

6. APPOINTMENT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE (A.1148/EWJ)

Proposal

1 This report requests the meeting to appoint Members to the Standards Committee.

2 RECOMMENDATION:

1. **That 3 Council Members and 3 Secretary of State Members be appointed to the Standards Committee.**
2. **That attendance at all meetings be an approved duty under the Members' Allowances Scheme.**

Policy/Legal Background

3 The composition of the Standards Committees is governed by The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008.

4 The Regulations prescribe that at least 25% of the membership shall not be Members of the Authority.

5 At the Authority meeting on 7th December 2007 the membership was increased from 6 to 9 Members to include three Independent Members. An additional Independent Member was appointed in February 2008. This increase was necessary to enable the Committee to take on the new statutory responsibilities, from May 2008, for receiving, assessing and determining complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct.

6 The current membership is:

Council Members:

Clr Mrs J Bevan
Clr A Marchington
Clr Mrs I Ratcliffe

Secretary of State Members:

Miss P Beswick
Mrs S Prince
Vacant

Independent Members:

Mr R Ashworth, Mrs J Carr, Mr R Todd.

Key Issues

7. The Standards Committee is a statutory requirement of the Local Government Act 2000. The terms of reference are to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members by assisting observation of the Authority's Code of Conduct and advising the Authority on the adoption of a Code of Conduct, monitoring the Code and advising and training members on matters relevant to the Code.

7. Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act the functions of the Committee have been extended from May 2008. Complaints against Members for a breach of the Code of Conduct will now be made direct to the Standards Committee rather than the Standards Board for England. The Committee has the powers to consider a complaint and to decide whether or not to carry out an investigation or take other appropriate action.

8. The Committee can hold hearings following an investigation into a complaint that a Member has breached the Code of Conduct. If the complaint is upheld appropriate penalties can be imposed on the Member, including suspension from the Authority for a period of up to six months.
9. The Committee also has a new power to determine appeals by staff against a decision of the Authority to designate a post as a politically restricted post.
10. The Committee and any sub-committees now have to be chaired by one of the Independent Members.

APPENDIX

Background

- 1 See main report

Resources

- 2 Attendance at meetings is an approved duty and the Independent Members are paid a Co-optees allowance of £543 per annum together with travel and subsistence allowances. These payments are provided for in the Members' Allowances budget.

Risk Management

- 3 There are no risks arising out of the proposals.

Human Rights, Equalities, Health & Safety

- 4 There are no issues arising out of the proposal.

Consultees

- 5 None required

Enclosures

- 6 None.

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

- 7 None.

Report Author

- 8 Eugene Judge, Democratic Services Manager.

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