



Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 24 November 2025.

PRESENT

Mr. J. Miah CC (in the Chair)

Mr. J. Boam CC

Mr. M. Bools CC

Mrs. N. Bottomley CC

Mr. S. Bradshaw CC

Mr. G. Cooke CC

Mrs. L. Danks CC

Mr. G. Grimes

Mrs. K. Knight CC

Mr. D. Page CC

Mr. J. Pilgrim

Mr. B. Piper CC

33. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2025 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

34. Question Time.

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

35. 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).

36. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

37. 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.

Mr. Gordon Grimes declared an other registrable interest in Agenda Item 11 as an Independent Member.

38. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 35.

There were no petitions.

39. External Auditor's Annual Report and External Audit of the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and Pension Fund Accounts.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which presented the Auditor's Annual Report (Value for Money review) for 2024/25 and the

2024/25 financial statements and letters of representation, provided information on the main areas of the financial statements and reported the key findings from the external audit of the accounts. Copies of the report and supplementary report, marked 'Agenda Item 7', are filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Ms Mary Wren, Ms Helen Lillington and Mr Grant Patterson from Grant Thornton LLP, the Council's external auditors, to the meeting to present the report.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) An unmodified opinion was anticipated, with delegated authority being given to the Chairman of the Committee to sign off any areas that still required completion. Work had largely been completed around the audit of the financial statements and it was expected that these would be signed off before the end of the year.
- ii) It was noted that a key recommendation in the Value for Money review related to the High Needs Block/Dedicated Schools Grant. Although this had been highlighted as a significant weakness, 29 other local authorities were in a similar position.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and delegated authority to the Director of Corporate Resources and Chairman of the Committee to approve and sign the financial statements and letters of representation for 2024/25, once the final outstanding items have been resolved, be approved.

40. Quarterly Treasury Management Report.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided an update on the actions taken in respect of treasury management for the quarter ending 30 September 2025. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

41. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Performance Annual Report 2024/25.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources which provided an overview of the County Council's performance in relation to the findings by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

The Annual Report presented comparative data to contextualise the Council's performance within the broader sector.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

42. Policy for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks for Elected Members.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance which presented a policy for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks for elected members. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

The policy applied to all elected members, who would be invited to make an appointment with the Head of Members Services to complete the DBS application form. The slight revision to the existing policy had been supported by all Group Leaders.

RESOLVED:

That the policy for DBS Checks for elected members be approved.

43. Annual Report on the Operation of the Members Code of Conduct 2024/25.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance which presented the annual report on the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

During the period 1 October 2024 – 1 October 2025, the Monitoring Officer had received 34 complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct. The focus of the complaints had been around engagement with member of the public and social media comments. All complaints had been referred to one of the panels of six Independent Persons appointed by the County Council, under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, for the purposes of giving a view on complaints submitted.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were made:

- i) In response to a query around whether further training should take place with new members, the Director of Law and Governance stated that social media training was part of the induction process. However, consideration would be given to undertaking this on an annual basis.
- ii) A member questioned whether the increase in complaints was as a result of individual political views, which did not align with those of the new administration. The Director of Law and Governance stated that complainants were not asked what their political background was and the complaints received had been from members of the public who were genuinely upset and had taken offence at comments that had been made. Assurance was given that there was no way of knowing the background of those submitting complaints.
- iii) In relation to recognising complaints, the outcome was fed back to the complainant, who was advised that this was confidential. Complainants were kept updated throughout the investigation, but there was no formal feedback around whether the outcome was satisfactory.
- iv) It was acknowledged that there would be some complainants who would not be satisfied with the outcome. It was felt that elected members needed to be

aware of how to respond to constituents and to remind themselves with the Code of Conduct where necessary.

- v) The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government had undertaken a consultation on strengthening standards. It had been announced that the reforms would be introduced following the consultation but as yet, it was unclear when this would take place. Further updates would be presented to the Committee as the Government progressed with the reforms.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and the Independent Persons be formally thanked for their ongoing commitment and assistance in upholding standards of conduct.

44. Risk Management Update.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources the purpose of which was to present the Corporate Risk Register for approval along with an update on Artificial Intelligence and Local Government Reorganisation as emerging risks and counter fraud updates. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12' is filed with these minutes.

As part of this item, the Committee also received a presentation from the Assistant Director of Environment and Transport on the strategic approach to managing the impact of growth in Leicestershire in the context of the corporate risk register. A copy of the presentation is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were made:

Presentation

- i) Concern was raised that risks around speculative developments had not been identified when considering local plans. As a statutory consultee on developments, it was felt that there should be a more robust statement from County Council departments, such as Highways, when asked to comment on applications. In response, the Director of Environment and Transport commented that the County Council had taken a firm stance in its responses to local plans and had raised concerns where appropriate. This was the clear approach that the Council wanted to build on, offering more clarity around the options in those situations. Assurance was given that site visits were undertaken and the Council proactively identified growth coming forward and sought to address its cumulative impact. However, the main risk to the Council was the potential financial burden.
- ii) A query was raised around the transition to a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), as it was felt that the move away from S106 funding fundamentally changed the ability of local communities to identify projects that they wanted to invest in. A member commented that CILs removed the local connection to where investment went and there was concern that smaller communities would not receive any benefit from developments. In response to a query on how this would be mitigated, the Director gave assurance that in mitigating risk, it was the intention to balance the Council's responsibility to make place. As an example, it was noted that in Charnwood, the CIL would only focus on

highways and transport because the impacts of that were so far spread, but it would be possible to use S106 funding for other services and in areas where there were Neighbourhood Plans, a percentage would be used for community projects. With the CIL, there would be a greater focus on large, strategic issues. The Director stated that there was a duty on local authorities to ensure that local communities received what they needed to function and that this was represented in local plan policies.

- iii) A member questioned whether there was any way to manage the risk of funding requirements being removed. It was noted that the Planning Authority could ultimately make that decision. If it was felt that an erroneous decision had been made, there was the possibility of legal challenge, but consideration would need to be given to the cost and benefit of doing that. The preferred option was to work with other partners to reach a compromise.
- iv) Concern was raised that there was no mention of flood risk. However, the Director stated that this tended to be dealt with by way of condition. It was a case of developers mitigating flood risk themselves, so the cost of development included greater flood risk mitigation which would affect the viability. The County Council would not want to collect S106 contributions for a flood risk scheme that should be delivered within the development site.
- v) In response to a comment around having better relationships with other agencies to manage risks, it was noted that there was now a greater awareness of the challenges and compromises that needed to be made and there was more of an appetite to work together. It was also the intention to find better ways of working with the development industry.
- vi) Recognition was given to the concerns raised by local communities about large scale developments. Some of these would be dealt with through a national policy position but in terms of the County Council's position, it was necessary to be clear on the impacts of the developments. Traditionally, weight had been given to the views of the County Council as a statutory consultee and it was felt important to comment where this could influence a decision.
- vii) In response to a member comment on the cumulative impact of developments, the Director stated that this was generally considered at local plan stage, but this was more difficult on speculative developments as a planning application would only need to deal with its own impact and without locally adopted policy there was nothing in the National Planning Policy that would enable the Council to judge a development in the wider context.

Main Report

- viii) It was suggested that it was necessary to stipulate that when using AI, checking the accuracy of the work would need to be demonstrated and assurance given that an AI model being used was not hallucinating (generating false, inaccurate, or misleading information presented as factual). It was also suggested that consideration should be given to a training plan for the use of AI and concern was raised around the use of personal data within AI and the risks associated with this. This would be a future presentation topic.

- ix) Reference had been made by the Council's external auditors to SEND, with a focus on the turnaround time for producing EHCPs. There was an acknowledgement of the capacity of staff and the potential workarounds, but it was queried whether this was causing difficulties. A written response would be provided.
- x) A member commented on the uncertainty around target risk scores and what the risk was if an issue was mitigated. The Director of Corporate Resources stated that further consideration would be given to what information was presented to the Committee as there had been a greater focus on issues rather than risk. It was noted that target risks were largely determined by departments, but there were occasions where the risk was removed from the Corporate Risk Register and managed within the relevant department. Assurance was given that further thought would be given to how risks were reported, but in some instances, the issues were outside the Council's control and there would always be a high level of risk around these despite some mitigation. A request was made that where this was the case, these issues should be identified separately.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the status of the corporate and strategic risks facing the County Council be approved;
- b) That recommendations be made on any areas which might benefit from further examination;
- c) That the emerging risks on Artificial Intelligence and Local Government Reorganisation (update) be noted;
- d) That the counter fraud updates be noted.

45. Internal Audit Service - Progress Against 2025-26 Internal Audit Plan and High Importance Recommendations.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided a summary of the work undertaken by the Council's Internal Audit Service during the period 1 April – 30 September 2025, an update on progress with implementing the High Importance recommendations at 31 October 2025, and progress against the 2025-26 Internal Audit plan. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 13' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the updates on progress on work undertaken (at 30 September 2025) and the implementation of high importance recommendations (at 31 October 2025) be noted;
- b) That the progress against plan position at 30 September 2025 be noted.

46. Draft Internal Audit Charter.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance which presented a revised Draft Internal Audit Charter. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 14' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the revised draft Internal Audit Charter be noted and that a delegation to the Director of Corporate Resources to make any necessary changes be agreed.

47. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting of the Committee be held on Friday 23 January 2026 at 10.00am.

10.00 - 11.51 am
24 November 2025

CHAIRMAN

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