

Chief Executive's Office

Town Hall
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London
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Our Ref: letters/letter re Applications for
Independent Chair of Audit Committee July
2025/LS
Your Ref:
Email: Stephen.halsey@towerhamlets.gov.uk
lynne.spillett@towerhamlets.gov.uk (PA)

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk

Date: 17 July 2025

Dear Applicant

Independent Chair of the Audit Committee

Thank you for your interest in becoming the Independent Chair of the Audit Committee. I am very pleased that you have expressed an interest in the role.

We wish to appoint someone with significant experience and understanding of audit or similar formal governance committees gained in the public sector or from major complex companies. Alternatively, candidates with experience as a senior external auditor of a significant organisation or experience as a senior qualified accountant of a significant organisation are welcomed. The successful candidate needs to demonstrate a good understanding of how to improve the performance, relevance, and effectiveness of Audit Committees.

The appointment process is as follows:

- For a confidential discussion ahead of the closing date please contact Julie Towers, Managing Consultant at our recruitment partners Penna on julie.towers@penna.com or 07764 791736.
- To apply, please send a comprehensive CV and supporting statement (up to 4 pages A4) setting out your interest and relevant knowledge, experience and skills by 15th August to julie.towers@penna.com.
- If you are selected, you will be invited for an interview on w/c 8th or 15th September with a recruitment panel comprising of the Mayor, the Chief Executive and a range of cross-party Councillors.



- Additionally, the Lead Ministerial Envoy (and TAB lead for governance – to be confirmed) will attend to observe the operation of the Recruitment Panel which will recommend a final appointment to Full Council.
- The full council ratification will take place on 8th October.
- The new Chair is expected to attend their first committee on 16th October.

The Purpose of the Audit Committee

The Audit Committee is responsible for considering the Council's arrangements for internal control, governance and financial management and recommending any actions accordingly.

This includes:

- Audit Plans.
- Reports from external audit (such as the Annual Audit Letter and Governance Report).
- The Annual Governance Statement.
- Anti-fraud and corruption initiatives.
- Authority's Risk Management Arrangements.
- The administration of the Council's financial affairs.
- Approving the Authority's Statement of Accounts.

The Audit Committee is made up of seven Members of the Council as appointed by Full Council and one non-voting Independent Member. Political balance rules apply to the Committee. The quorum is 3 Members of the Committee.

The Committee typically meets about four times a year at the Town Hall in Whitechapel and the meetings are open to the public to attend.

The terms of reference for the Committee can be found at:

<https://recruitment.towerhamlets.gov.uk/jobs/independent-chair-of-the-audit-committee>

The terms of reference will be revised to designate the Independent Member as Chair of the Committee.

The Role of the Independent Chair

The primary role of the Independent Chair of the Audit Committee is to bring objectivity, impartiality, experience outside of the Council and credibility with the public and help achieve a non-political focus on governance, risk and control matters.

The Independent Chair will supplement the knowledge and experience of elected representatives in specific areas, such as audit or financial reporting and provide continuity outside the political cycle.

Please note that due to the nature of the role, applications will not be accepted if you:

- Are a member, co-opted member or officer of Tower Hamlets Council or have been so within the last five years.
- Are a relative or close friend of a person of any of the above.
- Are currently actively engaged in party politics.

Information you might find useful in considering the role include:

- [Continuous Improvement Plan](#)
- [BVI report](#)
- [Annual Governance Statement](#)

I hope that having read this letter and the material enclosed with it, you will apply for this key role.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Halsey', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Stephen Halsey
Chief Executive