

London Borough of Islington

Audit Committee and Audit Committee (Advisory) - 14 June 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee and Audit Committee (Advisory) held at Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 14 June 2017 at 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillors: Nick Wayne, Satnam Gill OBE and Rakia Ismail
Also Present: Independent members: Alan Begg and Nick Whitaker.
Councillor Diarmaid Ward (Items B1 and C1)

Nick Wayne in the Chair

149 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item A1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kat Fletcher.

150 DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item A2)

There were no declarations of substitute members.

151 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item A3)

There were no declarations of interest.

152 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item A4)

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 25 May 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

153 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2016/17 (Item B1)

In the discussion it was noted that:-

- The Head of Internal Audit had given a moderate assurance which indicated some weakness but overall arrangements were good. This was consistent with previous reports.
- Comparisons could be made with other Councils for benchmarking purposes.
- Information was requested regarding job promotions for ethnic minority staff throughout the Council.

RESOLVED

- a) That the Annual Governance Statement be noted.
- b) That information regarding promotions for ethnic minority staff be sent to Audit Committee members.

154 PRINCIPAL RISKS REPORT 2017/18 (Item C1)

In the discussion it was noted that:-

- Two increasing risks had been identified:-

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- a) Serious information breach - an internal audit had been carried out on these risks and an action plan identified to ensure the Council was fully compliant with legislation.
- b) Decline in services to schools and pupils - It was noted that there was risk of an unmanaged decrease in services due to decline in funding.
- Councillor Ward was present to respond to questions regarding the tragedy at Grenfell Tower the previous evening. He reported that a briefing email had been sent to members and a more detailed report would be sent shortly. He was confident that Islington had a robust fire safety policy and did not consider there was a significant risk to housing stock. There had been a 7m investment in the fire assessment programme since 2013. The Council's Fire Safety arrangements were monitored by the Homes and Estates Safety Board which met quarterly with the fire brigade in attendance.
- Councillor Ward would be speaking to the Housing Associations about their own fire risk assessment arrangements.
- Some housing stock was managed by Partners but the fire risk was still the responsibility of the Council.
- Concerns were raised about the way in which certain types of risk were incorporated into the risk document in terms of council assets eg flooding and fire risks.
- Any lessons learnt from the investigation into the fire at Grenfell Tower would be actioned swiftly. At this stage it was too early to be certain of the initial cause of the fire.
- Residents needed to be reassured about fire safety but it was important not to give false assurances.
- The following issues were raised for response:-
 - a) Concern that there were no recorded decreasing trends;
 - b) The reasons for the increase in youth crime;
 - c) The concern that the Information Commission Office had still not issued guidance and that this would need to be followed up;
 - d) Outcomes and actions needed to be monitored with target dates where necessary and these to be included in future reports;
 - e) Comparisons of risk with other Councils be considered;
 - f) How risks were being evaluated and the need to ensure that risks were evaluated correctly.

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted and that Michael Bradley, the Head of Internal Audit, be thanked for his work over the past few years;
- b) That responses raised to the issues above be sent to members of the Audit Committee and/or included in future Risk reports where necessary;
- c) That for future reports:-
 - i) Target dates be listed by actions where appropriate;
 - ii) Where dates were included a short addendum be set out showing the progress made in achieving actions set out, in order to track progress on issues.

155

THE COUNCIL'S USE OF SURVEILLANCE UNDER THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (Item C2)

The following was noted in discussion:-

- The granting of an authorisation under RIPA 2000 had never been refused by a magistrate;

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- That an annual report would be submitted to the Executive, six months after the Audit Committee report.
- Consideration be given to providing the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee with information about RIPA in the Annual Crime report as an alternative to providing information to new members at induction.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

156 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY ACT 2000 (EXEMPT APPENDICES) (Item F1)

RESOLVED that the exempt appendix be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.40 pm

CHAIR