Recruitment Pack for the Appointment of Co-opted Independent Member of HIWFRA's Audit and Governance Committee

Appointment of Co-opted Independent Member of HIWFRA's Audit and Governance Committee

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Co-opted Independent Member of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Authority's (HIWFRA) Audit and Governance Committee.

HIWFRA is responsible for ensuring effective, accountable, and transparent governance of fire and rescue services across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

The Audit and Governance Committee is central to this responsibility, providing scrutiny of the Fire Authority's corporate governance, financial reporting, audit and assurance, and risk management. The committee's role gives greater confidence to those charged with governance (the HIWFRA's Full Authority) that those arrangements are effective.

The Committee membership is primarily locally elected councillors, bringing democratic accountability and local insight.

HIWFRA is seeking a committed and enthusiastic individual to serve as a Co-opted Independent Member of the Audit and Governance Committee from July 2026. This is a valuable opportunity to provide an independent and high-level focus on governance, risk and control arrangements.

The role of the Co-opted Independent Member is an important and demanding one. Members are expected to hold high standards of personal integrity at all times and to be respectful of others. The Co-opted Independent Member will be a full member of the Audit and Governance Committee, but without voting rights.

There is an expectation that the Co-opted Independent Member will review papers in advance of meetings, attend the meetings held face to face during normal working hours in Eastleigh and will be prepared to scrutinise and challenge those presenting papers to the Committee. Although the Co-opted Independent Member may not vote, they are expected to be fully engaged in debate prior to any vote. They will contribute additional skills, experience, and knowledge to enhance and complement the existing capabilities of the Committee.

New appointments will be made for the maximum period of 4 years.

The Co-opted Independent Member will receive a **fixed annual allowance of £1,804.62**, paid by HIWFRA.

In addition to reimbursement of reasonable travel expenses from within Hampshire and Isle of Wight and will receive an induction and other appropriate training.

You can find the selection criteria, role description and application form below.

Means of assessment will be by application form and subsequent Microsoft Teams interview.

For further details, please contact:

Paul Hodgson
Monitoring Officer
0370 779 3213

The closing date for applications is **midday Friday 30 January 2026**

Background Information

The role of the Co-opted Independent Member for the HIWFRA's Audit and Governance Committee is new and is being introduced in response to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) guidance on Audit Committees. This was a response to the Redmond Review into the oversight of local audit and the transparency of local authority financial reporting.

The CIPFA guidance sets out the benefits of independent members as follows:

- To supplement the knowledge and experience of elected representatives in specific areas, such as audit or financial reporting
- To provide continuity outside the political cycle
- To help achieve a non-political focus on governance, risk and control matters

In 2022, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) issued its updated *Position Statement on Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police*. CIPFA strongly advocates the inclusion of independent members as a means of strengthening governance, improving objectivity, and enhancing public confidence.

CIPFA highlights that audit committees are most effective when they can provide robust, independent scrutiny of governance, risk management, and financial reporting. While elected members bring essential democratic accountability, independent members add skills and experience that may not otherwise be available, particularly in areas such as finance, audit, risk, and governance.

Independent members also provide constructive challenge free from political considerations, offering valuable external insight into complex financial and assurance matters. Their presence helps ensure audit committees operate in line with recognised good-practice standards.

In line with this guidance, many public bodies, including fire and rescue authorities, appoint co-opted independent members to strengthen their audit committees.

HIWFRA's appointment of a Co-opted Independent Member to the Audit and Governance Committee reflects CIPFA's recommended best practice and supports strong, transparent, and accountable governance.

Following the selection process, the recommended candidate(s) will be considered by the Audit and Governance Committee in March 2026, which will make a

recommendation to HIWFRA's Full Authority meeting in June 2026, where the appointment will be formally confirmed. The initial meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee takes place in July.

Selection Criteria

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

The Co-opted Independent Member will have:

- Experience either as an accountant or auditor or working with statutory accounts and with experience of financial reporting, preferably at a senior level or significant experience as an Audit Committee Member or non-executive director in a large or complex organisation.
- Understanding of finance or accounts, preferably in a public sector environment.
- Understanding of risk management in a public sector environment.
- Understanding of IT systems and security.
- Ability to be objective and impartial, and to exercise good judgement.
- Ability to digest and understand complex financial information.
- Ability to analyse evidence and ask the right questions to hold the organisation to account.
- Ability to influence others to provide appropriate challenge.
- Effective interpersonal skills with strong influencing and communication skills.

Eligibility for Appointment

A person cannot be appointed as a Co-opted Independent Member if they are or were within a period of five years prior to the appointment:

- A member, co-opted member, or officer of HIWFRA
- A relative or close friend of the above
- Have business dealings, consultancy, or other material links with HIWFRA that could compromise objectively

Applicants should note that these rules do not prevent any person who has previously served as HIWFRA's Independent Person/ from being eligible to apply for the role.

In addition, to be eligible for appointment, a person must satisfy the following:

- Be 18 years of age or over.
- Have the appropriate citizenship status to be eligible for appointment.
- Meet at least one local connection requirement.
- Not be actively engaged in local party-political activity, other than as disclosed in response to Question 6 above.
- Not be disqualified from appointment, including that they:
  - Are not subject to bankruptcy or debt-relief restrictions.
  - Have no qualifying criminal conviction within the last 5 years.
  - Are not disqualified for electoral offences.

Any involvement in political activity or campaigning, particularly at local level, may affect public perceptions of independence. Applicants are asked to indicate the nature of such activity and whether it may affect public perception of independence.

The appointment may be terminated earlier where it is deemed, in the absolute discretion of the Fire Authority, that the role holder has conducted himself/herself in a way which, if he/she was a Member/Co-opted Member of the Fire Authority, would be a breach of the code of conduct.

Role Description

Responsible to: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority (HIWFRA)

Liaison with: Monitoring Officer, members of the HIWFRA Audit and Governance Committee, officers, key stakeholders within the community. Officers acting of behalf of the Clerk to HIWFRA, officers of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service, Members of HIWFRA.

1. To assist in promoting high standards of conduct by HIWFRA, and, to uphold the relevant adopted Codes of Conduct and the seven principles of public office, namely selflessness, honesty, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and leadership.

2. To prepare for and participate in meetings of HIWFRA's Audit and Governance Committee, held in the daytime, normally four meetings per year.

3. To support HIWFRA's Audit and Governance Committee by offering constructive challenge on reports being considered by the Committee and support others to do the same.

4. To challenge and provide expertise related to finance, accounts or audit and corporate governance.

5. To keep informed of issues facing the Fire Authority and the fire and rescue sector generally.

6. To assist HIWFRA's Audit and Governance Committee to review and monitor its own effectiveness.

7. To participate in training events related to the work of HIWFRA's Audit and Governance Committee.

8. To be contactable during normal working hours by telephone or by email.

Application for the Position of Co-opted Independent Member of HIWFRA's Audit and Governance Committee

Individuals who wish to be considered for appointment as a Co-opted Independent Member to HIWFRA's Audit and Governance Committee are requested to provide the following information to support their application. All information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and will only be used for the purposes of selection. Please feel free to use a separate continuation page if you wish to expand upon your answer to any question outlined below.

1. Personal Details

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

National Insurance Number:

Contact Details:

Telephone Number(s):

Email Address:

2. Qualifications

(Please list in particular any qualifications which you think are relevant to the position of Co-opted Independent Member)

3. Summary of Experience

(Please give a brief account of your experience including career, public and voluntary work together with the nature of your current or most recent occupation)

4. Relevant Expertise/Skills

(Please outline briefly any knowledge or expertise which you believe would be particularly relevant to your role as Co-opted Independent Member having regard to the selection criteria and role description)

5. **Why do you wish to be considered for appointment as Co-opted Independent Member and what particular attributes do you believe you would bring to the role?**

6. **Please explain whether any political activity or campaigning, particularly at local level that you may have had involvement in, may affect public perceptions of independence. Applicants are asked to indicate the nature of such activity.**

7. Please provide any additional information you may wish to give in support of your application:

8. <u>References</u>

1. Name: …… Address: …… …… …… Telephone No: …… Email address: …… Relationship to applicant: ……	2. Name: …… Address: …… …… …… Telephone No: …… Email address: …… Relationship to applicant: ……

I wish to apply to be a Co-opted Independent Member of HIWFRA's Audit and Governance Committee.

In submitting this application, I declare that:

- I am 18 years of age or over.
- I have the appropriate citizenship status to be eligible for appointment.
- I meet at least one local connection requirement.
- I am not actively engaged in local party-political activity, other than as disclosed in my response to Question 6 above.
- I am not disqualified from appointment, including that:
  - I am not, and have not within the past five years, been a Member, Co-opted Member, or Officer of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority.
  - I am not related to, nor a close friend of, any Member, Co-opted Member, or Officer of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority.
  - Not subject to bankruptcy or debt-relief restrictions.
  - No qualifying criminal conviction within the last 5 years.
  - Not disqualified for electoral offences.

- I agree to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Code of Conduct Form following appointment.

Signed .....

Date .....

Please return this application form by midday Friday 30 January 2026, by email to: Governance@hantsfire.gov.uk