

Audit & Governance Committee
25 September 2026
Public Questions and Responses

From: Mr Graham Layton

"The last co-opted member of the Audit & Governance Committee formally stepped down at the November 2025 meeting; 10 months ago.

At the last meeting the Council confirmed its commitment to comply with the CIPFA guidance regarding the appointment of co-opted members to assist the Audit & Governance Committee.

Indeed, the Council noted that the appointment of co-opted members is seen as being so important that it will become a statutory requirement in the very near future.

As at 20 September the Council has not advertised for co-opted members for the Committee to at least start the recruitment process.

Given that there will be no change in the role requirements ahead of the role becoming a statutory requirement; what has stopped the Council from starting the recruitment process for a replacement ?

Is it fear that a co-opted member will assist elected members in effective challenge of the Council ?

Why is the Committee itself not pressing the Council to address this ?"

Response:

The following response is now approved.

Thank you for your question.

The Council remains committed to the principles set out in CIPFA guidance regarding independent membership of Audit Committees and continues to recognise the value that independent members can bring through additional expertise, objective challenge and support for effective governance, audit and risk oversight.

As reported previously, following the resignation of the former independent member, the Council confirmed its intention to recruit a replacement and to ensure that its arrangements remain aligned with recognised good practice and forthcoming statutory requirements.

The delay in commencing recruitment has not arisen from any reluctance to appoint an independent member or from any concern that such an appointment would increase scrutiny or challenge. On the contrary, the Council welcomes constructive challenge as an essential component of strong governance. Independent members provide an important contribution to the effectiveness of Audit and Governance Committees, and the Council fully supports that role.

The recruitment process has taken longer than anticipated while a number of practical considerations have been reviewed, including the future statutory requirements, the role specification, support arrangements and the most appropriate recruitment approach to attract candidates with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience. The Council wishes to ensure that any recruitment exercise is robust and capable of securing suitably qualified applicants who can make a meaningful contribution to the Committee's work.

The Audit and Governance Committee itself does not have responsibility for undertaking recruitment exercises. The Committee has, however, previously expressed support for independent membership and will continue to be kept informed of progress. Responsibility for progressing recruitment and making the necessary arrangements rests with the Council through its established governance and appointment processes.

The Council continues to support the appointment of an independent member and is working towards progressing recruitment so that its governance arrangements remain consistent with both recognised good practice and forthcoming legislative requirements.