

Meeting	Audit And Governance Committee
Date	14 May 2025
Present	Councillors Hollyer (Chair), J Burton (Vice-Chair), Fisher, Merrett, Rose, Coles, Watson and Binney (Independent Member)
Officers in Attendance	Bryn Roberts – Director of Governance Debbie Mitchell – Director of Finance Max Thomas - Director and Head of Internal Audit, Veritau Jonathan Dodsworth - Assistant Director – Corporate Fraud Richard Smith - Deputy Head of Internal Audit Conor Munro – Audit Manager Lorraine Lunt - Information Governance and Feedback Manager/Dpo

75. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (17:30)

There were no apologies for absence.

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST 17:31)

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they may have in respect of business on the agenda.

Cllr Coles noted that should Emergency Planning or Local Resilience that in her role as Deputy Mayor of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority that these topics feel within her remit at the Combined Authority.

77. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (17:31)

Resolved: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Annex 3-5 to Agenda Item 10 on the grounds that it contains information relating to Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any

particular person (including the authority holding that information). This information was classed as exempt under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as revised by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

78. MINUTES & ACTION LOG (17:31)

The Committee discussed the minutes and the Committees action log. The Committee noted that it had asked whether there was a place for the Committee to be involved in the Review of Scrutiny. The Director of Governance confirmed that the latest attempt to recruit a new independent member for the Committee had been unsuccessful. It was noted that it was a national issue trying to recruit suitable independent members on Committees such as Audit and Governance.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2025 be approved and then signed by the Chair as a correct record.

79. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (17:44)

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

80. KEY CORPORATE RISKS MONITOR 4 (17:44)

The Director of Finance introduced the report on Key corporate Risks. Members noted that while the Local Plan had now been signed off, they wondered whether delivery against the plan should be recorded as a Key Corporate Risk. It was confirmed that officers were reviewing whether a specific Key Corporate Risk was required. Members raised concern about poor quality planning applications increasing now the plan was approved and asked whether there were sufficient resources to handle an increase in applications. It was confirmed that this was not a Key Corporate Risk but resources at a department level would be included in departmental risk registers. The Committee also enquired about the review of the Council's Constitution. They were informed that this was an ongoing process dependent on officer time and that drafts for changes when ready would be considered by Members.

Members highlighted the risk around the use of personal electronic devices outlined in the report and enquired about how big a risk this presented to the Council. Officers highlighted a range of risks presented by using a personal device for Council work, these included an inability to ensure data would be stored securely. It was also noted that individuals can face criminal proceedings if a breach is considered a knowing breach. Members agreed the importance of training on CYC ICT equipment and asked if information could be shared with all Councillors on the importance of using CYC devices.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the summary of the Council's Key Corporate Risks and the in-depth report on the review of KCR 2 (Governance);
- ii. To request that information be shared with all Councillors around the importance of using CYC devices and the dangers relating to using personal devices for CYC activities.

Reason: To provide assurance that the authority is effectively understanding and managing its key risks.

81. ANNUAL A&G REPORT FOR COUNCIL (18:08)

The Committee noted the Annual Report.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the Audit and Governance Annual Report.

Reason: To finalise the annual report for Council.

82. ANNUAL COUNTER FRAUD REPORT (18:09)

The Head of Internal Audit (Veritau) introduced the report on counter fraud work noting that Veritau had exceeded its targets for savings through good investigative work. They discussed the targets set for Veritau in supporting the Council to recover money from fraud and it was noted that the targets were challenging but realistic in terms of what can be recovered. It was noted that national measurement on counter fraud work

was a challenge due to no national modelling and only half of Councils investing in counter fraud work. Officers noted that it was important to triage cases correctly to ensure resources were well assigned and that fraud that was investigated was cases that were provable and a high value for the Council.

The Committee enquired about fraudulent use of residents parking. Officers noted that a lot of this would fall under parking enforcement, but that Veritau did undertake things such as action days with parking in this area.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the results of counter fraud work.

Reason: To enable members to consider the current risk of fraud against the council, this forms part of the committee's responsibility for overseeing the effectiveness of counter fraud arrangements.

83. AUDIT COMMITTEE SELF-ASSESSMENT (18:39)

Officers introduced the Self-Assessment for the Audit and Governance Committee to review the effectiveness of auditing at the Council. It was noted that the review had scored a 3.3 out of 5 for the audit work and a key area for improvement was identified as improving the relationship between the work of the Audit and Governance Committee with the Council's Executive and Corporate Management Team. The Committee discussed the opportunities for improvement and suggested exploring best practice at other local authorities.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the results of the self-assessment survey of the Committee's effectiveness;
- ii. Explore setting up a group of Members to look into best practice at other local authorities.

Reason: To ensure the Committee can continue to fulfil its responsibilities as set out in the Constitution and contribute to the effective operation of the Council's corporate governance framework.

84. AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE WORK PLAN (18:44)

The Committee reviewed its work for plan 2025/26. It was noted that a June meeting might be required but that Members would be informed if this was the case.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the Committee work plan.

Reason: To ensure the Committee maintain a plan of work for the Committee.

85. URGENT BUSINESS (18:47)

The Director of Governance presented a proposal to make changes to several Council committees. This included returning the Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee to 3 members with a quoracy of 2. There would also be a change to merge the Council's appeals panels due to the infrequency of several of the Committees and to assist in reducing the number of scheduled then cancelled committee meetings. The new Combined Appeals Panel would have 5 members but only 3 required for a meeting and there would be no limit on substitutes for the Committee.

Resolved:

- i. To approve changes in the Constitution to the Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee and Appeals Panels.

Reason: To update the Council Committees.

86. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HEAD OF INTERNAL AUDIT (18:50)

The Committee considered the draft Internal Audit Charter. Officers highlighted several areas within the charter including the Contract Management Audit for the Salvation Army Contract. Veritau confirmed that the report included their annual opinion as internal auditors for the Council and confirmed they had come to a position of reasonable assurance meaning there were no reasonable secure weaknesses to report.

The Committee considered the reset of this item in private session as agreed at minute 71.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the results of internal audit work undertaken, and the opinion of the Head of Internal Audit on the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control.

Reason: To enable members to consider the implications of internal audit findings.

- ii. Noted the outcome of Veritau's quality assurance and development arrangements, including the confirmation that the internal audit service conformed to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards during 2024/25 and that it conforms to the new Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector.

Reason: To enable members to consider the opinion of the Head of Internal Audit.

- iii. Noted that no significant control weaknesses have been identified by internal audit during the year which are considered relevant to the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement.

Reason: To enable the Annual Governance Statement to be prepared.

- iv. Approved the draft internal audit charter.

Reason: To enable the committee to fulfil its responsibility to approve the purpose, authority, and responsibility of the council's internal audit service.

Cllr Hollyer, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.55 pm].