

Annual Report of the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee 2016/17

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Annual Report provides Council with an overview of the work of the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee for 2016/17.
- 1.2 The work of the Committee during 2016/17 has been taken forward by its ten members; attendance at the five formal meetings of the committee is shown in the table below.

Member	Actual Attendance at Meetings	Nominated Substitute
Councillor David Reeve (Chairman)	5	
Councillor Clive Smitheram (Vice Chairman)	5	
Councillor Tony Axelrod (Appointed Committee member 9 September 2016)	4	
Councillor Steve Bridger	5	
Councillor Alex Clarke	3	
Councillor Rob Geleit	4	
Councillor Jan Mason	5	
Councillor Peter O'Donovan	3	
Councillor Humphrey Reynolds	5	
Councillor David Wood	2	3
Councillor Tella Wormington (Committee Member until 9 September 2016)	1	

- 1.3 In June 2016 the Committee considered and agreed its work programme for 2016/17. The work programme was designed to ensure that the Committee met its responsibilities both statutory and local and provided the Council with added value and reassurance. An overview of the main items considered by the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee across the year is set out below.

Effectively holding decision makers to account

- 1.4 A key function of the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee is to ensure effective, transparent and accountable decision making. To help fulfil this particular role the Committee has the power to review policy committee decisions made but not yet implemented through the Council's Call-in procedure and to consider an annual report on the use of delegated powers at the Council. It has the power to question both officers and members.

- 1.5 During 2016/17 the Committee did not receive any requests to use its call-in power from members of the Committee or any other body/individual. In June 2016, twenty one decisions were reported to the Committee as having been recorded or pending on the Council's delegated decision proforma. The Committee did not raise any particular concerns.
- 1.6 The Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee considered regular performance management reports which highlighted progress made by the policy committees in meeting their key performance priority targets. As well as noting a general overview, the Committee considered in more detail those targets reported as being on amber or red performance status. The Committee noted the actions that had been proposed or taken where performance was a concern. The Committee did not raise any particular matters but discussed the impact of external factors on the achievement of some priority targets.
- 1.7 In February 2017 the Committee received a monitoring report on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). The Committee noted that no requests for authorisations had been made by officers since 2010. The Committee agreed that it should wish to receive an annual report on the use of RIPA at the Council, even if no requests for authorisations had been made. It asked to be notified of any changes in the law, changes to authorised officers, and whether training had been provided to authorised officers.
- 1.8 Lastly, the Committee as the Council's Crime & Disorder Committee received two reports on the Epsom & Ewell Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The Committee was informed of the CSP's proposal to merge with the East Surrey Community Safety Partnership following approval by the Environment Committee in October 2016 and agreement of the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner (agreement has since been received).

Contributing to more effective policies, improving services, and improving the quality of life for local people

- 1.9 Two further key aspects of the role of the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee are (i) to secure improvements across the Council, and (ii) to consider the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the Borough. In relation to this latter area the Committee has the ability to report on any matter which affects Epsom and Ewell as well as its residents.
- 1.10 During 2016/17 the Committee considered Council CCTV provision, encompassing Town Centres' (streetscene) CCTV, Public Car Parks CCTV, Council venues/other facilities CCTV, and Council vehicles CCTV. A particular focus of the review was on street scene CCTV. The Committee was informed that it was proposed that street scene CCTV would continue at current levels despite changes to monitoring arrangements following the demise of the current streetscene CCTV contract on 31 March 2017. The Committee was also informed that work was being progressed to document compliance with the Surveillance Code of Practice; the Committee is to receive a further report on this during the next municipal year.

- 1.11 In February 2016, the previous Committee agreed to undertake a Review of Venues. It appointed a scrutiny task group comprising four members to undertake the investigatory work which has continued into 2016/17. The review was intended to assist in development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Terms of Reference were considered by the Financial Policy Panel on 1 December 2015.
- 1.12 The task group undertook a number of different evidence gathering exercises which sought input from various parties both internal and external. It reported its findings on Bourne Hall (including Bourne Hall Museum) and Hook Road Arena, together with recommendations, to the October 2016 meeting of the Committee. The report and recommendations approved by the Committee were presented by the Chairman and Vice Chairman to the November 2016 Community & Wellbeing Committee. The Community & Wellbeing Committee supported funding for renovation work to the Bourne Hall kitchen and agreed to establish a working party comprising its Chairman and Vice Chairman and officers to further investigations into securing improvements at Bourne Hall.
- 1.13 The task group has since January 2017 progressed the second phase of the Review of Venues; it is currently reviewing Epsom Playhouse. Its findings are to be reported in November 2017.
- 1.14 In relation to its 2015/16 scrutiny review of the administrative arrangements associated with the publication and determination of planning applications, the Committee received an update at its April 2017 meeting on action taken to date by the Council. In relation to another of its 2015/16 reviews (Routecall) Members of the Committee were informed that the Community & Wellbeing Committee had requested the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee to undertake a review of the rebranded community services in April 2018.

Adding value

- 1.15 Throughout 2016/17 the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee received regular reports from both internal and external audit. Auditors attended meetings of the Committee to present their findings and answer members' questions directly.
- 1.16 In June 2016 the Committee received the Internal Audit Assurance Report 2015/16 together with an assessment of the internal auditor's performance by the Director of Finance & Resources. At this meeting the Committee confirmed the adequacy of the arrangements made for preparing the Council's Annual Governance Statement. The Committee endorsed the 2015/16 Annual Governance Statement prior to it being certified by the Chief Executive and Chairman of Strategy & Resources Committee.
- 1.17 In February 2017 the Committee noted that the external auditor had issued an unqualified opinion regarding the Council's grant certification. The Committee expressed its thanks and congratulations to officers in the Council's Finance and Revenues & Benefits Teams for achieving such positive reports.

- 1.18 The Committee considered the Council's risk management framework in November 2015. It considered a new Risk Management Strategy 2017 – 2021 and confirmed that it was satisfied with the arrangements in place. The Committee considered the Council's Leadership Risk Register, but did not highlight any matters of concern to the Leadership Team.

Conclusion

- 1.19 To conclude its Annual Report, the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee wishes to record its particular thanks to all those who contributed to the work of the Committee across the year and thereby enabled it to meet its responsibilities to the Council during 2016/17.