

This Report will be made public on 12 July 2023

Report Number **AuG/23/02**

To: Audit and Governance Committee
Date: 20 July 2023
Status: Non – executive decision
Responsible Officer: Lydia Morrison, Interim S151 Officer and Director of Corporate Services

SUBJECT: EXTENSION OF TERM OF OFFICE OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

SUMMARY: In December 2019, Full Council agreed to the recommendations of the Audit and Governance Committee to appoint an Independent member to the Audit and Governance Committee. It had been envisaged the appointment would run until May 2023. However, due to the pandemic, the recruitment exercise was delayed, and an appointment was not made until November 2020. The Committee is therefore asked to recommend to Full Council that Andy Vanburen's term be extended until November 2024. This also assists in maintaining continuity of committee membership where membership has been affected by the electoral cycle.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note report AuG/23/02.
2. To recommend to Full Council that the appointment of Andy Vanburen be extended to November 2024.
3. That delegated authority be given to the Interim S151 Officer and Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee to draw up a person specification and to commence the recruitment process in the summer of 2024.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On 4 December 2019, the Audit and Governance Committee considered report AuG/19/14 which set out CIPFA's Publication - Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police, 2018 Edition.
- 1.2 The publication set out its guidance on the function and operation of audit committees in local authorities and police bodies and represents CIPFA's view of best practice for audit committees in local authorities throughout the UK and recommended the inclusion of an independent member on the Committee. Good practice shows that co-option of independent members is beneficial to the audit committee. The injection of an external view can often bring a new approach to committee discussions. It also brings additional knowledge and expertise to the committee and reinforces the political neutrality and independence of the committee.
- 1.3 Following consideration of the report, the Audit and Governance Committee recommended to Council that an independent Member be appointed to the Committee.
- 1.4 On 18 December 2019, Full Council considered report A/19/20 and resolved that an independent member be appointed to the Audit and Governance Committee.
- 1.5 A recruitment exercise was then undertaken, and at a Special meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee, held on 24 November 2020, Andy Vanburen was appointed as the Independent Member of the Committee.
- 1.6 The original report to the Committee had stated that it was envisaged that the appointment would be until the end of the current council (May 2023). However, due to the pandemic, there were delays in the recruitment process, and a year had passed before the appointment of Andy Vanburen was made.
- 1.7 It is therefore recommended that Andy Vanburen's appointment be extended to 23 November 2024. Prior to the expiry of the term of office a recruitment exercise will be undertaken. The extension of Andy Vanburen's term will also assist in maintaining continuity of committee membership where membership has been affected by the electoral cycle.
- 1.8 Delegated authority is sought for the Interim S151 Officer and Director of Corporate Services to draw up a person specification and to commence the recruitment process. A further report will be brought back to the Committee in Autumn 2024 with recommendations on persons to be invited for interview with a view to interviews being conducted shortly thereafter.

2. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 2.1 There are no significant risk management issues to consider as part of this report other than those identified within the report.

3. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

3.1 Legal Officer's Comments (AK)

The general power in section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 to appoint a Committee includes the power to appoint persons to that committee who are not members of the Council. However, by virtue of section 13 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 co-opted members are treated as non-voting members unless the committee is acting in an advisory capacity.

3.2 Finance Officer's Comments (TM)

There are no immediate financial implications arising out of this report.

3.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications (TM)

There are no implications arising out of this report.

4. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting

Lydia Morrison, Interim S151 Officer and Director of Corporate Services
Email: lydia.morrison@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

CIPFA's Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police 2018 Edition