
Extraordinary Audit Committee

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Committee Room - Swale House on Monday, 19 February 2024 from 6.00 pm - 6.27 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Derek Carnell (Vice-Chair), Simon Clark (Chair), Angela Harrison, Tara Noe, Richard Palmer and Dolley Wooster.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Billy Attaway, Lisa Fillery, Emma Wiggins and Katherine Woodward.

OFFICERS PRESENT (VIRTUALLY): Joanne Johnson.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Andy Booth, Mike Henderson and Rich Lehmann.

647 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Chair outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

648 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

649 **Planning - Outstanding Audit Action**

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods introduced the report by apologising to the committee for the outstanding action but reassured them that officers did take Audit actions seriously. She referred to the timeline of events shown at paragraph 2.10 of the report, which highlighted the number of changes that the planning team had gone through during the audit process. Going forward she was confident that the new planning team restructure, due to commence on the 1 April 2024, would address the outstanding audit action and more focus would be put on the business support element of the planning process.

The Chair invited Members to make comments, which included:

- It was key that officers knew audit recommendations were serious and if they did not follow through the recommendations then they would have to appear before the Audit Committee to explain why the recommendation had not been followed through;
- lots of negotiations had taken place with developers about Section 106 money, so it was upsetting to see that the non-financial contributions had not been monitored properly;
- thanked the officers for the report;
- member training was getting better which meant members were able to get more involved which was good to see;
- could see the officers had good strategies and processes in place;
- felt that the new management within the service had a positive impact;
- was there a date for when the outstanding audit action would be reviewed?;
- the reasons as to why the recommendation had not been completed could have been included in the auditors original report; and
- in the past developers had not followed through on Section 106 promises so it was important that they were correctly monitored.

The Director of Resources responded to the way the auditor's report was presented to the Audit Committee and said that her team were reviewing the layout of the reports to ensure that in future they were clear on any outstanding recommendations. She added that a review of the recommendations from Audit to officers was currently underway and a report on that work would be reflected in future internal audit update reports.

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods reminded members that the new planning restructure was due to be in place by the 1 April 2024 and the outstanding action would be completed before the next audit review date, which was end of April 2024.

Resolved:

- (1) That the explanation for the delayed completion of the Planning Services audit action, as detailed in the report be noted.***

Chair

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All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel