Brent	**Full Council** 14 September 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources

Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – Vice Chair's Report

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

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 to Full Council in November 2025.

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 The Audit and Standards Advisory Committee met on 3 December 2025 and 3 February, 24 March, 16 June and 27 July 2026. A summary of the substantive items considered at these meetings is set out below.

3.2.2 Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – 3 December 2025

a. Standards Report, including an Update on Gifts and Hospitality
The report provided an update on gifts and hospitality registered by Members, together with the outcome of the Government's consultation, "Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England", and the Government's response.

b. Interim Counter Fraud Report 2025–26
The report presented the Council's Interim Counter Fraud Report for the 2025–26 financial year.

c. Internal Audit Interim Report 2025–26
The report presented the work undertaken by Internal Audit up to the end of October 2025.

d. Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2025–26
The report updated Members on treasury management activity during the first half of the 2025–26 financial year.

e. Treasury Management Strategy 2026–27
The report presented the draft Treasury Management Strategy for 2026–27 for consideration prior to its inclusion within the final budget report.

f. Audit Findings Report: London Borough of Brent and Brent Pension Fund 2024–25
The Committee received an update on progress in finalising the External Audit Findings Report and the Council's Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025. Following consideration of the report, the Audit and Standards Committee approved the 2024–25 audit fees and delegated approval of the draft letters of representation to Grant Thornton to the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources. Sign-off of the final Statement of Accounts for 2024–25 was delegated to the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee, subject to written assurance that all outstanding matters and adjustments in the Audit Findings Report had been addressed and any material adjustments arising from the final Audit

Findings Report being reported back to the Audit and Standards Committee and notified to all members of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee.

3.2.3 Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – 3 February 2026

a. Member Complaints and Code of Conduct
The report provided the Committee with an update on complaints received under the Members' Code of Conduct during 2025 and the operation of the Council's complaints procedure.

b. Update on the Response to Housing Regulator Findings
The report provided an update on the Council's response to the findings of the Regulator of Social Housing and the improvement activity being undertaken following the Council's C3 regulatory judgement.

c. Artificial Intelligence Strategic Risk
The report provided the Committee with an update on the Council's strategic risk relating to artificial intelligence, including the arrangements in place to manage the associated governance, security and operational risks.

d. Internal Audit Interim Report 2025–26 – Addendum
The report provided additional information requested by the Committee on the ownership and implementation dates of agreed audit actions reported within the Internal Audit Interim Report. It also reinstated the basis of the audit classifications and assurance definitions.

e. External Audit Progress Update
The Committee received an update on progress in finalising the External Audit Findings Report and the Council's Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.

3.2.4 Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – 24 March 2026

a. Performance and Management of i4B Holdings Ltd and First Wave Housing Ltd
The report provided the Committee with an update on the performance and management of the Council's housing companies, including delivery against their business plans and the key risks and issues being managed.

b. Procurement Strategy Progress Review
The report provided an update on progress in strengthening the Council's procurement arrangements, including the delivery of improvement actions and the development of the Procurement Strategy 2026–2030.

c. Review of the Use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act Powers
The report provided the Committee with its annual update on the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and associated investigatory legislation.

d. Annual Standards and Governance Report for 2025
The report provided an update on Member conduct issues, gifts and hospitality registered by Members, Member training and the work undertaken on standards and governance matters during 2025.

e. Internal Audit Plan 2026–27 and Internal Audit Strategy 2024–27 Year 2 Review
The report presented the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2026–27 and provided an assessment of progress made during the second year of the Internal Audit Strategy 2024–27.

f. External Audit Update Report
The Committee received an update from the Council's external auditors on external audit activity and relevant developments across the local government sector.

g. Audit Findings Report for the London Borough of Brent 2024–25
The Committee received the final Audit Findings Report relating to the audit of the Council's financial statements for 2024–25.

h. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee 2025–26
The Committee reviewed the outcome of its annual self-assessment and considered opportunities to strengthen its effectiveness and future work programme.

3.2.5 Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – 16 June 2026

a. Annual Standards Report for 2025
The report provided an update on Member conduct issues and the work of the Monitoring Officer during 2025. It also included updates on gifts and hospitality, Member training and a proposed amendment to the Members' Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure.

b. Internal Audit Annual Report 2025–26, including the Annual Head of Internal Audit Opinion
The report summarised Internal Audit activity during 2025–26, including delivery of the Internal Audit Plan, key findings and the implementation of agreed management actions. It also presented the Head of Internal Audit's annual opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's governance, risk management and control arrangements.

c. Annual Counter Fraud Report 2025–26
The report summarised proactive and reactive counter-fraud activity undertaken during 2025–26 and provided assurance on the arrangements in place to prevent, detect and respond to fraud.

d. Chair's Annual Report 2025–26

The Committee received the Chair’s independent annual report covering the work of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee and the Audit and Standards Committee during the 2025–26 municipal year.

e. Annual Governance Statement 2025–26
The report presented the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2025–26 and summarised the outcome of the annual review of the effectiveness of the Council’s governance framework and system of internal control. Following consideration and comment by the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee the Annual Governance Statement was subsequently approved by the Audit and Standards Committee,

3.2.6 Audit and Standards Advisory Committee – 27 July 2026

a. Standards Update Report, including Gifts and Hospitality
The report provided an update on gifts and hospitality registered by Members during the first quarter of 2026–27 and on the delivery of Member training.

b. Emergency Preparedness Report
The report provided an update on the work and priorities of the Emergency Planning team since July 2025, including emergency preparedness, resilience and business continuity arrangements.

c. Treasury Management Outturn Report 2025–26
The report set out the outturn for the Council’s treasury management activities during 2025–26, including borrowing and investment decisions, prevailing economic conditions and treasury performance.

d. Update on the Statement of Accounts and External Audit Progress Report
The report provided an update on progress towards completing the annual Statement of Accounts, together with an update from the Council’s external auditors on developments relevant to Brent.

3.2.7 Forward Plan Items

The next meeting of the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee is scheduled for 23 September 2026. Based on the draft 2026–27 Forward Plan and Work Programme, the following items are currently scheduled for consideration:

- External Audit Progress Report
- Performance and Management of i4B Holdings Ltd and First Wave Housing Ltd
- Treasury Management Strategy
- Strategic Risk Register Update

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 Equity, 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