

# Reappointment of the Independent Member of the Audit and Standards Committee



**Report to:** Full Council

**Date:** 12 December 2024

**Report author:** Jacqui Van Mellaerts, Assistant Director Finance and Section 151 Officer

## Executive Summary

**A** This report is to confirm the reappointment of Laura Kirman for a further three years as the Council's independent member of the Audit and Standards Committee.

## Recommended that:

**A** Laura Kirman is reappointed as the independent member of the Audit and Standards Committee.

## Reason for decision

**A** The Term of Office for an independent member of the Audit and Standards Committee is three years. After their first term has expired, they can be appointed again if they wished for a second term unopposed.

## Other Options

**A** 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 by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) good practice to do so. The Council can carry out another recruitment process for an independent member to sit on the committee, or it can re-appoint Laura Kirman for a further term. The Council can decide not to have an independent member on the Audit and Standards Committee.

## Background

1. On 16 September 2021 Council confirmed the appointment of Laura Kirman as the independent member to the Audit and Standards Committee following a successful recruitment campaign.
2. Laura Kirman brings many years' experience of working in local government and lives locally.

3. The Term of Office for an independent member of the Audit and Standards Committee is three years. After their first term has expired, they can be appointed again if they wished for a second term unopposed; however, if they wished to serve further terms after this then their further appointment has to be subject to a competitive selection process.
4. Laura has confirmed her willingness to remain on the Committee and this has been endorsed by the Audit and Standards Chair.
5. The allowance awarded to the independent member is based on benchmarking data and is equivalent to the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Vice Chair of the Council. This is dependent on Full Council approval and their annual review thereafter. In addition, reasonable expenses can be claimed in line with Member's subsistence, travelling and carer's allowances as per part 6 (Councillor's allowance scheme) of the Council's constitution.
6. The independent member of the Audit and Standards Committee has to publicly declare and register any interest they have on the same basis as members of Harlow Council and observe the requirements of the Council's Constitution in performance of their duties in their capacity as an independent member.

## **Implications**

### **Equalities and Diversity**

The role of independent member of the Audit and Standards Committee is open to anyone over the age of 18.

### **Climate Change**

This report has no direct impact on climate change.

### **Finance**

As contained within the report.

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### **Governance**

The appointment of an independent member to the Audit and Standards Committee is not a statutory requirement. The Council has chosen to appoint an independent member as a means of bringing an independent, objective perspective to the work of the Audit and Standards audit Committee, which is in line with CIPFA guidance.

Author: Julie Galvin, Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer

## **Appendices**

None

## **Background Papers**

None

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

CIPFA - Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy