



**MINUTES of
PERFORMANCE, GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
12 MARCH 2026**

PRESENT

Chairperson	Councillor W Stamp, CC
Vice-Chairperson	Councillor N D Spenceley
Councillors	M G Bassenger, D O Bown, M G Neall, R G Pratt and M E Thompson

1. CHAIRPERSON'S NOTICES

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through some general housekeeping arrangements for the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J C Hughes and U G C Siddall-Norman.

The Chairperson advised that the Chief Executive was not present and the Director of Place, Planning and Growth and Commercial Manager were unable to attend. Should there be any questions that the Officers present were unable to answer these would be responded to in writing outside of the meeting.

At this point, the Chairperson welcomed Emma Larcombe from KPMG (External Auditors) and Andrew Billingham and Aaron Winter from BDO LLP (Internal Auditors) to the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 January 2026 be approved and confirmed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted the matters arising from the last meeting.

The Chairperson requested that Member training statistics continue to be monitored.

In response to a question regarding the blind spot at a pedestrian crossing point in the Promenade Park, the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Communities advised that they had looked at the options for improving this and she would ensure that an update was circulated to Members to provide some reassurance.

5. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

There were none.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No requests had been received.

7. REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR ON THE AUDIT OF FINANCIAL YEAR 2024 / 25

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance presenting a number of external audit documents for review. The Officer presented the report before referring to the external auditors to provide further information in relation to their reports (appendices 1 and 2).

- **International Standards on Auditing (ISA) 260 Audit report** (Appendix 1 to the report)
This report aimed to ensure that auditors communicated significant matters from the audit to those responsible for governance.

The 'statutory backstop and rebuilding assurance' section of the appendix explained the impact of the statutory backstop and the External Auditors expected that a disclaimer opinion would be issued on the financial statements.

- **Annual Audit report for the financial year 2024 / 25** (Appendix 2)
This report evaluated how effectively an organisation used its resources to achieve its objectives.

There was a requirement for this report to be published alongside the Council's financial statement on its website and provided a high-level overview of the findings of both external audit's financial statement audit along with more rationale and detailed assessment of the findings of Value for Money (VFM) work. It was noted that no significant weaknesses in respect of the arrangements the Council put in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources had been identified.

During his presentation of the report, the Director of Finance thanked KPMG (External Audit) for their work assisting the Council to meet the backstop date for signing the statement of accounts.

Ms Larcombe from KPMG referred to the 'disclaimer of opinion' that had been issued and how they were expecting to reach a qualified position for 2025 / 26. She thanked the Council's finance team for their support.

The Chairperson moved the recommendations set out in the report. These were duly seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED

- (i) That Members considered the ISA 260 Audit Report for 2024 / 25 at Appendix 1 to the report;

- (ii) That Members considered the Annual Audit Report for 2024 / 25 at Appendix 2 to the report.

8. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2024/25

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance presenting for approval the Maldon District Council Statement of Accounts (SoA) for the year 2024 / 25. The report also sought to confirm the final position arising from the completion of the External Audit review of the 2024 / 25 accounts.

Following consideration of a final update of the SoA by the Committee in January 2026 delegated authority had been granted to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Committee Chairperson to agree any further changes ahead of the 'back stop' date for signing the accounts (27 February 2026). Members were advised that the back stop date had been achieved and the fully signed SoA had been published on the Council's website. Considerable assurance could be taken from the progress of the audit review of the accounts, both in terms of accuracy and the Council's ability to prepare them in a timely manner. The fully signed SoA for 2024 / 25 were being brought back to this Committee for formal acceptance and approval in line with the recommendations approved in January 2026.

The Chairperson put the recommendation as set out in the report. This was duly seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED that the Statement of Accounts attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved as the final version of the Council's accounts for the year 2024 / 25.

9. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer and associated Internal Audit reports from BDP LLP, attached on the agenda as follows:

- 9a) Progress Report (March 2026);
- 9b) Follow-Up of Recommendations Report (March 2026);
- 9c) Management of Property Final Report (February 2026);
- 9d) HR System Review Final Report (October 2025);
- 9e) Food Safety Final Report (February 2026);
- 9f) Safeguarding Final Report (January 2026).

Progress Report (March 2026)

Mr Aaron Winter (BDO LLP) presented his report to the Committee which provided an update on progress made against the 2025 / 26 internal audit plan and summarised the work BDO had completed together with an assessment of the systems reviewed and recommendations raised. It was noted that four final reports were being presented to this Committee and fieldwork was in progress in respect of the remaining three audits from the plan.

Members were advised that the Local Government Review had been deferred from the 2025 / 26 plan, at the request of management, given the current status of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). This had been replaced with a review of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for which fieldwork had started in January 2026.

Discussions were ongoing regarding the 2026 / 27 Internal Audit Plan and this would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

Follow-Up of Recommendations Report (March 2026)

Mr Winter presented the report and provided an update in respect of the recommendations arising from reports issued in 2024 / 25. It was noted that a number of recommendations had been implemented, and it was noted that there were two outstanding recommendations where revised implementation dates had been provided and were therefore 'in progress'. He reported that there was one overdue recommendation, although progress continued to be made in respect of this.

For 2025 / 26 three recommendations had been implemented for the audits on Waste and Recycling and Corporate Governance. The recommendation relating to Corporate Governance had missed its original implementation date, although work was progressing and this would be followed up at the next meeting of this Committee.

Management of Property Final Report (February 2026)

Mr Andrew Billingham (BDO LLP) presented the report advising that a review of the Council's arrangements for ensuring all its properties were managed effectively and efficiently had taken place. He explained that this had received moderate assurance and outlined the one high, one medium and two low priority recommendations raised to support the Council mitigate the identified risks.

HR System Review Final Report (October 2025)

Mr Billingham presented the report advising that a review of the Council's HR (Human Resources) system had taken place and outlined the purpose of the review. It was noted a limited assurance had been given on the design and operational effectiveness of the controls in place to ensure adherence to core HR processes for the enhanced HR system introduced in 2024. A moderate assurance had been given on the control of effectiveness. Members were informed that one low, one medium and one high priority recommendation had been raised.

Mr Billingham explained that the high priority recommendation related to the lack of a Service Level Agreement with the HR service provider, however this had since been located. External Audit would ensure that the roles and responsibilities within the high priority recommendation were being met as part of their follow-up review.

Food Safety Final Report (February 2026)

Mr Billingham presented the report advising that a review of the Council's processes and controls in place for the inspection of premises and enforcement activities related to food safety had taken place and he outlined the purpose of the review. It was noted that substantial assurance had been given.

Safeguarding Final Report (January 2026)

Mr Billingham presented the report advising that a review of the Council's policies and arrangements in place to support the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults had taken place. Members were informed that a moderate assurance had been given in respect of this audit. It was noted that one medium and one low priority recommendation had been raised along with one observation to support the Council in mitigating the identified risk.

In response to a question, Members were advised that the previous Safeguarding report had been given limited assurance, in comparison this report had received a moderate assurance which highlighted that a lot of improvements had been made over the year. Mr Billingham explained that because of the high risk related to safeguarding it was unlikely that a substantial rating would be given.

Internal Audit report continued

The Chairperson then moved the recommendations set out in the report. This was duly seconded and approved.

RESOLVED that the Committee considered, commented, and approved the following reports as set out on the agenda:

- (i) Progress Report (March 2026) – at 9a;
- (ii) Follow-Up of Recommendations Report (March 2026) – at 9b;
- (iii) Management of Property Final Report (February 2026) at 9c;
- (iv) HR System Review Final Report (October 2025)– at 9d;
- (v) Food Safety Final Report (February 2026) – at 9e;
- (vi) Safeguarding Final Report (January 2026) – at 9f.

10. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 3

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive that required the Committee to undertake a quarterly review of the Corporate performance, as assurance that performance was being managed effectively to achieve the corporate outcomes as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2025 - 2028. Appendix 1 to the report provided an overview of performance as at the end of Quarter 3 (Q3) (October to December 2025).

The Chairperson introduced the report and deferred to the Head of Performance, Improvement and LGR to present the detail. The Officer took the Committee through the report highlighting section 3.4 which gave a high level view for each priority of delivery along with the specific indicators within the priority that had been marked at risk. It was noted that out of 57 indicators, 42 were on track with seven being marked for closer monitoring, seven as target met and one under review.

The Chairperson proposed that the recommendations as set out in the report be agreed and this was duly seconded.

In response to a question regarding delivery of the updated Local Development Plan, the Chairperson advised that this had been raised at the agenda meeting. She requested that this be raised as a matter arising for the next meeting and the Director of Place, Planning and Growth be requested to provide an update on this for Members.

The Chairperson then moved the recommendations set out in the report and these were duly agreed.

RESOLVED

- (i) That Members reviewed the information as set out in this report and Appendix 1 to the report, with priority focus given to the Strategic Priority level performance;

- (ii) That Members confirmed they are assured through this review that corporate performance was being managed effectively.

11. REVIEW OF CORPORATE RISK - QUARTER 3

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive that required Members to undertake a quarterly review of the Corporate Risk Register as assurance that the Council's corporate risks were being managed effectively. A summary and detailed table of the Corporate Risk Register, latest ratings and officer commentary was attached as appendix 1 to the report.

The Chairperson introduced the report and deferred to the Head of Performance, Improvement and LGR to address the detail. The Officer advised that the report covered the Corporate Risks for the third quarter of 2025 / 26, (October - December 2025). She drew Members attention to sections 3.2 – 3.4 of the report which highlighted one proposed removal and two reductions to risks.

The Chairperson moved the recommendations set out in the report. These were duly seconded and agreed.

In response to concern raised by the Independent Person in respect of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), the Chairperson provided reassurance that the matters had all been discussed and the data from PWC or Grant Thornton was available for each of the planned authority models. She advised that the Council's officers were working with all 15 Councils to progress through to the next stages but until the 'minded to' decision was received from the government further progress could not be made. The Head of Performance, Improvement and LGR highlighted that the Council had a risk 'failure to engage and be ready for any impact of Local Government Review' and the update in respect of this risk provided detail of the work undertaken during quarter three. The Council was also progressing a programme regarding LGR internally through the Project Management Office. The Director of Finance advised that the Council was receiving updates on LGR at each Council meeting, the last being 12 February 2026. The Chief Executive was part of the Essex Chief Executive's Group and the Director explained that he was involved with all Chief Finance Officers across Greater Essex, both groups met regularly to discuss all aspects of LGR. At this present time the 'minded to' decision was awaited from the Government at which point there would be an indication as to what the future shape of Essex government would be and from which further discussions could take place. It was agreed that some notes on LGR and the current status would be shared with Members and the Independent Person.

Councillor N D Spenceley commented on Risk 4 – Damage to the Council's reputation associated with delays to planned infrastructure delivery by third parties. He noted the public perception that infrastructure was lagging behind development and growth, concerns regarding Section 106 monies not being spent, particularly in relation to health and how in recent Planning Committee meetings there had been a shift beyond the strict limits of the planning application to look at the wider cumulative effect on infrastructure. Councillor Spenceley felt that the risk score for this risk was low. In response the Chairperson advised that this would be noted.

The Chairperson then moved the recommendations which were duly agreed.

RESOLVED

- (i) That Members reviewed the Corporate Risk Register in Appendix 1 to the report and provided comment and feedback for consideration;

- (ii) That Members reviewed progress of the Corporate Risk Mitigating actions in Appendix 2 to the report and provided comment and feedback for consideration;
- (iii) That Members are assured through this review that corporate risk is being managed effectively;
- (iv) That Members challenged risk where the Committee felt that the Council's corporate goals may not be achieved.

12. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT ACTIONS UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive providing Members with an update on the actions identified in the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The Chairperson introduced the report and deferred to the Head of Performance, Improvement and LGR, to present the detail.

The Head of Performance, Improvement and LGR took the Committee through the report that covered the best practice governance actions identified in the 2024 / 25 AGS and an update on progress against these. It was noted that the AGS was in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy best practice, reflective of governance matters and forward looking about where the Council could make improvements.

Section 3.5 of the report provided a table of those actions and an update of progress as at Quarter 3 (end December 2025). Actions highlighted in grey denoted actions completed and a further three actions were ongoing for the year, with updated text provided. The Head of Performance, Improvement and LGR highlighted how the draft AGS for 2025 / 26 was due to be considered as a separate item on the agenda and would continue to build on best practice.

The Chairperson proposed that the recommendation as set out in the report be agreed. This proposal was duly seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED that the Committee reviewed the Annual Governance Statement table and the updates within the report and challenged where necessary.

13. HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE - QUARTER THREE 2025 / 26

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Communities that provided an update on Health and Safety statistics and activity during Quarter 3 (Q3) (1 October to 31 December 2025). The Chairperson introduced the report and deferred to the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Communities and Corporate Health and Safety Manager to present the detail.

The Director took the Committee through the report advising on the numbers of accidents / incidents, near misses and unacceptable behaviour which were relatively low and dealt with according to Council policies with no particular trends identified during this period. It was noted that the number of accidents and near misses reported demonstrated that Officers continued to follow the correct procedure. The report provided further update in respect of the following areas:

- Health and Safety Actions – the report detailed a number of actions along with an update on the progress of each.

- Health and Safety Groups – Reported incidents were scrutinised through the monthly Health and Safety Managers' Group along with compliance in other areas and monthly performance updates were provided to the Senior Leadership Team.
- System resources – Work continued and resources for health and safety improvement had been agreed in principle with the Director of Finance.
- Fire Risk Assessments
- Policies and procedures – work was continuing to review and update all corporate policies and procedures.
- Health and Safety inspections – the annual mini-audit of the Council depots had been completed along with an inspection of the Blackwater Leisure Centre.
- Legionella – routine worked continued.
- Training – a number of training events had been undertaken during this quarter, including phase 1 of the driver safety (classroom) sessions for those who drove on council business and manage telephone aggression for those in customer services, housing, waste and environmental health teams. Further training courses to support the training programme has been scheduled.
- Accident-near miss reporting
- Health and Safety Audit – Most actions had been completed and a table within the report highlighted those still outstanding.

The Chairperson proposed that the recommendations as set out in the report be agreed and this proposal was duly seconded.

During the discussion that followed and in response to questions raised, the following information was provided:

- The new door entry system would provide a record of who was in the Council building and this information would be accessible for fire marshals during any fire evacuation. In response to a question regarding how the software recorded this information, the Corporate Health and Safety Manager advised he would have to defer this to the IT department.
- The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Communities drew Members' attention to the systems the Council had in place to support reception staff, should they feel threatened at any point, this included an alert being sent through the Police, CCTV and proactive management. It was noted should a situation result in an incident staff are supported, with appropriate action being taken. The Corporate Health and Safety Manager advised Members of a new device that the Council had recently procured which could be work behind a badge and should any member of staff feel they need assistance a button could be active and this system was monitored on a 24 hour basis.

It was requested that it be communicated to staff that Members deplored any incidents of abuse and assault and supported any actions which supported staff.

The Chairperson then moved the recommendations which were duly agreed.

RESOLVED

- (i) That Members considered the accident and incident statistics and incidences of unacceptable behaviour reported;

- (ii) That Members considered progress of key health and safety themes (as set out in section 3.2 of the report).

14. 2025/26 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive presenting the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2025 / 26 (attached at Appendix 1 to the report) for review and adoption by the Committee.

The Chairperson introduced the report and deferred to the Head of Performance, Improvement and LGR to present the details. The Officer advised that the AGS was a key statutory document that had to be produced and appended to the Council's Statement of Accounts and followed the Council's adopted template to reflect the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) best practice advice. It was noted that the report commented on the Council's position against the seven principles of good governance identified by CIPFA and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) in 2016. In addition, comments on the Council's arrangements against the CIPFA financial management code had been provided, particularly standard C. It was noted that this AGS was being brought forward prior to the end of the financial year, it was not expected that the commentary would change, however should there be any change these would be reported to the Committee.

The first page of the appendix highlighted the achievements of the 2025 / 26 financial year in terms of governance arrangements. Overall, the statement demonstrated that the Council had appropriate governance arrangements in place. It was noted that the appendix identified some actions for the coming year in line with best practice. The AGS also reflected on achievements in the 2025 / 26 financial year.

The Chairperson proposed that the recommendations set out in the report be agreed and this proposal was duly seconded.

At this point, the Chairperson referred to the changes and improvement made to the reporting processes and procedures, commenting that the Committee did scrutinise things well. She extended her thanks to Members and Officers, including those who had or would be leaving the Council.

The Chairperson then moved the recommendations which were duly agreed.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Annual Governance Statement (attached at Appendix A to the report) be approved and appended to the Statement of Accounts.
- (ii) That the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee monitors the progress of the action plan identified in the Annual Governance Statement through a quarterly report.

15. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Legal and Governance seeking Members' consideration of the outcome of the Community Governance review of electoral arrangements for Little Totham and Norh Fambridge Parish Councils and revisions of parish boundaries for Heybridge Parish and Maldon Town Council.

The Chairperson deferred to the Lead Elections and Democratic Services Manager to present the details. Building on work on a District-wide electoral review, all Parish and Town Councils had been contacted to establish whether there were any particular issues required to be dealt with through the mechanism of a Community Governance Review. Members were advised that four requests had been received and these were set out in the report.

The report set out the requirements of Community Governance Reviews and reported that the Council was satisfied that the requests were sound in the context of the law and associated Guidance as set out in paragraph 3.13 of the report. The proposed boundary changes and the impact of these were set out in Appendix A to the report. In addition, Appendix B provided details of the Community Governance Review documents published for consultation. The Committee was therefore requested to consider making the necessary Re-Organisation Orders, effective from May 2027:

- **Heybridge Parish Council** Revision of the boundary with Great Totham to include the North Heybridge Garden Suburb wholly within the Parish of Heybridge.
- **Little Braxted Parish Council** Increase in its membership from five to six.
- **Maldon Town Council** Revision of the boundary to account for the impact of new development at Maldon West in terms of parish boundary with Woodham Mortimer / Hazeleigh.
- **North Fambridge Parish Council** Increase in its membership from five to seven.

The Chairperson put the recommendations set out in the report and these were duly seconded.

In response to a comment raised, the Lead Elections and Democratic Services Manager explained that although this work had started with the Boundary Commission in February 2025 they gave the Council notice of implications of the English Devolution white paper and because of this and the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process it was felt the review should be paused for the foreseeable future. In light of LGR all Parish and Town Councils had been contacted to see if any wanted a Community Governance review and this report set out the four received and being worked on at this present time.

The Chairperson moved the recommendations, thanked Officers for their hard work and wished all Councils good luck going forward. The recommendations were duly agreed.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the consultation responses for the Community Governance reviews be considered;
- (ii) That the Council is satisfied that the requests meet the law and associated Guidance with respect to the object of achieving effective and convenient community governance, and authorises the making of a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to:
 - A) change the parish boundary between Heybridge and Great Totham to include the North Heybridge Garden Suburb wholly within the Parish of Heybridge to be effective from the next ordinary elections in May 2027.

- B) increase the membership of Little Braxted Parish Council from five to six Councillors, to be effective from the next ordinary elections in May 2027.
- C) change the parish boundary between Maldon West and Woodham Mortimer & Hazleigh to include the Crest Nicholson development wholly within the Parish of Maldon West to be effective from the next ordinary elections in May 2027.
- D) increase the membership of North Fambridge Parish Council from five to seven Councillors, to be effective from the next ordinary elections in May 2027.

16. UK SHARED AND RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUNDS

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive updating Members on the progress of the UK Shared and Rural England Prosperity Funds (UKSPF) for the allocation period 2025 / 26.

Members were reminded that the Chancellor had confirmed the continuation of UKSPF for a further year, allowing local authorities to invest in local growth, in advance of wider funding reforms. The Council on 3 April 2025 had approved the proposed projects to be delivered and granted delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Chairperson of the Strategy and Resources Committee and Ward Members to identify projects for delivery.

The Council had submitted its forecast spend, outputs and outcomes for 2025 / 26 to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) who had confirmed acceptance of the submission. It was noted that of the £738,369 funding £613,836.15 actual spend had been incurred and Appendix 1 to the report provided a progress update on the individual projects.

Members were advised that Officers would continue to deliver the projects over the funding period, submitting the required MHCLG returns, as required. Further progress updates would be reported to the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee throughout the municipal year.

The Chairperson put the recommendation set out in the report. This was duly seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED that the Committee acknowledged the update provided on Maldon District's UK Shared and Rural England Prosperity fund allocations for 25 / 26 and continues to monitor the delivery.

17. LEISURE CONTRACT UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Communities providing an update on the performance and delivery of the Leisure Management Contract, which commenced in March 2025.

Councillor N D Spenceley declared an interest in this item of business as a user of Blackwater Leisure Centre.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the Commercial Manager was unable to attend and deferred to the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Communities to present the report.

The report provided background information regarding the Leisure Contract, including the refurbishment works planned and key milestones achieved to date. The Council held weekly operation meetings with the contractor alongside monthly project meetings with the wider design team. Performance and financial information was cascaded to the Senior Leadership Team on a monthly basis along with the Leisure Contract Partnership Board (consisting of Officers, Members and Places Leisure management team) which met quarterly. Members were advised that these arrangements ensured early identification of any emerging issues and reinforced the shared commitment across all parties to deliver high-quality leisure services for residents of the district. The finance model for the contract was set out in Appendix 1.

In response to a request from the Chairperson, the Director of Finance then provided Members with further detail regarding the figures detailed in Appendix 1, the impact of Local Government Reorganisation and the risk to the Council. In response to a question regarding further breakdown of the figures Members were advised that this information was received by the Leisure Contract Partnership Board and it was agreed that this information would be circulated to Members of the Committee.,

During the debate that followed and in response to questions raised the following information was provided by Officers:

- In respect of Appendix 1, black figures represented expenditure and red figures income.
- It was confirmed that there were a number of concessions for different types of disability benefits and as a result of some gaps being identified Places Leisure were reviewing these, the results of which would be reported back to the Leisure Contract Partnership Board.
- The Chairperson asked that Officers look at whether there was a mechanism where information regarding the Leisure Contract could be reported back to this Committee.
- The Director of Finance advised that if the Council was making a return in respect of this contract this would be accommodated by the Council's budget planning and would go back into wider investment into the local area. Officers were looking at how this could be specifically targeted around the leisure centre.

The Chairperson agreed with the discussion, highlighting the current cost of living crisis and the need to be fair and balanced, giving back to the local community where there was opportunity to do so. She then moved the recommendations set out in the report which were duly seconded and agreed.

The Chairperson requested that Officers report back to the Committee regarding governance and whether it could make a recommendation in respect of the Leisure Management Contract.

RESOLVED

- (i) That Members note the progress of the Leisure Management Contract, including the on schedule- refurbishment programme, stable membership performance, and the positive development of the social outreach programme;
- (ii) That Members note that financial performance is being delivered as set out in the contract. This includes the fixed management fee which is monitored quarterly via the Leisure Contract Partnership Board.

18. ANNUAL REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance presenting the revised Financial Regulations (attached as Appendix 1 to the report) for review and recommendation to the Council for approval.

The Director of Finance presented the report and it was noted that the Financial Regulations provided a framework to ensure sound financial management and control within a local authority, aligned with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Financial Management Codes, and complied with relevant legislation and best practices in public financial management. It was noted that the Regulations were reviewed annually in accordance with the Council's Constitution to ensure they remained current and effective. A list of proposed changes was attached at Appendix 1 to the report and although a number of the changes were minor Members' attention was drawn to Items 8, 12 and 16 where more significant changes were proposed (detailed in sections 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7 of the report).

The Director of Finance advised how the Financial Regulations would be kept under constant review and refined, where necessary to adapt to emerging financial management challenges and opportunities.

The Chairperson moved the recommendations set out in the report and this was duly seconded.

In response to a question regarding the proposed change to the maintenance of reserves, the Director of Finance explained that the change related to general reserves and having an upper limit. However, it did not supersede any of the delegations that the Council currently had in place.

The Chairperson then proposed that consideration of the recommended changes to the Financial Regulations be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee. She requested that when the report was brought back a document highlighting the proposed changes was also presented to Members. This was duly seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED that the recommended changes to the Financial Regulations be brought back to the next meeting of the Council along with a document highlighting the proposed changes.

19. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMITTEE DECIDES ARE URGENT

The Chairperson expressed sincere thanks to Miss Green, Director of Neighbourhood Services and Communities at her final PGA meeting, on behalf of the Committee, recognising her consistent attendance, dedicated support, and longstanding commitment to the Council and its Members. The appreciation was warmly received and applauded.

There being no other items of business the Chairperson closed the meeting at 9.11 pm.

W STAMP, CC
CHAIRPERSON