

Report to the Council

Committee: Standards Committee Selection Panel **Date:** 18/25 September 2012

Chairman: Councillor Mrs P Smith

1. STANDARDS COMMITTEE – APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

Recommending:

- (1) That the Chairman of the Selection Panel submit the names of candidates recommended for appointment as Independent Persons; and
 - (2) That arrangements be made for the new members to receive appropriate training before they take up their appointments.
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- 1.1 We were appointed at the Council meeting on 18 June 2012 to interview and recommend the appointment of at least two Independent Persons who are required under the Localism Act 2011 as part of the new Council standards arrangements. Independent Persons are appointed to provide an impartial view these matters to the Standards Committee, the Monitoring Officer and Councillors regarding various matters such as complaints investigations, dispensations and imposing sanctions concerning breaches of the Code of Conduct.
- 1.2 The Monitoring Officer made arrangements to issue the Statutory Notice in the press inviting applications and full details were also provided on the Council's Website. This publicity resulted in a total of 12 recruitment packs being issued to interested persons. As a result, six applications were received. Under the Act appointments have to be approved by the Council by a simple majority vote.
- 1.3 All six applications met the selection criteria prescribed by Government regulations and applicants were invited to interview. Five applicants were interviewed on 18 September 2012 and one is to attend on 25 September 2012.
- 1.4 Interviews for each applicant took approximately 30 minutes and fell into three phases:
 - (a) set questions asked of each applicant on a range of topics linked to the essential and desirable competencies agreed by the Council;
 - (b) questions by the applicants themselves; and
 - (c) a concluding statement by applicants to sum up their applications.
- 1.5 After all the interviews had been held, we intend to score each applicant based on interview evidence against the key competencies. These criteria were as follows:
 - (a) an interest in public sector governance issues (essential);

- (b) experience or knowledge of public sector governance issues (desirable);
- (c) understanding of the pressures and constraints of serving as an elected or co-opted member of a democratically accountable public body (desirable);
- (d) understanding of the current policy agenda for local services (essential);
- (e) experience of handling misconduct issues (gained in the context of employment, a professional body or the voluntary sector) (desirable);
- (f) experience of reviewing data and evaluating other forms information to reach evidence based conclusions (essential);
- (g) strong oral and written communication skills (essential);
- (h) credible and authoritative personal style (essential).

- 1.6 We were assisted by the Monitoring Officer, the Deputy Monitoring Officer and Assistant Director Democratic Services who were there to answer factual questions but took no part in the final decision and voting.
- 1.7 As our final interview is not scheduled to take place until two days before the Council meeting, we are recommending that our Chairman should propose the Panel's preferred candidates at this Council meeting. We are also recommending that once the Council has made a decision on this appointment the two successful applicants be given training on the Standards Committee prior to taking up their duties.
- 1.8 We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.

Members of the Selection Panel:

Councillors Mrs P Smith (Chairman), K Angold-Stephens, A Mitchell, D Stallan and J H Whitehouse.

Background Papers:

Applicants' pack (including assessment criteria) and other correspondence.
Applications and Assessments.