
STANDARDS COMMITTEE – INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

Responsible Cabinet Member(s) - Councillor John Williams, Leader

Responsible Director(s) - Paul Wildsmith, Director of Corporate Services

Purpose of Report

1. To submit to the Council for approval details of three applicants to be Independent Members of the Council's Standards Committee.

Background

2. Council will recall that at its meeting on 23rd November 2006, it considered a report setting out the legislative requirements regarding the appointment of Independent Members of the Standards Committee and Council agreed that:-
 - (a) The number of Independent Members on the Standards Committee be increased to three.
 - (b) The Borough Solicitor be authorised to advertise and make arrangements to appoint all three Independent Members of the Standards Committee.
 - (c) The Standards Committee Independent Members Appointments Panel be increased to four members, with the Chair of the Standards Committee as the fourth member.
3. In accordance with that decision, an advertisement was placed in the Northern Echo and the Darlington Advertiser on Monday, 8th January 2007, inviting applications by the 31st January 2007. In order to maximise applications a number of high profile individuals were identified and contacted, and letters were sent inviting these individuals to apply for the position. The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer also recorded a radio appeal for local radio station, Alpha Radio, and issued a press release to the Northern Echo, in order to increase awareness of the vacancy.
4. In response to a large number of written and telephone requests, and discussions about the nature of the post, many application packs were sent out to interested persons. Twelve completed applications were received altogether including those from the existing members of the committee. In order to avoid additional costs in advertising in September 2007 when the current positions are due to come to an end, it was decided to consider these additional two positions alongside the new vacancy and as a result the existing Independent Members were invited to submit application forms.
5. In order to ensure that the appointment of a new Independent Member on the Standards Committee may be recommended to Council on the 1st March 2007, a decision was made to

convene a short listing panel in order to short-list the applications for presentation to this appointments panel. The short-listing panel met on the 8th February 2007 and short-listed five applications.

6. The five short-listed applicants were then invited for interview by the Standards Committee Independent Members Appointments Panel on the 19th February 2007. Following the interviews the Standards Committee Independent Members Appointments Panel resolved that:-
 - (a) Mike Airey be re-appointed as an Independent Member on this Council's Standards Committee.
 - (b) Francis Hayes be appointed as an Independent Member on this Council's Standards Committee.
 - (c) Mike Hill be appointed as an Independent Member on this Council's Standards Committee.

Legal Implications

7. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

8. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

9. The issues contained within this report are required to be considered by Council.

Recommendation

10. Council are requested to :-
 - (a) Agree the recommendations of the Standards Committee Independent Members Appointments Panel.
 - (b) Re-appoint Mike Airey as an Independent Member on this Council's Standards Committee.
 - (c) Appoint Francis Hayes as an Independent Member on this Council's Standards Committee.

(d) Appoint Mike Hill as an Independent Member on this Council's Standards Committee.

Reasons

11. The recommendations are supported to ensure that Independent Members of the Council's Standards Committee are appointed in accordance with the statutory process and as accordance with the previous resolution of the Council, namely, to increase the number of Independent Members on the Standards Committee to three.

Catherine H. Whitehead
Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Background Papers

- (i) Report to Standards Committee, 17th July 2006.
- (ii) Minute ST3 of Standards Committee, 17th July 2006.
- (iii) Report to Council, 23rd November 2006.
- (iv) Minute 58 of Council, 23rd November 2006.

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