

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR AUDIT AND BEST VALUE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Audit and Best Value held at County Hall, Lewes on 20 November 2008.

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PRESENT - Councillor Tutt (Chairman)  
Councillors Ensor, Murphy, St. Pierre and Whetstone

OFFICERS - Andrew Ogden, Director of Law and Personnel  
Richard Hemsley, Deputy Director of Corporate Resources  
Duncan Savage, Assistant Director, Audit and Performance  
Phil Packham, Assistant Director, Resources  
Russell Banks, Principal Audit Manager  
Paul Dean, Scrutiny Manager

ALSO PRESENT - Peter Collier, Application Strategy and Development Manager for item 6 (see minute 30)  
Rawdon Phillips, Insurance and Risk Manager for item 8 (see minute 32)

### 26. MINUTES

26.1 RESOLVED – to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 September 2008.

26.2 Members were reminded that, since the last meeting, the Scrutiny Committee meeting to be held in March 2009 had again been rescheduled and would now be held on 4 March 2009.

### 27. APOLOGIES

27.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Birch, Gadd and Sparks. Councillor St. Pierre attended the meeting as a substitute for Councillor Sparks.

### 28. REPORTS

28.1 Copies of the reports on the matters dealt with in the minutes below are contained in the minute book.

### 29. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT: QUARTER TWO

29.1 The Committee considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources summarising the key audit findings, progress on delivery of the audit plan and the performance of the internal audit service during Quarter 2. Copies of a leaflet entitled 'Don't turn a blind eye' on the County Council's 'Whistleblowing' Policy were circulated to Members. The leaflet had been circulated to all members of staff.

29.2 Officers reported on, and responded to, questions from Members about the key audit findings set out in Appendix A to the report. Members' concerns focussed, in particular, on the findings highlighted in relation to:

- Carefirst: ICT Audit (Adult Social Care) – Members requested that an update from the officers responsible for implementing the management action plan, be e-mailed to

them to provide reassurance that good progress was being made in addressing the identified weaknesses in control.

- Highways Maintenance: Contract Management (Transport and Environment) – Members were advised that the Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee had set up a Member Reference Group/Review Board to work with the Department in reviewing the Highway Maintenance Contract. The Department would be discussing ideas with the Reference Group over the next three to four months and Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Members would be kept informed and involved. If any wider issues arose, a report would be brought to the Committee.

29.3 RESOLVED – to (1) receive the report;

(2) endorse the actions being taken to address the issues raised in the key audit findings;

(3) request the responsible officers to email Members with an update on the progress being made with the management action plan to address the identified weaknesses on Carefirst: ICT Audit (Adult Social Care); and

### 30. EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND SERCO SAP 'TRANSPORT' PROCESS

30.1 The Committee considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources updating Members on progress against the recommendations contained in the Internal Audit Report of 21 May 2008.

30.2 The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources confirmed, in respect of the SAP Transport Process (paragraph 5.6 in the Management Action Plan), that he would be reporting back to the Committee in due course when a date was set for the replacement of the proposed SAP transport control process with one which uses SAP generated electronic workflow messages and online approvals.

30.3 RESOLVED – to (1) note the progress; and

(2) request the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources to circulate to the Chairman, and Members of the Committee, the service availability criteria to be applied if certain key indicators were not met (paragraph 5.10 in the Management Action Plan).

### 31. USE OF CONSULTANTS

31.1 The Committee considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources summarising the actions planned, and taken to date, to improve the Council's approach to the use of consultants.

31.2 Members welcomed the information, endorsed the project and requested that, once more progress had been made, an update report should be provided to the Committee

31.3 RESOLVED – to (1) note the action planned to improve the Council's approach to the use of consultants; and

(2) request the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources to provide an update report on the project to a future meeting..

## 32. STRATEGIC RISK MONITORING LOG

32.1 The Committee considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources updating Members on the current strategic risks and key departmental risks faced by the Council, their status and mitigating actions.

32.2 Members queried why Key Theme Area 22 (failure to respond effectively to the growing number of young people being classed as vulnerable and potentially requiring support and services) was classed as a risk when the Mitigating Action listed was simple and straightforward. The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources was asked to report back on this issue.

32.3 The Committee suggested that the adoption of a common methodology/format for reporting on the Risk Log would be helpful for them in considering the Log.

32.4 RESOLVED – to request the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources to (1) report further on the Mitigating Action in respect of Key Theme Area 22; and

(2) look at adopting a common methodology/format for reporting on the Risk Log.

## 33. QUARTER TWO PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT AGAINST THE COUNCIL PLAN

33.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Policy and Communications providing updated information on performance against the Council Plan for the Second Quarter of 2008/09.

33.2 RESOLVED – to note (1) the exception report at Appendix 1 to the report including the recommendations;

(2) the areas for improvement indicators set out in Appendix 2 to the report; and

(3) the selection of successes and achievements made during this quarter as set out in paragraph 3 of the report.;

## 34. FUTURE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

34.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Personnel setting out the Committee's planned programme of work for the forthcoming year. Copies of a report providing an update and plan for closure of the Business Transformation Programme Closure were circulated to Members. The report would be considered by the Adult Social Care Committee at its meeting on 27 November and Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Members were very welcome to attend and speak at that meeting.

34.2 RESOLVED – to note the Committee's programme of work for 2008.

## 35. FORWARD PLAN

35.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the period 25 November 2008 to 28 February 2009.

35.2 RESOLVED – to note the Forward Plan without comment