

CO-OPTION OF PARISH MEMBERS

Report Author Ifty Ali - Deputy Monitoring Officer, 01908 252478
Acting AD Law and Governance

1. Purpose

1.1 To discuss the options concerning the co option of Parish Members.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the co-option of three non voting parish members with previous Standards Committee experience to sit on the Committee up until 1 May 2013, namely Councillors David Livingstone, Michael Geddes and Norman Wilkes, be approved.

2.2 That the Full Council be recommended to approve that those Parish Members be co-opted onto the Standards Committee.

2.3 That the Monitoring Officer be instructed to approach those Members and invite them to attend Standards Committee training sessions as appropriate.

2.4 That the Monitoring Officer be instructed to send a formal letter of invitation to the Parish Councillors and the clerks of the Parish Councils concerned.

2.5 That the Monitoring Officer be instructed, prior to the final Standards Committee meeting of the Council year (2012-2013), to undertake a recruitment exercise and to present a list of names, and other details for consideration of co-option by the Standards Committee for the 2013/14 Council year.

3. Background

3.1 The Local Government Act 2000 and subordinate legislation introduced the requirement that where an authority was a responsible authority (an authority with parish councils in its area) at least two members of the Standards Committee should be parish councillors from the local area.

3.2 Further provisions stated that where any issue was to be determined by a sub committee of the Standards Committee, and the complaint concerned a parish matter, one of the members of the sub committee should be one of the parish members of the Standards Committee. As this was a statutory provision, the parish members had full voting rights.

- 3.3 The statutory provisions for Standards Committees came to an end on 1 July 2012, and from that date onwards, it has been a matter for Milton Keynes Council to determine how best to discharge its duties in respect to promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct and also put in place arrangements under which allegations of any breach of a Code of Conduct may be investigated and determined.
- 3.4 On 11 July 2012 a new Code of Conduct and arrangements for the determination of complaints were agreed by the Council. These arrangements included the terms of reference of the new Standards Committee, which include;
- “There shall be the power to co-opt between two and four members who shall be parish councillors within Milton Keynes but who may not otherwise be members of Milton Keynes Council.”
- 3.5 The arrangement also set out the role for Parish Members, both to attend, in a consultative, non voting role, at the initial decision in respect of any complaint against a parish member and also to attend, in a consultative non voting role, the determination of any investigation carried out under the arrangements.
- 3.6 This is a time of significant change in respect of the Standards agenda and as a result, it is suggested that members of the Committee may wish to consider re-appointing those parish members who sat on the Committee previously, as they are familiar with the Standards regime generally and also with the changes to the law in this area.
- 3.7 It is suggested that as the one year term reaches its end a recruitment exercise is undertaken, approaching all parish/town/community councils in Milton Keynes and requesting that members be put forward by parish councils to serve as co-optees on the Committee. The Standards Committee is to consider the list of potential co-optees and recommend co-options to the Council at the Annual Business Meeting of the Council in May 2013.

Background Papers: None