

Meeting of:	Governance and Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 22 June 2026
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Resources Scrutiny Committee
Urgent Decision Procedure Used (If yes, why)	No
Item Type	Part I
Report Title:	Governance And Audit Committee Self-Assessment
Portfolio Holder:	No Relevant Cabinet Member
Strategic Leadership Team:	Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer
Lead Officer:	Head of the Regional Internal Audit Service

1.0 What is this report about?

- 1.1 The Governance and Audit Committee is a key component of the Authority's governance framework. The purpose is to provide independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of the Authority's governance, risk and control arrangements. This report provides assurance that the Council's Governance and Audit Committee (GAC) can demonstrate its effectiveness against the good practice principles set by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) using the self-assessment tools provided.

2.0 What are the Recommendations?

	Recommendations – What and How?	Reason for Recommendation – Why?
2.1	Members of the Governance and Audit Committee are recommended to note the outcome of the self-assessment of the effectiveness of the Governance and Audit Committee.	To provide assurance that the Council's Governance and Audit Committee (GAC) can demonstrate its effectiveness against the good practice principles set by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) using the self-assessment tools provided.

3.0 What is the background to this report?

- 3.1 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) has produced a Position Statement (2022) setting out their view on audit committee practice and principles that local government bodies in the UK should adopt. CIPFA's Position Statement sets out the purpose, model, core functions and membership of the audit committee which supplements the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
- 3.2 CIPFA have also published additional guidance to support the establishment and effective operation of audit committees. This includes "*The Audit Committee Member in a Local Authority*" to support elected and lay members in understanding their responsibilities and Guiding the Audit Committee for those that support committee.
- 3.3 CIPFA's additional guidance includes two interactive tools for Governance and Audit Committees to assess their effectiveness:
- The Self-Assessment of Good Practice tool allows Governance and Audit Committees to complete a high-level review of their performance against the good practice principles set out within the CIPFA's Position Statement and guidance.
 - The Improvement Tool supports Governance and Audit Committees to evaluate their impact and effectiveness. This tool identifies 10 broad areas where an Audit Committee will have an impact, and each area is then assessed against:
 - Examples of what the committee might do to have an impact within these areas.
 - Key indicators that might be expected to be in place if arrangements are effective. These indicators are not directly within the control of the Audit Committee.

4.0 What issues are there to be considered?

- 4.1 To provide assurance that the Council's Governance and Audit Committee (GAC) can demonstrate its effectiveness against the good practice principles set by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), the following was initially completed by an Internal Auditor within the team on behalf of the Committee:
- CIPFA's GAC Self-Assessment of Good Practice tool.
 - Evaluating the impact and effectiveness of GAC for the following areas:
 - Good Governance
 - Effective Control Environment
 - Management of Risk
 - Reporting to Stakeholders and Community

- 4.2 The Auditor worked through the self-assessment tool questions, collected evidence and reviewed GAC meetings to answer the questions posed.
- 4.3 A draft document was collated and circulated to GAC members on 2nd April 2026 and 11th May 2026 to provide an opportunity to reflect on the Auditor's responses and make observations and comments.
- 4.4 **Appendix A** is the internal audit report including the completed self-assessment tool and the self-evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the GAC across the 4 areas highlighted above. The internal audit report also includes comments made by the GAC members.
- 4.5 The audit report at **Appendix A** identifies a few strengths and areas of good practice which have been identified as follows:
- The Governance and Audit Committee scored 87.5% (175/200) on the Self-Assessment of Good Practice tool, indicating that the Committee demonstrates a high level of performance against CIPFA's good practice principles.
 - The Governance and Audit Committee has demonstrated a sufficient impact, within their scope of influence, on the promotion of good governance and effective public reporting, supporting effective risk management arrangements, and contributing to the development of an effective control environment across the Council.
- 4.6 Although no High or Medium recommendations were made as a result of the audit, 4 low priority recommendations were made to strengthen the Governance and Audit Committee's conformance with CIPFA's best practice guidance. These are contained within the report at **Appendix A**.

5.0 How has evidence been used to inform the report, including the views of others?

- 5.1 The Auditor worked through the toolkit and collated evidence to support the statements and judgements made. The evidence included the Council's Constitution which contains GAC's terms of reference, various reports including internal audit reports, the Council's risk register, agendas and minutes from GAC meetings and observing recordings of GAC meetings.
- 5.2 All members of GAC were sent a copy of the draft report to reflect on the Auditor's responses and make observations and comments. Any comments made have been considered and included within the report.
- 5.3 In addition, key Council Officers were also given the opportunity to comment and Management comments have been included in the final report.

6.0 What are the next steps if the recommendations are approved?

- 6.1 Members of GAC will have an opportunity to consider the low priority recommendations made to enhance the current position. In addition, training needs will be considered, and a programme will be developed to assist in enhancing performance and effectiveness of the GAC.
- 6.2 The Council will have the assurance that its Governance and Audit Committee can demonstrate its effectiveness and compliance with good practice from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

7.0 How does this report support Vale 2030 and Reshaping?

- 7.1 Not directly however, the Governance and Audit Committee is a key component of the Authority's governance framework. The purpose is to provide independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of the Authority's governance, risk and control arrangements.

8.0 How does this demonstrate the Five Ways of Working?

- 8.1 Long term –Provides positive assurance on sound financial management which gives a firm foundation for future delivery of services.
- 8.2 Integrated – providing audit assurance on the compliance with policies, procedures and legislation and the proper use of public funds, supports service areas to deliver their services in line with the well-being goals. Where appropriate audit reports will include recommendations to make service delivery more efficient.
- 8.3 Involved – An independent audit review was undertaken initially and members of GAC were given the opportunity to comment and contribute to the process.
- 8.4 Collaborative –Good practice is shared across the 3 partner local authorities within the Regional Internal Audit Service (RIAS). RIAS is a member of the Welsh Chief Auditors' Group which also shares good practice on service delivery.
- 8.5 Preventative – identifying weaknesses in control, governance or risk management now will minimise the potential of fraud and error and also small issues escalating into much bigger problems in the future.

Resources

9.0 Finance

- 9.1 There are no resource implications as a direct consequence of this report, but effective audit planning, monitoring and reporting are key contributors in ensuring that the Council's

assets and interests are properly accounted for and safeguarded.

10.0 Workforce

10.1 There are no workforce issues as a direct consequence of this report

11.0 Legal and Equalities

11.1 Does an Equalities Impact Assessment need to be completed? No

11.2 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

11.3 The provision of an adequate and effective Internal Audit function is a legal requirement under the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 as amended from time to time.

12.0 Key Contacts

12.1 **Who are the primary officers to contact with any comments and/or queries on the report?**

Lead Officer: Andrew Wathan Head of Regional Internal Audit Service	Democratic Services Officer: Gareth Davies
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Appendix

Appendix A – Internal Audit Report – Effectiveness of the Governance and Audit Committee

Background Documents

none

Professional, Approachable, Independent

Internal Audit Report




EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

2025/26

Draft Report Issued	2nd April 2026
Final Report Issued	4th June 2026
Report Authors	Bethan Rose – Graduate Auditor Joan Davies – Deputy Head of Regional Internal Audit Service
Report Distribution	Andrew Wathan – Head Regional Internal Audit Service Matt Bowmer - Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer Victoria Davidson - Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal & Democratic Services James Langridge- Thomas - Operational Manager Democratic Services

**REGIONAL INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE /
GWASANAETH ARCHWILIO MEWNOL RHANBARTHOL**



AUDIT OPINION	RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY	
	High Priority	0
	Medium Priority	0
	Low Priority	4
	Total	4
<p>REASONABLE ASSURANCE</p> <p>There is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited.</p>		
<p>STRENGTHS & AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT</p>		
<p>During the audit a number of strengths and areas of good practice were identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance & Audit Committee scored 87.5% (175/200) on the Self-Assessment of Good Practice tool, indicating that the committee demonstrates a high level of performance against CIPFA's good practice principles. • Governance & Audit Committee has demonstrated a sufficient impact, within their scope of influence, on the promotion of good governance and effective public reporting, supporting effective risk management arrangements, and contributing to the development of an effective control environment across the council. <p>During the audit, 4 low priority actions have been identified to strengthen Governance & Audit Committee's conformance with CIPFA's best practice guidance.</p>		

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

An audit of the Effectiveness of Governance and Audit Committee has been undertaken in accordance with the 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan.

This report sets out the findings of the audit and provides an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place. Where controls are not present or operating satisfactorily, recommendations have been made to allow Management to improve internal control, governance and risk management to ensure the achievement of objectives.

Governance and Audit Committee is a key component of the Authority's governance framework. Their purpose is to provide independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of the Authority's governance, risk and control arrangements.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) has produced a Position Statement (2022) setting out their view on audit committee practice and principles that local government bodies in the UK should adopt. CIPFA's Position Statement sets out the purpose, model, core functions and membership of the audit committee which supplements the requirements of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

CIPFA have also published additional guidance to support the establishment and effective operation of audit committees. This includes *The Audit Committee Member in a Local Authority* to support elected and lay members in understanding their responsibilities and *Guiding the Audit Committee* for those that support committee.

CIPFA's additional guidance includes two interactive tools for Governance and Audit Committees to assess their effectiveness:

- The Self-Assessment of Good Practice tool allows Governance and Audit Committees to complete a high-level review of their performance against the good practice principles set out within the CIPFA's Position Statement and guidance.
- The Improvement Tool supports Governance and Audit Committees to evaluate their impact and effectiveness. This tool identifies 10 broad areas where an audit committee will have an impact and each area is then assessed against:
 - Examples of what the committee might do to have an impact within these areas.
 - Key indicators that might be expected to be in place if arrangements are effective. These indicators are not directly within the control of audit committee.

2. OBJECTIVES & SCOPE OF THE AUDIT

The purpose of the audit was to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in respect of the effectiveness of Governance & Audit Committee.

Audit testing has been undertaken in respect of financial year(s) 2024/25 & 2025/26.

The internal control, governance and risk management arrangements have been evaluated against the following audit objectives:

To provide assurance that the Council's Governance and Audit Committee (G&AC) can demonstrate its effectiveness against the good practice principles set by the Chartered

Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). This has been achieved by completing:

- CIPFA's G&AC Self-Assessment of Good Practice tool.
- Evaluating the impact and effectiveness of G&AC for the following areas:
 - Good Governance
 - Effective Control Environment
 - Management of Risk
 - Reporting to Stakeholders and Community

3. AUDIT APPROACH

Fieldwork has taken place following agreement of the audit objectives.

A draft report has been prepared and provided to Governance & Audit Committee members and Officers for review and comment with an opportunity given for discussion or clarification.

The final report will incorporate Governance & Audit Committee comments together with a Management Action Plan for the implementation of recommendations.

Governance & Audit Committee will be advised of the outcome of the audit and may receive a copy of the Final Report.

Management will be contacted and asked to provide feedback on the status of each agreed recommendation, once the target date for implementation has been reached.

Any audits concluded with a *No Assurance* or *Limited Assurance* opinion will be subject to a follow up audit.

4. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A number of staff gave their time and co-operation during the course of this review. We would like to record our thanks to all of the individuals concerned.

The work undertaken in performing this audit has been conducted in conformance with the Global Internal Audit Standards.

The findings and opinion contained within this report are based on sample testing undertaken. Absolute assurance regarding the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements cannot be provided given the limited time to undertake the audit. Responsibility for internal control, governance, risk management and the prevention and detection of fraud lies with Management and the organisation.

Any enquires regarding the disclosure or re-issue of this document to third parties should be sent to the Head of the Regional Internal Audit Service via awathan@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk.

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

1. SELF ASSESSMENT OF GOOD PRACTICE			
Control Objective: Governance and Audit Committee have a high degree of performance against CIPFA's good practice principles, indicating that the committee is soundly based and has a knowledgeable membership.			
	<p>Findings:</p> <p>Governance & Audit Committee scored 87.5% (175/200) on the Self-Assessment of Good Practice tool, indicating that the Committee demonstrates a high level of performance against CIPFA's good practice principles. The complete self-assessment is attached at Appendix A.</p> <p>A summary of the self-assessment of good practice is as follows:</p> <p><u>Audit Committee Purpose & Governance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has established a Governance & Audit Committee (G&AC) in line with the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Review of G&AC minutes demonstrates that Committee has maintained its advisory role by not taking on any decision-making powers. Where appropriate, G&AC promptly escalates issues and concerns with senior management. The 2024/25 G&AC Annual Report, outlining the work delivered by the committee in line with its terms of reference, was presented to Full Council on 1st December 2025. 		
Ref. & Priority	Finding / Weakness	Potential Risk	Recommendation
1.1 Low	Examination of Governance and Audit Committee's terms of reference (TOR) noted that, whilst the purpose of the Committee is expanded within the operational detail about how the Committee functions, there is no explicit statement of purpose as suggested in	CIPFA's audit committee best practice guidance not adopted.	In line with CIPFA's Position Statement and guidance, consideration should be given to including the following within Governance and Audit Committee's terms of reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement of purpose of the committee. Committee's responsibilities in respect

Ref. & Priority	Finding / Weakness	Potential Risk	Recommendation
	CIPFA's Position Statement and guidance.		of ethics and standards.
1.2 Low	Review of Governance & Audit Committee's 2024/25 Annual Report noted that there is no reference to the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A conclusion on the compliance with the CIPFA Position Statement. • Any development work undertaken and any planned improvements following Members knowledge and skills self-assessment questionnaire. 	CIPFA's audit committee best practice guidance not adopted.	In line with CIPFA guidance, consideration should be given to including the following information within Governance & Audit Committee's Annual Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A conclusion on the compliance with the CIPFA Position Statement. • Any development work undertaken and any planned improvements following Members knowledge and skills self-assessment questionnaire.
	<p><u>Functions of the Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The G&AC Committee's terms of reference addresses most of the 'core' audit committee functions identified within CIPFA's Position Statement, including governance and risk management arrangements, counter-fraud, financial management, Annual Governance Statement, financial reporting, Internal Audit, and External Audit. • Examination of G&AC meeting minutes and their 2026/27 Forward Work Plan confirms that adequate consideration is being given to 'core' functions and, where appropriate, 'wider' functions in line with CIPFA guidance. • G&AC Chair has pre-meetings which includes the Head of Internal Audit & External Audit. <p><u>Managers Comment</u> The Reshaping Scrutiny arrangements has enhanced clarity on the boundaries between G&AC and Scrutiny Committees, which is a positive step forward as they have been blurred post 2021.</p>		

Ref. & Priority	Finding / Weakness	Potential Risk	Recommendation
1.3 Low	Examination of Governance and Audit Committee's terms of reference noted that there is no clear reference to the Committee's responsibilities in respect of ethics and standards.	CIPFA's audit committee best practice guidance not adopted.	As per recommendation 1.1.
	<p><u>Membership & Support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> G&AC has been established separately from the executive (Cabinet) and the committee size is not considered unwieldy. Committee has appointed 3 Lay Members, each with professional experience to add value to the knowledge and skill of committee. A knowledge and skill self-assessment questionnaire was completed in 2024/25 to identify any training needs of Members. No gaps in knowledge were identified indicating a satisfactory level of knowledge across committee membership. A draft Member Development Programme has been developed for 2026/27. The programme addresses all core areas of knowledge and skills that Members require as outlined in CIPFA guidance. The Council's Democratic Service provide committee with secretariat and administrative support. Review of G&AC meeting recordings and minutes imply that the G&AC has established good working relations with key people and organisations, including external audit, internal audit, and the Section 151 Officer who all regularly attend meetings. <p><u>Effectiveness of the Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> G&AC meetings are well chaired and key agenda items are addressed with a focus on improvement, as evidenced in meeting minutes. Committee meeting minutes and recordings reviewed evidenced that G&AC has maintained a non-political approach. G&AC engage with a wide range of Council Officers, including for discussions of audit findings, risk and action plans. Where appropriate, the G&AC does make recommendations for the improvement of the Council's governance arrangements and the control environment. A Decision and Action Tracking record is being maintained to assist G&AC with decisions and outstanding actions raised during the exercise of its functions. 		

Ref. & Priority	Finding / Weakness	Potential Risk	Recommendation
<p>1.4 Low</p>	<p>The system used to facilitate hybrid meetings does not allow for members who have joined remotely to be visible to those in the Chamber unless they request to speak. This could have a negative impact on the flow of, and engagement with, committee discussions.</p>	<p>Inability to see all meeting attendees could reduce participation and effectiveness of discussions.</p>	<p>To facilitate effective discussions during hybrid committee meetings, consideration should be given to strengthening current arrangements by ensuring Members attending committee meetings remotely and those in the Council Chambers are visible to each other for the duration of the meeting.</p> <p><u>Managers Comment</u> This is not physically possible using the system currently</p>

<p>2. EVALUATING THE IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE</p>	
<p>Control Objective: Governance and Audit Committee is effective in respect of the contribution it makes to and beneficial impact it has on the Authority's business.</p>	
<p>Findings:</p>	<p>The impact and effectiveness of Governance and Audit Committee has been evaluated for four broad areas where the committee will have an impact. The complete evaluation is attached at Appendix B.</p> <p>A summary of the evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of Governance and Audit Committee is as follows:</p> <p><u>Impact: Promoting the principles of good governance and their application to decision making</u></p> <p>Examples of how Governance and Audit Committee has demonstrated its impact:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft and final 2024/25 Annual Governance Statement was reviewed and recommended for adoption by G&AC. The Council’s draft Annual Self-Assessment 2024/25 was reviewed by G&AC and commentary referred to Cabinet for consideration. G&AC has oversight of the Audit Plans, and quarterly updates on progress against these audit plans, for both Internal & External Audit. <p>Key indicators* of effective arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has a Code of Corporate Governance setting out the Council’s commitment and arrangements for corporate governance. Appropriate governance arrangements have been established for all the Council’s collaborations and arms-length arrangements. The Head of Internal Audit annual opinion on the Council’s governance arrangements for 2024/25 was Reasonable Assurance. 		
Ref. & Priority	Finding / Weakness	Potential Risk	Recommendation
1.5 Low	Governance and Audit Committee meeting minutes do not evidence that the committee received and reviewed the Council’s Code of Corporate Governance when the code was last updated in April 2022.	CIPFA’s audit committee best practice guidance not adopted.	In line with CIPFA guidance, consideration should be given to Governance and Audit Committee reviewing any changes to the Council’s Code of Corporate Governance.
	<p><u>Impact: Contributing to the development of an effective control environment</u></p> <p>Examples of how Governance and Audit Committee has demonstrated its impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> G&AC receive regular position statements regarding recommendations made, implemented and outstanding in respect of both Internal Audit and external regulatory recommendations. G&AC regularly escalate issues and hold senior management accountable for required improvements, as evidenced in meeting minutes. <p>Key indicators* of effective arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Head of Internal Audit’s annual opinion on the Council’s internal control arrangements for 2024/25 was Reasonable Assurance. 		

- The Council completed a self-assessment of compliance to CIPFA's Financial Management Code for 2024/25. This self-assessment was subject to an Internal Audit review which resulted in an overall assurance opinion of Substantial Assurance being issued and sighted by G&AC.

Impact: Supporting the establishment of arrangements for the governance of risk and for effective arrangements to manage risk

Examples of how Governance and Audit Committee has demonstrated its impact:

- G&AC endorsed the Council's Risk Management Policy 2024-2028 which details how the Council defines, manages and monitors risk.
- The Corporate Risk Register is presented to G&AC on a quarterly basis allowing committee to monitor risks and identify any trends.
- G&AC meeting minutes evidence that committee challenge the risks included on the Corporate Risk Register and, where appropriate, obtain further clarification from relevant Council Officers.

Key indicators* of effective arrangements:

- The Head of Internal Audit's annual opinion on the Council's risk management arrangements for 2024/25 was Substantial Assurance. With this opinion, it was noted that absolute assurance of effectiveness cannot be provided as it is impossible to eliminate all risks.
- The 2025/26 Corporate Risk Management Internal Audit, which sampled corporate risks to identify if they are being appropriately managed and progress is being accurately reported, was issued with a Substantial Assurance audit opinion.

Impact: Promoting effective public reporting to the authority's stakeholders and local community, and measures to improve transparency and accountability.

Examples of how Governance and Audit Committee has demonstrated its impact:

- G&AC has made suggestions to improve how the authority discharges its responsibilities for public reporting as evidenced in minutes.
- The Committee has reviewed, and later endorsed, the reporting arrangements for all joint bodies for which the Council is a formal member.
- G&AC presented Full Council with an Annual Report for 2024/25 detailing how the committee has met its terms of reference.

Key indicators* of effective arrangements:

- The Council's 2024/25 financial statements were issued with an unqualified opinion with minimal adjustments by External Auditors.
- An external audit of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2024/25 confirmed that the AGS is consistent with the Council's financial statement and has been compiled in accordance with relevant guidance.



**NB: Key indicators of effective arrangements are not directly within the control of G&AC but are expected if arrangements are effective.*

DEFINITIONS

AUDIT ASSURANCE CATEGORY CODE	
Substantial Assurance	A sound system of governance, risk management and control exists, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
Reasonable Assurance	There is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
Limited Assurance	Significant gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance were identified. Improvement is required to the system of governance, risk management and control to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
No Assurance	Immediate action is required to address fundamental gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance identified. The system of governance, risk management and control is inadequate to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.

RECOMMENDATION CATEGORISATION	
Risk may be viewed as the chance, or probability, one or more of the systems of governance, risk management or internal control being ineffective. It refers both to unwanted outcomes which might arise, and to the potential failure to realise desired results. The criticality of each recommendation is as follows:	
High Priority	Action that is considered imperative to ensure that the organisation is not exposed to high risks.
Medium Priority	Action that is considered necessary to avoid exposure to significant risks.
Low Priority	Action that is considered desirable and should result in enhanced control.



Governance & Audit Committee Self-Assessment of Good Practice

Based on CIPFA's Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (2022) Appendix E Self-Assessment of Good Practice

Good Practice Questions		Does not comply	Partially complies and extent of improvement needed*			Fully Complies	Auditor's Comments
		Major Improvement 0	Significant Improvement 1	Moderate Improvement 2	Minor Improvement 3	No further Improvement 5	
Weighting of Answers							
Audit Committee Purpose and Governance							
1	Does the authority have a dedicated audit committee that is not combined with other functions (i.e., standards, ethics, scrutiny)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Council has established a Governance & Audit Committee in line with the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
2	Does the audit committee report directly to the governing body (PCC and chief constable/full council/full fire authority, etc)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Council's Constitution (Section 25.13 & 25.14) states that the Chair & Member(s) of Governance and Audit Committee are accountable to Full Council.
3	Has the committee maintained its advisory role by not taking on any decision-making powers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G&AC has been delegated decision making powers (Section 14.6.O of the Council's Constitution) however, these relate to the overseeing Internal Audit arrangements (and approving Internal Audit reports), considering issues referred to it (by S151 Officer, Monitoring Officer or a Director), commenting on the work of external audit, approving measures to ensure effective risk management and corporate governance in the council.
4	Do the terms of reference clearly set out the purpose of the committee in accordance with CIPFA's 2022 Position Statement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The purpose of the committee is not clearly stated within G&AC's terms of reference (TOR) as per CIPFA's 2022 Position Statement. CIPFA's suggested layout for the TOR clearly separates the Statement of Purpose and the committee functions. G&AC's purpose is currently indirectly referenced within the committee functions (Council's Constitution Section 9.2 and 14.6.O). Proposed Action: Consideration should be given to including a statement of purpose within Governance and Audit Committee's terms of reference, as per CIPFA's Position Statement 2022.
5	Do all those charged with governance and in leadership roles have a good understanding of the role and purpose of the committee?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report is presented to full Council on an annual basis. This report provides background on the role, purpose and scope of the G&AC and how the committee has met its TOR. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) regularly receive and discuss audit and corporate governance reports prior to their presentation at G&AC (ref SLT Forward Work Programme, agendas and meeting minutes). The Director of Corporate Resources, Section 151 Officer, and Monitoring Officer regularly attend G&AC meetings. G&AC Member draft Development Programme Session 1 "Induction and Overview of Roles" objectives include clarifying the statutory remit

							of G&AC and its relationship with Cabinet, Council and external regulators.
6	Does the audit committee escalate issues and concerns promptly to those in governance and leadership roles?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Review of G&AC minutes show that the committee do escalate issues and hold senior management accountable for required improvements. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Officers were requested to provide an update on outstanding audit recommendation(s) in respect of limited assurance internal audit reports (G&AC minutes 17/02/25 and 24/03/25). G&AC agreed to write to Welsh Government to express concerns that no additional funding has been provided to LAs in respect of the new Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation Legislation. The committee also referred this matter to Cabinet (G&AC minutes 15/12/25). G&AC referred the QTR 2 Corporate Risk Summary Report to Cabinet for consideration with additional comments to highlight increased risks associated with major projects, cyber security and climate change / natural emergency (G&AC minutes 15/12/25).
7	Does the governing body hold the audit committee to account for its performance at least annually?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Full Council receive the draft Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report for consideration (Council minutes 01/12/2025). This report outlines the work delivered by the committee in each financial year.
8	Does the committee publish an annual report in accordance with the 2022 guidance, including:						
	- Compliance with the CIPFA Position Statement 2022	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The 2024/25 G&AC Annual Report demonstrates compliance with CIPFA Position Statement 2022 by showing how the committee has fulfilled its core functions, committee membership, engagement and output.</p> <p>CIPFA's Audit Committees Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police states that the annual report should include a conclusion on the compliance with the CIPFA Position Statement (page 38) however, there is no such concluding statement within the 2024/25 Annual Report.</p> <p>Proposed Action: Consideration should be given to including a conclusion of G&AC compliance with CIPFA's Position Statement within the G&AC Annual Report.</p>
	- Results of the annual evaluation, development work undertaken and planned improvements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The 2024/25 knowledge and skills self-assessment questionnaire results were included within the 2024/25 annual report. The results shows that no members indicated areas of little knowledge or experience. There are no development work or planned improvements discussed within the report.</p> <p>Proposed Action: Consideration should be given to including any committee development work undertaken and any planned improvements in the G&AC Annual Report.</p>
	- How it has fulfilled its terms of reference and the key issues escalated in the year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The 2024/25 G&AC Annual Report details how the committee has delivered its workplan and responsibilities in line with its TOR.</p> <p>Additionally, Appendix 3 provides examples of where G&AC have invited Director(s) / Head(s) of Service into Committee or requested written updates in respect of concerns raised or the implementation of agreed Internal Audit recommendations.</p>

Functions of the committee							
9	Do the committee's terms of reference explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement as follows?						
	Governance Arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G&AC TOR states that the committee will review and assess the corporate governance arrangements of the Authority (Section 14.6.O of the Council's Constitution).
	Risk management arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G&AC TOR states that the committee will review and assess the risk management arrangements of the Authority (Section 14.6.O of the Council's Constitution).
	Internal control arrangements, including:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	- Financial management						G&AC TOR states that the committee will "maintain an overview of Contracts Procedure Rules, Financial Regulations... and make recommendations to Cabinet and / or Council as appropriate". Additionally, the committee should "review and scrutinise the Authority's financial affairs".
	- Value for money						G&AC TOR does not explicitly address value for money but this implied in their functions which includes making "reports & recommendations in relation to the Authority's financial affairs" and ensuring external audit work gives value for money.
	- Ethics and standards						No explicit reference to ethics and standards within the G&AC TOR. Proposed Action: Consideration should be given to including G&AC's responsibilities in respect of ethics and standards within their terms of reference, as per CIPFA's Position Statement 2022.
	- Counter fraud and corruption						G&AC TOR states that the committee will monitor the Council's anti-fraud and bribery strategy and make recommendations to Cabinet and / or Council as appropriate. Additionally, committee has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of the Whistleblowing Policy.
	Annual Governance Statement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G&AC TOR states that the committee will oversee the production of the annual Governance Statement and recommend its adoption (Section 14.6.O of the Council's Constitution).
	Financial Reporting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G&AC TOR states that the committee will review the annual Statement of Accounts (Section 14.6.O Council's Constitution).
	Assurance Framework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	G&AC TOR does not explicitly address the Council's Assurance Framework. The CIPFA Position Statement 2022 states that the committee's TOR should include "promoting the effective use of internal audit within the assurance framework" as a core function.
	Internal Audit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G&AC TOR states that the committee will oversee the Authority's Internal Audit arrangements, contribute to their external quality assessment(s), consider reports from Internal Audit, and agree reports dealing with the management and performance of the providers of internal audit services (S14.6.O Council Constitution).
	External Audit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G&AC TOR states that the committee will oversee the Authority's external audit arrangements, consider External Audit's annual report and specific reports (as agreed), comment on the scope and depth of external audits work and ensure it gives value for money (S14.6.O Council Constitution).
							The CIPFA Position Statement 2022 states that the TOR should include <i>monitoring management action in response to the issues raised by external audit</i> . This is not explicitly addressed in the TOR however,

							committee receive a quarterly report showing progress against external regulatory recommendations and this includes external audit recommendations. This report aligns to the “wider functions” of committee rather than specifically that of external audit.
10	Over the last year, has adequate consideration been given to all core areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G&AC Forward Work Programme shows that consideration is being given to all core functions, as per CIPFA's Position Statement. This includes consideration to the Council's Internal and External Audit arrangements, Accounts, Governance, Risk Assurance and Counter Fraud.
11	Over the last year, has the committee only considered agenda items that align with its core functions or selected wider functions, as set out in the 2022 guidance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G&AC agendas and Forward Work Programme(s) demonstrate that the committee is considering items that align with its core functions or selected wider functions (i.e., Treasury Management).
12	Has the committee met privately with the external auditors and head of internal audit in the last year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G&AC Chair, the Head of Internal Audit and External Auditors have pre-meetings in advance of the public committee meetings.
Membership & Support							
13	Has the committee been established in accordance with the 2022 guidance as follows?						
	- Separation from executive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Council's Constitution states that no more than one member of the Governance & Audit Committee is a member of Cabinet (Section 14.6.O), the Chair of G&AC must be a lay member appointed by the committee and the Vice-Chair must not be a member or assistant to Cabinet (Section 9.2). Review of the composition of G&AC shows no Members sit on Cabinet hence, committee is separate from the executive.
	- A size that is not unwieldy and avoids use of substitutes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G&AC currently has 9 members. CIPFA recommend a committee size of no more than eight members should be established. No legislation stipulates the numbers of members for such committee.
	- Inclusion of lay/co-opted independent members in accordance with legislation or CIPFA recommendations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Governance & Audit Committee composition includes 3 lay members and 6 Councillors. This is one-third lay members and a lay member as Chair in accordance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
14	Have all committee members been appointed or selected to ensure a committee membership that is knowledgeable and skilled?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A recruitment and selection process, agreed by the Senior Management Appointment Committee, was used to appoint all Lay Members. This process included assessing applications against criteria and interviewing. Committee seats for Elected Members are maintained in line with the political balance as set out in the Local Government & Housing Act 1989. Political group leaders elect which members will sit on the Committee.
15	Has an evaluation of knowledge, skills and the training needs of the chair and committee members been carried out within the last two years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A self-assessment questionnaire, based on CIPFA's Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities & Police, was circulated to GA&C members in September 2024 to assess existing skills, knowledge and areas of expertise of members and identify any gaps or training requirements (ref 23.09.24 minutes). This information has been used to compile a programme of learning and development for G&AC.
16	Have regular training and support arrangements been put in place covering the areas set out in the 2022 guidance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Committee has received training during the 2025/26 financial year. This included sessions on counter fraud awareness, Global Internal Audit Standards, the role of Internal Audit, and induction training which included the core functions of committee. No G&AC Elected Members attended a Treasury Management briefing session held in February 2026 for all Councillors.

							A G&AC Member Development Programme has been developed for the 2026/27 financial year. The programme addresses the core areas of required knowledge and skills set out in CIPFA's Audit Committee Practical Guidance and will be delivered by a mix of internal officers and external experts (i.e., CIPFA, Council's Treasury Management Advisors).
17	Across the committee membership, is there a satisfactory level of knowledge, as set out in the 2022 guidance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The 2024/25 knowledge and skills self-assessment questionnaire, based on CIPFA's Audit Committee guidance, was circulated to Members and the results showed no Member had indicated any gaps in their knowledge.
18	Is adequate secretariat and administrative support provided to the committee?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G&AC Annual Report 2024/25 includes details of the qualifications and experience of each Lay Member to support that there is a sufficient level of knowledge across the committee membership for G&AC to be effective. The Council's Democratic Services provide G&AC with support in agenda planning, minute taking, guidance and communications.
19	Does the committee have good working relations with key people and organisations, including external audit, internal audit and the CFO?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G&AC meeting minutes and meeting recordings imply that committee have established good working relations with key internal and external parties. Notably, external audit, Section 151 Officer, Director of Corporate Resources and, where requested, other Chief Officers regularly attend committee meetings. Additionally, G&AC Chair has pre-meetings with the Head of Internal Audit and External Audit prior to the public meetings.
Effectiveness of the Committee							
20	Has the committee obtained positive feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is currently no documented, formal process used by committee to obtain feedback on its performance. CIPFA's Audit Committee Practical Guidance (2022) states that seeking feedback from those interacting with the committee is a possible improvement option where there are potential difficulties or barriers in the committee fulfilling their potential effectiveness. There have been no notable difficulties or barriers in the committee's effectiveness however, the committee should consider the possibility of obtaining feedback from those it interacts with should such difficulties arise in the future.
21	Are meetings well chaired, ensuring key agenda items are addressed with a focus on improvement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Review of G&AC meeting minutes and recordings for 2025/26 financial year noted that agenda items are being consistently addressed and discussions effectively highlight improvements in respect of such items.
22	Are meetings effective with a good level of discussion and engagement from all the members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Review of committee meeting recordings for the 2025/26 financial year noted that there are members which engage with agenda items and discussions do take place. Weighted average contribution from Members in attendance at the 5 G&AC meetings held during the financial year to date (as at March 2025 excluding extraordinary meeting) is 70%. (Note: contribution measured on basis that a Member commented at least once during a meeting). The system used to facilitate hybrid meetings does not allow for members who have joined remotely to be visible to those in Chambers unless they request to speak. This could have a negative impact on participation.

							Proposed Action: To facilitate effective discussions during hybrid committee meetings, consideration should be given to strengthening current arrangements by ensuring Members attending committee meetings remotely and in the Council Chambers are visible to each other for the duration of the meeting.	
23	Has the committee maintained a non-political approach to discussions throughout?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Review of G&AC meeting minutes and recordings for 2025/26 financial year noted no explicit references were made to specific political affiliations and there is no evidence of political sway on decisions made.	
24	Does the committee engage with a wide range of leaders and managers, including discussion of audit findings, risks and action plans with the responsible officers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Review of G&AC meeting minutes show that committee engage with a range of Council Officers for example, various Council Officers attend meetings to present committee with reports. Additionally, G&AC have invited relevant Director / Head of Service into committee or requested written updates to obtain further assurance that action is being taken in respect of agreed Internal Audit recommendations or following findings of limited assurance Internal Audit reports.	
25	Does the committee make recommendations for the improvement of governance, risk and control arrangements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Review of G&AC meeting minutes for the 2025/26 financial year noted that committee have regularly made recommendations to improve the Council's governance arrangements and the control environment.	
26	Do audit committee recommendations have traction with those in leadership roles?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G&AC recommendations are recorded on a Decision and Action Tracking record which is monitored regularly at committee meetings. G&AC meeting minutes show that these recommendations / actions are marked as completed when G&AC receive a report demonstrating completion.	
27	Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The G&AC Annual Report 2024/25 details how the committee has fulfilled its core functions, engagement and its output. As per Question 20, there is currently no documented, formal process used by committee to obtain feedback on its performance to measure its value added objectively.	
28	Does the committee have an action plan to improve any areas of weakness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is no formal action plan maintained to improve any areas of G&AC weaknesses. Notably, examination of meeting minutes did not show the committee had identified any "weaknesses" i.e., the 2024/25 G&AC Self-Assessment did not identify any gaps in knowledge and skills. G&AC resolved that a draft training programme would be developed to reflect the views of the committee. This is recorded, and being monitored, on the Committee's Decision and Action Tracking record which is a standing agenda item.	
29	Has this assessment been undertaken collaboratively with the audit committee members?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This assessment has been completed by Internal Audit.	
Subtotal Score		0	0	0	30	145		
Total Score							175	
Maximum Possible Score							200**	

Form Completed By: Internal Audit
Date Form Completed: March 2026

*Where the committee does not fully comply with an element, three options are available to allow distinctions between aspects that require significant improvement and those only requiring minor changes.

**40 questions/sub questions multiplied by 5



Evaluating the Impact and Effectiveness of Governance & Audit Committee

Based on CIPFA’s Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (2022) Appendix F Evaluating the impact and effectiveness of audit committee

Area where the Governance and Audit Committee can have impact by supporting improvement: 1) Promoting the principles of good governance and their application to decision making		
Examples of how the Governance and Audit Committee can demonstrate its impact:	Evaluation	Any Proposed Actions
Supporting the development of a local code of governance	The Council's Code of Corporate Governance forms part of the Council's Constitution. This was last updated in April 2022 & review of meeting minutes did not show that G&AC received and reviewed it the code at this time.	CIPFA's Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for LAs & Police (page 14) states that the G&AC should review the Code of Corporate Governance and any changes to the arrangements in the year (note it is not the responsibility of the audit committee to establish any local code, but it should be consulted).
Providing a robust review of the AGS and the assurances underpinning it	G&AC are reviewing the draft and final AGS on an annual basis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft AGS 2024/25 reviewed and recommended for adoption by G&AC on 21/07/2025. One Councillor provided commentary on the draft AGS. • 2023/24 AGS with Audited Statement of Accounts) approved by G&AC on 18/11/2024. • Draft AGS 2023/24 reviewed and recommended for adoption by G&AC on 18/07/2024. 	n/a
Supporting reviews / audits of governance arrangements	The 2025/26 Internal Audit Risk Based Audit Plan was presented to G&AC on the 25/06/25 for review and approval. This plan covers the Council's overall control environment including governance arrangements. G&AC receive a quarterly position statement on progress made against the audit work included on the Internal Audit Risk Based Plan. Meeting minutes evidence that Members query and challenge the progression and outcomes of individual audits. G&AC receive the annual Audit Wales Audit Plan which sets out Auditor General's statutory responsibilities and the work external audit will complete during the year. Any planned external audits covering governance arrangements are included in this report. G&AC receive quarterly reports on the progress against Audit Wales's work programme for consideration.	n/a
Participating in self-assessments of governance arrangements	G&AC received the draft Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment report 2024/25 on 21/07/2025. The self-assessment comprises of three main judgements, one of which is "how effective is the Council's governance?" G&AC meeting minutes evidence that the committee discussed the draft self-assessment and this included commentary on governance. The committee referred commentary to Cabinet for consideration in respect of the self-assessment. G&AC received the final draft Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment report 2024/25 on 15/09/2025. Meeting minutes evidence that the committee discussed the updated report and made a recommendation for Cabinet's consideration.	n/a
Working with partner audit committees to review governance arrangements in partnerships	n/a – There are no Partner Audit Committees.	n/a

Key indicators of effective arrangements (These are not directly within the control of G&AC but expected if arrangements are effective)	Evaluation	Any Proposed Actions
Elected members, the leadership team and senior managers all share a good understanding of governance, including the key principles and local arrangements	<p><u>Members</u> Committee has received training during the 2025/26 financial year. This included sessions on Global Internal Audit Standards, the role of Internal Audit, and induction training which included governance and core functions of committee.</p> <p>A G&AC Member Development Programme has been developed for the 2026/27 financial year. The programme addresses the core areas of required knowledge and skills set out in CIPFA's Audit Committee Practical Guidance, and this includes a dedicated session on Governance, Assurance and the Annual Governance Statement.</p> <p>The 2024/25 knowledge and skills self-assessment questionnaire, based on CIPFA's Audit Committee guidance, was circulated to Members and the results showed no Member had indicated any gaps in their knowledge.</p> <p><u>SLT & Senior Management</u> The Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report is presented to full Council on an annual basis. This report provides background on the role, purpose and scope of the G&AC and how the committee has met its TOR.</p> <p>The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) regularly receive and discuss audit and corporate governance reports prior to their presentation at G&AC (ref SLT Forward Work Programme, agendas and meeting minutes).</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Resources, Section 151 Officer, and Monitoring Officer regularly attend G&AC meetings.</p>	n/a
Local arrangements for governance have been clearly set out in an up-to-date local code	The Council's Code of Corporate Governance clearly outlines the Council's commitment to corporate governance and the arrangements put into place to ensure effective implementation and monitoring.	n/a
The authority's scrutiny arrangements are forward looking and constructive	<p>All minutes reviewed between April 2024 - September 2025 (excluding 2 extraordinary meetings) showed that G&AC has discussed and noted the Forward Work Plan at every meeting during 2024/25 FY & 2025/26 FYTD.</p> <p>A draft timetable for the 2025/26 Forward Work Plan was noted by G&AC prior to the start of the financial year (14/02/25 & 24/03/25).</p>	n/a
Appropriate governance arrangements established for all collaborations and arm's-length arrangements	<p>Collaborations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Cardiff Capital Region City Deal</u> - South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee which the Executive Leader & Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources sit. There is also a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee which the Chair of Place Scrutiny Committee sits as VOGC representative. There is also VOGC representatives on a Governance and Audit Sub-Committee • <u>Shared Regulatory Services</u> - Joint Committee with representatives from each Partner Council. Reports are taken to Cabinet of each Council as well. • <u>National Adoption Service & Foster Wales</u> - Joint Committee in place with 2 Cabinet Member representatives from the VOGC. There is also a Joint Scrutiny Committee which includes 2 non-executive members from the VOGC. • <u>Coychurch Crematorium</u> - Joint Committee in place and VOGC currently has 3 representatives on the committee. • <u>Glamorgan Archives</u> - Joint Committee (hosted by Cardiff) has 2 Cabinet Members from VOGC as representatives. • <u>Prosiect Gwyrdd</u> - Joint Committee has 2 Cabinet Members as representatives. <p>Arms-Length Arrangements: <u>Big Fresh Catering Company</u> - VOGC is the sole shareholder and there is currently 4 Council Officers and the Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills as Directors. The arrangement was referenced within the notes to the Council's Statement of Accounts. The Shareholder Committee has authority to undertake all the functions of the Council as shareholder under the Companies Act 2006, and all relevant legislation and associated guidance in respect of its shareholder duties.</p>	n/a

The head of internal audit's annual opinion on governance is satisfactory (or similar wording)	The Head of Internal Audit gave an opinion of Reasonable Assurance on the Council's governance arrangements for 2024/25.	n/a
2) Contributing to the development of an effective control environment		
Examples of how the Governance & Audit Committee can demonstrate its impact:	Evaluation	Any Proposed Actions
Encouraging ownership of the internal control framework by appropriate managers	Not applicable however, G&AC do ensure that Officers learnt lessons from issues identified within audit reports and hold them accountable for making required improvements (later example).	n/a
Actively monitoring the implementation of recommendations from auditors	G&AC receive regular position statements on internal audit recommendations made, implemented and outstanding. Meeting minutes evidence that Members are challenging and holding senior management to account for outstanding audit recommendations. G&AC receive a quarterly report on progress against external regulatory recommendations and refer comments to Cabinet for consideration. This report includes recommendations from the Council's External Auditors.	n/a
Raising significant concerns over controls with appropriate senior managers	The 2024/25 G&AC Annual Report Appendix 3 provides examples of where G&AC have invited Director(s) / Head(s) of Service into Committee or requested written updates in respect of concerns raised or the implementation of agreed Internal Audit recommendations. Review of G&AC minutes show that the committee do escalate issues and hold senior management accountable for required improvements. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Officers were requested to provide an update on outstanding audit recommendation(s) in respect of limited assurance internal audit reports (G&AC minutes 17/02/25 and 24/03/25). G&AC agreed to write to Welsh Government to express concerns that no additional funding has been provided to Authorities in respect of the new Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation Legislation. The committee also referred this matter to Cabinet (G&AC minutes 15/12/25). G&AC referred the QTR 2 Corporate Risk Summary Report to Cabinet for consideration with additional comments to highlight increased risks associated with major projects, cyber security and climate change / natural emergency (G&AC minutes 15/12/25). 	n/a
Key indicators of effective arrangements (These are not directly within the control of G&AC but expected if arrangements are effective)	Evaluation	Any Proposed Actions
The head of internal audit's annual opinion over internal control is that arrangements are satisfactory	The Head of Internal Audit gave an opinion of Reasonable Assurance on the Council's overall internal control arrangements for 2024/25.	n/a
Assessments against control frameworks such as CIPFA's FM Code have been completed and a high level of compliance identified	Annual report presented to G&AC by the S151 Officer detailing the Council's compliance with the Financial Management Code 2024/25 and preparation for 2025/26 with prospects for improvement. Internal Audit reviewed the self-assessment of compliance to the FM Code and provided recommendations where appropriate - For 2024/25, 2 sections of the self-assessment were reviewed (Section 2 Governance & Financial Management Style, and Section 4 Annual Budget) and an overall assurance opinion of "Substantial Assurance" was given.	n/a
Control frameworks are in place and operating effectively for key control areas i.e., information security or procurement	The Head of Internal Audit Opinion Statement on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control for 2024/25 was Reasonable Assurance. This opinion states that, based on the work of Internal Audit for the financial year, no significant cross-cutting control issues have been identified that would impact the Council's overall control environment. Audits included within the 2024/25 Head of Internal Audit Overall Opinion included Information Governance, Data Security Policies, Cyber Security in Schools, and Corporate Procurement. The 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan includes audits across the Council's policies, procedures and operational systems for the current financial year.	n/a

G&AC receive a quarterly position statement on progress made against the audit work included within the Internal Audit Risk Based Plan. This allows the committee to monitor the Council's control environment.		
3) Supporting the establishment of arrangements for the governance of risk and for effective arrangements to manage risks		
Examples of how the Governance & Audit Committee can demonstrate its impact:	Evaluation	Any Proposed Actions
Reviewing risk management arrangements and their effectiveness i.e., risk management maturity or benchmarking	<p>G&AC endorsed the current Corporate Risk Register (supplemented by a risk analysis in the form of a Corporate Risk Summary Report) and the Risk Management Policy (2024 to 2028) on 18/07/2024. This Policy sets out how the Council define, manage and monitor risks.</p> <p>G&AC meeting minutes evidence that committee are challenging the robustness of the risk management process, the scoring process and the risks included on the risk register.</p> <p>G&AC receives a quarterly position statement on progress made against both the Internal Audit Risk Based Plan & Audit Wales Audit Plan, this includes audits looking at the Council's risk management arrangements and / or any identified risks.</p>	n/a
Monitoring improvements to risk management	G&AC Forward Work Plan 2025/26 & 2026/27 includes receiving the Corporate Risk Register on a quarterly basis which allows committee to monitor risks and identify / assess any trends.	n/a
Reviewing accountability of risk owners for major/strategic risk	<p>G&AC receive quarterly updates on corporate risk via the Corporate Risk Register and the supplementary Corporate Risk Summary Report. These reports provide G&AC with a breakdown of the detail of risks and enables committee to call in Officers and / or request written updates.</p> <p>If G&AC raise comments following presentation of the quarterly corporate risk update, a response from Senior Leadership Team / Officer is included at the next quarterly risk update presented to committee. Example 2025/26 Q1 Risk Update Annex B.</p> <p>Internal Audit aim to audit some of the risks included on the Corporate Risk Register to provide assurance that identified risks are being appropriately managed. G&AC review the Internal Audit Plan and progress against this plan during the year.</p>	n/a
Key indicators of effective arrangements (These are not directly within the control of G&AC but expected if arrangements are effective)	Evaluation	Any Proposed Actions
A robust process for managing risk is evidenced by independent assurance from internal audit or external review	<p>The Head of Internal Audit's opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements for 2024/25 was "Substantial Assurance" - With this opinion, it was noted that absolute assurance of effectiveness cannot be provided because it is not possible to eliminate all risks of failure to meet the targets in Council policies, aims and objectives.</p> <p>The 2025/26 Internal Audit Risk Based Audit Plan was presented to G&AC on the 25/06/25 for review and approval. This plan covers the Council's overall control environment including the risk management framework.</p> <p>During 2025/26 financial year, Internal Audit completed a Corporate Risk Management audit to review a sample of corporate risks to identify if they are being appropriately managed and progress is being accurately reported. This audit was issued with a Substantial Assurance audit opinion indicating a sound system of governance, risk management and control exists, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited.</p> <p>G&AC receive the annual Audit Wales Audit Plan which sets out Auditor General's statutory responsibilities and the work external audit will complete during the year. This audit plan is based on Audit Wales's assessment of risks of the Council and the wider Local Government sector in Wales.</p>	n/a

4) Promoting effective public reporting to the authority's stakeholders and local community and measures to improve transparency and accountability		
Examples of how the Governance & Audit Committee can demonstrate its impact:	Evaluation	Any Proposed Actions
Working with key members/the PCC and chief constable to improve their understanding of the AGS and their contribution to it	<p>G&AC Members received induction training in September 2025 which was delivered by Head of Internal Audit, Section 151 Officer & Director of Corporate Resources. This session included information on what the AGS should include and the role of committee in respect of the AGS.</p> <p>The forthcoming 2026/27 G&AC Training Programme Session 5 (Governance, Assurance & Annual AGS) has an objective of reviewing how the AGS is prepared and the Committee's role in approving it.</p>	n/a
Improving how the authority discharges its responsibilities for public reporting i.e., better targeting the audience and use of plain English	<p>Review of meeting minutes show that G&AC makes suggestions on the Council's public reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21/07/2025 G&AC referred to Cabinet for consideration that an easy-to-read version of the Council's Annual Self-Assessment 2024-25 Report is devised post-consultation. 21/10/2025 G&AC referred to Cabinet for consideration that a plain language summary version of the Final Annual Self-Assessment 2023-24 Report is produced for members of the public. 18/07/2024 G&AC made suggestions on the presentation of the Council's updated Risk Management Policy 2024- 2028 including the language and terminology used (Policy is on Council's external website). 	n/a
Reviewing whether decision making through partnership organisations remains transparent and publicly accessible and encourages greater transparency	<p>21/07/2025 G&AC received a report on the reporting arrangements for all joint bodies of which the Vale of Glamorgan are formal members. Meeting minutes show that G&AC requested further clarity on where Joint Committee minutes are reported as part of the Council's democratic process.</p> <p>15/09/2025 G&AC reviewed, endorsed and referred to Cabinet the new process for reporting Joint Committee minutes. This process involves a quarterly report being presented to Cabinet to provide an overview of all Joint Committee Meetings held and a link to the respective minutes.</p>	n/a
Publishing an annual report from the committee	<p>The 2024/25 G&AC Annual Report was presented to full Council on 1st December 2025. The report can be accessed via the Council's external website.</p>	n/a
Key indicators of effective arrangements (These are not directly within the control of G&AC but expected if arrangements are effective)	Evaluation	Any Proposed Actions
The authority meets the statutory deadlines for financial reporting with accounts for audit of an appropriate quality	<p>The unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2024/25 were signed by the Finance Officer on 30th June 2025 and sent to Audit Wales the same day. This was a locally agreed Audit Wales deadline due to resource constraints. This did not meet the statutory deadline of the 31st May 2025 (Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations and the Council issued a Regulation 10 Notice advising that this deadline would not be met.</p> <p>G&AC approved the unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2024/25 on the 21st July 2025. Minutes evidence that G&AC expressed concern regarding the delay of SEWCJC accounts being prepared for audit and the impact this was having on the production of the Council's Statement of Accounts.</p> <p>The Council is required to publish its annual Statement of Accounts by 31st July, including the annual governance statement and audit opinion. Due to a national backlog, the Auditor General for Wales extended the audit opinion certification deadline to 31st October hence, the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts were not published by 31st July.</p> <p>G&AC received and approved the Final Statement of Account & AGS 2024-25 at an extraordinary meeting held on 20th November 2025.</p> <p>G&AC receive quarterly progress reports on Audit Wales's work and these reports include updates on progress against statutory financial reporting deadlines.</p> <p>G&AC Forward Work Plan 2025-26 and 2026-27 show that the committee plan to receive the draft and audited statement of accounts each year.</p>	n/a

<p>The external auditor completed the audit of the financial statements with minimal adjustments and an unqualified opinion</p>	<p>Audit Wales Audit of Accounts Report 2024-25 issued in November 2025 states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intent to issue an unqualified opinion on the accounts once the Council provided a Letter of Representation. • There were no other significant matters to report • There was one non-trivial uncorrected misstatement in the account. As agreed by Council, this would be amended in the 2026-27 accounts. 	<p>n/a</p>
<p>The Letter of Representation was noted by Council on 01/12/2025 and Audit Wales certified the account as per Auditor General for Wales letter dated 03/12/2025.</p>		
<p>The authority has published its financial statements and AGS in accordance with statutory guidelines</p>	<p>The Council's Statement of Accounts 2024/25 has been published on the Council's external website. This includes all required financial statements and the Annual Governance Statement.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>The Statement of Accounts for the past 6 financial years are available on the Council's external website.</p>		
<p>The AGS is underpinned by a robust evaluation and is an accurate assessment of the adequacy of governance arrangements</p>	<p>G&AC received the 2024/25 AGS and recommended its adoption by the Leader & Chief Executive on 21/07/2025.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>The 2024/25 AGS explains how the Council has complied with the 7 principles of the CIPFA and SOLACE Framework - Delivering Good Governance in Local Government 2016 for the year ended 31st March 2025.</p>		
<p>The review of effectiveness of the governance framework is informed by the work of Internal Audit, Chief Officers, External Auditors and other regulatory bodies.</p>		
<p>The actions taken to address significant governance issues identified in previous AGS have been included in the 2024-25 AGS.</p>		
<p>The 2024/25 AGS shows no significant governance issues were identified within the annual review however, for each of the 7 CIPFA Principles, areas for development have been identified.</p>		
<p>An external audit of the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 was completed and no significant issues identified. The Auditor General for Wales's certification letter stated that the AGS was consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with guidance.</p>		
<p>Form Completed By: Internal Audit</p>		
<p>Date Form Completed: March 2026</p>		