

**Council**

**On 19 January 2009**

Report Title. Increase in Independent Membership for Standards Committee

Report of John Suddaby, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

Signed :

Contact Officer : John Suddaby, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

Wards(s) affected: N/A

Report for: **Information and decision**

**1. Purpose of the report**

1.1. To advise members of the decision of the Standards Committee of 22 December 2008 to increase the Independent Membership of the Standards Committee by 1 additional Independent Member, and to request Full Council to endorse this recommendation and to amend the relevant section of the Council's Constitution accordingly, and in accordance with the requirements in the Local Government Act 2000 and the Relevant Authorities (Standards Committee) Regulations 2001.

1.2. To seek Council approval for the Standards Committee recommendations.

**2. Introduction by Cabinet Member (if necessary)**

2.1. Not applicable

**3. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities and actions and /or other Strategies:**

3.1. The council are obliged by law to appoint independent members to serve on the Standards committee and this is provided for in the Council's Constitution

#### **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1. To note this report and the recommendation from Standards Committee that the Membership of the Standards Committee be increased by one independent member, to 5 in total and that this additional position be recruited to as part of the recruitment process for independent members to be embarked upon in February 2009.
- 4.2. To approve the recommendation of Standards Committee, and to amend the relevant part of the Council's Constitution (Part Two – Articles of the Constitution – Article 9.02 (a) Membership) in relation to the Independent Membership of the Standards Committee.

#### **5. Reason for recommendation(s)**

- 5.1. The council are obliged by law to appoint independent members to serve on the Standards committee and this is provided for in the Council's Constitution

#### **6. Other options considered**

- 6.1. Not applicable

#### **7. Summary**

- 7.1. The Standards Committee currently has four independent members. It is proposed by the Standards Committee to increase this membership by 1 additional independent member to serve for four years. The process for recruitment of an additional member will form part of the recruitment process to be commenced in February 2009.

The Standards Committee is required by national legislation to have at least one independent member and also independent members must form 25% of the committee. The rules in relation to political balance do not apply to Standards Committees. Legislation provides that independent members

- must not have been a member or employee of Haringey Council within 5 years before the date of appointment.
- must not be a relative or close friend of a member or employee of Haringey Council
- must have filled in an application form
- must have been approved by the majority of the Council's members.

At its meeting on 22 December 2008 the Standards Committee considered and agreed that the independent membership of the Standards Committee should be increased by 1 member making a total of 5 Independent Members. The committee was of the view that this was necessary given the likely possible increase in the frequency of the Standard Committee's Assessment Sub-committee meetings, and that the increase of 1 independent member would assist in this process.

The Council's Constitution currently requires there to be four independent members on Standards Committee. Any increase would need to be agreed by full Council.

#### **8. Chief Financial Officer Comments**

8.1. The Chief Financial Officer has been consulted on this report and comments that the additional costs set out in paragraph 13 will be met from within existing resources.

#### **9. Head of Legal Services Comments**

9.1. The legal and constitutional implications are set out in the body of the report.

#### **10. Head of Procurement Comments**

10.1. Not applicable

#### **11. Equalities & Community Cohesion Comments**

11.1. Recruitment will take place in accordance with the Council's policies

#### **12. Consultation**

12.1. Not applicable

#### **13. Service Financial Comments**

13.1. The appointment of an additional Independent Member will result in the payment of an additional allowance, which currently stands at £615 per annum.

#### **14. Use of appendices /Tables and photographs**

14.1. Not applicable

**15. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

- 15.1. Local Government Act 2000
- 15.2. Council's Constitution
- 15.3. Standards Board for England Guidance
- 15.4. Member Services and Legal Services files.