

# Minutes

Name of meeting	<b>AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE</b>
Date and Time	<b>MONDAY 29 APRIL 2024 COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM</b>
Venue	<b>COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT</b>
Present	Cllrs A Garratt (Chairman), V Churchman (Vice-Chairman), C Critchison, C Jarman, C Quirk and R Redrup
Also Present	Councillor Clare Mosdell and Councillor Peter Spink  Barry Downer, Kerry Hubbleday, Geraint Newton, Wendy Perera, Megan Tuckwell, Marie Bartlett, Justin Thorne and Chris Ward
Also Present (Virtual)	Cllr G Brodie  Francis Fernandez, Elizabeth Goodwin, Colin Rowland, and Claire Shand
Apologies	Cllr K Lucioni

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## 56. **Apologies and Changes in Membership (If Any)**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Karen Lucioni.

## 57. **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2024 be confirmed as a true record.

## 58. **Declarations of Interest**

Questions were raised regarding the ability for councillors to discuss any potential changes in governance framework given the potential for changes to members allowances. The Senior Governance Advisor confirmed that there were no specific pecuniary or personal interests to declare at this stage and a general dispensation was in place for councillors to discuss changes to the members allowances scheme at Full Council.

Cllr Chris Quirk declared an interest in minute item 60, Future Governance Report, as member of the Future Governance Working Group.

Cllr Andrew Garratt declared an interest in minute item 60, Future Governance Report, as member of the Future Governance Working Group.

Cllr Chris Jarman declared an interest in minute item 60, Future Governance Report, as member of the Future Governance Working Group and as a member of the sub-group dealing with alternative models.

**59. Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum**

No public questions had been received.

**60. Future Governance Report**

The committee received and considered the report, and its appendices, which presented the options for the Full Council to consider in determining the future governance arrangements for the council, prior to its submission to the Full Council on 1 May 2024.

It was noted that a number of all-member briefing sessions had been delivered, which had been recorded. It was suggested that all members be encouraged to participate in order to be as fully informed as possible ahead of the Full Council.

Discussion took place regarding the recommendations of the Future Governance Working Group, including the analysis of all other potential models of governance. Comments were made with regards to the risks and additional costs associated with working at pace to deliver such a change.

The committee agreed that the report was fit-for-purpose and sufficient enough for an informed decision to be reached by the Full Council, including the financial implications and the level of risk (and mitigations related to that).

RESOLVED:

THAT the committee believes that this report (and its appendices) are comprehensive enough for a decision to be reached by the Full Council on 1 May 2024, with the proper discussion of the financial implications and the level of risk (and the mitigations related to that).

**61. Financial Regulations 2024**

Consideration was given to the report which sought the committee's approval for the council's updated Financial Regulations, following a review during the early part of 2024, which would provide a framework for the ongoing consistent financial management and internal control standards across the council. The committee received an alternative version of the Financial Regulations, which would be used should the council decide to move to a committee system of governance.

Questions were raised around councillors' access to accounts, transparency, and the online publication of financial data and information. Attention was drawn to the principles of the regulations and whether councillors were comfortable with those. The committee sought assurance that there was a proper balance between efficient internal day-to-day delivery within the budget, and councillors' oversight and knowledge as the accountable people.

Following discussion, it was:

RESOLVED:

- i) THAT the Financial Regulations detailed in Appendix 1 be approved.
- ii) THAT the alternative Financial Regulations detailed in Appendix 2 be approved, should the council's governance model change.

## 62. **Governance and the Budget-making Process**

The chairman introduced the item regarding the budget preparation process and access to information. It was recommended that the committee asks the Chief Executive to commission an independent report on the constitutional provisions for alternate budgets, and the delivery of this during the 2024-25 budget-setting process.

The specific questions to be addressed in the report would be confirmed amongst committee members and sent to the Chief Executive, and it was suggested that the initial findings be reported to committee members within four weeks. It was requested that all correspondence on the matter to be copied to all officers and councillors who had been involved in process to date.

Following discussion, it was:

RESOLVED:

THAT this committee requests that the Chief Executive commissions a report on the statutory responsibilities for preparing a budget, including the rights for any group or individual councillor to prepare an alternative budget, and asks whether or not they are adequately reflected in the constitution with particular consideration being given to if and how this was delivered in the 2024-25 budget setting process.

## 63. **Members' Question Time**

Cllr Chris Jarman asked an oral question seeking assurance that all councillors were notified of all delegated decisions. The Chief Executive confirmed that all councillors were notified when a delegated decision was due to be made, when the decision had been made, and when the forward plan was updated.

Cllr Chris Jarman asked a supplementary question relating to the timescales and decisions being backdated. The Chairman suggested that the matter be considered by the Chief Executive.

CHAIRMAN