

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Governance and Audit Committee held at The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 10th September, 2026 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor Tony Easson Tony Easson(Vice Chair)

County Councillor: Sara Burch, David Jones, Phil Murphy,
Peter Strong, Ann Webb and Rachel Garrick

Lay member: Rhodri Guest, Colin Prosser, Michael Thomas

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Adam Fall	Democratic Services Officer
Peter Davies	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Resources
Jan Furtek	Chief Internal Auditor
Richard Jones	Performance and Data Insight Manager
Hannah Carter	Performance Analyst
Colin Davies	Performance Audit Manager for Monmouthshire
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Jonathan Davies	Head of Finance/Section 151
Steve Wyndham	Audit Wales Officer
Ian Bakewell	Housing & Communities Manager
Bethan Hopkins	Audit Wales Officer
Martin Gibson	
Philippa Green	Head of HR

APOLOGIES:

A. Blackmore

1. Declarations of Interest

Declarations of Interest were received from:

- **Cllr Ann Webb** in relation to Item 8, Draft Statement of Accounts of the Charitable Trust Funds, in her capacity as Chair of the Welsh Church Fund Committee. This declaration was submitted prior to the meeting due to technical difficulties preventing it from being made during the webcast.
- **Cllr Peter Strong** in relation to Item 8, Draft Statement of Accounts of the Charitable Trust Funds, due to a close family connection with a member of a committee involved in the allocation of grants.
- **Cllr Sarah Burch** in relation to the Housing Adaptations Review, as the matter falls within her Cabinet responsibilities and she had participated in the audit process.

The Committee welcomed newly appointed Lay Member, **Mike Thomas**, who introduced himself and outlined his professional background in governance, assurance and the legal profession.

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2. Public Open Forum

No submissions were received.

3. To note the Action List.

Recording: [View Item 4 \(09:25\)](#)

The Committee reviewed the Action List and noted that the remaining outstanding action had been deferred to a future meeting.

Resolved: To note the Action List.

4. Internal Audit quarterly progress report (Q2)

Recording: [View Item 5 \(09:54\)](#)

The Committee received the Quarter 1 Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Update Report for 2026/27. Members considered the audit opinions issued during the quarter, including limited assurance opinions relating to Safeguarding of Children's Monies and Social Value Procurement. Discussion focussed on audit planning, strategic risks, recurring audit themes, reporting timescales and arrangements for officer call-ins.

Actions:

- Invite the Strategic Director for Social Care and Safeguarding to attend a future meeting to discuss the findings of the Safeguarding of Children's Monies audit.
- Request that the Corporate Parenting Group considers the wider issues arising from the audit findings relating to Children's Monies.

Resolved:

- To note the audit conclusions issued during Quarter 1.
- To note progress against the 2026/27 Internal Audit Strategy and Rolling Plan.
- To approve the Quarter 3 Internal Audit Rolling Plan.

5. Whistleblowing Policy and Guidance

Recording: [View Item 6 \(28:25\)](#)

The Committee received a report outlining revisions to the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and Guidance following consultation with officers and Trade Union representatives. Members considered the distinction between whistleblowing and employment grievances, arrangements to protect whistleblowers and the consultation process undertaken.

Action:

- Consider including further clarification within future guidance and communications regarding the distinction between whistleblowing and grievance procedures.

Resolved:

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- To support the revised Whistleblowing Policy and Guidance, enabling the documents to be approved and communicated to employees.

6. 2026/27 Q1 - Treasury report

Recording: [View Item 7 \(34:32\)](#)

The Committee received the Treasury Management Quarter 1 Report for 2026/27. Members considered borrowing levels, investment performance, market conditions and compliance with Treasury Management limits and Prudential Indicators.

Resolved:

To note the Treasury Management Quarter 1 position and compliance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy.

7. DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2025/26 - CHARITABLE TRUST FUNDS

Recording: [View Item 8 \(40:45\)](#)

The Committee reviewed the draft 2025/26 Statement of Accounts for the Council's Charitable Trust Funds. Members considered governance arrangements, grant allocations and the future governance arrangements of Llanfoist Hill Social Welfare Centre Trust.

Action:

- Provide a future update regarding the governance arrangements and potential options relating to Llanfoist Hill Social Welfare Centre Trust.

Resolved:

- To review and note the draft Charitable Trust Fund Accounts prior to the external audit and examination process.

8. Audit Wales: Review of Housing Adaptations

Recording: [View Item 9 \(55:09\)](#)

The Committee received the Audit Wales Review of Housing Adaptations. Audit Wales concluded that the Council provides an effective preventative housing adaptations service with strong operational arrangements. Members considered adaptation timescales, workforce capacity, customer feedback, contractor performance and arrangements for future demand planning.

Resolved:

- To note the Audit Wales findings.
- To support the recommendation that corporate oversight of the Housing Adaptations Service be strengthened.
- To support the recommendation that a workforce plan be developed to address resilience risks and future demand.

9. Audit Wales: Recruitment and Retention Challenges

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Recording: [View Item 10 \(1:13:33\)](#)

The Committee received the Audit Wales Review of Recruitment and Retention. Members discussed hard-to-fill posts, workforce planning, benchmarking, the use of workforce data and value for money considerations. The Committee recognised recruitment and retention as a significant strategic issue and sought assurance regarding future monitoring arrangements.

Resolved:

- To note the Audit Wales findings.
- To support the recommendations relating to workforce intelligence and value for money assessment.
- To receive progress updates through the Audit Wales recommendations monitoring process.

10. MCC Grants Report 2023-24 and 2024-25

Recording: [View Item 11 \(1:29:54\)](#)

The Committee received the Audit Wales Certification of Grants and Returns Report covering the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years. Members considered matters relating to empty property relief inspections and Housing Benefit subsidy claims.

Audit Wales confirmed that no significant issues had been identified and that the work provided reasonable assurance regarding the Council's grant management arrangements.

Resolved:

- To note the report.

11. Draft Self-Assessment 2025/26

Recording: [View Item 12 \(1:41:08\)](#)

The Committee received a presentation on the Draft Self-Assessment Report 2025/26, including the assessment methodology, key findings and improvements made to the process. Members considered accessibility, presentation of performance information, benchmarking, resident engagement and the use of Artificial Intelligence to support analysis.

Actions:

Review colour schemes used within charts to improve accessibility.

Consider the consistent application of RAG ratings throughout the report.

Resolved:

To review the Draft Self-Assessment Report 2025/26.

To endorse the report for submission to Council.

12. Governance and Audit Committee Forward Work Plan

Recording: [View Item 13 \(2:07:20\)](#)

The Committee considered the Forward Work Programme.

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Resolved:

- To note the Forward Work Programme.

13. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting

Recording: [View Item 14 \(2:07:49\)](#)

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2026.

Resolved:

- To approve the minutes as an accurate record.

14. To consider whether to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, that it involves the information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Act (proper officers view attached)

Recording: [View Item 15 \(2:08:44\)](#)

The Committee considered the exclusion of the press and public for the remaining items of business.

Resolved:

- That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of exempt items.

15. Cyber Resilience

The committee noted the report.

16. Date of Next Meeting: 29th September 2026 at 2.00pm.

Meeting ended at 4.32 pm