



# MINUTES

## Audit and Standards Committee

<b>Date:</b>	Thursday, 17 March 2022
<b>Venue:</b>	Town Hall, St Annes.
<b>Committee Members Present:</b>	Councillor Ellie Gaunt (Chairman) Councillor Ed Nash (Vice Chairman) Councillors Paula Brearley, Delma Collins, Will Harris, Paul Hayhurst, John Singleton JP.
<b>Other Councillors Present:</b>	None
<b>Officers Present:</b>	Paul O'Donoghue, Ian Curtis, Sharon Wadsworth.
<b>Other Attendees:</b>	Fiona Hill and Louise Cobain from MIAA.

### 1. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that any disclosable pecuniary interests should be declared as required by the Localism Act 2011 and any personal or prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct for Members. No interests were declared on this occasion.

### 2. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 23 February 2022 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

### 3. Substitute Members

There were no substitutions on this occasion.

Councillor

### Standards Information Items

### 4. Issues Raised with the Monitoring Officer

The Committee received a quarterly report on standards related matters raised with the Monitoring Officer.

### Audit Decision Items

### 5. Internal Audit Plan 22-23

Louise Cobain, Engagement Lead MIAA, was invited to introduce the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23 that has been compiled in consultation with Directors and Heads of Service following a detailed risk assessment. The approach ensured compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) to produce a Head of Internal Audit

Mrs Cobain highlighted the areas on the proposed internal audit plan for 2022/23 and how they would be conducted. It was also noted that the number of audit days required to complete the audit had been reduced by 45 days and thus reducing the annual fee.

It was unanimously RESOLVED to approve the revised Internal Audit Plan 2022/2023.

#### 6. Internal Audit Progress Report

Fiona Hill, Engagement Manager MIAA, provided an update in respect of the progress made towards the Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22. There were no issues to raise on this occasion.

It was RESOLVED to note the Internal Audit Progress Report.

#### 7. Revised Code of Conduct for Elected Members

Ian Curtis, Head of Governance, provided members with a brief background on the work undertaken following the report on local government ethical standards published by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in January 2019.

The report outlined several proposed recommendations, some of which would require a change in legislation and others considered to be of a best practice nature to drive high ethical standards within local authorities which councils could implement without a change in legislation. A number of these recommendations related to the code of conduct, and as a result the Local Government Association (LGA) developed a non-mandatory, model code of conduct.

Following two workshops to consider the LGA's model code of conduct; one with both Blackpool and Fylde's respective Monitoring Officers (MO's), senior governance officers and the three shared Independent Persons (IP's); and the other with the respective MO's, senior governance officers and Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of Blackpool and Fylde's Audit and Standards Committee together with an opposition member from each council a revised code had been developed and was presented to the Audit and Standards Committee for consideration.

Members of the committee found that the revised code read very well and the explanatory information was a welcomed addition.

It was suggested that the code be placed on the agenda for discussion at the next District Parish Liaison meeting and an undertaking was given that this would be taken forward.

It was RESOLVED:

1. To recommend that the Council adopts the revised Code of Conduct attached at Appendix A of the report;
2. That the code is shared with the 15 Town and Parish Councils across the Borough, inviting them to consider if they wish to adopt it locally;
3. Following adoption of the revised code by the Council, that the Member Development Steering Group, is invited to consider adding a training event on ethical standards, to outline the content and provisions of the revised code, to its programme of activity.

#### 8. Constitution Review

Mr Curtis introduced a report recommending that a cross-party working group be established to review the constitution.

The last review was undertaken three years ago and therefore it was timely to start the constitution review process, especially in consideration of the new governance changes to be implemented following the May 2023 local election.

The Monitoring Officer, together with the Head of Governance, worked on the last constitution review through a cross-party Working Group and it was suggested that this approach was emulated once more.

It was RESOLVED:

That a cross-party Working Group be established comprising Councillors Karen Buckley (Leader), Roger Small (Deputy Leader), Elizabeth Oades (Leader of the Opposition), Matthew Lee, Ellie Gaunt (Chairman of the Audit and Standards Committee) and Ed Nash (Vice-Chairman of the Audit and Standards Committee), to undertake a time-bound piece of work to review the constitution, proposing any changes to the Audit and Standards Committee for its agreement, prior to the council being invited to endorse any changes prior to the May 2023 local election.

#### Audit Information Items

#### 9. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000: Authorisations

The committee received information regarding the review of the use of covert surveillance and covert human intelligence sources by the council at least quarterly. It was noted that in the quarter up to March 2022, there had been no authorised operations.

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