



Committee and Date

Council  
15<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Item

Public

## **Recruitment of Co-opted Independent Members for the Audit Committee**

**Responsible Officer**

James Walton

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### **1. Synopsis**

In line with best practice, the Audit Committee is seeking to recruit a co-opted, independent member to sit alongside elected members and attend a combination of virtual and physical Audit Committee meetings for a four-year term.

### **2. Executive Summary**

- 2.1. The Local Government Association (LGA) Finance Peer Review carried out in June 2022 urged the Council to consider appointing a co-opted independent member as part of the Audit Committee. The merits of such an appointment include the opportunity to make productive and helpful contributions to the Committee which would align with the thinking of other councils and the Government's direction of travel.
- 2.2. Agreement is now needed to progress with recruitment to this role to ensure the Committee is compliant with the membership change.
- 2.3. This appointment is expected to support the Council's priority for a Healthy Organisation, helping deliver the strategic objective of ensuring that councillors are supported to advocate for their constituents but also be ambassadors for the council.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1. That the Council consider the approach set out in the report, and delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources (in consultation with the Chair of the Audit Committee) to progress

recruitment of a co-opted independent person for a term of four years.

- 3.2. That the Council nominate members to a panel who will undertake the shortlisting, carry out interviews and recommend the successful candidate for this role to Council on a date to be confirmed in early 2023.

## **REPORT**

### **4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal**

- 4.1. The risk of not attracting candidates for this role will be managed through the strategy for marketing the role across the Council's social media channels and local press engagement.
- 4.2. There are clear criteria set out in the application pack to ensure that candidates for this role can offer the expertise and knowledge to the Committee, balanced with political neutrality.

### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1. Expense arrangements in place are consistent with those for other non-elected, co-opted committee members and there will be a small cost in providing IT licenses. There are no financial implications outside of the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy in adopting the recommendations proposed.

### **6. Climate Change Appraisal**

- 6.1. There are no direct implications for Climate Change in progressing this appointment.

### **7. Background**

- 7.1. The Local Government Association (LGA) Finance Peer Review carried out in June 2022 urged the Council to consider appointing an independent member as part of the Audit Committee.
- 7.2. The Audit Committee has considered this as part of their self-evaluation against the CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) Guidance on the function and operation of Audit Committees and agrees the need for an independent co-opted member.
- 7.3. An independent member is entitled to be reimbursed for expenses but not to receive any allowance or remuneration.
- 7.4. Co-opted members to Council committees are not members of the Council itself, therefore other than in limited circumstances (for

example, an advisory committee established under s102(4) Local Government Act 1972) they have no voting rights. Co-opted members would instead be consulted during committee meetings and their views considered by voting members of the committee.

- 7.5. An approach for the advertisement, recruitment and selection to these roles is set out below. A draft timetable is included in **Appendix 1**.

#### Role Profile

- 7.6. A draft application pack, including the role profile which for the co-opted independent member is attached at **Appendix 2** to this report. This sets out the knowledge and experience requirements which are needed to best support the effective performance of the Committee.

#### Advertisement

- 7.7. Information about the roles will be hosted on the Council's website, supported by communications in the local press and across the Council's social media channels. A period of three weeks for the roles being advertised is suggested, with the deadline for applications being received at the end of that period.

#### Selection

- 7.8. Council will need to nominate members to carry out shortlisting and interviewing the candidates. It is recommended that this is carried out by the Chair, Vice Chair, and a member of the Audit Committee, who would be supported in the process by officers.
- 7.9. Applications will be reviewed by the appointed panel against the role profile in the application pack, and shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview; these can be facilitated virtually. Following the interview process, and subject to references successfully being obtained, the panel will recommend the co-option of one of the candidates to Council.
- 7.10. Details of the candidates will be circulated to members of the Audit Committee, and the candidates will be invited to attend Committee meetings along with induction training.

### **8. Additional Information**

- 8.1. Council is required to approve changes to committee structures and composition. The co-option of an independent member to the Audit Committee therefore needs to be agreed by Council and included in the Constitution.

- 8.2. Any appointments must comply with s102(3) Local Government Act 1972 (power to co-opt from outside Council membership) and s13 Local Government & Housing Act 1989 (which pertains to voting rights).
- 8.3. The arrangements in this report seek to implement the recommendations which have been agreed to, having demonstrated that the Committee has considered best practice and the impact of the move to the governance system operation and has identified proposals to ensure the Committee composition and structure is appropriate for local requirements.

**List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)**

**Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)**

Cllr Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder Finance and Corporate Support  
Cllr Brian Williams, Chair of Audit Committee

**Local Member**

n/a

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Proposed timeline of recruitment

Appendix 2 – Application Pack

**Proposed timeline for recruitment of co-opted independent member of the Audit Committee**

For Council to approve candidates at 2 March 2023 meeting

w/c 12.12.22	Report on suggested approach including draft application pack to be considered and approved by Council.
w/c 19.12.22	Web page to be launched, press release published by Communications team, social media campaign begins Application period opens
w/c 09.01.23	Application deadline: Wednesday 11 January 2023
w/c 16.01.23	Shortlisting of candidates to take place by a panel including the Chair of Audit Committee supported by officers if needed.
w/c 30.01.23/ 06.02.23	Interviews to be held
w/c 13.02.23	Provisional offers to be made to successful candidates subject to reference check
w/c 20.02.23	Report to be submitted to Council nominating successful candidates
w/c 27.02.23	2 March 2023 - Council Induction training for co-opted independent members
June/July 2023	Date tbc - Audit Committee Co-opted independent members introduced to Committee.