



INFORMATION PACK FOR INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE AND INDEPENDENT PERSON FOR STANDARDS

This pack provides information for candidates regarding the appointment of Independent Members of the Audit Committee and an Independent Person for Standards for Islington Council, including information on how to apply.

Please note that applications need to be received no later than 5 pm on Monday 7th September 2020.

Interviews are due to take place in September 2020 and will be held virtually, via Zoom

Audit Committee

Composition

The Audit Committee is composed of four councillors and two independent members.

Terms of Reference

The Audit Committee shall have responsibility for audit and governance matters and for other non-Executive matters specified under the relevant legislation, save for those that are reserved to Council or another decision-making body under the council's Constitution.

Audit Committee (Advisory) Functions

To consider the following matters and to make recommendations concerning them to the relevant Council bodies or to officers:

1. The Head of Internal Audit's annual report and opinion and the level of assurance internal audit activity can give over the Council's corporate governance arrangements;
2. The external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports and the report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts;
3. Reports dealing with the management, performance and value for money of the providers of internal and external audit services;
4. A report from internal audit on agreed recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale;
5. The appointment of the Council's external auditor;
6. Work to be commissioned from internal and external audit;
7. Specific internal and external audit reports as requested;
8. The contract procedure rules and financial regulations in the Council's constitution and the Council's compliance with its own and other published standards and controls;
9. Any issue referred to it by the Council, Executive, Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee or the Chief Executive;

10. The Council's arrangements for corporate governance and risk management and recommend necessary actions to ensure compliance with best practice;
11. The production and content of the authority's Annual Governance Statement;
12. The annual report from the Monitoring Officer concerning standards of member conduct, which shall include a summary of complaints received under the Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure and their outcome.
13. Any report on any matter relevant to the advisory functions of the Committee which the Committee may request from the Corporate Director of Resources or other proper officer.

Audit Committee Decision-Making Functions

Audit related matters

- a. To review and agree the annual statement of accounts, including considering whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the council.
- b. To adopt the authority's Annual Governance Statement.
- c. To agree annually the amount calculated by the Council as its tax base for the whole area of the borough, any tax base applying as special levies, and other matters associated with the tax base.

General Matters

- d. To appoint a Personnel Sub-Committee, including approval of its terms of reference and membership. Members of the committee will be the Leader of the Council, the Executive Member with responsibility for Human Resources, and three ordinary member positions, one of whom will be appointed as Chair by the Audit Committee. All other Executive Members will be appointed to act as substitutes for the Committee, with the relevant Executive Member joining the Committee depending on the appointment being made. There will also be 5 ordinary member substitutes, one of whom will be the Chair of Audit Committee.
- e. To appoint a Pensions Sub-Committee.

- f. To appoint such other sub-committees or other bodies, including their membership and terms of reference, as the Committee deems from time to time appropriate.
- g. To grant exemptions under section 3 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 from political restriction to holders of posts under the Council and to give directions as to inclusion of specified posts in the list maintained by the Council under section 2(2) of that Act.
- h. To make appointments between council meetings to those outside bodies and panels appointed to by the Council under Part 3 paragraph 7.2.
- i. To determine matters relating to the organisation and conduct of elections, including the following:
 - (i) division of the constituency into polling districts;
 - (ii) division of the borough into polling districts.
- j. To regulate matters affecting members, including remuneration, expenditure and training and to promote high standards of conduct amongst members.
- k. To recommend to Council the introduction, amendment or revocation of byelaws.
- l. To take decisions on any matter within the terms of reference of any of its sub-committees where the proper officer considers that it is necessary and reasonable to do so.
- m. All other non-Executive matters specified under the relevant legislation save for those which are delegated to officers (unless the relevant Corporate Director refers the matter to the committee) or are reserved to the Council under paragraph 1 of Part 3 of this Constitution or to the Licensing Committee or Licensing Regulatory Committee and Planning committees.

Job Description – Independent Members of the Audit Committee

The role

To be an independent member of the Audit Committee, providing external challenge, support and advice.

Accountability

To the council through the Chair of the Audit Committee.

Responsibilities

- To receive and consider reports to the Audit Committee from internal and external auditors and other council officers.
- To ensure the Chair of the Audit Committee, the Chief Executive and the Corporate Director of Resources (the council's chief finance officer) are aware of the significance of issues raised in the Audit or by its members.
- To obtain and maintain appropriate understanding of the organisation which is vital to the Audit Committee considerations.
- To provide support and direction to the Audit Committee members.
- To demonstrate high standards of corporate governance at all times, including by understanding the role played by the Audit Committee in helping to address the key financial and other risks facing the council.

Person Specification – Independent Members of the Audit Committee

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications		
Financial, Accounting or Audit qualification	▪	
Knowledge and skills		
A good communicator	▪	
Inquisitive, open minded and non-judgemental	▪	
Ability to analyse information and question effectively	▪	
Assertiveness	▪	
Understanding of the committee’s main functions and principles of good corporate and financial governance	▪	
Experience		
Experience of committee work and/or operating in a political environment		▪
Interest in public service and local government	▪	
Lives in and/or works in Islington		▪
A demonstrable interest in local issues	▪	
Competencies		
A person in whose impartiality and integrity the public can have confidence	▪	
Ability and willingness to maintain confidentiality	▪	
Able to make a significant contribution to the work of the committee	▪	
Other requirements		
Has not been a councillor or employee of Islington Council in the past five years	▪	
Is not related to or close friend of an Islington member or employee	▪	
Is not an active member of any political party or have a public profile in relation to political activities	▪	
Must formally agree to observe the Code of Conduct for members and complete a Register of Interests form on appointment	▪	
Must be able to attend committee meetings as programmed (approximately six evening meetings per year, currently held virtually)	▪	
Must be committed to a four-year term of office	▪	

Standards Committee

Composition

The Standards Committee shall comprise four members.

Independent Persons have been appointed by the council under the Localism Act 2011. Although not members of the Committee the Independent Persons are invited to attend meetings of the committee as observers.

Terms of Reference

1. To advise the Council on a local Code of Conduct for members.
2. To grant dispensations to councillors and co-opted members allowing them to vote in circumstances when they would not otherwise be entitled to do so following referral of a request by the Monitoring Officer.
3. To decide, if requested to do so by the Monitoring Officer, whether complaints that a member of the Council has failed, or may have failed, to comply with the Council's Members' Code of Conduct should be investigated.
4. To hear complaints that a member of the Council has failed, or may have failed, to comply with the Council's Members' Code of Conduct that have been referred to them by the Monitoring Officer pursuant to the Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure.
5. To agree relevant procedures for hearing complaints that a member of the Council has failed, or may have failed, to comply with the Council's Members' Code of Conduct.

Job Description – Independent Person for Standards

When any complaint about a possible breach of the Code of Conduct by a Councillor is made, the Monitoring Officer will consult the Independent Person about either whether it is appropriate to seek an informal resolution; not to investigate the matter further or to carry out an investigation.

The Monitoring Officer can ask the Independent Person to produce a report for the Committee setting out their views on the Investigating Officers report.

Person Specification– Independent Person for Standards

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge and skills		
A good communicator	▪	
Inquisitive, open minded and non-judgemental	▪	
Ability to analyse information and question effectively	▪	
Assertiveness	▪	
Understanding of the committee’s main functions	▪	
Experience		
Experience of committee work and/or operating in a political environment		▪
Interest in public service and local government	▪	
Lives in and/or works in Islington		▪
A demonstrable interest in local issues	▪	
Competencies		
A person in whose impartiality and integrity the public can have confidence	▪	
Ability and willingness to maintain confidentiality	▪	
Able to make a significant contribution to the work of the committee	▪	
Other requirements		
Has not been a councillor or employee of Islington Council in the past five years	▪	
Is not related to or close friend of an Islington member or employee	▪	
Is not an active member of any political party or have a public profile in relation to political activities	▪	
Must formally agree to observe the Code of Conduct for members and complete a Register of Interests form on appointment	▪	
Must be able to attend committee meetings as programmed	▪	
Must be committed to a four-year term of office	▪	

Terms and Conditions of Appointment

The appointment is for four years and will be subject to approval of Full Council.

The duties include attendance at the Audit Committee meetings, which meet four times per municipal year, and there may be additional meetings. Typically, the committee starts from 7.00pm. The Standards Committee will only meet as and when required. You will also be required to allocate time to read papers in preparation of the meeting. There may be additional duties, such as attending training courses or attendance at other meetings from time to time.

Subject to the agreement of Full Council, an allowance will also be paid for undertaking the role, which is currently £121 per committee meeting. This is paid at the end of each financial year in one lump sum. All payments are subject to tax and national insurance deductions.

As an independent member or person you will also be required to sign an undertaking to abide by a Code of Conduct for Members, which sets out standards of behaviour expected from all members. Additionally, you will be required to complete a Register of Interests form, which sets out any personal interests that affects the wellbeing or financial position of you or people that you have a close association with. This is to ensure fellow members, officers of the council and the public know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. You will also be required to pro-actively declare any potential conflicts that may arise in your role. For example, if a conflict interest arises out of business on the committee's agenda or from a change in your personal circumstances, you must declare that interest before the committee meeting.

These posts are also subject to the Disclosure And Barring Service – If an offer of employment is made, you will be required to attend a DBS meeting and apply for disclosure. Confirmation of appointment will be subject to satisfactory clearances from the DBS bureau.

Recruitment Process

Initial shortlisting will take place shortly after the closing date and applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application thereafter.

Interviews will take place during September 2020 and will be based on a question and answer assessment. Interviews will be held virtually via Zoom.

The interviews will be conducted by the Personnel Sub-Committee, which consists of five councillors. A small number of council officers will also be in attendance. As stated above, the final appointment is subject to approval of the Full Council.

Equal Opportunities

The fundamental principle of Recruitment and Selection in Islington Council is that all appointments are made on merit, based on fair and open competition. This ensures that the best person is selected for the job regardless of race, gender, disability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, religious or political beliefs, and HIV status. We guarantee to interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for the job.

Applicants are appointed on the basis of their experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to do the job. The Council has a duty to ensure the integrity of the selection process and that the correct procedures have been followed.

We welcome applications from Black and Minority Ethnic candidates and acknowledge our responsibility to mitigate against structural racism.

Data Protection

The council takes its obligations under the Data Protection Act very seriously. Any data about you will be held in secure conditions will access restricted to those who need it in connection with dealing with your application and selection process. Applications are retained for a period of 12 months and applications from candidates not selected for the post will be destroyed after this period.

Further information

For more information about the council and its services, visit www.islington.gov.uk

Islington Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and expects all staff, and volunteers to share this commitment.

Queries

Should you have any queries about any aspect of the role, you can contact Philippa Green, Head of Democratic Services and Governance, 020 7527 3184 or email Philippa.Green@islington.gov.uk

How to apply

1. Examine the job description and person specification carefully to assess your suitability for the role.
2. Complete the application form, ensuring you demonstrate how you meet the criteria in the person specification.
3. Submit your application form by the deadline of 5pm on Monday 7th September 2020.

Completed application forms should be sent to: democracy@islington.gov.uk