# GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

# MONDAY, 20 JULY 2026

Present: Councillor S J Carr, Chair

Councillors: C Carr (Vice-Chair)
M Brown
A Cooper
S Dannheimer
S P Jeremiah
A Kingdon
J M Owen
P J Owen (Substitute)
P A Smith (Substitute)
S Webb

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Bullock, J Couch, K A Harlow and E Winfield

8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

9 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2026 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

10 AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS

The Committee noted the latest Audit Progress Report from the Council's external auditors, Forvis Mazars, and noted progress made with the 2025/26 audit. Members noted that the Council had published its draft Statement of Accounts for 2025/26 on 29 June 2026, in advance of the 30 June statutory deadline, and that these had been shared with the external auditors, with a final report expected for the Committee's meeting in November 2026.

The Committee noted that the audit certificate for 2024/25 had been issued on 1 July 2026, following confirmation from the National Audit Office that no further work was required in respect of the Whole of Government Accounts, finalising the 2024/25 audit. In respect of the 2025/26 audit, the external auditors had updated their materiality levels following receipt of the draft accounts, and reported that no further significant risks had been identified from a review of the draft accounts at this stage. Work on the value for money arrangements was in progress and nothing had been identified to report at this time.

11 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2025/26 - GOING CONCERN

The Committee noted the assessment by the designated Section 151 Officer of the Council's Going Concern status for the purposes of the Statement of Accounts 2025/26. Members were advised that the assessment had had regard to the Council's current and projected financial position, its governance arrangements, and the regulatory and control environment, and that on this basis the Council's financial position remained sound and it continued to be regarded as a going concern.

Members raised concerns regarding the potential impact of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) on service delivery and questioned whether the Council's reserves might be used for the benefit of Broxtowe residents in advance of any transfer to a new unitary authority. The Section 151 Officer confirmed that LGR was not, at this stage, considered to have an impact on the Council's going concern status, and that the transfer and use of reserves and balances under LGR would be considered further through work with other finance officers in the run up to vesting day, whilst continuing to safeguard public funds and maintain a sustainable financial position.

Members also queried the potential impact of staff turnover linked to uncertainty over LGR, and were advised that this was being managed as a strategic risk through the Strategic Risk Register, to be considered later in the meeting.

12 INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW 2025/26

The Committee received the Chief Audit and Control Officer's Annual Assurance Opinion and noted the work of Internal Audit during 2025/26. Members noted that 96% of planned audits had been completed or were awaiting finalisation by the year end, above the 90% target, and that it was the opinion of the Chief Audit and Control Officer that the current internal control environment was satisfactory to maintain the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control.

In response to a question regarding the high priority actions arising from the Stores and Commercial Property Management audits, officers confirmed that all previously agreed actions from those audits had since been completed, and that there were no audit actions currently outstanding.

13 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee noted the recent work completed by Internal Audit. Officers confirmed that there were no audit actions currently outstanding from previously agreed audits, and no significant issues arising from audits completed in the period. Members noted that, since the report had been written, the Planning Income and New Pavilion at Hickings Lane, Stapleford audits had both been completed with no significant issues to report.

14 REVIEW OF STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

The Committee considered the proposed amendments to the Strategic Risk Register following a meeting of the Strategic Risk Management Group in June 2026. Members noted the proposal to remove the risk relating to the Government's welfare reform agenda, on the basis that this could now be managed operationally as part of business-as-usual activity, and the addition of two new strategic risks relating to failure to deliver weekly food waste collections and failure to deliver the Kimberley Depot office replacement and redevelopment programme.

Members held an extensive discussion on the highest-rated risks in the register, including: the risk relating to the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, noting that the minimum reserve balance had fallen below £1 million and that officers were working on a Business Strategy to address income, efficiencies and cost reduction; the risk relating to strategic leisure initiatives, including an update on progress with the replacement Bramcote Leisure Centre, where the construction contract and the licence agreement with the school in respect of temporary car parking arrangements were both close to being finalised; the risk relating to crime and disorder, in respect of which Members raised concerns about levels of antisocial behaviour; the risk relating to recruitment and retention of staff with the required skills and expertise, including in relation to environmental health posts; and the risk relating to failure to respond to the outcomes of Local Government Reorganisation, including the potential implications for joint use leisure facilities where sites are linked to schools that may become academies.

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

15 COMPLAINTS REPORTS 2025/26

The Committee received a summary of complaints made against the Council for 2025/26. Members noted that, of 552 stage 1 complaints received overall, 102 were investigated under the stage 2 complaints procedure and 12 were investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO); under the stage 2 procedure, 57 complaints (56%) were not upheld, 42 (41%) were upheld and one was withdrawn (3%).

Members queried the process where a compensation offer had been made, and were advised that acceptance of a stage 2 compensation payment did not preclude a complainant from subsequently referring their complaint to the Ombudsman. In response to questions regarding external wall insulation, officers confirmed there were no concerns regarding the contractors used for previous installation programmes, but that a small number of cases had arisen where subsequent repairs work had affected the integrity of insulation; work was underway to survey affected properties and to improve communication with tenants and repairs staff on this issue.

Members raised concerns regarding the trend analysis at Appendix 1, noting a deterioration in complaint themes such as communication, delays and follow-up monitoring between quarter 3 and quarter 4. Officers advised caution in drawing conclusions from a single year of trend data, given that complaints are not always made in the quarter in which the underlying issue arose, and noted that additional resources had been approved for both the Complaints Team and the Housing Repairs Team, together with a restructure of the Housing Repairs service, which were expected to support improved performance. Officers also noted that some of the increase in complaints relating to capital works reflected improved recording of complaints, rather than a decline in service, and that a recent change of pest control contractor had contributed to a number of complaints which were expected to reduce as the new arrangement embedded.

16 REGULATOR OF SOCIAL HOUSING - SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN REVIEW

The Committee noted its first 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, this Committee having been added to the scrutiny arrangements for the Plan alongside the Housing Improvement Board and Cabinet, in response to feedback from the RSH that scrutiny in this area required strengthening.

Members raised a number of detailed questions on progress against actions in the Service Improvement Plan and the Safety Performance Report, including: stock condition data, noting this had improved from 63% at the time of the RSH inspection to 74% currently, with a target of 100% by the end of the year; the number of outstanding fire risk assessment remedial actions, which officers reported had reduced from 3,117 at the start of the year to 1,866 at the time of the meeting, as a result of a themed and prioritised programme of work; electrical compliance, where officers reported ongoing difficulties gaining access to a number of properties, that new legislation from May 2026 had introduced a legal obligation (previously good practice) enabling the Council to pursue injunctions and powers of entry through the courts, and that 99 properties remained outstanding as at May 2026; damp and mould, where officers reported a reduction in outstanding cases from 233 in February 2026 to 106 in May 2026; and asbestos and Legionella risk management, where officers undertook to provide further detail outside the meeting.

Members raised concerns regarding the pace of progress against some actions and the clarity of the reporting, and officers acknowledged the feedback and undertook to bring updated and clearer reports to future meetings, including more recent data than that included in the appendices to this report.

17 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered additions to the Work Programme, including the addition of a regular Regulator of Social Housing - Service Improvement Plan Review report.

Members discussed the implications of Local Government Reorganisation for parish and town council arrangements, including the likelihood of requests for new parish or town councils, and the position of Greasley Parish Council, whose area would otherwise be split between different local authority areas under LGR proposals. It was agreed that the Governance Review Task and Finish Group should be resurrected to consider these and related governance matters arising from Local Government Reorganisation.

**RESOLVED that the work programme, with the addition of a regular Regulator of Social Housing - Service Improvement Plan Review report be added to the work programme and the establishment of a Governance Review Task and Finish Group, be approved**.