

MINUTES

AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

held as a hybrid meeting in the Flannel Flower Room, Civic Centre
Dee Why and online via remote audio visual link

TUESDAY 8 JUNE 2021

Minutes of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Meeting

Held on Tuesday 8 June 2021

**As a hybrid meeting in the Flannel Flower Room, Civic Centre Dee Why
and online via remote audio visual link**

Commencing at 2:04pm

ATTENDANCE – IN PERSON:

Voting Members of the Committee

Stephen Horne (Chair)
Julie Walton
Cr Sarah Grattan
Cr Sue Heins
Cr David Walton

Council Officers (non-voting)

Ray Brownlee PSM	Chief Executive Officer
Jeff Smith	Director Corporate and Legal
Karen Twitchett	Director Workforce and Technology
David Walsh	Chief Financial Officer
Caroline Foley	Executive Manager Financial Planning and Systems
Deirdre Cooper	Executive Manager Internal Audit and Complaints Resolution
Sarah Dunstan	Executive Manager Governance and Risk
Mark Jones	Executive Manager Strategy Performance and Improvement
Carel Bothma	Executive Manager Human Resources
Michael McDermid	Manager Corporate Strategy
Rob Koopman	Manager Insurance and Risk
Jasmine Evans	Governance Officer

ATTENDANCE – ONLINE:

Voting Members of the Committee

Mark McCoy
Sarah Richardson

Council Officers (non-voting)

Barbara Scott	Manager Complaints Resolution
Lesley Milbourne	Acting Manager Governance
Aline Fernandes	Internal Auditor

Council Auditors (non-voting)

Sarah Cain-Frost	Internal Audit, Partner, KPMG
Karen Taylor	Director of Financial Audit Services, Audit Office of NSW

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY:

The Chair acknowledged the traditional custodians of the lands on which meeting participants gathered and paid respects to Elders past and present.

1.0 APOLOGIES

Nil

2.0 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Nil

3.0 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

3.1 MINUTES OF AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 9 MARCH 2021

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

That the Minutes of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting held 9 March 2021, copies of which were previously circulated to all Members , are hereby confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

4.0 ITEMS RESOLVED BY EXCEPTION

Nil

5.0 ACTION ITEMS FROM MINUTES

5.1 ACTION ITEMS UPDATE

PROCEEDINGS IN BRIEF

The Chair addressed the meeting on this item.

PURPOSE

To provide the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee with a progress update on the actions arising from the minutes of previous meetings of the Committee.

PRECIS

Action items arising from Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meetings are minuted and responsibility assigned. Progress is tracked and reported to the Committee at subsequent meetings.

DISCUSSION

The Committee acknowledged and thanked staff for the improvements made to the actions report and meeting papers and requested that comments against action items be short, clear and specific.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee noted the progress on actions arising from the minutes of previous meetings.

6.0 STANDING ITEMS

6.1 VERBAL UPDATE BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

PROCEEDINGS IN BRIEF

The Chief Executive Officer addressed the meeting on this item.

PURPOSE

To advise the Committee with a brief update on current issues, particularly those relating to areas of potential risk for Council.

PRECIS

The Chief Executive Officer provided the Committee with an update on current issues under consideration by Council, particularly any issues which may present a potential risk of which the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee members should be aware.

DISCUSSION

The CEO raised the following matters for discussion:

- Due to the Local Government elections being held on 4 September 2021, Council will be in caretaker mode for the extraordinary ARIC meeting of 3 September 2021 to review the Annual Financial Statements. It was noted that Councillor membership for the ARIC may not be confirmed before the next ordinary ARIC meeting on 14 September 2021. The Committee considered other options, such as changing the meeting dates, however no changes to the meeting schedule were made.
 - Service Reviews are progressing and are being reviewed by Councillors. Service Levels will be brought to the Committee for review later this year.
 - Staff are being directed to reduce leave loads. During the pandemic staff were not asked to take leave but Council's position has now changed given the easing of restrictions.
 - The appointment of the new Chief Executive to the Office of Local Government, Ms Kiersten Fishburn NSW. The Committee noted the role will be in addition to Ms Fishburn's current position as Coordinator General for the Planning Delivery Unit at the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.
 - The appointment of Sarah Dunstan to the Executive Manager Governance and Risk position.
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ACTION ITEMS

That the Director Workforce and Technology provide further information on staff with excess leave.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee noted the verbal update by the Chief Executive Officer.

NOTE

Carel Bothma joined the meeting at 2:24pm.

6.2 WORK HEALTH & SAFETY AND INJURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE FOR JULY 2020 TO APRIL 2021**PROCEEDINGS IN BRIEF**

Carel Bothma, Executive Manager Human Resources, addressed the meeting on this item.

PURPOSE

To provide the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee with a bi-annual update on Work Health & Safety (WHS) at Northern Beaches Council.

PRECIS

Council is committed to fostering the development of attitudes and beliefs that support a safety-first culture and enable our people to work safe.

This report related to the period July 2020 to April 2021. It included an update on the completion of actions to remediate the high risks identified by KPMG. It updates Council's support for employees during COVID-19, and outlined the outcome of a financial feasibility study on alternative insurance models available to Council within the NSW workers compensation regime.

DISCUSSION

The Committee noted the status update provided by the Executive Manager Human Resources including the further completion of six high risk procedures since the publication of the agenda. Low risk procedures will be prioritised in the second half of the year and risk assessment training has commenced.

The Committee noted the review of the workers compensation premiums has been completed and agreed.

The Government's COVID-19 vaccination program was discussed where it was advised that Council staff are eligible to take well-being leave to attend vaccine appointments during business hours.

ACTION ITEMS

That the Director Workforce and Technology consider issues relating to keeping a record of staff who have been vaccinated.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee noted the update as at May 2021.

NOTES

1. Mr Bothma left the meeting at 2:48pm.
2. Caroline Foley and David Walsh joined the meeting at 2:49pm.

6.3 FINANCE UPDATE

PROCEEDINGS IN BRIEF

David Walsh, Chief Financial Officer and Caroline Foley, Executive Manager Financial Planning and Systems, addressed the meeting on this item.

PURPOSE

To provide an update on the financial performance of the Council as at 31 March 2021.

PRECIS

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact Council's budget, with further unfavourable variations to the budget proposed including Lakeside Holiday Park (-\$0.4 million), outdoor dining fees (-\$0.3million), Glen Street Theatre (-\$0.2 million) and Manly Visitor Information Centre (-\$0.1 million). The estimated cost of the pandemic to Council is now \$30 million (\$19 million in 2020/21). For the nine months to 31 March 2021 the operating result is \$5.9 million ahead of budget, primarily due to timing of operating expenditure.

The March Quarterly Budget Review recommended for the full financial year the forecast operating result before capital grants and contributions be reduced by a further \$0.3 million, from a deficit of \$18.2 million to a deficit of \$18.5 million, primarily due to the impacts of COVID-19 along with additional waste service costs.

With a deficit position forecast, the Council is unlikely to meet the Operating Performance ratio benchmark of 0% at this time. Council previously adjusted its capital expenditure to provide capacity to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and retain our long term strong and sustainable position. Savings in program costs and funding adjustments to capital projects have provided sufficient funding to maintain the Council's working capital and balanced budget position.

DISCUSSION

The Committee commented that the report was of high quality and had a good level of detail.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee noted the finance update as at 31 March 2021.

NOTES

1. Ms Foley and Mr Walsh left the meeting at 2:53pm.
2. Mark Jones and Michael McDermid joined the meeting at 2:54pm.

7.0 IMPROVEMENT

7.1 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE - PROJECTS, PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES

PROCEEDINGS IN BRIEF

Jeff Smith, Director Corporate and Legal and Mark Jones, Executive Manager Strategy and Performance addressed the meeting on this item.

PURPOSE

To provide the Committee with an overview of the Northern Beaches Council's proposed Governance Structure for project/program delivery, strategy development and budget oversight.

PRECIS

Annually, Council operates a \$450 million budget (\$105 million capital and \$345 million operational). As a part of the Annual Budget and Operational Plan, Council facilitates some 188 projects (121 Capital projects and 67 Operational projects). Further to this, the organisation also undertakes other corporate projects, programs and develops strategies that are in addition to those that are already included within the Operational Plan.

While significant effort is undertaken to ensure rigor and efficiency is a part of the project management and the budget setting process, it is envisaged that the addition of a new Governance Structure that oversees practices associated with projects, program, strategy development and budget oversight will add further value to the process.

The proposed Governance Structure (projects, programs and strategies) and the functions of each of the 5 proposed Governance Panels that sit between the Chief Executive Team (CET) and the Project Co-ordination and Delivery Teams was reported to the Committee.

DISCUSSION

The Committee discussed some of the rationale behind the framework including why it has separate property and asset management panels. It was noted that Council owns over 500 properties and intends to ensure all decisions regarding its portfolio are well considered from all economic factors to maximise outcomes for ratepayers.

The Committee was advised the structure has been modelled on a City of Sydney framework and includes some of Council's pre-existing panels.

The Committee offered some suggestions for consideration regarding striking the right balance between complexity and rigour. It was noted the structure will be reviewed and revised as it is implemented and as any opportunities for improvement are identified.

ACTION ITEMS

That the Director Corporate and Legal provide an update to the ARIC in due course on how the structure is being implemented.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

That:

1. The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee note the progress of Council's proposed Governance Structure for project, program delivery, strategy development and budget
-

oversight.

2. The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee provide input into the proposed Governance Structure.
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7.2 PERFORMANCE REPORTING UPDATE - MARCH 2021

PROCEEDINGS IN BRIEF

Mark Jones, Executive Manager Strategy and Performance, and Michael McDermid, Manager Corporate Strategy, addressed the meeting on this item.

PURPOSE

To report on performance as at March 2021 against measures in Council's Operational Plan 2020/21.

PRECIS

Quarterly performance and workload measures are monitored to track the implementation of the Operational Plan. Of the 36 performance measures, in March 86% were met or were within 5% of the target. The ongoing effects of COVID-19 continue to impact our community and the delivery of services. While Council is adjusting its service in response to the changing conditions, of the ten measures not achieving targets five were impacted by the pandemic.

DISCUSSION

The Committee provided positive feedback on the observations, narrative and trends included in the report.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee noted the report.

7.3 AUSTRALASIAN PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM - BENCHMARKING 2019/20

PROCEEDINGS IN BRIEF

Mark Jones, Executive Manager Strategy and Performance, and Michael McDermid, Manager Corporate Strategy, addressed the meeting on this item.

PURPOSE

To review Northern Beaches Council performance in the Australasian Local Government Performance Excellence Program (ALGPEP) for financial year 2019/20 (FY20).

PRECIS

In December 2020, the results for the Australasian Local Government Performance Excellence Benchmarking Program for 2019/20 were released with 89 Council's participating, including seven

Sydney metropolitan councils.

The six categories benchmarked within the report are Workforce, Finance, Operations, Service Delivery, Corporate Leadership and Asset Management.

Based on this highlight report the Northern Beaches Council is performing well across the six benchmarked categories.

To date, the ALGPEP has demonstrated that Council is on par or better than the industry. This pattern has remained constant over the three year that Council has participated in the program. Over this time we have also seen a decline in the number of participating Councils and accordingly the value of the current program in driving efficiency and performance is to be considered.

DISCUSSION

The Committee discussed the future of Council's participation in continuing with the ALGPEP. The CEO confirmed that while a decision hadn't been made, Council is looking at benchmark alternatives as participation levels have reduced and many metropolitan councils are no longer participating.

The Committee discussed the benefits of benchmarking and challenges associated with obtaining a benchmarking framework that suits Council's needs while also ensuring best practice approaches and collaboration across the sector.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee noted the:

1. Performance results from the 2019/20 Australasian Local Government Performance Excellence Benchmarking Program.
 2. Review of Council's ongoing participation in the ALGPEP for the 2020/21 year, and alternative benchmarking considerations to be brought back to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.
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7.4 NORTHERN BEACHES COUNCIL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM REPORT

PROCEEDINGS IN BRIEF

Mark Jones, Executive Manager Strategy and Performance, and Michael McDermid, Manager Corporate Strategy, addressed the meeting on this item.

PURPOSE

To provide the Committee with an update on the Northern Beaches Council's continuous improvement program.

PRECIS

Council has continued to implement its Business Excellence Strategy through a wide range of continuous improvement programs collectively referred to as IGNITE – Inspiring Great New Ideas Towards Excellence.

This report provides an update on the IGNITE programs. It outlines the progress the education and awareness programs are making in building a culture of continuous improvement and how the

improvements register continues to promote and capture small continuous improvements that are collectively moving the organisation through the Business Excellence scale.

Details of larger organisational improvement projects including project benefits released (time, cost and quality) are outlined for larger improvements in Attachment 1 and the Continuous Improvement Register is presented in Attachment 2.

An update on the Service Review Program is provided which outlines the next steps proposed to ensure implementation of the 546 improvement ideas (indicative subject to review by CET and Council) that have been identified throughout the Service Review process.

DISCUSSION

The Committee noted the significant work done to date for the Service Review project.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee noted the progress of Council's continuous improvement programs.

NOTES

1. Mr Jones and Mr McDermid left the meeting at 3:32pm.
2. The meeting adjourned at 3:32pm and resumed at 3:45pm.
3. Rob Koopman joined the meeting at 3:45pm.

8.0 FRAUD AND RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 GOVERNANCE, RISK AND COMPLIANCE UPDATE

PROCEEDINGS IN BRIEF

Sarah Dunstan, Executive Manager Governance and Risk, and Rob Koopman, Manager Insurance and Risk, addressed the meeting on this item.

PURPOSE

To provide the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) with an update on governance, risk management and compliance activities.

PRECIS

This report provides an update to the ARIC on governance, risk management and compliance activities over the reporting period from March to May 2021.

DISCUSSION

The Committee noted the status of enterprise wide risk registers and discussed levels of awareness of risk management practices and opportunities for staff to raise or escalate risks. It was noted the current status of risk ownership was most commonly at Executive Manager level or higher, however the ownership of many risk controls were also managed by staff at other levels of the organisation.

The Committee noted the next steps in the process will see risks above tolerance reviewed and a reporting regime commence for risks above tolerance.

The Committee also noted the compliance framework and further work ongoing and that legislative compliance was an area of interest for the Audit Office in its most recent report on the sector.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee noted the governance, risk management and compliance update.

8.2 FRAUD AND CORRUPTION CONTROL COMMITTEE MINUTES

PROCEEDINGS IN BRIEF

Sarah Dunstan, Executive Manager Governance and Risk and Rob Koopman, Manager Insurance and Risk, addressed the meeting on this item.

PURPOSE

To report the minutes of the Fraud and Corruption Control Committee meetings held on:

- 22 November 2020
- 18 February 2021

PRECIS

The minutes for the Fraud and Corruption Control Committee were reported to the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee for noting in accordance with its Terms of Reference.

DISCUSSION

The Committee congratulated Council for being recognised as the Statewide Mutual Metropolitan Regional winner of the Risk Management Excellence Award.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

The Audit Risk and Improvement Committee noted the minutes of the Fraud and Corruption Control Committee meetings dated:

1. 22 November 2020
 2. 18 February 2021.
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9.0 SPECIAL AGENDA ITEMS

9.1 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE CHARTER

PROCEEDINGS IN BRIEF

Sarah Dunstan, Executive Manager Governance and Risk, addressed the meeting on this item.

PURPOSE

To undertake the annual review of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) Charter.

PRECIS

As per the conditions of the ARIC Charter, the Committee is to review its Charter to ensure it remains current, relevant and accurately reflects the Committee's composition, role and responsibilities on an annual basis.

Following the release of its discussion paper in September 2019, the Office of Local Government is expected to publish a new Risk Management and Internal Audit Framework which will support and guide the operation of ARICs including Model Terms of Reference. The release of the new framework did not occur in 2020 as anticipated and is expected to be published in due course this year.

DISCUSSION

The Committee recommended the below updates to the Charter:

- The introduction should include information about the Committee's role in improvement, and that improvement needs to be proactive and future focused.
- Clause 3.1 to include "improvement expertise".
- Clause 5.1 be amended to remove the requirement that the annual report for the ARIC is provided to the first ARIC meeting of the calendar year, providing some flexibility to the ARIC in its consideration of this item.

ACTION ITEMS

That the Executive Manager Governance and Risk draft updates to the Charter incorporating the Committee's recommendations and circulate for out of session consideration.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee:

1. Note the Office of Local Government is anticipated to release updated guidance on the operations of ARICs as part of its new Risk Management and Internal Audit Framework including Model Terms of Reference for ARIC.
2. Note that a revised version of the ARIC Charter will be circulated out of session for the ARIC's consideration.

9.2 AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

PROCEEDINGS IN BRIEF

Sarah Dunstan, Executive Manager Governance and Risk, addressed the meeting on this item.

PURPOSE

To present the draft Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) Annual Report for 2020.

PRECIS

The ARIC plays a pivotal role in the governance framework to provide Council with independent assurance and advice in the areas of internal audit, risk management, compliance and control, governance, organisational performance and improvement, along with external accountability responsibilities.

As per the conditions of the ARIC Charter, the Chair of the Committee will provide an Annual Report to Council on the Committee's operations following endorsement by the Committee.

Following the ARICs review, the report will tabled to Council.

DISCUSSION

The Committee accepted the Annual Report content as drafted, with an update to Cr Grattan's profile information.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee endorsed the ARIC Annual Report for 2020 for presentation to Council.

NOTES

1. Cr Heins joined the meeting in person at 4:03pm.
2. Mr Koopman left the meeting at 4:03pm.

10.0 EXTERNAL AUDIT**10.1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECTOR REPORT****PROCEEDINGS IN BRIEF**

Karen Taylor, Director of Financial Audit Services, Audit Office of NSW, addressed the meeting on this item.

PURPOSE

To provide an update to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee on the Local Government Sector Report.

PRECIS

This item provided an update on the Auditor-General's report on the local government sector in New South Wales, covering 2019-20 financial audits of councils and joint organisations.

DISCUSSION

The Committee noted the recommendation of the Auditor General that rural firefighting equipment

should be recorded in Council financial statements.

The Committee discussed advice from Ms Foley and Mr Walsh who recommended Council hold its position on this matter as it is Council's position that RFS assets do not meet the control test for Council to record them as Council assets. It would also be double counting as the Council already pays for these assets through the Emergency Service Levy. Adding the assets would create an additional depreciation expense, which would have an unfavourable impact on our operating result excluding capital grants and contributions.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee noted the report.

NOTES

Ms Foley and Mr Walsh re-joined the meeting at 4:10pm and left at 4:16pm.

11.0 INTERNAL AUDIT

11.1 INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE REPORT

PROCEEDINGS IN BRIEF

Deirdre Cooper, Executive Manager Internal Audit and Complaints Resolution, addressed the meeting on this item.

PURPOSE

To provide an update to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee on all aspects of Internal Audit work since the March meeting.

PRECIS

This report provides an update on all audit activity since the last ARIC meeting.

DISCUSSION

The Committee discussed the status of completion of audit recommendations including the drivers for some outstanding recommendations in relation to the Warringah Aquatic Centre noting the age of the asset as one reason.

The processes required for extensions to audit recommendation deadlines were noted.

The Committee noted the cash handling audit had since been completed with management recommendations noted. The Committee also discussed the work zones audit, noting this was the first audit of this kind provided to the Committee.

Issues regarding the Library internet access audit were discussed, in particular issues relating to the Child Safeguarding Policy recently adopted by Council.

Cr Walton raised concern that the further clarifications and information provided (at two ARIC meetings) subsequent to the internal audit report into the Mayoral travel expenses did not fully answer the intention of his questions in his initial request. Further clarification of Cr Walton's queries was elicited and in response information was verbally provided regarding the process

followed for reporting Mayoral expenses, with formal advice to be confirmed to the next ARIC meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

The Director Workforce and Technology to investigate the feasibility of requiring an ID or library card to be scanned to access computers in libraries.

The Director Corporate and Legal to provide further information on the process for reporting expenses for the Mayor (with particular reference to confirming that expenses statements and declarations cover all expenses paid or refunded, including and processed through Council credit cards or by Council direct payments).

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee noted the report.

11.2 COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION TEAM UPDATE REPORT

PROCEEDINGS IN BRIEF

Deirdre Cooper, Executive Manager Internal Audit and Complaints Resolution, addressed the meeting on this item.

PURPOSE

To present to the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee information relating to complaints received, including alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct, complaints made under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 (PID), and referrals to or from the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) and the NSW Ombudsman.

PRECIS

The report presents information on complaints received by the Complaints Resolution Team, including alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct and matters referred by the ICAC and the NSW Ombudsman for the six-month period from 1 October 2020 – 31 March 2021. There was one complaint made under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 for the period. The report also sets out key outcomes of complaints.

DISCUSSION

The Committee noted the rise in service related complaints and discussed drivers for the increase.

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

That the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee note the report from the Executive Manager Internal Audit & Complaints Resolution.

NOTES

1. Barbara Scott joined the meeting (online) at 4:40pm.

12.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

The Chair addressed the meeting during General Business. Going forward:

- The agenda will include a list of items for the next meeting, as per the ARIC Workplan, and members will have the opportunity to discuss and make any changes at the end of the meeting.
- Regular in camera sessions will be held before each meeting.

13.0 NEXT MEETING

The next ordinary meeting of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee is scheduled to take place on 14 September 2021 commencing at 2pm in the Flannel Flower Room, Civic Centre Dee Why.

The meeting closed at 5:06pm.