

## Slough Borough Council

<b>Report To:</b>	Council
<b>Date:</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> November 2025
<b>Subject:</b>	Appointment of Co-Opted Member to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Sukdave Ghuman, Monitoring Officer
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Gary Lelliot, Democratic Services & Scrutiny Manager
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Exempt:</b>	NO
<b>Appendices:</b>	None

### 1. Summary and Recommendations

1.1 This report seeks Council's approval to appoint co-opted member to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.

#### Recommendations:

Council is recommended to resolve:

- a) That, subject to obtaining satisfactory references, Basant Chana be appointed as non-voting co-opted member to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025 until the annual meeting of the Council in May 2027.
- b) That delegated authority be given to the Monitoring Officer to consider the references and decide whether to make an unconditional offer to appoint Mr Chana.

#### Reason:

To ensure all seats on committees are filled in accordance with all legal and constitutional requirements and in accordance with terms of reference of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.

#### Commissioner Review

The commissioners are content with the recommendations in this report.

### 2. Report

#### Introductory paragraph

Full Council is required to make appointments to committees and outside bodies. The Terms of Reference for Audit and Corporate Governance Committee provide for up to four non-voting co-opted members to be appointed to the committee.

## Options considered

*Option 1 – Agree to make the appointments to Audit and Corporate Governance Committee as recommended in Section 1 (Recommended).*

This option ensures independent expertise on the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, as recommended by CIPFA and in accordance with the terms of reference for the committee.

*Option 2 – Do not agree to make the appointments as recommended in Section 1 (Not recommended).*

The terms of reference for Audit and Corporate Governance Committee states there should be a minimum of one independent member and up to four. The independent members are non-voting and therefore do not impact on the political balance of the committee, however they bring skills and knowledge across a range of areas. A fair and open process has been followed and the individual has relevant skills and knowledge and it would be unreasonable not to make an appointment, subject to receipt of satisfactory references.

## Background

### Audit and Corporate Governance Committee - Co-Opted Member

- 2.1 The Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, at its meeting in January 2022, agreed revised terms of reference, which made provisions for up to four non-voting, co-opted members to be appointed to the Committee. Skills and knowledge include:
  - Demonstrated ability to support good governance principles
  - Public sector financial management
  - Corporate governance, including company board representations
  - Financial management
  - Accountancy
  - Auditing
  - Regulatory work
  - Risk management
- 2.2 The vacancies were advertised online in July 2023 and circulated to CIPFA South East Network. Following interviews by Group Leaders on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2025, it is recommended that subject to satisfactory references being received, Mr Basant Chana be appointed for a term of office until the annual Council meeting May 2027.
- 2.3 Mr Basant is a Chartered Accountant (FCA, ICAEW) with extensive senior leadership experience across finance, risk, audit, and corporate governance. He has worked with internal and external audit, overseen implementation of regulatory remediation programmes, and provided independent, evidence-based challenge to executive management. In addition, Mr Chana has working knowledge relating to audit processes, risk management principles, and the requirements of effective corporate governance.

### **3. Implications of the Recommendation**

#### **3.1 Financial implications**

3.1.1 Audit co-opted member will receive an allowance of £621 per annum and this will be met from existing budgets within Democratic Services.

#### **3.2 Legal implications**

3.2.1 The terms of reference for the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee confirms that up to four co-opted (non-voting) Independent Members can be appointed to the committee, with a minimum of one appointment. The Independent Members should have suitable experience and be selected following a fair and open process.

3.2.2 In February 2025, the Member Panel on the Constitution considered the benefits of independent members and in particular an independent chair for the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee. Members considered CIPFA Guidance: Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police. This confirms that the appointment of co-opted independent members on the committee should increase the overall knowledge and expertise of the existing members, reinforcing its independence. The Guidance recommends at least two co-opted members to supplement knowledge and experience, provide continuity, help achieve a non-political focus and demonstrate support and investment in the committee. The Panel decided not to recommend an independent chair, as it was felt that this lacked democratic legitimacy and the need for a relationship with the wider officer and member leadership and risked elected members taking a back seat and becoming overly reliant on independent co-opted members.

3.2.3 Independent members are non-elected representatives who are recruited based on the suitability of their qualifications and experience in the area of audit and/or governance. They should provide:

- specialist knowledge and insight to the workings and deliberations of the committee;
- an effective, independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework;
- an independent review of the Council's financial and non-financial performance;
- independent challenge to, and assurance over, the Council's internal control framework and wider governance processes.

3.2.6 The Independent Member would not have a vote in the same way as elected members of the Committee but will be part of the Committee in an advisory and consultative capacity. The co-opted member is not bound by the Code of Conduct for Members and sanctions under this regime do not apply, however he will be subject to an induction and will be expected to comply with standards in relation to conduct, including confidentiality and declaring interests.

### **4. Background Papers**

None