

Minutes

Audit and Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 11th July, 2023

Attendance

Cllr Sankey (Chair)	Cllr Marsh
Cllr Naylor (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Rigby
Cllr Mrs Fulcher	Cllr White
Cllr Hirst	

Apologies

Cllr Mrs N Cuthbert	Cllr Wagland
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Substitute Present

Also Present

Cllr Barber
Cllr Murphy
Cllr Mrs Pound

Officers Present

Steve Summers	- Strategic Director
Tim Willis	- Interim Director - Resources
Tracey Lilley	- Director - Communities & Health
Alistair Greer	- Principal Accountant (Financial Reporting)
Jonathan Woodhams	- Corporate Manager, Community Safety
Janine Combrinck	- Internal Audit, BDO
Andrew Billingham	- Internal Auditor
Elizabeth Jackson	- Partner, Ernst & Young LLP
Zoe Borman	- Governance and Member Support Officer

LIVE BROADCAST

[Live stream to start at 7pm and available for repeat viewing.](#)

67. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Wagland and N Cuthbert.

There were no substitutes.

Cllr Murphy withdrew from being a substitute as she was not a named substitute for this committee.

68. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th March were signed as a true record.

69. Brentwood Community Safety Partnership Annual Report

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is made up of Responsible Authorities as outlined in the Crime & Disorder Act 1988 which includes the Council as a key partner.

Each year the partnership has a statutory duty to carry out a Strategic intelligence assessment which reviews existing priorities and identifies any new or emerging priorities that the partnership should focus on.

Mr Jonathan Woodhams was present at the meeting and summarised the report.

Officers advised Members that future member involvement was planned with a twice yearly briefing with the Community Safety Partnership being held to facilitate engagement with the Police and other third party colleagues.

Officers ensured members that drug and knife crime, together with vehicle theft are all priorities of the CSP, as well as fly tipping. Data was being shared around the borough and with neighbouring authorities regarding cross border operations. However, Mr Woodhams said he would undergo work regarding sharing fly tipping data with the wider Essex through Safer Essex colleagues. Mr Woodhams also advised that a government initiative, ASB hotspot policing, 'Operation Dial' would pilot in Essex and would enable Brentwood to benefit from extra resource for colleagues to patrol identified 'hotspot' areas, out of hours. This would also include resident engagement.

Following a full discussion, Cllr Sankey **MOVED** and Cllr Naylor **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report.

Members voted by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** that:

Under the scrutiny arrangements in place the Committee are asked to consider the work of the CSP as outlined in the annual report attached at Appendix B and refer any comments or concerns to the partnership.

Reasons for Recommendations

Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 requires every Local Authority to have a Crime and Disorder Committee with the power to review, scrutinise, and make reports and recommendations regarding the functioning of the CSP.

70. S106 Financial Obligations

This report provided a summary and detail of the current financial contributions the Council has secured through section 106 agreements from new developments for affordable housing and public open space works. In addition, the report sets out the proposed future plans for s106 Agreement processes and procedures.

Following a full discussion, Members noted the report.

71. Delayed audit of 2021/22 accounts

This report summarised the background and reasons for the delayed external audit of the 2021/22 accounts. The unaudited accounts were published in July 2022 but the audit is planned to complete in September 2023.

Mr Willis summarised the report. Following discussion the report was noted.

72. Historic accounting for Minimum Revenue Provision

This report described an outstanding issue with the calculation of and accounting for Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) for the period 2007/08 to 2011/12 and from 2017/18 onward. It also outlined the plan to resolve the matter with the involvement of the Council's external auditors, EY, and treasury advisors, Link Group.

Following discussion the report was noted.

73. External Audit Plan for 2021/22

This report attaches the plan from our external auditors, Ernst & Young (E&Y), when carrying out their audit of the 2021/22 accounts.

Ms Elizabeth Jackson (E&Y) was present at the meeting and summarised the report.

Following a full discussion the report was noted.

74. Internal Audit Progress Report

This report is intended to inform the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of progress made against the 2022/23 internal audit plan.

The following reports have been finalised since the last Committee meeting:

- Main financial systems (Moderate/Moderate)
- Payroll (Substantial/Moderate)
- Climate change (no opinion as advisory review)
- Licensing (Moderate/Moderate)
- Sheltered accommodation (Limited/Moderate)
- Policy review (Moderate/Moderate)
- Environment - fly tipping, street cleaning and enforcement (Moderate/Moderate)
- Leisure services (Moderate/Moderate).

Ms Janine Combrinck was present at the meeting and summarised the report.

Following a full discussion the report was noted.

75. Internal Audit Annual Report and Annual Statement of Assurance

This report intended to inform the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of the Head of Internal Audit opinion for 2022/23.

Overall, Internal audit have been able to provide moderate assurance that there is a sound system of internal control, designed to meet the Council's objectives and that controls are being applied consistently.

Ms Combrinck summarised the report.

Members raised concerns regarding the Corporate Leadership Team, and Declarations of Interest. Officers advised Members that Senior Officers were requested to declare their interests as part of the accounts process and it was thought this part of the accounts was then published.

Following discussion the report was noted.

76. 2022/23 Financial Outturn

This report gives a summary of the overall financial outturn position for the financial year 2022/23.

Mr Willis summarised the report.

Members requested information regarding particular projects which contributed to the underspend in the Housing Revenue Account. Also, with

regards to Capital, the proportion of underspend due to the reduced MRP. Mr Willis advised he would respond to members outside of the meeting.

Mr Willis advised that the Council was conducting a review of capital investment and treasury management to be brought back to this committee.

Under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the committee went into private session to discuss an exempt item from a previous committee..

Following a full discussion the report was noted.

77. 2022/23 Treasury Management Annual Report

This report provided a summary of treasury management activity during 2022/23.

Mr Willis summarised the report.

Members thanked officers for the comprehensive and useful report.

Following a full discussion Cllr Sankey **MOVED** and Cllr Naylor **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report:

That the Committee approves the actual 2022/23 prudential and treasury indicators in this report (paragraphs 3.4 to 3.13) and notes the annual treasury management report for 2022/23.

Cllr Sankey **MOVED** and Cllr Hirst **SECONDED** and amendment to the recommendation to read:

That the Committee notes the actual 2022/23 prudential and treasury indicators in this report (paragraphs 3.4 to 3.13) and notes the annual treasury management report for 2022/23, and recommends approval at Ordinary Council.

Members voted by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED**:

That the Committee notes the actual 2022/23 prudential and treasury indicators in this report (paragraphs 3.4 to 3.13) and notes the annual treasury management report for 2022/23, and recommends approval at Ordinary Council.

Reasons for Recommendation

The Council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2022/23. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, (the Code), and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, (the Prudential Code).

78. Risk Management Update

This report updates the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on the status of the Council's 2023/24 Strategic Risk Register.

The number of very high risks has reduced to one since the last report to the committee, the one remaining relates to Cyber Threat. The risk that has reduced slightly relates to the General Fund Budget.

There is one new risk this quarter regarding the partnership between Brentwood Borough Council and Rochford District Council.

Mr Willis summarised the report.

Members enquired whether the risk table could be changed slightly to reflect risk tolerance and the process used to mitigate certain risks. Mr Willis advised the risk strategy was being reviewed and this could be explored simultaneously and used in future reports.

Following a full discussion the report was noted by members.

79. Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24

The Constitution requires that the Audit & Scrutiny Committee agrees its Scrutiny work programme at each meeting of the Committee. This report provides an update of the current scrutiny work programme and is set out in Appendix A of the report.

Members proposed a number of items to be included within the Scrutiny Programme.

Members were encouraged to use the Scrutiny Work form to determine the scope of the projects and achievable outcomes and provide these to Officers for consideration by Members at the next committee.

Cllr Sankey **MOVED** and Cllr Naylor **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report.

Members voted by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED:**

That the Committee considers and agrees the 2023/24 Scrutiny work programme as set out in Appendix A.

Reasons for Recommendation

The Constitution requires that the Audit & Scrutiny Committee agrees its Scrutiny work programme at each meeting of the Committee.

80. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting concluded at 21:00