

General Purposes & Audit Committee

Meeting of General Purposes & Audit Committee held on Thursday, 15 March 2018 at 6.30pm
in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon, CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Joy Prince (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Jan Buttinger, Jason Cummings, Patsy Cummings, Patricia Hay-Justice, Bernadette Khan, Donald Speakman and Co-optee Muffaddal Kapasi

Also Present: Councillor Simon Hall

Apologies: Councillor Karen Jewitt, Jeet Bains, Sherwan Chowdhury and Mike Fisher

PART A

48/17 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2017 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.

49/17 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

50/17 **Urgent Business (if any)**

There were no items of urgent business.

51/17 **Update Report Local Government Ombudsman**

The Assistant Director of Adult Social Care and All Aged Disability provided a verbal update of the actions undertaken by the service following a service user complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Committee heard that within the last six months, the service had been working very closely with the service user and family with home life and education. The service had met all the required requirements of the Local Ombudsman and had received positive feedback from the Local Ombudsman and also the family.

The Committee further heard that the Adult Social Care and All Age Disability Service had learned a huge amount of experience from their deliverance with

the way the service was responding to complaints and working quickly and directly with families. In addition, the active programme and customer service had also been a top priority for the service.

The Committee further learned of the resources within the All Aged Disability Service, and of each division within the service [0-15 teams, 16-25 teams and adults] all cases held had been reviewed. The service had provided a team to actively work through the waiting list backlog which had been a success. The service had also been tracking cases and working with the new manager for the Complex Care Team which was a top priority for the service. The Committee heard that the two cases brought to the Local Ombudsman came from the Children's division of the All Aged Disability Service which had been addressed as all needs had been met. The Committee heard that in the Children's division there was a dedicated review team to focus on the specific cases brought to the LGO's attention. In the adults service there was a reviewing team to focus on the cases specifically, to avoid additional pressure on social workers with their caseloads. The service is achieving significant progress.

The Committee:

RESOLVED:

- (i). To **NOTE** the verbal update with recommendations for a written report of evidence and transparency on issues of concern and the updated progression.

The Chair thanked the officer for the update.

52/17

Substance Misuse Internal Audit Update 2014/2015

The presentation of Substance Misuse was shared with the Committee informing about the significant changes and improvements that had happened with the substance misuse service since the last internal audit was undertaken.

The Committee learned that substance misuse was an area for focal change, where Public Health England had produced a guidance expectation of the commissioning of substance misuse within the Local Authority area.

The Committee heard of the hard working staff in centres ensuring that the provision was working. Substance misuse also operated closely with other sectors to provide other influences of support.

The Committee heard that there had been a noticeable improvement from the clinically and treatment service that had made a real difference for the people of Croydon.

Councillor Hall shared of his visit to Lantern Hall meeting key staff and service users.

He shared that of the then limited cohort of long-term users not working to change lives and not providing the service for the non-long term, which had now shifted as Lantern Hall was providing a service that was evident as the service had changed service user's lives. This noticeable change was very visible, although there was always room for improvement, the data received from the service was positive. Councillor Hall also talked of the Hub and Spoke model approach that was actively working. The Turning Point was also another centre in Croydon of excellence.

The Committee heard that a considerable amount of work had been done within the community and this was something that was in need of support.

Members of the Committee congratulated and appreciated all the staff involved for their efforts in the change that had taken place. Members of the Committee were enlightened by the journey that had started, and which would continue to empower service users more for this kind of situation.

In response to Members comments on the improvements and changes following (a) the focus on Data Focused Needs Assessments in 2017, (b) the data estimated number in need of the service in 2014/15, and (c) the number of people who received services in 2017/18, officer's shared that there was a different mix of people in need for service in 2014/15. Ongoing, the service was reaching a high percentage of people in need within the borough and was currently seeing clients who was able to self-lead their lives. Thus a great need of increased demands, which had been the challenges faced within the service.

The Committee further learned that there was an increase in the prevalence of substance misuse in Croydon as there was more people involved, and there was different profiles on how individuals binge or have other problematic issues that included illegal drug taking and cultivating different use of alcohol. Nonetheless, Croydon Services was not seeing an increase in their clients' substance misuse.

The Committee heard that following previous concerns raised by internal audit, there had been good progress on implementing audit recommendations; out of seven recommendations raised, five had been closed and two were in progress, and so the level of engagement had eventually been successful.

Members of the Committee commended on the great work.

The Committee

RESOLVED:

- (i). To **NOTE** the Substance Misuse Internal Audit Update of 2014/2015; and
- (ii). To agree for a circulation of the 2014/15 data of statistics; numbers and percentages of distinctions between groups of ages and substances; the past and present and all key performance indicators, sent to Public Health England to be sent to the General Purpose of Audit Committee.

The Chair thanked the Director of Public Health for her presentation.

53/17 **Grant Thornton Reports**

The Grant Thornton representatives presented their first report to the Committee, highlighting the certification letter year ending in March 2017. The work completed was in line with the national work.

The Committee noted the good work from the report.

The officers also addressed the planned work intended to be completed by the end of July, where plans had been made to address the changes. The report summarised work completed in the year. It also highlighted significant risks subjected to judgment. In evaluation, the Brick by Brick project would have its own audit options in transactions. There was two elements related to financial statements where particular attention was to HSC and Ofsted Inspection. Officers highlighted that all the logistics was processing well.

The officers delivered their second report of the work scheduled to be completed. The report highlighted significant risks and two specific risks: (1) evaluation of level three investments; and (2) a change in the accounting system for transfer of date. Officers shared that all the work was scheduled to be completed within the statutory timetables.

The Committee

RESOLVED:

- (i). To **NOTE** the Grant Thornton Reports presented; and
- (ii). To request the reports for Brick by Brick and property evaluation to be brought to the next General Purpose and Audit Committee meeting in July.

The Chair thanked the Grant Thornton Representatives for the updates and the completed work.

54/17 **Internal Audit Charter, Strategy and Plan**

The Director of Governance in his role as the Council's head of Internal Audit presented his report to the Committee to reapprove the Charter and Strategy, which is an annual requirement.

The Committee learned that there was no change to the Strategy mentioned within the report other than the dates. There was also no change to the Charter addressed within the report, other than the section about Independence because of the range of other services that the Director of Governance is responsible for. The report identified that steps would be taken to maintain the independence of internal audit.

Appendix three of the report cited the proposed internal audit plan in the coming year 2018/19.

The Committee discussed the issues raised, the types of audit to be undertaken and the risk based methodology used to identify the work that needed to be included in the plan.

The Committee learned that discussions were held with members of the Executive Leadership Team and Corporate Leadership Team as part of the planning process.

The Committee

RESOLVED:

- (i). To **APPROVE** the Internal Audit Charter and Strategy; and
- (ii). To **APPROVE** the Internal Audit Plan for use.

55/17 **Internal Audit Update Report**

The Director of Governance presented an update report to the Committee of the work completed for the internal audits of 2017/18.

The Committee was informed that two thirds of the audits are at substantial or full assurance. Following on from the previous Committee meeting in 7 December 2017, where Members of the Committee was concerned that only forty percent of reports had been issued, the current report showed this had moved forward and there was more progress at the end of January. The service aimed to deliver all remaining work by the end of March.

In response to the Members' comments about the audit of the Mayors Charity, officers advised that there was very good engagement and all recommendations had been implemented. The work was completed very quickly. With comments in regards to the abandoned vehicles, officers shared that the service had reacted very quickly on these issues too. The Committee Members further heard that there was a current contract in place as the previous contract was implemented a year ago and had ended due to transition issues.

The Committee

RESOLVED:

- (i). To **NOTE** the Internal Audit Update Report.

56/17 **Anti-Fraud Update Report**

The Head of Anti-Fraud presented the report that detailed the performance of the Council's Corporate Anti-Fraud Team and included the details of the team's performance with an update on the developments during the period of 1 April 2017 to 31 January 2018.

The officer explained further of the annual target and value of fraud identified that was highlighted in table 1 in the report. It was highlighted that the outcome achieved had a lower value than the previous year. This was due to the value attributed to the removal of people on the waiting list. The value was revised by the Cabinet Office.

In response to questions raised by Members of the Committee about the expectation of a better outcome, officers highlighted that figure 1 in the report showed the key performance indicators, and noted that the numbers of successful outcomes were higher this year as work was being completed on the national fraud initiative. The Director of Governance highlighted that the targets were set based on historical outcomes, as each year the value fluctuates. The number of outcomes being higher is a significant success.

The Committee congratulated the department for its work.

The Committee

RESOLVED:

- (i). To **NOTE** the Anti-fraud activity of the Corporate Anti-Fraud Team for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 January 2018.

57/17 **Corporate Risk Register**

The Head of Insurance Risk and Corporate Programme Office, Finance Investment and Risk presented the report and highlighted that changes had been made since the last meeting held on 15 March 2018.

It was noted that there was risks previously in the high red had deescalated to high amber. There was also risks escalated to red status around children and exploitation.

Members of the Committee addressed the relevant issue of children and exploitation and was pleased to see the risk of exploitation of people on the risk register, which was given a level of focus. Members of the Committee requested for an update to consider the actions taken on the issue.

Members of the Committee discussed the relevant issue noting that Croydon had the largest youth population in the borough with risks of unaccompanied minors. The Improvement Plan had some focus of the specifics within this area and the Children's Safeguarding Board also focused on this issue. A progress in August would be good to have the other risks such as Missing as a related area. Members of the Committee suggested that autumn would be a good time for these issues to return to the Committee for an update.

The Committee

RESOLVED:

- (i). To **NOTE** the contents of the corporate risk register as at 15 March 2018.

58/17 **General Purposes and Audit Committee Annual Report 2017-2018**

The substantive Annual Report provided the work completed by the Chair in the municipal year 2017-2018, which was to be presented at Full Council. The report was to be amended with the inclusion of January statistics.

Members of the Committee commended on the work achieved by the Chair and all she had accomplished.

The Committee

RESOLVED:

- (i). To **APPROVE** the General Purposes and Audit Committee Annual Report 2017-2018.

59/17 **Exclusion of Public and Press**

This was not required.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

Signed:

Date:

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