



SHIRE OF
DOWERIN
TIN DOG TERRITORY

MINUTES

Audit, Risk and Improvement
Committee Meeting

Held in Council Chambers
13 Cottrell Street, Dowerin WA 6461
Friday, 24 April 2026

UNCONFIRMED

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Shire of Dowerin

Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Meeting

24 April 2026

1. Official Opening

The Chair welcomed those in attendance and declared the Meeting open at 2:21 pm.

2. Record of Attendance / Apologies / Leave of Absence

Committee Members:

Ms TA Jones	Independent Chairperson
Cr DP Hudson	Deputy (Councillor)
Cr JA Graffin	

Staff:

Ms M Barthakur	Chief Executive Officer
Ms K Rose - <i>via Teams</i>	Manager of Governance and Community Services
Ms M Sumpton	Executive Assistant
Ms R Wall	Manager of Corporate Services

Auditors:

Mr M van der Merwe	Executive Director - Pitcher Partners
Mr S Hoar	Director, OAG

Apologies:

Cr RI Trepp	
Cr JC Sewell	<i>Proxy</i>

3. Public Question Time

Nil

4. Disclosure of Interest

Nil

5. Confirmation of Minutes of the Previous Meeting(s)

- 5.1 Audit, Risk, and Improvement Committee Meeting held on 20 February 2026.
[Attachment 5.1A](#)

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation/Resolution – 5.1

Moved: Cr Hudson

Seconded: Cr Graffin

1291

That, in accordance with Sections 3.18 and 5.22(2) of the *Local Government Act 1995*, the Minutes of the Audit, Risk, and Improvement Committee Meeting held on 20 February 2026, as presented in Attachment 5.1A, be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

CARRIED 3/0

For: Ms T Jones, Cr Graffin, Cr Hudson

6. Presentations

7. OFFICER'S REPORTS

7.1 Audit Entrance Meeting

Corporate & Community Services



Date:	10 February 2026
Location:	Not applicable
Responsible Officer:	Manisha Barthakur, Chief Executive Officer
Author:	Kahli Rose, Manager of Governance and Community Services
Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1995;</i> <i>Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996</i>
SharePoint Reference:	Organisation/Governance/Committees
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Attachments:	Nil

Purpose of Report

Executive Decision

Legislative Requirement

Summary

Pitcher Partners will attend the meeting to formally commence the 2025/26 audit and present their audit approach, scope, and key timelines.

Background

Pitcher Partners have been appointed as the Shire's external auditors for the 2025/26 financial year, replacing the previous audit provider.

The audit entrance meeting is a standard requirement at the commencement of the audit process and provides an opportunity for the Committee to understand how the audit will be delivered and any areas of focus.

Comment

Pitcher Partners will present:

- Their audit methodology, including risk-based audit planning and reliance on internal controls
- Key audit risks and focus areas, including financial reporting risks and any sector-specific risks relevant to local government
- Their engagement plan, including communication protocols with management and the Committee
- Expectations around documentation, timelines, and staff availability during fieldwork

The following key milestones have been confirmed:

- Interim fieldwork 4-8 May 2026
- Final fieldwork 5-9 October 2026
- Draft financial statements due to auditors 30 September 2026
- Exit meeting 30 November 2026 at 6:00pm

Pitcher Partners have also advised that contingent liability disclosures (if available) will be reviewed during the interim audit. This approach allows sufficient time for any required amendments prior to finalisation of the financial statements.

Operational requirements have also been identified, including:

- (1) Accommodation for two audit staff during both fieldwork periods (Monday to Friday)
- (2) Access to key systems, records, and finance staff during the audit periods
- (3) Timely completion of working papers and supporting documentation by management

This meeting provides the Committee with an opportunity to:

- Confirm expectations of the auditors
- Seek clarification on audit risks and focus areas
- Ensure alignment on timelines and deliverables
- Establish a clear working relationship with the new audit provider

Consultation

Manisha Barthakur, Chief Executive Officer

Kahli Rose, Manager of Governance and Community Services

Rachael Wall, Manager of Corporate Services

Megan Shirt, Accwest

Marius van der Merwe, Pitcher Partners

Steven Hoar, Office of Auditors General

Policy Implications

Nil

Strategic Implications

Strategic Community Plan

Community Priority:	Our Organisation
Objective:	Deliver a high standard of governance and administration
Outcome:	4.1
Reference:	4.1

Asset Management Plan

Nil

Long Term Financial Plan

Nil

Statutory Implications

Local Government Act 1995

Section 7.9 – Audit to be conducted

1. *A local government is to have its accounts audited annually by an auditor appointed by the local government.*
2. *The auditor is to examine the accounts and annual financial report submitted for audit and is to report to the local government –*
 - a. *whether the accounts are based on proper accounts and records; and*
 - b. *whether the annual financial report –*
 - i. *is consistent with those accounts and records; and*
 - ii. *presents fairly the results of the financial operations of the local government.*

Risk Implications

Risk Profiling Theme	Failure to fulfil statutory regulations or compliance requirements
Risk Category	Compliance
Risk Description	Short term non-compliance but with significant regulatory requirements imposed
Consequence Rating	Major (4)
Likelihood Rating	Unlikely (2)
Risk Matrix Rating	Moderate (8)
Key Controls (in place)	Appointment of external auditors; defined audit schedule; governance oversight through ARIC
Action (Treatment)	Ongoing coordination with auditors; timely preparation of financial statements and supporting documentation
Risk Rating (after treatment)	Adequate

Financial Implications

External audit costs are provided for within the adopted 2025/26 budget

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation/Resolution - 7.1

Moved: Cr Graffin

Seconded: Cr Hudson

1292

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee notes the audit entrance meeting with Pitcher Partners as the contractor from the Office of the Auditor General and accept the proposed audit approach and timeline for the 2025/26 financial audit.

And Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee notes that representatives from both OAG and Pitcher Partners are present in this meeting in person.

CARRIED 3/0

For: Ms T Jones, Cr Graffin, Cr Hudson

Please note: the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee has limited authority to make decisions. All recommendations of the Committee are presented to Council for ratification.

UNCONFERMED

7.2 Appointment of the Independent Deputy Presiding Member

Governance and Compliance



Date:	20 April 2026
Location:	Not applicable
Responsible Officer:	Manisha Barthakur, Chief Executive Officer
Author:	Kahli Rose, Manager of Governance and Community Services
Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i>
SharePoint Reference:	Organisation/Governance/Committees
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Attachments:	Nil

Purpose of Report

Executive Decision

Legislative Requirement

Summary

To consider applications received through the Expression of Interest (EOI) process and recommend the appointment of an Independent Member as Deputy Presiding Member of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC).

Background

As part of the Shire's transition to the updated Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) framework, an Expression of Interest (EOI) process was undertaken to recruit an independent member to the Committee in the role of Deputy Presiding Member.

The ARIC Terms of Reference were updated in February 2026 to reflect the new governance requirements, including the inclusion of an independent Deputy Presiding Member.

The EOI process was publicly advertised, seeking suitably qualified and experienced individuals with skills in governance, audit, risk management, finance, or public sector leadership.

Applications closed at 5:00pm on 20 April 2026, only one application was received.

Comment

The expression of interest process for the Independent Deputy Presiding Member of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) closed at 5:00pm on 20 April 2026.

A total of one application was received via email on 20th April 26.

The application was submitted by Ms Nadine McMorran, a former Councillor with prior experience in local government governance, committee processes, and an established understanding of the Shire's operations and strategic priorities.

Ms McMorran brings relevant experience that is directly aligned to the requirements of the role, including:

- Demonstrated experience as an elected member within local government governance structures

- Strong understanding of committee decision-making, risk oversight, and governance frameworks
- Familiarity with the Shire's operational environment, enabling immediate effectiveness and continuity support

Assessment Outcome

Following assessment, the preferred candidate is:

Ms Nadine McMorran

Recommendation Rationale

The appointment of Ms McMorran is recommended on the basis that:

- She is the only applicant received through the public expression of interest process
- She meets the capability requirements for the position based on prior governance experience
- She provides immediate capacity to support continuity and effectiveness of ARIC operations

The recommended appointment supports the Shire's commitment to strong governance, continuity of committee operations, and effective oversight of risk and audit functions.

Consultation

Manisha Barthakur, Chief Executive Officer
Kahli Rose, Manager of Governance and Community Services
Rachael Wall, Manager of Corporate Services

Policy Implications

Development and/or review of multiple policies is required, including:

- Fraud Risk Prevention Policy
- Whistleblower Policy
- Internal Control Policy
- Debt Management Policy
- Asset Management procedures
- IT governance documentation

Strategic Implications

Strategic Community Plan

Community Priority: Our Organisation
Objective: Deliver a high standard of governance and administration
Outcome: 4.1
Reference: 4.1

Asset Management Plan

Nil

Long Term Financial Plan

Nil

Statutory Implications

The **Local Government Act 1995 (WA)**, as amended by the Local Government Amendment Act 2024 (Tranche 2 reforms), establishes mandatory requirements for the composition and governance of Audit, Risk and Improvement Committees (ARIC).

Under the amended ARIC framework, each local government is required to appoint:

- An Independent Presiding Member (Chair); and
- An Independent Deputy Presiding Member

Risk Implications

Risk Profiling Theme	Failure to fulfil statutory regulations or compliance requirements
Risk Category	Compliance
Risk Description	Short term non-compliance but with significant regulatory requirements imposed
Consequence Rating	Major (4)
Likelihood Rating	Unlikely (2)
Risk Matrix Rating	Moderate (8)
Key Controls (in place)	Independent external reviews; governance oversight through ARIC; compliance calendar
Action (Treatment)	Development and implementation of action plan; ongoing monitoring and reporting to ARIC
Risk Rating (after treatment)	Effective

Financial Implications

An allowance for the Deputy Presiding Member will be set at the same rate as the meeting attendance allowance payable to Councillors for committee meetings. Any cost will be accommodated within existing budget allocations for committee allowances.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation/Resolution - 7.2

Moved: Cr Hudson

Seconded: Cr Graffin

1293


That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee, in accordance with Section 7.12A of the *Local Government Act 1995*, and Regulation 17 of the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*, recommends that Council:

1. Notes that the expression of interest process for the Independent Deputy Presiding Member of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee closed on 20 April 2026 at 5:00pm, with one application received;
2. Notes that Ms Nadine McMorran is the sole applicant and a former Councillor with relevant experience in local government governance and committee processes;
3. Endorses to appoint Ms Nadine McMorran as Independent Deputy Presiding Member of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee;
4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to finalise appointment arrangements post council approval.

CARRIED 3/0

For: Ms T Jones, Cr Graffin, Cr Hudson

Please note: the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee has limited authority to make decisions. All recommendations of the Committee are presented to Council for ratification.

7.3 Risk Dashboard Review	
<h2>Governance and Compliance</h2>	
 SHIRE OF DOWERIN TIN DOG TERRITORY	
Date:	21 April 2026
Location:	Not applicable
Responsible Officer:	Manisha Barthakur, Chief Executive Officer
Author:	Maddison Sumpton, Executive Assistant
Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1995;</i> <i>Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996</i>
SharePoint Reference:	Organisation/Governance/Committees
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Attachments:	Attachment 7.3A - April Risk Dashboard Action List

Purpose of Report

- Executive Decision
 Legislative Requirement

Summary

This Item presents the Risk Dashboard Quarterly Report to the Audit, Risk, and Improvement Committee for consideration and, if satisfactory, recommendation to Council for adoption. The report highlights numerous risks that are not adequately managed and require attention.

Background

The Shire maintains a Risk Dashboard to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of controls across operational, governance, compliance, and strategic functions.

The Dashboard focuses on:

- Identifying areas where controls are operating effectively
- Highlighting gaps where controls are incomplete or not yet implemented
- Supporting prioritisation of management actions and oversight by Council and the Audit, Risk, and Improvement Committee

The Risk Dashboard applies a three-tier risk rating framework (Low, Moderate, High), reflecting the maturity and effectiveness of controls rather than incident severity.

Comment

The Risk Dashboard demonstrates that while many controls are operating effectively, several areas require continued focus and prioritised action.

Asset Management Practices

Key Risks:

- Incomplete or outdated asset valuations and management plans
- Misalignment between asset plans, long-term financial planning, and the ISP
- Potential misinformed capital and maintenance decision-making

Actions Required:

- Complete outstanding asset reviews and valuations
- Finalise and align AMP, LTFFP, and ISP
- Implement scheduled reviews and ongoing monitoring processes

Business & Community Disruption

Key Risks:

- Insufficient testing of emergency, business continuity, and disaster recovery arrangements
- Reduced organisational resilience during major incidents or service interruptions

Actions Required:

- Undertake scheduled emergency exercises and BCP testing
- Finalise and implement IT disaster recovery planning
- Ensure annual review and testing cycles are embedded

Failure to fulfill Compliance Requirements (Statutory and Regulatory)

Key Risks:

- Non-compliance with legislative, regulatory, and audit obligations
- Increased exposure to adverse audit findings and reputational damage

Actions Required:

- Progress and adopt governance, HR, and information management frameworks
- Address outstanding audit findings within agreed timeframes
- Maintain training and induction programs for Councillors and staff

Document Management Processes

Key Risks:

- Non-compliance with record keeping and information management requirements
- Inability to locate, retain, or dispose of records appropriately

Actions Required:

- Review and implement the Information Management Framework
- Finalise SharePoint and record keeping system reviews
- Deliver staff training aligned with PRIS requirements

Employment Practices

Key Risks:

- Inconsistent workforce planning and capability development
- Gaps in staff wellbeing, training, and performance management processes

Actions Required:

- Implement the Workforce Plan and training program
- Progress health and wellbeing initiatives
- Maintain regular review of induction and performance processes

Engagement Practices

Key Risks:

- Inconsistent handling of complaints, feedback, and community engagement
- Reduced community confidence and transparency

Actions Required:

- Review and update community engagement policies and frameworks
- Improve complaint handling processes and registers
- Undertake regular community feedback and satisfaction activities

Environment Management

Key Risks:

- Non-compliance with environmental and waste management obligations
- Legacy infrastructure and systems creating long-term liability

Actions Required:

- Progress waste management planning and compliance reviews
- Address sewage system audit and valuation requirements
- Finalise closure and remediation planning where required

Errors, Omissions and Delays

Key Risks:

- Inconsistent procedures and undocumented controls
- Increased likelihood of operational errors and delays

Actions Required:

- Centralise and document key procedures and controls
- Review and update internal checklists and guidance material
- Embed review cycles to ensure ongoing accuracy

External Theft and Fraud (Incl. Cyber)

Key Risks:

- Weak access controls and incomplete asset and security registers
- Increased exposure to fraud, cyber incidents, or data loss

Actions Required:

- Review and update access control and key registers
- Improve asset recording and photographic registers

Management of Facilities/Venues/Events

Key Risks:

- Inconsistent inspection, maintenance, and event management practices
- Potential safety and compliance issues at public facilities

Actions Required:

- Develop and implement an event management framework
- Complete inspections and maintenance schedules
- Undertake community facilities reviews

IT or Communications Systems and Infrastructure

Key Risks:

- Insufficient documentation of IT systems and replacement planning
- Reduced system resilience and business continuity capability

Actions Required:

- Document IT frameworks, services, and replacement programs
- Maintain regular review of IT service agreements
- Progress internal documentation and asset management improvements

Misconduct

Key Risks:

- Inadequate documentation of controls and oversight mechanisms
- Reduced ability to detect, prevent, or respond to misconduct

Actions Required:

- Document organisational controls and systems
- Complete Regulation 17 and FMR reviews (currently in progress), and present findings to ARIC

Project/Change Management

Key Risks:

- Inconsistent project delivery and change implementation
- Lack of standardised methodologies and documentation

Actions Required:

- Develop and document a project management framework
- Review communication and engagement practices for change initiatives
- Embed standard templates and reporting processes

Safety and Security Practices

Key Risks:

- Potential workplace safety incidents if controls are not maintained
- Security vulnerabilities across Shire facilities

Actions Required:

- Continue regular inspections, audits, and hazard reviews
- Maintain WHS committee oversight and reporting
- Monitor and update security systems and procedures

Supplier/Contract Management

Key Risks:

- Inconsistent contract oversight and monitoring

Actions Required:

- Implement a centralised contract management system
- Maintain standardised contract templates and controls
- Continue review and improvement of financial and reporting tools

Consultation

Manisha Barthakur, Chief Executive Officer

Kahli Rose, Manager of Governance and Community Services

Ben Forbes, Manager of Infrastructure and Projects

Policy Implications

Council Policy 2.2 – Risk Management Policy

Strategic Implications

Strategic Community Plan

Community Priority:	Our Organisation
Objective:	Deliver a high standard of governance and administration
Outcome:	4.1
Reference:	4.1

Asset Management Plan

Nil

Long Term Financial Plan

Nil

Statutory Implications

Local Government Act 1995

Section 5.41 – Functions of CEO

(1) The CEO is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the local government.

Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996

Regulation 17 – Review of systems and procedures

A local government is to review the appropriateness and effectiveness of its systems and procedures

Risk Implications

Risk Profiling Theme	Failure to fulfil statutory regulations or compliance requirements
Risk Category	Compliance
Risk Description	Short term non-compliance but with significant regulatory requirements imposed
Consequence Rating	Moderate (3)
Likelihood Rating	Possible (3)
Risk Matrix Rating	Moderate (6)
Key Controls (in place)	Governance Management Framework, Staff Training Plan
Action (Treatment)	Document Governance Management Framework
Risk Rating (after treatment)	Adequate

Financial Implications

Risk management actions will require ongoing allocation in annual budgets to facilitate resources and staff support where necessary.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation/Resolution - 7.3

Moved: Cr Graffin

Seconded: Cr Hudson

1294

That, in accordance with Regulations 16 and 17 of the Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996, the Audit, Risk, and Improvement Committee:

1. Receives the Risk Dashboard Quarterly Report - April 2026, as presented in Attachment 7.3A, detailing significant risks and required mitigation actions; and
2. Recommends to Council that it adopts the Risk Dashboard Quarterly Report - April 2026, with ongoing allocation of resources and budget to address them effectively.

CARRIED 3/0

For: Ms T Jones, Cr Graffin, Cr Hudson

Please note: the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee has limited authority to make decisions. All recommendations of the Committee are presented to Council for ratification.

8. Questions from Members

9. Urgent Business Approved by the Person Presiding or by Decision

10. Date of the Next Meeting

18 May 2026 - Tentative

11. Closure

The Chair thanked those in attendance and declared the Meeting closed at 2:43 pm

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