

Chairman - Councillor R A James

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

M G Dodson

A Nixon

P A Leason

D P Rouxel

A R McNaughton

Also present:- Councillor R P Cooke (Resources Portfolio)

Officers in attendance:-

J Aupers - Head of Business Support and Assurance

S Baddeley - Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager

J Allen - Democratic Services Officer

*Prior to the commencement of the meeting, a minute's silence took place to remember the late Councillor Loughran who had served on the Audit and Accounts Committee as Chair and Committee Member.*

#### **AAC1 Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2026, as previously circulated, were agreed as a correct record.

#### **AAC2 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor J A Barron (substituted by Councillor P A Leason).

#### **AAC3 Auditor's Annual Report Year Ended 31 March 2025**

The external auditors were not present but had sent their apologies.

The External Auditors' (Azets) report was circulated with the agenda which included a full value for money report with conclusions.

Head of Business Support and Assurance stated that the report was generally positive and a significant improvement to two years ago.

Members asked for an update on the staffing position in the Finance Team. It was noted that although some recruitment for key posts had taken place, it was difficult to attract suitable candidates for other roles.

ACTION:- S151 Officer to provide update to the next meeting on the process for the budget monitoring of large scale capital projects.

RESOLVED:- that in accordance with the powers delegated to the Committee the report be noted

#### **AAC4 Governance Improvement Plan - Progress Report for Q4 2025-26**

Head of Business Support and Assurance presented the report, commenting that the proposed action plan for 2026/27 is superseded by the one included with the Annual Governance Statement later on the agenda.

RESOLVED:- that:

- (a) the progress made in the delivery of the Governance Improvement Plan be noted;
- (b) the revised Governance Improvement Plan for 2026-27 be approved, subject to further additions arising from the Annual Governance Statement for 2025-26

#### **AAC5 Updated Strategic Risk Register**

Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager introduced the report stating that a full review has taken place with the Leadership Team.

It was noted that for some items, limited progress has been made since the last update, although it remains a priority to improve the status of the risk.

ACTION:- Ask Cabinet to add Climate Change as a risk

RESOLVED:- that:

- (a) the draft Strategic Risk Register be noted
- (b) the progress made in the identification and management of strategic risks be noted

#### **AAC6 Internal Audit Annual Report 2025-26**

Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager presented the report and drew attention to sections that the Committee had not previously seen.

ACTION:- Leadership Team to provide joint response to paragraph 3.10, page 116

**ACTION:-** Any internal audits on partial assurance which have had 2, 3 or 4 follow-ups, HOS to provide narrative for circulation to the committee within three weeks. The committee can then decide if any HOS should be invited to the September meeting.

**RESOLVED:-** that the contents of the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2025-26 and the annual conclusion contained within it be noted

**AAC7 Code of Governance and Annual Governance Statement**

Head of Business Support and Assurance presented the report.

**RESOLVED:-** that:

- (a) The Code of Governance is recommended to Council for approval;
- (b) the committee approves the Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26 set out in Appendix 2 and the Governance Improvement Plan set out in Annex 2

CHAIR