



Person specification Independent Member of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

West Suffolk Council is seeking Independent Members to join its Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.

Individuals will have experience of working at a senior level, not necessarily in the public sector, but with an interest in the workings of local government. You will be an impartial, independent-minded person who will have experience in one or more of the following: audit, finance, performance, treasury management, governance or risk management.

The independent member will have responsibility to the council and to assist the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee in discharging its responsibilities as set out in its Terms of Reference. Co-opted non-elected members will not be able to vote on any items considered by the committee.

The Independent Member will meet the following criteria:

Skills and competencies:

- A desire to serve the local authority and a keen interest in public life.
- An ability to understand complex issues and an understanding of the importance of accountability and probity in public life.
- An ability to be objective and impartial, and to exercise good judgement and make sound decisions.
- An ability to influence and challenge the standards of governance within the council.
- An ability to analyse evidence, to question written and verbal reports and to come to rational and well-evidenced conclusions.
- An ability to maintain confidentiality in relation to sensitive information.
- Effective interpersonal skills, in particular strong influencing and communication skills
- Ability to demonstrate integrity and discretion
- A commitment to Equality and Diversity

Independent members will need to liaise with the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer, Head of Paid Service, Head of Internal Audit, Chairman and members of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, other officers and councillors of the Council as required.

In particular, the Independent Members will be required to assist the Committee in:

- Providing independent assurance to the Council in relation to its internal control environment.

- Considering and commenting on reports from council officers, the external auditor and other inspection agencies.
- Considering any significant issues arising from internal or external audit work and ensuring appropriate actions are taken for improvement.
- Commenting on the council's arrangements to counter fraud and corruption, including effective proactive and reactive actions.
- Assisting in the review of the annual statement of accounts, including the annual governance statement and the external auditor's report.
- Assisting in the review and monitoring of the effectiveness of both internal and external audit.
- Assisting the council in promoting high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted Members through, in particular, the Suffolk Code of Conduct.
- Assisting the monitoring of the effectiveness of the Council's financial and performance framework.
- Assisting the monitoring the effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements.
- Developing a sound understanding of the ethical framework as it operates within West Suffolk Council.
- Acting as advocate and ambassador for the council in promoting ethical behaviour.

Knowledge:

All Members of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee should have, or should acquire as soon as possible after appointment, an understanding of:

- the council's structure and responsibilities
- audit, financial governance and stewardship, performance management, treasury management and risk management in either the public or private sectors
- the council's decision-making process
- the importance of ethical behaviour
- how risks and performance evolves for organisations operating with finite capacity

Experience (all or some of the following):

- Financial management (accountancy, audit or management of a large budget)
- Performance and risk management in a changing environment
- Contract management
- Corporate governance arrangements
- Treasury management
- Operating in a political environment

As part of the application, candidates are required to declare any matters that may cause a conflict of interest in performing their role. The council has the right to remove any candidates or members of the committee (once appointed) who they believe do not meet this criteria; whose interest conflict with the independent requirement, and who they believe have undertaken activities that would be considered a breach of the Suffolk Code of Conduct if undertaken by members of the committee.