

Wiltshire Council

Standards Committee

25 April 2017

Appointment of Co-opted Members of the Standards Committee

Purpose of Report

1. To ask the Standards Committee to review the role, number and arrangements for the appointment of non-voting co-opted members to the Committee and recommend Council accordingly at its Annual General Meeting on 16 May 2017.

Background

2. At its meeting on 26 June 2012 Council approved terms of reference for the Standards Committee as set out in Appendix A.
3. The terms of reference provide for the appointment of up to 8 non-voting co-opted members, 50% of whom must be serving town, parish or city councillors from within the Council's area who are not councillors or officers of the Council.
4. At its meeting on 10 July 2012 Council resolved that four non-voting co-opted members should be appointed for the remainder of the council term, and delegated the appointment to the Standards Committee.
5. Following a selection process overseen by the Standards Committee four non-voting co-opted members were appointed at the meeting of the Committee on 24 October 2012 – Mr John Scragg; Miss Pam Turner; Mr Paul Neale and Mr Philip Gill MBE JP.
6. Council subsequently approved the appointment of these co-opted members for a four year term of office on 14 May 2013, reconfirming the appointments at each annual general meeting of Council.

Main Considerations

7. During their term of office the four co-opted members have provided valuable input to the work of the Standards Committee, enhancing objectivity, both real and perceived, and providing common sense and sound judgment and a parish council perspective on matters involving parish and town councillors.
8. As well as attending meetings of the Standards Committee non-voting co-opted members may serve on Review, Hearing or Dispensations Sub-Committees. Two co-opted members are appointed to serve on the Constitution Focus Group.

9. Since the appointment of the non-voting co-opted members in October 2012 there have been 14 meetings of the Standards Committee, 32 Review Sub-Committees; 1 Hearing Sub-Committee and 17 meetings of the Constitution Focus Group.

10. A number of other authorities in the South West appoint non-voting co-opted members to their Standards Committee, for example:

- Cornwall Council includes 4 lay members, 5 town and parish representatives, 1 serving clerk (allowance £1300 a year)
- Swindon Borough Council 2 lay members and two parish representatives (allowance £1032 a year)
- BANES 3 lay members, 3 parish representatives (expenses only, no allowance)

11. As far as selection is concerned, in the event of the Standards Committee recommending, and Council approving, the appointment of co-opted members, it is proposed that the selection process would be delegated to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Standards Committee, to include convening a selection panel to interview applicants drawn from those who meet the agreed eligibility criteria. These would take place as soon as possible after full Council in May.

Public Health Implications

12. None arising from this report.

Safeguarding Implications

13. None arising from this report.

Procurement Implications

14. None arising from this report.

Equalities Implications

15. The arrangements are consistent with the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Risk Implications

16. None arising from this report.

Financial Implications

17. The allowance for a non-voting co-opted member on the Standards Committee is currently £1,120 per year, as approved by Council on 10 July 2012. Therefore, the annual cost has been £4,480. This allowance is subject to review by Council after considering any recommendations of the Independent Review Panel.

Legal Implications

18. The Council has a discretion under the Localism Act 2011 to establish a standards committee to discharge its duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of elected and co-opted members and a further discretion to include non-voting co-opted members on any committee so established.

Recommendation

19. The Standards Committee is therefore asked to consider recommending the Council:
- a. whether it wishes to retain the role of non-voting co-opted members on the Standards Committee; and, if so,
 - b. how many non-voting co-opted members should be appointed within the maximum of 8 provided for in the Committee's terms of reference;
 - c. subject to a. and b. above, to delegate the appointment of any non-voting co-opted members to the Standards Committee and the arrangements for selection of such members to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Standards Committee.

Ian Gibbons
Associate Director, Legal and Governance, and Monitoring Officer

Report Author: Kieran Elliott, Senior Democratic Services Officer, 01225 718504,
kieran.elliott@wiltshire.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix A - Terms of reference of Standards Committee

Unpublished Background Papers - None