



**REPORT TO:** Mayor and Members of Council

**PREPARED BY:** Ashley Cook, Director of Corporate Services / Municipal Clerk

**DEPARTMENT:** Corporate Services

**DIVISION:** Clerk

**MEETING DATE:** May 6, 2026

**SUBJECT:** 2026 Municipal Election - Joint Compliance Audit Committee

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**PROPOSED MOTION**

THAT the 2026 Municipal Election - Joint Compliance Audit Committee report be received for information;

AND THAT Council adopt the By-Law to establish a Joint Middlesex County 2026 Election Compliance Audit Committee in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

THAT the 2026 Municipal Election - Joint Compliance Audit Committee report be received for information;

AND THAT Council adopt the By-Law to establish a Joint Middlesex County 2026 Election Compliance Audit Committee in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, municipalities are required to establish a Compliance Audit Committee prior to October 1 in an election year to address matters related to campaign finances and contributions. Consistent with past practice, Middlesex County and its member municipalities propose to establish a Joint Compliance Audit Committee to efficiently satisfy these legislative requirements.

The proposed Terms of Reference outline the Committee’s mandate, structure, appointment process, and operational procedures. Following approval by all participating municipalities, Middlesex County will coordinate a joint recruitment process for committee members.

This collaborative approach supports cost-sharing, administrative efficiency, and consistency in decision-making across the region. Associated costs include member honoraria, mileage, and shared orientation expenses, with Middlesex County facilitating recruitment and initial advertising.

### **LINK TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

**Staff, Culture, Work Environment By providing high-quality public services**

**Fiscal Responsibility By seeking fiscal sustainability by balancing service needs, demands, and growth**

### **BACKGROUND**

Section 88.37 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended requires each municipal Council to establish a Compliance Audit Committee before October 1<sup>st</sup> in an election year to deal with matters regarding election campaign finances and contributions.

Historically, Member Municipalities within Middlesex County have established a “Middlesex Election Joint Compliance Audit Committee” to deal with matters provided for in Sections 88.33, 88.34, 88.35 and 88.36 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

### **DISCUSSION**

The attached draft Middlesex Election Joint Compliance Audit Committee Terms of Reference provides for the Committee Term, Meeting Overview, Mandate, Composition, Appointment Process, Compensation, Role of Staff, Application Process, Roles and Responsibilities and Appeal overview.

A Compliance Audit Committee is a statutory body required under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* to oversee matters related to municipal election campaign finances. The Committee is responsible for considering applications from eligible electors requesting a compliance audit of a candidate’s or registered third-party advertiser’s financial statements, determining whether an audit should be granted, and reviewing the findings of any completed audit. Where appropriate, the Committee may also commence legal proceedings in relation to identified contraventions of the *Act*.

Establishing a Compliance Audit Committee is a legislative requirement for municipalities. The Committee plays an important role in supporting transparency, accountability, and public confidence in the municipal election process for the 2026 election.

Once all Middlesex County Member Municipalities have established a Joint Compliance Audit Committee and approved a Committee Terms of Reference by By-Law, recruitment for committee members will begin. Middlesex County will facilitate the recruitment process on behalf of member municipalities. Advertising for prospective Committee Members will include the placement of ads in local newspapers, job posting sites, and by posting ads on each respective municipal website. More information about the Committee Member Appointment Process is outlined in Section 7 of the attached Terms of Reference.

### **FINANCIAL**

Costs associated with the recruitment process, including advertising expenses, will be incurred by Middlesex County as part of its coordination role.

Members of the Committee shall be paid an honorarium of \$200.00 per meeting, plus mileage at the current mileage rate established by the host municipality. The host municipality shall pay all costs relative to the respective application.

The cost of a mandatory orientation session will be divided equally among the eight (8) member municipalities.

### **ATTACHMENT**

- Attachment 1 – Joint Compliance Audit Terms of Reference
- Attachment 2 – Draft By-Law

Prepared By: **Ashley Cook, Director of Corporate Services / Municipal Clerk**

Reviewed By: Ralph D'Alessandro, Director of Finance /Treasurer

Approved By: Samuel Shannon, Interim Chief Administrative Officer