

	<p align="center">Full Council 11 July 2022</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Director of Legal, HR, Audit & Investigations</p>
<p>Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – Vice Chairs Report</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A - Council
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Debra Norman, Director of Legal, HR, Audit and Investigations Tel:020 8937 1578 Email: debra.norman@brent.gov.uk

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report provides a summary of the activities carried out by the Council's Audit & Standards Advisory Committee (ASAC) and the Audit & Standards Committee (ASC) since the last update provided on 22 November 2021. 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.

2. Recommendation

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

3. Detail

3.1 The ASAC has met four times since the last update, and the ASC has met twice.

3.2 Audit & Standards Advisory Committee – 7th December 2021

3.2.1 Standards Report (Including update on Gifts and Hospitality)

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on gifts and hospitality registered by members, and the attendance record for members in relation to mandatory training sessions.

3.2.2 Review of the Constitutional Working Group

In a response to a recommendation from the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, this report provided a review of the current role and operation of the Constitution Working Group. It provided some information about practices elsewhere, highlighted steps already taken in response to the Scrutiny Committee recommendations, and proposed a further review be undertaken following the Local Elections.

3.2.3 Review of the Financial and Procedural Rules governing the Mayor's Charity Appeal

The purpose of this report was to update the Committee on a recent review of the financial and procedural rules for governing the Mayor's Charity Appeal.

3.2.4 Cyber-Security Strategy implementation update

Following a request by the Committee at the September 2021 meeting, it was agreed that a report be brought back regarding the actions that the Council were taking in relation to cyber-security. The report provided an update on the progress in implementing the Brent and Shared Technology Service cyber-security strategies.

3.2.5 CIPFA Financial Management Code and Redman Review – Progress Report

This report updated the Committee on progress to implement the CIPFA Financial Management Code and the Redmond Review of Audit and Transparency in Local Authority Financial Reporting.

3.2.6 Treasury Management Report

This report provided an update on treasury activity for the first half of the financial year 2021-22. The report also presented the draft Treasury Management Strategy for 2022-23 for consideration by the Committee, with the final version incorporating the view of the Committee being included in the annual budget setting report presented to Cabinet in February 2022.

3.2.7 Internal Audit Charter

The purpose of this report was to set out the revised Internal Audit Charter for Committee's consideration and approval.

3.2.8 External Audit Progress Report

This report provided the Committee with an update on Grant Thornton's progress in delivering their responsibilities as the Council's external auditor.

3.3 **Audit and Standards Committee – 7th December 2022**

3.3.1 Review of the Financial and Procedural Rules governing the Mayor's Charity Appeal

The Committee approved the proposed changes to the Financial and Procedural Rules governing the Mayor's Charity Appeal, following its consideration by the preceding Audit and Standards Advisory Committee.

3.4 **Audit & Standards Advisory Committee – 31st January 2022**

3.4.1 Internal Audit Progress Report

This report provided the Committee with an update on progress against the Internal Audit Plan for the Period October to December 2021.

3.4.2 Counter Fraud Progress Report

The purpose of this report was to provide a summary of the Council's counter fraud activity for the period 2021-22 to Q3.

3.4.3 External Audit Appointment for 2023/24 to 2028/29

This report set out proposals for appointing the external auditor to the Council for the accounts for the five-year period from 2023/24. The report recommended that the Council accepts the Public Sector Audit Appointments' invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023.

3.4.4 External Audit Progress Report

This paper provided the Committee with a report on Grant Thornton's progress in delivering their responsibilities as the Council's external auditor.

3.5 **Audit & Standards Advisory Committee – 15th March 2022**

3.5.1 Standards Report (Including update on Gifts and Hospitality)

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on gifts and hospitality registered by members, and the attendance record for members in relation to mandatory training sessions.

3.5.2 Annual Standards Report

This paper was the Monitoring Officer's Annual Report to the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee for 2021. It provided an update on Member conduct issues and the work of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee, the Audit and Standards Committee, and the Monitoring Officer during 2021.

3.5.3 Review of the Member Development Programme and Members' Expenses

The purpose of this report was to provide members of the Committee with a summary of the Member Learning Development Programme since the last report to the Committee in March 2021. The report also provided information regarding the Members' Expense Scheme.

3.5.4 Review of the use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA)

This report explained the Council's use and conduct of surveillance techniques in accordance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000; and complied with its annual reporting obligations as set out in the Council's RIPA policy and procedures.

3.5.5 To review performance & management of i4B Holdings Ltd and First Wave Housing Ltd

The Committee received a report on the performance on i4B Holdings and First Wave Housing Ltd, including their accounts outturn, risk register and audit arrangements.

3.5.6 Draft Internal Audit Strategic Plan and Counter Fraud Plan for 2022/23

This report set out the draft Internal Audit Strategic Plan, and the Counter Fraud Plan, for 2022-23. Both reports summarised how and where Internal Audit and Counter Fraud resources would be deployed in 2022/23.

3.5.7 External Audit Update – Verbal Report

This item provided the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee with a verbal update on Grant Thornton's progress in delivering their responsibilities as the Council's external auditors.

3.6 Audit & Standards Advisory Committee – 7th June 2022

3.6.1 Standards Report (including Gifts and Hospitality)

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on gifts and hospitality registered by Members, and the attendance record for members in relation to mandatory training sessions. The report also updated the Committee in respect of the provisional appointment of an Independent Person for the purposes of Code of Conduct complaints, the Governments response to the Committee on

Standards in Public Life review and a Standard's case involving a Maldon Councillor being removed from Office.

3.6.2 Annual Governance Statement

This report set out the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22 as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

3.6.3 Strategic Risk Register

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the Strategic Risk Register, which summarised the Council's corporate risk profile as at the end of 2021-22.

3.6.4 Treasury Management Outturn Report

This report provided an update to the Committee on treasury management activity and confirmed that the Council complied with its Prudential Indicators for 2021/22

3.6.5 CIPFA consultation on temporary changes to infrastructure assets accounting

The purpose of this report was to update Members on how local authorities account for infrastructure assets, following the CIPFA consultation on temporary changes to infrastructure assets accounting.

3.6.6 Internal Audit Annual Report, including Annual Head of Audit Opinion

This report outlined the work undertaken by Internal Audit in respect of delivery of the 2021-22 Internal Audit Plan. The report also included the Head of Internal Audit's annual opinion on the Council's system of internal control.

3.6.7 Annual Counter Fraud Report

This report summarised the counter fraud activity undertaken in 2021/22. The report also referenced the refresh of related policies covering anti-fraud and bribery, anti-money laundering and whistleblowing.

3.6.8 External Audit Plan

The Committee received and considered Grant Thornton's External Audit Plan for both the Council and the pension fund for the year ending 31 March 2022.

3.7 Audit & Standards Committee – 7th June 2022

3.7.1 Annual Governance Statement

The Committee formally approved the Council's 2021-22 Annual Governance Statement, following its consideration by the preceding Audit & Standards Advisory Committee.

4. Forward Plan Items

4.1 Listed below are the reports that are due to be presented to the next Audit & Standards Advisory Committee meeting on 26 July 2022:

1. Standards Report (including gifts & hospitality)
2. Planning Code of Practice Review
3. Emergency Preparedness
4. Statement of Accounts
5. CIPFA Financial Management Code and Assessment
6. Internal Audit Progress Report
7. External Audit Progress Report

Report sign off:

Debra Norman

Director of Legal, HR, Audit & Investigations