

Runnymede Borough CouncilSTANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE18 September 2018 at 7.30pm

Members of the Committee Present: Councillors M G Nuti (Chairman), D E Anderson-Bassey (Vice-Chairman), A Alderson, M D Cressey, S L Dennett, J R Furey, P Snow, P J Taylor, A P Tollett and Mrs G Warner.

Members of the Committee absent: Mr J Healy and Mr M Litvak (Independent persons)

241 FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Chairman read the procedures to be followed in the event of fire or other emergency.

242 NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Group mentioned below had notified the Chief Executive of their wish that the change listed below be made to the membership of the Committee. The change was for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting and thereafter the Councillor removed would be reappointed.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Remove From Membership</u>	<u>Appoint Instead</u>
Conservative	Councillor Mrs Y P Lay	Councillor Mrs G Warner

The Chief Executive had given effect to this request in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

243 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 July 2018 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

244 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no items of business for the Independent persons.

245 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2018/19

The Committee noted progress with 2018/19 Internal Audit plan. TIAA had completed audits in the following areas: Whistleblowing incident follow up, sheltered accommodation and Community First Grants. There were 6 priority 3 recommendations arising from sheltered accommodation and 10 from Community First Grants, which included 2 priority 2 recommendations which were set out in full to the Committee and the management responses noted accordingly.

An audit on Housing Section 106 agreements had been added to the programme for Quarter 4 of 2018/19. This area had not previously been audited.

Mr Harris reported that TIAA was looking at an alternative format for future Internal Audit Progress reports to accommodate the additional information requested by the Committee.

Members requested that the deferred audit on Community Transport be conducted as a matter of priority and Mr Harris replied that he would speak to the Assistant Head of Community Services the next day in order to agree on a date for the audit to commence.

246 INTERNAL AUDIT COMPARISONS REPORT

TIAA's first annual report showing a comparison of assurance levels for audited services between 2014 and 2018 was considered by the Committee.

Members were pleased to note that despite going through an extended period of austerity the authority's overall control framework was sound. The number of 'reasonable' and 'substantial' judgements made by TIAA had increased, with no 'limited assurances' and only 1 where 'no assurance' had been given, which subsequently had attained a 'substantial' assurance in 2017/18.

Mr Harris explained that TIAA did not apply any algorithms to their audits, each was concluded as their opinion of the service. He further explained that the criteria for the outcomes was made accordingly to how many recommendations were made and which category they fell into.

Members were assured that any 'no assurance' or 'limited assurance' audits would be reported in full to the Committee and any trends would be identified by the end of the financial year 2018/19.

247 COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS 1 JUNE – 31 JULY 2018

The Committee received its regular report on Complaints and Compliments that had been recorded centrally with the Corporate Head of Law and Governance since the last meeting up to 31 July 2018.

Members were informed that there had been 13 formal complaints recorded and 8 compliments between 1 June and 31 July 2018. It was noted that 5 complaints had been upheld or partly so.

Members sought more detail by way of a report to the next meeting in November regarding the nature of complaints received by Environmental Services, Housing and Planning during 2017/18.

Officers were also asked to present a 'snapshot' of the register for information which complied with GDPR in terms of redacting any personal/sensitive information.

Officers confirmed that a number of the complaints in the last reporting period concerned advice given to members of the public regarding Council procedures, legislative requirements and decisions which either the public disagreed with or which they had not fully understood.

Members were also keen to identify further trends and requested that the figures be aligned to the results for 2017/18, with the same reporting periods as the corporate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Officers were asked to consider adding targets for complaints to the quarterly KPI reports for those Service Committees that did not

currently do so. It was understood that both Housing and Community Services did include targets at the moment.

The Committee noted that there were currently 17 complaints marked as overdue on the register which equated to approximately 10% of all complaints received in the last 15 months. Members were concerned that implementing the previously agreed response turnaround time for complaints at 5 working days instead of 10 as set out in the new Customer Service Charter would place undue pressure on Officers and should therefore be reviewed.

Members noted that both Planning and Housing had the most complaints recorded. Officers agreed to advise the Committee when the report on the Review of the Planning Service would be available to all Members.

Officers advised that recently there had been some duplication with regard to Housing and Planning, where members of the public had challenged decisions by making a complaint on-line through the complaints procedure rather than or as well as lodging an appeal. This was being looked at.

248 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

The Committee reviewed the annual report from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman regarding the cases that had been referred to them in 2017/18.

The Committee was pleased that none of the 11 cases they had dealt with had been upheld and the majority had either been dismissed or referred back to the authority for local resolution.

Members noted that Runnymede performed well and when compared with the other local authorities in Surrey.

249 ADDLESTONE ONE RISK REGISTER – UPDATE

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

Officers were asked to provide the Committee by email, as a matter of priority, more details regarding the current position with the letting of the retail units, the overall marketing strategy thereof, together with costings and outcomes as reported to Corporate Management Committee.

Officers were asked to review the risk rating on two of the entries discussed at the meeting.

Officers were also asked to confirm the opening date of The Light cinema which they looked forward to as the flagship of the development which would herald progress across the site.

Officers were requested to log all the closed risks to date to identify 'lessons learned' to be applied to future projects.

Unfortunately, the Director of Commercial Services had been unable to attend the meeting. Therefore, Officers were asked to arrange a meeting for the Committee with him and the Chief Executive to discuss Addlestone One and the issues raised at the meeting in order to achieve a greater level of clarity and understanding of this most important of projects.

It was noted that a report was being considered at the next meeting of the Corporate Management Committee which Members of the Committee would find relevant.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.20pm)