

Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee

12 November 2025

Present

Councillor D Clements (Chair), Councillor C George, Ms H Gwenllian, Dr M Havard, Mr J Hogg, Councillor M James and Councillor S Skyrme-Blackhall.

Councillor B Price arrived prior to consideration of item 5

Officers in attendance

Ceri Kwiechinski, Astari (Internal Audit – items 10 - 12), Chief Executive, Performance and Compliance Officer, Head of Decarbonisation and Democratic Services Manager.

(Virtual Meeting: 10.00am -11.20am; 11.30am – 12.45pm)

1. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor V Thomas.

2. **Disclosures**

There were no disclosures of interest.

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 23 July 2025 were presented for confirmation and authentication.

On the proposal of Councillor Clements seconded by Councillor George, it was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2025 be confirmed and authenticated.

4. **Action Log**

The Chief Executive noted that the Tier 2 Safeguarding training had been arranged for 8th January 2026; action 1062 regarding deep dives undertaken would be discussed later in the meeting when the risk register was considered.

With regard to action 1086, sickness absence the Committee was advised that current rates were considered to be low and not of concern.

The remaining updates provided in the Action Log were **noted**.

[Councillor B Price arrived]

5. Well-being Objectives Performance Report – Progress against Priority Indicators and Projects/ Corporate Areas of Change Actions/ Annual Governance Statement Improvement Actions for the Period Ending 30 September 2025

The Performance and Compliance Officer presented two reports. The first set out the Authority's performance against its four Wellbeing Objectives (Conservation, Climate, Connection and Communities) within its Corporate and Resources Plan 2023/24 – 2026/27, outlining progress against priority indicators (including new Welsh Government indicators), projects and activities identified in the Authority's Delivery Plans. It acted as part of control monitoring for Risk 1- 4 in the Authority's risk register.

Performance report 2 set out the Authority's performance against corporate area of change deliverables within the Delivery Plan, governance elements of Welsh Government reporting and deliverables from delivery plans, Welsh Government and improvement actions from Annual Governance Statement. It acted as part of control monitoring for Risk Areas 5, 6, 7, 9 and 11 in the risk register.

The report noted that there were potential issues identified around underreporting in some areas that were being addressed, and in response to a question, the officer advised that this was due to changes in staff, and systems where information was stored.

Members asked questions on other aspects of the report including climate based projects, Welsh language, beach wheelchairs and heritage crime and these were answered by officers. It was also noted that several activities had been impacted by the vacancy in the Head of Regenerative Tourism, and the Chief Executive advised that an interim appointment was currently being looked at and the priorities of that role would be reconsidered.

Noted.

6. Action Log for External Performance Audit and Internal Audit (Ending 30 September 2025)

Members were reminded that following a request from the Committee, an Action Log for External Performance Audit and Internal Audit had been created to assist with monitoring of actions agreed from Audit reviews. The report provided an update on each of the actions, and had been amended since the last meeting in response to comments. It was clarified that those actions arising from the Internal Audit reports presented that morning would be added to the Action Log following the meeting.

It was noted that a number of external and internal Audit actions had been completed and updates were provided on other actions.

Members welcomed the report and noted its usefulness in ensuring that actions raised by external and internal auditors were progressed.

Noted.

7. People Services Report

The Chief Executive presented the report on behalf of the acting Head of People Services which updated the Committee on health and safety, including accidents and incidents in the second quarter of 2025, staff sickness absence, training and development, pay and grading, workforce planning and volunteering.

It was noted that there was a significant increase in incidents, however this was positively encouraged as becoming aware of incidents at an early stage ultimately prevented accidents. There had been one RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) incident caused by inappropriate use of a mobility scooter by a member of the public and this had been investigated and additional user training would be provided going forwards.

A Member asked about the number of HAVS incidents reported and the Chief Executive replied that there were limited concerns, as a result of better monitoring using the new watches. He explained that the incidents had been generated when more than 100 points had been reached, whereas 150 points was the threshold for concern; the reporting approach was being reviewed going forward. A RAG indicator for the severity of incidents was suggested by a Member to draw attention to any that were of concern.

Peaks in staff sickness in June and August 2025 were questioned and it was requested that comparators for prior years be included in future reports. The cost of part-time staff, in terms of equipment and training was also noted, however the Chief Executive explained that many part-time roles were in respect of seasonal staff, however flexible working also had benefits in terms of recruitment and retention.

Noted.

[The meeting was adjourned between 11.20am and 11.30am]

8. General Update on Member Development

The report of the Democratic Services Manager updated the Committee on work being undertaken with Welsh Government in respect of

arrangements for evaluation individual Member performance across National Park Authorities across Wales, training offered in the year to date and Member attendance.

In respect of training attendance Members considered that it would be helpful to receive a list of training they had, or perhaps more importantly, had not undertaken to help them identify any areas that they needed to address.

Noted.

9. Budget Report 30 September 2025

The report of the Head of Finance and Fundraising was also presented by the Chief Executive, although he noted that this had also been considered at a Workshop for all Members at the end of October.

The report provided a summary of the Revenue budget, 2025-26 Revenue Forecast, overview of the Capital programme and an outline of the Authority's reserves. It noted that as at 30th September 2025 the Authority's net revenue position showed a net surplus of £563k against an expected budget deficit of £371k (£934k better than budget) with key variances provided. It was currently anticipated that, buffered by the additional revenue funding of £1.4m received from Welsh Government in the prior year, carried forward as an Earmarked Reserve and used to balance the budget, there would be no deficit for 25-26.

The capital programme for the year had increased from the original budget of £1,675k to a revised budget of £1,979k. The increase was due to the inclusion of Phase 2 Traeth Mawr/Newport Sands redevelopment and reflected the tender price for both Phase 1 and 2. The costs would be funded by a combination of SLSP funds and Brilliant Basics award.

The importance of regular reports for both officers and Members was highlighted and it was hoped that the new finance system had helped in this respect. In response to a question, the Chief Executive noted that staff had been made aware of the funding situation and detailed conversations had been had at Team Leader level. He believed that a cultural shift was needed in respect of the approach to generating income.

Noted.

10. Internal Audit Progress Report

Ceri Kwiechinski from the Authority's Internal Auditors, Astari, presented an update of progress towards delivery of the 2025/26 Internal Audit Annual Plan, as well as a summary of the work undertaken to date. It

was noted that since writing the report further work had been undertaken and these reports would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

The report also included an update on relevant legislation and publications which included the European Confederation of Institutes of Internal Auditing annual Risk in Focus report. This included risk associated with new technology and AI. Officers advised that work in that area was developing and that guidelines for use would be developed.

Noted.

11. Exclusion of the Public

On the proposal of Councillor Clements, seconded by Dr Havard it was **RESOLVED** that the public be excluded from the meeting as exempt information, as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, would be disclosed.

12. Internal Audit report on IT Continuity and Disaster Recovery

It was reported that this report had concluded that taking account of the scope of the review and the issues identified, Members could take substantial assurance that the organisation had robust IT continuity and recovery processes in place for responding to an incident impacting on the operation of the organisation's key IT systems.

Noted.

13. Risk Management Policy – Risk Register and Risk Management Statement

The Chief Executive explained that following agreement of a revised version of the Risk Management documents by the Authority in June, an updated version of the Risk Register was presented. An additional document providing a second line of assurance was also provided, in line with the recommendation of the Internal Auditors. Since the last meeting, some actions had been updated and other changes made, and these were outlined.

An update was also provided in respect of agreed actions from a previous internal audit on cyber security.

Noted.

14. Delegation of any issues for consideration by the Continuous Improvement Group

It was **resolved** that there were no issues of concern that the Committee wished to delegate to the Continuous Improvement Group for consideration.