

**Minutes of the Audit Committee
21 October 2025**

Present:

Councillor J. Button (Chair)
Councillor K. Howkins (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

G. Neall

H.R.D. Williams

R. Chandler

Independent Members: P. Briggs

Substitutions: Councillors C. Bateson (In place of L. E. Nichols)

Apologies: Councillors P.N. Woodward

58/25 Apologies and Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillor Nichols, Councillor Woodward, and Sati Seehra. Councillor Bateson attended as Councillor Nichols' substitute.

59/25 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

60/25 Value for Money - Grant Thornton

The Committee received the Interim Auditor's Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2025 from Grant Thornton. There were five key recommendations arising from the report which had been accepted by the Council, some of which were being addressed through the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan. Grant Thornton confirmed the Best Value Inspection report provided important evidence during their audit and the five recommendations related to findings within the report. A further report on audit findings would be brought before the Committee in January.

Councillor Chandler arrived at 19.15

The Committee were assured that the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan was on track for adoption and delivery, and consideration was being given to resourcing to deliver the Plan in its entirety. The Committee were advised of upcoming reports to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and Council that would address elements of the key recommendations.

The Committee **resolved** to note the Interim Auditors Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2025.

61/25 Audit Committee Governance Arrangements

The Committee received an update on Audit Committee Governance Arrangements. Rob Winter had provided the Council with initial conclusions and recommendations regarding Audit Committee governance arrangements. These had been presented to members for initial feedback which would be evaluated with the Committee Chair. A formal report and response would be presented to a future Audit Committee meeting.

The Committee **resolved** to note the update.

62/25 Corporate Risk Management (Corporate Risk Register)

The Committee received a report on the Corporate Risk Register from the Deputy Chief Executive. The report highlighted the Council's continued efforts to identify, monitor, and manage its most significant strategic risks in relation to the delivery of the corporate priorities. A new risk subject area relating to Contract Management had been added, and there had been updated risk scores for Finance Resilience and Commercial Assets – Commercial Investment Portfolio, and Financial Resilience and Supporting Communities – Reducing debt, both of which had moved from an amber rating to a red rating. This was the last presentation of the Corporate Risk Register in its current form as the next would be formatted to incorporate a governance assurance-based approach to risk management.

The Committee explored the rationale behind some of the risk ratings, and were assured that some of the risk areas would be addressed through the Council's forthcoming Improvement and Recovery Plan and further reports that would be presented to Council in November for approval. The Committee suggested that future reports may benefit from referencing Key Performance Indicators to provide the Committee with assurance that performance was being managed and monitored.

The Committee **resolved** to agree that they had considered the significant strategic risks and issues highlighted in the report and to present these to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, ensuring continued wider reporting of the Corporate Risk Register and actions across Committees.

63/25 Argus Software Discussion

The Committee received an update on the presentation on Argus Software given to members of the Committee.

The Chair advised some members of the Committee were given a demonstration of Argus Software which was used by the Commercial Assets Team. Some members of the Committee were impressed by the software and its capabilities, which allowed easy updates to financial modelling for properties that would assist in decision-making.

The Committee **resolved** to note the update.