

COUNCIL:

28 November 2019

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

AUDIT COMMITTEE INDEPENDENT MEMBER - LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST

Reason for this Report

1. For the Council to consider a recommendation from the Audit Committee for one of the Committee's Independent Members to be granted a leave of absence.

Background

2. In accordance with section 82 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, the Audit Committee is required to have at least one independent (lay) member, and no more than one third of the Committee's membership may be independent members.
3. The Audit Committee is currently comprised of eight Councillors (5 Labour, 2 Conservative and 1 Liberal Democrat) and four Independent Lay Members. (At the time of reporting there are two Labour Councillor vacancies on the Committee.) The number of independent members constitutes one third of the total Committee membership, which is the statutory maximum number permitted.
4. One independent member, the Chair, has written to the Council to request a leave of absence for up to one year, due to other work commitments. The request was considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 12th November.

Issues

5. The Audit Committee has carefully considered the request for a leave of absence. The Committee noted, in particular:
 - (i) the member's commitment to his role and assurance of his intention to resume his position within one year, to serve the remainder of his term of office (over three years); and
 - (ii) that a new Chair would need to be elected by the Committee (pursuant to section 83 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011) for the duration of the Chair's leave, if approved.

Legal Implications

6. The Council has power to determine the size and membership of its Audit Committee and make appointments to it, subject to compliance with the statutory provisions set out in Part 6, Chapter 2 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. The recommended leave of absence may be approved by Council pursuant to these powers.
7. Other relevant legal implications are set out in the body of the report.

Financial Implications

8. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, if fewer Co-opted Audit Committee Members were to attend Committee Meetings, associated meeting attendance costs would be lower, in accordance with the rates applicable through the Members' Schedule of Remuneration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

- a) Approves the recommendation of the Audit Committee to grant the Chairperson's request for a leave of absence of up to one year; and
- b) Notes that, subject to approval of recommendation 1, a new Chairperson, for the duration of the leave of absence, is to be elected by the Audit Committee at its next meeting.

GP JONES
HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
22 November 2019

Background papers
Audit Committee report 'Leave of absence request', 12 November 2019