

Wiltshire Council

Standards Committee

14 November 2019

New Standards Procedures and Appointment of Standards Assessment Sub-Committee

Purpose of Report

1. This report asks the Standards Committee to consider note preparations underway for implementation of new Standards procedures, and to appoint the membership of the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee, to come into effect from 1 January 2020.

Background

2. Following consideration by the Constitutions Focus Group and the Standards Committee, Full Council on 9 July 2019 resolved to approve amendments to Protocol 12 (now 11) of the Constitution: Arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints.
3. The amendments included establishing a revised procedure for consideration and determination of Code of Conduct complaints, with determination by a standing Standards Assessment Sub-Committee rather than by the Monitoring Officer.
4. The new Sub-Committee would meet on a monthly basis and be comprised of five Members or Substitute Members of the Standards Committee, with all other Members and Substitute Members acting as substitutes for the Sub-Committee. Up to two Co-opted Members of the Standards Committee would be able to attend the Sub-Committee on an ad hoc basis.
5. A revised assessment criteria and assessment sub-committee procedure are attached as previously approved at **Appendix A**.

Main Considerations

6. On 9 September 2019 a Councillor Briefing Note was circulated to all Members of Wiltshire Council and to town and parish council clerks for information about the revised procedure approved by Full Council. This is attached for information at **Appendix B**.
7. Officers have also been preparing for updates to council webpages and internal processes in order to prepare for implementation of the new procedures, including clarifying with the Independent Persons their role within the new procedures.
8. These updates include a revised complaints form and report structure, which have been attached as drafts at **Appendix C** for information.
9. On 23 August 2019 all Members and Substitute Members of the Standards Committee were emailed on behalf of the Chairman, requesting expressions of interest to serve as Members of the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee. Given

the increased likelihood of Members being conflicted from sitting on the Sub-Committee with more complaints considered at each meeting, all other Members and Substitute Members would be provided the dates for the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee meetings to attend if necessary.

10. Five Members responded with expressions of interest to sit on the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee. These Members, if appointed, would provide a political balance of three Conservatives, one Liberal Democrat and one Independent. Whilst the Sub-Committee is not required to maintain political balance, this would be achieved by appointing those Members.
11. Additionally, the Members in question represent area from the Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western parts of the Council area as divided for regulatory matters. Their appointment would therefore offer a wide geographic range for the Sub-Committee.
12. Accordingly, the Sub-Committee is recommended to appoint the Members as detailed at paragraph 20 to the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee, and to determine who should serve as Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Safeguarding Implications

13. There are no safeguarding issues arising from this report.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

14. There are no equalities impacts arising from this report.

Risk Assessment

15. There are no risk issues arising from this report.

Financial Implications

16. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

17. The recommendations in this report are consistent with the council's duties under relevant legislation.

Public Health Impact of the Proposals

18. There are no public health impacts arising from this report.

Environmental Impact of the Proposals

19. There are no environmental impacts arising from this report.

Proposal

20. **To note the preparations for the new Standards procedures coming into effect on 1 January 2020.**

21. **To appoint the following membership of the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee, also to come into effect on 1 January 2020:**
- **Cllr Richard Britton**
 - **Cllr Ernie Clark**
 - **Cllr Ruth Hopkinson**
 - **Cllr Fred Westmoreland**
 - **Cllr Stuart Wheeler**
22. **To appoint a Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee**

Ian Gibbons, Monitoring Officer

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Appendices

- Appendix A – Revised assessment criteria and procedure
- Appendix B – Briefing note
- Appendix C – Updated Complaints Form and Report

Background Papers

[Approved Protocol 11 of the Constitution \(into effect 1 January 2020\)](#)