

Annual Report of the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee 2017/18

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Annual Report provides Council with an overview of the work of the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee undertaken during 2017/18.
- 1.2 Over the course of the year, the work of the Committee was undertaken by its ten members. Specific investigative work was undertaken by a scrutiny panel appointed in February 2016.
- 1.3 Attendance at the four formal meetings of the committee during 2017/18 is set out in the table below.

Member	Actual Attendance at Meetings*	Nominated Substitute*
Councillor David Reeve (Chairman)	3	
Councillor Steve Bridger (Vice Chairman)	3	
Councillor Alex Clarke	2	1
Councillor George Crawford	1	1
Councillor Rob Geleit	3	
Councillor Jan Mason	2	
Councillor Humphrey Reynolds	3	
Councillor Jean Steer	2	
Councillor Peter Webb	3	
Councillor Clive Woodbridge	3	

*Figures to be updated following April 2018 meeting.

- 1.4 In June 2017 the Committee considered and agreed its work programme for 2017/18. The work programme was designed to ensure that the Committee met its statutory and local responsibilities and provided the Council with added value and reassurance. An overview of the main items is set out below.

Effectively Holding Decision Makers to Account

- 1.5 A key element of the Committee's role is to support effective, transparent and accountable decision making. To enable the Committee to meet this responsibility it undertakes a number of different activities. 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.
- 1.6 During 2017/18 the Committee did not receive any requests to use its call-in power. In June 2017, the Committee was informed that thirty one significant

decisions, taken by officers in consultation with Committee Chairmen, had been recorded since 12 May 2016 (or were pending) on the Council's delegated decision proforma. The Committee did not raise any particular concerns regarding these decisions.

- 1.7 The Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee has a responsibility to monitor progress on the Council's Corporate Plan. As such, it received regular performance reports throughout 2017/18. No particular issues were raised by the Committee. However, in February 2018, the Committee was informed of a change in performance management reporting arrangements. From the end of September 2017 the reporting of performance targets was aligned more with the financial reporting process. Reports are now issued to councillors direct. The Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee will continue to receive regular performance management reports to reflect its on-going responsibilities in this area.
- 1.8 In February 2017 the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee agreed it should receive an annual report on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). The Committee asked to be informed of any changes in the law, changes in authorised officers, whether training had been provided to authorised officers, and usage of RIPA powers by the Council. Following consideration by the Committee, the Council's RIPA arrangements were inspected by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners. A set of recommendations was received by the Council. The annual RIPA report scheduled for consideration by the Committee in 2017/18 has been deferred. However, it will be presented to the Committee in June 2018 following consideration of the updated RIPA policy by the Strategy & Resources Committee in April 2018.
- 1.9 Lastly, in June 2017, in recognition of the Committee's duty to scrutinise decisions and actions of the local Community Safety Partnership (CSP), the Committee received a report on the work and position of the Epsom and Ewell Community Safety Partnership 2016/17. The Committee noted the work undertaken and received a verbal update on arrangements and priorities following the merger of Epsom and Ewell CSP with the East Surrey CSP.

Contributing to more effective policies, Improving Services, and Improving the Quality of Life for Local People

- 1.10 The Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee has a role to play in securing improvements to Council services and in considering 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.
- 1.11 In February 2018 the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee received a follow up report to a 2016 scrutiny review of the Administrative Arrangements for Publicising and Determining Planning Applications. All scrutiny recommendations made, bar two, have been implemented. The Committee agreed that its recommendation regarding potential review of the Council policy

on telecommunications masts sited on Council land, be taken forward by the Head of Property and thereafter reported to the appropriate Committee. It was informed that the recommendation to undertake a customer satisfaction survey would be undertaken once resources allowed.

- 1.12 Progress made against recommendations of another scrutiny review was reported to the Committee in April 2018. The Committee received an update on the Routecall Review undertaken in 2015.
- 1.13 In February 2016, the Committee agreed to undertake a Review of Venues. It appointed a Scrutiny Review Task Group to undertake the investigatory work. Review work on Epsom Playhouse, the third venue reviewed, commenced in January 2017 and continued into 2017/18. The Task Group undertook a number of different evidence gathering exercises which sought input from various parties both internal and external. On conclusion of the review no specific recommendations were made, but the Task Group highlighted a number of matters under three headings – Equipment, Income Generation and Building - for further exploration. The Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee approved the final report of the Task Group in November 2017. The Report was presented to the Community & Wellbeing Committee in January 2018.
- 1.14 Review by the Committee of the last venue included within the original 2015 review scope - Ewell Court House - was removed from the Committee work programme 2017/18. This was due, in part, to the relatively short period of time the venue had been operating since its refurbishment; it was considered that any value secured from a review at this time would be minimal. The Committee, however, could include this particular piece of work in any of its future work programmes.

Adding Value

- 1.15 Throughout 2017/18 the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee received regular audit reports. Internal Auditors attended each Committee meeting to present their findings and answer members' questions. In November 2017 the Committee considered an audit of Emergency Planning at the Council. In response to a request of the Committee, a Members' Briefing Evening designed to provide emergency response training for councillors is now planned for June 2018. It will cover issues such as how to react, signposting to responsible authorities and use of social media.
- 1.16 In June 2017 the Committee received the Internal Audit Assurance Report 2016/17 together with an assessment of the internal auditor's performance by the then Acting Director of Finance & Resources. No reports were issued with a 'no assurance' level during 2016/17. The Internal Auditors overall opinion recorded that the Council had an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control. To ensure it remained adequate and effective, enhancements were identified.

- 1.17 Progress on the implementation of high and medium Internal Audit recommendations was reported to the Committee in February 2018. Progress on implementing the recommendations agreed in 2016/17 had been good overall. However, the Committee did ask for an update in November 2018 on progress made in relation to three recommendations where no action had been taken.
- 1.18 At the June 2017 meeting the Committee confirmed the adequacy of the arrangements made for preparing the Council's Annual Governance Statement. The Committee endorsed the 2016/17 Annual Governance Statement prior to it being certified by the Chief Executive and Chairman of Strategy & Resources Committee.
- 1.19 Finally, the Committee considered the Council's risk management framework in November 2017. It confirmed that it was satisfied with the arrangements in place, but did raise one matter for consideration by the Leadership Team regarding the Council's Leadership Risk Register - Risk L8: Monitoring the Plan E Project Plan and assess impact. The Committee expressed the view that an action plan to address any problems with the implementation of Plan E should be produced.

Conclusion

- 1.20 The Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee wishes to record its particular thanks to all those who contributed to the work of the Committee over the year and thereby enabled it to meet its responsibilities for 2017/18.