Audit & Governance Committee (A&GC), 23rd November 2026, Agenda Item 5

External Audit report for the year ending 31st March 2026

Committee is asked to consider the external auditor's comments on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ending 31st March 2026.

The council received the completed AGAR for the year ending 31st March 2026, from the external auditor, on 2nd September. I circulated the report to councillors an hour after receipt. The report was noted by Full Council at its meeting on 5th October (Minute 752/26), with the comment the report would be considered in greater depth at this committee's meeting.

The external auditor's comments on the AGAR were:

"Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with the Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

"In completing Section 2 – Accounting Statements on a receipts and payments basis and due to the council not operating a separate bank account for the Warren Recreation Ground (Charity No. 283037), the council has included transactions and/or balances relating to the Ground within the boxes. However, by included these amounts the council has not complied with all of the regulations for the proper preparation of its accounts. As a result, the council should have provided a 'No' response to Assertions 1 & 9 of Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement.

"There are no other matters affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority."

The council raised this concern with its new internal auditor, Tracey Euesden, when she visited on 12th October. Tracey agreed with the concern and said the council should consider again opening a separate bank account for the Warren Recreation Ground. On behalf of the council and the charity, the Finance & General Purposes Committee agreed to do just that at its meeting on 16th November (Minute 860/26). That should address the external auditor's concern.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 19th November 2026

A&GC, 23rd November 2026, Agenda Item 6

Internal Audit report for the year ending 31st March 2027

On behalf of the council, committee is asked to consider the interim internal audit report the year ending 31st March 2027.

As mentioned above, Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd., in the guise of Tracey Euesden, carried out its interim internal audit for the year ending 31st March 2027 on 12th October. This was Tracey's first interaction with this council. Tracey's report was received on 13th October and immediately circulate electronically to all councillors. This report will be formally noted by Full Council in December.

The main concern in Tracey's report was again the lack of a separate bank account for the Warren Recreation Ground and this has been addressed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 19th November 2026

A&GC, 23rd November 2026, Agenda Item 7

Variable direct debits

Committee is asked to review the council's variable direct debits.

Adrian will produce a list for consideration at the meeting. This is as much for information as anything else.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 19th November 2026

A&GC, 23rd November 2026, Agenda Item 8

Investment Policy

Committee is asked to review the council's Investment Policy.

The council's Investment Policy was adopted on 6th January 2020 (Minute 016/20, Resolution 1394) so is overdue a review. I have proposed an addition to the committee's Terms of Reference to review the policy at least every three years.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 19th November 2026

A&GC, 23rd November 2026, Agenda Item 9

Tenancies

Committee is asked to review the information we ask from our tenants annually.

This refers to the council's sporting tenants – Angmering-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club, East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club and East Preston Cricket Club. This should possibly also cover East Preston Stoolball Club although the council does not have a direct agreement with the club.

This has arisen because within the annual licence the council grants to the cricket club it states, "the Club shall send a copy of its annual accounts to the Council each year with the number of its members who live in the village of East Preston." This requirement does not appear to be included within the leases to the tennis and bowls clubs.

Concerns have been expressed the club has not been providing the council with the number of its members who live in the village. The main concern has been if too small a number of members live in the village is the Warren Recreation Ground really being used for the benefit of the village / villagers. I am not suggesting we discuss that point at this meeting, but I think we should perhaps bear this in mind and consider, at a future date, whether we should be asking the same of other clubs and how we would use this information. The licence to the cricket club was last updated in 2018, ten years after its was first used. Perhaps it should be reviewed again in time for 2028.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 19th November 2026

A&GC, 23rd November 2026, Agenda Item 10

Terms of Reference

Committee is asked to review and agree the committee's Terms of Reference for the coming year.

The current Terms of Reference, v10, were last updated and re-adopted on 17th July 2023 and reviewed without changes since.

I have proposed some additions, marked in red.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 19th November 2026

A&GC, 23rd November 2026, Agenda Item 12

Minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2026

Committee is asked to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2026.

The draft Minutes were circulated to all councillors on 17th July asking for any suggested amendments by 27th July. None were received.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 30th July 2026

A&GC, 23rd November 2026, Agenda Item 12

Updates from previous meetings

Minute 203/26 – publication of draft Minutes – in a recent, informal meeting with the new Monitoring Officer at ADC, the subject of recording meetings arose. The new Monitoring Officer also saw no great need to retain the recordings of meetings once the Minutes have been agreed.

Minute 529/26 – insurance – in order to obtain a quote for cyber cover, I have a form to complete sometime.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council** 19th November 2026