



Audit and Governance Committee		Agenda Item
7th July 2023		11
Title:	Co-option of independent members	
Report of:	Edwina Adefehinti	
Lead Member:	Edna Murphy (Lead Member for Governance)	
Public Report:	Yes	
Key Decision:	No	
Voting Arrangements:	Simple majority	

Recommendations:

A	Review the suggested update to the Combined Authority constitution and to provide recommendations to the Board to adopt the proposed changes as revisions to the Constitution, so that a co-opted independent member and substitute from constituent authorities can be appointed.
B	To recommend to the Combined Authority Board to delegate the recruitment, selection and appointment of an independent co-opted member(s) to the Audit and Governance Committee and that the arrangements for the selection of such members be delegated by the Audit & Governance Committee to the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee in consultation with the Monitoring officer.
C	Agree that the role of any independent co-opted member(s) from a constituent authority is not remunerated but note that they will receive expenses in line with the authority's current expenses policy, and note that if the Committee decides to co-opt an independent member from outside a constituent council through an open advertisement in the future then such a role would be subject to a review of potential remuneration by the Independent Remuneration Panel.
D	Approve the proposed process attached as Appendix 1

Strategic Objective(s):

The proposals within this report fit under the following strategic objective(s):

5	Achieving Best Value and High Performance
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1. Purpose

1.1	The purpose of the report is to request that the Audit and Governance Committee consider and approve the draft wording contained in Paragraph 2.2 to be inserted in the constitution and to make recommendations to the Combined Authority Board to adopt the proposed amendments to the constitution.
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2. Proposal

2.1	To include additional wording in the constitution that codifies the power of the Audit & Governance committee to co-opt independent members and to agree the process for recruiting an appointing co-optees.
2.2	<p>The addition wording is below :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A co-opted independent member(which may include independent Councillors of constituent authorities) is a committee member who does not represent any political party or constituent authority for the purposes of the Audit and Governance committee but recruited to join the committee. • The role description of an independent member of Audit Committee is the same as for an elected member with the only substantial difference being around decision making responsibilities. An independent member cannot vote so will not be able to take part in the decision although they can actively contribute to the discussions leading up to the vote. The objective of including such members is to increase the knowledge and experience base of the committee, reinforcing its independence. • The appointed independent co-opted member will not have voting rights. Therefore, their involvement on the Committee will be in a consultative manner, with their views being taken into account by voting members of the Committee. • The Audit and Governance committee has authority to determine the process for recruiting and appointing a co-optee and substitute.

3. Background

3.1	On 9 th June, this committee resolved to co-opt an independent member (and substitute) from a Constituent Council. The co-opted member would not be given voting rights, the co-option of an independent member, authority may be delegated from the Combined Authority Board to the Committee to appoint a co-optee. The co-option would be for the municipal year 2023/24.
3.2	The co-opted independent member will be expected to provide advice and bring valuable experience and knowledge to the Committee in discharging its function

4. Appendices

4.1	Appendix 1 – Proposed Process
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5. Implications

Financial Implications

5.1	No financial implication presently but there may be financial implication on the appointment of the member(s)
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Legal Implications	
6.1	The Combined Authority is obliged to adopt and maintain a constitution and standing orders.
6.2	The purpose of this Committee is to give assurance as to the governance and sound financial management of the Council. This will likely be strengthened by including members who are independent from the Combined authority Board and scrutiny functions and who are suitably qualified with experience in the area of governance, audit, finance, regulation and compliance or risk management to provide specialist knowledge and insight.
Public Health Implications	
7.1	None directly
Environmental & Climate Change Implications	
8.1	None Directly
Other Significant Implications	
9.1	None Directly
Background Papers	
10.1	None