

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, FOLLATON HOUSE, PLYMOUTH ROAD,
TOTNES ON THURSDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2022**

Members in attendance			
* Denotes attendance			
∅ Denotes apology for absence			
*	Cllr L Austen (Chairman)	*	Cllr R Rowe
*	Cllr J Brazil	*	Cllr B Spencer (Vice-Chairman)
*	Cllr J McKay	*	Cllr B Taylor
∅	Cllr J T Pennington		

Member(s) also in attendance:
Cllrs H D Bastone; N Hopwood (via Teams) and J Pearce

Item No	Minute Ref No below refers	Officers and Visitors in attendance
All Items		Director of Strategy and Governance; Section 151 Officer; Head of Finance; Democratic Services Manager (via Teams); Audit Specialist (via Teams), External Auditor (via Teams) and Senior Case Manager (Democratic Services).

AG.19/22 MINUTES

The minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee meeting held on 8 September 2022 were confirmed as a true and correct record.

AG.20/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting, but none were made.

AG.21/22 GRANT THORNTON AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT AND SECTOR UPDATE

The Committee considered a paper from Grant Thornton that provided a progress update on delivering their responsibilities as the Council's External Auditors.

In discussion, a Member sought clarification on the Auditing, Reporting and Governance Authority (ARGA) and it was reported that following the Redmond review ARGA's aim was to simplify the auditing framework. It was further reported that there was a requirement for Audit Committees to include one independent member when the new regulations were adopted.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the contents of the Grant Thornton Audit Progress Report and Sector Update be noted.

AG.22/22 **IVYBRIDGE REGENERATION SCHEME - PROJECT CLOSURE REPORT**

Members considered a closure report that reviewed the chronology of the reporting, internal governance, stakeholder engagement and planning undertaken during the Ivybridge Regeneration Project.

In discussion, a Member queried if there was an opportunity for future high streets funding and it was reported that the bid for high street funding was unsuccessful. Members then debated how decisions were made in relation to this project and that a report was only presented to the Audit Committee on one previous occasion. Members also discussed that at the start of this project there was majority community support but when the plans were published, support turned into objections. Members also felt that rising costs in construction would have impacted on the project if planning permission had been granted by the Development Management Committee.

Members felt that public engagement on major projects was crucial and **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** to include a timeframe on recommendation two.

It was then

RESOLVED

- 1) that the project closure report be noted; and
- 2) that a planning protocol be adopted for major projects, with a final draft of the protocol being presented to the Committee within the next six months for approval..

AG.23/22 **OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER**

A report was considered that presented the Ombudsman Annual Review Letter for 2021.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the Ombudsman's Annual Letter for 2021 as attached at Appendix A of the presented report, has been reviewed; and
2. That the steps set out to ensure that the Council continued to address complaints fairly and in line with best practice, be noted

AG.24/22 **SUNDRY DEBT**

Consideration was given to a report that provided Members with an update of the position with regard to Sundry Debt.

In discussion, a Member raised the substantial amount of debt which was over 4 years old and it was reported that the Asset Team were making every effort to recover remaining debts with payment plans. Members raised whether some of these debts were economical to pursue and requested for further reports to be provided to the Committee in January and March.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the position in relation to Sundry Debt be noted.

AG.25/22 **AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE WORKPLAN 2022-23**

Members were presented with the latest version of the Committee Work Programme and noted its contents.

RESOLVED

That a report on Sundry Debt be added to the workplan for January 2023 and March 2023 and that the Planning Protocol for Major Projects be added to the workplan for March 2023

(Meeting commenced at 2:00pm and concluded at 3.25 pm)

Chairman