**OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS**

**Allowance**

An annual allowance of £3,156 will be paid to each of the Independent Members of the Audit and Governance Committee.

**The role**

Oxfordshire County Council is seeking to appoint a second independent member to their Audit and Governance Committee, in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Audit Committee Guidance.

**About us**

Oxfordshire is a diverse and dynamic county with more than 700,000 residents. Along with the historic city of Oxford and a number of market towns, the county has a thriving network of villages and market towns. They are home to around 40% of the population, making Oxfordshire the most rural county in the south-east.

The Council provides a wide range of services including the following:

* Adults and children’s social care
* Education and learning
* Highways and transport
* Waste disposal and recycling
* Public health improvement and prevention services
* Fire and rescue and community safety.

The Council currently comprise 63 elected councillors, increasing to 69 at the next election, due in May 2025. Meetings are normally held at the Council’s offices at County Hall, Oxford.

**What are the responsibilities of the Audit and Governance Committee?**

The primary purpose of the Audit and Governance Committee is to provide independent assurance on the effectiveness of the control environment and corporate governance arrangements operating within the Council. This is achieved by:

* Reviewing the annual statement of accounts and annual governance statement.
* Considering reports received from the internal and external auditors on work completed.
* Monitoring the independence, objectivity and performance of the auditors
* Monitoring counter fraud plans and activities
* Reviewing the council’s treasury management strategy and activities
* Promoting high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members

The committee reports annually regarding its work, to demonstrate how they have fulfilled their responsibilities.

**What are Independent Members of the Audit and Governance Committee Members expected to do?**

Independent Members will be formally appointed to serve on the Council’s Audit and Governance Committee for a fixed four-year term.

They are expected to read agenda papers sent prior to each meeting, attend meetings and participate in questioning officers about the contents of reports prepared for the committee’s consideration. There are six scheduled committee meetings per annum. Independent Members may also be requested to attend meetings of the Audit Working Group and training sessions.

Independent Members are an important part of the corporate governance assurance framework. They should bring knowledge and skills relating to financial accounting and auditing that are complementary to the elected members of the committee.

Although Independent Members do not have a vote in the same way as councillors do at committee, they fulfil an important role in an advisory and consultative capacity and are fully involved in the discussions of issues due considered at the committee.

Members are also expected to conduct themselves in keeping with the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life (below).

**How to apply**

Please read the role description and person specification before submitting your application. For further details, including an application form, please visit Oxfordshire County Council’s website [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk) or contact Kim Sawyer, Interim Head of Legal and Governance (kim.sawyer@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

We are unable to consider anyone who is, or has been within the last five years, a councillor, co-opted member or officer of Oxfordshire County Council; or is a relative or close friend of a councillor, co-opted member or officer of Oxfordshire County Council.

**Closing date:**

**Interview date: To be confirmed**

**Person specification**

The successful candidate will be someone who:

* Understands the importance of good governance and the responsibilities placed on those responsible for oversight of good governance.
* Shows an appreciation of the complex issues which can arise within any large and diverse organisation.
* Demonstrates a commitment to building a strong council with clearly articulated objectives and purpose.
* Has gained practical experience in financial or general management within a business or public sector environment or has other relevant experience.
* Understands the roles and purpose of internal and external audit
* Understands the importance and benefits of good risk management
* Demonstrates an understanding of or willingness to learn about statutory duties and legislative requirements relevant to local government.
* Has good communication and interpersonal skills
* Displays open-mindedness and impartiality
* Is able to analyse, interpret and absorb information and evidence effectively and quickly.
* Understands and complies with confidentiality requirements

Previous experience of audit-related activities is desirable but not essential

Independent Members should not be affiliated with a political party as this may result in potential conflicts of interest. They should also be willing to disclose to the Council any matter which, if it became public, might damage the Council’s reputation.

Oxfordshire County Council seeks to reflect the views of all their residents and therefore welcome applications from members of all communities. We are committed to workplace inclusion, tackling disadvantages in our communities and delivering services that work for everyone. In applying for this role you do not have to live or work in Oxfordshire but you should be able to demonstrate an interest in the county.

**The Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life**

The principles are:

**Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest

**Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

**Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

**Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

**Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

**Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful

**Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.