

Report to the Council

Report of: Monitoring Officer

Date: 16 February 2010

Item: 17

STANDARDS COMMITTEE - APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER

Recommending:

- (1) That five members be appointed together with the current independent Chairman of the Standards Committee as a non-voting Chairman to form a Standards Committee Selection Panel;**
 - (2) That the Selection Panel be authorised to:**
 - (a) agree a short list of applicants for interview for the independent member vacancies on the Standards Committee which will arise in May 2010;**
 - (b) interview the persons short listed; and**
 - (c) make recommendations to the Council on appointments;**
 - (3) That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to:**
 - (a) place an advertisement in a local newspaper inviting applications;**
 - (b) prepare an applicant's pack, including application form, a job description, person specification and terms of reference of the Committee; and**
 - (c) make arrangements for suitable training of the new members when appointed;**
 - (4) That in the event of only one appointment being made, Grenville Welch continue to be an independent member of the Committee until May 2011.**
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Report

1. Mary Marshall, one of the three independent members and current Chairman of the Standards Committee, has advised that she does not wish to seek re-appointment when her current three-year term of office expires in May 2010. Grenville Welch, another one of the independent members and current Vice-Chairman of the Committee has also indicated that he wishes to stand down but is prepared to carry on for one more year if the Council cannot find a replacement to commence duties from May 2010. The other independent member, Murray Wright has indicated that he is prepared to serve for a further three-year period from May 2010.

2. A person can be an independent member only if:
 - (a) he or she has not been a member or employee of the Council within the five years before the date of appointment;
 - (b) he or she is not a relative or close friend of a member or employee of the Council;
 - (c) he or she has filled in an application for the position;
 - (d) he or she has been approved by a majority of members of the Council;
 - (e) the position has been advertised in one or more newspapers circulating in the District.
3. To meet the requirements set out in paragraph 2 above, the Council is asked to approve a procedure which will ensure that appointments are made to the vacancies at the Annual Council meeting in May 2010.
4. When an independent member was last appointed to the Standards Committee in 2007, a Selection Panel of five members was set up to make recommendations to the Council on appointments. As the appointment is non-political each of the five groups on the Council at that time nominated one member. It is proposed that a similar arrangement be made to fill the vacancies which will arise in May 2010, with each of the current four groups making a nomination and the fifth place being taken by one of the members not affiliated to a group. It is also suggested that Mary Marshall should be a non-voting member of the Selection Panel.
5. It is proposed that the Selection Panel should:
 - (a) agree a short list of applicants for interview;
 - (b) interview the persons short listed; and
 - (c) make recommendations to the Council on appointments.
6. Group Leaders have been asked to make nominations at the meeting
7. In order to make the necessary arrangements and ensure that applicants are aware of the selection criteria and terms of reference of the Committee it is recommended that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to:
 - (a) place an advertisement in a local newspaper and on the Council's website inviting applications;
 - (b) prepare an applicant's pack including application form, job description, person specification and terms of reference of the Committee;
 - (c) prepare a marking/evaluation system for members of the Panel to assess persons interviewed; and
 - (d) make arrangements for suitable training of the new independent members when appointed.

8. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Chairman of the Standards Committee is appointed from the independent members but this is a matter for the Committee at its first meeting in the 2010/11 municipal year.
9. In 2007, the Council agreed a reserve list from applicants interviewed at that time for consideration for appointment at a future date in the event of a vacancy arising. Where possible, copies of the applicant's pack will be sent to those on the reserve list.