
REPORT TO:	COUNCIL	AGENDA ITEM: 8
DATE OF MEETING:	29 JANUARY 2026	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	MONITORING OFFICER	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	ELISABETH PAGE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-LAW & PEOPLE elisabeth.page@southderbyshire.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 To approve the appointment of Vivek Achar and Paul Stone as Independent Members to the Council's Audit and Governance Committee for a period of 3 years.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To recommend to Council the appointment of the Independent Members to the Council's Audit and Governance Committee.

3.0 Detail

3.1 At its Annual Meeting on 15 May 2025 Council approved the deletion of the Audit Sub-Committee and the Standards Committee to be replaced with a newly created Audit and Governance Committee, to undertake all the duties of the deleted Committees.

3.2 Council delegated to the Monitoring Officer, the advertisement of the two non-voting independent co-optee vacancies on the Audit and Governance Committee for appointment by a future meeting of Council. The positions were advertised on the Council's web site and social media platforms. The closing date for the receipt of applications was 31 October 2025.

3.3 The Monitoring Officer and Executive Director- Resources and Transformation carried out the shortlisting and interviews of those applicants who met both the legal eligibility criteria and had the essential skills, knowledge and experience that were assessed from their applications, as identified in the person specification.

3.4 Following the interviews, the Monitoring Officer recommends to Council to appoint Vivek Achar and Paul Stone as Independent Members of the Audit and Governance Committee:

- 3.5 Vivek Achar has over 25 years of experience in project management, risk governance in corporate sector roles, and currently is employed by Rolls Royce as Programme Manager – Non-Asia.

Mr Achar has gained extensive experience in both the private and public sectors, with a particular focus on financial governance and risk management, key areas for ensuring the success of an organisation. His roles as a Risk Facilitator and Assessor have honed his skills in probing, challenging and critically reviewing financial operations to ensure robust management controls.

- 3.6 Paul Stone has worked for local government for 25 years and gained experience in, accounts, finance and is practiced in audit committee functions through his role as an Independent Member at other local authorities. Mr Stone is currently employed as the Director of Resources (S151 Officer) for North West Leicestershire District Council.

Mr Stone's professional background has required him to work closely with both internal and external auditors and lead on financial close-down and year-end reporting, achieving consistently strong ISA260 reports. His experience demonstrates an ability to analyse complex financial information, think strategically, and reach practical decisions that deliver tangible outcomes. His professional expertise, governance experience, and personal integrity makes him well-placed to contribute to the Audit and Governance Committee's effectiveness and would welcome the opportunity to support the Committee in strengthening assurance, promoting accountability, and upholding public confidence in the Council's governance.

4.0 Legal Implications

- 4.1 The proposed appointments are in line with the new Committee Terms of Reference. The Independent Members role is to provide specialist advice and challenge on matters of finance and audit to the Committee. Independent Members are non-voting members of the Committee.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The successful candidates will be appointed for a period of 3 years and are entitled to the allowance as agreed on 11 September 2025 under the revised Members Allowance Scheme which totals £2,927 for the period 2025/26. Remuneration paid in 2025/26 will be absorbed into the current budget, with future budgets incorporating this payment.

6.0 Corporate Implications

- 6.1 The dissolving of the Standards Committee and Audit Sub Committee with the functions being undertaken by a new Audit and Governance Committee, including adopting terms of reference for the new Committee and making consequential amendments elsewhere throughout the Constitution
- 6.2 The Audit and Governance Committee undertakes all the duties of the dissolved Standards Committee and Audit Sub-Committee and considers matters in relation to Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) (which was removed from Overview and Scrutiny Committee). This Committee can form sub-committees, as necessary, to consider Member complaint investigations. The Committee supports the Council's financial, audit and governance functions.

7.0 Community Implications

- 7.1 The Audit and Governance Committee plays a vital role in promoting and maintaining the highest standards of conduct by Councillors of South Derbyshire District Council and all the Parishes in its area in addition to ensuring the Council properly undertakes its audit function.