

10 July 2012

Appointment of Co-opted Members of the Standards Committee

Purpose of Report

1. To ask Council to consider the number of co-opted members to be appointed to the Standards Committee within the terms of reference agreed by Council on 15 May 2012 and to delegate to the Standards Committee the authority to make these appointments.

Background

2. At its meeting on 15 May 2012 the Council agreed to establish a new Standards Committee with terms of reference as set out at Appendix A.
3. In order to ensure continuity of knowledge and experience, and in view of the limited time available Council agreed on 26 June 2012 that initial appointments of co-opted members would be made from the existing co-opted membership of the former Standards Committee for a term of approximately 12 months until such time as new appointments are made following parish council elections in May 2013.
4. A number of the existing co-opted members who have indicated their willingness to serve as a non-voting co-opted member on the new Standards Committee have also expressed interest in applying for one of the three independent person positions. It is, therefore, proposed to hold interviews for co-opted members, if necessary, after the interviews for the independent persons on 9 July. However, it will no longer be possible to conduct these interviews on the same day, as we had originally intended, given the interview schedule for the independent persons, which is likely to last a full day. We will not, therefore, be in a position to recommend co-opted members for appointment by Council at this meeting.

Main Considerations

5. The terms of reference for the new standards committee provide for a politically balanced committee of 13 elected members and up to 8 non-voting co-opted members, 50% of whom are to be parish council representatives. They also provide that the Hearing, Review and Dispensation Sub-Committees may, in addition to the 3 elected members, include 2 non-voting co-opted members, one of whom should be a parish representative where a complaint involves a parish councillor.
6. The maximum of 8 co-opted members was recommended by the former Standards Committee, and agreed by Council, to allow for a sufficient pool of co-opted members to cover the meetings of the various sub-committees that may be required under the new arrangements. It is difficult to give any reliable indication at this stage of how many sub-committee meetings will be required. It will be necessary to wait until the new arrangements have been in operation for a while. However, fewer meetings should be required than under the previous statutory arrangements where about 30 sub-committee meetings were held last year.
7. It is open to Council to determine the number of co-opted members to be appointed within the maximum of 8 set by the terms of reference for the new Standards Committee. Alternatively, Council may wish to delegate this decision to the new Standards Committee.
8. Subject to paragraph 7 above, Council is asked to delegate the appointment of non-voting co-opted members to the Standards Committee. Otherwise this will be delayed until the Council's meeting in November, which will be unsatisfactory as the Standards Committee and its sub-committees will not be fully operational until that time.

Environmental and Climate Considerations

9. None arising from this report.

Equalities Impact

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

Risk Assessment

11. Failure to implement the new arrangements for standards may risk damage to the reputation of the Council.

Financial Implications

12. If the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel are accepted the allowance for a co-opted member will be £ 1,120 per year.

13. Implementation of the new arrangements will be met within existing resources.

Legal Implications

14. The issues covered in this report form part of the new standards framework, which the Council is required to establish under the Localism Act 2011.

Recommendations:

15. **Council is asked to:**

- (1) determine or, alternatively, ask the Standards Committee to determine the number of co-opted members to be appointed to the Standards Committee within the maximum of 8 set under the terms of reference agreed by Council on 15 May 2012 and**
- (2) subject to (1) above, to delegate the appointment of the non- voting co-opted members to the Standards Committee.**

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Appendix A - Terms of reference of Standards Committee agreed on 15 May 2012