AUDIT AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Narborough

MONDAY, 27 APRIL 2026

Present:-

Cllr. Mark Jackson (Chairman)

Cllr. Lee Breckon JP
Cllr. Richard Holdridge
Cllr. Roger Stead
Cllr. Jane Wolfe
Helen King (Independent Member)

Officers present: -

Sarah Pennelli	-	Executive Director - S.151 Officer
Joanne Davis	-	Accountancy Services Manager
Sarabjit Khangura	-	Council Tax Income and Debt Manager
Kerry Beavis	-	Shared Service Audit Manager
Bethany Hincks	-	Azets External Auditor
Gemma Dennis	-	Assistant Director - Corporate Services
Avisa Birchenough	-	Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer

Also in attendance as observers: -

Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore - Finance, People and Transformation Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader

Apologies:-

Cllr. Dillan Shikotra

266. **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

No disclosures were received.

267. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February, as circulated, were approved and signed as a correct record.

268. **INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER AND MANDATE**

Considered – Report of the Shared Service Audit Manager.

DECISION
That the Internal Audit Charter and Mandate be approved. Reason: One of the core functions of the Committee, as defined within its terms of reference, is to approve the Internal Audit Charter and Mandate and the scope and types of internal audit services (an essential condition of the Global Internal Audit Standards).

269. INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY

Considered – Report of the Shared Service Audit Manager.

DECISIONS

1. That the progress made against the internal audit strategy during 2025/26 be noted.

2. That the continued delivery of outstanding actions into 2026/27, including the external quality assessment and the development of data analytics capability, be supported.

3. That the ongoing improvement activities designed to enhance the effectiveness and modernisation of the internal audit service be endorsed.

Reasons:

1. Noting the progress ensures the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee has transparent oversight of delivery against the Internal Audit Strategy, providing assurance that key improvements relating to governance, standards alignment and continuous-improvement activities have been implemented as planned. It also enables the Committee to recognise where progress has been strong and where external factors have influenced delivery timelines.

2. Support is required because several remaining actions—such as the External Quality Assessment, skills development and analytics capability—are essential for achieving full alignment with the GIAS. These actions have clear plans and resource commitments for 2026/27, and Committee endorsement helps ensure these improvements remain appropriately prioritised despite earlier unavoidable delays due to corporate and sector dependencies.

3. Endorsement ensures that longer-term modernisation initiatives, including the use of data analytics, Copilot tools, where appropriate, innovation and enhanced root-cause analysis, continue to receive organisational support. These improvements strengthen Internal Audit’s ability to deliver high-quality, risk-based assurance and help maintain a robust governance and control environment across the organisation.

270. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2025/26 Q4

Considered – Report of the Shared Service Audit Manager, introduced by the Accountancy Services Manager and presented by the Azets External Auditor.

Helen King – Independent Member thanked the Shared Service Audit Manager and acknowledged the progress made on the audit report.

DECISION
That the Internal Audit progress report be noted. Reason: To inform the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee of progress against the Internal Audit plan for 2025/26 and to highlight any incidences of significant control failings or weaknesses that have been identified.

271. EXTERNAL AUDIT PLANNING REPORT 2025/26

Considered – Report of the Finance Group Manager.

DECISION
That the Azets Audit Planning Report for 2025/26 be approved. Reason: The Audit Planning Report sets out the proposed audit approach and the scope of the work to be carried out by Azets, and their fees for undertaking that work.

272. 2026-27 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN

Considered – Report of the Shared Service Audit Manager.

DECISIONS

1. That the report be noted.

2. That the 2026/27 Internal Audit Annual Audit Plan be approved.

Reason:

To comply with the Global Internal Audit Standards and the CIPFA Application Note: Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector.

273. AUDIT & CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

Considered – Report of the Shared Service Audit Manager.

DECISIONS

1. That the content of the report be agreed in advance of it being presented to Council.

2. That the report to be presented at Council be noted.

Reason:

To ensure compliance with the CIPFA Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police 2022.

274. ACCOUNTING POLICIES 2025/26

Considered – Report of the Finance Group Manager, presented by the Accountancy Services Manager.

DECISION

That the accounting policies as set out in Appendix A of the report be approved.

Reasons:

1. The Council should select appropriate accounting policies to be applied in the preparation and presentation of its annual Statement of Accounts.
2. It is considered good practice for the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee to review and comment upon the proposed accounting policies to be used in the preparation of the Council's annual accounts.

275. RISK MANAGEMENT Q4 2025/26

Considered – Report of the Council Tax Income & Debt Manager.

DECISION

That the latest information in respect of the Council's major corporate risks be accepted.

Reason:

The overview of the Council's risk management processes is a key responsibility of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee. It is important that members are aware of the corporate risks and their potential impact on Council business, and that they review the control measures in place to mitigate risks.

276. STATUTORY BEST VALUE DUTY - VOLUNTARY SELF-ASSESSMENT

Considered – Report of the Business Systems & Information Manager, presented by the Group Manager - Corporate Services & Monitoring Officer.

DECISIONS

1. That the 'Assessment Report' and the methodology used to be noted.
2. That the results of the voluntary self-assessment 'Opportunities for Improvement' document and the potential next steps be noted.

Reason:

This is the first voluntary self-assessment to be carried out since the publication of the Statutory Guide for Best Value Standards in May 2024. Therefore, officers are asking members to note the results of the assessment and the improvement areas where actions have been identified.

277. ANNUAL FRAUD REPORT

Considered – Report of the Finance Group Manager, presented by the Council Tax Income & Debt Manager.

DECISIONS

1. That the Council's self-assessment against the six principles of 'reasonable prevention' for the new offence of 'failure to prevent fraud' and the planned improvements be considered and accepted.
2. That the updated Anti-Fraud and Corruption policy, Whistleblowing policy, and Anti-Money Laundering policy be reviewed and approved.

Reason:

The high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements is a key responsibility of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee. The Committee are also required to maintain an overview of the Whistleblowing Policy, and to monitor the Anti-fraud & Corruption Policy.

278. AUDIT & CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Members accepted the items on the Audit & Corporate Governance Committee Work Programme.

DECISION
That the Audit & Corporate Governance Committee Work Programme be noted. Reason: It is appropriate that the Audit & Corporate Governance Committee set the Work Programme for the year.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 7.15 P.M.