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**REPORT OF HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

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**APPOINTMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT MEMBER TO THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Appendix A to this report is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 12 of Schedule 12A, Part 4 of the Local Government Act 1972

The Chairman has accepted this item as urgent as the outcome of the interview process for the appointment of an Independent Member of the Governance and Audit Committee was not confirmed until after the agenda for the committee meeting had been circulated.

**Reason for this Report**

1. To consider the decision of the Appointment Panel on 24 September 2021 to recommend the appointment of an Independent Member to the Governance and Audit Committee.

**Background**

2. At the Annual meeting on 27 May 2021 Council approved the terms of reference of the Governance and Audit Committee and the establishment and composition of the committee, with 12 Members comprised of 8 Elected Members and 4 Independent Members
3. Following the resignation of Ian Arundale as an independent member of the Audit Committee on 23 March 2021, an Appointment Panel was established to recruit an Independent Member to serve on the Committee in his place.
4. A recruitment exercise was undertaken, and the notification of vacancy was published in local newspapers and on the Council's website. The Council website also provided additional information about the role and the requirement of being an independent member of the committee.
5. The Appointment Panel comprised Gavin McArthur, Deputy Chair of the Committee and Appointment Panel Chair, Chris Lee, Corporate Director Resources and Section 151 Officer, and Paula O'Connor, Chair and Independent Member of the Governance and Audit Committee in Swansea Council.

## Issues

6. The vacancy was advertised on the Council's website, in the South Wales Echo, the Western Mail and Wales Online from 27 August 21. The advertisements closed on 10 September 2021 with two applications being received. Shortlisting took place on 13 September with provisional dates the interview being planned. The recruitment exercise was concluded on the 24 September with the Appointment Panel interviewing the shortlisted candidate.
7. The recommendation of the Appointment Panel is to appoint the candidate identified in **Appendix A**, subject to satisfactory references, agreement of the Governance and Audit Committee and approval by Council, for an initial a 5-year term of office, with the possibility of reappointment for one further 5-year term.
8. The Governance and Audit Committee's recommendation will be included on the amendment sheet for Council which will be published on 30 September 2021.

## Legal Implications

9. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 (section 82) provides that there must be at least one lay member on the Governance and Audit Committee or up to a third of the total membership. The current composition of the Governance and Audit Committee includes four non - councillor 'Independent Members' seats and 8 Councillors. This proportion of Independent Members is one third of the Committee members, which is currently the maximum permitted by law. The Committee is reminded that with effect from May 2022, it will be a requirement for one third of the Committee to be lay members (under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021).
10. The Committee can include no more than one Cabinet member, who may not be the Leader. The Governance and Audit Committee is subject to the political balance rules. Statutory Guidance recommends that all Members of the Committee should display independence of thinking and unbiased attitudes, and must recognise and understand the value of the audit function.
11. Appointments to Committees must be made by full Council, so the recommended appointment is subject to the approval of full Council.

## Financial Implications

12. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Independent Member remuneration payments are to be made in accordance with the rates applicable through the Members' Schedule of Remuneration, and contained within the allocated budget.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

13. The Governance and Audit Committee is recommended to:
  - Consider the decision of the Appointment Panel on 24 September 2021; and

- Recommend to Council the appointment of the Independent Member shown in **Appendix A** to the Governance and Audit Committee, subject to receipt of satisfactory references, for an initial a 5-year term of office, with the possibility of reappointment for one further 5-year term.

**GARY JONES**

**Head of Democratic Services**

27 September 2021.

Background Documents:

Establishment of Standing Committees of The Council 2021-2022 – Annual Meeting of Council dated 27 May 2021

[Correspondence following the meeting](#) – Audit Committee dated 23 March 2021

Appendix A. Candidate Profile – Extract of CV