



BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Governance Committee held on Thursday 23 April 2026 in the Council Chamber, Arms Everytne House, Blyth, NE24 2AS immediately following the Special Full Council Meeting which commenced at 5:30pm.

Councillors: BW Elliott (Chair), M Peart (Vice Chair), RA Baker, A Cartie, D Campbell, D Carr, TE Elliott, B Erskine, D Johnson, D Nicholson, N Rolls and D Swinhoe.

Officers: M Wilkinson (Town Clerk), E Brown (Deputy Town Clerk), H Jenner (Principal Officer), E Mullen (Democratic Services Officer)

Also Present: Mike Slaughter

Members of the Public – 0

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and introduced Mike Slaughter, the current Internal Auditor who will be presenting as part of Agenda Item 4.

Cllr Erskine wished all Members a Happy St George's Day.

Minute No	
1	Apologies for Absence Apologies were noted for Cllr M Nicholson.
2	Disclosure of Interests and Grant of Dispensations None.
3	Minutes of the previous Governance Committee It was noted that the minutes of the Governance Committee meetings held 6 January 2026 were approved at the meeting of the Council held 15 January 2026.
4	Internal Audit Presentation

	<p>Following Member requests at a previous meeting, the Town Clerk introduced the Internal Auditor to provide an overview of the work he does and the report he produced.</p> <p>The Internal Auditor gave his presentation about the internal audit process and his role in ensuring transparency and compliance.</p> <p>He offered Members the opportunity to ask any questions in relation to the role of the internal audit.</p> <p>The Chair and Members thanked Mike for his comprehensive presentation.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>5.1 Decision Report - Review of Out-turn Against Probable 2025/26</p> <p>The outturn report for 2025-26 was presented by the Town Clerk. Members were offered the opportunity to ask questions.</p> <p>Cllr D Nicholson asked if it would be possible to have a clearer reserves use strategy to show how financial resilience would benefit the community, as well as financial updates and a performance risk summary for the 500k market investment to offer more transparency for residents. The Town Clerk agreed that this can be something that could be done and there would be an opportunity to publish something after the minutes have been approved which offers further transparency for residents.</p> <p>Following discussions regarding the reserves use strategy, a proposal was made to freeze the precept for at least 1 year to help the public, or to look at the possibility of how we freeze it. The Chairman and Town Clerk explained the risk of such a proposal with the market position for the future being unknown and unpredictable.</p> <p>Moving forward with the proposal, it was requested that this was a named vote.</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr B Erskine Seconder: Cllr D Carr</p> <p>In favour: Cllr B Erskine, D Carr Against: Cllr BW Elliott, M Peart, RA Baker, D Campbell, TE Elliott, D Johnson, D Nicholson, N Rolls, D Swinhoe Abstention: Cllr A Cartie</p>

	<p>This proposal was not supported.</p> <p>The committee RESOLVED to confirm the draft financial situation following the completion of the accounts for 2025/26 for Council to approve. It was noted that the year end investment certificate on 31 March was awaited and an estimated receipt had been included. The accounts would be adjusted to reflect the receipt of the certificate for approval at Council.</p> <p>The committee RESOLVED to agree the carried forward financial commitments to be finalised in 2026/27, re previously funded initiatives and Committee decisions, which will subsequently revise the initial budget set of £1,590,373 at Council on the 15 January 2026. This increase is in the order of £61,391 and does not affect the medium-term plan.</p> <p>5.2 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26</p> <p><i>Cllr B Erskine left the meeting.</i></p> <p>The committee RESOLVED to approve the documents listed in connection with the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26 prior to approval by the Council before submission to the External Auditor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Councils Internal Auditors Report <p><i>Cllr Erskine returned to the meeting.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Annual Internal Audit Report for 2025/26 iii. Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26 iv. Accounting Statements for 2025/2026 <p><i>Mike Slaughter left the meeting.</i></p> <p>5.3. Appointment of Internal Auditor 2026/27</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that Governance Committee recommend to Council to confirm the appointment of Mike Slaughter as Internal Auditor for the financial year 2026/27.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Date & Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Governance Committee is scheduled to take place on Thursday 9 July 2026 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Arms Everytne House.</p>

The meeting closed at 7:35pm