

Committee: **Special Council**

Date of Meeting: **17th December, 2020**

Report Subject: **Audit Committee Lay Member Appointment**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor N. Daniels, Leader / Executive Member Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden – Chief Officer Resources**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	Yes for information	Yes					Yes	Audit Committee

1.	Purpose of the Report
1.1	The purpose of the report is to seek Council approval for the appointment of two new lay members to the Blaenau Gwent Audit Committee.
2.	Scope and Background
2.1	In order to comply with legislative requirements, Council is required to approve all new appointments to the Audit Committee.
2.2	The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires that at least one member of its Audit Committee is a lay Member (that is not a member of the local authority).
2.3	In October 2020, the serving Lay Member (and Chair of the Audit Committee), namely Mr P Williams, served notice of his intention to step down from the role. Therefore, the vacancy was advertised in anticipation of this departure to ensure that it was filled in time for further meetings of the Audit Committee in January 2021 onwards. Interviews for this vacancy were held on 8 th December 2020
2.4	Two candidates were interviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr T. Edwards • Mr. M. Veale The selection panel, considered that both applicants met the criteria for selection, having complementary experience and skill sets. Given this the selection panel recommend that both candidates be appointed as Lay Members to the Audit Committee.

2.5	It is proposed that the term of office will initially be until the Local Government elections in May 2022 and reviewed at that time.
3.	Options for Recommendation
3.1	<p>Option 1: (Preferred option) Approve the appointment of both candidates outlined above to the Audit Committee.</p> <p>Option 2: Do not appoint and re-advertise.</p>
4.	<p>Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan</p> <p>Establishment and maintenance of an Audit Committee is a statutory responsibility.</p>
5.	<p>Implications and risks against Each Option</p> <p>Option 1 is preferred as the Council is then taking positive steps to comply with legislative requirements. This would also mitigate against any risk of a lay member leaving the committee resulting in further meetings not taking place until a replacement is appointed.</p> <p>Option 2 would mean that the Council is non-compliant with current legislation and no meeting of the Audit Committee can take place until further steps are taken to recruit.</p> <p>The current daily fees for Audit Committee members, as determined by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales are: Ordinary Members - £198 (4 hours & over), £99 (up to 4 hours) Chair - £256 (4 hours & over), £128 (up to 4 hours)</p>
5.3	<p>Legal The appointment aims to prevent the risk of non-compliance with statutory obligations. The appointment will ensure the Council complies with statutory requirements and guidance on Audit Committee membership.</p>
5.4	<p>Human Resources N/A</p>
6.	Supporting Evidence
6.1	<p>Performance Information and Data The changes are necessary to maintain an effective Audit Committee.</p>
6.2	<p>Expected outcome for the public An effective Audit Committee that conforms with the requirements of the appropriate legislation and promotes confidence in effective democracy and accountability.</p>

6.3	<i>Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)</i> The Audit Committee supports involvement as it provides an opportunity for challenge.
6.4	<i>Thinking for the long term (forward planning)</i> This will ensure the Council meets its current statutory obligations and plans for the longer term, providing stakeholders with assurance around its governance arrangements
6.5	<i>Preventative focus</i> The appointment will assist to prevent the risk of operating ultra vires (outside the law).
6.6	<i>Collaboration / partnership working</i> N/A
6.7	<i>Integration(across service areas)</i> N/A
6.8	<i>EqIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)</i> N/A
7.	Monitoring Arrangements The Audit Committee is kept under review to ensure it complies with any changes in legislation and codes of practice. Any further amendments will be put before full Council for formal approval.
	Background Documents /Electronic Links