

# Council

23 February 2023



<b>Title</b>	<b>Appointment of an Independent Member of Audit Committee</b>
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report Author</b>	Farida Hussain, Group Head Corporate Governance
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Exempt</b>	No
<b>Exemption Reason</b>	Not applicable
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	All
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Council is asked to appoint:</b>  <b>Philip Briggs as the independent member of the Audit Committee</b>
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	As part of the move to the committee system of governance, the Council resolved to have an independent member of the Audit Committee.

## 1. Key issues

- 1.1 The revised terms of reference for the Audit Committee were approved by the Council on the 15 July 2021 and this reflected that there would be one independent member on that committee.
- 1.2 In order to affect the decision of the Council to appoint an independent member to the Audit Committee, the role was advertised and was subject to a recruitment process. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee were invited to conduct interviews with applicants. As a result of the recruitment process, a suitable recommendation was made to the Appointments Committee which has in turn considered that recommendation and concluded unanimously that it supported recommending the preferred candidate. Council is now asked to consider the recommendation by the Appointments Committee.

## 2. Recruitment Process

- 2.1 A recruitment pack was produced in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee. The pack included a person specification stating the skills, knowledge and other requirements for the role which were:

(a) **Qualifications and Experience**

You will be a person who has experience of working in a medium / large organisation at a senior level or other experience which would give similar benefits.

Financial management experience (accountancy, audit or management of a large budget) would be advantageous.

(b) **Skills**

You will have:

- an ability to understand complex issues and the importance of accountability and probity in public life
- an ability to analyse and question written and verbal reports on audit and risk management activities
- an understanding of the need for independence of audit from daily management responsibilities
- an ability to demonstrate integrity and discretion
- effective interpersonal skills
- be able to maintain strictest confidentiality of sensitive information

(c) **Knowledge**

All members of the Audit Committee should have, or should acquire as soon as possible after appointment:

- An understanding of the objectives and key activities of the Council and current major initiative and significant issues for the Council
- An understanding of the Council's structures and responsibilities, including key relationships with partners, businesses and organisations
- An understanding of the organisation's culture
- An understanding of any relevant legislation or other rules governing the organisation
- An understanding of corporate governance arrangements in place across the Council
- An understanding of the governance environment generally
- An understanding of risk management

(d) **Other**

You must:

- Have local connections, and either reside in the Borough, carry out the main part of your work in the Borough or have other recognisable ties to the area
- Agree to abide by the provisions of the Code of Conduct while serving on the Committee

You must not:

- Be a councillor or officer of the Council or have been so in the preceding five years prior to appointment
- Be related to, or a close friend of, any councillor or officer of Spelthorne Borough Council.

- Have been convicted of any offence. The Council has the right to DBS check any independent committee members.
- Be an undischarged bankrupt
- Have significant business dealings with the Council
- Have a formal connection with any political group
- Have a proven history of vexatious and/or frivolous complaints against Spelthorne Borough Council
- Be the holder of a significant office in an organisation being grant aided/supported by Spelthorne Borough Council

- 2.2 The role was advertised on the Council's website and on all social media channels.
- 2.3 There was a positive response to the advertisement with five applications for the role being received. On assessment of the applications against the personal specification, three candidates were shortlisted for interview.
- 2.4 Prior to interview one candidate advised that they were not able to proceed with the application. Therefore, the Panel proceeded with the interview with the two remaining candidates.
- 2.5 The interviews were undertaken by the Chair of the Audit Committee and assisted by the Deputy Chief Executive (Terry Collier), the Internal Audit Manager (Punita Talwar), and the Group Head Corporate Governance (Farida Hussain).
- 2.6 Through the interview process Philip Briggs demonstrated that he fully met all the requirements of the person specification and would bring appropriate expertise to the committee. The interview panel and the Appointments Committee were unanimous in their decision on the recommendation to the Council.

### **3. Recommendation for appointment**

- 3.1 It is recommended by the Appointments Committee that the Council appoint Philip Briggs as the independent member of Audit Committee.
- 3.2 Philip Briggs is a chartered accountant and a trained auditor, who has worked within the banking and finance sector for his whole career. He has sat on board of directors and chaired a relevant sub-committee of that board and has experience of briefing the trustees of many Pension Committees on complex financial matters.

### **4. Next steps**

- 4.1 If the Council are minded to approve the appointment then Philip Briggs would with immediate effect be a member of that Committee.

**Background papers: There are none.**

**Appendices: There are none**