

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a Meeting of the Audit Committee held in Committee Rooms 1 and 2, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **13th July 2021**.

Present:

Cllr. Ovenden (Chairman);
Cllr. Chilton (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Blanford, Burgess, Farrell, Hayward, Howard-Smith, Krause, Ledger, Mulholland.

Apologies:

Head of Culture, Tourism and Leisure.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Campkin, Clokie, Forest, Harman, Smith, Sparks, Wright.

In attendance:

Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications, Compliance and Data Protection Manager, Arts and Cultural Industries Manager, Funding and Partnerships Officer, Policy and Scrutiny Officer, Member Services Manager.

69 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 8th June 2021 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

70 Presentation on Young People's Mental Health

This item was deferred due to presenter being unavailable.

71 Support Given to the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector

Following a discussion by this Committee at its April meeting, Cultural Services had produced a spreadsheet outlining all grants distributed by the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic and some slides giving more context and the projects and services that had been supported. The Arts and Cultural Industries Manager introduced the item and advised that such work was still ongoing to support the needs of the Borough's most vulnerable residents.

Resolved:

That the information be received and noted.

72 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21

The Policy and Scrutiny Officer introduced the report, which highlighted the work of the Committee over the past 12 months. Despite the pandemic, the Committee had continued to meet and undertake its work, including two Task and Finish Groups being set up. A summary of the Committee's work and a list of recommendations made were detailed in the report.

The Chairman thanked the Policy and Scrutiny Officer for an excellent and comprehensive report.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

73 Future Reports Tracker

The Policy and Scrutiny Officer explained that they were approaching one year since the Digital Transformation Task Group had made its recommendations to the Cabinet and she was hoping to bring an update back to the Committee in the Autumn.

A Member said that the Committee had previously set up a Task Group on Air Quality in the Borough, and he wondered if, in light of the pandemic and the subsequent return to workplaces, there should be an examination of air quality within Council premises as well as the houses it was building etc. He asked if there should be policies around matters such as planning conditions, air purification systems etc. and whether this matter should be examined by the Committee. The Chairman asked that the issue be scored via the Matrix.

A further Member asked about the new Port Health Service and whether the Committee should examine how it was managed? The Policy and Scrutiny Officer advised that the decision making of the Lorry Park had been scored as a topic in early 2020 via the Matrix and the outcome was that the Committee could not really have a meaningful impact on this at the current time. The Member Services Manager advised that the Audit Committee was going to examine the risks associated with the implementation of the new Service and he knew that there were plans for an all Member briefing from the new Head of Service to introduce the Service and his plans for it. It should be remembered that the Service would not be properly up and running until the Autumn at the earliest, so there would be opportunities to drill down in more detail later. Further to this, a Member said that an Environmental Impact Assessment of the whole site had been produced but had not been released by the Government and other relevant Authorities. He asked if the Committee could request information from that Assessment and the environmental impact on the surrounding area to be part of the Briefing.

Resolved:

That, subject to the discussions above, the Report Tracker be received and noted.

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