

Report for: Standards Committee 23 January 2020

Title: **Recruitment process for the Appointment of Independent Person - Standards Committee from 30 June 2020 – 29 June 2024**

Report authorised by : Bernie Ryan – Assistant Director Corporate Governance & Monitoring Officer

Lead Officer: Ayshe Simsek – Acting Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** Non Key Decisions

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 This report sets out the recruitment process for the appointments of up to two persons under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

N/A

3. Recommendations

3.1 To note the process set out at paragraphs 4.4 to 4.7 and provide any comments.

3.2 To note that the proposed appointment will be considered by the Standards Committee at the 2nd of March meeting and will be for onward approval by full Council at their meeting on the 16th of March.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Council must appoint at least one Independent Person (IP) whose views are to be sought and taken into account by the Council before it makes its decisions on allegations about breaches of the Code of Conduct. The views of the Independent Person may also be sought by the Council's Monitoring Officer where an investigation has not yet been commenced, and by a member who is the subject of a complaint.

- 4.2 Under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 the Council must have in place arrangements for inviting Independent Persons to be involved in making recommendations to Council before any decision to dismiss a statutory officer. It would be possible to use IPs other than those appointed to support the Standards Committee, or IPs from other authorities for this purpose, however it is considered sensible to use the IPs supporting the Standards Committee for this purpose if needed as well
- 4.3 Following on from Standards Committee's approval in October 2019 to the recruitment process to seek an Independent person (to commence office on 1 July 2020 for an initial 2 year term and with the option to extend for a further two years), the recruitment process proceeded in December 2019 and January 2020. There is an advert for the post in the local press and on the Council website with a closing date of the 2nd of February 2020.
- 4.4 Given the Committee need to recommend these appointments to the full Council it is appropriate that three members of the Committee be involved in the shortlisting and interview process for these positions. The interview panel will need to be politically proportionate with 2 Labour Councillors and 1 Liberal Democrat Councillor. It is usual for the Chair of Standards to lead these proceedings with assistance from Legal services and Democratic services. Cllr Cawley Harrison has been invited by virtue of his membership of the Standards Committee and keeping to the rules of political proportionality. Therefore, a further Labour nomination will be sought at the meeting to participate in the shortlisting and interview process. It is proposed to hold the shortlisting exercise in the week beginning the 3rd of February.
- 4.5 Democratic Services will compile and provide the Standards interview panel members, completed application forms, person specification form, submitted CV's and required extracts of the legislation concerning appointment of Independent Persons on the 3rd of February. Members will be asked to consider applications against the person specification and focus on the essential criteria, deciding if these are strongly met, met, partially met and not met. The candidates that score more/most strongly met on the criteria should be invited to the interviews. Legal services will also share some suggested questions for the interviews for comments by the Member Panel in this part of the process.
- 4.6 Interviews for the position will take place on the week beginning the 10th or 17th of February according to Member availability. These interviews will be held at the Civic Centre and there will be around 45 minutes allocated for each person successful in the shortlisting process. There will then need to be a further time period for scoring and agreeing the successful candidates. Therefore, it will likely be necessary to diarise around 4 hours for the interviews and conclusions.
- 4.7 Following on from the decision of the interview panel, the successful candidates will be written to and references sought. Legal services will compile an exempt report for Standards Committee on the 2nd of March 2020 to consider and agree the recommendations of the interview panel for a Primary and Secondary Independent Person. The Committee will ask Full Council on the 16th of March to confirm this appointment.

5. Statutory Officers comments

Financial Implications

- 5.1 The cost of the recruitment exercise and payment of Allowances will be met from the Democratic Services budget

Comments of the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance and Legal Implications

- 5.2 These are contained within the report.

Equalities

- 5.3

6. Use of Appendices

N/A

7. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 7.1 Background documents:

Recruitment of Independent Person – Standards Cttee – 14/10/19

The background papers are located at River Park House, 225 High Road, Wood Green, London N22 8HQ.

To inspect them or to discuss this report further, please contact Ayshe Simsek on 0208 489 2929.