# Audit and Governance Committee

**Date:** Monday, 24 November 2025
**Time:** 6.30 pm
**Venue:** Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

**Members (Quorum: 3)**
Gary Suttle (Chair), Spencer Flower (Vice-Chair), Belinda Bawden, Neil Eysenck, Jill Haynes, Andrew Parry, Andy Todd, Beryl Ezzard, Ryan Holloway and Chris Kippax

**Co-opted Members:** S Roach and R Ong.

**Chief Executive:** Catherine Howe, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic & Governance Services Meeting Contact john.miles@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting, apart from any items listed in the exempt part of this agenda. If you would like to attend this meeting and have any specific requirements please contact the Democratic Services Officer named above.

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## Agenda

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| 4. | **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** | 3 - 4 |

Representatives of town or parish councils and members of the public who live, work, or represent an organisation within the Dorset Council area are welcome to submit either 1 question or 1 statement for each meeting. You are welcome to attend the meeting in person or via MS Teams to read out your question and to receive the response. If you submit a statement for the committee this will be circulated to all members of the committee in advance of the meeting as a supplement to the agenda and appended to the minutes for the formal record but will not be read out at the meeting. The first 8 questions and the first 8 statements received from members of the public or organisations for each meeting will be accepted on a first come first served basis in accordance with the deadline set out below.

All submissions must be emailed in full to
john.miles@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30 am on 19th November 2025.

When submitting your question or statement please note that:

- You can submit 1 question or 1 statement.
- A question may include a short pre-amble to set the context.
- It must be a single question and any sub-divided questions will not be permitted.
- Each question will consist of no more than 450 words, and you will be given up to 3 minutes to present your question.
- When submitting a question please indicate who the question is for (e.g., the name of the committee or Portfolio Holder)
- Include your name, address, and contact details. Only your name will be published but we may need your other details to contact you about your question or statement in advance of the meeting.
- Questions and statements received in line with the council's rules for public participation will be published as a supplement to the agenda.
- All questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

# Audit and Governance Committee

## 24th November 2025.

**Public Participation question submitted by Torsten Mills.**

The Grant Thornton commentary on governance (page 21) says that concerns were raised in September 2024 with findings reported in November 2024 in relation to the health and safety buildings debacle. I then believe that there was a further wait for the SWAP investigation to be completed. There is a comment in this agenda that states there has not been adequate governance arrangements and a lack of management and member control and seems to indicate that not enough progress has been made this year to address their concerns.

I've read through the Council's response and I've got to agree with Grant Thornton. I'm sympathetic that there obviously had to be a major overhaul with some considered thought behind how and what changes were to be made and that takes time, but we are only just reviewing actions in early December 2025? The scheme of delegation comes out in January 2026?

From personal experience, I sat in the meeting in August 2025 and highlighted that internal audit actions raised had not been dealt with appropriately or had been delayed with no reasons as to why that was the case. It was decided that each department head affected was to be present at the next meeting to discuss how they were mitigating the risks raised, as suggested by Simon Roach. This quite clearly should have been a separate agenda point, and I'd query why this did not happen? Two heads did actually speak at the next meeting, and I'd like to thank Louise Ryan for actually taking the initiative to address the issues raised proactively.

On a side note, having listened to Mr Roach's comments over the last year's worth of committee meetings I've listened to, I can only imagine how frustrated he must be that his suggestions just aren't acted upon quickly. His insights are the most constructive thing that comes out of these meetings.

I have to look at this Committee and wonder where is the leadership, where is the urgency, where is the accountability? There was more uproar on a slight typo in the last meetings report that named the building control team rather than the health and safety team than at any other time, which seemed completely disproportionate given the larger challenges that you face. You need to set the agenda, the tone and make the most of the time people are putting in to being here. It all just appears we are going through the motions.

So, to the Chair, given the comments from Grant Thornton about inadequate governance, what changes (if any) will you be making to the way this Committee is run going forward?