

**Meeting:** Audit Committee

**Date:** 30 September 2020

**Wards Affected:** All

**Report Title:** Appointment of Independent Person for Audit Committee

**Cabinet Member Contact Details:** Councillor Carter, Cabinet Member for Corporate and Community Services, christine.carter@torbay.gov.uk

**Director/Assistant Director Contact Details:** Anne-Marie Bond, Interim Chief Executive, [anne-marie.bond@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:anne-marie.bond@torbay.gov.uk). Martin Phillips, Chief Finance Officer, martin.phillips@torbay.gov.uk.

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Following a request by the Audit Committee, Council on 26 September 2019 agreed a job advert and role profile for the Council to seek a suitable person to join the Audit Committee as an Independent Advisor and that the Employment Committee be delegated authority to appoint a suitable candidate.
- 1.2 CIPFA's 'Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police' 2018 Edition, recommends local authorities actively explore the appointment of an independent member to join local authority Audit Committees. Good practice has shown that co-option of Independent Person(s) is beneficial to audit committees with the appointment of an Independent Person providing additional benefits such as:
  - Additional knowledge and expertise to the committee;
  - Reinforcement of the political neutrality and independence of the Audit Committee; and
  - Continuity of committee membership where membership is affected by the electoral cycle.
- 1.2 The recruitment initially resulted in two interested parties applying, the subsequent applications were assessed by the Employment Committee in December and were deemed to be unsuitable for the role. A further advert was placed on the Council's website and shared via the Council's social media platforms in January 2020. On this occasion there were no applicants.
- 1.3 As a result, the Audit Committee's views are sought on the next steps. Members of the Audit Committee have particular skills and qualifications that the Independent Person were expected to possess. These skills and qualifications held by Members of the Audit Committee are also complemented by the independent roles performed by the Council's external and internal auditors. Therefore Members are asked to consider whether an Independent Person is required, whilst CIPFA recommends 'actively exploring' the appointment of an Independent Person as being good practice, Members have themselves demonstrated the ability to challenge and hold the authority to account without the input of an Independent Member. Members are

therefore asked to consider whether it is prudent to continue to try and recruit an Independent Person.

### **3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision**

That Members determine whether efforts to appoint an independent person should continue.

### **Appendices**

None

### **Background Documents**

Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police' 2018 Edition.