

**Report to Audit and Governance
Committee**



Report reference: AGC-006-2013/14
Date of meeting: 27 June 2013

**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Finance & Technology
Subject: Appointment of Co-opted Member
Responsible Officer: Ian Willett (01992 564243)
Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That a report be submitted to the Council recommending as follows:
 - (a) that an Appointment Panel be appointed to undertake interviews following public advertisement for the vacancy for a co-opted member of this Committee which will occur with effect from 13 September 2013;
 - (b) that the Council be asked to approve the membership of the Panel at its meeting on 30 July 2013;
 - (c) that the Council be asked to grant delegated authority to the Panel to appoint the preferred candidate following interview;
- (2) That consideration be given as to whether the remaining independent person should form part of the Appointment Panel, either as a voting or non-voting member and that an appropriate recommendation be made to the Council at its July meeting; and
- (3) That the Committee indicate its preferences as to advertising the position and delegate the preparation and content of the recruitment pack to Officers in consultation with Members of the Committee.

Executive Summary:

This report deals with the process of filling the vacancy for a co-opted member of the Audit and Governance Committee which will occur with effect from 13 September 2013. The report proposes the establishment of an interview panel with authority to appoint a preferred applicant following public advertisement. The report discusses:

- (a) the terms of reference, membership and delegated powers of the proposed Panel;
- (b) the eligibility criteria which will apply;
- (c) the timetable for recruitment and advertising of the vacancy; and
- (d) the involvement of the other co-opted member of the committee in the process.

Reason for Proposed Decision:

The vacancy for a co-opted person will occur on 13 September 2013 and in order to allow time for the appointment of a member panel to supervise the process, to conduct interviews and to make an appointment prior to that date, decisions on the process to be adopted need to be made at this stage.

Report:

1. Under changes to Article 11 of the Council's Constitution relating to the Audit and Governance Committee, each co-opted member of the Committee may only serve for a maximum of two three-year terms as of right. If an independent person wishes to continue for a further term or terms, the rules say that they may be appointed but only after competitive recruitment has been arranged.
2. Under the current arrangements, the two independent persons on the Committee have staggered terms of office and the two terms of office for Melanie Peddle will come to an end on 12 September 2013.
3. It is suggested that this Committee should recommend to the Council that an Appointment Panel should be formed. In order to comply with the timetable for filling the vacancy, it is also recommended that the Committee should seek delegated powers for the Panel to not only conduct interviews but also to appoint a preferred candidate. The Committee is asked to consider the size and membership of the Panel that wish to recommend.
4. The Committee is also asked to consider the role to be adopted in this process by the other co-opted member of the Committee. Options appear to be :
 - (a) that he should take part in an advisory/non voting capacity; or
 - (b) that he should have full voting status.
5. Mr R. Thompson, the other co-opted member, has indicated that he does not consider it appropriate for him to be a voting member at interviews conducted by the Panel but is willing to participate in a non voting capacity to assist the process.
6. A summary timetable for this recruitment is as follows:
 - (a) report of this Committee to the Council meeting on 30 July 2013;
 - (b) interview appointment in August/September 2013; and
 - (c) new co-opted member attends the Audit and Governance Committee scheduled for 23 September 2013.
7. A recruitment advertisement has been agreed informally (copy enclosed) and this will be published in the edition of The Forester to be published in late July. This advert and the recruitment pack will also be available on line and in hard copy together with an application form. It is suggested that the contents and style of the information pack should be dealt with informally by Officers in consultation with Members of the Committee. .
8. Publicity would also include a press release timed to coincide with the publication of the Forester.

9. It has been suggested by Committee Members that details of the position might also be circulated on a more targeted basis to suitable organisations who may have access to potential applicants.

Resource Implications:

Provided that the Committee does not wish to publish a formal public notice in the local press, the cost of the recruitment process is minimal and can be met from internal resources.

Legal and Governance Implications:

Currently, this Council's Audit and Governance Committee is a discretionary body, not required to be established by statute and therefore any rules regarding co-opted persons are those which the Council has itself devised.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

None.

Consultation Undertaken:

A draft copy of this report has been circulated to members of the Audit and Governance Committee and to the Corporate Governance Group for comment prior to submission to this meeting. Their views have been incorporated in this report.

Background Papers:

None.

Impact Assessments

Risk Management

There are no perceived risks in the proposed recruitment process. A risk assessment of failure to make an appointment to the second co-opted member position indicates that without the appointment the work of the Audit and Governance Committee could be adversely affected in that it would not comply with the Council's Constitution.

Equality and Diversity

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications? No

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? No

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?
N/A.

How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?
N/A.

A condition of the recruitment process will be that it is open to all interested persons who meet the Council's criteria as follows:

- (a) that they should have professional expertise, experience and background relevant to the role and responsibilities of the Audit and Governance Committee;
- (b) that they should not have any links either directly or indirectly with Members or Officers of the District Council which might create a conflict of interest in their role as Members of the Committee.