



Governance and Audit Committee Meeting

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street,
Colchester, CO1 1PJ**

Tuesday, 16 December 2025 at 18:00

The Governance and Audit Committee considers and approves the Council's Statement of Accounts and reviews the Council's annual audit letter. The Committee also deals with the Council's governance, risk management and audit arrangements. To make recommendations to the Council on functions such as Elections and bye laws, and determine Community Governance Reviews.

Information for Members of the Public

Access to information and meetings

You have the right to attend all meetings of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet. You also have the right to see the agenda (the list of items to be discussed at a meeting), which is usually published five working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published. Dates of the meetings are available here:

<https://colchester.cmis.uk.com/colchester/MeetingCalendar.aspx>.

Most meetings take place in public. This only changes when certain issues, for instance, commercially sensitive information or details concerning an individual are considered. At this point you will be told whether there are any issues to be discussed in private, if so, you will be asked to leave the meeting.

Have Your Say!

The Council welcomes contributions and representations from members of the public at most public meetings. If you would like to speak at a meeting and need to find out more, please refer to the Have Your Say! arrangements here:

<https://colchester.cmis.uk.com/colchester/HaveYourSay.aspx>.

Audio Recording, Mobile phones and other devices

Public meetings are streamed for live broadcast over the internet and the recordings are available to listen to afterwards on the Council's YouTube channel. Audio recording, photography and filming of meetings by the public is welcomed. Phones, tablets, laptops, cameras and other devices can be used at all meetings so long as this doesn't cause a disturbance. Voice or camera flash functions must not be used and devices must be set to silent.

Access

There is wheelchair access to the Town Hall from the rear of the Town Hall off St Runwald Street and wheelchair access to the Old Library from West Stockwell Street. There is an induction loop in all the meeting rooms.

Security Procedures

It is a condition of entry that members of the public are searched on arrival. This is conducted by a member of the Council Hall Keeping team. This may include a search of your person and bags with an electronic device or by hand. Please inform the Hall Keeping Team if you have a health condition. The team will always include a female member. The team are Security Industry Authority trained and the searches are conducted in line with the relevant regulations. Please note that placards, large bags, umbrellas, food and items that might disturb the meeting must be left in reception for collection on exit.

Facilities

Toilets with lift access are on each floor of the Town Hall. A water dispenser is available on the first floor.

Evacuation Procedures

Evacuate the building using the nearest available exit. Make your way to the assembly area in the car park in St Runwald Street behind the Town Hall. Do not re-enter the building until the Town Hall staff advise you that it is safe to do so.

Colchester City Council

telephone (01206) 282222 or textphone 18001 followed by the full number you wish to call

e-mail: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk

www.colchester.gov.uk

Governance and Audit Committee - Terms of Reference (but not limited to)

To consider and approve the Council's Statement of Accounts in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Core functions as defined in the CIPFA's Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police 2022

1. Maintenance of governance, risk and control arrangements:
 - Supporting a comprehensive understanding of governance across the organisation,
 - Considering the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements,
 - Monitoring the effectiveness of the systems of internal control.
2. Financial and governance reporting
 - Ensuring that the authority's accountability statements properly reflect the risk environment,
 - Supporting the maintenance of effective arrangements for financial reporting.
3. Establishing appropriate and effective arrangements for audit and assurance
 - Considering the arrangements in place to secure adequate assurance across the authority's full range of operations,
 - Overseeing the independence of the authority's internal audit functions,
 - Considering the opinion, reports and recommendations of external audit and inspection agencies and the implications,
 - Contributing to the operation of efficient and effective external audit arrangements,
 - Supporting effective relationships between all providers of assurance, audits and inspections.
4. Annual Report
 - Publishing an annual report on the work of the Committee by reporting annually to Full Council on the Committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations,
 - Reporting to Full Council where the Committee wishes to raise concerns within its remit.

Miscellaneous regulatory matters

To make recommendations to Council on functions such as elections, the name and status of areas and individuals, and byelaws.

To determine and approve Community Governance Reviews.

An overview of the Council's complaint handling procedure and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman investigations.

Shareholder Committee for Council owned companies

To consider, review and make recommendations to Cabinet regarding the activities and financial performance of Colchester Commercial (Holdings) Limited, its subsidiary companies and Colchester Borough Homes Limited.

Consider an annual review of the business plans of Colchester Commercial (Holdings) Limited (including its subsidiary companies) and performance of the companies including delivery of the dividend; and the Annual Report, Governance Statement and performance of Colchester Borough Homes Limited.

The creation of any arrangements for any future Council owned company including activities and performance.

Landlord Social Housing

To monitor (in the City Council's capacity as landlord of social housing) compliance and delivery of the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer and Rent Standards, providing assurance to Full Council.

Standards

To consider reports from the Monitoring Officer on the effectiveness of the Members' Code of Conduct, and to advise the Council on the adoption or revision of the Code.

To receive referrals from the Monitoring Officer into allegations of misconduct and to create a Hearings Sub-Committee to hear and determine complaints about Members and Co-opted Members referred to it by the Monitoring Officer.

To conduct hearings on behalf of the Parish and Town Councils and to make recommendation to Parish and Town Councils on improving standards or actions following a finding of a failure by a Parish or Town Councillor.

To inform Council and the Chief Executive of relevant issues arising from the determination of Code of Conduct complaints.

To grant dispensations, and to hear and determine appeals against refusal to grant dispensations by the Monitoring Officer.

To make recommendations to Council regarding the appointment of Independent Persons.

General

To review of the Constitution including governance issues around formal meetings, processes and member training and to make recommendations to Council.

The complete Terms of Reference of the Governance and Audit Committee are contained within the Council's Constitution.

COLCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
Governance and Audit Committee
Tuesday, 16 December 2025 at 18:00

The Governance and Audit Committee Members are:

Councillor Alison Jay	Chair
Councillor Dave Harris	Deputy Chair
Councillor Paul Dundas	
Councillor Sam McLean	
Councillor Sara Naylor	
Councillor Natalie Sommers	
Councillor William Sunnucks	

The Governance and Audit Committee Substitute Members are:

All members of the Council who are not currently appointed by the Council to the Board of Colchester Commercial (Holdings) Limited or the Board of Colchester Borough Homes Limited as a director.

AGENDA
THE LIST OF ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING
(Part A - open to the public)

Please note that Agenda items 1 to 2 are normally dealt with briefly.

1 Welcome and Announcements

The Chairman will welcome members of the public and Councillors and remind everyone to use microphones at all times when they are speaking. The Chairman will also explain action in the event of an emergency, mobile phones switched to silent, audio-recording of the meeting. Councillors who are members of the committee will introduce themselves.

2 **Substitutions**

Councillors will be asked to say if they are attending on behalf of a Committee member who is absent.

3 **Urgent Items**

The Chair will announce if there is any item not on the published agenda which will be considered because it is urgent and will explain the reason for the urgency.

4 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors will be asked to say if there are any items on the agenda about which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest which would prevent them from participating in any discussion of the item or participating in any vote upon the item, or any other registerable interest or non-registerable interest.

5 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Councillors will be invited to confirm that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2025, including those contained in Part B of the agenda, are a correct record.

Governance and Audit Committee draft minutes 21-10-2025

9 - 14

6 **Have Your Say! (Hybrid Council Meetings)**

Members of the public may make representations to the meeting. This can be made either in person at the meeting or by joining the meeting remotely and addressing the Committee via Zoom. Each representation may be no longer than three minutes. Members of the public wishing to address the Committee must register their wish to address the meeting by e-mailing democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk by 12.00 noon on the working day before the meeting date. In addition, a written copy of the representation will need to be supplied.

7 **Core**

7(i) **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman – Annual Review Letter 2025**

15 - 20

The Committee will consider a report which provides details of Colchester City Council's Annual Review Letter for 2025, which is provided by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman detailing the number of complaints it has received regarding each local authority.

7(ii) **Review of the Council's Ethical Governance Policies**

21 - 106

The Committee will consider a report requesting the Committee to review the Council's updated Ethical Governance policies. These are the key policies which set out the standards of conduct and

integrity that the Council expects of councillors, staff, partners, suppliers and customers when conducting Council business. They contain procedures for dealing with breaches of the policies and processes to be followed.

7(iii) **Review of Local Code of Corporate Governance 2024/25** 107 - 150

The Committee will consider a report requesting that it review the Local Code of Corporate Governance for 2025/26. The Local Code of Corporate Governance is how the Council demonstrates that its structures comply with the recognised principles of good governance. The Committee is also requested to recommend that Full Council includes the Code in its Policy Framework which comprises all of the Authority's key policies.

8 **Standards**

8(i) **Annual review of the Members' Code of Conduct and the Council's Localism Act Arrangements** 151 - 174

The Committee will consider a report requesting that it review the Councillors' (Members') Code of Conduct, the Council's Localism Act Arrangements for dealing with complaints made regarding councillors. The report also provides an update on the number and types of complaints received under the Members' Code of Conduct.

8(ii) **Member Officer Protocol** 175 - 186

The Committee will consider a report inviting to approve the Member / Officer Protocol and that it be included in the Council's Constitution.

8(iii) **Gifts and Hospitality – Review of Guidance for Councillors and Policy for Employees** 187 - 198

The Committee will consider a report requesting that it approve updated guidance for councillors regarding any gifts and hospitality received in their role as a councillor and for employees in relation to any gifts and hospitality received.

8(iv) **Guidance for Members on Dispensations** 199 - 206

The Committee will consider a report requesting that it approve the attached Guidance for Members and Co-opted Members on Dispensations and that it be included in the Constitution.

8(v) **Guidance for Councillors and Officers on Outside Bodies** 207 - 220

The Committee will consider a report requesting that it approve the attached Guidance for Councillors and Officers on Outside Bodies and that it be included within the Constitution.

8(vi) **Constitutional amendment** 221 - 222

The Committee will consider a report which requests that it endorse the proposed change by the Leader of the Council to the Leader's Scheme of Delegation to Cabinet.

9 Shareholder

9(i) Amphora Draft Accounts 2024/2025 223 -
226

The Committee will consider a report which presents to it the unaudited accounts for the Council's wholly owned companies for 2024/2025.

9(ii) Verbal update from the Managing Director, Amphora Group

The Committee will receive a verbal update from the Managing Director, Amphora Group in respect of Amphora's Financial Model and Grounds Maintenance.

10 Work Programme 2025-2026 227 -
232

The Committee will consider a report which sets out its work programme for the current municipal year.

11 Exclusion of the Public (not Scrutiny or Executive)

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

Part B
(not open to the public including the press)

Not for publication - Governance and Audit Committee Draft minutes 21-10-2025

- This report is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (financial / business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding information).

Item 9(i) confidential appendices

- This report is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (financial / business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding information).

