

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT, GOVERNANCE & STANDARDS COMMITTEE 7th MARCH 2019

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Tom Baker Price
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering – Director Finance and Resources
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	None specific

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To enable Members to consider the appointment of an independent member to the Committee .

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **Members are asked to consider the report and to agree if an independent member is to be recruited.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The independent member would be a voluntary post however a reimbursement for travelling would be made.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The constitution of the Council states “ the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee shall be entitled to appoint a number of people as non-voting co-optees”. It is proposed that one independent member is recruited with the aim to review the value of the position after 12 months.

- 3.3 Independent members to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee do not have voting rights in accordance with Section 13 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.4 In 2013 Members of this Committee approved the recruitment of an independent member. Mr Jones secured the role and continued this appointment until 2018. The appointment of independent non-voting co-optees is considered to strengthen the independence of the Audit, Governance & Standards Committee and add additional independent

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experience and expertise. Suitably qualified and experienced independent members serving on Audit Committees can bring specialist knowledge and insight to the workings and deliberations of the Committee which, when partnered with elected members' knowledge of working practices and procedures, enhances the performance of the Committee. Members will be aware that Mr Jones participated fully in the meetings, asking questions and requesting further information and undertook further review of services areas and reporting back to Committee where appropriate.

- 3.5 Should members agree a new appointment be made, it would be necessary to establish an interview panel, consisting of 4 elected members from amongst the Audit, Governance & Standards Committee in order to ensure political balance, with delegated authority to interview candidates for the position of independent member.
- 3.6 Previously members agreed that it was reasonable to follow guidance as currently in place for appointment to the independent remuneration panel to appoint to the role. The criteria for appointments is that independent members cannot be:
- a member of any local authority in the area (including Parish Council)
 - disqualified from being an elected member of a local authority
 - a member of any committee or sub-committee of the local authority, including being a co-opted member
 - a member of a political party to ensure independence
 - a relative or close friend of a Member or employee of the Council
- 3.7 A proposed role description is attached at Appendix 1 for members consideration to ensure that the appointment is made within a framework of competency and experience.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.8 The appointment will be made in a fair and transparent manner and it is anticipated that the independent member will be able to enhance the role of the Audit, Governance & Standards Committee.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The appointment of an independent member is recognised as promoting good governance and best practice within the Council.

5. APPENDICES

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Appendix 1 – Role Description

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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APPENDIX 1

**INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE &
STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

JOB DESCRIPTION

Main Purpose

To act as an independent member of the Council's Audit ,Governance & Standards Committee.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. To review the effectiveness of the Council's risk management framework and internal control environment, including overseeing:
 - risk management strategies
 - anti-fraud arrangements
2. 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.
3. To provide independent assurance to the Council in relation to the Annual Governance Statement.
4. 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.
5. To monitor and review the activity and effectiveness of both Internal and External Audit.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Experience

You will be a person who has experience working in a medium/large organisation at a senior level or other experience that would give similar benefits.

Financial management experience (accountancy, audit or management of a large budget) would be advantageous.

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Skills

You should be able to:

- understand complex issues and the importance of accountability and probity in public life.
- analyse and assess evidence and come to a rational conclusion.
- demonstrate objectivity.
- demonstrate integrity and discretion.
- make decisions.
- possess effective interpersonal skills.

Knowledge

Some knowledge of local government would be useful.

Knowledge of corporate governance arrangements in either public or private sectors would be beneficial.

Knowledge of risk management.

Commitment

The Audit, Governance & Standards Committee meets approximately 5 times a year for about 2 hours on each occasion. Preparation time will also be required for each meeting.

Payment

This public office does not command a salary, however reimbursement of travelling and subsistence expenses will be paid.: