



Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee held on Monday 3 February 2025 at 6.30 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT:	Councillor Barrie Hargrove (Chair) Councillor Maggie Browning Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE Councillor Graham Neale Councillor Andy Simmons Councillor Michael Situ
OFFICER SUPPORT:	Clive Palfreyman, strategic director of resources Hakeem Osinaike, strategic director of housing Nat Stevens, Head of Governance and Tenant Management Aaron Winter, BDO Angela Mason-Bell, BDO Fleur Nieboer, KPMG Amarjit Uppal, chief accountant Humphrey Thompson, deputy chief accountant Tim Jones, director of corporate finance Paul Bergin, fraud manager Laura Sandy, corporate risk and insurance manager Doreen Forrester-Brown, assistant chief executive, governance and assurance Geraldine Chadwick, assistant director of finance (corporate) Virginia Wynn-Jones, constitutional team

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Nick Johnson.

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 the meeting of Wednesday 13 November 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

6. GOVERNANCE CONVERSATION: STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

Hakeem Osinaike, strategic director of housing, presented to the committee. The committee had questions for the strategic director.

Officers undertook to publish the briefing circulated by the strategic director prior to the meeting.

Officers undertook to bring back a written report in nine months on the results of the housing department's work with TMO on their finances.

7. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT FEBRUARY 2025

The internal auditors introduced the report. Members had questions for the officers.

The internal auditors undertook to include an audit on estate lighting in the 2025/26 audit plan.

The committee offered their congratulations to the treasury management team, Bankline, IT incident management, pest control, and the youth and play service for their very positive audit outcomes.

RESOLVED:

1. That the audit, governance and standards committee noted the update reports, as attached at Appendix A and B of the report.
2. That the audit, governance and standards committee agreed the indicative internal audit programme for 2025/26 as attached at Appendix C of the report.

8. AUDITOR'S YEAR END REPORT ON SOUTHWARK COUNCIL 2023-24

The external auditors introduced the report. Members had questions for the auditors.

The auditors undertook to update the text on page 30 of their report relating to officers' oversight of major works.

Officers confirmed that an action plan based on the auditors' recommendations would be brought back to the committee in July 2025.

Officers undertook to consider how best to present information on waivers to the committee in 2025/26, and to bring a response back via the work plan update.

RESOLVED:

That the Audit, Governance and Standards committee:

- a. Considered the matters raised in KPMG's Year End Report for the council's core financial statements 2023-24 (Appendix A of the report) before approval of the council's accounts
- b. Considered the matters raised in KPMG's Auditor's Annual Report (Appendix B of the report)
- c. Considered the matters raised in the KPMG's Year End Report for the Pension Fund 2023-24 (Appendix C of the report) before approval of the Pension Fund accounts.

9. FINAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2023-24

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

The committee thanked the officers and the external accountants for their work in bringing the accounts up to date before the deadline.

RESOLVED:

That the Audit, Governance and Standards committee:

- a. Noted the adjustments to the council's accounts as set out in paragraph 14 of the report
- b. Noted the adjustments to the Pension Fund accounts as set out in paragraph 15 of the report
- c. Approved the letters of representation for the council and Pension Fund (Appendices A and B) as required by KPMG in order to conclude the audit of the 2023-24 statement of accounts
- d. Approved the Statement of Accounts 2023-24 (Appendix C) subject to any final changes required by the conclusion of the audit, being delegated to the Strategic Director of Resources in consultation with the Chair of the Audit, Governance and Standards committee.

10. 2024-25 Q3 REPORT OF THE CORPORATE ANTI-FRAUD TEAM (CAFT), FINANCE AND THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS TEAM (SIT)

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

Officers undertook to confirm the risk status of concurrent working in future report.

RESOLVED:

That the audit, governance and standards committee note the 2024-25 Q3 report of the Corporate Anti-Fraud Team (CAFT) and the Special Investigations Team (SIT).

11. ANNUAL REPORT ON CORPORATE RISK

Officers introduced the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the audit, governance and standards committee noted the annual report on corporate risk.
2. That the audit, governance and standards committee reviewed the current corporate risk register and provided comments to officers for their consideration prior to the publication of the register by the Strategic Director of Resources.

12. REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT UPDATE

Officers introduced the report. Members had questions for the officer.

Officers undertook to circulate the link to the consultation questionnaire so members can choose to respond. The consultation closes on 26 February 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the committee noted the pausing of the Review of the Members' Code of Conduct as a result of the Government's new proposals on member conduct.

13. REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS MADE UNDER THE MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT IN 2024

Officers introduced the report. Members had questions for the officer.

RESOLVED:

That the committee noted the report.

14. WHISTLEBLOWING COMPLAINTS AND OUTCOMES

Officers introduced the report. Members had questions for the officer.

RESOLVED:

That the committee noted the report.

15. REPORT ON THE OPERATIONAL USE OF THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000

Officers introduced the report. Members had questions for the officer.

RESOLVED:

That the committee noted the report.

16. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WORK AND PERFORMANCE OF THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE IN 2024-25

Officers introduced the report. Members had questions for the officer.

Officers undertook to update a minor typographical error.

RESOLVED:

That the audit, governance and standards committee forward this report on its work and performance in 2024-25 to all councillors, subject to any amendments it wishes to make.

17. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR (2025-26)

Officers introduced the report. Members had questions for the officer.

Officers undertook in 2025/26 to bring reports on the following:

- Waivers
- Complaints governance, including TMO complaints
- Members' enquiries.

RESOLVED:

1. That the audit, governance and standards committee considered the proposed draft work programme for 2025-26 and made the above amendments.
2. That the audit, governance and standards committee, subject to any requested changes, agreed the work programme for 2025-26 set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

18. APPOINTMENT OF NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS OF THE CIVIC AWARDS SUB-COMMITTEE FOR 2024-25

The committee went into closed session.

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

RESOLVED:

That the committee appoint the following as co-opted members of the audit, governance and standards (civic awards) sub-committee:

Christiana Opoku-Addo
Hajia Saidat Oketunde
Brenda Wade
A representative of the Civic Society

Reserve: Jonathan Sedgwick

Meeting ended at 8.45 pm

CHAIR:

DATED: