



Audit & Governance Committee Annual Report 2024/2025



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The Role and Function of the Audit & Governance Committee

Our Audit & Governance Committee is a key component of Boston's Corporate Governance. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards. It is formally recognised as the body charged with governance and, with independence from Scrutiny Committees, it reports directly to Full Council.

The purpose of our Audit and Governance Committee is to provide independent assurance to the members of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. It provides independent review of Boston's governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes. It oversees internal audit and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.

This is achieved through key regular items received by the committee in relation (but not limited) to:

- Internal and external audit
- Key finance items
- Governance reviews
- Strategic risk management reporting



Introduction from the Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee

As Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee I am pleased to report that over the past year, the Committee have continued to work to a very high standard to ensure they monitor the Borough's corporate governance and its internal and external auditing processes.

This Committee continually ensures effective controls are in place, overseeing and challenging all risk management, ensuring strong financial treasury management along with full transparency within all areas of its operations

Part of our role we provide independent assurance and ensure that rigid controls are in place within the Council, to mitigate risks where necessary and apply appropriate scrutiny regarding the completion of all recommendations and ensuring that all departments are operating to their very best ability and output.

Where audit issues have been identified, the Committee has been pleased with the focus given to those areas which have been addressed promptly. We are striving for complex reports wherever possible to be simplified with executive summaries to demystify what are complex matters, and to assist in this further we have asked for them to be clearly focussed around areas for consideration.

Working with Officers for the Committee's ongoing development, we have produced a self-assessment 12 month Action Plan which covers many topics such as the Terms and Reference of the A&G Committee, an Annual Plan of our effectiveness as a Committee, highlighting continuous training requirements, the monitoring of our progress and many other important aspects, ensuring we are a very effective ongoing A&G Committee.

Treasury management is a very high priority for this Committee, ensuring it is working effectively within safe agreed parameters. The scrutiny of the Annual Treasury Management and approval of the Financial Statements are just some of the important areas undertaken.

As Chair, I continue to liaise with other Chairs of A&G Committees within the Partnership to compare all our Committee's work, share best practice, and find ways to align our audit and financial workings together to seek the very best outcomes for Boston Borough.

I look forward to working with Committee Members and supporting their continued development in experience, bringing a balanced, independent, and objective approach to the business of the Committee and challenging all areas of financial management where necessary.

Continuous training sessions are key to providing increased knowledge and expertise within the Committee across a wide range of technical areas and topic-based matters where necessary.

The Audit and Governance Committee will continue to strive for excellence from all departments, using Key Performance Indicators from the Risk Register, and Internal and External Audit reports to monitor this.

We are very pleased to welcome two new independent lay members Gideon Hall and Adam Cartwright who have been co-opted onto the membership of the A&G Committee. Gideon and Adam both bring a wealth of financial management, business experience, specialist expertise, knowledge, transparency and an outsider's view which have proven very valuable and beneficial.

Finally, I would like to thank all our A&G Committee Members for their valuable contribution during the past year and also thank you to all the Council Officers, Internal and External Auditors, and the financial management from PSPS who have all provided support, information, advice, guidance and a first-class professional service, enabling Committee Members to operate at a very effective level.



Thank you most sincerely, and on behalf of the Committee we look forward to working with you all over the next 12 months for the best interest of the Borough Council and its stakeholders.

Councillor Barrie Pierpoint
Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee 2024/25

Audit & Governance Committee Membership 2024/2025

Membership of the Audit & Governance Committee comprised 11 Non-Cabinet members and 2 Non – Elected representatives (Non-Councillor).

During the 2024/2025 municipal year, the committee was made up of the following elected members:

- ▶ Cllr Barrie Pierpoint (Chairman)
- ▶ Cllr Anton Dani (Vice Chairman)
- ▶ Cllr Jyothi Arayambath
- ▶ Cllr Richard Austin BEM
- ▶ Cllr James Cantwell
- ▶ Cllr Mike Gilbert
- ▶ Cllr Paul Gleeson
- ▶ Cllr David Middleton
- ▶ Cllr Chris Mountain
- ▶ Cllr Lina Savickiene
- ▶ Cllr David Scoot
- ▶ Adam Cartwright (Co-opted Independent Member - appointed 14th October 2024)
- ▶ Gideon Hall (Co-opted Independent Member - appointed 14th October 2024)



Audit and Governance Committee Meetings and Summary of Work

During 2024/2025, the Audit & Governance Committee met five times. The table below shows the meeting dates and gives a brief summary of work activities. Full agendas and minutes for each meeting can be accessed by clicking on the dates.

Date	Items and Reports Considered
8 July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft External Audit Plan and Strategy Report • Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2023/24 • Q4 Risk Report 2023/24 • Annual Governance Statement - Action Plan Update • Audit and Governance Committee Self-Assessment Action Plan • Annual Treasury Report 2023/24 • Unaudited Financial Statement 2023/24 including Narrative Report and Annual Governance Statement • Combined Assurance Status Report 2023/24
14 October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final External Audit Plan & Strategy for the year ending 31st March 2024 • External Audit Progress Report 2023/24 • Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 and Financial Statements 2023/24 • Q1 Risk Report 2024/25 • Q1 Treasury Reprt 2024/25 • Audit and Governance Annual Report 2023/24 • Appointment of Co-opted Members
18 November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2024/25 • Information Governance Annual Update
27 January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final External Audit Completion Report 2023/24 (ISA 260) • Draft External Audit Report • Internal Audit Progress Report • Q2 Risk Report 2024/25 • Update on changes to Statutory Guidance "Capital Finance: Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision Policy" • Budget Overview 2025/26 - 2029/30
22 April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Audit Plan & Strategy for the year ending 31 March 2025 • Financial Statements 2024/25 - Accounting Policies • Q3 Treasury Report 2024/25 • Q3 Risk Report 2024/25 • Internal Audit Progress Report 2024/25 • Combined Assurance Status Report 2024/25 • Internal Audit Plan 2025/26 • Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 Update

Internal Audit

The Council is required by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 to *'undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards and guidance'*.

For 2024/2025, the Internal Audit function continued to be provided by Internal Audit, Lincolnshire County Council (previously known as Assurance Lincolnshire).



Head of Internal Audit Opinion

The Head of Internal Audit is responsible for the delivery of an annual audit opinion which is based on the internal audit work undertaken during the year and is used by the Council to inform its Annual Governance Statement.

The 'Boston Borough Council Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2024/2025', presented to the Committee at its [7 July 2025](#) meeting, provided a summary of the eleven assurance reviews undertaken during 2024/2025 as well as the overall audit opinion the period.



In forming the opinion, the Head of Internal Audit considered the frameworks of governance, risk management and management controls to be adequate and that audit testing had demonstrated controls to be working in practice.

Where weaknesses had been identified through internal audit review, the audit team had worked with management to agree appropriate corrective actions within an appropriate timescale for improvement.

External Audit

From April 2023, the External Audit function was provided by KPMG. The activity status of the external audit of BBC's financial statements is as follows:

2023/2024

Representatives from KPMG attended committee meetings during the year and an External Audit Plan & Strategy Report for 2023/24 was presented at the [14th October 2024](#) Audit & Governance Committee meeting. On [27th January 2025](#) the Committee received the Final External Audit Completion Report for 2023/24 and a draft External Audit Annual Report which upon finalisation confirmed an unqualified opinion on the Councils accounts. This means that the Auditor believes the accounts gave a true and fair view of the financial performance and position of the Council. The External Auditor also concluded that the Council had appropriate arrangements in place to secure value for money (i.e. economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources).

2024/2025

The Engagement Manager attended a committee meeting on [22nd April 2025](#) and presented a report which set out the external auditor's risk assessment, audit plan and strategy for the financial year 2024/25, including the value for money commentary.

[Click on dates to view detail](#)

Governance

The following items were considered by the Committee in relation to its governance function:

▶ **Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 Update**

Members were presented with an update and provided feedback relating to RIPA regulatory activity within the last 12 months.

▶ **Information Governance Annual Update**

Members were informed about the council's activities and compliance with Data Protection, Environmental Information Regulation and Freedom of Information requirements.

▶ **Combined Assurance Status Reports 2023/24 and 2024/25**

The Assistant Director, Governance & Monitoring Officer presented the Combined Assurance Status report 2023/24, attached at Appendix A within the report, which provided a record of assurance against the Council's critical services, key risks, partnerships and projects. It supported the Council's commitment to achieving good corporate governance.

▶ **Governance and Audit Committee Self-Assessment Action Plan**

In addition, members evaluated the impact and effectiveness of the committee to support effective audit and governance arrangements. A resulting action plan was put forward for 2024/2025.

▶ **Annual Governance Statement Action Plan update**

The Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate Development & S151 provided the Committee with an action plan update in respect of the Annual Governance Statement.

▶ **Co-opted Independent Member representation on the Governance and Audit Committee**

The Assistant Director – Governance & Monitoring Officer presented a report which sought the Committee's approval, following a recent recruitment process, to co-opt two new Independent Members to the Audit and Governance Committee.

Risk Management

The Audit and Governance Committee monitors and approves policies for the effective development and operation of risk management and corporate governance in the Council. During 2024/2025, the Audit and Governance Committee received four reports from the Group Manager – Insights and Transformation which provided an overview of the key risks that the Council was exposed to, the action taking place to mitigate those risks, and an up-to-date assessment of their likelihood and impact.



Treasury and Accounts

The Council is required to produce an Annual Treasury Management Review after the end of each financial year in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management. The code suggests that members be informed of Treasury Management activities at least twice per year.

The following reports relating to finance and treasury management were considered by the committee:

- Annual Treasury Report 2023/24
- Q1 Treasury Report 2024/25
- Unaudited Financial Statements 2023/24 including Narrative Report and Annual Governance Statement
- Annual Governance Statement and Action Plan
- Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2024/25
- Update on changes to Statutory Guidance: Capital Finance: Guidance on Minimum Revenue Position
- Financial Statements 2024/25 - Accounting Policies
- Q3 Treasury Report 2024/25
- Budget Overview 2025/26 - 2029/30



Training and Development

During 2024/2025, the Audit & Governance Committee received training on.

- Induction Training for Independent Members
- Treasury Training
- Self Assessment and Action Plan Training

Further Information

For detailed information of work covered by the Audit and Governance Committee, please visit the Council and Democracy area of the Council's website:

<https://democracy.boston.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=128>

Contact



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