

Enquiries to Committee Services

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Date: 4th March 2024

Our Ref: MM

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the **AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE** will be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Nuneaton, on **Tuesday, 12th March 2024** at **6.00pm**

Please note that meetings will be recorded for future publication on the Council's website.

Yours faithfully,

BRENT DAVIS
Chief Executive

To: All Members of the
Audit & Standards
Committee

Councillors R Baxter-Payne (Chair),
J. Sheppard (Vice-Chair), B. Beetham,
D. Brown, T. Cooper, L. Cvetkovic,
L. Downs, J. Hartshorn, J. Kennaugh,
N. Phillips and R. Tromans.

A G E N D A

PART I - PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. ANNOUNCEMENTS

To advise the meeting participants of the procedure that will be followed by the Members of the committee.

A fire drill is not expected, so if the alarm sounds please evacuate the building quickly and calmly. Please use the stairs and do not use the lifts. Once out of the building, please gather outside Lloyds Bank on the opposite side of the road.

Exit by the door by which you entered the room or by the fire exits which are clearly indicated by the standard green fire exit signs.

If you need any assistance in evacuating the building, please make yourself known to a member of staff.

Please also make sure all your mobile phones are turned off or set to silent.

The meeting will be live streamed to YouTube and will be available to view via the NBBC website.

2. APOLOGIES - To receive apologies for absence from the meeting.

3. MINUTES – To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 9th January 2024, attached (**Page 5**).

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

Declaring interests at meetings

If there is any item of business to be discussed at the meeting in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest or non-pecuniary interest (Other Interests), you must declare the interest appropriately at the start of the meeting or as soon as you become aware that you have an interest.

Arrangements have been made for interests that are declared regularly by members to be appended to the agenda (**Page 10**) Any interest noted in the Schedule at the back of the agenda papers will be deemed to have been declared and will be minuted as such by the Committee Services Officer. As a general rule, there will, therefore, be no need for those Members to declare those interests as set out in the schedule.

There are, however, TWO EXCEPTIONS to the general rule:

1. When the interest amounts to a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest that is engaged in connection with any item on the agenda and the member feels that the interest is such that they must leave the room. Prior to leaving the room, the member must inform the meeting that they are doing so, to ensure that it is recorded in the minutes.

2. Where a dispensation has been granted to vote and/or speak on an item where there is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, but it is not referred to in the Schedule (where for example, the dispensation was granted by the Monitoring Officer immediately prior to the meeting). The existence and nature of the

dispensation needs to be recorded in the minutes and will, therefore, have to be disclosed at an appropriate time to the meeting.

Note: Following the adoption of the new Code of Conduct, Members are reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their personal interests at the commencement of the relevant item (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary or a Deemed Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, the Member must withdraw from the room.

Where a Member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest but has received a dispensation from Audit & Standards Committee, that Member may vote and/or speak on the matter (as the case may be) and must disclose the existence of the dispensation and any restrictions placed on it at the time the interest is declared.

Where a Member has a Deemed Disclosable Interest as defined in the Code of Conduct, the Member may address the meeting as a member of the public as set out in the Code.

Note: Council Procedure Rules require Members with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests to withdraw from the meeting unless a dispensation allows them to remain to vote and/or speak on the business giving rise to the interest.

Where a Member has a Deemed Disclosable Interest, the Council's Code of Conduct permits public speaking on the item, after which the Member is required by Council Procedure Rules to withdraw from the meeting.

5. PUBLIC CONSULTATION - Members of the Public will be given the opportunity to speak on specific agenda items, if notice has been received.

Members of the public will be given three minutes to speak on a particular item and this is strictly timed. The chair will inform all public speakers that: their comments must be limited to addressing issues raised in the agenda item under consideration: and that any departure from the item will not be tolerated.

The chair may interrupt the speaker if they start discussing other matters which are not related to the item, or the speaker uses threatening or inappropriate language towards Councillors or officers and if after a warning issued by the chair, the speaker persists, they will be asked to stop speaking by the chair. The chair will advise the speaker that, having ignored the warning, the speaker's opportunity to speak to the current or other items on the agenda may not be allowed. In this eventuality, the chair has discretion to exclude the speaker from speaking further on the item under consideration or other items of the agenda.

6. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2024-25 – a report of the Head of Audit and Governance, attached (**Page 13**).
7. MEMBER INDUCTION AND TRAINING PROGRAMME 2024 / 2025– a report of the Assistant Director – Governance and Democracy, attached (**Page 16**).
8. ANY OTHER ITEMS - which in the opinion of the Chair should be discussed as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances (which must be specified).

9. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS - Under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item, it being likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph (i) and (iv) of Part I and II of Schedule 12A to the Act.
10. OVERVIEW OF MEMBER COMPLAINTS - a report of the Monitoring Officer attached **(To Follow)**.
11. INVESTIGATION REPORT – COMPLAINT 4/22 - a report of the Monitoring Officer attached **(To Follow)**.
12. INVESTIGATION REPORT – COMPLAINT 3/23 - a report of the Monitoring Officer attached **(To Follow)**.

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE

9th January 2024

A meeting of the Audit & Standards Committee was held on Tuesday, 9th January 2024 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Nuneaton. The meeting was recorded for publication on the Council website.

Present

Councillor R Baxter Payne – Chair

Councillors: D. Brown, T. Cooper, L. Downs, L. Cvetkovic, R. Tromans, S. Harbison (substitute for Councillor J. Hartshorn) and C. Watkins (substitute for Councillor J. Sheppard).

Apologies: Councillors B. Beetham, J. Hartshorn, N. Phillips, J. Sheppard and Kennaugh.

PART I – PUBLIC BUSINESS

ASC19 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 7th November 2023 be approved and signed by the Chair.

ASC20 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor R. Tromans declared he has been asked to represent WCC on the West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Board.

As Councillors S. Harbison and C. Watkins were substitute Councillors for this meeting, their declarations were not detailed in the Schedule attached to the agenda, but are available to view on the NBBC website.

RESOLVED that the declarations of interest are as set out in the Schedule attached to these minutes, with the addition of the Declarations of Interest for Councillor R. Tromans, and the Declarations of Interests for Councillors S. Harbison and C. Watkins who were substitute Councillors for this meeting.

ASC21 **Formal Complaints and Freedom of Information Requests 1st April 2023 to 31st October 2023**

The Strategic Director for Economy and Transformation provided a report outlining the significant performance improvements that have been made against target Service Level Agreements (SLA) within the last 12 months for both Formal Complaints and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

RESOLVED that

- a) the information within the report be considered and noted;
- b) the changes and suggestions made by the committee be noted and actioned;
and
- c) this item be considered again by the committee in six months to ensure NBBC is fulfilling and meeting necessary recommendations.

ASC22 **Scheduled Reviews of the Performance Management Framework and the Risk Management Policy and Strategy**

The Audit and Governance Manager and the Governance, Risk Management and Performance Officer provided Members with the reviewed Performance Management Framework and Risk Management Policy and Strategy documents for approval.

Public Speaker: Mr Peter Smith

RESOLVED that the revised Performance Management Framework and Risk Management Policy and Strategy documents be approved.

ASC23 **Publicity Protocol – Change to the Constitution**

A report from the Chief Executive provided Members with an opportunity to consider the recommendations from the Officers to Publicity Protocol and recommend changes to the Constitution.

RESOLVED that

- a) the recommendations as set out in the report and appendix be approved; and
- b) IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the Constitution be amended accordingly.

ASC24 **Contract Procedure Rules - Update**

The Assistant Director – Governance and Democracy presented a report noting the proposed changes to the Contract Procedure Rules considering the senior management restructure and changes in procurement law.

RESOLVED that

- a) The proposed changes to the Contract Procedure Rules be notes; and
- b) IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the Constitution be amended accordingly.

ASC25 **Annual Governance Statement 2022/23**

The Assistant Director – Governance and Democracy presented the findings of an assessment of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council's corporate governance framework as presented in the Annual Governance Statement.

RESOLVED that

- a) The findings of the review of corporate governance and index control as set out in the Annual Governance Statement be considered; and
- b) The Annual Governance Statement be approved

Chair _____

Audit and Standards Committee - Schedule of Declarations of Interests – 2023/2024

	Name of Councillor	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest	Other Personal Interest	Dispensation
	General dispensations granted to all members under s.33 of the Localism Act 2011			Granted to all members of the Council in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing matters - Statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 - An allowance, payment given to members - An indemnity given to members - Any ceremonial honour given to members - Setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 - Planning and Licensing matters - Allotments - Local Enterprise Partnership
	R. Baxter-Payne (Chair)	Employed by Vinci Construction Major Projects UK Ltd (VCMP UK Ltd); County Councillor - WCC	Spouse: Self-employed childminder Member of the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Midlands Combined Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee • Warwickshire Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (substitute) 	
	B. Beetham	Senior PowerBi Lead at Wye Valley Hospital Trust; Warwickshire County Council – Camp Hill	Member of the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp Hill Urban Village: Pride in Camp Hill Board • Committee of Management of Hartshill and Nuneaton Recreation Ground 	
	D. Brown	Employed by H.M Land Registry	Regional Coordinator, Ragdoll Rescue Charity. Representative on the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhall Education Foundation (Council appointment). 	
	T. Cooper	None	Member on the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp Hill Urban 	

	Name of Councillor	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest	Other Personal Interest	Dispensation
			Village: Pride in Camp Hill Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee of Management of Hartshill and Nuneaton Recreation Ground 	
	L. Cvetkovic	Head of Geography (Teacher), Sidney Stringer Academy, Coventry	The Bulkington Volunteers (Founder); Bulkington Sports and Social Club (Trustee) Member on the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Control Partnership Steering Group 	
	L. Downs	River Bars Limited; Coventry Plus Beyond the Plane Little Caesars Donuts Limited NBBC Council Contract for market pitch	Member on the following Outside Body: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hammersley, Smith and Orton Charity 	
	J. Hartshorn	Employed by Asda Nuneaton	Member of Nuneaton Conservatives	
	J. Kennaugh	County Councillor W.C.C. Employed by Yu Energy.	Member of the W.C.C. Regulatory Committee Member of the Conservative Party Member of UNITE the Union Member on the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQulP 	
	N. Phillips	Employee of DWP	Member of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuneaton Labour CLP • The Fabian Society • The George Eliot Society • The PCS Union • Central Credit Union • Stockingford Sports and Allotment Club • Haunchwood Sports and Social Club 	
	J. Sheppard (Vice-Chair)		Partnership member of the Hill Top and Caldwell Big Local. Director of Wembrook Community Centre. Member of Labour Party.	Dispensation to speak and vote on any matters of Borough Plan that relate to the Directorship of Wembrook Community Centre
	R. Tromans	Compliance, GIM, Coventry Warwickshire County Councillor	Member of the Conservative Party Member of the Chartered Institute of Credit Management	

	Name of Councillor	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest	Other Personal Interest	Dispensation
		(Weddington) Share in a rental property in Hydes Pastures, Nuneaton		

Audit and Standards Committee - Schedule of Declarations of Interests – 2023/2024

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	R. Baxter-Payne (Chair)	Employed by Vinci Construction Major Projects UK Ltd (VCMP UK Ltd); County Councillor - WCC	Spouse: Self-employed childminder Member of the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Midlands Combined Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee • Warwickshire Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (substitute) 	
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			Village: Pride in Camp Hill Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee of Management of Hartshill and Nuneaton Recreation Ground 	
	L. Cvetkovic	Head of Geography (Teacher), Sidney Stringer Academy, Coventry	The Bulkington Volunteers (Founder); Bulkington Sports and Social Club (Trustee) Member on the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Control Partnership Steering Group 	
	L. Downs	River Bars Limited; Coventry Plus Beyond the Plane Little Caesars Donuts Limited NBBC Council Contract for market pitch	Member on the following Outside Body: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hammersley, Smith and Orton Charity 	
	J. Hartshorn	Employed by Asda Nuneaton	Member of Nuneaton Conservatives	
	J. Kennaugh	County Councillor W.C.C. Employed by FedEx Express UK Limited.	Member of the W.C.C. Regulatory Committee Member of the Conservative Party Member of UNITE the Union Member on the following Outside Bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQulP 	
	N. Phillips	Employee of DWP	Member of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuneaton Labour CLP • The Fabian Society • The George Eliot Society • The PCS Union • Central Credit Union • Stockingford Sports and Allotment Club • Haunchwood Sports and Social Club 	
	J. Sheppard (Vice-Chair)		Partnership member of the Hill Top and Caldwell Big Local. Director of Wembrook Community Centre. Member of Labour Party.	Dispensation to speak and vote on any matters of Borough Plan that relate to the Directorship of Wembrook Community Centre
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		(Weddington) Share in a rental property in Hydes Pastures, Nuneaton		

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to: Audit and Standards Committee – 12th March 2024

From: Head of Audit and Governance

Subject: Internal Audit Plan 2024-25

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2024-25.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Internal Audit Plan at Appendix A be approved.

3. What the Committee is being asked to consider?

- 3.1 That the approach taken to develop the Audit Plan is sound.
- 3.2 That the breadth of the Plan is sufficient to allow the Head of Audit and Governance to give an opinion on the overall control environment.

4. Internal Audit Plan

- 4.1 The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) require an annual internal audit plan to be developed using a risk-based assessment process. The assessment process used at Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) considers factors such as: -
- The extent of change and development;
 - Staffing issues, e.g., inadequate training, high vacancy levels or extensive delegation;
 - The complexity of the system;
 - Previous audit findings, agreed action plans and the length of time since the last review;
 - Frauds detected or investigated;
 - The sensitivity of the system, for example the impact to the Council of something going wrong; and
 - The value and volume of transactions.
- 4.2 From the assessment, a risk score is allocated to each system, which is then used to prioritise audits and determine the frequency of each review. On completion of each review the assessment is updated to ensure that it remains reasonable and is based on sound judgement.

- 4.3 There are some high-profile areas such as data quality and asbestos management that require an annual review. Also, due to limited internal audit resources and additional work pressures during 2023/24, there are three reviews from the 2023/24 audit plan that remain outstanding, these are marked with an asterisk in Appendix A. All other proposed audit reviews listed at Appendix A are from the results of the risk assessment process outlined above taking into account the risk score, required frequency and date of the last review.
- 4.4 Follow-up reviews are completed 6 to 12 months after the final audit report has been issued to ensure that all agreed actions have been addressed as planned.

LINDA DOWNES

Operational and Financial Reviews

- Capital Project Management
- Corporate Land and Property
- Credit Cards
- Electoral Services*
- Fire Risk Management
- Fuel Cards
- General Ledger*
- Health and Safety Inspection
- Housing Voids
- Licensing*
- NABCEL (NBBC related activities only e.g. financial recharging services)
- Outsourced Services
- Risk Management

Annual Reviews

- Asbestos Management
- Data Quality
- Water Bodies

Follow-up Reviews

- Absence Management
- Assisted Funerals
- Car Park Management
- Emergency Planning
- External Grants and Funding
- Food Hygiene and Inspection
- HEART
- Housing Lettings
- HR Management
- Leaseholder Management
- Payroll
- Rental Income
- Treasury Management

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to: Audit and Standards Committee – 12th March 2024

From: Assistant Director – Governance & Democracy

Subject: Member Induction and Training Programme 2024 / 2025

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To provide the Committee with a draft Elected Member Induction and Training programme for the next municipal year with a view to seeking feedback from the panel to refine and update (where applicable) as per this Committee's role and function; and
- 1.2. To highlight to the Committee and Elected Members, the additional guidance, support and training offered by third party organisations, such as the Local Government Association, which is available for Members.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The draft Elected Member Induction and Training programme for the next municipal year be noted; and (if applicable)
- 2.2. The Committee refine and/or suggest any amendments to the draft Elected Member Induction and Training programme for Officers to review; and
- 2.3. If applicable, the Assistant Director – Governance & Democracy may liaise with the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee to refine and finalise the programme where necessary.

3. Body of Report

- 3.1. The Audit and Standards Committee has a key role in directing the provision of member development to ensure that elected members receive training, which meets their needs as decision makers and ward councillors. The Committee therefore needs to review and update the training and development needs which involves the consideration of the training programme. The programme includes items that the Committee consider mandatory and areas that it also feels necessary for members to be aware of in carrying out their duties generally as a Councillor and in their specific roles.

- 3.2. Members are expected to ensure they are regularly updated with the necessary knowledge of key legislation relating to their work as Councillors as well as their specific roles. This is particularly important to enable Councillors to make informed decisions. The training and development opportunities detailed in this report would assist in the delivery of that objective. In addition, there are also constitutional requirements for elected members to receive training on specific matters which as the requirement for the Chair of Planning Committee (as an example) to have received training in planning procedures and planning law in the preceding two years or, in the case of new Members, received in-house training within two months of the Annual Council Meeting.
- 3.3. Member training and development is necessary for providing elected members with key knowledge to enable them to undertake their public roles. The Council should therefore put in place adequate provision for training and development for its members (particularly the newly elected members), and provide support and encouragement to members to undertake the training provided.
- 3.4. Please note:
- a) The draft training themes contained in section 4 of this report will be delivered face-to-face or in some cases virtually;
 - b) A full programme with dates and times will be produced subject to 2.1 and 2.2 of the report;
 - c) The Council does utilise an e-learning system so additional (or follow up) e-learning will also be available for Elected Members in addition to the programme below;
 - d) The Council can refer external training sessions to Elected Members such as the training offered by the Local Government Association (LGA) from time to time;
 - e) All Elected Members will be invited to each training session; and
 - f) Should a specific training need/requirement be identified during the municipal year, officers may provide a training session related to the specific item.

4. Draft Induction and Training programme 2024/2025

- 4.1. Table 1 below sets out the training themes proposed to be delivered as part of the Elected Member Induction and Training Programme for the next municipal year. They cover training themes required by the Constitution but also include sessions which provide an overview of the Council and the processes and procedures it has in place from a governance and legal process for Elected Members to be aware of. The training will enable Elected Members to obtain an understanding of the Council and its key responsibilities. Within the draft programme, there is a proposed 6 month catch up to provide Elected Members (aimed more at new Elected Members) an

opportunity to provide feedback on the training delivered (from the perspective of a new Member) to enable the Council to improve its training delivery, but to also allow the new Members an opportunity to follow up with any questions or queries Council Officers may be able to help with since being in post.

Table 1

1. Introduction and Equipment Day
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome. • Overview of the Council – vision, values, structure and corporate plan. • Tour of Town Hall (Committee Rooms, Chamber, Mayors Parlour etc). • Collection of equipment and ID.
2. Overview of the political management arrangements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet, Scrutiny, Leader and Executive Model. • Procedures and protocols. • Members Allowance Scheme
3. Corporate Governance Training (Session 1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Fraud • Safeguarding • Risk Management & Performance • Data Protection • Freedom of Information
4. Corporate Governance Training (Session 2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement • Accounts Payable • SME Focus • Social Value • Internal Audit • Bribery, Gifts & Hospitality
5. Local Government Finance Training
6. Equality and Diversity Training
7. Lone Working, Health & Safety
8. Planning Committee
9. Licensing Committee
10. Audit and Standards Committee
11. Shareholder Committee

12.6-month catch-up / follow up

- This session presents an opportunity 6 months into the municipal year for Elected Members to ask any general questions, to seek feedback regarding any additional training requirements and to provide officers with feedback (if necessary) for future consideration with regards to training.

5. Financial Implications

- a. All training proposed under section 4 of this report will be undertaken in-house and will therefore be at no cost.
- b. If, however, the Committee determines additional sessions would be beneficial to include in the draft programme, Officers will review and identify any suggestion put forward by the Committee whether the training can be undertaken in-house or whether external training support is required. As per 2.2 of this report, where necessary, the Assistant Director – Governance & Democracy may liaise with the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee to refine and finalise as required.

6. Local Government Association (Information only)

6.1. As referred in section 3.4 d of this report, the LGA provide a range of e-learning, training material and sessions for Elected Members such as:

- Councillor e-learning:
 - Audit committees (an introduction)
 - Biodiversity for councils
 - Building safety
 - Children's Services
 - Commissioning council services
 - Community engagement and leadership
 - Corporate parenting
 - Councillor Code of Conduct
 - Councillor induction
 - Economic development
 - Equality, diversity and inclusion
 - Facilitation and conflict resolution
 - Handling intimidation
 - Holding council meetings online
 - Influencing skills
 - Licensing for councillors
 - Local government finance
 - Performance management
 - Planning
 - Police and crime panels
 - Scrutiny for councillors

- Stress management and personal resilience
- Supporting mentally healthier communities
- Supporting your constituents with complex issues
- The effective ward councillor
- The importance of speech, language and communication in the early years
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- One-to-one coaching for councillors
- Leadership Essentials

6.2. For the avoidance of any doubt, the information contained in section 6.1 of the report is not included in the proposed Elected Member Induction and Training programme. The purpose of including section 6 in this report is to highlight to Members the additional training, guidance and support offered by 3rd parties, such as the LGA, to support Elected Members in their role as a Councillor.

6.3. Should any Member wish to participate in any training or sessions delivered by a 3rd party organisation, such as the LGA, the Member should contact Democratic Services to establish the scope of the session/training and any cost implications.