

AUDIT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 28 JULY 2025

Present:

Councillor Christine Smith (Chair) (in the Chair)
Councillor David Cheetham (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Alex Dale

Councillor Tony Lacey

Councillor Martin E Thacker MBE JP

Also Present:

L Hickin	Managing Director & Head of Paid Service
J Dethick	Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer)
J Williams	Head of Internal Audit Consortium
T Scott	Governance and Scrutiny Officer
G Garg	Audit Manager - Forvis Mazars

AC/1 Apologies for Absence

/25-

26 No apologies for absence were received.

AC/2 Declarations of Interest

/25-

26 Members were requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and/or other interest, not already on their register of interest, in any item on the agenda and withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate time.

Councillor Martin Thacker MBE JP and Councillor Christine Smith advised the Committee of an interest as members of the Rykneld Homes Board.

AC/3 Minutes of Last Meeting

/25-

26 Councillor Tony Lacey requested an amendment to the 14 April 2025 minutes in order to be replaced in the Apologies for Absence item by Councillor Alex Dale.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 14 April 2025 be approved with one amendment.

AC/4 Audit Strategy Memorandum

/25-

26 The Audit Manager - Forvis Mazars presented the Council's Audit Strategy Memorandum for the year ending 31 March 2025.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

AC/5 Internal Audit Consortium Annual Report 2024/25

/25-

26 The Head of the Internal Audit Consortium presented a report to the Committee to

outline the adequacy of the Council's arrangements for governance, risk management and control, and also to obtain necessary assurances on the overall arrangements of governance, risk management and control systems.

Members discussed paragraph 2.3 of the report, in particular its reference to a delay ("the exception to this opinion is in relation to the IT cyber and network security arrangements of Rykneld Homes Ltd. Internal Audit can not provide assurance in this area. An external review was planned to have taken place, however this has been delayed") and asked what had caused this delay. The Director of Finance and Resources explained that the delay had been caused by the need to appoint an external specialist. The Committee felt that the completion of the external review was very important and further delays could lead to cyber security risks, so agreed to include a comment about its importance in the item resolutions.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Audit Committee accepted the 2024/25 Internal Audit Consortium Annual Report for North East Derbyshire District Council and the overall assurance opinion on the Council's governance, risk management and control arrangements.
- (2) That the Audit Committee would like to see the delayed external review of the IT cyber and network security arrangements of Rykneld Homes Ltd. completed in a timely fashion.

AC/6 Summary of Progress on the 2024/25 Internal Audit Plan

/25-

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The Head of the Internal Audit Consortium presented a final progress report to the Committee in respect of the 2024/25 Internal Audit Plan.

Members were informed that a full-time auditor had been appointed.

RESOLVED – That the report was noted.

AC/7 Treasury Management Update (Q4)

/25-

26

The Director of Finance and Resources presented a report to the Committee informing them of the Treasury Management outturn position for 2024/25.

Members were pleased that the Audit Committee was being made aware of the report before it was presented to Cabinet.

RESOLVED – That the Committee noted the report concerning the Council's treasury management report for the 2024/25 financial year.

AC/8 Annual Governance Statement and Code of Corporate Governance

/25-

26

The Director of Finance and Resources presented a report for the Committee to consider the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 along with the review of the Code of Corporate Governance.

The Committee's attention was drawn to a section of the draft Annual Governance Statement titled 'Pressure on the Council's Budget', which explained the budget shortfall the Council would have to address, and the new Government redistributing grants.

Members expressed concerns that other local authorities could use the Local Government Review to take funding from the Council. The Director of Finance and Resources explained that the Council was in ongoing discussions with other authorities to prevent that from happening.

RESOLVED –

(1) That the Committee noted the contents of the draft Annual Governance Statement.

(2) That the Committee approved the Code of Corporate Governance.

AC/9 Statement of Accounts 2024/25

**/25-
26**

The Director of Finance and Resources presented a report informing the Committee of the completion and publication of the draft Statement of Accounts for 2024/25 in line with the statutory deadline.

RESOLVED – That the Committee noted the draft Statement of Accounts in respect of 2024/25.

AC/1 Going Concern 2024/25

**0/25-
26**

The Director of Finance and Resources presented a report informing Members of an assessment of the Council as a 'going concern' for the purposes of producing the 2024/25 accounts.

RESOLVED – That the Committee accepted the outcome of the Council's Section 151 Officer's assessment of the Council's 'going concern' status for the purpose of preparing the Statement of Accounts for 2024/25.

AC/1 Work Programme 2025/2026 to 2028/2029

**1/25-
26**

The Director of Finance and Resources presented a report to enable the Audit Committee to approve the first Work Programme of the year for 2025/2026 to 2028/2029.

Members were informed of two changes to the format of the Work Programme appendix:

1. The Programme now set out work for the Committee covering four years instead of one, because the Committee wanted to take a longer term view of its work.

2. The format of the Programme had been changed to a table to enable officers to input work items more efficiently.

Members were pleased with the longer term view of four years, but felt that going this far into the future diluted the content of the Programme. Members agreed to proceed with this format but with three years included instead of four.

Members discussed the new table outlay of the Programme and felt it was not as clear as the previous format. Members agreed to proceed with the old Work Programme table format instead of this new one.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the draft Work Programme 2025/2026 to 2028/2029 was approved.
- (2) That the Work Programme proceeds with the newly proposed time period format, but with three years included instead of four.
- (3) That the Work Programme does not proceed with the newly proposed Excel table outlay of the Programme and the previous format be used in future.

AC/1 Urgent Matters

**2/25-
26**

None.

AC/1 Exclusion of Public

**3/25-
26**

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the following item of business to avoid the disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 and 5, Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

AC/1 Risk Management Update

**4/25-
26**

The Managing Director presented a report to update Members of the current position regarding Risk Management arrangements and the Strategic Risk Register as of July 2025.

The report included an appendix which outlined all of the Risks relating to the Local Government Review.

Members discussed Safeguarding and Child Protection Risks no longer appearing as part of this report. The Managing Director stated that the Housing Policy and Intelligence Officer would be consulted with to discuss the reasons it was removed.

RESOLVED – That the Committee noted the report and Strategic Risk Register as of July 2025 as set out in Appendix 1.

AC/1 Date of Next Meeting

**5/25-
26**

The next meeting of the Audit Committee was scheduled to take place on 3pm Monday 20 October 2025.