

AUDIT COMMITTEE – SPECIAL MEETING**10 February 2016****Attendance:**

Councillors:

Cutler (P)

Burns (P)
Huxstep (P)
Hiscock (P)
Osborne

T Ruffell
Power (P)
Stallard (P)
Weir (P)

Others in attendance:

Councillors Godfrey (Leader), J Berry and Thompson.

1. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

Councillors Huxstep and Stallard both declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of items under consideration which may have a Hampshire County Council involvement due to their roles as County Councillors. However, as there was no material conflict of interest regarding these items, they had a dispensation granted on behalf of the Standards Committee to speak and vote in all matters.

2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded Members that the meeting was to debate the issues and make any recommendations following the presentations at the meeting of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the Audit Committee members attended earlier. Because public participation (including from other Councillors) took place at The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, that part of the procedure was not to be repeated, but the Committee has been asked to take into consideration all points raised at The Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in making their decision at this meeting.

4. SILVER HILL: INDEPENDENT REVIEW
(Report OS139 refers)

The Committee noted that the Report had not been notified for inclusion on the agenda within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept the item onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration.

The Committee referred to the report of Ms Lloyd- Jones as set out in Annex 2 to the Report. Members thanked her for the report and its recommendations therein.

During discussion, it was agreed that matters related to governance (i.e. recommendation 6.1.12 on page 38 of her report) should be led by the Committee, also having regard to any wider views put forward. In addition, Members agreed that Cabinet should be urged to apply appropriate timescales and methodology with regard to each of the review's recommendations and to undertake the work in a timely manner.

The Committee also agreed that it should give support in principle and accept the recommendations as a general direction of travel. However, Members should be allowed time to review each of the recommendations in light of the presentations, discussion and deputations made at The Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members may wish to prioritise and/or add additional matters for consideration, or reflect on the detailed wording of the Council's response to each recommendation. Therefore, the in-depth discussion on the recommendations should take place at a future, additional meeting of the Committee.

It was also noted that although several of the report's recommendations were not within the remit of the Committee, it should still have input to these. With regard to 6.1.12 (governance issues), it was observed that the suggested timeframe to undertake this work (before the May elections) was such that to try to achieve this would lead to the full exercise being rushed and an achievable timetable would need to be adopted. The Chairman suggested that approaches adopted in some other local authorities would also need to be considered.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee support in principle, the recommendations arising from the Independent Review of Silver Hill and in light of the presentation of Ms Lloyd-Jones, public participation and subsequent discussions at The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and this Committee, Members be allowed time to take stock and to review the recommendations and make any proposals for subsequent changes or additions. These detailed responses would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee and recommended to Cabinet, and Council accordingly.

2. That the Committee take a lead and look closely at those recommendations on matters of governance and consider a methodology of implementation as appropriate, and Cabinet be advised accordingly.

The meeting commenced at 9.10pm and concluded at 9.40pm.

Chairman