

27TH SEPTEMBER, 2021

REPORT NO. ED2101

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON (AUDIT)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Report sets out the outcome of the process to appoint an Independent Person (Audit) to the Committee, and recommends that the Council be asked to confirm the appointment of Gwilym Davies, known as Tom Davies, as an Independent Member of the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards (CGAS) Committee. The appointment follows a public advertisement, written application, and interview panel which comprised the Chairman of the CGAS Committee, the Chief Executive, and Executive Director/Monitoring Officer.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In April 2021, the Council agreed changes to help ensure the future effectiveness of the Committee with a stronger focus on its corporate governance role providing oversight and public confidence in Council activities. A key proposal was the co-option of Independent Member(s) to the Committee with experience in corporate governance. Good practice shows that for committees with audit responsibilities, the co-option of independent members with technical knowledge and expertise can be beneficial, as the addition of an external and independent view can help the process of in-depth questioning and committee discussion.
- 2.2 The Committee agreed a role description for the Independent Person (copy attached at Appendix 1), together with the following terms which would apply to the role:
- A fixed term of three years, with provision for early termination or extension of the appointment
 - An allowance equal to the statutory co-optee allowance as set out in the Members Allowances Scheme (currently £523 per year)
 - Expectation to follow the same code of conduct as elected Members and with a Register of Interests.

3. **PROCESS**

- 3.1 A public advertisement and application pack for the role was placed on the Council's website and Jobs Go Public website during May 2021. Three applicants submitted written applications, who were invited to a preliminary and informal discussion with the Monitoring Officer and Service Manager - Democracy. Following this, two applicants were invited to a formal interview with the Chairman of the CGAS Committee, Chief Executive, and Executive Director who is also the Council's Monitoring Officer.
- 3.2 The Interview Panel selected Mr. Tom Davies as the preferred candidate for the role, and he has confirmed his interest to accept the position.

Mr Tom Davies

- 3.3 Tom Davies' area of expertise is in audit and risk management, with Chartered Internal Auditor status (CMIIA), with an MSc in Internal Auditing and Management. He began his career performing audits in the private sector, and then moved into the public sector, including twenty years' experience in local government. His recent work has involved the development of Risk Management systems, and with depth of experience on the Local Code of Corporate Governance and Annual Governance Statements. He has previous Board Member experience on the British Transport Police Independent Advisory Network. Mr Davies has no connection past or present with anyone who has served on Rushmoor Borough Council.

4. **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 The Independent Person (Audit) will be a non-voting Member of the CGAS Committee, attending meetings in an advisory/consultative manner on all corporate governance and audit matters before the committee, and on the basis of the role description and terms set out in Para. 2 above.
- 4.2 **It is RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL** that Mr Gwilym Davies (known as Tom Davies), be confirmed as an Independent Person (Audit) on the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee for a three-year term.

IAN HARRISON

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

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INDEPENDENT PERSON (AUDIT) - ROLE DESCRIPTION

Responsible to: Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Internal Audit Manager

Liaison with: Elected Members of the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee, Section 151 Officer, (Internal) Audit Manager any other relevant Members and officers and the External Auditors of Rushmoor Borough Council.

Responsibilities

1. To engage fully in collective consideration of all corporate governance and audit matters before the Committee, taking into account a full range of relevant factors, including legislation and supporting regulation (e.g. the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015), professional guidance (e.g. that issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) or the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA)), and the advice of the Council's Section 151 Officer and Audit Manager.
2. To participate fully in the discharge of all audit functions, as set out in the Committee's terms of reference and the constitution.
3. To promote the concept of proportionate, effective risk management and internal control throughout the organisation; and to champion the work of Internal Audit, External Audit and Risk Management.
4. To participate in periodic review of the overall effectiveness of the committee with regards to audit matters, and of its terms of reference.

Audit Independent Person – Skills and Competencies

1. Demonstrates up-to-date knowledge, skill and a depth of experience in the fields of audit, accounting, risk management, corporate governance, and performance management.
2. Operates consistently and without bias.
3. Is an effective role model; supports appropriate behaviours and challenges opinions and advice where appropriate, separating major issues from minor ones.
4. Contributes proactive, proportionate and independent thought, and also collaboration with officers to temper the opinions of Committee Members.
5. Works sensitively with people inside and outside the Committee / Council.
6. Listens to and balances advice.

Must have no personal, legal or contractual relationship with the Council (including employees or Members or former staff), or any other relationship/activity which might represent a conflict of interest.