

Audit Committee and Audit Committee (Advisory) - 13 June 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee and Audit Committee (Advisory) held in Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 13 June 2022 at 7.00 pm.

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

Independent Alan Begg and Alan Finch
Members:

Councillor: Diarmaid Ward

Councillor Nick Wayne in the Chair

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

None.

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

None.

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

None.

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

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

5 **(A) ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUDIT COMMITTEE 2022/23 AND (B) APPOINTMENTS TO PENSIONS SUB-COMMITTEE, BOARD AND PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE (Item A5)**

RESOLVED:

(a) That the membership appointed by Council on 26 May 2022, terms of reference and dates of meetings of the Audit and Audit (Advisory) Committee for the municipal year 2022/23, as set out at Appendix A to the report of the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, be noted.

Pensions Sub-Committee

(b) That the size of the Pensions Sub-Committee and its Terms of Reference, as detailed in Appendix A of the report of the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, be confirmed.

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(i) That the following members be appointed to the Pensions Sub-Committee for the municipal year 2022/2023, or until successors are appointed:

Councillors	Substitute Members
Paul Convery (Chair)	Jenny Kay
Diarmaid Ward (Vice-Chair)	Mick Gilgunn
Satnam Gill OBE	
Michael O'Sullivan	

(ii) That Councillor Paul Convery be appointed as Chair and Councillor Diarmaid Ward be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Pensions Sub-Committee for the municipal year 2022/2023, or until successors are appointed.

Personnel Sub-Committee

(c) That the size of the Personnel Sub-Committee and its Terms of Reference, as detailed in Appendix A of the report of the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, be confirmed.

(i) That the following members be appointed to the Personnel Sub-Committee for the municipal year 2022/2023, or until successors are appointed:

Councillors	Substitute Members
Anjna Khurana (Chair)	All other Executive members
Kaya Comer-Schwartz	Jenny Kay
Janet Burgess MBE	Dave Poyser
Satnam Gill OBE	
Diarmaid Ward	

(ii) That Councillor Anjna Khurana be appointed Chair of the Personnel Sub-Committee for the municipal year 2022/23, or until a successor is appointed.

Pensions Board

a) That the following appointments to the Pensions Board be noted:

i) Valerie Easmon-George as pensioner member representative for a term of four years, from 3 June 2019.

ii) The reappointment of the following members for a three year term from 3 June 2019: (i) *Mike Calvert, Unison, as a member representative

(ii) *Maggie Elliott – Chair of Governors at Montem School as an employer representative.

(*N.B. – nominations were being sought)

iii) Alan Begg as an independent member for a term of four years, from 3 June 2019.

iv) Maggie Elliott as Vice-Chair of the Pensions Board.

v) That there was an employer representative vacancy and a substitute pensioner member representative vacancy.

vi) George Sharkey, GMB, as a member representative on the Pensions Board for a three year term, with effect from 25 May 2021.

b) That Councillor David Poyser be appointed as a member and Chair of the Pensions Board.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND FRAMEWORK (Item B1)

Members suggested that the new Risk Management Strategy and Framework should be widely publicised amongst staff, particularly staff at more junior levels. Training in how to flag a risk would be covered in training for Members.

It was noted that the Auditors had recommended that the Principal Risk Report should be shared with the Executive and/or the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the revised risk management strategy and framework attached to the report of the Corporate Director of Resources be noted.

7 PRINCIPAL RISK REPORT 2022 (Item B2)

Members considered ways of monitoring individual risks and agreed that, while regularity of this report may be varied, there be an opportunity for a departmental lead to attend Audit Committee to discuss the risk with Members. The Chair undertook to speak to the Chair of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee to discuss this approach to ensure that there would be no duplication in work. For the September Audit Committee, the risk to be considered would be the cost of living and its effect on residents and the local economy.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the contents of the report of the Corporate Director of Resources, detailing the position on the current risks facing the Council, be noted.

(b) That, for the future, there be a slot on the agenda for a lead officer of a principal risk to attend the Committee to participate in discussion with Members of the Committee.

(c) That it be noted that the risk to be considered at the September Audit Committee will be "be the cost of living and its effect on residents and the local economy".

8 INTERNAL AUDIT EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSESSMENT (EOA) (Item B3)

Members stated that the areas of good practice in the report were impressive and reassuring and gave them confidence.

With regard to paragraphs X11 and X111, relating to Audit Committee, it was noted that a training programme was being put in place for Islington councillors.

RESOLVED:

That the outcome of the External Quality Assessment at Appendix A and the corresponding action plan at Appendix B of the report of the Corporate Director of Resources be noted.

9 **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY (Item B4)**

Members thanked officers for their work on the revised Whistleblowing Policy.

It was suggested that, in order for Councillors to be aware of and to comply with the Policy, a guidance note be sent to Councillors, reviewed by the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Audit Committee, advising them of procedures on receipt of a referral relating to a whistleblowing complaint.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure, attached at Appendix A to the report of the Corporate Director of Resources, be approved.

10 **CYBER DEFENCE ASSURANCE FOR THE LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON (Item B5)**

In response to a question about staffing resources in Digital Services, the Director of Digital Services reported that it was proving very difficult to recruit to certain posts, such as project managers and architect posts and that specialist skills were generally in short supply.

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Corporate Director of Resources, detailing the current position on the Council's cybersecurity assurance programme and the ongoing audits and activity, be noted.

11 **EXTERNAL AUDITOR REPORTS (Item B6)**

Ade Oyerinde and Jo Taylor, from Grant Thornton, made presentations to the Committee on their Annual Audit Report for the year ending 31 March 2021 and the audit plan for the external audit of the Council and the Pension Fund for 2021/22.

Following discussion, Members came to the view that it would be useful for the Council to take a fresh approach to budget setting, perhaps by taking a look back over the previous four years as part of a thematic analysis to ascertain which savings had been effective and which had not, rather than the current "line by line" budget monitoring approach.

In addition, Members were keen that all learning from the Bunhill II project be captured and applied to future projects as appropriate.

RESOLVED:

(a) That it be noted that the total anticipated fees for the external audits of the Council and Pension Fund for the year ending 31 March 2022 was £290,237.

(b) That the contents of the Audit Plan for the Council and Pension Fund Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2022 and attached to the report of the Corporate Director of Resources be noted.

(c) That the contents of the Annual Audit Report 2020/21, also attached to the report of the Corporate Director of Resources, be noted.

(d) That representatives from Grant Thornton be thanked for their work on the audits and for their attendance at this meeting.

12 CYBER SECURITY UPDATE - EXEMPT APPENDIX (Item F1)

Noted.

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm

CHAIR