

Runnymede Borough CouncilSTANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE29 January 2019 at 7.30pm

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

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

451 FIRE PRECAUTIONS

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

452 NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Groups mentioned below had notified the Chief Executive of their wish that the changes listed below be made to the membership of the Committee. The changes were for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting and thereafter the Councillors 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
Runnymede Independent Residents' Group	Councillor A Alderson	Councillor Mrs L M Gillham

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

453 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 November 2018 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

454 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no items of business for the Independent persons.

455 TIAA FOLLOW UP ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM AUDITS IN 2017/18

TIAA presented their annual report on recommendations that had not yet been implemented. These were in the areas of Community Safety, Data Quality, the ICT Service Desk, ICT Strategy, Safeguarding and Prevent, Risk Management and Creditors. Officers updated where recommendations had now been implemented or there were plans in place to do so soon. Members noted with concern that some audit recommendations had been outstanding for over a year and asked that relevant Officers provide an explanation of all outstanding recommendations within their service areas.

In respect of the Data Quality recommendations, the Committee was advised that streamlining the Corporate Business Plans was something that was being introduced for 2019/20.

The Director of Resources stated that he would submit a report on the restructure of ICT to Corporate Management Committee in February 2019. This would also address concerns raised by the Service Desk internal audit.

With regard to Risk Management, the Director of Resources planned to submit a report to the next scheduled meeting of the Committee in May 2019.

Whilst it was noted that a number of outstanding recommendations had now been implemented, the Committee felt quite strongly that the audit function should be given higher priority and that senior managers should be required to take full ownership of audits. This could involve requiring Service Heads who had outstanding recommendations to appear before the Committee. The Chief Executive would be asked to consider inclusion of accountability for the implementation of audit recommendations as part of the appraisal and staff performance monitoring process. It was suggested that this should be carried out in consultation with the HR Member Working Group.

TIAA agreed to consider a refresh of the exceptions report for the next scheduled meeting in consultation with the Director of Resources. This could include a 'traffic lights' monitoring column for example. It was agreed that as risks increased, particularly financial and reputational risks, keeping the audit function robust was an important part of the Governance arrangements.

456 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2018/19

The Committee noted progress with the 2018/19 audit plan, noting a number of changes to the agreed plan.

The Committee was informed that the following audits were now in draft form; HR Recruitment and Payroll. The audit on Benefits and Council Tax Support had commenced and Housing Rents was in progress.

Members were assured that deferred audits were going to be carried out in Quarter 1 of 2019/20, including Planning Enforcement, Housing Enforcement and Section 106 agreements. The additional audit which Members had requested on the Local Plan would take place in Quarter 2 of 2019/20.

The Committee was invited to comment on the Audit Planning Memorandum for 'lessons learnt and post completion review of Addlestone One' tabled at the meeting. This had been allocated an additional 4 days. It was agreed that one scoping point listed could be re-worded to 'identify commonality across projects.' Other feedback could be emailed to TIAA.

457 TIAA ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2019/20 AND STRATEGY 2019/20 – 2021/22

The Committee was asked to approve TIAA's Annual Audit Plan for 2019/20 and Strategy for 2019/20 – 2021/22.

The Audit Plan for 2019/20 had been allocated 175 days and included the following areas to be examined: Risk Management, Commercial Property Redevelopment

Projects, Data Quality, Commercial Rents, Benefits and Council Tax Support, Non-Domestic Rates, Council Tax, Accounts Payable and Debtors, Income, Main Accounting, Payroll, Capital Accounting and Asset Management, Treasury Management, ICT, Procurement/Contracts, Governance, Freedom of Information, Depot (Trade Waste), Car Parking, Planning Enforcement, Housing Rents, Housing Allocations and Homelessness, Housing Enforcement and Section 106s. In addition, TIAA would conduct their regular annual review and follow up exercise and other housekeeping related items. The Committee noted this was an ambitious programme to fit into 175 days. TIAA assured Members it was achievable.

TIAA agreed to add a column to the annual audit plan to indicate when an area was last audited in line with the regular progress reports.

Whilst not within the remit of the Committee, and more a matter for Corporate Management, some Members were keen to ascertain staff morale and their general wellbeing. Members commented that it had been some time since Unison had been invited to make any detailed reports on proposed changes in the workplace. It was also noted that staff did have recourse to the Council's Whistleblowing Policy. Therefore, the Director of Resources was asked to discuss with the Chief Executive and Head of HR the possibility of a staff survey as there had not been one for some years and whether a revival of the former Annual Pay and Workforce Plan would be beneficial to the organisation in consultation with the HR Member Working Group.

The Committee commended TIAA for their work and looked forward to receiving progress reports on those audits in due course.

**RESOLVED that -**

**the Audit Plan for 2019/20 and three year audit strategy for 2019/20 to 2021/22 be approved**

458 COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS – QUARTER 3 2018/19

The Committee was updated on both the complaints and compliments registers for the period 1 October 2018 – 31 December 2018. There had been 15 complaints, the majority of which had not been upheld and 6 compliments received in Quarter 3 of 2018/19.

Officers confirmed that the 4 complaints that had been upheld had all been resolved satisfactorily.

Members also reviewed ward based information, noting that with the forthcoming boundary changes the reporting structure would be amended to accommodate the new ward names. The Committee was assured that if major issues occurred in their wards the Monitoring Officer would advise them accordingly within the restrictions of GDPR.

Members were advised that the list of overdue complaints (since June 2017) had reduced slightly to 12 and Officers in Housing and Customer Services were thanked for their assistance with keeping their parts of the Complaints Register up to date.

The Committee was pleased to note that the 6 compliments received were for helpful and efficient customer service in Housing Maintenance, Customer Services and Green Space and for the Street Cleansing team in Englefield Green.

The Committee would consider presentation of data at a later date in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee once some further preparatory 'brainstorming' work had been undertaken.

459 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.

The Director of Commercial Services appraised the Committee of the present position with regard to retail and residential units in Addlestone One. As well as a detailed account, a pictorial update was tabled at the meeting which Members noted contained sensitive commercial information.

There was some discussion about the level of detail which Councillors sought from the presentation of the risk register and how projects were progressing generally. Members were referred to detailed reports that were received by Corporate Management Committee which were available to all Councillors on the website.

Members discussed project management at some length, what information should be provided and how it was resourced. The need for balance between the roles of the Standards and Audit Committee, Overview and Scrutiny and Corporate Management Committees was discussed. Members were cautioned to avoid duplication and micro management of projects. However, it was agreed that it would be useful if the Committee's terms and references could be refreshed and its role and responsibilities clarified.

The Committee considered it would be useful to have a briefing to update Councillors on the project if this was physically possible before the next meeting of Corporate Management Committee in February. Officers agreed to discuss this with the Chief Executive and advise the Chairman accordingly.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 9.20 pm)