

Audit and Accounts Committee: Minutes (Public)

Date: 28 November 2025

Time: 2.00pm – 5.40pm

Place: New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald

Present: Councillors M Black, C Boden (Chair), P Fane (Vice Chair), R Ioannides, L Navarro, C Poulton and G Wilson

Non-voting co-opted member:
M Hussain (via Zoom)

S Brown	KPMG, External auditor
E Larcombe	KPMG, External auditor
H Foscoe	KPMG, External Auditor

26. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

There were no apologies for absence or declarations of interest.

27. Minutes – 23 July 2025 and Minutes Action Log

The minutes of the meeting on 23 July 2025 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

The Chair asked that it be noted that he mis-spoke twice during the meeting in July 2025 in relation to Section 26 inspection rights when he spoke of sole accounts when it should have been group accounts.

The minutes action log was reviewed and the following verbal updates received:

- Minute 197: A report relating to Opus People Solutions Ltd had been taken to the Shareholder Sub-Committee in November 2025. This action was complete.
- Minute 198: The review of the property risk data base had been completed.
- Minute 24: The Internal Audit report following its review of the council's relationship and governance in relation to This Land Ltd was expected to be available around January 2026.

The minutes action log was noted.

28. Petitions and Public Questions

There were no petitions or public questions.

29. Financial Reporting and Related Matters

The committee was advised that the published papers included KPMG's year-end report on the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund for 2024/25 with a recommendation to note that report. The same report was also included at Item 5: Pension Fund Annual Report and Statement of Accounts 2024/25 and would be discussed under that item instead. Minute 30 below refers.

The Head of Finance advised that the report provided an update on the 2024/25 accounts and draft value for money (VFM) report. The audit was progressing well and no material issues had been identified so far. KPMG was providing challenge around key risk areas identified by the previous committee and work around that was continuing. In common with most local authorities, the council was expecting a disclaimed opinion again this year and was working to return to a position of full assurance in the medium term. The committee's approval was sought of the treatment of some minor audit differences. A £0.5m error in asset valuations was highlighted as a potential adjustment. Some clerical corrections had also been made, including some identified by committee members at the previous meeting. The materiality level was £20m.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the officer report and introduction:

- received confirmation that the assessment for Expected Credit Loss (ECL) for loans to This Land Ltd was being considered as part of the external audit.
- commented that the KPMG narrative report referred to c£59.9m loan principle converted to a capital contribution during the year, but that This Land Ltd's accounts showed £107m of loans and a £108m capital contribution. The Head of Finance advised that these were inter-group balances so the process of consolidation tried to deal with the non intra-group aspects of the accounts. In response to a request for a note setting out the reconciliation before the final audit opinion the Executive Director of Finance and Resources advised that this would depend on what the external auditors chose to do. The External Auditor advised that KPMG was not the auditor for This Land Ltd and would not comment on its financial statements. They would though make sure they were comfortable with the group consolidation and would report back to the committee on this in February.
- highlighted that note 27 gave amortised costs of council loans to This Land Ltd of £65.2m, but the council had chosen to carry them at £59.9m. They asked for clarification of this departure from the code and why it was not amortised for 2024/5. KPMG agreed that this was a departure from the code. If there were any material disagreements once the audit was complete these would be set out in the audit opinion, but they were not at that point yet. The Head of Finance stated that the carrying of historic costs had always been done this way, but the amortised basis included cash flows as well as the loans value. The S151 Officer's judgement was that this was the clearest way to proceed.

- asked whether the council had sought external advice on IFRS9 compliance of This Land Ltd in relation to loss provision for 2023/24. The Head of Finance's recollection was that there had been external assurance around this, but it was not thought to be material so no adjustment was made. The Executive Director of Finance and Resources stated that this had been complicated by the delays to the audit and closing the accounts for 2023/24 against the Government backstop. Work with the company had begun later in the year.
- the Chair highlighted the adjustments in Appendix 1. Many were for disclosure only with one item of £0.5m for potential adjustment. He confirmed with committee members that there were no objections to this.

The KPMG representatives described progress on the audit so far. Work around the valuation of land and buildings was progressing well with work continuing on the underlying assumptions. There had been some differences around the valuation of investment properties last year and work on this was progressing. So far, a control deficiency had been identified which would be reported and a potential mis-statement of £3.5m which was being discussed with management. Work on management override of controls was progressing well with no issues so far. There was nothing to report to date on pensions liability. The recoverability of This Land Ltd's long-term debt was a complex area and KPMG had been challenging the position around ECL and the treatment of debt restructuring. There had been a good level of engagement from management. There was nothing to report to date around the adoption of IFRS 16, while work was taking place this year to challenge the underlying models around the accuracy and valuation of PFI liabilities. Work was on-going around the potential for non-capital expenditure being incorrectly recognised with no issues to date. The Chair asked KPMG about the timeliness and sufficiency of documents provided by the council, and was advised that there were no issues or challenges on this. It had been slower in relation to the This Land Ltd debtor, but this was a complex area and KPMG judged it was not surprising that management had sought additional assurances in that area.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to KPMG's report and update:

- asked whether the three PFI assets totalling £79m with liabilities totalling £102m should be considered significant. The Monitoring Officer stated that this was not causing her any concern, although it was still being worked on.
- asked about progress on the objections to the accounts, and whether these were new objections or a repeat of previous objections. KPMG advised that one objection to the 2023/24 accounts had been concluded and a provisional response sent through the PSAA. Further comments had been received from the objector and a final response was with the PSAA. A similar but separate objection had been received to the 2024/25 accounts. The response was being finalised internally and it was expected that a response would be issued in a few days.
- in relation to This Land Ltd's accounts, asked whether from an audit perspective recognising only £11.8m as equity was a true and fair reflection of the re-stated loan agreement. KPMG stated that it would be inappropriate for them to comment on This Land Ltd's accounts. They would though make sure that the council's

consolidated position was materially correct. If they felt it was not this would be reported.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the report.
- b) endorse the approach proposed to adjustments identified so far, set out in Appendix 1.
- c) note the audit progress report (Annex A) provided by KPMG.
- d) note the draft value for money report (Annex B) provided by KPMG.

30. Pension Fund Annual Report and Statement of Accounts 2024/25

The committee was advised that the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund draft statement of accounts 2024/25 were clear of material and non-material adjustments and had been produced to the required standards. The draft accounts had been reviewed by the Pension Fund Committee in July 2025 and the annual report had been approved by the Pension Fund Committee in September 2025 and published.

KPMG advised that their audit had not identified any significant issues to bring to the committee's attention.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the report:

- received confirmation from KPMG that the adjustments noted had all been corrected. No further adjustments were expected, but the audit was still being completed.
- commented that the level of investment looked like a more cautious approach. KPMG advised that investment assumptions and estimates could change so the auditor looked at these within a range. They were not concerned about the stated position as it was within a material range with which they were comfortable and it did not impact their opinion.
- noted that the valuation of the Cambridge and Counties Bank (CCB) was identified as a high priority question every year.
- asked whether it was usual for a county council to have a bank within its level 3 pension fund investments. The Executive Director of Finance and Resources stated that CCB was a longstanding asset that predated many of the changes in local government pensions. The Pension Fund Committee had received a report

in September 2025 on the dividends for 2025/26. This was monitored and managed by the Pension Fund Committee and the Fund appointed an executive onto the bank's board. KPMG advised that it was not necessarily for them as auditors to comment on what the Pension Fund decided to invest in unless they had concerns in relation to dividends or valuation. Their work in relation to the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund was thorough and included the use of independent

actuarial specialists and their own in-house specialist teams, as well as reviewing and assessing the Grant Thornton valuations.

- asked whether there were contingency plans in place in case of market volatility. The committee was advised that the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund had a diversified portfolio and the Pension Fund Committee set the investment strategy.
- commented that the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund held significant level 3 illiquid assets and that risk must be actively challenged and explained to members. The member was content to approve the draft statement of accounts included in the meeting papers, but would want a clear expectation of continued scrutiny of level 3 investments. The Chair noted that the Audit and Accounts Committee was not a service committee and that there was a balance to be struck between risk and reward.
- noted that the audit had not yet concluded and that the final version would include KPMG's audit opinion. With the consent of the meeting it was resolved to amend recommendation a) to reflect that the statement of accounts before the committee was still in draft form.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) approve the draft Statement of Accounts and note the Annual Report of the Pension Fund for the 2024-25 financial year.
- b) note the findings of external audit documented in the Year End Report to the Audit and Accounts Committee for the year ended 31 March 2025.

31. Internal Audit Progress Report

The committee learned that there were currently 73 agreed audit actions outstanding, a reduction of 10 since the last report in July. The whistleblowing caseload remained high in comparison to the previous year. Work was taking place around some of the council's key financial systems this year and it was hoped to provide more information on this at the next meeting. The committee's approval was sought to commission an external quality assessment of conformance with Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) in the UK Public Sector.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the report:

- noted that the essential audit recommendation related to the dedicated schools grant (DSG) safety valve remained unresolved. The committee learned that Internal Audit would work with the relevant service to see that the risk had been managed and the action would not be closed until Internal Audit was satisfied that the risk had been addressed. Currently, Internal Audit judged that the level of risk had not reduced.

The Chief Executive advised that statements made by the Chancellor earlier in the week had indicated that the Department for Education would in future take responsibility for High Needs Block costs, but it was not yet known what would happen to the existing debt. It was understood that the Schools White Paper in the spring would address this.

- commented that the investment property audit controls seemed quite poor and asked the root cause of this. The Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management stated that a sample of five properties had been carried out. The council subsequently decided not to enter into further investments of this type so the oversight governance structures that would usually be expected were not put in place because of the small number of properties involved. The agreed actions would address this, and the Assets and Procurement Committee was starting to see improved reporting.
- welcomed confirmation that the Internal Audit team was now fully staffed and the recommendation for an external quality assessment of conformance with GIAS rather than a peer review, which they felt would be of more benefit to the authority.
- asked for more information on the timescale and scope of the planned Internal Audit review of the council's relationship and governance in relation to This Land Ltd. The Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management advised that the review was expected to conclude in January 2026. A copy of the terms of reference would be shared with committee members. **Action required**
- welcomed the report, stating they would expect a firm line to be taken in relation to overdue risks and highlighted the review of the council's relationship and governance in relation to This Land Ltd as crucial.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the content of the report.
- b) review and approve the proposals for the external quality assessment of conformance with Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector, as set out at Section 5.3 of the report.

32. Draft Annual Report of the Audit and Accounts Committee 2024/25

The Audit and Accounts Committee provided an annual report to Full Council each year. The draft provided covered the 2024/25 municipal year and the period to November 2025. It had been produced in consultation with Chair and Vice Chair and key officers and the final version would be presented to Council in December 2025.

A member asked whether the report would be amended to reflect KPMG's findings of substantial weakness in relation to This Land Ltd, while the Chair noted that a number of significant risks and weaknesses had been identified in relation to the dedicated schools grant (DSG). The Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management

advised that paragraph 4.2.10 of the report did highlight weaknesses identified by KPMG in the 2023/24 accounts in relation to the DSG and council owned companies.

It was resolved to review the proposed annual report to Full Council and agree any changes required.

33. Executive Director's Assurance Report: Adults, Health and Commissioning

The Executive Director for Adults, Health and Commissioning (AHC) stated that the report provided assurance around the robust internal controls and governance in place within the Adults, Health and Commissioning directorate. In relation to the annual governance statement action plan he highlighted the induction sessions arranged for Adults and Health Committee (A&H) members which provided training on key areas and the establishment of a new Health Scrutiny Committee. Work on the control environment included the development of a directorate scorecard to set and monitor performance targets, a strategic review of mental health social work and the approval by A&H of a new Strategy for Adults, Health and Commissioning. Progress was being made on all of the Directorate's six outstanding audit actions and two risks had been escalated to the Corporate Risk Register. There had been an increase in complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman during 2024/25, and all of the Ombudsman's recommendations had been actioned. A Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment of adult social care was reported in August 2025 and awarded a rating of 'Good'.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the report:

- commended the Executive Director for AHC and his team on achieving a CQC rating of Good for adult social care.
- noted high levels of debt relating to adult social care provision, including aged debt. The Executive Director for AHC acknowledged that this was a challenge for the directorate and the corporate debt team. Some improvement work was taking place within the current arrangements to secure payment at an earlier opportunity which would improve the position over time. The Chair noted that this was not a new area of concern and that the committee was not seeing the amount of improvement it might have been expecting given previous discussions of this issue.
- commented that it was clear that AHC pressures were a key part of Council's financial position and asked what was being done to ensure any additional cost pressures were not passed on to local council tax payers. The Executive Director for AHC highlighted the focus on effective commissioning which was done clearly and transparently and with a commercial lens. All staff received at least the national living wage and officers scrutinised details of payments and set fee levels annually to ensure money was well spent. The volume of demand from both the growing aged population and the complex needs of some younger adults remained a challenge.
- noted that there had been a material failure in the last few years to accurately forecast the demand for adult social care and asked how this could be improved. The Executive Director for AHC stated that the forecasts were usually quite accurate. However, much of the forecasting was based on historical trends, and the pandemic had both disrupted this historical data and created a spike in demand during the past year. Officers were looking to do more around sharing data with partners and understanding the make-up of the county's population and what future demand might look like. The Executive Director of Finance and

Resources stated that the projections and data would be shared with the Adults and Health Committee in January and members could question and challenge these at that point. Officers continued to learn lessons around forecasting demand, but the impact of the pandemic had been unprecedented.

Members highlighted the importance of looking at data from other organisations and data sharing agreements that might help with forecasting, with one member commenting that they felt there was room for improvement on the data being gathered.

- learned that some of the directorate's work around future commissioning intentions was to prevent, reduce and delay people needing health and social care services and that this was built into its demand modelling. There were also workstreams to support people more creatively to maintain their independence.
- requested an update on the relationship with the local NHS Integrated Care System. The committee learned that council officers were continuing to work closely with local Integrated Care Board (ICB) staff as that organisation evolved into the new Central East ICB. The Health Scrutiny Committee would be scrutinising ICB cost reductions and reconfiguration the following week. Some aspects were still unclear and the council had not yet got the assurances needed to de-escalate this issue from the corporate risk register. The Chair commented that it was concerning that this was on the corporate risk register, but it was unclear what more the council could do.

Summing up, the Chair stated that it was important to recognise how difficult it was to accurately forecast demand for services. Officers used their best efforts to achieve this, but it was also true that getting it wrong had a substantial impact on the council's budget. The Executive Director of Finance and Resources encouraged councillors to explore these issues as part of the budget scrutiny debates in January when service committees would provide feedback to the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee on budget proposals for their areas.

The committee considered the assurance provided over the adequacy of the council's control environment and compliance with corporate governance controls.

34. Change to the Order of Business

With the consent of the meeting the Corporate Risk Register report was moved to the end of the agenda following a member's request to discuss the confidential appendix.

35. Annual Whistleblowing Report

The results of the annual whistleblowing survey showed greater staff awareness of the council's whistleblowing policy and higher completion rates for the associated eLearning following publicity and awareness campaigns around whistleblowing and fraud. The committee's approval was sought to minor changes to the council's whistleblowing policy, anti-fraud and corruption policy and anti money-laundering policy.

The Chief Executive stated that when he re-joined the council in 2022 there were some historical issues around staff not feeling able to speak up. A robust approach

had been taken to strengthen arrangements since then. In part the increase in the number of whistleblowing reports would suggest staff felt more confident to raise concerns. The Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management provided him with independent assurance on this and he was encouraged by the way the culture of the organisation had changed. The results of a recent all-employee survey were currently being analysed and it was expected these would be shared in the new year. It was hoped the results would offer reassurance about staff confidence in raising concerns. The Chief Executive felt that the culture had shifted fundamentally and he would continue to support this.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the report:

- welcomed the increased number of staff coming forward to make whistleblowing reports.
- asked if there was any evidence that staff were less confident whistleblowing where this might relate to an individual or political initiative. The committee learned that Internal Audit would be doing some focus groups in the new year and would report back on that. **Action required**

The Chief Executive clarified that the council's whistleblowing policy was not constrained by political matters and council officers were politically neutral. This position was covered by council policy and by legislation. Anyone coming forward would be supported by the Internal Audit and Human Resources teams and might also be protected by law.

- noted that a key witness had declined to make a statement in relation to a case about direct payment fraud and asked if that person had been a council officer. A response would be provided outside of the meeting. **Action required**
- asked whether there was learning for other schools around mental health support from Case 178: School Health and Safety Concerns. The committee was advised that an investigation had been carried out by the health and safety team. An action plan had been issued and any learning would be taken forward by the health and safety team as part of usual work with other schools.
- asked how they might obtain more information about Case 195: Bank Mandate Fraud against the council. Committee members were advised that Internal Audit held the full details of all of its investigations and committee members could access these via the Teams site or contact the Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management who would signpost them to the information. Rapid action was taken to increase the control environment where this was deemed necessary following an investigation.
- asked if it would be possible to broaden the methodology of the staff survey to separate results by grade to see if that showed up any issues. The Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management advised that the staff survey was anonymous, so it would not be possible to break the results down by grade. However, it was planned to conduct some focus groups in the new year and the results from those could be brought back to the committee with more information on the grades of those involved. **Action required.**

The Chief Executive advised that an all-employee survey had first been carried out in 2023 and the results of a second survey in autumn 2025 were currently being analysed. The response rate in 2023 had been around 50% and this had increased to around 57% in 2025. The commissioned provider advised that a minimum response rate of around 33% was required to be statistically significant and whilst the response rate could be higher it was not unreasonable.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) approve the updated Whistleblowing Policy at Annex A.
- b) approve the updated Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy at Annex B.
- c) approve the updated Anti-Money Laundering Policy at Annex C.

36. Procurement and Commercial Annual Report 2024/25

The Procurement and Commercial Annual Report 2024/25 provided details of the corporate procurement team's activity during this period, including 112 regulated procurements and a significant focus on the implementation of new legislation. Work had also taken place around contract management as part of the 'Our Future Council' programme. The procurement team had a strong reputation both internally and externally and the Head of Procurement and her team were recognised for the improvements in procurement compliance. The report had been presented previously to the Assets and Procurement Committee and it was recommended that future iterations were presented solely to that committee. The Chair advised that he had recommended this change, although this did not mean that there were not still areas for improvement.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the report:

- welcomed the strengthening of procurement governance.
- commented that procurement should achieve the best deal for tax payers. If adding social value saved money that was good, but they could not support it if it did not. The Chair noted that it was for the Administration to set its strategic priorities. The Service Director: Finance and Procurement advised that the council followed national legislative provisions on how social value could be included in procurement. A member briefing session on social value had taken place earlier in the week and was available to councillors to watch through the council's intranet. Social value was a different measure to price and was assessed separately, but he was not aware of this leading to any increase or decrease in costs. The council was at the early stages of using Match My Project which did capture the social value pledged by suppliers and this would continue to be monitored. The Executive Director of Finance and Resources stated that the council's evaluation criteria included quality as well as price. Updates on social value and Match My Project were reported quarterly to the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee.
- expressed the hope that the procurement team would offer proactive support with contracts rather than reviewing them after award. Officers advised that the procurement team was small and highly skilled, and its focus had been on

managing contracts after procurement to add expertise around contract flow and the recovery of income. Its work focused on realising shorter term savings and improving practice around contract management.

It was resolved unanimously that the Procurement and Commercial Annual Report should be considered solely by the Assets and Procurement Committee in the future.

37. Consultancy and Agency Spend

Consultancy and agency spend remained areas of close attention, and this position had been reinforced in-year due to the financial pressures which the council faced. Progress had been made in relation to both consultancy and agency spend and the report set out the position for individual directorates. The committee's attention was drawn to the reducing proportion of agency social workers in the Children, Education and Families (CEF) directorate.

The Chief Executive noted that consultants were engaged rather than employed and could offer specialist expertise for particular programmes and projects where this did not exist in house.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the report:

- asked whether the decreased use of agency and consultancy staff had impacted the service provided. The Chief Executive advised that the use of agency social workers in CEF was now down to around 12% with no detriment to service delivery. This represented a huge improvement. Having a directly employed workforce also offered benefits around stability and staff management.
- asked about forecast consultancy and agency costs. The Chief Executive advised that it was difficult to predict what projects the council might need to undertake, but the corporate leadership team continued to bear down on agency costs wherever possible. Enhanced financial controls were in place on both consultancy and agency spend so while there were no hard targets officers tried to reduce expenditure year on year where possible.
- the Chair noted the necessity for greater expenditure on consultancy and also for middle to higher level staff replacements in the context of local government reorganisation (LGR). The Chief Executive advised that increased consultancy and agency costs for all Cambridgeshire councils were expected due to LGR, based on the experience of other areas where this had already taken place. These costs were expected to be absorbed within councils' existing budgets and would not be funded by Government.
- asked about the average cost for agency staff in comparison to permanent staff. The Service Director: Finance and Procurement advised that comparisons would exist to ensure that comparable rates were paid. More information on this could be provided in a briefing note outside of the meeting. The Chief Executive noted that the council must comply with IR35 requirements. The distinction between

consultancy and agency costs in that context would be provided either in that briefing note or in a future report. **Action required.**

The report was noted.

38. Debt Management Update November 2025

The committee was advised of an overall improvement to the council's debt position. NHS debt was down to £2.4m compared to £28m a year ago, reflecting a pragmatic resolution. The report set out a range of improvement measures being implemented in relation to adult social care (ASC) debt including text message reminders and easier direct debit set up. The business plan would include proposals for further resource in this area. The main area of concern now was ASC debt which was more than 730 days overdue. Going forward, the council was in a better place on this, but there would be a degree of write-off.

The Chair commented that a lot of work had been done around ASC debt over time and there was now better reporting to members, including setting out overall aged ASC debt by debt status. He noted that more than half ASC debt was outside of the council's control, for example waiting for probate or power of attorney, and suggested that future reports separate out those factors within the council's control and those that were not as the effectiveness of the debt team should be measured against those factors within its control. The Service Director: Finance and Procurement welcomed this suggestion, highlighting the need for active management across all areas as a learning point. **Action required.**

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the report:

- discussed the need to balance a proactive approach to debt recovery with the sensitive situations in which people could find themselves. The Executive Director for Adults, Health and Commissioning (AHC) stated that the council's relationship with families was often via a social worker. Officers needed to provide the committee with assurance that families were being supported appropriately to understand and manage debt. The ASC teams was working with the debt team on this.

- asked if there were any available comparators from other similar local authorities and what would be considered best practice. The Service Director: Finance and Procurement advised that it was surprisingly difficult to obtain benchmarking data on ASC debt. Anecdotally it was known that some of the issues faced in Cambridgeshire were being seen nationally. The Executive Director for AHC advised that similar challenges had existed at his previous local authority. For most people the issue was that large ASC debts had accrued because of the time taken to put payment arrangements in place rather than them not wanting to pay for the care. They had looked at ethical debt recovery agencies but that had not been fruitful. The Executive Director of Finance and Resources advised that council treasurers reported that this situation was common amongst county councils.

- asked about management's confidence that officers were getting invoices right first time as often as possible. The Service Director: Finance and Procurement

advised that the debt management and recovery team received few complaints. The Executive Director for AHC advised that the financial assessment team's performance had improved significantly since decoupling from Peterborough City Council. The backlog in financial assessments was down to low numbers and a better working relationship had been established with the debt team at head of service level. There had been significant improvements both in the backlog and in being more proactive in collecting income and starting contributions early to avoid debt accumulating. A more proactive approach was also being taken to speaking directly with people who had accumulated large debts.

- asked if the team was fully staffed and had capacity to maintain this improved position. Officers advised that the financial assessment team was fully resourced and that additional resource had been requested next year for the debt team.
- stated that they were looking for clear and measurable ambition. They could not see a target or timelines for reducing overall debt and asked if that could be included in future reports. The Service Director: Finance and Procurement stated that there was an ASC debt target included in reports to the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee and that could be included in future reports. There was also a target for the level of bad debt provision which could be included in future reports. **Action required.**
- asked if data was available to show the number of people unable to pay compared to those who would not pay. The committee's attention was drawn to the table at Appendix 1 which gave a sense of the reasons for overdue debt. The Chair suggested that one measure would be debt cases which were subject to legal action.

The debt management update for November 2025 was noted.

39. Committee Agenda Plan

The committee agenda plan was noted.

40. Committee Training Plan

The committee training plan was noted.

41. Corporate Risk Register

The report contained an exempt appendix. Committee members confirmed that they wished to discuss that appendix. The public report was discussed first.

The committee reviewed the corporate risk register. This contained the same information as that presented to the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee in October 2025. Attention was drawn to the increasing level of risk identified for Risk 3: The council does not have enough budget to deliver agreed short and medium term corporate objectives. This had increased from 16 to 20 due to a worsening forecast outturn.

The Chief Executive highlighted a new risk which had been added to the corporate risk register relating to effective relationships and governance across the Integrated Care System (Risk 14). A new Central East Integrated Care Board (ICB) was due to be established in April 2026 and would incorporate a number of existing ICBs including Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The existing ICBs were already operating as a committee in common with Robin Porter appointed as Chair of the new body and Jan Thomas as its Chief Executive. The County Council's Chief Executive currently represented Cambridgeshire and Peterborough on the committee in common. From April 2026 that role would transfer to the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and discussions around that were ongoing, recognising that the Combined Authority had no direct remit over adult social care of public health services. The new cluster had confirmed its commitment to the existing north and south place based partnerships in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and a new committee was being established to feed up to the Central East ICB Board. It was noted that as part of the Government's NHS reforms all ICBs had been tasked to reduce their running costs by 50% by October 2025, but they had been unable to do this as there was no provision for redundancy costs. The Government had also announced the abolition of Healthwatch.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the public report:

- expressed thanks to the Chief Executive for his grip on the implications of NHS reform on the county council.
- expressed some reservations about the proposed non-decision making body below the new Central East ICB and noted the impact of Government reforms on the role of the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB). The Chief Executive advised that the future role of HWBs and health scrutiny committees had been raised with both NHS England and Government, but no satisfactory answers had been received so far. The council was also pressing for the statutory role of Directors of Public Health to be recognised at a regional level, but this had not yet been entirely resolved.
- asked whether Risk 3: The council does not have enough budget to deliver agreed short and medium term corporate objectives included the issues highlighted in the Value for Money report like the dedicated schools grant (DSG) and PFI contracts. The Executive Director of Finance and Resources confirmed that both the DSG and the position around commercial activities were included in this risk and that the potential consequences of these risks were set out in the report alongside controls and actions. The Financial Transparency Panel which he chaired was driving mitigations and savings and work to bring this into the base budget was taking place as part of the business planning process. The Integrated Finance Monitoring Report to the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee (SRP) in December would provide a further update and in late January he would deliver his Section 25 finance report to SRP.
- asked about the implications of local government reorganisation (LGR) on the council's risk assessments and risk management plans and processes. The Chief Executive advised that the risk horizon remained medium to long term at this stage as he was not prepared to expose this or any future authority to risk. The focus remained on managing risk as part of business as usual for the current and successor authorities.

42. Exclusion of the Public and Press

It was resolved to unanimously to exclude the public and press from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that Confidential Appendix 2 contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

43. Corporate Risk Register (Confidential)

The committee discussed Confidential Appendix 2 to the Corporate Risk Register. This related to Risk 8: Risk that the council is a victim of cyber crime. The Chair suggested that an exempt report on risk management and cyber security should be added to the agenda for the next meeting. **Action required.**

The Corporate Risk Register was noted.

[Chair]