



STANDARDS COMMITTEE REPORT

Report Title	Recruitment of Parish Councillors and Independent Members to the Standards Committee
---------------------	---

AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Committee Meeting Date:	20 March 2017
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to ask the Standards Committee to consider the need to recruit Independent Members and Parish Council Members for appointment to the Standards Committee.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Standards Committee instruct the Working Group, *Work Plan* to:
- a) devise and conduct a process for the recruitment of two Parish Councillors and two Independent Members to be recommended for co-option onto the Standards Committee; and
 - b) following conclusion of the process, bring recommendations to the Standards Committee for appointments by co-option of Parish Council Members and Independent Members of the Standards Committee.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background and Issues

- 3.1.1 The Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee set out in Article 10 of the Council's Constitution state:

The Standards Committee will be composed of 9 Councillors. In addition the Standards Committee shall appoint:

- *such Independent Members as the Committee considers appropriate. The Independent Members shall not have the right to vote;*
- *two Parish Council Members without the right to vote.*

3.1.2 The Terms of Reference also provide for the Standards Committee to establish a Hearings Panel. The Hearings Panel would be convened on an ad hoc basis where a Code of Conduct complaint against a Councillor (Borough or Parish) had progressed through the process to the stage where it becomes necessary to determine whether a Councillor has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct. If the complaint in question was about a Parish Councillor, one of the two Parish Council Members of the Standards Committee would be an additional member of the Hearings Panel.

3.1.3 There are currently two vacancies on the Committee for Parish Council Members.

3.1.4 There are currently two vacancies on the Committee for Independent Members.

3.1.5 The Independent Members who are appointed to the Standards Committee are different from the statutory Independent Persons appointed by Full Council pursuant to the Localism Act 2011. The ability to co-opt Independent Members onto the Standards Committee is something that the Council has chosen to do. The purpose of having co-opted Independent Members on the Standards Committee is to bring external, independent views onto the Committee. By contrast, the statutory Independent Persons are not members of the Standards Committee. The statutory Independent Persons have specific roles in relation to standards case work (ie. where complaints are received by the Monitoring Officer that a Borough Councillor or Parish Councillor has breached the Code of Conduct).

3.1.6 As the Standards Committee commences work on the matters set out in its Work Plan for 2017/18, it will become increasingly important that the Committee has full membership. Although Parish Councillors and Independent Members on the Committee will not have the right to vote, they will bring valuable, external views and knowledge to the Committee.

3.1.7 It will be important for the Work Group to ensure that it carries out a process that communicates widely in advertising these vacancies to ensure a sufficient range and number of potential applicants are reached. The Standards Committee Work Plan anticipates that the Standards Committee will be in a position to make appointments at its next meeting in June 2017. This will depend on the success of the recruitment process.

3.2 Choices

3.2.1 It is recommended that the Standards Committee instruct the Working Group, *Work Plan* to:

- a) devise and conduct a process for the recruitment of two Parish Councillors and two Independent Members to be recommended for co-option onto the Standards Committee; and
- b) following conclusion of the process, bring recommendations to the Standards Committee for appointments by co-option of Parish Council Members and Independent Members of the Standards Committee.

3.2.2 The alternative is to leave the Committee without Parish and Independent Members. This is not recommended.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 This report does not have any direct policy implications.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 This report does not have any direct resource implications.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report. Any process used to select individuals for recommendation to the Standards Committee in the event that there are a number of expressions of interest to become wither a Parish Council Member of Independent Member of the Committee, will have due regard to equality and diversity implications.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 Not applicable.

4.6 Other Implications

4.6.1 None.

5. Background Papers

5.1 Report - Parish Councillors and Independent Members to the Standards Committee – December 2015

**Francis Fernandes
Borough Secretary**