

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 24 February 2022
Report Subject	Appointing Lay Members of the Governance and Audit Committee
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires the Council to ensure that 1/3 of members on the Governance and Audit Committee are Lay Members. The Committee currently has 2 such members and has tried to recruit one further Lay Member, so far without success. It is advertising again at present.

The term of office for one of the existing Lay Members expires in May 2022, having already served 5 years. The Lay Member is willing to serve for a second term if the Council is willing to re-appoint her.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Council notes the update on the current recruitment process.
2	That Council reappoints the Lay Member for another 12 months.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE APPOINTMENT OF LAY MEMBERS
1.01	The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires the Council to ensure that, with effect from May 2022, 1/3 of the members of the Governance and Audit Committee are Lay Members. The Committee only contains 2 Lay Members at present. The Council has therefore been recruiting for a further Lay Member.

1.02	All Councils in Wales are subject to the same duty and so there has been national recruitment exercise with the assistance of the WLGA. The Council has so far held one round of interviews. The Panel did not wish to recommend any candidate for appointment. A further round of advertising is underway at present (closing date 28 February 2022). If the recruitment panel wishes to recommend any candidate for appointment, its report will be brought, after the elections, to the Annual Meeting in May.
1.03	One of the existing Lay Members, Sally Ellis, was appointed by the Council in May 2017 for a period of 5 years. Her term of office therefore expires in May 2022. She has been a diligent and active member of the Committee. She is willing to serve again if the Council is willing to reappoint her.
1.04	At least some Councillors will be newly elected to the County Council in May. In order to allow Councillors time to “settle in” and time for mature consideration of the skills mix on the Committee, it is suggested that Sally Ellis should be re-appointed for 12 months. This will also have the benefit of staggering the retirement dates of Lay Members so that the Council does not in future lose all experienced Lay Members in one go.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Each recruitment exercise costs around (£3,500 – £4,000) and requires support from both Councillors (typically a panel of 5) and officers. However, it is the optimum manner to openly and transparently appoint to vacancies.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	The Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The key risks are that the Council does not recruit to the third position and that it loses the existing experienced Lay Member. Should the Committee not have sufficient Lay Members then its acts/decisions will be invalid (section 82(6) Local Government Measure 2011). The Council has advertised widely as a result.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None</p> <p>Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer Governance Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Lay Member – is defined by the Local Government Measure 2011 as a person who is not a member of the Council i.e. not already an elected Councillor.</p> <p>WLGA – the representative body for all County and County Borough Councils in Wales. As well as representative role it also co-ordinates activity especially where all councils need to undertake a common task (e.g. recruiting Lay Members).</p>