

AUDIT BOARD
20 JULY 2022
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL
25 JULY 2022

**APPOINTMENT OF NON-VOTING INDEPENDENT MEMBER TO THE
AUDIT BOARD**

1. Summary

1.1 To update on and progress the appointment of a non-voting Independent Member to the Audit Board.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS TO AUDIT BOARD

2.1 That the outcome of the application process to appoint Independent Members to the Board, as set out in the body of the report, be noted.

2.2 That the appointment of Mo Chughtai, as a non-voting Independent Member of the Board, be recommended to the General Assembly of the Council.

3. RECOMMENDATION TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL

3.1 That Mo Chungtai be appointed as a non-voting Independent Member of the Audit Board.

4. Background and Discussion

3.1. On 26 January 2022 [Min 35], the Audit Board approved a recruitment exercise for up to two non-voting Independent Members. This was in line with CIPFA guidance and best practice in order to provide additional independent expertise and specialist knowledge to the Board, in the exercise of its functions.

3.2. Whilst current guidance requires the appointment of non-voting Independent Members to be considered as good practice, it was announced in June 2022, that the Government proposes to make such roles mandatory as part of the new system for regulating audit, following the Redman Review recommendations.

3.3. The role of Independent Member was advertised jointly with Sevenoaks District Council and interviews were held with a joint Panel consisting of Members and officers from each Council.

3.4. The Panel recommended one applicant, Mo Chungtai, for appointment as a non-voting Independent Member to the Dartford Audit Board. Mo Chungtai's experience and interest in the Dartford area should serve the Board well. In addition, he is also serving as an Independent Member for Sevenoaks District Council, which should provide added synergy. Mo Chungtai has provisionally accepted the role.

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- 3.5. The Board is invited to recommend Mo Chungtai's appointment as a non-voting Independent Member of the Board, to the GAC.
- 3.6. The GAC is recommended to endorse the appointment of Mo Chungtai as a non-voting member of the Audit Board.

4. Relationship to the Corporate Plan

Council Performing Strongly theme: The Audit Board is established further to the Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000 and its purpose is to give assurance to the Council and the public about the governance, financial reporting and performance of the Council. The appointment of a non-voting Independent Member to the Board will assist and promote good governance and scrutiny by the Board.

5. Financial, legal, staffing and other implications and risk assessments

Financial Implications	An allowance of £800 per annum, plus expenses, will be paid for the role, which can be met within the members allowance budget.
Legal Implications	<p>Audit committees in local authorities are necessary to satisfy the wider requirements for sound financial management and internal control included in the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 and Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.</p> <p>The Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police, 2018 Edition' supports the Audit Board by setting out CIPFA's guidance on the function and operation of audit committees and provides guidance around independent members of audit committees</p>
Public Sector Equality Duty	<p>The Council is responsible for running processes that enable it to make appointments in a way that complies with the Equality Act 2010, which prohibits discrimination, harassment and other unlawful conduct because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, where an individual applies for a public appointment.</p> <p>The Council's public appointments are governed by the principle of appointment on merit, with a</p>

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	choice of high quality candidates, drawn from a strong, diverse field, whose skills, experiences and qualities have been judged to meet the needs of the Council.
Climate Impact Assessment	None
Staffing Implications	None
Administrative Implications	None
Risk Assessment	This initiative should augment the Audit Board's independence, provide additional expertise, and an opportunity for the community to play an enhanced role in the governance of the Council.

6. Details of Exempt Information Category

Not applicable

7. Appendices

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

<u>Documents consulted</u>	<u>Date / File Ref</u>	<u>Report Author</u>	<u>Section and Directorate</u>	<u>Exempt Information Category</u>
Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police, 2018 Edition	July 2022	Tim Sams 343148	Financial Services/ Corporate Services	N/A