



Report of:	Meeting	Date
Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council and Clare James, Corporate Director Resources	Council	14 September 2023

Appointment of an Independent Person to the Audit and Standards Committee

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1** To seek approval to appoint an independent person to the Audit and Standards Committee.

2. Corporate priorities

- 2.1** An effective process for ensuring that the council has robust governance arrangements in place.
- 2.2** Independent members who have suitable abilities and expertise which enhance those of the elected members and boost the Audit and Standards Committee's effectiveness.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1** That Mr Paul M. Taylor be appointed as a co-opted independent member onto the Audit and Standards Committee.

4. Background

- 4.1** In October 2022, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) updated their Audit Committees: Practical Guidance For Local Authorities And Police (2022 edition). It included additional guidance and resources to support audit committee members, and those working with and supporting the committee's development. This confirmed CIPFA's recommendation that each authority's Audit Committee should include at least two co-opted Independent Members to provide appropriate technical expertise. Whilst not a requirement, it is considered best practice and approval was sought to introduce the arrangement at Wyre.

- 4.2** At the Annual Council meeting held on 18 May 2023, the Appointments to Committees, Panels and Groups 2023/24 report proposed that two external co-opted Independent Members be appointed to the Audit and Standards Committee. This report further confirms the appointment to this position. The Independent Person is a non-councillor with experience in the area of audit, risk management and governance. The Independent Member will not be able to vote in the same way as councillors; instead, they will act as an advisory consultant.
- 4.3** An advert seeking to appoint two Independent Members was placed on Jobs Go Public, Facebook and LinkedIn. It required all interested parties to submit an application to the council demonstrating how they met the essential and desirable criteria set out in the job description and person specification. The appointment was not open to any person who had been an Elected Member, Parish Councillor or officer of Wyre Council within the last five years or a person who is a relative or close friend of an Elected Member or Officer of Wyre Council.
- 4.4** The council received an early expression of interest from one individual. However they were prevented from applying owing to the exclusion criteria in 4.3. One eligible application was received though, and following an interview with the Corporate Director Resources (S151 Officer) and the Head of Governance and Business Support, it was agreed that the candidate met the essential criteria and would be an asset to the committee.
- 4.5** Mr Paul M. Taylor is a qualified internal auditor (CFIIA) and former Chief Internal Auditor for Blackpool Council. For his services to the profession, he was granted Fellowship of the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors. Mr Taylor had previously served on the Veolia Environmental Trust as a volunteer regional panel member, later becoming the chair of the local regional panel and a trustee on the trust's board. He has also served as a school governor, including chairing finance committees and governing bodies, a member and lay chair of a parochial church council, chair of a heritage centre project group, a trustee of a disability charity and a trustee of the British Sjögren's Syndrome Association and chair of the charity's audit, risk and finance committee.
- 4.6** A decision was made to recommend to Council that Mr Paul M. Taylor, who has extensive local government and senior leadership experience and a background in internal audit, be appointed to the Audit and Standards Committee.

5. Key issues and proposals

- 5.1** Following the recruitment process, Mr Paul M. Taylor, who meets the required criteria, has indicated that he is willing to become a co-opted Independent Member of the committee.

5.2 The advert for the second appointment will remain active until a second Independent Member can be appointed, at which time, a new report will be submitted to the Council to confirm this additional appointment.

6. Alternative options considered and rejected

6.1 No alternative options were considered.

Financial, Legal and Climate Change implications	
Finance	None arising directly from this report. The role is voluntary and any expenses claimed will be met from existing budgets.
Legal	None arising from this report.
Climate Change	None arising from this report.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

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List of background papers:

name of document	date	where available for inspection

List of appendices

None.