

Brighton & Hove City Council

Audit & Standards Committee

4.00pm 30 January 2024

Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall

Minutes

Present: Councillor West (Chair) Robinson (Opposition Spokesperson), Atkinson, Burden, Czolak, Guilmant and Miller

Other Members present: David Gill

Part One

28 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

29a Declarations of substitutes

29.1 Councillor Burden was present as substitute for Councillor Daniel.

29b Declarations of interests

29.2 There were none.

29c Exclusion of the press and public

29.3 In accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act"), the Committee considered whether the public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item of business on the grounds that it is likely in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during it, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act.

29.4 **Resolved** - That the press and public not be excluded from the meeting.

29 MINUTES

30.1 **Resolved** – That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as the correct record.

30 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

30.1 The Chair provided the following communications:

“I have been discussing with officers my concern in the level of detail given in the quarterly standards update. I don't think the detail we receive is sufficient for committee to fully oversee its responsibility the standards process. Officers have agreed that it would be possible to explore options for greater detail in the report. Therefore I've asked that Councillor Robinson and I meet with officers to explore these options. Any proposals for change will then be table to the next meeting”.

31 CALL OVER

31.1 All items were reserved for discussion.

32 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

No public representations were received.

33 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

33.1 The Committee considered a letter submitted by Councillor Shanks relating to poor standards of behaviour by councillors in council and committee meetings.

33.2 The Chair provided the following response:

“Thank you presenting your letter and bringing your concerns to us. Your comments made are noted.

In terms of the conduct of elected members, this Council does have in place a detailed set of arrangements which aim to make sure that councillors stay within the Nolan principles at all times, including (but not only) at Council meetings, which as we all know, are webcast and may be viewed online.

The arrangements we have in place are regularly reviewed, as is the training we offer all members to ensure compliance with the Code. This subject matter is the subject of regular Reports to each meeting of this Committee.

Also, as it happens, on today's agenda we have our annual review of complaints which assesses themes and trends and offers members the opportunity to ask questions and to make suggestions for actions to be taken having considered the landscape overall. In this context, it is not considered that a review of the type requested is either necessary or a proportionate use of officer resources”.

33.3 **Resolved-** That the Committee note the Letter.

34 FORMAL APPROVAL OF THE RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK 2023/24

34.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Governance, People & Resources that gave oversight of the Brighton & Hove City Council's current Risk Management Framework with a view to for approval.

34.2 Councillors Miller, Robinson, Burden and Czolak asked questions and contributed to the debate of the report.

34.3 **Resolved-**

- 1) That the committee approves the Risk Management Framework as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2) That the committee notes the current corporate Strategic Risks and the Committees those Risks are reported to, as set out in Appendix 2.

**35 INTERNAL AUDIT AND COUNTER FRAUD QUARTER 2 PROGRESS REPORT
2023-24**

- 35.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Governance, People & Resources that provided Members with an update on all internal audit and counter fraud activity completed during quarter 2 (2023/24), including a summary of all key audit findings. The report also includes an update on the performance of the Internal Audit Service during the period.
- 35.2 Councillors Atkinson, Guilment, Miller, Robinson, Czolak and Burden asked questions and contributed to the debate of the report.
- 35.3 **Resolved-** That the Committee note the report.

36 ANNUAL SURVEILLANCE REPORT 2023

- 36.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Governance, People & Resources that appraised Committee of the activities that have been undertaken utilising the powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) since the last report to Committee in March 2023. The report also introduced an updated Policy and Guidance document
- 36.2 Councillor Atkinson asked a question on the report.
- 36.3 **Resolved-**
 - 1) That Committee approves the continued use of covert surveillance as an enforcement tool to prevent and detect crime and disorder investigated by its officers, providing the activity is in line with the Council's Policy and Guidance and the necessity and proportionality rules are stringently applied.
 - 2) That Committee notes the surveillance activity undertaken by the authority since the report to Committee in March 2023 as set out in paragraph 3.3.
 - 3) That committee approves the continued use of the Policy and Guidance document as set out in Appendix 1 in its updated form.

37 STANDARDS UPDATE

- 37.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Governance, People & Resources that provided an update on Standards-related matters, including a review of complaints received in during 2023 alleging that Members have breached the Council's Code of Conduct for Members.

37.2 Councillors Miller, Burden and Atkinson asked questions and contributed to the debate of the report.

37.3 **Resolved-** That the Committee note the report.

38 ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL

36.1 No items were referred for information.

39 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

39.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at 5.25pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of