

Questions for Audit and Scrutiny Committee 13th Nov 2025

Question 1

At the last A&S meeting, the Chief Exec described the new audit dialogue with Grant Thornton:

“We have... scheduled in catch-ups with myself... there’ll be a shared part where the Section 151 Officer is in there and possibly the Monitoring Officer... and then I’ll get some time on my own... We’re promoting that very open dialogue, and I believe I’ve got my first one... this week.”

EEBC response to a request for minutes of that meeting with Grant Thornton are at para 5 of FOI 505.25. It is stated that “no minutes taken” at that first meeting.

With no record of these discussions being made, does this committee agree that the Chief Executive’s description of a “new audit dialogue” is misleading when she described this new proposal as a “very open dialogue”?

Question 2

In the last meeting, when asked to attend to explain the SLT’s response to the peer review comments regarding a ‘*culture of secrecy*’, Jackie King referred to an e-mail she received that day from the peer review lead.

Jackie King summarised the e-mail stating *“They [peer review lead] don’t recall making the comment to say that there’s a culture of secrecy... they were more concerned with transparency from the aspect of clarity... being transparent in a way that everybody understood the processes around decision-making”*

The minutes state *“She explained she had received an email earlier that evening from the lead peer who stated that they didn’t recall making the comment about there being a culture of secrecy at EEBC and they also did not remember hearing it in any of the sessions. The lead peer clarified that they were more concerned with transparency from the aspect of clarity rather than hiding things, meaning being transparent in a way that everybody understands the processes around decision making. The Chief Executive explained that somewhere along the line the meaning of the comment has been. The Vice Chair asked if the LGA peer review was minuted and how the comment has not been able to be tracked down. The Chief Executive explained that the lead peer has gone back to their notes and stated that she did recall a conversation with three members about how they weren’t clear on how members and officers had come to some decisions around one of the Council’s larger projects. She agreed to follow up with this further and provide a response to Members in writing.”*

Can you please share the written follow up Jackie King agreed to provide to Members?