

MINUTES AUDIT & IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON

19 November 2008

7.30pm-8.53pm

PRESENT

COUNCILLORS

David Carter (Chairman)

Anthony Durcan
Shona Johnson

Joel Charles
Nick Macy
Mark Wilkinson

Mark Gough
Clive Souter

APOLOGIES

Lorna Spenceley

SUBSTITUTIONS

Linda Pailing substitute for Lorna Spenceley

ALSO PRESENT

Simon Carter

34. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

35. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2008 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

36. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

37. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

None.

38. **COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN**

RESOLVED that the Forward Work Plan be noted.

39. **PROGRESS AGAINST AUDIT PLANS**

Paul King, Martina Lee and Christine Connelly from the Audit Commission attended the meeting and submitted a report which summarised the progress to November 2008 against the audit plans for 2007/08 and 2008/09.

Members noted that Christine Connelly would be attending future meetings of this Committee in place of Paul King.

RESOLVED that the progress report be noted.

40. **USE OF RESOURCES**

The Committee received the Use of Resources report from the Audit Commission. Paul King confirmed that the scores, which would put the comments in the report into context, would be available on 8 December 2008.

The key findings and areas for improvement were summarised under five themes. These were financial reporting; financial management; financial standing; internal control and value for money.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

41. **QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT (SECOND QUARTER 2008/09)**

The Committee received a report on the Council's performance for the period 1 June to 30 September 2008, which included action plans for performance indicators which were failing to meet their target.

Inspector Andy Bray, Essex Police gave an update on policing issues affecting rates of crime and Police initiatives which aimed to reduce the level of crime in the area.

Members asked for information on work which might be done locally on child protection issues.

It was noted that, according to the action plan, Kier Harlow anticipated that performance on PI NI195b (Improved street and environmental cleanliness) would be back on target by the end of November 2008.

Members asked to be updated on the situation before the next meeting of this Committee (as it was not due to meet again until February 2009).

RESOLVED that

- (a) the report be noted;
- (b) the performance improvement action plans, attached in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved;
- (c) information on child protection issues, in particular for children vulnerable to abuse, be circulated to members of this Committee;
- (d) an update on progress to improve PI NI195b be circulated to members of this Committee before the next Committee meeting.

42. **PLAYHOUSE BUDGET**

The Committee received a report on the Playhouse budget, which was a standing item on the agenda. This report covered the period to the end of September (Period 6).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

43. **WORKING PARTY AND GROUP MINUTES**

- (a) Improvement Group

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 16 July 2008 and 29 October 2008 be noted.

- (b) Constitution Working Group

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 22 September 2008 and 28 October 2008 be noted.

44. **REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

None.

45. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

46. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following agenda item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified under Paragraph 1 of Part One of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

47. **INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee received a progress report on Internal Audit and Insurance since the annual report was presented to this Committee on 25 June 2008.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit progress report be noted.

CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE