

Council

Appointment of New Independent Member to the Standards Committee

19th May 2010

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To confirm the appointment of Derek Bacon as the new Independent Member of the Standards Committee and to confirm the remaining terms of the other three Independent members.

This report is public

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- (1) To approve the appointment of Derek Bacon as an Independent Member of the Standards Committee for an initial two year term
- (2) To approve the continued appointment of Dr Sadie Reynolds for a further two years at the end of which Dr Reynolds will no longer be able to serve having completed eight years
- (3) To approve the continued appointment of Mr James McBeth for a further four years
- (4) To confirm the initial two year appointment of Mr Ken Hawtin will end at the end of the 2010/2011 municipal year

Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 Independent members are important in providing a clear signal to the public that the Standards Committee acts fairly and impartially. Legislation requires that at least 25% of the Standards Committee should be made up of Independent members. There is no upper limit to the number you may have.
- 1.2 The Standards Committee reported to Council on 19th April that Mr Frewer

had resigned, because of moving house, and that a recruitment process was taking place to appoint a new Independent member.

- 1.3 The recruitment process was successful and a number of good potential candidates have been interviewed.
- 1.4 Standards for England recommendation is for an initial four year term for Independent members so they have long enough to gain an understanding of the authority and utilise the training received. The maximum term recommended is a further four years making a total of eight years. Cherwell have generally appointed for an initial term of two years, then appointed, if both parties are happy, to a four year term then confirmed a further two year period in which plans can be made for a replacement.

Proposals

- 1.5 To appoint Mr Derek Bacon as the new Independent member for an initial two year term.
- 1.6 To confirm Mr Ken Hawtin's appointment in January 2009 for an initial two year term which will expire at the end of 2010/2011
- 1.7 To confirm that Mr James McBeth, originally appointed in April 2008, is appointed to serve a further four year term. Mr McBeth is currently Vice Chairman of the Standards Committee and now has considerable experience of Assessment subcommittees.
- 1.8 To confirm that Dr Sadie Reynolds, originally appointed in 2004, continues for a further two years. Dr Reynolds is currently Chairman of the Standards Committee

Conclusion

- 1.9 It is necessary for the number of Independent members to be at least 25% of the total membership of the committee. It is important that Independent members have long enough in their position to be able to make a full contribution but not so long that they could be perceived as losing their independence. The proposals outlined clarify the length of term for each of the current Independent members and ensures differing end dates in line with Standards for England guidance so that all the experience is not lost simultaneously.

- 3.1 The Standards Committee must have 25% Independent members and currently does not.
- 3.2 A number of good potential candidates have come forward so we now have a few possible interested candidates for positions in the future.

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

- Option One** Accept the recommendations as drafted
- Option Two** Amend the recommendations
- Option Three** Reject the recommendations

Implications

- Financial:** The costs for the four Independent members are contained within the budget.
Comments checked by Denise Westlake, Service Accountant, 01295 221982
- Legal:** It is a legal requirement that the Standards Committee has a minimum 25% Independent members
Comments checked by Liz Howlett, Head of Legal and Democratic Services 01295 221686
- Risk Management:** There are no risk implications to this report
Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management and Insurance Officer 01295 221566

Wards Affected

All

Document Information

| Appendix No | Title |
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| | |
| Background Papers | |
| | Local Standards Framework Guide for authorities |
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