Brent

MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Held in Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 16 June 2026 on the rising of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee

PRESENT: Councillor Choudry (Chair) and Councillors Bajwa, Donnelly-Jackson, Georgiou, Ibrahim and Mitchell.

Also Present: David Ewart (Independent Chair of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee), Councillor Jayanti Patel and Councillor Grahl (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform), Sebastian Evans and Stephen Ross (Independent co-opted members on Audit & Standards Advisory Committee) (Sophia Brown (External Auditor Grant Thornton), Sheela Phillips (External Auditor Grant Thornton) & Matt Dean (External Auditor Grant Thornton).

1. **Apologies for Absence and clarification of alternate members**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Brown (with Councillor Georgiou attending as a substitute) and Councillor Blackman (with Councillor Ibrahim attending as a substitute).

In addition, it was noted that Councillor Jayanti Patel was attending in an informal capacity to represent Councillor Kansagra.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

3. **Deputations (if any)**

There were no deputations received at the meeting.

4. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday 3rd December 2025.

5. **Annual Governance Statement 2025-26**

The Committee received a report from the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources detailing the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2025-26 as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Members noted that the AGS had been referred on to the Committee for formal approval following its detailed consideration at the preceding meeting of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee.

Having noted the comments highlighted at the preceding meeting of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee in relation to the draft Annual Governance Statement it was **RESOLVED** to approve the 2025-26 Annual Governance Statement for formal sign off subject to clarification being included regarding the delay in completion of 2024-25 external audit and Statemen of Accounts as a result of work required to complete the reconciliation process in relation to Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) Assets and Valuation referenced at paragraphs 142 and 148.

6. **Annual Standards Report 2025 - Amendment to Members' Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure**

The Committee received a report from the Corporate Director Finance & Resources presenting the Monitoring Officer's Annual 2025 which as well as providing an update on Member conduct issues and the work of the Monitoring Officer during 2025 together with the Q2 & Q3 quarterly reports on gifts and hospitality registered by Members and status of Member training following the May 2026 elections also included a recommended amendment to the Members Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure.

Members noted that the proposed amendment to the Complaints Procedure had been referred on to the Committee for formal approval following its detailed consideration at the preceding meeting of the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee with members reminded it related to an extension being sought in the timeframe for carrying out initial assessments from 10 to 15 working days with the proposed amendment based on a view (given he number and nature of complaints being received) that a more realistic timescale was required in order to better manage expectations and reflect the time required for assessment.

Having noted the basis of the discussion and comments highlighted at the preceding Audit & Standards Advisory Committee it was **RESOLVED** to approve the change in normal deadline for carrying out an initial assessment under the Members' Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure with an extension from 10 to 15 working days.

The meeting closed at 7.49 pm

COUNCILLOR SAQLAIN CHOUDRY
Chair