

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee held at County Hall,
Glenfield on Monday, 31 March 2025.

PRESENT

Mr. T. Barkley CC (in the Chair)

Mr. N. D. Bannister CC
Mr. D. C. Bill MBE CC
Mr. G. A. Boulter CC
Mr. J. G. Coxon CC

Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC
Grimes
Mr. T. J. Richardson CC

15. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2025 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

16. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 34.

17. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

18. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

19. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

20. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 35.

There were no petitions.

21. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance which set out the Authority's use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA) for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 January 2024. The report also asked the Committee to review the Covert Surveillance and the

Acquisition of Communications Data Policy Statement relating to RIPA and advised of an inspection undertaken by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 7' is filed with these minutes.

Members welcomed the report and the outcome of the inspection which had only identified minor recommendations to improve what were already good standards adopted by the Service.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA) for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2024 be noted;
- (b) That the Council's Covert Surveillance and the Acquisition of Communications Data Policy Statement (which had not changed since approval by the Cabinet in March 2021) be confirmed as remaining fit for purpose;
- (c) That the Committee continue to receive an annual report on the use of RIPA and IPA powers.

22. External Audit Plan 2024/25.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources, the purpose of which was to present the 2024/25 External Audit Plan for the County Council. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Timothy Lance, the Assistant Audit Manager from Grant Thornton LLP, the Council's external auditors, to the meeting.

Members noted that the Plan included the proposal to audit the Council's Oracle Fusion IT application and that this had been specifically selected because this system was used to create the accounts. Whilst the Council operated other IT systems which had not been included in the list of planned external audits, Members were reassured that these would still be subject to ad hoc testing by the Council's Internal Audit Service.

In response to questions raised Members were advised that IT audits were carried out by Grant Thornton's own IT audit team which had the technical expertise needed to carry out this work. Members noted that the audit would be similar to those carried out for other councils that also used this system.

RESOLVED:

That the External Audit Plan for 2024/25 be noted.

23. Resilience and Business Continuity Annual Update.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to provide an update on the Council's Resilience and Business Continuity activities, work undertaken with other Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) local authorities, and wider multi-agency resilience activities during the period April 2024 to the end of March 2025. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- (i) Members welcomed the work of the resilience team and how well this worked in partnership across LLR. A Member raised concerns, however, regarding the potential level of fatigue and wellbeing amongst resilience officers given the number of incidents it had dealt with during the last year. Members were reassured that steps were being taken to identify if there were any issues around capacity and capability that needed to be addressed.
- (ii) It was noted that one role of resilience officers was to act as an adviser to managers on call during an incident. To potentially reduce burden of the level of support needed by some, a rolling programme of training had been launched for managers on grades 11 – 16. This would upskill over 1350 managers regarding procedures for dealing with incidents. In the longer term, training would also commence to upskill specific high level managers deemed to be practitioners in an incident.
- (iii) A Member queried whether the Council should reconsider its membership of the Local Governance Association (LGA) as a means of raising local concerns at a national level, for example, regarding funding for flooding impacts. It was noted that recent flooding in the area had resulted in joint correspondence being sent to the Government from all partners of the Local Resilience Forum with further support from local MPs. It was not thought that membership of the LGA would have added to this process. However, it was acknowledged that this would be a matter for the new Council to consider.
- (iv) A Member questioned, in the light of the recent power outage at Heathrow Airport, what arrangements were in place to ensure this did not happen at East Midland's Airport or at County Hall. It was noted that resilience exercises were undertaken to prepare for such events by the Council. Members were also reassured that County Hall had a back-up generator, and that information regarding vulnerable persons in the County were uploaded twice a day to a national system that would remain accessible during such an event which would enable officers to continue to support them. The Chief Executive advised that EMA Business Continuity Plans were not known to the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the annual report regarding the Council's Resilience and Business Continuity activities, work undertaken with other Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland local authorities, and wider multi-agency resilience activities during the period April 2024 to the end of March 2025 be noted.

24. Internal Audit Service - Progress Against 2024/25 Audit Plan for Leicestershire County Council and East Midlands Shared Services.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided, for the County Council, a summary of internal audit work undertaken during the period 1 November 2024 and 28 February 2025, an update on progress with implementing high importance recommendations as at 28 February 2025 and progress against the 2024-25 Internal Audit Plan. The report also advised of progress against East Midlands Shared Services 2024-25 Internal Audit Plan and plans for the delivery of

internal audit for 2025-26 and beyond. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- (i) It was noted that some audits had been delayed due to staffing issues within Departments. The Head of Internal Audit Service confirmed that these would now take place in 2025-26. In response to questions from Members the HoIAS undertook to confirm this with departments and to update the Committee if further delays were expected.
- (ii) The HoIAS confirmed that, as had happened some years ago, if the audits continued to be delayed by departments, the relevant Directors could be asked to attend a future Committee meeting to explain the reasoning for this.
- (iii) The Audit of CCTV within Care Homes would now be undertaken as part of a wider audit of CCTV generally. This work was on track, noting that for vulnerable adults in care homes, security was key.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the updates on progress of work undertaken and the implementation of high importance recommendations (both as at 28 February 2025) be noted;
- (b) That progress against the 2025-25 Internal Audit Plan as at 28 February 2025 be noted;
- (c) That the Head of Internal Audit Service be requested to confirm with departments that 2024-25 audits which had been delayed would commence during 2025-26 and that they would have sufficient resources to support these.
- (d) That the update on the Audit Plan for East Midlands Shared Services 2024-25 and options for future years be noted.

25. Internal Audit Service - Annual Plan 2025/26.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources, the purpose of which was to present the Internal Audit Plan for 2025-26 for approval. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

It was requested and the Head of Internal Audit Service undertook to provide in future reports, greater clarity regarding the planned audits listed in the Appendix to the report, noting that audits titled 'Operation Whitehall' or 'Operation Imogen' did not provide adequation information for the Committee about what these audits related to.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Internal Audit Annual Plan 2025-26 be approved;
- (b) That the Internal Audit Annual Plan include more information in future to provide greater clarity regarding what the planned audits related to.

26. Implementation of the Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources, the purpose of which was to provide an update on plans to implement the new Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 12', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the work undertaken to respond to consultations on changes to internal audit standards be noted;
- (b) That the Director of Corporate Resources, following consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, be authorised to approve the arrangements for the implementation of the Global Internal Audit Standards, noting that the approved documents will be reported to the Committee at its meeting scheduled for 23 June 2025.

27. Risk Management Update.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources, the purpose of which was to present update on risks included in the Corporate Risk Register, advise of the emerging risk relating to Local Government Reorganisation and to provide an update on counter fraud initiatives. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 13' is filed with these minutes.

A Member questioned if risks arising from the new waste collection and disposal arrangement coming into force from April 2026 had been captured. It was noted that this had likely been captured on the departmental risk register, however the Head of Internal Audit Service undertook to confirm this.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the status of the corporate and strategic risks facing the County Council be approved;
- (b) That the Head of Internal Audit be requested to check if the risks arising from the new waste collection and disposal arrangement coming into force from April 2026 had been properly captured by the Environment and Transport Department;
- (c) That the Director be requested to provide a presentation at its next meeting regarding business continuity arrangements involving a cyber attack;
- (d) That the emerging risk regarding Local Government Reorganisation be noted;
- (e) That the update on counter fraud initiatives be noted.

28. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting of the Committee be held on Monday, 23 June 2025 at 10.00am.

29. Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman confirmed that neither he nor the Vice Chairman, Mr Richardson CC would be standing in the next County Council elections and so this would be their last meeting. The Chairman thanked Mr Richardson and all Members of the Committee and officers for all their support over the last few years.

The Members of the Committee thanked Mr Barkley for his outstanding chairmanship of the Committee, commenting that his experience, intelligence and tact and been a model of an excellent chairman.

10.00am – 11.08am
31 March 2025

CHAIRMAN