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# Formation of an Audit and Risk Committee

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<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Council
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	16 May 2026
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Iain Cottingham
<b>Date Service Director agreed report:</b>	2 January 2026
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	12 January 2026
<b>Report Author:</b>	Martyn Sargeant, Service Director – Strategy and Governance
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	C4769

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## 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The audit system that serves local authorities is currently the focus of a government consultation, to ensure local audit is the ‘bedrock of local accountability and transparency, of trust and confidence in councils to spend taxpayer money wisely’. The importance of strong assurance arrangements was highlighted in the 2024 Local Government Association peer review and, with the current financial challenges faced by the Council, remains a high priority.
- 1.2 Consequently this report proposes the formation of a new Audit and Risk Committee to provide a stronger and clearer focus on financial management and risk assurance, with the consequent merging of the Governance and Personnel Committees.

## 2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That, with effect from the new municipal year, the Council should agree:
  - To dissolve the existing Governance Committee and form a new Audit and Risk Committee.
  - That the new committee should have a politically-balanced membership of seven councillors plus up to two independent members (of the public).
  - That the independent members (of the public) should receive an allowance of £2,192 to recognise their technical skills and professional expertise.
  - To dissolve the existing Personnel Committee and create a new Personnel and Standards Committee, with oversight for the residual responsibilities of the current Governance Committee and the existing responsibilities of the current Personnel Committee.

### 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary			
<b>Financial:</b>	There are no financial implications arising from this decision. The proposed changes involve a redistribution of existing responsibilities and no increase in the number of committees.			
<b>Human Resource:</b>	None.			
<b>Legal:</b>	<p>Whilst it is not a statutory requirement for councils to have an audit committee, “audit committees are a key component of an authority’s governance framework” and “their purpose is to provide an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements.”</p> <p>Sarah Clarke, Monitoring Officer 6 Jan 2026</p>			
<b>Risk Management:</b>	The formation of a committee with a clearer focus on audit and risk will support the development of the Council’s robust risk management arrangements.			
<b>Property:</b>	None.			
<b>Policy:</b>	None.			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		There are no equalities implications arising from the proposed decision. Local Government Association (LGA) guidance suggests an audit committee can contribute to ensuring a local authority effectively carries out its duties in respect

## Formation of an Audit and Risk Committee

<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		of equality and inclusion, as part of its wider governance focus.
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>		X		None.
<b>Health Impact:</b>		X		None.
<b>ICT Impact:</b>		X		None.
<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>		X		None.
<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>	X			This decision supports the strategy priority 'Services we are proud of' and the goal within it to 'treat our residents with respect, be transparent in our decision-making'. More broadly, an effective audit function helps the Council to operate efficiently in the achievement of its objectives.
<b>Core Business:</b>		X		None.
<b>Data Impact:</b>		X		None.
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	As the report relates to the Council's governance framework, no public engagement has been undertaken. The draft report has been considered by the Corporate Board, Constitution Review Task Group and Executive, and consultation undertaken with the various political groups.			

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The peer challenge conducted by the LGA in February 2024 made recommendations for how the Council could simplify and strengthen its governance arrangements. One specific recommendation was in relation to the existing audit oversight arrangements:

*The remit of the Governance Committee includes audit and risk, and the peer team would encourage the Council to review this as best practice clearly*

## Formation of an Audit and Risk Committee

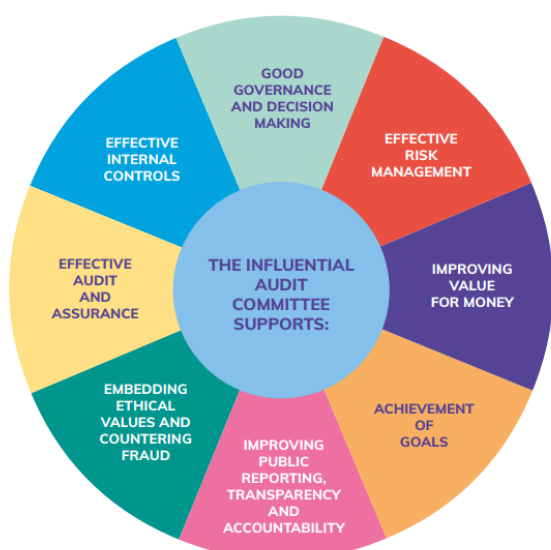
*states that audit should be considered separately from other issues such as standards, code of conduct, etc.*

- 4.2 LGA guidance suggests that “the role of the audit committee is normally to seek assurance that the council’s financial reporting, internal controls, governance and risk management are effective and can be relied upon by councillors and citizens”. It goes on to say that “the audit committee is most effective when it is unencumbered by other tasks, such as scrutiny, ‘general purposes’ or standards.” Alongside its responsibilities for audit and risk, West Berkshire Council’s Governance Committee also has oversight of conduct matters, partnership arrangements and the Constitution.
- 4.3 In keeping with the corporate peer challenge recommendation, this report sets out proposals for a new Audit and Risk Committee to have a dedicated focus on providing assurance to the Council, “which does not involve it in policy-setting or decision-making.”
- 4.4 As the new committee would take on a significant proportion of the existing Governance Committee’s terms of reference, it is further proposed that the Governance and Personnel Committees be merged to form a new Personnel and Standards Committee with appropriate terms of reference.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Background

- 5.1 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA’s) guidance on the core functions of an audit committee recommend it should provide oversight of a range of core governance and accountability arrangements, specifically:
- Maintenance of governance and risk arrangements.
  - Financial and governance reporting.
  - Establishing appropriate and effective arrangements for audit and assurance.
- 5.2 A broader representation of this is offered by CIPFA in the diagram below:



## Formation of an Audit and Risk Committee

- 5.3 Membership arrangements for council audit committees vary widely across the country. Both the LGA and CIPFA recommend that there should be a "willingness to operate in an apolitical manner" (CIPFA).

*The audit committee is....independent and, as the matters it deals with are normally apolitical, it should rise above politics. (LGA)*

- 5.4 They are similarly united on the importance of independent members as part of the committee:

*The recruitment of independent (co-opted) members with specialist backgrounds in, say, accounting or risk management is strongly recommended as a way of supplementing the skills of the committee. (LGA)*

*....each authority audit committee should include at least two co-opted independent members to provide appropriate technical expertise. (CIPFA)*

- 5.5 The table below demonstrates the range of different approaches taken by councils:

<b>Council</b>	<b>No of councillors</b>	<b>No of independents</b>	<b>Politically balanced?</b>	<b>Chair</b>
West Berks	9	4*	Yes	Majority group
Bracknell	8	1	Yes	Majority group
Reading	9	0	Yes	Opposition
Wokingham	7	1	Yes	Opposition
Basingstoke	9	1	Yes	Majority group (NB: independent)
Windsor & Maidenhead	5	0	Yes	Majority group
Slough	9	2	Yes	Opposition
Solihull	3	3	No (1 from each group)	Independent

\*Up to two independent members plus up to two Parish/Town Councillors.

- 5.6 In all of the scenarios above, the independent members are voting members of the committee, whereas the independent member(s) on West Berkshire's Governance Committee are non-voting. However, the LGA guidance advises that this is only an issue where a committee has formal delegated decision-making responsibilities, which is not usual or recommended for an audit committee.
- 5.7 The role of an audit committee is to provide oversight and assurance regarding a council's financial management and governance. Cabinet members are responsible for policy and implementation, creating a potential conflict of interest when they also oversee the audit of those same activities. For this reason, many councils prohibit members of the Executive from being part of the audit committee to maintain clear

## Formation of an Audit and Risk Committee

separation. By way of example, Hampshire County Council amended its audit committee's terms of reference to exclude members of the executive following an assessment against the 2022 CIPFA Position Statement. Lead councillors, such as the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, may want to attend as a matter of course, and it would be expected that key officers would be in attendance (Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, s151 Officer and the Audit Manager).

- 5.8 Because of the level of training that is required to ensure committee members are able to discharge their responsibilities effectively, and because an audit committee should be non-political (see paragraph 5.3), no provision is made for substitute members.

## Proposal

- 5.9 The corporate peer challenge provided a clear steer to the Council about forming an audit committee with an exclusive focus on core governance and accountability arrangements. This report consequently proposes the formation of a West Berkshire Council Audit and Risk Committee, for which a draft terms of reference is attached as appendix A.

- 5.10 All of the local comparator councils in section 5.5 have between five and 11 members. With the exception of Reading/Windsor and Maidenhead, all have at least one independent member with voting rights. However, all are politically balanced. Solihull is offered as an example of a council that has strongly embraced the LGA/CIPFA guidance on being apolitical (having one councillor from each of the political groups) and the importance of independent membership (having three independent members, of whom one is the chair). The current constitution of the Governance Committee membership works well, so it is recommended that the membership of the new Audit and Risk Committee should comprise:

- Seven councillors (slightly smaller than other committees because of the need for training and building up a level of expertise and in line with the LGA's advice that the committee should be 'typically, six to eight members'), distributed on a politically balanced basis.
- Up to two independent members (of the public, in line with CIPFA guidance) with relevant risk and/or financial expertise.
- A chair elected after the Annual Council meeting each year.

- 5.11 It has become increasingly difficult to recruit independent members for council committees (specifically for audit and standards). Offering a small allowance to recognise people's time and skills will significantly improve the quality and field of potential candidates, ensuring the new Audit and Risk Committee has a strong base of technical expertise. There is a wide range of approaches taken across councils, with some not offering any remuneration other than expenses (eg Bracknell, although it offers an allowance for the Independent Member for Standards). South Oxfordshire/Vale of White Horse District Councils offer an allowance of 50% of the committee chair's allowance (which equates to £2,205 in 2025/26). Hampshire County Council provides an allowance of £2,000 (2025/26). Research amongst London authorities on this issue by Hackney Council in 2024 identified allowances being paid up to £2,500. Oxfordshire County Council provides an allowance of £3,156 (2025/26). West Berkshire provides an allowance (currently £1,132) to independent members of

## Formation of an Audit and Risk Committee

the Governance Committee, which was introduced in 2012 following implementation of the new standards regime. Given the level of technical expertise required for the Audit and Risk Committee roles, it is suggested the allowance should be higher. Two thirds of the chair's allowance would equate to £2,192, roughly equivalent to the South Oxfordshire/Vale of White Horse arrangement.

5.12 The removal of the audit and risk responsibilities from the Governance Committee will take away about two thirds of its terms of reference. In light of this, and as the Personnel Committee only meets twice a year, the report also proposes that the Governance and Personnel Committees should be merged, with a draft terms of reference attached as appendix B. By merging the committees, this will ensure the new committee has a substantive terms of reference, whilst not creating additional meetings/work for both councillors and the Democratic Services team.

5.13 A summary of the broad areas of respective responsibility is provided in the table below:

Audit and Risk Committee	Personnel and Standards Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate governance, including annual governance statement</li> <li>• Risk management, assurance and controls</li> <li>• Value for money, fraud and counter-fraud, internal controls</li> <li>• Internal audit, including the annual work programme, review of reports highlighting significant weaknesses, and the annual report on effectiveness</li> <li>• External audit, including the annual assessment of independence, annual letter, and other reports</li> <li>• Financial reporting, including the annual statement of accounts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing review and maintenance of the Constitution</li> <li>• The Councillor code of conduct</li> <li>• Arrangements for investigating and determining allegations of misconduct, including for parish/town councils</li> <li>• Appointment panels for director-level recruitments</li> <li>• HR policies and procedures</li> <li>• Designation of officers for statutory social care posts</li> <li>• Recommend to Council officers to fill the statutory Monitoring Officer and s151 Officer posts</li> <li>• Consideration of requests for early release of pension</li> </ul>

## 6 Other options considered

6.1 It would be possible to retain the status quo, of a Governance Committee with a wider brief than simply audit and risk, but this would go against the advice of the LGA's peer review and best practice guidance.

## 7 Conclusion

7.1 Forming a dedicated Audit and Risk Committee means West Berkshire Council will be in line with best practice guidance and able to strengthen its assurance arrangements.

## 8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Draft terms of reference for a new Audit and Risk Committee
- 8.2 Appendix B – Draft terms of reference for a new Personnel and Standards Committee

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### Corporate Board's recommendation

Report approved subject to minor amendments for future consideration at Executive Briefing and the Constitution Review Task Group, then ultimately Annual Council, with consultation with the chairs of Personnel and Governance Committees.

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### Background Papers:

[CIPFA's Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police 2022](#)

[LGA Corporate Peer Challenge: West Berkshire Council, Feb 2024](#)

[LGA Ten Questions for Audit Committees, Apr 2024](#)

[Audit Committee Guidance: 2022 update | CIPFA](#)

[Audit Committee Terms of Reference: Hampshire County Council, May 2024](#)

[Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, October 2024](#)

[Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, Reading Borough Council, October 2024](#)

[Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, Hampshire County Council, January 2025](#)

[Audit Committee Independent Membership Briefing, Hackney Council, July 2024](#)

### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:       No:

**Wards affected:** All

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## Part XX - Appendix: Audit and Risk Committee

### 1. Preamble

- **1.1** Part 3 (Meeting Procedure Rules) and Part 6 (Council Bodies) set out the rules and procedures that apply to all of the Council's Bodies and Sub-Bodies.
- **1.2** If there is any conflict between the wording of Parts 3 and 6 and this Appendix, this Appendix will prevail.

### 2. Scope of Role

- **2.1** The Audit and Risk Committee ("the Committee") is a key component of the Council's corporate governance. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.
- **2.2** The purpose of the Committee is to provide independent assurance to the Council of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. It provides independent review of the governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes. It also oversees internal and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.

### 3. Membership

- **3.1** The Committee shall consist of seven Councillors reflecting the political balance of the Council, together with up to two co-opted independent members.
- **3.2** The membership is set out in the Committees List and Meeting Rules Table.
- **3.3** There will be no provision for substitute Councillors to attend Committee meetings.
- **3.4** No member of the Committee may be a member of the Executive.
- **3.5** The Chair of the Committee shall be elected following the Annual Council meeting each year.

### 4. Terms of Reference

#### 4.1 Governance, risk and control

To review the Council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework and consider annual governance reports and assurances.

To review the annual governance statement prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, taking into account Internal Audit's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control.

To consider the Council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.

## Formation of an Audit and Risk Committee

To consider the Council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the Council.

To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the Council.

To monitor progress in addressing risk-related issues reported to the committee.

To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.

To review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the Council from fraud and corruption.

To monitor the counter-fraud strategy, actions and resources.

To review the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations.

### 4.2 Internal audit

To approve the internal audit charter.

To review proposals made in relation to the appointment of external providers of internal audit services and to make recommendations.

To approve the risk based internal audit plan, including internal audit's resource requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.

To approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit plan and resource requirements.

To make appropriate enquiries of both management and the head of internal audit to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.

To consider any impairments to independence or objectivity arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing of the Audit Manager. To approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments.

To consider reports from the Audit Manager on internal audit's performance during the year, including the performance of external providers of internal audit services. These will include:

- Updates on the work of internal audit including key findings, issues of concern and action in hand as a result of internal audit work.
- Regular reports on the results of any quality assurance and improvement initiatives.
- Reports on instances where the internal audit function does not conform to the Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector, considering whether the non-conformance is significant enough that it must be included in the annual governance statement.

## Formation of an Audit and Risk Committee

To consider the internal Audit Manager's annual report:

- The statement of the level of conformance with the Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector and the results of the quality assurance and improvement programme that supports the statement - these will indicate the reliability of the conclusions of internal audit.
- The opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control together with the summary of the work supporting the opinion - these will assist the committee in reviewing the annual governance statement.

To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.

To receive reports outlining the action taken where the Internal Audit Manager has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the authority or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.

To contribute to the quality assurance and improvement programme and in particular, to the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years.

To consider a report on the effectiveness of internal audit to support the annual governance statement, where required to do so by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

To provide free and unfettered access to the audit committee chair for the Internal Audit Manager, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the committee.

### **4.3 External audit**

To support the independence of external audit through consideration of the external auditor's annual assessment of its independence and review of any issues raised by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) company or the authority's auditor panel as appropriate.

To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance.

To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.

To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.

To commission work from internal and external audit.

To advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external and internal audit and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies.

## Formation of an Audit and Risk Committee

### **4.4 Financial reporting**

To receive detailed training in respect of the process associated with the preparation, sign off, audit and publication of the Council's annual statement of accounts.

To monitor the on-going progress towards publication of the Council's annual statement of accounts, ensuring the statutory deadlines are achieved.

To obtain explanations for all significant variances between planned and actual expenditure to the extent that it impacts on the annual statement of accounts.

To review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed, appropriate accounting estimates have been included in the Council's financial statements and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.

To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

### **4.5 Accountability arrangements**

To report to those charged with governance on the Committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks, financial reporting arrangements, and internal and external audit functions.

To report to full Council on a regular basis on the Committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference, and the effectiveness of the committee in meeting its purpose.

To publish an annual report on the work of the Committee

## Part XX - Appendix: Personnel and Standards Committee

### 1. Preamble

- **1.1** Part 3 (Meeting Procedure Rules) and Part 6 (Council Bodies) set out the rules and procedures that apply to all of the Council's Bodies and Sub-Bodies.
- **1.2** If there is any conflict between the wording of Parts 3 and 6 and this Appendix, this Appendix will prevail.

### 2. Scope of Role

- **2.1** The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 set out specific requirements in relation to the recruitment and appointment of the Head of Paid Service, Chief Officers and Deputy Officers. These include a requirement to draw up job descriptions and person specifications.
- **2.2** The Council's approach to recruitment and selection is set out in the Recruitment and Selection Policy, Procedure and Guidance document on the Council's intranet.
- **2.3** Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 imposes a duty on local authorities to promote and maintain high standards of conduct. Section 28(6) of the same Act requires that that arrangements are in place under which allegations of misconduct can be investigated and decisions on those allegations determined. The Committee will have oversight of those arrangements.

### 3. Membership

- **3.1** The Committee shall consist of seven Councillors reflecting the political balance of the Council, together with up to two co-opted but non-voting Parish or Town Councillors and an Independent Person (Standards).
- **3.2** The membership is set out in the Committees List and Meeting Rules Table.
- **3.3** The Committee shall accept Substitute Members but, to sit as a Substitute Member, he or she must be a member of the same political group as the Member for whom they are substituting.
- **3.5** The Chair of the Committee shall be elected each year after the Annual Council meeting.

### 4. Terms of Reference

The principal functions of the Committee shall be as follows:

#### 4.1 Personnel matters - general

- **4.1.1** Appoint staff at Service Director level or above by means of an Appointments Panel and to agree terms of reference for that Panel.
- **4.1.2** Agree and make necessary changes to the Council's Human Resources policies and procedures.

## Formation of an Audit and Risk Committee

- **4.1.3** Designate officers as the Director of Adult Social Care and the Director of Children's Services.
- **4.1.4** Recommend officers for the statutory posts of Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer.
- **4.1.5** Consider requests for the early release of pensions (the financial implications of which will need to be considered and approved by the Executive).

### **4.2 Personnel matters – recruitment of Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Service Directors**

- **4.2.1** Where the Council proposes to appoint a Chief Executive, Executive Director or Service Director it will convene an Appointments Panel, which shall:
  - in the case of the recruitment of a Chief Executive, consist of five Councillors;
  - in the case of Executive Directors or Service Directors, consist of three Councillors;
  - include at least one Executive Member;
  - have regard to the political balance of the Council;
  - draw up a statement specifying the duties of the Officer concerned and any qualifications or qualities to be sought in the person to be appointed;
  - make arrangements for the post to be suitably advertised.
- **4.2.2** The Council must approve the appointment of the Chief Executive having regard to the recommendations of the Appointments Panel before an offer of employment is made to that person.
- **4.2.3** The Council must approve the designation of an Officer as the S151 Officer or the Monitoring Officer, having regard to the recommendations of the Appointments Panel.
- **4.2.4** The Council may only make or approve the appointment of the Chief Executive where no well-founded objection has been made by any Member of the Executive.
- **4.2.5** Executive Directors or Service Directors (other than those who will hold a statutory post) will be appointed by the Appointments Panel.
- **4.2.6** An offer of employment as an Executive Director or Service Director must not be made until:
  - the Proper Officer has been advised of the name of the person to whom the offer is going to be made, and any other particulars relevant to the appointment;
  - the Proper Officer has notified every Member of the Executive as to:
    - the name of the person to whom the Appointments Panel wish to make the offer;
    - any other particulars relevant to the appointment which the Appointments Panel has notified to the Proper Officer; and
    - the period within which any objection to the making of the offer is to be made by the Executive Leader, on behalf of the Executive, to the Proper Officer; and either:
      - the Leader has, within the period specified in the Notice, notified the Appointments Panel that neither they nor any other Member of the Executive has any objection to the making of the offer; or

## Formation of an Audit and Risk Committee

- the Appointments Panel is satisfied that any objection received from the Leader within that period is not material or is not well-founded.

### **4.3 Personnel matters – dismissal of Chief Executive, S151 Officer or Monitoring Officer**

- **4.3.1** In this Part –
  - "Chief Finance Officer", "Head of the Authority's Paid Service" and "Monitoring Officer" (each a "Relevant Officer"), and "disciplinary action" have the same meaning as in Regulation 2 of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001;
  - "Independent Person" means an Independent Person (Standards) appointed under s.28(7) of the Localism Act 2011;
  - "the Panel" means a Committee appointed by the Council under s.102(4) of LGA 1972 for the purposes of advising the Council on matters relating to the dismissal of relevant Officers of the authority; and
  - "Relevant Meeting" means a meeting of the Council to consider whether or not to approve a proposal to dismiss a relevant Officer.
- **4.3.2** The Council must approve that dismissal of a Relevant Officer before notice is given to that person.
- **4.3.3** In this paragraph, "Dismissor" means, in relation to the dismissal of a Relevant Officer, the Council or Body as the case may be.
- **4.3.4** Notice of the dismissal of an Officer referred to above, must not be given by the Dismissor until:
  - the Dismissor has notified the Proper Officer of the name of the person who the Dismissor wishes to dismiss, and any other particulars which the Dismissor considers are relevant to the dismissal;
  - the Proper Officer has notified every Member of the Executive of:
    - the name of the person whom the Dismissor wishes to dismiss;
    - any other particulars relevant to the dismissal which the Dismissor has notified to the Proper Officer; and
    - the period within which any objection to the dismissal is to be made by the Leader, on behalf of the Executive, to the Proper Officer, and either:
      - the Leader has, within the period specified in the Notice above, notified the Dismissor that neither they nor any other Member of the Executive has any objection to the dismissal;
      - the Dismissor is satisfied that any objection received from the Leader within that period is not material or is not well-founded.
- **4.3.5** A Relevant Officer may not be dismissed by the Council unless the procedure set out in the following paragraphs is complied with.

## Formation of an Audit and Risk Committee

- **4.3.6** The Council must invite its Independent Persons (Standards) to be considered for appointment to the Panel, with a view to appointing at least two such Persons to the Panel.
- **4.3.7** Where there are fewer than two such Persons available, the Council shall seek to appoint one or more Independent Persons as have been appointed by another authority or authorities as the Council considers appropriate, so that there are at least two Independent Persons appointed to the Panel.
- **4.3.8** Subject to paragraph 6.10, the Council must appoint to the Panel such Independent Persons who have accepted an invitation issued in accordance with paragraph 6.7 in accordance with the following priority order:
  - an Independent Person (Standards) who has been appointed by the Council and who is a local government elector;
  - any other Independent Person (Standards) who has been appointed by the Council;
  - an Independent Person or Persons who have been appointed by another authority or authorities.
- **4.3.9** Not more than two Independent Persons shall be required to be in appointed to the Panel.
- **4.3.10** The Council must appoint the Panel at least 20 Working Days before the Relevant Meeting.
- **4.3.11** Before the taking of a vote at the Relevant Meeting on whether or not to approve such a dismissal, the Council must take into account, in particular:
  - any advice, views or recommendations of the Panel;
  - the conclusions of any investigation into the proposed dismissal; and
  - any representations from the relevant Officer.
- **4.3.12** Any remuneration, allowances or fees paid by the Council to an Independent Person appointed to the Panel must exceed the level of remuneration, allowances or fees payable to that Independent Person in respect of that person's role as Independent Person under the 2011 Act.

## 4.4 Standards

- **4.4.1** With the support of the Monitoring Officer, the Committee will promote and maintain high standards of conduct by all Councillors and co-opted members, including:
  - assisting Councillors and co-opted members to observe the Councillors' Code of Conduct;
  - advising the Council on the adoption, or revision of, the Councillors' Code of Conduct;
  - monitoring operation of the Councillors' Code of Conduct;
  - advising and training councillors and co-opted councillors on matters relating to the Councillors' Code of Conduct;

## Formation of an Audit and Risk Committee

- granting dispensations to Councillors and co-opted members on requirements relating to interests.
- **4.4.2** The Committee has responsibility for ensuring that arrangements are in place by which allegations against Councillors and other Members of a Body, or of Town or Parish Councillors, which assert a breach of the relevant Code of Conduct, can be investigated and determined.