

APPENDIX 2
INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW – COMMITTEE SYSTEM - AUDIT
RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1 – LGA Peer Review

It is acknowledged that a Council wide LGA peer review is planned for Autumn 2022 and consideration of the Committee system of governance should form an important part of that wider review. The Peer Review could provide an ideal opportunity to remind Councillors how the Committee System should be working in practice and to evaluate how to move forward and succeed in the new arrangement for the benefit of the residents, officers, and fellow colleagues. This could be supported with joint refresher training for both Members and Officers.

Recommendation 2 – Monitoring Governance Objectives

The Monitoring Officer in collaboration with Officers across the Council, should implement Performance Monitoring in the form of establishing key performance indicators against each of the five specific objectives set out in the governance arrangements of the Committee System. This will provide continuity and a mechanism for effective measurement and monitoring of the Council set objectives and highlight potential improvements to the process.

Recommendation 3 – Standards and Conduct

The Standards Committee in collaboration with the Monitoring Officer and the Political Group Leaders, should actively promote and robustly support the culture, vision and values of the Council and challenge the conduct and poor behaviour of Councillors wherever it occurs.

Recommendation 4 – Decision making

The Political Group Leaders in collaboration with the Monitoring Officer and the Management Team (MAT), should remind Councillors that their decisions and actions are a reflection on the Council. Specifically, they are accountable to the residents and communities of the whole Borough, and they have a collective responsibility to deliver requirements set by Central Government.

Recommendation 5 – Committee System Working Group

The role of the Committee System Working Group will remain pivotal in regularly monitoring the achievement of objectives as defined at the pre-implementation stage, as well as providing a Member forum to discuss and progress further improvements. In particular, focus needs to be given to how to effectively embed and demonstrate a more robust scrutiny role within the new Committee System / structure. This working group should also review the extent to which the risk mitigation measures highlighted by the Consultants at the outset are being applied.

Recommendation 6 – Model of Governance


Internal Audit acknowledge that if the Committee System is not sustainable, then there would be an opportunity to invoke a petition to be presented, which if signed by 5% of the electorate, will trigger a referendum. If a referendum does in fact take place and there is a positive public vote to change then this will need to take place. This in turn would allow the Committee System form of governance to proceed towards a hybrid approach: the most common hybrid is between a Leader / Cabinet and the Committee System, which is legally a modified version of the Leader / Cabinet model. In such circumstances, the Monitoring Officer should consider advising on the benefits of a hybrid approach.

Management Action / Officer Response (Recommendations 1 to 6)

All the recommendations as presented are accepted (by both the Council's Management Team and former Monitoring Officer).

The implementation of the Committee System was undertaken at a significant pace against the backdrop of the Council's response to the pandemic. The Committee System Working Group met on an almost weekly basis to design a committee system to meet the objectives and it was the Working Group's recommendation of the structure and processes which was presented to Council for adoption.

It was acknowledged by the Committee System Working Group and Officers that amendments to the system will be required as the system embeds. The Working Group have now met on four occasions to discuss potential adjustments, and these will be presented to the Council before the Annual Council Meeting for implementation in 2022-23 municipal year.

Priority	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date
<p>High</p> 	<p><u>Recommendation 1:</u> Monitoring Officer</p> <p><u>Recommendation 2:</u> Monitoring Officer in collaboration with Officers across the Council</p> <p><u>Recommendation 3:</u> The Standards Committee in collaboration with the Monitoring Officer and the Political Group Leaders</p> <p><u>Recommendation 4:</u> The Political Group Leaders in collaboration with the Monitoring Officer and the Management Team (MAT)</p> <p><u>Recommendations 5 and 6:</u> Monitoring Officer</p>	Autumn 2022


Recommendation 7 - Skillset and Training for decision making

The skillset of Members to Chair and actively participate in development decisions, planning decisions and financial matters cannot be underestimated. Councillors should be reminded of the significant adverse implications of poor, ineffective and delayed decision making and training on financial and planning matters should be well attended and understood.

Management Action / Officer Response – Recommendation 7

The recommendation is noted and agreed.

Clear informed decision making is paramount to the operation of the Council under the Committee System. What training is required for Members needs to be assessed and put into place.

Priority	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date
High 	<u>Recommendation 7:</u> The Political Group Leaders in consultation with the statutory officers	Autumn 2022

Recommendation 8 – Corporate Capacity

(i)The Monitoring Officer in collaboration with the Management Team (MAT) should engage with the Political Group Leaders and the Leader of the Council to articulate and capture the expectations of Councillors ensuring that the expectations are proportionate with respect to the impact on the delivery of statutory duties of the Council, resource implications including retention of key staff and whether Officers have sufficient time available to discharge their responsibilities effectively.


(ii)The Monitoring Officer in collaboration with the Management Team (MAT) should address the risks and the implications around Officer feedback regarding Councillors excessive involvement in the operational side of the Council, in particular the concerns raised regarding adverse impact on physical and mental health of the Officers.

Management Action / Officer Response – Recommendation 8

The recommendations are accepted.

Corporate capacity is a red risk in the Corporate Risk register and this needs to be addressed.

A full Council Peer Review is scheduled to take place, which will provide useful input to these recommendations.

Priority	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date
<p>High</p> 	<p><u>Recommendation 8i:</u> Monitoring Officer in collaboration with the Management Team, the Political Group Leaders and the Leader of the Council</p> <p><u>Recommendation 8ii:</u> Monitoring Officer in collaboration with the Management Team</p>	<p>Autumn 2022</p>