

Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee held on Monday 17 October 2022 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G01A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Barrie Hargrove (Chair)
Councillor Graham Neale
Councillor Gavin Edwards
Councillor Sarah King
Councillor Andy Simmons
Councillor Michael Situ
Councillor Emily Tester

OFFICER SUPPORT: Toni Ainge, Director of Leisure
Geraldine Chadwick, Finance
Doreen Forrester-Brown, Director of Law and Governance
David Pugh, Head of Leisure Insourcing
Allan Wells, Law and Governance
Matt Dean, Grant Thornton LLP
Greg Rubins, BDO
Angela Mason-Bell, BDO
Virginia Wynn-Jones, Constitutional team

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Duncan Whitfield, strategic director of finance and governance, and Ciaran McLaughlin, Grant Thornton LLP.

1. 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

The chair agreed to vary item 7: governance conversation with Duncan Whitfield, to welcome Doreen Forrester-Brown, director of law and governance and monitoring officer.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of 18 July 2022 were agreed as a correct record. Councillor Neale thanked the chair for agreeing to the hybrid format of the meeting.

6. INSOURCING OF THE LEISURE CONTRACT

Toni Ainge and Dave Pugh presented the governance of the insourcing of the leisure contract to the committee. The committee had questions of the officers.

Members encouraged the officers to ensure that engagement with the users of the leisure service is ongoing throughout the process.

Officers undertook to bring a report back to the audit, governance and standards committee in February 2023, with a report including the RAG rated risks.

Officers undertook to inform all councillors of the timing of the insourcing programme before the start of the new contract in June 2023.

7. GOVERNANCE CONVERSATION: DOREEN FORRESTER-BROWN

Doreen Forrester-Brown, director of law and governance, and monitoring officer, presented to the committee. Members had questions for the officer.

Officers undertook to circulate an update on the temporary accommodation recovery board to the committee.

Councillor Andy Simmons undertook to email officers with samples of good practice electoral communications.

Officers undertook to bring back the results from a survey of all councillors on the induction and training programme for 2022, analysed for differences of opinion between incoming and returning members.

Officers undertook to bring back feedback on a review of overview and scrutiny committee recommendations to a future committee.

8. GRANT THORNTON AUDIT UPDATE REPORT

Matt Dean of Grant Thornton LLP updated the committee on the delays signing off the council's accounts, due to the national issues raised over the valuation of infrastructure assets. This is currently likely to be managed by the end of 2022 in order for the external auditors to be able to offer an unqualified opinion.

9. INTERNAL AUDIT AND ANTI-FRAUD PROGRESS REPORT: OCTOBER 2022

Greg Rubins and Angela Mason-Bell, BDO, introduced the report. Members had questions of the auditors.

Officers undertook to invite the officers responsible for the work that BDO have audited in four areas to the audit, governance and standards committee. These are:

- Objection Review of the Council's relationship with Stanbury Building Services Limited
- 2021-22 Disaster recovery
- 2017-18 Land Charges
- 2017-18 IT – Network Security

RESOLVED:

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

10. DRAFT 2021-22 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR SOUTHWARK COUNCIL

Geraldine Chadwick introduced the report. Members had questions of the officer.

Officers undertook to circulate a written update on the housing revenue account relating to the zero balance.

RESOLVED:

That the audit, governance and standards committee considered the draft 2021-22 statement of accounts published in August 2022 (appendix 1 of the report) and noted the contents.

11. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2021-22

Geraldine Chadwick introduced the report. Members had questions of the officer.

RESOLVED:

That the audit, governance and standards committee approve the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2021-22 as attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

12. APPOINTMENT PROCESS FOR INDEPENDENT PERSONS

Allan Wells introduced the report. Members had questions for the officer.

RESOLVED:

1. That the committee noted the process for the appointment of independent persons to deal with member code of conduct complaints.

2. That the committee agreed to appoint a panel comprising Cllr Michael Situ, Cllr Graham Neale and Cllr Sarah King to assist the monitoring officer in interviewing applicants with a view to making appointment recommendations to Council Assembly.

Meeting ended at 8.35 pm

CHAIR:

DATED: