

Wednesday, 7 March 2018
at 6.00 pm



EBC Audit and Governance Committee

Present:-

Members: Councillor Swansborough (Chairman) Councillor Tester (Deputy-Chairman) Councillors di Cara, Holt, Metcalfe, Robinson and Taylor

24 Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2017.

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2017 were submitted and approved and the Chair was authorised to sign them as an accurate record.

25 Apologies for absence.

An apology for absence was reported from Councillor Choudhury.

26 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) by members as required under Section 31 of the Localism Act and of other interests as required by the Code of Conduct.

There were none.

27 Polling district and polling places review (part review of Upperton ward - polling district UPA).

The committee considered the report of the Electoral Services Lead regarding the review of part of the current Upperton ward as a consequence of the loss of Upperton United Reformed Church Hall due to redevelopment.

Members were advised that the council had a duty to undertake a full review at intervals of not less than 4 years and at all other occasions when a change was proposed.

The council was also expected to ensure that all electors in the constituency had reasonable facilities for voting as were practicable in the circumstances and that so far as was reasonable and practicable the polling places were accessible to those who were disabled.

A consultation was held between 31 January and 12 February 2018.

The committee was advised that it was proposed that the Hub on the Hill in the grounds of St Michael and All Angels Church, Willingdon Road (opp Mill Road) be used as the polling place for UPA, until such time as the original venue became available again.

Following this review, the revised polling arrangements would be implemented for the 2 May 2019 Eastbourne Borough Council Elections and any other elections or referenda, called in the interim period.

RESOLVED:

1) That the Acting Returning Officer's proposal in respect of polling district UPA (Upperton ward), namely the Hub on the Hill in the grounds of St Michael and All Angels Church, Willingdon Road, be approved.

2) That the Electoral Services Lead, on behalf of the Acting Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer, be authorised to implement the committee's decision in respect of the review.

28 Internal Audit Report to 31 December 2017.

The Committee considered the report of the Internal Audit Manager regarding a summary of the activities of Internal Audit for the third quarter of the year. A list of all final audit reports issued from 1 October 2017 to 31 December 2017 and the level of assurance attained were detailed in the report. None of the reports had been given an assurance level of inadequate.

Audit work carried out to date against the audit plan to the end of December 2017 was set out in appendix A. Main points from the appendix were summarised in the report and related to "IT Contract and Change Controls".

Further information on reports issued in final during the year with an assurance level below "Performing Well" was set out in Appendix B, with any issues highlighted in the reviews which informed the assurance level given. The committee noted that the Buildings Health and Safety review had been completed with some recommendations arising having already been addressed and all other areas currently being actioned.

The Committee was reassured that this status was the assurance level given at the time the final report was issued and did not reflect recommendations that had been addressed.

Due to there being no outstanding actions relating to audits that were issued with an "inadequate assurance level" there was no appendix C.

Work undertaken by the Corporate Fraud team and East Sussex Counter Fraud Hub was also detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

29 Draft Internal Audit Plan for 2018/19.

The Committee considered the report of the Internal Audit Manager regarding the draft internal audit plan for 2018/2019.

The internal audit plan for each year began with a calculation of the number of audit days available. Twelve "managed" audits were required to be

undertaken this year to satisfy the external auditors and these were detailed in the report.

In addition to the core audits, days were also set aside for verifying the Benefits Subsidy Claim, special investigations, follow ups, advice and National Fraud Initiative activity. The days necessary to carry out this work were calculated and taken from the auditor time available. The remaining figure was the days available to carry out other audits specifically for the Council. Appendix A detailed these calculations.

A risk assessment was carried out on all areas listed in the "Audit Universe" in order for the annual internal audit plan to be produced. The "Audit Universe" was a list of all the areas and systems across the Council which could be audited. The completed risk assessment, included at appendix B to the report had been arranged by the level of risk and by the date the last audit review was undertaken.

The proposed plan, as agreed with Lewes District Council was included at appendix C to the report.

It should also be noted that Lewes would be carrying out some reviews that would cover Eastbourne as well but these would be undertaken solely by the Lewes team. However, once these had been completed they would be reported to committee at both Lewes and Eastbourne. These areas were:

- 1) Cyber Security,
- 2) Legal Services,
- 3) Business Continuity Planning
- 4) RIPA.

RESOLVED: (Unanimous) That the proposed internal audit plan for 2018/19 be adopted.

30 Covert Surveillance update.

The committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive regarding the Covert Surveillance Policy.

In common with all district councils in England and Wales, directed surveillance carried out by Eastbourne Borough Council would only be lawful if conducted in accordance with part II of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).

Members were advised that no RIPA authorisations for directed surveillance had been sought or given by the Council since September 2016. The Council's policy is one of authorising directed surveillance only after all other reasonable options had been considered but deemed unsuitable or inadequate.

In November 2017 the Home Office consulted on three updated codes of practice relating to powers under RIPA. The particular update on covert surveillance included expanded guidance on the use of surveillance in online investigations, especially those involving observation of social media sites.

The committee was advised that the annual audit programme for 2017/18 included an audit of compliance with RIPA. Owing to specific concerns raised by the Chief Surveillance Commissioner about public authority surveillance of social networking sites, it was decided that the audit should focus on (1) the Council's controls over the use of social media for investigative and research purposes and (2) the adequacy of the RIPA Monitoring Officer's draft guidance on the circumstances when RIPA authorisation might be required for activity of this type.

RESOLVED: (Unanimous) That the following be noted:

- 1) That there was no incidence of authorised covert surveillance at the Council since September 2016.
- 2) Planned amendments to the Home Office code of practice on covert surveillance.
- 3) The outcome of an internal review of online surveillance activity across Eastbourne and Lewes District Council.

31 Annual Audit Plan 2017 - 2018.

The Committee considered the report of the external auditors BDO regarding the Annual Audit Plan Report which highlighted and explained the key components of their audit strategy relevant to the audit of the financial statements of the Council and consolidated entities and use of resources of the Council for the year ending 31 March 2018.

Ms Kodjo, from BDO was in attendance to present the report and respond to Members' questions.

RESOLVED: (Unanimous) That the Annual Audit Plan for year ending 31 March 2018 noted.

The meeting closed at 6.40 pm

Councillor Swansborough
(Chairman)