

Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee held on Wednesday 9 September 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
Caroline Bruce, strategic director of environment and leisure
Ciaran McLaughlin, Grant Thornton
Matt Dean, Grant Thornton
Nick Baker, BDO
Simon Bevan, director of planning
Norman Coombe, head of governance, legal
Rob Woollatt, finance
Geraldine Chadwick, finance
Virginia Wynn-Jones, constitutional team

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

The member 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 on 20 July 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

6. GOVERNANCE CONVERSATION: CAROLINE BRUCE

Caroline Bruce, the strategic director of environment and leisure, presented to the committee. The committee had questions for the strategic director.

Officers undertook to send a more comprehensive response on departmental communications with a plan of action to the committee outside the meeting.

The committee agreed to record their thanks to the department and officers working hard for Southwark.

7. REPORT ON RETROSPECTIVE CONTRACT-RELATED DECISION: AFFORDABLE HOUSING MONITORING SERVICE

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the audit, governance and standards committee noted the retrospective contract decision detailed in the report.
2. That the audit, governance and standards committee noted the actions taken by the Director of Planning as set out in paragraphs 14 and 15 of the report to ensure that the risk of future retrospective contract decisions is minimised for the future.

8. GRANT THORNTON: EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

Grant Thornton presented their verbal update. Members had questions for Grant Thornton.

The chair agreed to call a further meeting of the committee in October 2020 to consider the final Statement of Accounts.

9. INTERNAL AUDIT AND ANTI-FRAUD PROGRESS REPORT SEPTEMBER 2020

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the audit, governance and standards committee noted the report.

10. COVID-19 PANDEMIC: FINANCIAL IMPACT 2020-21

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the audit, governance and standards committee noted the updated position of:
 - Government grants to support the council's financial losses;
 - The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on spending and income;
 - The continuing uncertainty around the additional government funding;
 - The ongoing plans in place to mitigate the financial risk to the council.

11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION PROPOSAL FOR A MODEL CODE OF MEMBER CONDUCT

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

RESOLVED:

That the audit, governance and standards committee note the report.

12. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WORK AND PERFORMANCE OF THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE IN 2019-20: UPDATE

RESOLVED:

1. That the audit, governance and standards committee forward this report on its work and performance in 2019-20 to all councillors.

Meeting ended at 8.25 pm

CHAIR:

DATED: