

# **BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

### **APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER**

#### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

##### **1. ABOUT THE COUNCIL**

Bedford Borough Council is made up of 47 Councillors; each elected to serve one of the 28 Wards in the Borough, and an elected Mayor. The present political make-up of the Council (following the May 2023 elections) is: -

• Conservative Group	15
• Green Party	3
• Independent Group	3
• Labour Group	13
• Liberal Democrat Group	13

Elections are held every four years

The Council's budget and its major policies, such as the Corporate Plan, are decided by Full Council. However, the main decision making body is the Executive, which is responsible for decisions about the majority of Council services. There are Executive Members, including the Mayor who provides the political leadership of the Council and chairs meetings of the Executive. There are some Council functions for which the Executive is not responsible, such as decisions on planning, licensing applications and arrangements for Elections, these are dealt with by separate "Regulatory" Committees of Councillors.

In addition to the Full Council and the Executive, the other key Council Committees are:

- (Licensing Act 2003) Licensing Committee
- (Licensing Act 2003) Licensing Sub-Committee
- Adult Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Appointments Committee
- Audit Committee
- Bedford Schools' Forum
- Bedfordshire Local Pension Board
- Budget & Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- General Licensing Committee
- General Licensing Sub-Committee

- General Purposes Committee
- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Housing Committee
- Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee for Primary and Secondary Education
- Pension Fund Committee
- Planning Committee
- Standards Committee
- Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education
- Trustees of the House of Industry Estate Management Committee
- Trustees of the Mayor of Bedford's Charity

The Council has also established, with others, the following joint committees:

- Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel
- Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel Complaints Sub-Committee
- Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Wixams Joint Development Control Committee

## **2. ABOUT THE AUDIT COMMITTEE**

The Council is required by law to establish an Audit Committee. The Council's Audit Committee is composed of 7 councillors and one independent member. Audit committees are a vital part of any organisation. A dedicated, effective committee is key to supporting good governance, strong financial management and effective internal and external audit, by:

- providing independent assurance of the Council's corporate governance, risk management framework and associated control environment;
- providing independent scrutiny of the Council's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the Council's exposure to risk and impacts on the control environment; and
- approving the Council's Statement of Accounts, in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

The Audit Committee has four scheduled meetings each year to consider such issues as External and Internal Audit Reports, Annual Governance Statement, Risk Management Arrangements and the Annual Report

The Council's Audit Committee's Terms of Reference can be found: [here](#)

Information on how to watch the Council's Virtual Committee Meetings can be found [here](#).

### **Further reading**

*CIPFA's Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police 2022, and Audit Committees Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police CIPFA,*

2022 (These can be made available upon request.)

## THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

- Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
- Integrity:** Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- Objectivity:** Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- Openness:** Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- Honesty:** Holders of public office should be truthful.
- Leadership:** Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.