

Report considered by the Business Management Group –
9 November 2005

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Contact Officer: Phillip McCourt (Head of Legal and Property Services) MK 252962

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Further to Minute CL66(a), of the Council meeting held on 11 October 2005, to consider a process for the appointment of an additional independent member to the Standards Committee.
- 1.2 To review the person specification for an independent member.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the person specification for an independent member be approved.
- 2.2 That a public advertisement be placed for an additional independent member of the Standards Committee.
- 2.3 That the chair of the Standards Committee and the Head of Legal Services prepare a shortlist of suitable candidates for interview.
- 2.4 That a Panel be appointed, comprising the Chair of the Standards Committee and the three spokespersons of the Business Management Group, or their nominees, to interview and recommend to the Council the appointment of an additional independent member to the Standards Committee.
- 2.5 That the Council be recommended to adopt a term of office for any appointee which expires immediately prior to the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2009.

3. Issues and Choices

- 3.1 The Council is required by the Local Government Act 2000 to have a Standards Committee. Regulations made under the Act specify that at least 25% of the membership of the committee should comprise members independent of the authority.
- 3.2 At its meeting on 12 September 2005, the Standards Committee considered a report on its constitution, noting that as currently constituted it did not comply with the relevant legislation, in that the proportion of independent members on the Committee was less than 25%.

- 3.3 In order to rectify the situation the Committee agreed, in the short term, to regard only one of the Parish Council representatives as a member of the Committee and, in the longer time, to request the Council to appoint a further independent member.
- 3.4 The Council at its meeting on 11 October 2005, adopted the recommendation of the Standards Committee to appoint an additional independent member.
- 3.5 It is suggested that a public advertisement be placed advertising the vacancy.
- 3.6 The Group is therefore asked to consider a selection procedure. It is suggested that a Panel of four Members, including the Chair of the Standards Committee and comprising a Standards Committee representative of each of the political groups on the Council be appointed to shortlist, interview and recommend an appointment to the Council.
- 3.7 Alternatively, the Group could undertake the whole process itself, or delegate certain aspects, such as compiling the shortlist, to the Head of Legal Services, possibly in consultation with the Chair of the Standards Committee.
- 3.8 The two existing independent members, are appointed for a term expiring immediately prior to the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2007. It is suggested that any new appointment is for a four year term, similar to that of Elected Members, expiring immediately prior to the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2009. This would provide some continuity for the independent member representation on the Committee, in that the independent members would not all retire at the same time, so retaining at least one experienced independent member on the Committee at all times.
- 3.9 A copy of the person specification for an independent member, used during the previous recruitment campaigns, is attached as an **Annex**. The Group is requested to review the person specification and suggest any changes it would wish to see.

4. **Implications**

4.1 Policy

None

4.2 Resources

There are no specific resources identified to support this process. Any costs are met from within existing budgets, with the work being carried out by the Head of Legal Services personally.

4.3 Legal

The legal implications are addressed at paragraph 3.1 of this report.

Regulations prohibit the appointment of people who are, or have been a Member or officer of the Council and those who are relatives or partners of an officer or Councillor. Also the Council has, in the past, sought to assure the

independence of candidates by making sure that they are clearly seen by all to be outside of party politics

Background Papers: None