

Brighton & Hove City Council

Audit & Standards Committee

4.00pm 27 June 2023

Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall

Minutes

Present: Councillor West (Chair) Robinson (Opposition Spokesperson), Burden, Cattell, Czolak, Daniel and Meadows

Independent Persons present: David Gill

Part One

1 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

1a Declarations of substitutes

1.1 There were none.

1b Declarations of interests

1.2 There were none.

1c Exclusion of the press and public

1.3 In accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act"), the Committee considered whether the public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item of business on the grounds that it is likely in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during it, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act.

1.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public not be excluded from the meeting.

2 MINUTES

2.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 April 2023 be approved and signed as the correct record.

3 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 The Chair provided the following communications:

Welcome everyone to the committee- we have a number of new elected councillors on this committee and I look forward to working with you all.

This is also the first meeting for our newly appointed Independent Person, Barbara Beardwell.

We are lucky to consistently attract Independent Persons who are of a very high calibre, willing to give the significant time commitment the role entails and Barbara continues that trend.

The Independent Persons help us apply an educated perspective to the Council's approach to discharging the core audit functions of this Committee as well as having an essential role in considering Standards related matters and I look forward to working with Barbara as well as David Bradley and David Gill.

I'd like to remind members that the role of the Audit & Standards Committee is different from that of a policy Committee. Our focus is on proper governance, transparency, and financial accountability. We should therefore apply impartial and rigorous focus on the facts as presented before us and avoid political or partisan rhetoric.

I'm hoping everybody will agree with that at this time of continued pressures and challenges, and the demands that that places upon on us all.

4 CALL OVER

4.1 The following items on the agenda were reserved for discussion:

- Item 8: Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2022-23
- Item 9: Counter Fraud Annual Report 2022-23
- Item10: Formal Approval of The Annual Governance Statement 2022-2023
- Item 11: Financial Management Code - Self Assessment

4.2 The Democratic Services Officer confirmed that the items listed above had been reserved for discussion and that the following reports on the agenda with the recommendations therein had been approved and adopted:

- Item 7: Constitutional Matters: Audit & Standards Committee
- Item 12: Standards Update
- Item 15: External Audit Plan and Informing the Audit Risk Assessment 2022/23

5 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

5.1 No public representation items were received.

6 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

6.1 No items from Members were received.

7 CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS: AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE

7.1 The Committee

Resolved:

- 1) That the committee's terms of reference, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, be noted; and
- 2) That the Committee formally approved the establishment of a Standards Panel in accordance with the terms of reference proposed in Appendix 1, and in accordance with the procedure described at para 3.9 of this Report for the Panel's composition; and
- 3) That the Committee gives the Monitoring Officer delegated authority to make any changes to the Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members and related documents considered necessary to enact recommendation 2.2 above.

8 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT AND OPINION 2022-23

- 8.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Governance, People & Resources that provided the committee with an opinion on Brighton and Hove City Council's control environment for the year from the 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.
- 8.2 Councillors Robinson, Meadows, Daniel and Burden asked questions and contributed to the debate of the report.
- 8.3 The Committee

Resolved:

- 1) That Committee noted the Internal Audit Service's opinion on the Council's control environment (Appendix 1).
- 2) The Committee agreed that the Council's system for internal audit has proved effective during 2022/23.

9 COUNTER FRAUD ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

- 9.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Governance, People & Resources that covered the counter fraud work completed in the year from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 in accordance with the Counter Fraud Strategy and Framework.
- 9.2 Councillors Meadows, Czolak, Cattell, Daniel and David Gill asked questions and contributed to the debate of the report.
- 9.3 The Committee

Resolved:

- 1) That Committee noted the counter fraud activity completed during 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

10 FORMAL APPROVAL OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2022-2023

- 10.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Governance, People & Resources that provided the committee with information on the annual review of the city council's governance arrangements.
- 10.2 Councillors Daniel and Meadows asked questions and contributed to the debate of the report.
- 10.3 The Committee

Resolved:

- 1) That Audit & Standards Committee formally approved the Annual Governance Statement 2022-2023 at Appendix 1 so that the AGS may be signed by the City Council's Leader and Chief Executive before publication alongside the City Council's Statement of Accounts.

11 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT CODE - SELF ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Governance, People & Resources that provided the committee with a self-assessment and review of the council's level of compliance with the standards set out in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy's (CIPFA's) Financial Management Code (FM Code).
- 11.2 Councillors Burden, Daniel and Robinson asked questions and contributed to the debate of the report.
- 11.3 The Committee

Resolved:

- 1) That the Audit & Standards Committee note the authority's self-assessment against the Financial Management Code and the identified improvement actions set out in Appendix 2.

12 STANDARDS UPDATE

- 12.1 The Committee

Resolved:

- 1) That the Audit & Standards Committee noted the contents of this report.

13 ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL

- 13.1 No items were referred to Full Council for information.

14 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

14.1 No items were requested for the next meeting.

**15 EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN AND INFORMING THE AUDIT RISK ASSESSMENT
2022/23**

15.1 The Committee

Resolved:

- 1) That Committee noted both the external audit plan and informing the audit risk assessment for 2022/23.

The meeting concluded at 5.54pm

