

GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2026

Present: Councillor S J Carr, Chair

Councillors: C Carr (Vice-Chair)
M Brown
R Bullock
A Cooper
J Couch
S Dannheimer
S P Jeremiah
A Kingdon
J M Owen
E Winfield
S L Camplin (Substitute)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K A Harlow and S Webb.

18 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

19 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2026 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

20 **AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS**

The Committee noted a verbal update from the Council's external auditors, Forvis Mazars, on progress with the 2025/26 audit. Members noted that the draft Statement of Accounts for 2025/26 had been published on the Council's website on 29 June 2026, ahead of the statutory deadline, and shared with the external auditors; the interim audit had been completed and the final audit was underway during September, with completion targeted for November 2026 ahead of the Council's accounts being signed off by the end of that month.

Members were advised that, in respect of the value for money conclusion, the risk of a significant weakness relating to housing management previously flagged in the audit strategy memorandum had not been confirmed as such following further work, although a recommendation was likely to be made, subject to the auditors' internal quality processes, regarding the continued development of the Council's action plan to address matters raised by the Regulator of Social Housing. In response to a question about whether further support or guidance would be offered to the Council in respect of housing services, the external auditors confirmed that, while not specialists in that

area, they would support the Council in ensuring its arrangements were appropriate, with findings to be reported to the Committee in November 2026.

21 REVIEW OF STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

The Committee considered proposed amendments to the Strategic Risk Register following a meeting of the Strategic Risk Management Group in August 2026, noting that the highest-rated risks related to resourcing, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, housing repairs compliance, strategic leisure initiatives and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Members noted that the residual risk score for the HRA Business Plan had increased from 12 to 16 (red), reflecting the current financial position, while the score for LGR had reduced from 20 to 16 (remaining red), reflecting continued engagement across Nottinghamshire notwithstanding the Government's pause.

Members held an extensive discussion, including on: the current status of LGR work and the Council's continued engagement across Nottinghamshire; the timescale and reasons for recovering the HRA balance above the Council's £1 million working minimum; progress on strategic leisure initiatives, including the closure of Eastwood Library and the proposed DH Lawrence Healthy Lifestyle Centre; and long-standing concerns regarding outstanding tram compensation owed by Nottingham City Council, with officers undertaking to seek a further update. Members also queried individual risk scores, including crime and disorder, sickness absence and income maximisation, and officers agreed to review these ahead of future meetings.

RESOLVED that the amendments to the Strategic Risk Register and the actions to mitigate risks as set out be approved.

22 REGULATOR UPDATE

The Committee received its second report reviewing and scrutinising the Housing and Asset Management Service Improvement Plan, developed following the judgement of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in October 2025. Officers provided an update on recruitment to the restructured housing service, confirming that new Compliance Assurance Officer, Compliance Administrator and Senior Inspector posts had been filled, and that an offer had been made in respect of the Repairs Manager post.

Members raised concerns regarding the absence of opposition Councillors on the Housing Improvement Board (HIB), the level of non-attendance without substitutes at HIB meetings, and the timeliness and presentation of performance data reported to this Committee; officers agreed to take these points away for consideration and undertook to review how information is presented to the Committee going forward. Members also discussed specific performance areas, including fire risk assessments, damp and mould, and electrical compliance, where officers reported improving but still significant numbers of overdue actions.

RESOLVED that:

(1) the Committee's understanding and scrutiny of the Service Improvement Plan be strengthened, including further investigation of opposition Councillor representation on the Housing Improvement Board;

(2) the way in which information is presented to this Committee be reviewed; and

(3) attendance at Housing Improvement Board meetings be reviewed, with named substitutes provided where the usual attendee is unable to attend.

23 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW UPDATE

The Committee noted a verbal update on the work of the Governance Review Task and Finish Group, established by this Committee on 20 July 2026. Members were advised that the Group had met in August 2026 and agreed to seek a budget from Cabinet for external specialist advice to support its work, but that Cabinet had deferred a decision on this budget to allow time for greater clarity on the Government's pause of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR); the Task Group would therefore need to reconvene to decide whether to proceed with, or await further clarification before continuing, its review.

Members discussed the implications of the LGR pause for interest in new parish and town councils in Bramcote and Beeston, noting that demand for these had been closely linked to the prospect of a merger with Nottingham City Council, and questioned whether work should continue in the meantime. Members also suggested that any future review consider the number of Councillors on some parish councils relative to population guidance, and boundary anomalies left outstanding from the previous, abandoned community governance review, including in the Greasley area. Members raised the specific case of two properties in Strelley transferred to Kimberley parish under the previous review, and asked that this be corrected; officers confirmed that affected residents would be consulted again, with a view to a report returning to this Committee in November 2026 and to Council in December 2026.

It was agreed that the Chair would continue to liaise with the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Chief Executive with a view to reconvening the Task and Finish Group to determine how it wished to proceed in light of the changed timetable for LGR.

24 COMPLAINTS REPORT QUARTER 1

The Committee noted a report summarising complaints made against the Council in Quarter 1 2026/27, noting a redesigned format including trend analysis and diagrams, and Members welcomed the improved presentation.

Members raised significant concern that poor communication with residents remained the most frequently recurring theme in upheld complaints, noting that this had been raised at successive meetings of this Committee over several years without sufficient improvement, and asked that this be addressed as a priority. Officers advised that a specific communication issue previously identified by Members had already been referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration, and invited Members to raise any specific communication issues with officers so that these could similarly be referred for scrutiny.

25 MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT

The Committee noted the annual report summarising complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, including an increase in the number of borough complaints and a decrease in the number of parish complaints compared with the previous year, and noted that the great majority of complaints had been resolved through informal resolution.

Members considered the report's inclusion of declarations of gifts and hospitality by Officers and Members, and requested that further detail on the nature of items declared with a value over £25 (the mandatory declaration threshold) be provided in future reports, in the interests of transparency. Officers agreed to consider this for future reports.

26 ANNUAL CONSTITUTION REVIEW

The Committee considered setting out amendments to the Constitution recommended by the Constitution Task Group at its meeting on 8 June 2026, relating to the timing of the Advisory Shareholder Sub-Committee, the method of voting on changes to Council Procedure Rules, and the number of ex-officio Members provided for in the Constitution. Additional amendments were also considered at the meeting to the original proposition. The Committee also considered a proposed amendment to Financial Procedure Rule 14.4, to extend the exception permitting Officers to negotiate and settle leases and rents for industrial units and commercial properties, up to an annual rental of £100,000, without referral to Cabinet, to all such properties rather than Beeston Square alone; and noted forthcoming statutory changes to the Planning Committee's call-in procedure arising from the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026, which take effect from 31 October 2026 and would be given effect through the Monitoring Officer's delegated authority to make legislative amendments to the Constitution.

RESOLVED that: (1) the amendments to the Constitution, as detailed in Appendix 2 and as amended;

12.11.2 If a motion to proceed to next business is seconded and the Mayor thinks the item has been sufficiently discussed, they will give the mover of the original motion a right of reply and then put the procedural motion to the vote. Any vote at Full Council to move to next business contained in Chapter 2 Of the Constitution, will require a 66% majority of those members voting and present in the room at the time the question was put.

12.11.3 If a motion that the question be now put is seconded and the Mayor thinks the item has been sufficiently discussed, they will put the procedural motion to the vote. Any vote at Full Council that the question now be put contained in Chapter 2 of the Constitution, will require a 66% majority of those members voting and present in the room at the time the question was put. If it is passed they will give the mover of the original motion a right of reply before putting his/her motion to the vote.

12.11.4 If a motion to adjourn the debate or to adjourn the meeting is seconded and the Mayor thinks the item has not been sufficiently discussed and cannot reasonably be so discussed on that occasion, they will give the mover of the original motion or an amendment, or a substantive motion (as the case may be) a right of reply and then put the procedural motion to the vote. Any vote at Full Council to adjourn a debate or meeting contained in Chapter 2 of the Constitution, will require a 66% majority of those members voting and present in the room at the time the question was put.

be recommended to Council;

(2) the proposed amendment to the Financial Regulations be recommended to Council; and

(3) the legislative changes to the Planning Committee, as set out in Appendix 3, and the proposed amendments to the Constitution, be noted.

27 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme for future meetings. Members asked that, should it become necessary to change the date of the late autumn meeting to align with the timetable for agreeing the Statement of Accounts, as had occurred in previous years, the maximum possible notice be given, given the importance of that meeting. Officers confirmed that, having considered the options, the next meeting would remain scheduled for 23 November 2026.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be approved.