

London Borough of Islington

Audit and Risk Committee - 20 November 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee held at Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 20 November 2023 at 7.00 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** Councillor Nick Wayne (Chair), Councillor Flora Williamson (Vice-Chair), Councillor Janet Burgess MBE, Councillor Sara Hyde, Alan Begg (Co-Optee) and Alan Finch (Co-Optee)

Also Present: **Independent member:**

Councillor Nick Wayne in the Chair

89 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item A1)

None.

90 DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item A2)

There were no substitute members at the meeting.

91 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item A3)

On item 2, Mr Alan Finch informed the committee his employer was a provider of member training and he provided member training in his role.

92 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - TO FOLLOW (Item A4)

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th September 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

93 LAYCOCK POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW (Item C1)

The committee considered proposed changes to polling districts and polling places in Laycock ward. The change would take effect with the revised Register of Electors on 1st December 2023 and for all elections for four years thereafter.

RESOLVED:

- (a) To agree the changes set out in the report in relation to Laycock Ward.
- (b) To note the comments and representations received by Councillors and residents

94 MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2023-2026 (Item C2)

The committee considered the Member Learning and Development Strategy which set out the council's commitment to provide effective learning and development opportunities to its elected members. There had not previously been a strategy to support members in their role. It was aligned with the councils Islington Together 2030 Plan and it's priorities reflected the Islington Promise. The Strategy was also

aligned with the principles of the Local Government Association (LGA) Charter Framework. The aim of the charter was to ensure members were appropriately developed and supported to be effective in their appointed roles. The Strategy would ensure members had structured, up to date training that would also reflect new legislation. Success would be measured by attendance figures.

The committee raised the following points in their discussion:

- The strategy was thorough and an example of good practice that all councils should be adopting;
- Whether the core training targets should be higher. It was explained that the targets recognised that councillors, particularly backbench councillors had other draws on their time and, some long-standing councillors would not need to repeat training.
- Whether Audit Committee training should be included under specialist committees;
- How to drive engagement, particularly in relation to members whose conduct was a cause for concern. It was explained that all newly appointed members would receive training and there would be dedicated 1:1 support using personal development plans;
- Whether councillors training records should be available on the council's website. This was not part of the plan but could be considered by the steering group.
- What training was considered essential and how often there should be refresher training;
- How training could be provided, for example briefings on changes to legislation not just formal training sessions;
- Whether there was capacity to deliver the strategy;
- Whether there should be higher attendance targets and whether penalties should be used to improve attendance;
- Whether training could have a level of importance rating, e.g highly recommended to help members decide which sessions to attend;
- Whether lunch time slots or online training could help improve uptake.
- That recording training had previously been disallowed for data protection reasons and whether that could be reviewed.
- Whether every few months a bulletin could capture what was coming up or what might have been missed that would be valuable for councillors to know without requiring an officer session;

RESOLVED:

To approve the strategy

95

RAAC UPDATE - TO FOLLOW (Item C3)

The Committee received an update on the use of raac in Islington. It was emphasised that the safety of everyone using the buildings was of utmost importance and the council was taking a proactive approach to ensure safety across the estate, reviewing all the information they held on buildings, and updating processes and training as required. The checks had been completed and they were working with one college who had been confirmed as having raac. There were also two outstanding inspections planned in Highbury Field School before Christmas.

A committee member was relieved that there were no issues in residential houses and asked if there were checks on private sector housing. It was understood that raac was not commonly used in the construction of residential properties and they had not heard from any institutions but could reach out to them.

That the financial risk to the council appeared to be minimal due to racc and whether any other issues had been identified by the surveys. They were being analysed and a plan was being created.

RESOLVED:

To note the update

96

WORK PROGRAMME (Item)

Noted.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm

CHAIR