



MINUTES

Audit and Standards Committee

Date:	Thursday, 15 March 2018.
Venue:	Town Hall, St Annes.
Committee Members Present:	Councillor John Singleton JP (Chairman) Councillor David Donaldson (Vice-Chairman) Councillors Delma Collins, Peter Collins, Edward Nash, Louis Rigby, Roger Small, Viv Willder.
Officers Present:	Tracy Morrison, Paul O'Donoghue, Ian Curtis, Tara Walsh.
Other Attendees:	Amanda Latham KPMG Director, Harriet Fisher KMPG Manager, Anthony Mozley Independent Persons. One member of the public.

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 held on 18 January 2018 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

3. Substitute Members

The following substitution was reported under Council procedure rule 22 (c):

Councillor Viv Willder for Councillor Graeme Neale.

Audit Decision Items

4. KPMG Audit Plan 2017/18

Harriet Fisher, KPMG Manager, presented the Audit Plan for 2017/18. She provided the committee with a summary of the report including the key aspects of the Audit Plan and the planned approach to the financial statement audit, and the work regarding value for money.

Ms Fisher went on to advise the committee that the deadline for the production and signing of the financial statements has been advanced and as such, draft accounts are required by 31 May and final signed accounts by 31 July.

It was therefore RESOLVED to note and accept the KPMG External Audit Plan for 2017/18.

5. Consultation on Ethnical Standards in Local Government

By way of introduction, Tracy Morrison, Director of Resources, explained that the committee had been invited to respond to a consultation due to be undertaken by the Committee on Standards in Public life in regards to local government ethical standards. She went on to direct members to the terms of reference for the review as outlined in the report.

In addition to the above, Ms Morrison explained that the report sought members to consider holding a workshop with representatives from Blackpool Council's Standards Committee and three Independent Persons to formulate the response to the consultation.

The Chairman went on to advise that the deadline to submit a response is 18 May 2018.

It was therefore RESOLVED:

1. To agree to hold a workshop together with representatives from Blackpool Council's Standards Committee to formulate a response; and
2. To invite the Independent Persons to the workshop.

6. Constitution Review

The Chairman invited Ms Morrison to present the report. She advised members that the previous constitution review took place in 2015 and in accordance with Article 15 of the constitution, the Monitoring Officer would review the Constitution every three years and seek its formal re-adoption by the Council.

The committee were invited to consider conducting the review in conjunction with the Chairman of the Audit and Standards Committee and the three Group Leaders.

The committee noted an inconsistency within the constitution which suggested that the Council was responsible for amending the constitution which was in contrast to further commentary within the document which gave the Monitoring Officer delegated authority to make minor alterations. It was advised that this matter would be considered during the review process.

Following a full discussion it was RESOLVED that the Monitoring Officer work in consultation with the Chairman of the Audit and Standards Committee and the Group Leaders, to review the constitution and to report to a future meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee.

Audit Information Items

7. Internal Audit Interim Report 2017/18

The committee received information regarding the progress of planned audits against the internal Audit Plan from April to December 2017.

It was advised that due to the reduction in team capacity the percentage of the audit plan expected to be completed by the end of the financial year was 56%.

The committee noted the report and requested that a further update on the current status of the Internal Audit Plan be presented at the next meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee.

8. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000: Authorisations

In line with the requirements to report on a quarterly basis regarding the use of covert surveillance and covert human intelligence sources, the information report advised that in the quarter to March 2018, there had been no authorised operations.

Standards Items

9. Exclusion of the Public

Members of the committee were invited to consider passing a resolution excluding the public from the meeting for the consideration of item 10 below in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act 1972. This was on the grounds that the business to be discussed was exempt

information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 (Information relating to an individual and Information which was likely to reveal the identity of the individual) of Schedule 12A of the Act.

It was RESOLVED to exclude the public.

10. Exempt Item – Issues Raised with the Monitoring Officer

Tracy Morrison (Monitoring Officer) provided an overview of two complaints which had been closed.

It was noted that in discussion with Council's independent persons regarding this matter, it was felt that assessment criteria would be helpful for the Monitoring Officer to refer to in complaint handling. In particular this could underline that the council would not consider anonymous complaints.

Following a discussion the Committee AGREED:

1. To note the report
2. To ask the Monitoring Officer to prepare draft of assessment criteria for future consideration by the committee and in the meantime underline that the council would not consider anonymous complaints with respect to standards issues
3. To thank the Monitoring Officer for providing a comprehensive report and to thank the Independent Persons involved for their input into the matter

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