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**Information Pack for Independent Members of the Audit Committee and Independent Person for the Standards Committee**

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

Please note that applications need to be received no later than 5 pm on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2016

Interviews will take place on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2016



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# Audit Committee

## Composition

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

## Terms of reference of the audit committee

The Audit Committee shall have responsibility for audit and governance matters (other than those that are the responsibility of the Standards Committee) and for all other non-Executive matters specified under the relevant legislation save for those that 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 or the Health and Wellbeing Board.

## Audit Committee (Advisory) Functions

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

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. Reports dealing with the management, performance and value for money of the providers of internal and external audit services.
- d. A report from internal audit on agreed recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale.
- e. The appointment of the council's external auditor.
- f. Work to be commissioned from internal and external audit.
- g. Specific internal and external audit reports as requested.
- h. 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.
- i. Any issue referred to it by the council, executive, Policy and Performance Scrutiny committee or the chief executive.
- j. The council's arrangements for corporate governance and risk management and necessary actions to ensure compliance with best practice.
- k. The production and content of the council's Annual Governance Statement.
- l. 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.
- m. Any report on any matter relevant to the advisory functions of the committee which the committee may request from the Corporate Director of Finance 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 council'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. The Audit Committee may decide to appoint different members to the personnel sub-committee in order to deal with appointments of different corporate director posts.
- e. To appoint a pensions sub-committee.
- f. To appoint such other sub-committees or other bodies, including agreeing 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. provision of assistance at European Parliamentary elections
  - ii. division of the constituency into polling districts
  - iii. 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 the Constitution or to the Licensing Committee or Licensing Regulatory Committee and Planning Committee.

## Job Description – 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.

### Responsibility

- 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, Finance (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 – Audit Committee

	Essential	Desirable
<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial, Accounting or Audit qualification</li> </ul>	✓	
<p><b>Knowledge and skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A good communicator</li> <li>Inquisitive, open minded and non-judgemental</li> <li>Ability to analyse information and question effectively</li> <li>Assertiveness</li> <li>Understanding of the committee’s main functions and principles of good corporate and financial governance</li> </ul>	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
<p><b>Experience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience of committee work and/or operating in a political environment</li> <li>Interest in public service and local government</li> <li>Lives in and/or works in Islington</li> <li>A demonstrable interest in local issues</li> </ul>	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓
<p><b>Competencies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A person in whose impartiality and integrity the public can have confidence</li> <li>Ability and willingness to maintain confidentiality</li> <li>Able to make a significant contribution to the work of the committee</li> </ul>	✓ ✓ ✓	
<p><b>Other requirements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has not been a councillor or employee of Islington Council in the past five years</li> <li>Is not related to or close friend of an Islington member or employee</li> <li>Is not an active member of any political party or have a public profile in relation to political activities</li> <li>Must formally agree to observe the Code of Conduct for members and complete a Register of Interests form on appointment</li> <li>Must be able to attend committee meetings as programmed</li> <li>Must be committed to a four-year term of office</li> </ul>	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	

# Standards Committee

## Composition

The Standards Committee is composed of four councillors.

An Independent Person appointed by the Council under the Localism Act 2011. Although not members of the Committee the Independent Person is invited to attend meetings of the Committee as an observer.

The quorum of the committee shall be three councillors.

## Role and function

The Standards Committee will have the following roles and functions:

- a. To advise the council on a local Code of Conduct for members.
- b. To grant dispensations to councilors and co-opted members allowing them to vote in circumstances when they would not otherwise be entitled to do so following a referral of a request by the Monitoring Officer.
- c. To decide, if requested to do so by the Monitoring Officer, whether complaints that a member of the Council has failed, to comply with the Council's Members' Code of Conduct should be investigated.
- d. 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.
- e. 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 – Standards Committee**

### **Independent Person**

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 – Standards Committee

	Essential	Desirable
<b>Knowledge and skills</b>		
• A good communicator	✓	
• Inquisitive, open minded and non-judgemental	✓	
• Ability to analyse information and question effectively	✓	
• Assertiveness	✓	
• Understanding of the committee’s main functions	✓	
<b>Experience</b>		
• 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	✓	
<b>Competencies</b>		
• A person in whose impartiality and integrity the public can have confidence	✓	
• Ability and willingness to maintain confidentiality	✓	
• Ability to make a significant contribution to the work of the committee	✓	
<b>Other requirements</b>		
• Has not been a member 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 7.30pm. 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, e.g. hearings for the Standards Committee.

Subject to the agreement of Full Council, an allowance will also be paid for undertaking the role, which is currently £117 per meeting. This is paid at the end of each financial year in one lump sum. All payments will be processed by the council's payroll department and will be 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.

## 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 on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2016. and will be based on a question and answer assessment. The interviews will be conducted by the personnel sub-committee, which consists of seven councillors, and an officer from the Finance and Legal departments will also be in attendance. As stated above, the final appointment is subject to approval of the Full Council.

## Equal Opportunities

Islington Council is an equal opportunities employer. Applications from women, members of the ethnic minorities and people with disabilities who have the appropriate skills and experience are particularly welcome. The council is committed to interviewing all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a vacancy and consider them on their abilities.

## 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](http://www.islington.gov.uk)

## Queries

Should you have any queries about any aspect of the role, you can contact John Lynch on 020 7527 3002 or email [john.lynch@islington.gov.uk](mailto:john.lynch@islington.gov.uk)

## How to apply

If you wish to apply for the post, please read and comply with the following requests:

1. Examine the job description and person specification for the role carefully in assessing the suitability of your candidature.
2. Complete the application in writing, ensuring you demonstrate how you meet the criteria in the person specification.
3. Submit a hard copy of your application form by the deadline of 5pm on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2016 to:

Debra Norman  
Assistant Chief Executive (Governance and HR)  
Islington Council  
Islington Town Hall  
Upper Street  
London N1 2UD

Or email your completed application to  
[democracy@islington.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@islington.gov.uk)

## Application of an independent member to serve on the council's Audit Committee or Standards Committee

### Personal Details

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Contact numbers

Home:

Work:

Mobile:

Email address:

Education and professional qualifications:

## Memberships and connection with local and campaigning organisations

Please give details below of your memberships, if any, of the following types of organisations. Please also indicate if you hold a position such as secretary or management board member:

Public bodies (e.g. local authority, health services, school governing bodies, etc):

--

Political organisations or bodies whose main purpose is to influence public opinion or policy:

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Trade unions or professional associations:

--

Charitable bodies or voluntary organisations:

--

Any other similar memberships:

--

## Employment or Profession

**Please give details of the nature of your current, recent or any other significant employment.**

(Note: This information is requested to obtain a picture of your background and skills, and to identify if there may be any financial interests that could be relevant if you are appointed. No contact will be made with your employer. Neither is it essential that you are in employment.)

## Suitability

Please give details below, or on a separate page, of your knowledge, skills and/or experience relevant to the duties of an independent member, and why you would be suitable for appointment.

(Note: Please indicate in this section how you meet the criteria set out in the Person Specification).



## Other details

Are you related to any current councillor or employee of Islington Council?      Yes      No

If yes, please give details:

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Have you ever served as an Islington councillor?      Yes I      No

If yes, please give dates and details of any party members or positions held:

Party:	Position:	Date: (day, month, year)		