

BODY: COUNCIL

DATE: WEDNESDAY 17 JANUARY 2007

SUBJECT: STANDARDS COMMITTEE – APPOINTMENT OF SECOND INDEPENDENT PERSON

REPORT OF: MONITORING OFFICER

Ward(s): All

Purpose: To consider the appointment of a second Independent Person to the Standards Committee as recommended by the Selection Panel.

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Recommendations:

1. That the Selection Panel's chosen candidate, to be reported at the meeting, be appointed as the second Independent Person to the Standards Committee and be given appropriate training to fulfil the role.
2. That the Selection Panel's recommended initial appointment period, to be reported at the meeting, be approved.
3. That if confirmation of acceptance from the preferred candidate cannot be obtained prior to the meeting, the appointment be delegated to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Selection Panel.
4. That the allowance payable under the Member Allowances Scheme of £135 per day up to a maximum annual payment of £2,700 for the period to 31 March 2007 be noted.

1.0 Background and Introduction

1.1 The Council at its meeting on the 28 November 2001 agreed arrangements to ensure that the Council's Standards Committee complied with the Local Government Act 2000 and associated Regulations. This involved a revision of the Committee's size, composition and terms of reference and the recruitment of an Independent Person. Subsequently the Council adopted its new Constitution in May 2002.

1.2 The Council at its meeting on 16 April 2003 approved a change to the composition and with effect from 2003/04 the membership of the Committee was increased to 6 members, 2 members from each group and 2 independent members.

1.3 The Council's current Independent Members are Mr A Hobden who was appointed to the Committee on 25 September 2002 and became Chairman in 2003/04 and Mr J Libeccio who was appointed in December 2004.

2.0 Appointment of Independent Person

- 2.1 Guidance from the Standards Board for England suggests that four years is the optimum length of service for an Independent Member and that local authorities should consider reviewing their independent membership after that period of time. Mr Hobden's term of office was completed in September 2006 and authority was sought to begin the formal process of appointing a replacement independent member.
- 2.2 Council at its meeting on 20 September 2006 agreed the arrangements for the appointment and to the extension of Mr Hobden's term of office until 31 December 2006 to allow for the recruitment and appointment process to be undertaken.
- 2.3 Following the advertisement of the post in the Eastbourne Herald on 8 December 2006, eight applications were received. A Selection Panel comprising Mr J Libeccio, Councillors Lucas and Stanley and the Monitoring Officer will interview the selected candidates on Tuesday 16 January 2007.
- 2.4 The Selection Panel's chosen candidate will be reported at the meeting.

3.0 Consultation

- 3.1 None specific to this report.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There will be costs associated with the allowance payable to the Independent Person and appropriate training to ensure the chosen candidate can fulfil the role and participate effectively in the work of the Committee.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The appointment of a second Independent Person to the Standards Committee is required to comply with the latest legislation and the Council's Constitution. The Independent Person will have an important role in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by elected members and co-opted members of the Council.

Jeremy Chambers
Monitoring Officer

Background Papers:

The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

1. Standards Committee Reports on Appointments and Procedures dated 30 October 2001 and 18 October 2004.
2. The Relevant Authorities (Standards Committee) Regulations 2001.
3. Local Government Act 2000.
4. The Council's Constitution

To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.