



Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Held: MONDAY, 26 JANUARY 2026 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Kaur Saini (Chair)

Councillor Bajaj

Councillor Kitterick

Councillor Moore

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**1. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair attended an Audit and Scrutiny Chairs meeting at the end of 2025 which focussed on the expectations of the role, aims and objectives, the role of internal and external auditors and risk management within audit and scrutiny commissions. The Chair found the meeting useful in understanding the barriers officers and members face.

The Chair found the meeting useful in understanding how other councils operate, recognising that members of Leicester City Council's Governance and Audit Committee had a very good understanding of the purpose of committee and the role of key stakeholders.

The Chair was happy to provide further information to members on the meeting upon request.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Russell, Joel, Rae Bhatia and Singh Patel.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### **4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous of meeting held on 26 November 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

#### **5. MID-YEAR PROCUREMENT UPDATE**

The Head of Procurement, Izabela Skowronek presented the mid-year procurement report which includes information on waivers following concerns raised by the Committee at the September 2025 meeting.

The following points were highlighted:

- The Council has completed 63 procurements with a total estimated value of £202m within the period of April to September 2025-26.
- There have been 20 waivers for under £4m, table one and two within the report provides a breakdown by department.
- This represented a significant reduction compared to 122 waivers approved during the 2024-25 financial year.
- While noting that this was a mid-year position, officers stated that the reduction was encouraging and indicated that improved controls and compliance arrangements were beginning to have a positive impact.

In response, members raised the following points:

- A member asked for a clear definition of what constituted a procurement waiver. The Head of Procurement clarified that waivers in this case referred to when the Council was required to continue without full implementation of elements of the Contract Procedure Rules. Reasons could include a need for urgency, continuity of service, retrospective approval or limited market availability.
- It was emphasised that waivers were part of a controlled governance framework and did not exempt from the complying with the requirements of procurement law.
- A member commented that while some waivers such as emergency works were understandable, others appeared predictable and asked what action was being taken to reduce foreseeable waivers in future and queried examples including specialist services where alternative procurement options were limited.
- Officers acknowledged the concern and advised that several measures were in place to reduce future waivers including enhanced monitoring of spend and early identification of procurement risks, increased engagement with Directors and service areas, targeted training to reinforce procurement planning requirements, lead-in times and continued scrutiny of high-risk waivers.
- In relation to security services, officers explained that two waivers had exceeded legal procurement thresholds following an unsuccessful procurement exercise. To ensure continuity of service, a waiver had been approved to extend the existing arrangements while a compliance procurement exercise was re-run.

RESOLVED

1. The Commission noted the contents of the report and made comments to the Director of Finance.

**6. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT**

The Head of Internal Audit, Connor Munro presented the Internal Audit Progress Report. The following points were raised:

- Five audits have been finalised and a further four audits have reached the report stage.
- Members were referred to the reports provided within the agenda pack which provided an overview of the overall status of the audit programme including ICT Network Security, Contract Management, Information Security, Purchasing and information on the Contract Procedure Rules.
- Members were informed that delivery priorities have been prioritised as the end of the audit programme was near.
- It was reported that there were currently approximately 21 audits identified for future consideration, which would form part of the consultation.
- Attention was drawn to the Contract Procedure Results, Waiver Audit, which had been requested by the Governance and Audit Committee in September.
- The audit reviewed the five highest value contract waivers across departments, to evaluate whether they were in compliance with the Contract Procedure Rules. The audit concluded that there was reasonable assurance, with a robust control framework in place including input from Finance, Legal, Procurement, Directors and the Strategic Procurement Board.
- It was noted that four of the five waivers reviewed were retrospective in nature. While the audit identified that improved forward planning could potentially have avoided some of these situations, it was emphasised that the Council's approach of not strictly applying the Contract Procedure Rules and instead requiring transparency and corrective action. Overall, the waiver process was assessed as operating effectively.
- Members were advised that at the time of reporting there were no overdue audit actions, demonstrating a strong level of engagement and compliance by officers in implementing agreed actions.

There were no further questions from the commission.

RESOLVED

1. The Commission noted the progress made in delivering the 2025/26 internal audit work programme, and plans for delivery over the remainder of the year.

**7. INTERNAL AUDIT WORK PROGRAMME CONSULTATION - 2026-27**

The Head of Internal Audit, Connor Munro presented the Internal Audit Programme Consultation 2026-27.

The following points were highlighted:

- It was noted the Internal Audit Work Programme Consultation is required as a professional and independent assurance service to develop and deliver an annual work programme that is risk-based and aligned with the Council's risk profile, the Council's governance framework, requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and expectations of external audit and other regulatory bodies.
- Members were informed that the work programme concerns the Internal Audit's ability to provide an annual opinion on the effectiveness of governance, risk management and internal control arrangements.
- The Commission was informed that Internal Audit develops its assessment independently, of key risk areas across the organisation but also consults with the Governance and Audit Committee to ensure that members priorities and potential risks are appropriately considered.
- The Head of Internal Audit clarified informed members that they were able to formally or informally suggest potential audit priorities for inclusion within the programme, and the report represented the consultation stage of the audit planning process.
- The proposed work programme is designed to be flexible and allow for amendments during the year.

The Head of Internal Audit responded to queries from members:

- A member raised a request for Internal Audit to consider inclusion of work relating to Council officers holding multiple roles or contracts, particularly where individuals may be undertaking more than more role within the City Council.

#### RESOLVED

1. That the Governance and Audit Committee noted the Internal Audit Work Programme Consultation 2026-27
2. That Internal Audit incorporate the agreed additional work area.

#### **8. ACTION TRACKER**

The Action Tracker was noted.

#### **9. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There being no other urgent business the meeting concluded at 17.39pm.

