

COUNCIL**On 9 January 2006**

Report Title: Recruitment of Independent Members for Standards Committee

Forward Plan reference number (if applicable): N/A

Report of: Davina Fiore, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

Wards(s) affected: All

Report for: Information and Decision

1. Purpose

1.1 To update members on the selection process for independent members of the Standards Committee to serve from May 2006, 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. Recommendations

2.1 To note this report and the recommendation from Standards Committee that one new independent member be recruited from the current recruitment exercise to serve for 4 years from May 2006.

2.2 To approve the recommendation of Standards Committee that Nicholas Weber, Irene Francis and Roger Lovegrove be appointed to serve as independent Members on the Standards Committee from May 2006 for two years.

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3. Executive Summary

3.1 The Standards Committee currently has four independent members who were appointed until May 2006. It was proposed to recruit two independent members each two years, to serve for four years. However, the limited response of high quality

candidates to the recruitment exercise has led to a recommendation that one candidate be appointed from the current recruitment exercise to serve for four years and the existing three independent members be appointed to serve for a further 2 years.

4. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

4.1 Local Government Act 2000

4.2 Council's Constitution

4.3 Standards Board for England Guidance

4.4 Member Services and Legal Services files.

5. Background

5.1 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.

5.2 This Council's Constitution provides that the Standards Committee is composed of 8 councillors and 4 independent members and that the independent members must not be councillors or officers of the Council or any other body with a Standards Committee.

5.3 In September the Standards Committee considered a report on the recruitment of independent members to serve on the Standards Committee from May 2006. It agreed a revised job description, person specification, advertisement and application process to result in a recommendation to full Council to appoint independent members to serve from May 2006. It was agreed that 2 new independent members would be recruited and recommended to Council for appointment and that 2 of the existing 4 independent members would be recommended to full Council to be appointed for a further 2 years. This was to ensure:

- that there is some continuity on the Standards Committee and that there are always some independent members with some experience, rather than having four new independent members start at the same time and
- that the independent members appointed are of a sufficiently high calibre. It is more likely to be possible to recruit two high quality independent members at one time, than four.

- 5.4 The advert to recruit independent members was placed at the start of October in Local Haringey newspapers, (Camden Gazette, EC1 Gazette, Islington Gazette, Hornsey and Crouch End Journal, Muswell Hill Journal, Tottenham, Wood Green and Edmonton Journal), in Haringey People and on the Haringey Council website with a closing date of 14 November 2005. The Monitoring Officer received a number of telephone calls from people expressing an interest and 17 application packs were sent out. Three completed application forms were received. Cllrs Winskill and Robertson met and considered the applications, advised by the Monitoring Officer. Two of the applications met the shortlisting criteria.
- 5.5 As only two applicants are shortlisted to be interviewed, the Standards Committee considered the position again at its meeting on 5th December. As three of the existing independent members are eligible to serve again, it was decided to recommend to Council that they serve again for a period of two years.
- 5.6 The Committee was informed that some members have asked questions about this process and the number of independent members on the Standards Committee. Councillors were advised:
- i) that the appointment of independent members of the Standards Committee will be made by full Council after considering recommendations from Standards Committee.
 - ii) that the Council's Constitution currently requires there to be four independent members on Standards Committee. Any change would need to be agreed by full Council.
 - iii) all meetings of the Standards Committee or hearings held, have to have an independent member present in order for the meeting to be quorate. It is good practice to have more than one independent member on Standards Committee to ensure that any meetings and hearings can take place without unnecessary delays caused by the unavailability or conflict of interest of an independent member.
- 5.7 The Committee agreed that it did not wish to request full Council to alter the makeup of the Committee, and noted that a review was planned.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 To note this report and the recommendations from Standards Committee that one new independent member be recruited from the current recruitment exercise to serve for 4 years from May 2006.
- 6.2 To approve the recommendation of Standards Committee that, Nicholas Weber, Irene Francis and Roger Lovegrove be appointed to serve as independent members on the Standards Committee from May 2006 for 2 years.

7. Comments of the Director of Finance

- 7.1 There are no financial implications.

8. Comments of the Head of Legal Services

8.1 The legal position is set out in the report.

9. Equalities Implications

9.1 Recruitment is taking place in accordance with the Council's policies.