

**Audit Committee and Audit Committee (Advisory) - 22 March 2022**

Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee and Audit Committee (Advisory) held at Islington Town Hall on 22 March 2022 at 7.00 pm.

**Present:**        **Councillors:**        Nick Wayne (Chair), Janet Burgess MBE and Flora Williamson

**Also Present:**        **Independent members:**        Alan Begg and Alan Finch

**Councillor Nick Wayne in the Chair**

**270        APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item A1)**

Received from Councillor Sara Hyde.

**271        DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item A2)**

None.

**272        DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item A3)**

None.

**273        MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item A4)**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

**274        DRAFT 2022-23 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN (Item B1)**

The following points were noted during discussion:

- The Committee was reassured by officers that the 750 planned days for work on the Audit Plan could be completed by the Team within its current staff resources
- It was likely that the time spent by Internal Audit on reviewing grant claims for government funding should reduce this year, meaning that time could instead be devoted to other items in the Plan
- Pensions KPIs to appear on future Audit Plans

A general observation was made about how the Council deals with complaints, which was not necessarily related to the Internal Audit Plan, in that the complaints

process could be regarded as an early warning system for areas that might warrant investigation by Internal Audit.

**RESOLVED:**

That the 2022-23 Internal Audit Plan for the Council, as detailed in the report of the Corporate Director of Resources, be approved.

**275 BI-ANNUAL WHISTLEBLOWING MONITORING REPORT – 1 SEPTEMBER 2021 TO 31 JANUARY 2022 (Item B2)**

The following points were noted during discussion:

- There had been five whistleblowing complaints to date in 2021/22, a decrease since the total of eighteen in 2016/17
- Whistleblowing complaints could be particularly useful to the Council on occasions when they helped to effect change
- The triage system operated by Internal Audit for dealing with complaints ensured that they were dealt with appropriately, referred to managers or other structures, and not necessarily as whistleblowing complaints.
- Complainants were encouraged to include as much detail as possible in their complaints and to put their name to the complaint in order to substantiate them.
- Staff who wished to make a complaint but did not have access to a computer were encouraged to put their complaint in writing
- Officers were to be commended on the speed and thoroughness of an investigation into a whistleblowing complaint from October 2021
- The proposed revised Whistleblowing Policy would be considered by Audit Committee in June 2022, following consultation. Following approval by Audit Committee, it was anticipated that communication would be made to all Council staff and trade unions to draw the revised Policy to their attention
- The proposed revised Whistleblowing Policy should also include guidance to councillors on the handling of complaints they received directly

**RESOLVED:**

That the report of the Corporate Director of Resources, detailing the Council's current Whistleblowing arrangements, be noted.

**276 BI-ANNUAL WHISTLEBLOWING MONITORING REPORT – 1 SEPTEMBER 2021 TO 31 JANUARY 2022 - EXEMPT APPENDIX (Item E1)**

Noted.

**277 VOTE OF THANKS**

Chris Lobb, Audit Manager

Noting that this would be Chris Lobb's last attendance at Audit Committee, as he was due to retire at the end of March after 22 years' service at Islington and 42 years in local government, the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, placed on record the Council's thanks to him for his years of valuable service to the Committee and the Council and wished him good health and a long and happy retirement.

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On behalf of the Committee, the Chair also thanked officers for their support to the Committee over the past four years.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

**CHAIR**