

Name of the committee:	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
Chair of the committee:	Karen Lewis
Reporting period:	Meeting held on 25 June 2025
Key decisions and matters considered by the committee	
Committee meeting 25 June 2025:	
<p>Internal Audit: The Head of Internal Audit gave an overview of 3 completed internal audit reports, which completed the planned audits for the 2024/2025 internal audit plan. Information Governance (reasonable assurance), Performance Management (reasonable assurance) and Finance (substantial assurance).</p> <p>The committee also considered the Head of Internal Audit Opinion for 2024/2025 – this was confirmed as overall reasonable assurance and would now be reported in the governance statement as part of the Annual Report and Accounts.</p> <p>The committee also endorsed the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2025/2026. The plan had been developed in consultation with the Executive Team and prior consultation with the committee. The first of the 4 audits for the year will be on external partnerships – service providers and will commence in July 2025.</p> <p>Audit tracker: 30 actions have been completed on the tracker during the last year and 8 remained. Executive Team had requested that 3 actions be considered as superseded by more recent audit activity (information governance and performance management). It was confirmed by internal audit that this would be appropriate and supported by the committee.</p> <p>5 recommendations remained outstanding. It was confirmed that resources have been committed to progress this work. The committee raised concerns about these long-standing overdue actions, and requested revised, realistic target dates, which would be determined by the Executive Team. A narrative report would be added to future reports to further outline proposed remedial activity.</p>	

Audit Wales: The committee received and endorsed the Audit Wales audit plan for 2025/2026, which focused on the processes around the annual report and accounts work for the coming year.

Annual Report and Accounts 2024/2025: The continuing work on the production of the Annual Report and Accounts was outlined. The committee has met informally on the 4 June to provide initial feedback, and further feedback was provided at the meeting. The documentation was being finalised with the draft accounts to be submitted to Audit Wales on the 7 July and the draft annual report on the 14 July.

The documentation would now enter the audit process with the outputs expected later in the summer with final consideration by the committee and Board approval in the autumn.

Risk report: A new style narrative risk report was submitted to the committee. It was welcomed by committee members who highlighted the improved accessibility of the narrative format. The Board Secretary confirmed future reports would combine narrative and dashboard formats and include risk appetite considerations.

Finance Report: The committee heard that confirmation was still awaited on the 2025/26 budget allocation letter from Welsh Government. However, teams were building budgets based on agreed work programmes to improve ownership and flexibility. Internal budget monitoring processes have been streamlined. Dashboards were also under development.

The medium-term financial plan is in development, considering cost pressures and future scenarios with the contingency having been adjusted from £276,000 to £46,000 following recent budget realignments. Also, a review of acceptable contingency levels was planned by the Strategic Director of Operations and Corporate Services.

Routine reports: The committee as part of its programme of routine reporting received updates on the work undertaken on declarations of interest and gifts and hospitality reporting and noted improved reporting and coverage across the organisation.

A report on complaints and feedback was also received. No formal complaints about Llais had been received, but a range of positive and constructive feedback had been received from across Wales.

Committee effectiveness report and work programme: The outputs of the committee's effectiveness review session on 7th May were presented. Members agreed the summary and development plan for the coming year. The Board Secretary is incorporating these actions into the committee's formal forward work programme and will circulate for final approval at the September 2025 meeting.

Matters requiring Board level approval or consideration

- None required

Key risks and issues/Matters of concern

- The committee has been actively engaged in the overall development work being taken forward on the risk framework for Llais. Further work continues on risk reporting, as outlined above.
- The first committee additional risk assurance session will be undertaken in early August 2025 on the key risk area of cyber, digital and IT/information assets. This session was originally planned for the end of June but had to be rescheduled.

Planned committee business for the next reporting period

- The committee will continue to focus on its planned programme of work including receipt of the first internal audit report from the 2025/2026 programme, and updates on finance and risk management. At the next meeting, the committee will also receive reports on Welsh language compliance and information requests.
- The additional meeting at the end of September 2025 will receive the outputs from the audit of the draft annual report and accounts by Audit Wales. A recommendation will also be made to the Board for the adoption of these public disclosure documents.

Date of the next meetings:

Friday 1 August 2025 – Additional risk assurance session on cyber, digital and IT.

	<p>Wednesday 10 September 2025 – routine committee meeting.</p> <p>Wednesday 30 September 2025 – additional committee meeting to consider the final draft annual report and accounts.</p>
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