

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE
MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL
in the Community Hub Meeting Room, Victoria Park
held on Wednesday 16 July 2025 at 6pm**

Councillors

Cllr David Watkins
Cllr David Mead
Cllr Anne Cherry

Apologies

Cllr Emma Green

Also Attending

Linda Blake – Town Clerk
Julia Winkworth – Minute Clerk
Cllr Marilyn Birks - Mayor

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were noted from Cllr Emma Green.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr David Watkins for Malvern in Bloom

11. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the following meeting be approved and adopted as a correct record of the proceedings, and these were signed by the Chair:

- Audit Committee meeting Wednesday 11 June 2025

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

12. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2025/26

Report AC01/25 was received and accepted.

The Town Clerk gave a brief background of the services which Mr Duncan Edwards of DKE Audit Services had provided to date.

The committee **RECOMMENDED** that Mr Duncan Edwards of DKE Audit Services would continue as the Town Council's internal auditor for a further one-year period in 2025/26 as the Town Council are satisfied with the competence and independence of the internal auditor as appointed.

13. RISK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS AROUND OBJECTIVES

Following the completion of the Aims and Objectives for the Town Council, the committee are asked to highlight any risks and look at how they are managed.

A general discussion resulted in the following suggestions:

- Financial - Budget contingency for AGAR and Year End Accounts
- Agency/Professional contingency
- Communication – report on social media/website/communication quarterly basis
- Councillors to liaise with their wards
- Feedback from the community on an event (AB or Community Engagement)
- Produce information on our Councillors, Who's Who type page

- QR code on each site so community can report any problems or issues along with a phone number
- Could Councillors take part in basic planning training (MHDC)

The committee then went on to discuss possible risks against the Aims and Objectives from April 2025. It was **AGREED** that officers would produce a detailed risk analysis document from these discussions, and this would be considered in more detail at the next meeting of this committee.

14. **IDENTIFICATION OF RISKS FROM DEVOLUTION PROCESS**

The chair gave a brief overview of what the devolution process could result in - a unitary authority for the whole of Worcestershire, or a North and a South Worcester Authority. The implications for the Town Council, if District Council was removed, could be quite a different view in the future than present.

The committee discussed and **AGREED** that the risks to the Town Council were as noted below.

Risks

- Town Council could end up with more assets than we are able to maintain effectively and not have the budget for ongoing maintenance and repairs / replacement as necessary.
- There could be a loss of opportunity if the Town Council do not move fast enough to negotiate on assets which would be valuable for community/localism or financial possibilities.
- Assets such as buildings, toilets etc could be lost to the community. If these assets are transferred to the unitary authority and they do not wish to maintain them within Malvern, they could be closed or sold.
- The Town Council would inherit cost incurring assets but lose out on income generating assets.
- Loss of localism.
- Possible increase in precept and how this would be received by the taxpayers of Malvern.
- Lack of co-ordinated thinking and the three tiers of Councils not working together overall to get the best outcome for the public
- Extra responsibilities being taken on, which may require skills sets and expertise not currently held by Town Council staff.

It was **AGREED** to review these risks again at the next meeting as more may need to be added.

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

It was **AGREED** that the next meeting of the Audit Committee would be on Wednesday 3 December 2025 at 6.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 7.58pm.

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(Chairman)