

Meeting	Audit and Governance Committee
Date	12 November 2025
Present	Councillors Hollyer (Chair), J Burton (Vice-Chair), Fisher, Merrett, Rose and Coles
In Attendance	Bryn Roberts – Director Of Governance Debbie Mitchell – Director Of Finance Lorraine Lunt - Information Governance Manager/Dpo Mark Outterside - Director, Forvis Mazars Louise Stables - Audit Manager, Forvis Mazars Connor Munro - Assistant Director – Audit Assurance, Veritau Max Thomas - Head of Internal Audit, Veritau Jonathan Dodsworth, Assistant Director – Corporate Fraud, Veritau
Apologies	Mr Binney – Independent Member

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (17:31)

It was confirmed that apologies had been received from the Committee's Independent Member Mr Binney.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (17:32)

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. None were declared.

27. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (17:32)

Resolved: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Annexes 2-9 to Agenda Item 13 on the grounds that it contains 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).

28. MINUTES & ACTION LOG (17:32)

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2025 be approved and then signed by the Chair as a correct record with the amendment to note that apologies were received from Independent Member Mr Binney and not Cllr Myers.

29. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (17:38)

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Gwen Swinburn raised concerns relating to governance, the Council's procedural processes, and asked that the Committee review the Council's delegated powers, citing the changes to public participation which had resulted in her not being able to register to speak at the extraordinary Council meeting.

30. INFORMATION GOVERNANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT (17:42)

The Information Governance Manager introduced the report and explained the process and requirements of the Council when responding to Freedom of Information Requests (FOI). If Members had specific queries relating to FOI's brought to them by residents, then they can contact the Information Governance Team. The Committee were also updated on two data breaches since last report at the Council, both had been addressed, and measures had been put in place to reduce happening again, and the Information Commissioner's Office were content with the actions taken by the Council.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the performance details contained in the report.

Reason: To provide Members with details and current performance from the Corporate Governance Team.

31. REVISED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROTOCOL (17:57)

The Director of Governance introduced the report outlining the changes made to the Council's Constitution, relating to Public Participation to remove public participation from Extraordinary Council Meetings relating to staffing matters. He confirmed that prior to using his delegated powers to amend the Constitution he had consulted with representatives of the three political groups at the Council prior to making the changes. Finally, he confirmed that for the appointment of the Chief Operating Officer the public have the right to observe the meeting but there is not a requirement to allow public speaking on the item.

Members raised concerns relating to how close the change was made to the Extraordinary Council Meeting and noted that they believed there should have been an officer decision published with tracked changes to make it easy to see what had been amended, members asked that in future when using delegated powers to amend the constitution that this be the case. The Committee also noted that they felt the Chair and Vice Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee should have been informed of any planned amendments and requested that in future this happen for other delegated level amendments.

The Committee considered whether the public participation section of the Constitution should have a wider review and agreed to set up a Constitution Working Group to review Appendix 8 - Public Participation Protocol.

Resolved:

- i. To establish a Constitution Working Group to review Appendix 8 of the Constitution- Public Participation Protocol;
- ii. Note the amended Public Participation Protocol.

Reason: To ensure the Constitution remains fit for purpose.

32. TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITOR 2 (18:16)

The Director of Finance introduced the report which updated the Committee on the Council's Treasury Management. Members noted the information provided in the report and enquired about how the Council focuses and makes the most of its investments. The Director of Finance noted that the Council doesn't currently have a large amount of investments but those it does have follow a model of ensuring security, lucidity, and yield, as well as, considering the ethical, social, and governance arrangements of any potential investment.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report and Review of Prudential Indicators 2025/26 at Annex 1.

Reason: That those responsible for scrutiny and governance arrangements are updated on a regular basis to ensure that those implementing policies and executing transactions have properly fulfilled their responsibilities with regard to delegation and reporting.

33. AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT (18:20)

The Committee noted the report presented by the Council's external auditors Mark Outterside and Louise Stables from Forvis Mazars.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the matters set out in the Audit Progress report presented by the external auditor.

Reason: To ensure the proper consideration of the work of the external auditor in respect of the annual audit of accounts and review of the council's arrangements for ensuring value for money.

34. COUNTER FRAUD PROGRESS REPORT 2025/26 (18:25)

Jonathan Dodsworth and Max Thomas from the Council's counter fraud service Veritau introduced the Counter Fraud Progress report and a breakdown of savings. The Committee enquired about QR code scams at Council car parks and whether this issue had been addressed. Jonathan Dodsworth noted that this was national issue and were highlighted in York between January and the Summer, work was undertaken with Transport and QR code stickers were removed quickly when found.

The Committee noted the 10 formal warnings identified in the report that had been issued and enquired about how Veritau decide which cases to pursue. It was confirmed that cases all different but that decisions were taken based on the Council's counter fraud policies and the expected return from any action.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the current and planned counter fraud activity.

Reason: To enable the Committee to consider the progress of counter fraud work in the current financial year.

35. AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE WORK PLAN (18:36)

The Committee considered its work plan for 2025/26. It was confirmed that an update on recruitment of a new independent member for the Committee and Joint Standards would be brought to the Committee in January. The Committee also recommended to go out with new adverts for independent members as soon as possible and to readvertise after Christmas if there hadn't been enough interest.

Members enquired about when the Council would plan to undertake a Community Governance Review. The Director of Governance noted that it was the Council's decision for when it would undertake a Community Governance Review but suggested that this wouldn't be something the Council would want to explore until after the Council's Boundary Review changes. Members therefore suggested they add a recommendation to the Audit and Governance Committee after the 2027 election to explore a Community Governance Review.

The Committee asked whether they would be receiving an update report on any NDA's in staff exits. It was confirmed that there had not been a report due to no NDA's being used since the Public Interest Report recommendations and that a further update would be included in the Annual Accounts Report.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the Committee work plan;
- ii. To recommend that the Council put out new adverts for independent members posts on Audit and Governance and Joint Standards Committees;
- iii. That a recommendation be added to the Committee action log to consider exploring a Community Governance Review.

Reason: To maintain a programme of work for the Committee and find new independent members for key Council Committees.

36. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2025/26 (18:46)

Connor Munro and Max Thomas from the Council's Internal Auditors Veritau introduced the report on the Internal Audit Progress Report 2025/26. The Committee enquired about whether the audit into the Council's Section 106 money could be moved up the priority list and the auditors confirmed that they would discuss with Council officers about changing the priority of this audit in their work plan.

The Committee considered the rest of this item in private session as agreed at minute 27.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the progress made in delivering the 2025/26 internal audit work plan, and plans for delivery over the remainder of the year.

Reason: To enable members to consider the implications of internal audit findings, and to review planned activity for the remainder of 2025/26.

Cllr Hollyer, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.31 pm and finished at 6.52 pm].

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