

Independent Member

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Audit Governance and Standards Committee	15 January 2024
Council	21 February 2024

Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Head of Service	Mark Green, Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Mark Green, Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement Katherine Woodward, Head of Mid Kent Audit
Classification	Public report with exempt appendices Exempt Appendix 1: Curriculum Vitae Exempt Appendix 2: References This appendix contains exempt information as classified in paragraph 1 of part 1 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 in that it contains information relating to any individual. The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in its disclosure.
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

The Constitution adopted by the Council at its meeting on 19th April 2023 makes provision for the co-option of an Independent Member to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee. This report sets out a process for identifying and co-opting a suitable person to the Committee.

Purpose of Report

Decision.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee recommends that Council co-opt the person proposed by the selection panel as an Independent Member of the Committee.

Independent Member

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities.</p>	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>There will be no material impact on these objectives.</p>	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement

Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The co-option of an independent member of the audit committee is authorised under the council's constitution. 	Team Leader (Contentious and Corporate Governance)
Privacy and Data Protection	No implications	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	No implications.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Crime and Disorder	No implications.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Procurement	No implications.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and there are no implications on biodiversity and climate change.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Constitution adopted by the Council at its meeting on 19th April 2023 makes provision for the co-option of an Independent Member to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee. This is in line with best practice and with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). This report describes the process of selecting an Independent Member and makes a recommendation to Council.
- 2.2 Note that the Independent Member will be in addition to the two Parish Representatives who already sit on the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee. Like the Parish Representatives, the Independent Member will not have voting rights.

- 2.3 In order to ensure that a wide range of potential candidates was alerted to the opportunity, the role was advertised on LinkedIn, PF Jobs and the Council's own website. In the end, six applications were received. A panel comprising the Chair, Vice-Chair, Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement and Head of Mid-Kent Audit reviewed the applications for the role and agreed a shortlist of four. Two candidates were interviewed in person by the Chair, the Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement, the Head of Mid-Kent Audit and the Council's HR Manager, the other two candidates being unavailable for interview.
- 2.4 Both candidates seen by the panel submitted strong applications and performed well in interview. On the basis of a structured interview assessment, the panel agreed unanimously that the candidate whose curriculum vitae is included as an appendix to this report scored most strongly in relation to the requirements of the role.
- 2.5 Two references were sought on the proposed candidate. Only one of these had been received when this matter was considered at the meeting of the Committee on 13 November, so a decision on whether to recommend the candidate to Council was deferred to this meeting.
- 2.6 Both references have now been received and are included at Appendix 2.
- 2.7 If the proposed candidate is approved by the Committee, they will be put forward for Council to agree their co-option as an Independent Member of the Committee at its meeting on 21 February 2024.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 Option 1

The recommended candidate is put forward for approval by Council.

3.2 Option 2

The recommended candidate is not put forward and the recruitment process starts again.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is recommended that Option 1 is chosen. The preferred candidate has excellent experience, of considerable relevance for the Committee, and meets the requirements for the role.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The overall impact of the course of action proposed in the report is likely to be to mitigate the risks faced by the Council, in that it will add an informed and independent element to the work of the Committee.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The proposal to co-opt an Independent Member was considered by Democracy and General Purposes Committee prior to Council adopting the current constitution, and was generally welcomed.
- 6.2 This Committee agreed the process for selecting an Independent Member at its meeting on 24 July 2023. The matter was considered at the Committee's meeting on 13 November 2023, but no decision was made as only one reference on the preferred candidate had been received of the two requested.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 See paragraph 2.7 above.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- Exempt Appendix 1: Curriculum Vitae of recommended candidate
- Exempt Appendix 2: References

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.