

Report to the Council



Epping Forest District Council

Committee: Audit & Governance

Date: 17 February 2015

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

Chairman: Councillor A. Watts

Recommending:

- (1) That a Panel of three Councillors, to include the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, be appointed with delegated authority to undertake interviews following public advertisement and to appoint the preferred candidate for the vacant co-opted member position on the Audit and Governance Committee;**
 - (2) That pro-rata rules not apply and that, on the nomination of the Leaders of the Liberal Democrat Group and the Loughton Residents Association Group, Councillors K. Adams and B. Jennings be appointed to serve on the Panel with the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee;**
 - (3) That Mr. R. Thompson (co-opted member) be invited to attend the interviews in an advisory, non-voting capacity; and**
 - (4) That appreciation of the contribution of Mr. R. Thompson as a co-opted Member of the Audit and Governance Committee over a six-year period be formally recorded.**
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 Robert Thompson come to an end on 8 February 2015 and he is not seeking a further term.
 3. In order to fill the vacancy, it is recommended that the Council appoint at this meeting a Panel of three Councillors, including the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee and two member nominations of the remaining political groups, with delegated powers for the Panel to conduct interviews to appoint the preferred candidate. Nominations to the Panel have been made as follows:

Liberal Democrat Group - Councillor K. Adams
Loughton Residents Association Group – Councillor B. Jennings
 4. The Leader of the UKIP Group has indicated that the group does not wish to nominate a member for possible membership of the Panel.

5. We have previously considered other options regarding the number of Councillors to serve on the Panel. Panels comprising five or seven members enable pro-rata membership to be achieved, but we see distinct advantages in a smaller Panel, which has worked well in the past for similar recruitment exercises. 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.
6. We consider that Mr Robert Thompson, the retiring 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 is willing to participate in a non-voting capacity to assist the process. We feel that his input to the process will be valuable.
7. We recommend as set out at the commencement of the report and also wish to pay particular tribute to Mr. Thompson's contribution to the work of the Committee as the outgoing co-opted member.