

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Governance and Audit Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Thursday, 27th November, 2025 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: Andrew Blackmore, (Chairman)
County Tony Easson, Councillor (Vice Chairman)

Lay Members: S. Davies, C. Prosser, R. Guest,

County Councillor: A. Blackmore, S. Davies, C. Prosser,
R. Guest, Sara Burch, John Crook, Tony Easson, Phil Murphy,
Peter Strong and Ann Webb

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Annette Evans	Customer Relations Manager
Peter Davies	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Resources
Jan Furtek	Chief Internal Auditor
Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer
Richard Jones	Performance and Data Insight Manager
Jonathan Davies	Head of Finance/Section 151
Steve Wyndham	Audit Wales Officer
Hannah Carter	Performance Analyst
Tim Buckle	
Catrin McCarthy	
Cath Fallon	Head of Economy and Enterprise

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors David Jones

1. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

2. Public Open Forum

No members of the public were present.

3. To note the Action List from the previous meeting.

The action list from the previous meeting was noted.

1. Global Internal Audit Standards: The Chief Internal Auditor confirmed that there is sufficient budget available to ensure that all internal audit staff achieve a sufficient level of professional competence. [CLOSED]

<https://www.youtube.com/live/uxPDKdwoS4I?si=PTQWfroKd21QaRV7&t=52>

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4. Audit Wales report - Arrangements for commissioning services and council management response'

Audit Wales Officers presented a report on arrangements for commissioning services. The Performance and Data Insight Manager presented the management response. Following presentation of the report and the management response, Members were invited to ask questions:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/uxPDKdwoS4I?si=hStCm5NQsGAVbJDT&t=97>

The Audit Wales Report and the Council's management response were noted.

[ACTION] The Performance and Data Insight Manager was tasked with ensuring that the commissioning framework that is in development is brought to Governance and Audit Committee when it has reached a suitable stage for scrutiny.

5. Annual Audit Plan 24-25 Welsh Church Funds

The Audit Wales Officer presented the Annual Audit Plan 2024-25 Welsh Church Funds. Following presentation of the report, questions from Committee Members were invited:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/uxPDKdwoS4I?si=qrVlii5yN1c4k86F&t=1043>

It was resolved to note the Annual Audit Plan.

6. 25/26 Q2 Treasury report

The Head of Finance and Finance Business Partner Corporate presented the 2025/26 Q2 Treasury Report. Following presentation of the report, Members were invited to ask questions:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/uxPDKdwoS4I?si=pbayolduZu5v7bCo&t=1325>

In line with the report recommendations, the Governance & Audit Committee reviewed the results of treasury management activities and the performance achieved in quarter 2 as part of their delegated responsibility to provide scrutiny of treasury policy, strategy and activity on behalf of Council.

In doing so, the Committee noted concerns regarding Castlegate Business Park, which is currently reported as showing a 7.5% loss, largely due to markdowns. Occupancy is high (90–97%), but a small portion remains unfilled.

[ACTION]: In respect of Castlegate Business Park, it was agreed that an updated valuation and return on investment report is included in the Scrutiny Committee report scheduled for the new calendar year.

7. Whole Authority Annual Complaints Report

The Customer Relations Manager presented the annual Whole Authority Complaints Report. Following presentation of the report, committee Members were invited to ask questions:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/uxPDKdwoS4I?si=RTPrwEUcNNIOrV-9&t=1917>

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In line with the report recommendations, the Committee used the report, which covers the 12 month period up to 31 March 2025, to seek assurance about the effectiveness of the authority's processes for dealing with complaints and compliments and had the opportunity to make recommendations where any shortcomings were identified.

8. The Ombudsman's Annual Letter

The Customer Relations Manager presented the Ombudsman's Annual Letter. Following presentation of the Annual Letter, Members were invited to ask questions.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/uxPDKdwoS4I?si=umZUGUUGmhR7QDbs&t=2722>

As per the report recommendations:

1. The Committee agreed to note the content of the Public Sector Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) annual letter (Appendix 1) and inform the PSOW of their considerations and any proposed actions. The PSOW is aware that due to the scheduling of meetings there would be a delay in responding to them.
2. The Committee noted that the authority continues to engage with the PSOW complaints standards work, accesses training for staff and provides the PSOW with complaints data. We have also fully implemented the PSOW's model complaints policy.

[ACTION] In receiving the Ombudsman's Annual Letter, the Committee asked the Monitoring Officer to provide a written update to the Committee on his role in complaints in relation to Town and Community Councils.

9. Panel Performance Assessment: Purpose to provide the committee with an early overview of the arrangements being put in place as part of the council's Panel Performance Assessment

The Chief Officer for People, Performance and Partnerships presented an update on Panel Performance Assessment to provide the Committee with an early overview of the arrangements being put in place as part of the Council's Panel Performance Assessment. Following the update, Committee Members were invited to ask questions:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/uxPDKdwoS4I?si=pEoFF5xK77Z8Uq5j&t=3189>

As per the report recommendations the Committee sought assurance that the arrangements being put in place are appropriate to meet the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

10. Effectiveness of Strategic Risk Management Framework and summary of wider arrangements

The Performance and Data Insight Manager and Performance Analyst presented a report on the Effectiveness of Strategic Risk Management Framework and summary of wider arrangements. Following presentation of the report, Members asked questions:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/uxPDKdwoS4I?si=kOBXQHEsO-vHVPT6&t=4391>

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As contained in the report recommendations, Members used the assessment to seek assurance about the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements.

11. Governance and Audit Committee Forward Work Plan

The Forward Work Plan was noted.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/uxPDKdwoS4I?si=tMkJthfBtz7uQ7La&t=5621>

12. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/uxPDKdwoS4I?si=YlbCF-uQf7mNExfP&t=5629>

13. Date of Next Meeting: 15th January 2026

Meeting ended at 3.34 pm