

## Crawley Borough Council

### Minutes of Audit Committee

Tuesday, 28 November 2017 at 6.00 pm

#### **Councillors Present:**

K Sudan (Chair)

C R Eade (Vice-Chair)

R D Burrett, I T Irvine and R Sharma

#### **Also in Attendance:**

Councillor A C Skudder

#### **Officers Present:**

Chris Corker                      Operational Benefits and Corporate Fraud Manager

Gillian Edwards                Audit and Risk Manager

Karen Hayes                      Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits

Mez Matthews                    Democratic Services Officer

#### **1. Disclosures of Interest**

No disclosures of interests were made.

#### **2. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 September 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

A Committee member drew attention to minute 16 (Local Government Audit Committee Briefing) which referred to the interest expressed in conducting an audit to look at the number of women employed by the Council in senior roles. Following a brief discussion, it was suggested that the Human Resources Department might already hold such information and therefore the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits advised the Committee that she would liaise with the Head of People and Technology to obtain data relating to equalities if it were available (a copy of which was circulated to Committee members following the meeting).

#### **3. Investigation Team Report**

The Committee considered report FIN/429 of the Operational Benefits and Corporate Fraud Manager, which focused on activity for the period from 11 July 2017 to 14 November 2017. The report indicated that the Team had continued to perform successfully.

The Committee was provided with details of cases investigated and the Team's investigations, whilst a discussion took place on the Team's work generally. The Committee sought and received clarification on a number of points raised, including the fraud work undertaken on behalf of the Council's RSL partners and the illegal eviction case. The chair asked that it be noted that it would be better if companies were obliged to report that their business had started up or that there was a change in their business activities which would affect their business rates, rather than the Council having to use its resources to find those properties.

**RESOLVED**

That the Investigation Team Report be noted.

**4. Internal Audit Progress Report as at 31st October 2017 Incorporating Risk Management Update as at 31st October 2017**

The Committee considered report FIN/428 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 2017/2018 Internal Audit Plan, 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. The Audit and Risk Manager took the opportunity to brief the Committee on high priority findings and follow up audits. At the request of the Committee, the Audit and Risk Manager provided further information on the Procurement Audit, Queens Square Audit and Freedom of Information requests. In addition, the Committee was advised that the Risk Management Awareness and Training Audit had highlighted several areas for training which relevant staff would be obliged to attend.

The Committee discussed the update provided on Strategic Risk Management. The Committee sought and received clarification on several points, including the delivery of the affordable housing programme and the composition of the LEP Board. A detailed discussion took place regarding the Town Hall Project with clarification provided relating to a certificate of immunity and the potential cost implications should the application to English Heritage be successful. The Committee also expressed concern regarding the Council's current challenge in recruiting and retaining key specialist and professional roles.

**RESOLVED**

That the Internal Audit Progress Report as at 31st October 2017, incorporating Risk Management Update as at 31st October 2017, be noted.

**Closure of Meeting**

With the business of the Audit Committee concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.05 pm

K SUDAN  
Chair