

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 24 th May 2022
Report Subject	Appointment of a Lay Person to 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 the membership of the Governance and Audit Committee are Lay Persons. The intention of the legislation is to make the Committee visibly more independent in its oversight of Council processes.

Until now the Committee has consisted of 7 elected Councillors and 2 Lay Persons. To bring it into line with the legislation Council noted at its meeting in 1 April 2021 the need to increase the number of lay members by 1 and reduce the number of elected Councillors by 1.

As reported to Council in February 2022, we have needed to advertise the position twice in order to attract an appointable candidate, despite combining our recruitment efforts with a national series of adverts placed by the WLGA.

Interviews were held on Wednesday 30th March and the interview panel recommends that Brian Harvey is appointed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Council appoints Brian Harvey to the Governance and Audit Committee until 31 December 2027.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE NEED TO APPOINT A LAY PERSON
1.01	The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires the Council to ensure that Lay Persons make up 1/3 of the membership of the Governance and Audit Committee. This is to increase the visible independence and impartiality of the Committee which oversees the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's governance processes.
1.02	The Committee already includes 2 Lay Persons, who have been recruited based on their skills and experience. The Council noted at its meeting on 1 April 2021 the need to increase the number of Lay Persons to 3 and reduce the number of elected Councillors to 6. This decision is referenced in a report earlier in the agenda. As also noted earlier a Lay Person must be the chair of the Committee though the vice chair can be an elected councillor.
1.03	The Council advertised twice for applicants. We received 6 applications in total. They were all interviewed by a panel consisting of members appointed by reason of their role/position ("ex officio") as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee – Cllr Chris Dolphin at the first interviews2) Chair of Council – Cllr Joe Johnson at the second interviews3) Cabinet member for Finance and Social Value – Cllr Paul Johnson4) Member of the Governance and Audit Committee – Cllr Arnold Woolley5) Lay Person on the Governance and Audit Committee – Sally Ellis (who is also the vice chair) for the first round of interviews and Allan Rainford for the second interviews.
1.04	The second interview panel unanimously agreed that it should recommend Brain Harvey for appointment. A pen portrait of the candidate is attached at Appendix 1 for information.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There were no resource implications as the post as advertised through the WLGA, our website and through local network groups so no costs were incurred.

3.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	The application pack specified the essential characteristics required for the position of Lay Member. Each applicant's suitability was assessed using both the application form and a mix of pre-set interview questions (which were drafted to bring out each requirement) and follow up questions.

3.02	The advert and application pack were published bilingually and applicants were asked whether they wished to be interviewed in Welsh.
4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Interview Panel.
5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Pen Portrait of Brian Harvey.
6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Application pack and advert
7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer (Governance) Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk
8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	None.