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NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY PANEL

12 December 2023

PRESENT: - Councillor J Lee (Chair)

Councillors A Davison (Vice-Chair) and H Rowson.

Councillor S Swift attended the meeting in accordance with Procedure Rule 1.37(b) of the council's Constitution.

The meeting was held in Room S01e, Church Square House, Scunthorpe.

169 **SUBSTITUTIONS** - There were no substitutes at the meeting.

170 **DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND PERSONAL OR PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS AND DECLARATIONS OF WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS (IF ANY)** - Councillor J Lee declared a personal interest in minute 173 as the election incident occurred during the count for the Broughton and Scawby local government electoral ward.

171 **TO TAKE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 21 NOVEMBER 2023 AS A CORRECT RECORD AND AUTHORISE THE CHAIR TO SIGN** - That the minutes of the proceedings of the meeting held on 21 November 2023, having been printed and circulated amongst the members, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the Chair.

172 **PUBLIC SPEAKING REQUESTS, IF ANY** - No public speaking requests had been received.

173 **POST ELECTION INDEPENDENT REVIEW REPORT** - The Chair welcomed Richard Mell and Anthia Taylor to the meeting, the council's Head of Democracy and Electoral Registration and Elections Manager respectively, who had been invited to discuss with members 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.

The council's Audit Committee had, on 6 October 2023, considered the same report. Following a discussion, the committee resolved that the report and the action plan be considered by the Governance Scrutiny Panel.

The Director: Outcomes informed the Panel that in addition to informing the Electoral Commission that some postal ballots for the Broughton and Scawby ward had not been counted during the local government election count held on 4 May 2023, the Returning Officer commissioned, via the Director: Governance and Communities, a post-election independent review

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by the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA). The review was undertaken by the AEA's Chief Executive, Peter Stanyon and his report was attached at appendix 1.

The AEA's report had been shared with the relevant candidates and agents that, in addition to relevant officers, took part in the review. Officers had carefully considered the review recommendations and prepared an action plan in response which was attached at appendix 2 and would assist the Returning Officer in administering future elections.

The AEA's report had also been shared with the Electoral Commission, which had referenced the referral in its post poll report into Performance Standards for the May 2023 elections.

The Chair then facilitated a discussion amongst the Panel and Head of Democracy and Electoral Registration and Elections Manager on the Association of Electoral Administrators report, including the action plan.

Resolved - That the Head of Democracy and Electoral Registration and Elections Manager be thanked for their verbal presentation and for answering members' questions; (b) that the Association of Electoral Administrators report and the council's action plan be noted, and (c) that the council's Chief Executive and Returning Officer be invited to a future meeting of the Panel to discuss the report and action plan.

174 **ADDED ITEM, IF ANY** - There was no added item for consideration at the meeting.

175 **ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MUST BE SPECIFIED** - There was no urgent business for consideration at the meeting.