



Lay Members – Ceredigion County Council Governance & Audit Committee

Term of Office/Key information:

Ceredigion County Council is looking to recruit 1 independent lay member of its Governance and Audit Committee.

It should be noted that, per the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the Committee is to appoint its own Chair (who must be a lay person) and Vice Chair (who must not be a member of the Local Authority Executive, or assistant to a member of the Local Authority Executive).

The advantages of having an independent member on the Committee are considered to be:

- a) to bring additional knowledge and expertise;
- b) to reinforce political neutrality and independence; and
- c) to maintain continuity of committee membership.

The appointment will be for the remainder of the current administrative term of the Council (up to May 2027), with potential for extension (up to a maximum of two consecutive administrative terms). The estimated time commitment required to undertake the role can vary, and flexibility is essential. On average, this would likely involve attendance at 5-7 daytime meetings of between one - three hours per year, plus associated preparatory reading, training and development.

For further information about the work of the Governance and Audit Committee see link below:

<https://council.ceredigion.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=147&LLL=0>

Fees (2020-2021):

Committee Member/Vice Chair standard rates of £105 per half day and £198 per full day 2020/2021, future rates to be confirmed and Chair fees to be confirmed. Travelling costs incurred will be reimbursed at 45p per mile.

Working and attending meetings either from the Council's Penmorfa offices in Aberaeron, or remotely/from home, as required.

ABOUT THE ROLE

The composition and proceedings of the Committee will be in accordance with Local Government (Wales Measure 2011), as amended by the Local Government & Elections Act 2021 and any subsequent legislation.

The role includes attending and participating in meetings of the Council's Governance & Audit Committee and assisting the Council to discharge its powers and functions as set out in the remit and Terms of Reference, of the Committee.

The Governance & Audit Committee advises the Council and Cabinet, and their respective Committees and Officers, on matters regarding good governance, financial oversight, risk management, complaints procedures and internal control in the delivery of the Council's services and functions. The Committee is responsible for ensuring the Council's systems of governance and internal control are effective and that the Council's internal audit services operates in accordance with agreed procedures.

The functions of the Committee are set out in the Terms of Reference, and include:

- Reviews, scrutinises and issues reports and recommendations in relation to the Council's financial affairs;
- Reviews, scrutinises and issues reports and recommendations on the appropriateness of the Council's risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements; and
- Oversees the authority's audit arrangements and reviews its financial statements.

In addition, the Council can confer other functions on the Governance & Audit Committee, which it deems suitable for it. The Governance & Audit Committee can decide how it wants to carry out its functions but it must have regard to statutory guidance issued by the Welsh Government. It also has regard to the CIPFA Audit Committees Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (2018 Edition).

It should be noted that lay members have voting rights on recommendations, but not policy.

The role will also include liaison with: Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance, Head of Internal Audit, Chairman and members of the Governance and Audit Committee, other Officers and Councillors of the Council as required.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

It is essential that Applicants:

- Are available to attend and undertake appropriate preparation for each meeting of the Governance & Audit Committee;
- Have a good understanding of the environment within which Ceredigion County Council operates (including knowing the principles and practices of risk management, corporate and financial governance and controls, continuous improvement and external scrutiny);
- Can assess issues relating to arrangements for risk management, governance and control, and identify and evaluate solutions;
- Can assist in providing independent assurance to the Council in relation to its internal control environment;
- Have analytical skills including the ability to weigh/sort complex evidence and documentation and reach rational, independent and unbiased conclusions, incorporating appropriate advice;
- Have strategic awareness and an ability to make clear and reasoned decisions;
- Work to high standard of behaviour, demonstrating honesty and integrity in conduct and discretion;
- Have experience in decision making;
- Have an ability to be objective, independent and impartial;
- Are able to work effectively with Elected Members and Council Officers in a formal Committee environment;
- Can consider and comment on reports from Council officers, the external auditor and other inspection agencies, identify any significant issues arising and ensuring appropriate actions are taken for improvement;
- Have the ability and confidence to challenge and hold to account Council Officers and representatives of Internal and External Audit;
- Have a high level of inter-personal skills, including an ability to work as part of a team, participating in meetings and chair meetings if necessary;
- Have good communication skills (both written and oral), excellent leadership and interpersonal skills, able to both empower and challenge supportively;
- Have a knowledge of and commitment to Equality and Diversity;
- Have an understanding of the importance of Welsh Language and Culture;
- Is 18 years old or over;
- Can demonstrate their political independence;
- Are digitally aware, with good IT skills and the ability to access reports, information and communication electronically (or be willing to undertake any necessary training); and attend any digitally remote meetings; and

- Willing to attend meetings at the Council's offices or remotely as required

It is desirable that Applicants:

- Have Governance and Audit Committee experience, or experience gained working in or with a large, or public sector, organisation, or serving on a Committee or Board;
- Have a degree/further education/professional qualification in a relevant field of study, such as accountancy, finance, risk management, business management, internal audit or law;
- Have financial, risk management, performance management and audit experience, such as practical experience in the financial and/or general management of business or public sector organisations;
- Have experience of partnership working, collaboration and improvement and performance in context of local government;
- Knowledge /skills/ experience in audit or risk management, or other technical speciality pertinent to the Council's activities, including a good understanding of the roles, and the difference between Internal and External Audit;
- Has experience in the local government environment and a knowledge of the challenges facing Ceredigion County Council and wider public services, including understanding of its communities, major functions, its vision and priorities;
- Have an ability to understand complex issues and the importance of accountability and probity in public life;
- Have an understanding of the need for independence of audit from daily management responsibilities;
- Have an understanding of the complexity of issues surrounding audit, finance and risk management in local government;
- Have an awareness of the risks of fraud and the controls to limit fraud;
- Have an understanding of Committee procedures;
- Has chaired a Committee meeting;
- The ability to converse through the medium of Welsh;
- Live and/or work in Ceredigion; and
- Has a demonstrable interest in local issues.

Applicants must not:

- Have been a member, co-opted member or employee of the Council within the last five years;
- Have been convicted of any offence;
- Be an undischarged bankrupt;
- Have significant business dealings with the Council;
- Have a formal connection with any political group;
- Be the holder of significant office in an organisation being grant aided/supported by the Council;

- Have any personal, legal or contractual relationship with Ceredigion County Council (including employees or members or former staff), or any other relationship/activity, which might represent a conflict of interest, such as a close friend or relation;
- Be an employee or Member of the Council or another Local Authority; or
- Be disqualified from holding office as a member of the Local Authority.

Any person who is recommended for appointment will be required to confirm that he/she is not disqualified.

Applicants are advised that all lay members are subject to the provisions of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members. Before being able to take office, the successful applicants will be required to sign an undertaking that they will comply with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members (available on the Council's website).

Applicants must also be aware that canvassing will disqualify their application.

Applicants are further advised that they will be required to disclose any conflicts or potential conflicts of interest with the Council, such as business or personal connections with the Council, and declarations regarding hospitality/gifts, to the Council's Monitoring Officer, as per the obligations on Members of the Council and in line with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members. If Applicants are unsure whether a conflict or potential conflict exists, or a declaration should be made, they must disclose this to the Monitoring Officer. Any questions regarding declarations/conflicts or interest or hospitality can be made to the Monitoring Officer.

Note: We reserve the right to amend the application closing date.

The Council's Corporate Strategy

The Council's *Corporate Strategy 2017-2022* details how the Council plans to continue to deliver high quality, safe, efficient and effective services to the residents of Ceredigion for the administration period of 2017-2022.

The Council knows what the priority areas for improvement are by continuing self-evaluation processes, stakeholder engagement and a diverse range of consultation events both formal and informal. The Council also has regard to national policies and priorities, as well as the Local Well-being Assessment, which has influenced the Corporate Strategy and development of the Corporate Priorities.

The Corporate Priorities include the Well-being and Improvement Objectives, for the administration period to 2022, which are designed to improve and enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being for the citizens of Ceredigion.

The Council

Ceredigion County Council employs over 3,500 members of staff serving just under 73,000 residents in a County recognised as one of the "safest places to live and work", with an enviable mix of friendly bilingual communities, vibrant culture, beautiful coastlines and rolling countryside.

The Council delivers a range of services including education, social care, highways maintenance to name just a few.

The career opportunities with us are varied and rewarding. See our [Life@Ceredigion](#) webpage for further information.

[Penmorfa, Aberaeron](#) is our most central office and it is where our Chief Executive and Councillors are based (currently most staff are working on a hybrid basis).

[Aberaeron](#) is a picture perfect harbour town and is one of Ceredigion's best-loved holiday destinations with fashionable places to stay and eat.