

Report to Audit and Governance Committee



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Report Reference: AGC-020-2014/15

Date of Meeting: 30 March 2015

Subject: Audit and Governance Committee – Appointment of Co-opted Member.

Portfolio: Governance & Development Management.

Responsible Officer: Stephen Tautz (01992 564180).

Democratic Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That members note the current position with regard to the appointment of a replacement co-opted member of the Audit and Governance Committee.

Executive Summary

This report provides details of the recruitment process and current position with regard to the receipt of applications for the appointment of a replacement co-opted member of the Committee.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

Failure to appoint a replacement co-opted member will have implications for the operation of the Committee and the management of audit and governance matters.

Other Options for Action:

None. However, the Committee may wish to identify alternative options for the recruitment and appointment of a replacement co-opted member.

Report

1. This report updates members with regard to the current position in respect of the appointment of a replacement co-opted member of the Committee, following the recent retirement of Mr. Robert Thompson (Vice-Chairman) after a period of six years.

2. At its meeting on 17 February 2015, the Council appointed Councillors K. Adams and R. Jennings to join the Chairman of the Committee on an Appointment Panel to consider applications received for the vacant co-opted member position, and to make an appropriate appointment of the preferred candidate. At its last meeting, the Committee received copies of documents relating to the vacancy, including the proposed appointment selection criteria, and the vacancy was advertised shortly thereafter.

3. The vacancy for the co-opted member position was advertised through the Council's website and a range of social media from 16 February 2015. An initial period of three weeks was allowed for the submission of completed applications, with a closing date of 6 March 2015. Due to the very significant advertising costs, notice of the vacancy was not published in the Epping Forest Guardian (the only publication circulating across the district), although the

position was promoted in the on-line version of the newspaper. The position was also promoted through the locally-based 'Everything Epping Forest' news website.

4. Unfortunately, only a very low level of interest was expressed in the vacancy during the initial application period. Additional advertising and promotion of the position and the work of the Committee was therefore progressed at the end of February in order ensure the widest possible interest.

5. This additional recruitment activity included circulation of details of the vacancy to all members of the Council (through the Council Bulletin), all local town and parish councils in the district, the Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership and Voluntary Action Epping Forest. Where appropriate, these organisations were requested to promote the co-opted member vacancy, by means such as relevant bulletins and newsletters etc. The closing date for receipt of applications for the vacancy was extended to 27 March 2015 to reflect this additional activity.

6. When the vacancy was first advertised, provisional arrangements were made for the Appointment Panel to undertake interviews for the position. Clearly, as a result of the extension of the closing date for applications, alternative arrangements will now need to be made in this respect. The Council has invited Mr. A. Jarvis and Mr. R. Thompson, as current and immediately former co-opted members of the Committee, to attend the interviews in an advisory, non-voting capacity.

7. The Director of Governance will report to the Committee on the current position with regard to the receipt of applications for the appointment of a replacement co-opted member. Members might also wish to consider arrangements for interviews to be held in respect of any applications received for the co-opted member position.

8. On behalf of the Council, the Director of Governance has written to Mr. Thompson to formally express the authority's appreciation of his dedicated contribution to the work and success of the Committee, over the course of his appointment.

Resource Implications:

Recruitment activity for the appointment of a new co-opted member of the Audit and Governance Committee has so far been contained within existing resources.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The current terms of reference of the Audit and Governance Committee provide that no business may be transacted at a meeting of the Committee unless two councillor members and one co-opted member are present.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the district.

Consultation Undertaken:

None.

Background Papers:

None.

Risk Management:

Failure to appoint a replacement co-opted member will place a burden on the remaining co-opted member, in terms of having to be present at all meetings of the Audit and Governance Committee in order to achieve quorum requirements.