

STATES OF JERSEY



COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL BOARD OF GOVERNANCE: APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND INDEPENDENT MEMBER

Lodged au Greffe on 21st November 2024
by the Chief Minister
Earliest date for debate: 21st January 2025

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

in accordance with Article 2(2) of the [Comptroller and Auditor General \(Board of Governance\) \(Jersey\) Order 2015](#), to approve the recommendation of the Chief Minister and the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee to appoint Mr Michael Whitehouse OBE as Chair and Ms Cosette Reczek as an independent member of the Board of Governance of the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, for a term of 5 years.

CHIEF MINISTER

Note: In accordance with Article 2(3) of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Board of Governance) (Jersey) Order 2015, this proposition has the support of both the Chief Minister and the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee.

REPORT

Background

Article 15 of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Jersey) Law 2014 provided for the establishment of a Board of Governance (“the Board”) to perform functions in connection with the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (“C&AG”). The Comptroller and Auditor General (Board of Governance) (Jersey) Order 2015 (“the 2015 Order”) established the Board to scrutinise the use of resources by the C&AG and the governance arrangements of the Office.

In accordance with Article 2 of the 2015 Order, as amended in February 2023, the Board shall be constituted by two to four members appointed by the States Assembly, one of whom shall also be appointed by the States as Chair of the Board.

On the 13th March 2025, the term of office for both the current Chair of the Board, Mrs Grace Nesbitt OBE, and Independent Member, Professor Russel Griggs OBE, comes to an end. Both have reached the maximum time allowed within the role, having served 2 terms of office, in line with the 2015 Order.

A recruitment exercise has therefore been undertaken to appoint a new Chair and independent member(s), in accordance with Article 24 of the Employment of States of Jersey Employees (Jersey) Law 2005, following the guidance issued by the Jersey Appointments Commission.

Recruitment process

A selection panel was established, comprising Deputy Malcolm Ferey in his capacity as an Assistant Minister to the Chief Minister, and the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee. The Greffier of the States joined the process for the selection of the Chair, and the current Chair of the Comptroller & Auditor General Governance Board joined for the selection of the Independent Member. The process to appoint the new Chair and Independent Member was overseen by the Jersey Appointments Commission, for the full end-to-end process.

The process of recruitment and attraction of candidates was managed by the Government of Jersey resourcing team, supported by a full executive search by Whitehall Industry Group (‘WIG’). Advertising was placed on both the WIG and Jersey Audit Office webpages.

The role attracted applicants from the UK and overseas, with no interest generated from on-Island candidates. The panel deliberated over a longlist of 14 applicants for the Chair role, and 25 for the Member role, shortlisting to 4 and 6 applicants respectively, to take forward to interview. Interviews were held on the 8th and 9th October 2024.

The Appointments Panel were unanimous in their recommendation to appoint Michael Whitehouse OBE as Chair, and Cosette Reczek as Independent Member, for a 5 year term.

A short biography of each follows:

Michael Whitehouse OBE

Michael Whitehouse has over 35 years' experience in public audit serving the UK Parliament. As a director and Board member at the National Audit Office (NAO), he had a wide range of portfolios, including the NHS, Defence, Education, Social Security and International. He regularly attended Committee of Public Accounts hearings.

He was the lead director responsible for the quality of the NAO's value for money work. He led the development of the NAO's cross government audits, focusing on systemic enablers of strong performance such as risk management, governance and commercial strategy. For the last eight years at the NAO, he was Chief Operating Officer responsible for running the organisation, supporting the C&AG in developing strategy and transforming the NAO's strategic partnerships.

Michael has significant international experience. He worked at the Audit Office in New Zealand. He was also the UK Commissioner on the Audit Board of the European Space Agency for 4 years. He led a major investigation into Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines and has led or participated in other international assignments across the USA, South America and Africa.

Since retiring from the NAO, Michael has served on the Republic of Ireland Audit Office. For six years, he was Honorary Treasurer and Trustee of Cruse, the UK's national bereavement charity. He is currently Interim Co-Chair of the Medicines and Health Care Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and Chair of the Audit Committee. He is Deputy Chair and Senior Independent Director at South East Coast Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust, which provides 999 and 111 services to Kent, Sussex and Surrey.

Michael was awarded an OBE for services to Parliamentary audit in the 2016 New Years Honours.

Cosette Reczek

Cosette Reczek is a Chartered Governance Professional and an alumna of the prestigious FT Non-Executive Director Diploma Programme, joining the FT NED Faculty in 2017. She has served in multiple non-executive and independent member roles, including Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee at the Valuation Office Agency (now part of HMRC), and as an Independent Member of the Audit & Transparency Committee for the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.

Her advisory work focuses on board effectiveness, governance reviews, conduct risk, and organisational culture. As the founder of Permuto Consulting, Cosette advises boards and senior leaders on these critical areas. In addition, she is a guest lecturer at both Bayes Business School and University College London, where she shares her expertise in governance and leadership.

Cosette is also a Managing Director at Standard Chartered Bank in the Corporate & Investment Banking division, bringing over two decades of experience in the financial services industry to her leadership roles.

Financial and staffing implications

There are no additional financial or staffing implications for Government, as a result of this proposition. The Chair receives remuneration of £2,000 for the position. The Member role is unpaid. Both remain unchanged.

Where necessary, reasonable expenses for travel and accommodation will be paid for attendance at meetings in London and Jersey, the cost of which will be met within the existing budgets.

Children's Rights Impact Assessment

Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) has not been prepared in relation to this proposition as a CRIA is not required, in accordance with Schedule 2 to the Children (Convention Rights) (Jersey) Law 2022.