

**REPORT TO:** **AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** **11 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**TITLE:** **INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**LEAD OFFICER:** **SARAH MARSH, INTERNAL AUDIT MANAGER  
(01279) 446884**

**RECOMMENDED that:**

- A** The recommendation of the Working Party to appoint an independent person to the Committee is approved.
- B** The Independent Member Recruitment Pack (attached as Appendix A to the report), and the membership of the interview panel is agreed.

**BACKGROUND**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the inclusion of an independent person to the Audit and Standards Committee as recommended by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) in their guidance, 'Audit Committee: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police', published in 2018. This asks local councils to consider the inclusion of at least one independent member.
2. At its 28 November 2018 meeting the Audit and Standards Committee agreed to establish a Working Party to look at whether the Committee should appoint an independent person, with terms of reference and membership as set out below:
  - a) To establish the advantages and disadvantages of having an independent person on the Committee;
  - b) To determine whether the Committee should appoint an independent person and to make a recommendation to the Committee; and
  - c) The membership would be Councillors Simon Carter, Jean Clark and Stefan Mullard.
3. The Working Party met twice, on 10 July 2019 and 28 August 2019, and was supported by the Head of Finance and Internal Audit Manager.

## **ISSUES/PROPOSALS**

4. After reviewing CIPFA's guidance the Working Party agreed with the general principle of appointing an independent person, and that appointing people with the required skills would add value to the Committee.
5. Following research on how other councils approach this, the Working Party agreed wording for a recruitment pack which included a person specification, eligibility criteria and duties (attached as Appendix A to the report). It was agreed to put this to the Committee for approval.
6. The allowance to be awarded to the successful applicant is based on benchmarking data and is equivalent to the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Vice Chair of the Council (which is currently £510 per annum). This, however, would be dependent on full Council approval and their annual review thereafter.
7. The Working Party agreed that three Councillors should sit on the interview panel, with the membership agreed by the Committee and that advertising on the Council's website and social media would take place in the Autumn.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **Environment and Planning (Includes Sustainability)**

None specific.

**Author: Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning**

### **Finance (Includes ICT, and Property and Facilities)**

As contained within the report.

**Author: Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Deputy to the Chief Executive**

### **Housing**

None specific.

**Author: Andrew Murray, Head of Housing**

### **Community Wellbeing (Includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)**

None specific

**Author: Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing**

### **Governance (Includes HR)**

There is no legal or constitutional requirement for the Committee to have an independent person on the Audit and Standards Committee, however, it is considered good practice to do so.

**Author: Simon Hill, Head of Governance**

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Independent Member Recruitment Pack

## **Background Papers**

None.

## **Glossary of terms/abbreviations used**

CIPFA – Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy