

Cheltenham Borough Council Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee Minutes

Meeting date: 28 January 2026

Meeting time: 6.00 pm - 7.35 pm

In attendance:

Councillors:

Adrian Bamford (Chair), Ashleigh Davies, Chris Day, Ben Orme (Vice-Chair), Julian Tooke and Dr David Willingham

Also in attendance:

Lucy Cater, Claire Hughes (Director of Governance, Housing and Communities) and Matt Ward (Head of Housing Services)

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Duncan Chittenden.

2 Declarations of interest

There were none.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 October were approved, with two typographical corrections.

4 Internal Audit Update Report

The Assistant Director SWAP introduced her report as set out and was happy to take Members' questions. She also invited Members to contact her with any suggestions of areas to include in next year's audit.

In response to a Member's question as to why open agreed actions ID6814 Recharges Monitoring and ID6823 Recharges Reconciliation were categorised as Priority 2 rather than Priority 1 when operating effectively gives assurance over the process as a whole, the Assistant Director SWAP said she would provide a written response to Members after checking the reason. She hoped all the recharge agreed actions would be complete by 31 March, ahead of the next meeting on 22 April.

The Director of Governance, Housing and Communities added that this is quite a challenge for officers, as the recharging mechanism did not exist prior to this audit. She said all the systems are now in the final stages of testing and she was confident that they would go live by the end of February.

In response to a Member's enquiry regarding the non-compliance with the Section 20 notice process, the Head of Housing Services said the scope of work involved is complex and Section 20 notices must be served within the legal framework and provide assurance that the findings related to one occasion. He confirmed that the process involves a number of teams working together, and all notices now go through the operations manager, who oversees large contracts and signs off every stage of works to ensure there are no reoccurrences.

Members noted the contents of the Internal Audit Update Report – no vote was required.

5 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan Progress Update

The Director of Governance, Housing and Communities introduced her report, which provided an update on the actions identified in the last Annual Governance Statement.

A Member commented that, while happy with progress, they felt more could be done around safeguarding, including the licensing of late-night fast food outlets. They said that safeguarding training for taxi drivers has been shown to protect children and young people, and suggested including similar training for fast food outlet staff at the consultation stage of the next policy review. They appreciated that this is challenging and not an issue for Audit, Compliance and Governance Committee, but felt that it needs to be captured. The Director of Governance, Housing and Communities confirmed that a few sentences around the issue and its context can be included in this year's Annual Governance Statement. ACTION

Another Member thanked the Director of Governance, Housing and Communities for the all the progress made on housing compliance over the last year.

Members noted the contents of the report, as recommended.

6 Briefing Note: Review of Risk Register

The Director of Governance, Housing and Communities introduced the item, highlighting new and closed risks, and changes to risk scores as set out in the report.

She gave the following responses to Members' questions:

- the different scores for Risks 142 (Leisure and Culture Venues) and 152 (Cheltenham Trust) arise from 142 relating to the venues, including structure, repairs and maintenance, and 152 relating to the delivery of services by the Cheltenham Trust. The arrangement with the Trust is coming to an end and, with Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon, the organisation needs to consider what the model will look like going forward, including decisions around procurement. There is a risk to CBC as an entity and to service delivery, and a question around whether this will be a priority for the new council; work needs to start now to reduce the risk of it falling through the net;
- regarding the scoring for Risk 158 (Local Government Reorganisation) a Member felt that this should be higher to reflect the complexities. The Director advised that LGR has its own risk register across Gloucestershire but that she would take the challenge away and discuss with the risk owner;
- regarding Junction 10, and in view of the fact that funding is now in place and the risk around S106 contributions should be broader and framed differently, she said the report was run before changes to J10 were announced – she will ask the Director of Planning and Building Control to look at these issues.

No vote was required.

7 Work Programme

A Member asked whether the external audit is on track and if the accounts are likely to be approved at the meeting on 23 February. The Director of Governance, Housing and Communities said this is unlikely – Members will be looking at the value for money review part of the work and progress so far, in advance of the backstop date.

8 Any other item the chairman determines to be urgent and requires a decision

There were none.

9 Date of next meeting

The next two meetings are scheduled for Monday 23 February and Wednesday 22 April.

10 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED THAT:

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining agenda items as it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, if members of the public are present there will be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 7 Part (1) Schedule (12A) Local Government Act 1972, namely:

Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Paragraph 7: Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

11 Exempt Minutes of the last meeting

The exempt minutes were considered and approved by a show of hands.

12 ICT Security Update

The Chief Technology Officer presented his update and answered Members' questions. The report was noted.

13 Review of Confidential Risks

The confidential risks were considered and noted.