

Report to the Council

Report of: Monitoring Officer

Date: 19 December 2006

Item: 15

STANDARDS COMMITTEE - APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER

Recommendations:

- (1) That five cross party 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 vacancy on the Standards Committee which will arise in May 2007;**
 - (b) interview the persons short listed; and**
 - (c) make recommendations to the Council on an appointment;**
- (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 member when appointed.**

Report

1. Dr D Hawes, one of the three independent members and current Chairman of the Standards Committee, has advised that he does not wish to seek re-appointment when his current three-year term of office expires in May 2007. The other two independent members have indicated that they are prepared to serve for a further three-year period from May 2007.

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 an appointment is made to the vacancy at the Annual Council meeting in May 2007.
4. When independent members were initially appointed to the Standards Committee in 2001, a Selection Panel of cross party members was set up to make recommendations to the Council on appointments. It is proposed that a similar arrangement be made to fill the vacancy which will arise in Mat 2007.
5. It is suggested that a Selection Panel be appointed comprising one representative from each political group plus Dr Hawes as a non-voting member to:
 - (a) agree a short list of applicants for interview;
 - (b) interview the persons short listed; and
 - (c) make recommendations to the Council on an appointment.
6. Group Leaders have been asked to make nominations at the meeting. It is understood that the Conservative Group and the Independent Group will be nominating their members who are the existing District Councillors on the Standards Committee, namely Councillors Mrs P Smith and Mrs D Borton.
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 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 member when appointed.
8. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Chairman of the Standards Committee is appointed from the independent members or the parish/town councils'

representative but this is a matter for the Committee at its first meeting in the 2007/08 municipal year.

9. In 2001, 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.