

General Purposes and Audit Committee

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Thursday 21 April 2022 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

Present: Dr Olu Olasode (Independent Chair); and Councillors Karen Jewitt (Vice-Chair); Chris Clark, Nina Degrads, Clive Fraser, Lynne Hale, Ola Kolade, Stuart Millson, Ian Parker, Joy Prince and Paul Scott.

PART A

29/22 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

There were no apologies for absence received from Members.

30/22 Disclosure of Interests

There were no disclosures of interests received from Members.

31/22 Any Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

32/22 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Thursday 3 March 2022, be approved as an accurate record.

33/22 Minutes Action Tracker

RESOLVED that the contents of the Action Tracker, be noted.

34/22 Assurance Mapping – Next Steps

The Committee considered a report, which recognised assurance mapping as a good tool to support Audit Committees in their role of providing independent assurance of the organisation's internal controls and risk management. It was proposed that this technique be used to plan and prioritise the Committee's work programme for 2022/23 in order that the Committee fulfilled its terms of reference.

During consideration of the recommendations, the Committee discussed the following:

- (i) The need for ongoing, comprehensive training and briefings to be factored-in, given the complexities of the Committee's work and to allow Members the freedom to ask questions in relation to the details of the training being provided.

- (ii) That the use of new Members' induction to outline the functions and responsibilities of the Committee be considered.
- (iii) That consideration also be given to tapping into the knowledge and experience of existing Committee members, post 9 May 2022, as part of the Committee's training for new and existing Members, moving forward.
- (iv) That more detail be added to some of the points contained within the Code of Governance.
- (v) That "doing the right thing" be added as a work in progress.

Accordingly, it was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

35/22 **Anti-Fraud Update Report 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022**

The Committee considered a report, which detailed the performance of the Council's Corporate Anti-Fraud Team (CAFT) and included details of the Team's performance together with an update on developments between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 and a comparison with 2020/21.

During consideration of the recommendations, the Committee discussed the following:

- (i) Points of clarification within the report, specifically in reference to "pensions", "planning" and "schools", as detailed in Table 2 to the report.
- (ii) Provision for any appeals lodged.
- (iii) Individual or organisation-led housing and illegal sub-lets.
- (iv) Covid grants and Trading Standards
- (v) Any increased costs and whether the Council actively looked for cases of fraud.
- (vi) The use of the Council's in-house Legal Services in dealing with cases of fraudulent activity.

Accordingly, it was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

36/22 **General Purposes and Audit Committee – Annual Report 2021-2022**

The Committee considered a report, presented by the Chair, which highlighted the work of the Committee over the last year as provided within the Committee's 'Terms of Reference and Scope of Work'. The report also included a brief forward look into the year ahead on the Committee's work and developments.

During consideration of the recommendations, the Committee discussed the following:

- (i) Points of clarification around the use of the “JACB” acronym and typographical errors (which officers agreed to amend).
- (ii) No mention in the report of CMT’s audit and review of past actions or reference to Fairfield Halls.
- (iii) The timing of the Council’s independent internal audit review (due every five years) and its inclusion in the Committee’s Work Programme for 2022/2023.
- (iv) The next steps for the Annual Report.

Accordingly, it was RESOLVED that the report be noted/referred to Council

Chair’s Closing Remarks

In marking the final meeting of the current Committee, the Chair thanked all Committee Members for accepting him, in his role as independent Chair, and for developing the work of the Committee.

At the invitation of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, Councillor Karen Jewitt, said it had been a difficult time to co-chair the Committee. She said that the new rules and regulations for running the meetings had come to fruition.

The Vice-Chair extended her thanks and gratitude to all Members of the Committee and paid special thanks to Councillors Millson and Prince for their contributions at meetings.

The meeting was declared closed at 7.48pm.

Signed: _____ **(Chair)**

Date: _____