

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 24TH SEPT 2015

INDEPENDENT MEMBER PERFORMANCE REPORT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor John Fisher
Portfolio Holder Consulted	-
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering – Exec Director Finance and Resources
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	No
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Non–Key Decision

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To update members on the role of the Independent Member and for Members to consider any changes to the role.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the update and to make any suggestions for changes to the role.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Council has a statutory responsibility to comply with financial regulations.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.3 Section 4 of the Audit, Governance & Standards Committee Procedure Rules state that the Committee can appoint a number of people as non-voting co-optees. The role of the Independent Member on the Committee has been in place since January 2014 and was initially for a trial 12 month period. The role was established to support good governance for the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee and is seen as a model of good practice for Local Government. Mr Dave Jones was successful in securing the role following a formal recruitment process.

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- 3.4 In September 2014 this Committee discussed the role and due to the active and positive contribution Mr Jones had made to the Committee it was approved that;
- the role of Independent Member on the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee be made permanent, with the role being subject to a four-year term of office and Independent Members being permitted to serve a maximum of two consecutive four-year terms of office;
 - Mr Jones be appointed to the role of Independent Member on the Committee for a four-year term of office with immediate effect, and that his appointment be subject to review during his fourth year of office; and
 - Officers take back to the Committee proposals relating to required attendance at meetings by Independent Members and arrangements for reviewing Independent Member performance
- 3.5 This report seeks to inform Members of the key responsibilities of the role and to advise the Committee of the work Mr Jones has undertaken in meeting these responsibilities since January 2015.
- To review the effectiveness of the Council's risk management framework and internal control environment, including overseeing:
 - risk management strategies
 - anti-fraud arrangements
 - *As Risk Champion Mr Jones has regular updates with Heads of Service and the Director of Finance and Resources to ensure the registers reflect the key risks associated with the delivery of services across the organisation. In addition Mr Jones gives updates to the Committee at each meeting in relation to risk and any anti-fraud arrangements. Mr Jones has raised a number of issues during his time undertaking this role which have been taken on board when officers have considered the risk registers.*
 - To monitor the effectiveness of the Council's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects exposure to risk and poor internal control.
 - *Mr Jones has actively sought assurance over the performance management framework and the resources within finance to ensure the accounts are prepared in a more timely manner next financial year.*
 - To provide independent assurance to the Council in relation to the annual Statement on Internal Control/Governance Statement.
 - *Mr Jones has been actively engaged with this Committee and has asked challenging questions around the assurance levels of the Governance. In addition he has referred to other Local Authorities Governance Statements to*

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ensure Redditch Borough Council reflects best practice and has made recommendations to the Director of Finance of improvements.

- To review and approve the annual statement of accounts, confirming the appropriate accounting policies have been followed, including the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.
 - *Prior to the Statement of Accounts Briefing Mr Jones had a separate meeting with the Financial Services Manager to interpret and understand the Accounts and to raise a number of queries. I*
- To monitor and review the activity and effectiveness of both Internal and External Audit.
 - *Mr Jones has been actively engaged with this Committee and has asked challenging questions to both External and Internal Audit in relation to performance and reporting.*

3.6 It is not proposed that a set number of meetings to attend to prescribed by the Committee as the performance of the role would dictate that attending meetings would be required. Should the Committee wish to specify a number of meetings that are required the role responsibilities will be updated.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.7 There are no implications arising out of this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 None as a direct result of this report.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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