

Independent Member – Job Description *DRAFT*

What is an Independent Member?

The Audit Committee is an essential part of the Council's governance to ensure that its decision-making, administrative and compliance processes are transparent, accountable, and open.

Whilst Members of the Committee bring democratic accountability and have a range of skills and knowledge, the intention is that an Independent Member (co-optee) will be able to bring different skills and perspective.

Whilst the Independent Member will have the right to participate in the discussion at meetings, the Independent Member will not have the right to vote.

What are the tasks associated with the role?

- To read papers and reports in preparation for meetings and to attend Audit Committee meetings as required, the Committee normally meets five times a year, though additional meetings may be scheduled as required. Meetings take place in the evening in person in Council offices. Attendance is in person and remote attendance is not currently permitted.
- To attend Training events to carry out those duties described.
- To actively promote good governance, risk management and control in the delivery of the Council's functions.
- To be an Independent source of support for the Council's Audit Committee providing independent challenge and scrutiny in response to reports presented to the Committee.

Skills and Knowledge

We are looking for an Independent Member who has specific knowledge in relating to financial management, accounting, and governance. You may be (or have been) a member of a professional accounting body, have an academic finance qualification or have held a senior management post with responsibilities for finance in a large organisation.

- A good understanding of governance, risk management and control.
- Integrity, objectivity, discretion, and ability to make decisions.
- An ability to analyse complex information, question, probe and seek clarification to come to an independent and unbiased view.
- Experience of working in or with large, complex organisations with an understanding of the political environment that local authorities operate within.

- Good interpersonal skills.
- Practical experience of operating in a financial environment ideally within the public sector and understands financial statements.
- Practical management experience in a governance capacity in a large organisation.
- Experience of undertaking representational duties.
- Experience of operating in a technical area e.g. audit, accountancy, risk management, general organisational management, legal.
- Experience of audit committee work or representation within the private or public sectors.
- Understanding of the role of audit committees in local government / public sector.
- Knowledge and understanding of local government services and their financing.
- Recognise the importance of good governance and the responsibilities placed on those charged with governance.
- Appreciation of the importance of public accountability and transparency.
- Understands the role and purpose on internal and external audit.
- Understands the importance and benefits of good risk management.
- Ability to think strategically and understand the wider perspective and implications of the work of the Council and its partners.
- Effective communication, questioning and interpersonal skills, particularly orally.
- Ability to provide constructive challenge.

The following persons cannot be an Independent Member

- An Independent Member must not be, or have been during the last 5 years, a Councillor or officer (or the spouse of civil partner of a Councillor or officer) of Medway Council, or any other local authority.
- An Independent Member must not be a relative or close friend of a Councillor or officer of the Council.
- An Independent Member must not be engaged in any party-political activity.

- An Independent Member must not have any criminal convictions.
- An Independent Member must not have any significant business dealings with the Council.
- An Independent Member must not be otherwise disqualified for election as a councillor under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Members' Code of Conduct

An Independent Member will be required to comply with the Medway Council Members' Code of Conduct.