

Report of the Chair on the work of the Audit Committee

This report gives an overview of the key items considered by the Committee at its meetings on 24 February 2026, and 26 March 2026.

At the Audit Committee held on 24 February 2026, the following business was considered:

1. Audit Progress Report and Sector Updates from the External Auditor

1.1 The Committee received the Audit Progress Report and sector updates from Grant Thornton.

1.2 The Committee **resolved** to note the Audit Progress Report and sector updates from Grant Thornton.

2. Audited Statement of Accounts

2.1 The Committee received the final Statement of Accounts and Audit Report for 2024-25.

2.2 The Committee **resolved** to approve the Statement of Accounts for 2024/25 and the Letter of Representation; and to accept the external auditors' report and disclaimer opinion.

3. Improvement and Recovery Plan Assurance Report

3.1 The Committee received an update on the assurance work associated with the Improvement and Recovery Plan.

3.2 The Committee **resolved** to note the arrangements for the governance of the Improvement and Recovery Plan; progress made to date on Improvement and Recovery Plan actions and the shift to tracking outcomes; and the recommendation for Improvement and Recovery Plan information coming to Audit Committee as amended to prioritise clarification on roles.

4. Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy

4.1 The Committee received a review of the Council's Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy.

4.2 The Committee **resolved** to acknowledge the annual review of the Council's Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy; to approve the proposed amendments to the Council's Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy; and to recommend to Council that the Constitution be updated with the revised Council's Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy.

5. Governance Assurance Update

5.1 The Committee received an update on progress with implementing the Council's new governance assurance approach to risk management.

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

At the Audit Committee held on 26 March 2026, the following business was considered:

1. Internal Audit Charter and Annual Audit Plan 2026-27

1.1 The Committee received the Internal Audit Charter 2026/27 and the Internal Audit Annual Audit Plan 2026/27

1.2 The Committee **resolved** that the Internal Audit Charter 2026/27 be approved, and that the Internal Audit Annual Audit Plan 2026/27 be approved.

2. Internal Audit Progress Report

2.1 The Committee received the Internal Audit Progress report for February 2026.

2.2 The Committee **resolved** to note the Internal Audit Progress Report for February 2026 and to approve the adjustments to the Internal Audit Plan 2025/26.

3. External Quality Assessment – Final Report

3.1 The Committee considered a report reflecting the outcome from the External Quality Assessment of the Southern Internal Audit Partnership against the new Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector

3.2 The Committee **resolved** to note the report of the external assessor, and the associated action plan addressing the suggested opportunities for future development.

4. Governance Assurance Update

4.1 The Committee received an update on progress in implementing the Governance Assurance approach to risk management.

4.2 The Committee **resolved** to note the update on the Governance Assurance approach to risk management.