

Minutes of the Meeting of the AUDIT, CRIME & DISORDER AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held on 23 November 2017

PRESENT -

Councillor David Reeve (Chairman); Councillor Steve Bridger (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Alex Clarke, Neil Dallen (as nominated substitute for Councillor George Crawford), Rob Geleit, Humphrey Reynolds, Jean Steer, Peter Webb and Clive Woodbridge (Items 14 - 20 only)

In Attendance: Lorna Raynes (Client Manager) (RSM Risk Assurance (Internal Auditor)) (Items 12 - 15 only)

Absent: Councillor George Crawford and Councillor Jan Mason

Officers present: Andrew Lunt (Head of Venues & Facilities), Gillian McTaggart (Head of Corporate Governance), Margaret Jones (Scrutiny Officer) and Tim Richardson (Democratic Services Officer)

12 QUESTION TIME

No questions were asked or had been submitted by members of the public.

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by councillors in items on the agenda for this meeting.

14 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee held on 20 June 2017 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

Minute 10 a). That the final sentence of the first paragraph be amended to read as follows:

“The revised form would be circulated to **members of** the Audit, Crime and Disorder Committee for information once it had been designed.” (amendment highlighted in **bold** text).

Minute 11 a). That the word “the” be removed, to make the sentence read as follows:

“The Chairman informed the Committee that as Ewell Court House had only recently reopened following a fire, the scrutiny review group would consider whether more time was required to establish business at the venue prior to undertaking a review of it.”

15 INTERNAL AUDIT MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received a report summarising progress against the audit plan for 2017/18.

The following matters were considered:

- **Verbal update on financial management and main accounting audit reports.** The Head of Corporate Governance provided the Committee with a verbal update on actions taken following the audits of Financial Management and Main Accounting (which had previously been considered at the meeting of 11 April 2017). The Committee was informed that the Council’s finance team was now fully staffed.
- **Deferral of housing audits.** The Committee noted that the Head of Housing & Community had requested that three audits relating to the Council’s housing service be deferred to 2018/19, due to the introduction of new duties by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This request was being considered and would be reviewed in conjunction with the Internal Audit Manager.
- **Audit of emergency planning and civil contingencies.** The Committee noted that the auditor had identified 3 medium priority actions within this report. Following consideration of the auditor’s report, the Committee requested officers to provide an update at its next meeting with regard to the ICT business continuity and disaster recovery plans, in light of the end of shared service arrangements with Elmbridge Borough Council. The Committee also asked officers to provide an update on the non-desktop based testing arrangements for the Council’s wider emergency and business continuity plans.

Members of the Committee also asked whether councillors could receive training in how to react in the event of an emergency. The Head of Corporate Governance informed the meeting that a briefing session on emergency and civil contingency planning had been provided for councillors, but that it could be repeated. This matter was further considered in Minute 17, below.

- **Audit of commercial property acquisitions.** The Committee noted that this report had been given a substantial level of assurance by the Internal Auditor. Following a question from a member of the Committee, the Internal Auditor clarified that the report considered whether the policies and procedures agreed by the Council with regard to the acquisition of commercial property had been complied with. It did not examine in detail

the investment criteria approved by the Council, but the Internal Auditor informed the Committee that these were broadly similar to those agreed by other local authorities.

The Committee noted that the report did not consider the governance arrangements of the commercial property investment company formed by the Council, and requested that this be included in the future internal audit work plan if there was availability to do so.

Following consideration, the Committee:

- (1) Noted the internal audit progress report;
- (2) Requested that an update on ICT business continuity, ICT disaster recovery and testing of emergency planning arrangements be presented to its meeting in February 2018.

**16 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND EXTERNAL AUDIT FINDINGS
2016/17 - PROGRESS AGAINST ACTION PLAN**

The Committee received and noted a report setting out progress in implementing the Action Plan contained within the Annual Governance Statement, and the actions agreed in Audit Findings within the External Auditor's Report.

17 RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee received a report providing it with an update on the Council's risk management arrangements.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- **Emergency and crisis management.** The Committee expressed support for further training for members with regard to emergency and crisis management, including how officers are able to utilise and manage information from councillors in such events. The Head of Corporate Governance informed the Committee that she would work with the Democratic Services Manager to identify a suitable date for this session. This matter was also considered in Minute 15, above.
- **Monitoring of Plan E.** The Committee expressed concern that the risk "Monitoring the Plan E Project Plan" on page 63 of the agenda was outside the control of the Council, as the implementation of works was the responsibility of Surrey County Council. The Head of Corporate Governance informed the meeting that this was a typing error, and that the full description of this risk should read "Monitoring the Plan E Project Plan and assess impact". The Committee was informed that whilst the implementation of works were the responsibility of Surrey County Council, there were still reputational risks to Epsom and Ewell Borough Council if they were not delivered as planned. Additionally, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council had contributed funding to the Plan.

Members of the Committee expressed the view that an action plan to address any problems that may arise with the implementation of Plan E might be required.

Following consideration, the Committee:

- (1) Confirmed that it was satisfied with the arrangements in place for risk management.
- (2) Reviewed the Leadership Risk Register and identified the following risk as being an item which it wished to raise with the Leadership Team:

Risk L8 (Monitoring the Plan E Project Plan and assess impact): the Committee expressed the view that an action plan to address problems with the implementation of Plan E should be produced.

18 CORPORATE PLAN: PERFORMANCE REPORT ONE 2017 TO 2018

The Committee received a report providing an update against the Council's Key Priority Performance Targets for 2017 to 2018, under the new Corporate Plan.

The Committee:

- (1) Considered the performance reported in Annexe 1 and did not identify any areas of concern.
- (2) Considered the actions that had been proposed or taken where performance was currently a concern as shown in table 3.1 of the report.
- (3) Noted the overview of the Key Priority Performance Targets in Annexe 2.

19 WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

The Committee received a report updating it on its work programme for 2017/18.

The following matter was discussed:

- **Community Safety Partnership (CSP).** The Committee noted that a half-yearly report on the work of the CSP had not been presented to this meeting as there was no marked change on its previous position. It was also noted that a report considering how best to scrutinise the activities of the CSP in the future would be brought to the April 2018 meeting of the Committee.

The Committee requested further information on the make-up and membership of the CSP, and enquired whether a councillor representative from EEBC could be appointed to it. It was noted that the Community Safety & Projects Officer would be asked to provide further information regarding this following the meeting.

A member of the Committee identified that the Council's website currently referred to the Epsom and Ewell Community Safety Partnership, rather than the East Surrey CSP which the Council was now a member of. It was noted that officers would look into this.

Following consideration, the Committee:

- (1) Agreed to receive a report in April 2018, which would look at how best the Committee can scrutinise the local CSP in future.
- (2) Noted the current position of its work programme 2017/18, attached to the report as Annexe 1.

20 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EPSOM PLAYHOUSE

The Committee received the report of the Scrutiny Review Task Group on Epsom Playhouse.

The following matters were considered:

- **Characteristics and usage of Epsom Playhouse.** The Chairman provided the Committee with a verbal summary of the Scrutiny Review Group's report and findings. This included detailed analysis of the venue, its usage, and financial performance.
- **Visitor consultation feedback** The Committee noted the highly positive responses received from users of the Playhouse during the consultation carried out for the review, and that these strongly supported the continued operation of the venue.
- **Capital works.** The Committee was informed that bids for capital funding to replace the main stage and refurbish the toilet facilities in the first floor dressing room had been submitted for consideration in the 2018 budget setting process.
- **Reduction of subsidy.** The Committee noted the reduction in subsidy (both per ticket and total) achieved in recent years, and thanked the Head of Venues and Facilities and the staff working at the venue for their hard work to achieve this.

Following consideration, the Committee:

- (1) Approved the Report of the Scrutiny Review Task Group on the Review of Epsom Playhouse attached at Annexe 1.
- (2) Agreed that the report be presented to the Community & Wellbeing Committee on 23 January 2018.

Following these decisions, the Committee expressed its thanks and congratulations to the Head of Venues and Facilities, staff at the Playhouse, the

Research, Consultation & Information Analyst, Councillor Mike Teasdale and the Scrutiny Officer for the amount of work put into the review.

21 THANKS TO MR SIMON YOUNG, HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

The Committee recorded its thanks to Mr Simon Young, the Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services, who had attended its meetings and assisted it for several years. Mr Young was due to leave the Council's employment for a new position, and the Committee wished him well in his new career.

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 9.11 pm

COUNCILLOR DAVID REEVE (CHAIRMAN)