

Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee held on Monday 19 July 2021 at 6.30 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G01A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor James McAsh (Chair)
Councillor Graham Neale
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE
Councillor Andy Simmons

OTHER MEMBERS: Councillor Humaira Ali

OFFICER SUPPORT: Duncan Whitfield, strategic director of finance and governance
Doreen Forrester-Brown, director of law and governance
Norman Coombe, head of governance team
Rob Woollatt, finance
Geraldine Chadwick, finance
Jade Cheung, finance
Greg Rubins, BDO
Nick Baker, BDO
Virginia Wynn-Jones, constitutional team

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Michael Situ and Tom Flynn. Councillor Humaira Ali was unable to attend in person, but was in attendance via Zoom.

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

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting be moved from 8 September 2021 to 20 September 2021.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 2 June 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

6. GOVERNANCE CONVERSATION: DUNCAN WHITFIELD

Duncan Whitfield presented to the committee. Members had questions for him.

It was noted that Cllr Dora Dixon-Fyle would contact Doreen Forrester-Brown after the meeting to discuss apprenticeships.

7. DRAFT 2020-21 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR SOUTHWARK COUNCIL

Officers presented the report.

RESOLVED:

That the audit, governance and standards committee considered the draft 2020-21 statement of accounts (appendix 1 of the report).

8. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT AND ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2020-21 - FINAL

Officers introduced the report alongside item 9. Members had questions for the officers.

Officers undertook to bring a written update on outstanding audits from 2017/18 to the committee.

RESOLVED:

That the audit, governance and standards committee noted the report, as attached at Appendix A of the report.

9. INTERNAL AUDIT AND ANTI-FRAUD UPDATE JULY 2021

RESOLVED:

That the audit, governance and standards committee noted the report, as attached at Appendix A of the report.

10. COVID-19 PANDEMIC: UPDATE 19 JULY 2021

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

Officers undertook to bring further information to members before the next meeting

RESOLVED:

That the audit, governance and standards committee noted the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on spending and income and the government grants to support the council's financial losses in 2021-22.

11. REVIEW OF MEMBER AND OFFICER PROTOCOL AND COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL

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

Officers undertook to bring back a report on members' enquiries to a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the committee noted this report.
2. That the committee recommended to Council Assembly that the Member and Officer Protocol be amended as shown in Appendix 1, with the additional amendment tabled at the meeting, to be included after paragraph 19:

20. Chief Officers and the Chief Executive are responsible for ensuring that members receive responses to member's enquiries within the corporate timescales. Chief Officers and the Chief Executive must regularly review corporate performance and performance within their area of responsibility on member enquiries and ensure any underperformance is addressed.

Meeting ended at 8.10 pm

CHAIR:

DATED: