

# Recruitment Pack

**Independent Member for Audit Committee**

**June 2025**

## Recruitment Pack Contents

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| Contact: | Members Services |
| Direct Line: | 01234 228799/ 228256 |
| Fax no: | 01234 718391 |
| Email: | MemberServices@bedford.gov.uk |
| Date: | June 2025 |

Dear Applicant,

## APPLICATION TO SERVE AS AN INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

Thank you for your interest in becoming a member of the Audit Committee. This pack aims to provide useful information to aid you in completing your application form.

The role of the Audit Committee Independent Member is voluntary, with an annual allowance of £350 plus reasonable travel expenses. Audit Committee members are required to attend, in person, and participate in meetings of the Council’s Audit Committee, and to independently assist the Audit Committee to effectively discharge its role by providing advice and scrutiny on matters relating to the Council’s arrangements for audit, risk management, governance and control.

Detailed information about the role is given in the enclosed pack. I hope that having read this letter and the material enclosed with it, you will wish to apply to join the committee. If you would like to be considered, please complete the application form and submit it by email to: MemberServices@bedford.gov.uk or by post: **Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP.**

Deadline for applications **is midnight on 30 July 2025.**

Your application will be considered, and you will only be notified if you have been short-listed and invited for interview. If shortlisted the interview will take place on Monday 14 July 2025.

If you would like an informal discussion about the role, please contact Members Services on (01234) 228799 or 228256.

Yours sincerely, Lesley Blue

Democratic and Member Services Manager

Lee Phanco – Chief Officer for Legal, Performance & Democratic Services (Monitoring Office)

Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP

Phone (01234) 267422 DX 117105 Bedford 4

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**Audit Committee Member recruitment timeline**

1. June 2025: Advertisement of vacancy
2. 1 August 2025: Shortlisting
3. W/C 4 August 2025: Interview
4. 22 August 2025: Full Council to consider appointing nominee
5. September 2025: First meeting of the Audit Committee/ training session

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT BEDFORD AND BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

**1.0 The Borough of Bedford**

Bedford Borough Council is a unitary authority with borough status in the ceremonial county of Bedfordshire, England. The borough contains one large urban area that comprises Bedford and the adjacent town of Kempston, surrounded by a rural area compromised of villages.

## The Council’s Democratic Structure

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. Bedford Borough Council is one of only 12 Unitary Authorities in the country to have a directly elected Mayor, who is elected every four years. Councillors are also elected to the Council every four years. The last local and mayoral elections were held in May 2023.

There are four Political Groups represented at Bedford Borough Council and the number of Members in each of those Groups is as follows:

Conservative (15 including the Mayor) Liberal Democrat (13)

Labour (13)

Green (3)

Independent (3)

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

Further information about the Borough Council is available on our website: [http://www.bedford.gov.uk](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/)

## INFORMATION 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 Council’s Audit Committee’s Terms of Reference can be found: [**here**](http://bb-mgovsql01/documents/s74045/Item%2007%20Terms%20of%20Reference.pdf)

Information on how to watch the Council’s Virtual Committee Meetings can be found [**here**](https://www.bedford.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/decision-making-and-meetings/virtual-committee-meetings/)**. 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.

**BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**ROLE DESCRIPTION**

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| **JOB TITLE:** | **Independent Member of the Audit Committee** |
| **DIRECTORATE:** | **Chief Executive** |
| **SECTION/DIVISION:** | **Democratic & Member Services** |
| **DATE PREPARED:** | **December 2024** |
| **REPORTS TO:** | **Full Council** |
| **PURPOSE:** |  |
| Bedford Borough Council is committed to ensuring and demonstrating good governance and has established an Audit Committee with a remit based on CIPFA’s ‘Practical Guidance for Local Authorities’. The Committee will makerecommendations to Full Council in respect of its work. |

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| **KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES:** |
| The role of the Independent Members of the Committee will be to independently assist the Audit Committee to effectively discharge its role by providing advice and scrutiny on matters relating to the Council’s arrangements for audit, risk management, governance and control.The Audit Committee meets four times per year. Independent Members are expected to make arrangements to attend in person the majority of meetings. The business of the council may, on occasion, require additional meetings. |

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| **Skills required (see also Person Specification)** |
| * High ethical standards.
* Good communication skills both written and oral
* A willingness to participate in meetings
* Ability to take an independent, unbiased and objective view
* Ability to examine evidence and complex documentation
* Ability to ask searching questions
* A knowledge or interest in financial matters would be desirable
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| **Time commitment:** Not likely to be more than 1 day every 2/3 months, up to a maximum of 10 days per year. |
| **Remuneration:** A £350 per annum allowance (subject to annual indexation), plus reasonable travel expenses. |

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| **SPECIAL CONDITIONS:** |
| The following are not eligible to serve as Independent Members:* a serving Councillor or Officer (or the spouse or civil partner of a Councillor

or Officer) of Bedford Borough Council, or any Bedford Borough Town or Parish Council;* a former Councillor or Officer of Bedford Borough Council;
* an individual who has a material business connection with the Council; or
* those disqualified from serving as a co-opted member (see section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 34 of the Localism Act 2011).

The Council has further agreed that independent members should not:* be active in local or national politics;
* have had significant previous dealings with the Council which compromise their impartiality; or
* have a close relationship with any Member or Officer of the Council.

In addition:* You will be required to sign an undertaking to comply with the Council’s Code of Conduct for Members; and
* Canvassing by the candidate will disqualify your application.

It is anticipated that the initial period of the appointment would be for four years. |

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| **PERSON SPECIFICATION** |
| **Assessment Areas** | **Essential Criteria** | **Desirable Criteria** |
| **Relevant Experience** | Practical experience in the financial and / or general management of businesses or public sector organisations. | Experience in Local Government Environment.Audit Committee (or equivalent) experience. |
| **Specific Skills, Abilities and Qualities** | Understanding and appreciation of the importance of good corporate governance and of the key elements of audit, risk management, best value and external scrutiny.Understanding of the environment within which Councils operate (including knowledge of the principles and practices of audit, risk management, best value, external scrutiny).Understanding of Local Government accounting requirements.High Level of interpersonalskills and ability to work effectively with Elected Members and Council Officers in a formal Committee environment.The ability to assess issues relating to risk and control, and to identify and evaluate solutions.Ability and confidence to challenge and hold to account Council Officers, Portfolio Holders and representatives of Internal and External Audit.Ability to demonstrate objectivity, independence and impartiality. | Understanding of the wider local government environment and accountability structures.Awareness of Bedford and its communities and the challenges faced.Knowledge/skills/ experience in audit, or risk management, or other technical specialities pertinent to the Council’s activities.Good understanding of the roles of Internal and External Audit. |
| **Required Qualifications** | Must have a good standard of education, sufficient to understand reports and numerical information that might be complex. | Degree or relevant further education or professional qualification in accountancy, finance, risk management, business management or internalaudit. |
| **Any Additional Job Related** | Available to attend and undertake | Audit Committee members do not |

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| **Requirements** | appropriate preparation for each meeting of the Council’s Audit Committee.Ability / willingness to attend any relevant training or development activities associated with the role. | necessarily have to be residents of the borough but preferably would have a connection with the borough. |
| **Equality** | Knowledge of and commitment to Equality and Diversity. |  |

**Declaration**:

Can you outline any and all debts owed by you to Bedford Borough Council? This includes but is not limited to arrears of council tax, National Non-Domestic Rates, rent or payment for individual services. Arrangements to payment of current invoices/ bills such as by way of direct debit need not be disclosed. **Please give details below:**

I have read through all the information and can confirm that none of the disqualifications, which are listed on page 7 of this document in the section entitled ‘Role Description, Special Conditions’, apply to me.

Please tick to confirm: 

I agree to commit to follow the seven principles of public life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership) if I gain a position on the Audit Committee.

Please tick to confirm: 

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| **Signature:** |
| **Name:** |
| **Date:** |

**INDEPENDENT AUDIT COMMITTEE MEMBER**

**APPLICATION FORM**

**Please complete all sections below.**

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| --- | --- |
| **Forename:** |  |
| **Surname:** |  |
| **Home Address in full:** |  |
| **Home phone number:** |  |
| **Mobile phone number:** |  |
| **E-mail address:** |  |
| **Date of Birth:** |  |
| **Employment Status:**Employed / Self-employed / Unemployed / Retired (delete as appropriate) |
| **If employed or self-employed, please give the following details. If retired please give the relevant details at the time of retirement.****Name of Employer/Business: Nature of Business:****Position Held:** |
| **Please describe any links which you have or have had with the Borough or with the community of the Borough** e.g. living or working in the Borough, through work or business, through voluntary bodies, public bodies etc. |



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| **Are you currently a Member of any other Local Authority?** (This includes Parish Councils, Police and Fire Authorities)Yes / No (delete as appropriate)**If yes please provide the name of the Authority:** |
| **Are you a *relative* or a *close friend* of any Member or Officer of the Council?**Yes / No (delete as appropriate)**If yes, please give details:** |
| **Please provide details of any organisations (including political parties) you are, or have been a Member of during the past 5 years.** |
| **Relevant Experience and Qualities**Please explain why you wish to be a Member of the Audit Committee and give details of any relevant experience. You may wish to refer to the person specification. **(Please continue on a separate sheet as necessary).** |
| **Please supply the name and contact details of a person whom we may contact for a character reference as to your suitability for the role.****Name:****Tel:** |



**DECLARATION**

**I confirm that:**

* I have read the background information, and I understand and accept the commitment needed to be an active member of the Audit Committee.
* The information that I have provided on this application form is correct.
* I would fully respect the confidentially of the information provided to me as a member of the Audit Committee.
* I would observe any rules set by the Audit Committee and act in good faith in the interests of the Audit Committee.

## Signed:

**Date:**

**Please return this form to:**

**Lesley Blue**

**Manager for Democratic and Members**

via email: MemberServices@bedford.gov.uk

or by post:

Room 326 Borough Hall Cauldwell Street Bedford

MK42 9AP