

Wiltshire Council

Audit and Governance Committee

8 February 2023

Independent co-opted member on the Audit and Governance Committee

Executive Summary

This report provides an update for the Audit and Governance Committee on the progress of recruiting and appointing an independent co-opted member to the Committee.

Proposal(s)

To note that Patrick Jarvis has been appointed as an independent co-opted member on the Audit and Governance Committee.

Reason for Proposal(s)

The Committee had previously resolved to appoint an independent co-opted member, so that they can provide advice and bring valuable experience and knowledge to the Committee in discharging its function. This report updates on the process and on who has been appointed.

Perry Holmes

Director Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Audit and Governance Committee on the progress of recruiting and appointing an independent co-opted member to the Committee.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The appointment of an independent co-opted member to the Committee will bring valuable experience and knowledge to the Committee, assisting them to discharge their function and give assurance to elected Members and the to the public as to the governance and sound financial management of the Council.

By having an even more effective Audit and Governance Committee we can help to ensure that we take an open and transparent approach to decision making and to ensure that decisions are evidence based, which meets the Resilient Society theme. It will also help to support the aim that we have An Efficient and Healthy Organisation.

Background

3. At it's meeting on [1 March 2022](#) the Audit and Governance Committee considered the issue of an independent co-opted member on the Committee. The previous background to this matter can be seen in the report considered at that meeting.
4. It should be noted that in response to the Redmond Review, the government launched a local audit framework technical consultation, and on 31 May 2022 the government published their [response to that consultation](#). This included that councils were required to have an audit committee with at least 1 independent member.
5. At the meeting on 1 March 2022 the Audit and Governance Committee resolved:
 - To approve the creation of an independent co-opted member role;
 - To approve the draft proposed role profile and delegate authority for the final wording to the Monitoring Officer;
 - To make recommendations to Full Council:
 - That appropriate changes to the constitution should be made so that an independent member could be appointed;
 - To delegate the appointment of any independent co-opted members to the Audit and Governance Committee and arrangements for the selection of such members to the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee in consultation with the Monitoring officer. Arrangements for selection would include a selection panel made up of 3 Members of the Committee and a lead officer.
 - That the remuneration of the independent co-opted member be looked at by Wiltshire Council's Independent Remuneration Panel.
6. At [Full Council on 17 May 2022](#), Council considered the matter and approved the changes to the constitution and to delegate the appointment as requested.
7. Following Full Council in May 2022 the position of independent member on the Audit and Governance Committee was advertised but no applications were received.

8. At [Full Council on 18 October 2022](#), Full Council considered the recommendation from the Independent Remuneration Panel and determined that the remuneration for the position be set at £2,000 per annum.
9. In September 2022, following minor amendments to the job advert and role description, the position was readvertised and 3 applications were received. These were shortlisted and 2 candidates were put forward to interview.
10. On 10 January 2022 the interviews were undertaken by a panel of three Members of the Committee (Councillor Mark Connolly – Chairman, Councillor Gavin Grant and Councillor Mike Sankey), they were supported by Lizzie Watkin, Assistant Director Finance and Deputy S151 Officer. The panel were unanimous in their opinion of which candidate should be appointed, due to their wealth of experience and knowledge regarding audit and governance. Following the panel, the Chairman, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer determined that the candidate chosen by the panel should be appointed to the role.
11. On 17 January 2022 the successful candidate accepted the role.

Main Considerations

12. An independent co-opted member will provide valuable advice to the Committee, enhancing the experience and knowledge of the Committee.
13. The recruitment of independent co-opted members was supported by the S151 officer and other lead Audit and Governance officers.
14. The addition of independent co-opted members is recommended by both CIPFA guidance and the Redmond Review and is being made a requirement for Audit Committees.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

15. There has been no overview and scrutiny engagement in this process.

Safeguarding Implications

16. There are no safeguarding issues arising from this report.

Public Health Implications

17. There are no public health implications arising from this report.

Procurement Implications

18. There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

19. There are no equalities impacts arising from this report.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

20. There are no environmental or climate change considerations arising from this report.

Workforce Implications

21. There are no workforce implications to this report. The independent co-opted member will be supported by existing workforce capacity.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

22. There is no decision required to be made, as the decision had already been taken under the previously agreed delegation.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

23. There is no decision required to be made, as the decision had already been taken under the previously agreed delegation.

Financial Implications

24. The allowance of the independent co-opted member was considered by the Independent Remuneration Panel and approved by Full Council in October 2022.

Legal Implications

25. The legal implications detailed in the 1 March 2022 report were all considered.

26. The appointed independent co-opted member will not have voting rights. Therefore, their involvement on the Committee will be in a consultative manner, with their views being taken into account by voting members of the Committee.

27. The purpose of the Committee is to give assurance to elected members and to the public as to the governance and sound financial management of the Council. This will likely be strengthened by including members who are independent from the executive and scrutiny functions and who are suitably qualified with experience in the area of audit/governance to provide specialist knowledge and insight.

Options Considered

28. It is best practise for the Audit and Governance Committee to have an independent co-opted member and this will become a requirement.

Proposals

29. It is recommended that the Audit and Governance Committee note that Patrick Jarvis has been appointed as an independent co-opted member on the Audit and Governance Committee.

Perry Holmes

Director Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer

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30 January 2023

Background Papers

- [Report and minutes of the 1 March 2022 Audit and Governance Committee \(minute item 12\)](#)
- [Government response to local audit framework: technical consultation](#)
- [Government response to the Redmond Review](#)
- [CIPFA position statement on Audit Committees](#)
- [Report and minutes of the 17 May 2022 Full Council meeting \(minute item 31\)](#)
- [Report and minutes of the 18 May 2022 Full Council meeting \(minute item 46\)](#)