

Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee held on Wednesday 10 June 2020 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor James McAsh (Chair)
Councillor Humaira Ali
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE
Councillor Nick Dolezal
Councillor Tom Flynn
Councillor Andy Simmons
Councillor Dan Whitehead

OFFICER SUPPORT: Duncan Whitfield, Strategic Director of Finance and Governance
Jo Anson, Head of Financial and Information Governance
Rob Woollatt, Departmental Finance Manager
Geraldine Chadwick, Interim Senior Finance Manager
Virginia Wynn-Jones, Constitutional Team
Angela Mason-Bell, BDO
Greg Rubins, BDO
Ciaran McLaughlin, Grant Thornton
Matt Dean, Grant Thornton

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

The members present were confirmed as the voting members.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were none.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of 10 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

6. CORPORATE RISKS AND HIGH LEVEL MITIGATIONS

Officers introduced the report. Members had questions of the officers.

RESOLVED:

1. That the audit, governance and standards committee noted the follow up report on the corporate risks and high level mitigations following comments and feedback from members.
2. That the audit, governance and standards committee reviewed the mitigations and has no further comments.

7. BDO INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT AND ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2019-20

Officers introduced the report. Members had questions of the officers.

Officers undertook to bring updates to the next meeting on issues raised by members on reports which at that time had not been finalised.

RESOLVED:

1. That the audit, governance and standards committee noted BDO's internal audit annual report and annual statement of assurance report, as attached at Appendix A of the report.

8. BDO INTERNAL AUDIT AND ANTI-FRAUD PROGRESS REPORT

Officers introduced the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the audit, governance and standards committee noted BDO's internal audit and anti-fraud progress report, as attached at Appendix A of the report.

9. EXTERNAL AUDIT PLANS ADDENDUM (INCLUDING PENSION FUND)

Officers introduced the report. Members had questions of the officers.

RESOLVED:

1. That the audit, governance and standards committee noted the external audit plan addendum for Southwark Council, attached as Appendix A of the report.
2. That the audit, governance and standards committee noted the external audit plan addendum for Southwark Council's Pension Fund, attached as Appendix B of the report.

10. 2019-20 GRANT THORNTON REPORT ON INFORMING THE AUDIT RISK ASSESSMENT AND DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Officers introduced the report. Members had questions of officers.

RESOLVED:

1. That the audit, governance and standards committee noted the management responses to Grant Thornton's inquiries in respect to the audit risk assessment for Southwark Council and the Pension Fund (appendix 1 of the report) and considered whether these responses are consistent with its understanding; there were no further comments it wished to make.
2. That the audit, governance and standards committee considered the draft statement of accounts for 2019-20 (appendix 2 of the report).

11. DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2019-20

Officers introduced the report. Members had questions of the officers.

Officers undertook to bring back a report next meeting on lost income/increased costs relating to covid-19, and what the council expects to be able to recoup from government. This will be accompanied by a list of initiatives in place trying to cover some of those costs and lost income.

RESOLVED:

1. That the audit, governance and standards committee noted the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2019-20 as attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

12. REVIEW OF CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Officers introduced the report. Members had questions of the officers.

RESOLVED:

1. That the audit, governance and standards committee noted the updated code of corporate governance as shown at appendix 1 of the report.
2. That the audit, governance and standards committee reviewed the council's compliance with the best practice governance framework as shown at appendix 2 of the report and considered there were no further examples of good practice it wished to add.

The chair thanked all officers involved in ensuring that reports were available in good time and of good quality; and thanked everyone involved in the meeting for its smooth running.

The chair noted that the committee's annual committee self-assessment form deadline was extended owing to the delay in annual council assembly, and that members were encouraged to complete this and return their responses to the clerk.

Meeting ended at 8.30 pm

CHAIR:

DATED: