

Report to the Council

Report of: Audit and Government Committee

Date: 30 July 2013

Chairman: Councillor A Watts

1. **AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBER**

RECOMMENDING:

- (1) That an interview panel be appointed to undertake interviews following public advertisement for the vacant co-opted member position on this Committee which will occur with effect from 13 September 2013;**
 - (2) That the Council be asked to appoint at this Council meeting a Panel of 3 Councillors (including the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee) with delegated authority to appoint the preferred candidate following interview;**
 - (3) That the Leaders of the LRA and Liberal Democrats Group each nominate one of their members to serve on the Panel with the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee representing the Conservative Group;**
 - (4) That Mr R Thompson, the other co-opted member of the Committee, be invited to attend the interviews in advisory capacity as a non-voting member; and**
 - (5) That the Council's appreciation of the contribution of Melanie Peddle as co-opted member of the Committee over 6 years be recorded.**
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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 they wish 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 come to an end on 12 September 2013 and she is not seeking a further term. The date for her successor to take up office is therefore 14 September 2013. This will mean that the first Committee meeting for the appointee will be 23 September 2013.
3. In order to fill the vacancy it is also recommended that the Council appoint at this meeting a Panel of three Councillors (one from each of the three political groups) with delegated powers for the Panel to conduct interviews to appoint the preferred candidate.

4. We considered other options regarding the number of Councillors to serve on the Panel. Panels comprising 5 or 7 members enable pro rata membership to be achieved but we see distinct advantages in a smaller Panel. The role of Audit and Governance Committee should be non political and we think this warrants a Panel of three without the pro rata rules being applied. This can be approved subject to no member voting against.
5. We consider that Mr R Thompson, the other co-opted member of the Committee should attend the Panel interviews in a non voting capacity to offer his advice on the appointment. We propose this because he 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. We feel that his input to the process will be valuable.
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. We have asked for the position to be publicised through social media and also through targeted contacts with the business community and voluntary sector as we hope that this may engage with potential applicants.
8. Publicity would also include a press release timed to coincide with the publication of the Forester.
9. We recommend as set out at the commencement of the report and wish to pay a particular tribute to Melanie Peddle's contribution to the work of the Committee as the outgoing co-opted member.