

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE PANEL.

Minutes of a hybrid webcast meeting on 25 February 2026 at 10.00 a.m.

Present in
County Hall: Councillors Julie Dettbarn (Chair), Wullie Hogg and Bob Pollock.

Present
Remotely: Councillor Brian McGinley.

Apologies: Councillors Kenneth Bell, Cameron Ramsay, and George Weir.

Attending in
County Hall: T. Baulk, Chief Financial Officer; W. Carlaw, Service Lead - Democratic Governance; P. Bradley, Service Lead - Professional Design Services; C. McGhee, Chief Internal Auditor; D. Love, Corporate Finance Team Co-ordinator; J. Chapman, Committee Services Officer; and C. McCallum, Clerical Assistant.

Attending
Remotely: T. Simpson, Service Lead - Corporate Accounting, G. McNally and P. Morrison, Audit Scotland.

Opening Remarks.

The Chair

- (1) welcomed everyone to the meeting;
- (2) outlined the procedures for conducting this meeting and advised that this meeting would be broadcast live.

1. Sederunt and Declarations of Interest.

The Chair called the Sederunt for the meeting and having called the roll, confirmed that there were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Council Standing Order No. 17 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

2. Call-ins from Cabinet.

The Panel noted that there were no call-ins from Cabinet of 17 February 2026.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting.

The Minutes of the meeting of 3 December 2025 ([issued](#)) were submitted and approved.

4. **Action Log and Work Programme.**

There was submitted an update of the Action Log and Work Programme for this Panel ([issued](#)).

The Chief Financial Officer advised Members that an incorrect version of the Action Log and Work Programme had been published online in error and confirmed that the correct version would be issued following the meeting.

The Panel

Decided: to note the current status of the Action Log and Work Programme.

5. **External Audit Reports – Progress to 31 December 2025.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 4 February 2026 by the Chief Financial Officer providing Members with an update on the progress that the Council is making in relation to external audit improvement actions.

The Panel

Decided: to scrutinise the progress against the Council's external audit improvement actions as presented in this report.

6. **Internal Audit – Progress Report to 31 December 2025.**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 11 February 2026 by the Chief Internal Auditor advising Members of progress of the 2024/25 and 2025/26 internal audit plans and Directorate's progress against implementation of internal audit action plans.

In response to the concerns expressed by Members regarding the limited assurance associated with PVG checks, the Chief Internal Auditor provided an update and gave assurance that the issue was being dealt with and that a progress report would be presented to the Panel.

A Member of the Panel requested clarification concerning the third extension requested in relation to the Document and Implement Contract Management procedures. The Service Lead - Professional Design Services indicated that the process had taken longer than initially anticipated, as it is tailored specifically for South Ayrshire Council. Furthermore, it was noted that significant progress had been achieved, with a briefing for Members planned to be delivered once it was set to be implemented to the Team.

The Panel, having considered the contents of the report

Decided:

- (1) to consider the content of this report.
- (2) to agree to extend the implementation date of action IA2023/30/04.01 to 30 April 2026.

7. The Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector – Self Assessment Rules.

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 11 February 2026 by the Chief Internal Auditor advising Members of the outcome of the Internal Audit self-assessment of conformance against the Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) in the UK Public Sector.

A Member of the Panel gave his views and commented on the usefulness of the Self-Assessment undertaken.

Following discussion, it was noted that the GIAS set out guidance for Chairs of Audit Committees, albeit that it was not specifically tailored for the public sector.
The Panel

Decided:

- (1) to note the contents of the report, the summary results for all domains in Appendix 1, the self-assessment action plan in Appendix 2 and the detailed self-assessment outcome against Domain III “Governing the Internal Audit Function” in Appendix 3; and
- (2) to agree that progress against the action plan would be included within the quarterly update reports to this Panel until fully implemented.

8. Local Government in Scotland: Financial Bulletin 2024/25

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 30 January 2026 by the Chief Financial Officer presenting the findings and recommendations included in the Audit Scotland report ‘Local Government in Scotland: Financial Bulletin 2024/25), published in January 2026.

A Member of the Panel urged the public to review the Audit Scotland report, which detailed the financial difficulties faced by Councils.

The Panel

Decided:

- (1) to note the findings and recommendations from the Audit Scotland report (attached as Appendix 1); and
- (2) to note the local arrangements in place at paragraph 4.2.

9. **Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Quarter 3 Update Report 2025/26**

There was submitted a report ([issued](#)) of 4 February 2026 by the Chief Financial Officer providing Members with updates on the 2025/26 treasury prudential indicators for the period October-December 2025 (Quarter 3) and on the latest wider economic position.

The Chief Financial Officer informed Members that additional appendices had been attached to the report in error and confirmed that these would be removed in a revised version of the report which would be issued after the meeting.

The Panel

Decided: to scrutinise the contents of this report.

The meeting ended at 10:25 a.m.