

**MINUTES of the meeting of Standards and Audit Committee held on 06
February 2013 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors Tunde Ojetola (Chair), Martin Healy, Cathy Kent,
Diana Hale, Simon Wootton and Terry Hipsey

**Independent
Members:** Jason Oliver

Apologies: Rhona Long, Stephen Rosser, Fiona Taylor, Chris Harris and
Chris Stephenson

In attendance: Martin Hone – Director of Finance and Corporate Governance
Sean Clark – Head of Corporate Finance
Gary Clifford – Client Manager for Audit Services RSM Tenon

Wendy Borgartz – Ernst and Young
Debbie Hanson – Ernst and Young
Jackie Hinchliffe – Head of HR, OD and Customer Strategy
Martin Whiteley – Transformation Programme Manager
Lindsey Marks – Principal Safeguarding Lawyer
Barbara Foster – Head of Care and Targeted Outcomes
Barbara Brownlee – Director of Housing
Kenna-Victoria Martin – Democratic Services Officer

1 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of Standard and Audit Committee, held on 06 December 2012,
were approved as a correct record.

2 Additional Items

There were no additional items declared.

3 Declaration of interests

Councillor Ojetola declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 7, in that he was
the of Chair Governors at an Academy within the borough.

4 External Audit: Progress Report and Other Matter

Director of Finance and Corporate Governance introduced the report, which
included the Audit Plan, the Audit Fees for 2012/13 and a General Briefing on
related issues the from the External Auditors, Ernst and Young.

The External Auditors informed the Committee that the risks within the
progress report were not necessarily all the risks which would be within the

final draft of risks. Members were informed of the risks identified within the progress report and that some of them were risk areas within all Council's furthermore that these would be the areas focused on. It was explained to the Committee that the Audit Fee for 2012/13 was set by the Audit Commission and was 40% lower than for 2011/12 as a result of the Audit Commission tendering exercise.

RESOLVED:

That the Standards and Audit Committee notes the report.

5 Update on Follow-Up of Care Proceedings Review

The Client Manager for Audit Services notified the Committee that the report was a follow up from the September meeting in which it set out the implementation of high and medium recommendations. A total of 5 recommendations were considered within the review, these comprised of 1 high, 2 medium and 2 low recommendations. Members were informed that all recommendations had reached their implementation date.

The Head of Care and Targeted Outcomes explained to the Committee that the original audit predated the requirement to always provide a core assessment with applications and that overall the service was very good.

It was explained to the Committee by the Principal Safeguarding Lawyer, that some cases have to go to Court as a matter of emergency and with these cases it isn't always possible to have a core assessment, however with cases that were not an emergency Officers were ensuring that they had core assessments.

Members suggested that future recommendations were SMART so that Members and Officers could know precisely what the recommendation was requiring of them and it would be clearer to monitor.

RESOLVED:

That the Standards & Audit Committee notes the progress made by management in implementing high and medium recommendations in the review of Care Proceedings, with an update to be taken to the 06 March 2013 meeting.

6 Internal Audit Progress Report 2012/13

The Client Manager for Audit Services introduced the report, which set out the progress made against the internal audit plan. The Committee were informed that 6 reports received green assurance, 3 amber/green reports and no reports received an amber/red assurance.

Members queried as to why a Primary School which had been in the local press, hadn't appeared within the report. Officers explained that they would be reporting formally on that matter at the March meeting.

Members enquired about who commissioned the reports, and Officers advised that they had an inspection routine which meant that they liaised with schools on a regular basis. Members also asked about the impact of many schools becoming academies, to which Officers confirmed that they ensured all finances were in order before signing off the accounts.

RESOLVED:

That the Standards & Audit Committee:

Considered the reports issued by Internal Audit in relation to the 2012/13 audit plan.

Notes those areas of Internal Audit activity which are not formally reported to the Standards & Audit Committee.

Notes the progress against the Internal Audit Plan for 2012/13.

7 Re-Charging Tenants Internal Audit Report

The Client Manager for Audit Services explained to the Committee that the Director of Finance and Corporate Governance requested the review into rechargeable housing repairs due to breakages or neglect. Members were informed that the report received a red assurance as 3 high and 3 medium recommendations issued.

The Director for Housing explained that it was her understanding that recharging in the past had not been implemented correctly. The repair and maintenance contract with Morrisons had not contained a mechanism for doing this. As well as this failure, the client side resource to carry this out and manage the repair contract had been limited. More recently a new management system had been put in place, a new contract with Mears was now in place and a new Head of Housing had been appointed

Members queried as to how much it had cost the Council to terminate the contract with Morrisons. Officers informed Members of the Committee that the termination of the Morrisons contract hadn't cost the Council anything.

Members noted that the Committee was limited to the financial side of the report and agreed that the report should be sent to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee for detailed scrutiny of the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That the Standards and Audit Committee notes the report and that a follow up report go back to Committee during the next municipal year.

8 Thurrock Transformation Programme 2012/14–Review of Progress

The Transformation Programme Manager introduced the report to the Committee in which he explained that the programme had been created to deliver improved working practice to the Council and reduce running costs.

Members were informed that the programme was organised in 5 programmes:

1. Customer Services
2. Community Hubs
3. Centres of Excellence
4. Better Buying
5. New Ways of Working

The Transformation Programme Manager further explained that there was a Transformation Programme Board that steered the delivery of the Programme, who included the Portfolio Holder for Transformation and the Board of Directors.

Members enquired as to whether the Council's relationship with Barking and Dagenham would impact on the programme. Officers explained that they were having conversations with Barking and Dagenham, as it may benefit the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Standards and Audit Committee:

Notes and considers the progress to date in respect of the delivery of the outcomes required of the Transformation Programme during 2012-13

Considers and notes the progress in respect of the development of business cases to deliver the outcomes required of the Transformation Programme during 2013-14.

9 Work Programme

Members discussed the work programme and request another meeting during April 2013, so not to overload the March agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the Standards and Audit Committee requested an additional meeting in April 2013.

The meeting finished at 9.00pm.

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIRMAN

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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or alternatively e-mail kmartin@thurrock.gov.uk**