

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

POST ELECTION INDEPENDENT REVIEW

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee on the outcome of the independent review undertaken by the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) into the failure to count some postal ballots for the Broughton and Scawby ward in the May 2023 local elections.
- 1.2 To consider the Action Plan prepared in response to the recommendations of the AEA review.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At its last meeting the Committee received a report on the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2022-23. Within that report reference was made to the Returning Officer having made a referral to the Electoral Commission following the Local Elections in May 2023 when it was identified that some postal ballots for the Broughton and Scawby ward had not been counted.
- 2.2 In addition to informing the Electoral Commission, the Returning Officer commissioned, via the Director: Governance and Communities, a post-election independent review by the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA). The review was undertaken by the AEA's Chief Executive, Peter Stanyon and his report is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The AEA's report has been shared with the relevant candidates and agents that, in addition to relevant officers, took part in the review. Officers have carefully considered the review recommendations and prepared an Action Plan in response which is attached at Appendix 2 and will assist the Returning Officer in administering future elections.
- 2.4 The AEA's report has also been shared with the Electoral Commission, which has referenced the referral in its post poll report into Performance Standards for the May 2023 elections.

A link to the Electoral Commission's report is <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/elections-and-referendums/our-reports-and-data-past-elections-and-referendums/england-local-council-elections/report-may-2023-local-elections-england> Electoral Commission representatives are arranging to visit in early Autumn and as part of their visit will discuss implementation of the Action Plan and assurance taken from the AEA review, which is to be welcomed.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1. To note the outcome of the AEA review and the Action Plan that has been put together in response to the recommendations. There are no other options associated with this report.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 The outcome of the AEA review and Action Plan will assist the Returning Officer in administering future elections.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Any logistical costs arising from the AEA recommendations will be borne by the Elections budget.

5.2 Existing elections training will be adjusted to address the recommendations of the AEA review so that staff are familiar with revised processes.

6. OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)

6.1 The Elections Assurance Plan, Risk Register and Count Plan will be adjusted to address the recommendations of the AEA review.

7. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (if required)

7.1 No integrated impact assessment is required for this report.

8. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

8.1 No conflicts of interest have been declared arising from this report. In compiling its report, the AEA has consulted with relevant officers, candidates and agents.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To note the outcome of the independent review carried out by the Association of Electoral Administrators and the Action Plan prepared in response to its recommendations.

DIRECTOR: OUTCOMES

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Draft Annual Governance Statement 2022/23