

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Audit Committee

28 September 2016 at 6.30pm

Present:

Councillor	K Sudan (Chair)
Councillor	C R Eade (Vice Chair)
Councillors	R D Burrett, I T Irvine and Portal Castro.

Also in Attendance:

Councillor A C Skudder.

Officers Present:

Roger Brownings	Democratic Services Officer
Gillian Edwards	Audit and Risk Manager
Karen Hayes	Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits
Mark Rice	Fraud Investigator
Stuart Small	Fraud Investigator

13. Apologies for Absence

With all the Committee's Members being present at this meeting, there were no apologies for absence.

14. Members' Disclosures of Interests

There were no disclosures of interest.

15. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on **26 July 2016** were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Reference was made by a Member to Minute No. 6 (Internal Audit Progress Report as at 30 June 2016, Incorporating Risk Management Update as at 30th June 2016). In this connection, the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits confirmed that as requested at the Committee's 26 July meeting, she had circulated clarification on the agreed delegated process for approving the use of monies from Section 106 Agreements, whilst also indicating that this process was currently being reviewed by

officers, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development.

16. Fraud Team Report

The Committee considered report **FIN/391** of the Corporate Fraud and Inspections Manager, which focused on activity for the period from 8 July 2016 to 22 August 2016. The Team had looked further into a wide range of fraud and loss against the Council.

The report indicated that the Team had continued to perform successfully. Mark Rice and Stuart Small (Fraud Investigators from the Team) took this opportunity to brief the Committee on specific areas of the Team's work, including, for example, that in respect of Right to Buy and the Single Person Discount. The Committee was provided with details of cases investigated and the Team's associated interventions, whilst a discussion took place on the Team's work generally. Members acknowledged that a fraud awareness training package was soon to be rolled out for all staff across the Council. Members sought and received clarification on a number of issues raised, whilst the Chair thanked both Mark and Stuart for enhancing Members' understanding of the work undertaken.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

17. Internal Audit Progress Report as at 31st August 2016 Incorporating Risk Management Update as at 31st August 2016

The Committee considered report **FIN/394** of the Audit and Risk Manager. The purpose of the report was primarily to update the Committee on the progress made towards the completion of the 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 Internal Audit Plans, and to report on the progress made in implementing the previous recommendations. The report also included an update on the Council's Strategic Risks.

The Committee discussed and noted all the Audit Plan reviews in progress, along with other work as detailed in the report. With regard to car park income, the Audit and Risk Manager agreed to a Member's request to circulate to Members shortly clarification as to the possibility of car parking machines (in Council operated car parks) being able to accept the use of debit and credit cards - thus increasing convenience of payment, whilst reducing the amount of money held by those machines.

With regard to the Crawley Deposit Service (formerly known as the Rent Deposit Service), the Audit and Risk Manager confirmed that as indicated in the report, the Service had received an audit opinion of substantial. A Member of the Committee referred to recent meetings of the Committee at which he had sought assurances that concerns he had previously raised regarding that Service had now been dealt with and resolved accordingly. With this in mind the Member indicated that he was now happy to accept the changes to the way the Service now operated, acknowledged the substantial audit opinion given, and considered the matter closed.

The Committee discussed the update provided on Risk Management. Members received clarification on issues arising, including matters on the financing and development of the Three Bridges Railway Station project, whilst in response to

comments from a Member, it was confirmed by the Head of Finance, Revenue's and Benefits that with regard to the matter of recruitment and retention, details on starters and leavers - which had not been included in recent publications of the Council's Information Bulletin, would be reintroduced to that document shortly.

RESOLVED

That the Internal Audit Progress Report as at 31 August 2016, Incorporating the Risk Management Update as at 31 August 2016, be noted.

18. Closure of Meeting

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm.

K SUDAN
Chair