



**Full Council**  
20 November 2023

**Report from the Corporate Director  
of Finance and Resources**

**Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – Vice Chair’s  
Report**

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Council
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>List of Appendices:</b>	None
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Minesh Patel, Director of Finance and Resources Tel: 020 8937 4043 Email: <a href="mailto:minesh.patel@brent.gov.uk">minesh.patel@brent.gov.uk</a>

**1.0 Executive Summary**

1.1. This report provides a summary of the activities carried out by the Council’s Audit and Standards Advisory Committee and the Audit and Standards Committee since the last update provided on 18 September 2023.

**2.0 Recommendation(s)**

2.1 Council is asked to note the contents of the report.

**3.0 Detail**

**3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context**

3.1.1 The Council’s Audit and Standards Advisory Committee (ASAC) and the Audit and Standards Committee (ASC) play an important role in ensuring the good governance of the Council. The committees are a key component of the Council’s governance framework. They contribute to the overall success of the Council by providing an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements to provide assurance and confidence to those charged with governance.

3.1.2 The ASAC is responsible for considering and advising the relevant council bodies on various governance matters relating to audit activity, the council's regulatory framework, and members' standards of conduct. The ASC is responsible for various governance matters including reviewing and approving the Annual Statement of Accounts, adopting the council's Annual Governance Statement and promoting high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members.

## **3.2 Background**

3.2.1 Both the ASAC and ASC have met twice since the last update provided. A summary of the items discussed and considered at these meetings is set out below.

### **3.2.2 Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

a. **Standards Report (including gifts and hospitality)**

The purpose of this report was to update the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee on gifts and hospitality registered by Members, member training and a recent case highlighting action taken as a result of non-compliance with s85 Local Government Act.

b. **Performance and Management of i4B Holdings Ltd and First Wave Housing Ltd**

This report provided an update on i4B Holding Ltd.'s and First Wave Housing Ltd.'s draft accounts, recent performance, development strategy risk register and recent audits.

Historically, the Committee received a report from the Chair of both companies twice each year on the company's financial and operational performance, risks, business plan and governance. Following a review of the Committee's arrangements, and in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, it has been agreed that moving forward the Committee will receive bi-annual reports from the Council's Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Finance and Resources, providing assurance on the arrangements the Council has in place to oversee the good performance and governance of the companies. This approach is in-line with best practice as set out in CIPFA's Audit Committees guidance.

c. **Strategic Risk Register**

This report provided the Committee with an update on the Council's Strategic Risks as of September 2023. The update was prepared in consultation with risk leads and the Council Management Team and summarised the risks that are considered to be of an impact and/or likelihood of materialising, and which may have an adverse effect on the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives.

The report also presented the Committee with a new Risk Management Strategy. The strategy seeks to outline the Council's approach to risk management to support a robust and consistent process for managing risk and opportunities.

d. Statement of Accounts and Pension Fund Accounts / Audit Findings Report

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the progress of the Statement of Accounts and to review the Audit Findings Report for 2022/23.

The Committee was asked to consider the key issues and recommendations; consider the corrected audit differenced; delegate approval of the draft letter of representation to Grant Thornton to the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources; note the draft audit opinion; and note the objections to the accounts.

e. External Audit Progress Report and Sector Update

The Committee received a verbal update on progress on delivering Grant Thornton's responsibilities as the Council's external auditors along with a summary of any emerging national issues and developments that may be relevant to Brent as a local authority.

3.2.3 Audit and Standards Committee – 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023

a. Brent Council Statement of Accounts 2022/23

The Committee receive an update on the Council's Statement of Accounts 2022/23, following the consideration of their current position as discussed at the preceding Audit and Standards Advisory Committee (as detailed above).

3.2.4 Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023

a. Statement of Accounts 2022-23 Update

The Committee received and reviewed the Council's and the Pension Fund Audit Findings Report for 2022/23 in order to recommend approval to the Audit and Standards Committee for signing off the Statement of Accounts.

3.2.5 Audit and Standards Committee – 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023

a. Statement of Accounts 2022-23 Update

The Committee received and reviewed the London Borough of Brent and London Borough of Brent Pension Fund Audit Findings Report for 2022/23

following its consideration at the preceding Audit & Standards Advisory Committee.

### 3.2.6 Forward Plan Items

This following items are due to be presented to the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023:

1. Standards Report (including Gifts and Hospitality)
2. Interim Internal Audit Report 2023/24
3. Interim Counter Fraud Report 2023/24
4. External Audit Progress Report
5. Treasury Management Mid-Year Report
6. Treasury Management Strategy

### **4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement**

4.1 None.

### **5.0 Financial Considerations**

5.1 The report is for noting and so there are no direct financial implications.

### **6.0 Legal Considerations**

6.1 The report is for noting and there are no direct legal implications.

### **7.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations**

7.1 None.

### **8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations**

8.1 None

### **9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)**

9.1 None

### **10.0 Communication Considerations**

10.1 None

**Report sign off:**

***Minesh Patel***

Corporate Director of Finance and Resources