

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE**  
**MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL**  
**held on Wednesday 25 October 2023**  
**in the Council Chamber, Belle Vue Terrace, Malvern at 6.00 pm**

**Councillors**

Cllr Caroline Bovey  
Cllr Jude Green  
Cllr David Mead  
Cllr David Watkins

**In attendance**

Linda Blake – Town Clerk  
Louise Wall – Minute Clerk  
  
Cllr Clive Hooper (Mayor)

**Absent**

Cllr Josephine Leibrandt (apologies)

**17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from Cllr Josephine Leibrandt were **NOTED**.

**18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**19. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous Audit Committee meeting held on 23 August 2023 be approved and adopted as a correct record of the proceedings.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

**20. BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY**

Further to the Internal Auditor's recommendation that members look at creating a business continuity policy, members discussed the various threats to the continuity of Town Council business which could be categorised into three areas:

- Threat to staffing and councillors
- Threat to data
- Threat to equipment and buildings

**Threat to staffing and councillors**

The loss of key staff: the Town Clerk and Operations Manager are both able to fulfil the other's role in the event of short-term absence. However, if the length of absence was likely to be long-term, a locum Town Clerk could be recruited; external recruitment would be needed for the Operations Manager's role.

Loss of councillors: if resignations of councillors took the council to less than two-thirds, it would be placed into special measures.

Loss of office and operations team employees: all employees are multi-skilled and therefore able to take on other roles within day-to-day activities at short notice as a temporary measure. However, the loss of specific skills would still have an immediate impact.

In any of these cases, the likely period of absence would be assessed and then measures taken as necessary, including consultation with the Emergency Decision Making Group, recruitment, employment of locum clerk etc.

Threat to data

In recent years, all data has been stored in electronic format and held on a cloud-based system which is password protected. In the event of equipment and physical files being lost, staff would be able to access cloud-based files and continue business once new laptops had been purchased.

Members of the committee made the following suggestions:

- Any important physical files, including cemetery records, should be kept in a fireproof safe.
- It was suggested that older documents of importance should be scanned and uploaded to the cloud.
- Passwords should be updated regularly.

Threat to equipment and buildings

Members questioned what procedures were in place in the event of fire. It was noted that the register in the hallway was not always filled in and councillors and visitors should be reminded to sign in and out of the building.

General points for the draft policy

Members agreed that the policy should:

- include a step-by-step process of how the plan would be actioned
- classify different types of incidents and grade them in terms of importance or seriousness
- recognise that it was impossible to plan for every eventuality and to make a general policy

The Town Clerk was asked to draft a policy based on the sample document used at the last meeting, incorporating the comments made. This would be made available to committee members before Christmas and ahead of the next meeting.

**21. DATE OF NEXT AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING**

It was **AGREED** that the next meeting of the Audit Committee would be on Wednesday 31 January 2024 at 6.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 6.50 pm

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(Chairman)