

**Report to:** **Standards Committee**

**Date of Meeting:** 13 August 2019

**Public Document:** Yes

**Exemption:** None

**Review date for release** None



**Subject:** **Recruitment process for co-optees to the Standards Committee**

**Purpose of report:** This report considers the process of recruiting co-optee members to the Standards Committee.

**Recommendation:** **Members consider the appropriateness of the co-optee recruitment process.**

**Reason for recommendation:** To enable the Standards Committee to consider whether or not the current recruitment process is fit for purpose.

**Officer:** Henry Gordon Lennox, Monitoring Officer

**Financial implications:** No financial implications have been identified as a consequence of the report.

**Legal implications:** These have been incorporated within the report.

**Equalities impact:** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk

**Links to background information:** • [Report to HRB on recruitment process - 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017](#)

**Link to Council Plan:** Living in this Outstanding Place

## **Report**

1. The Standards Committee comprises 9 individuals. The Chair of the Committee must be the Chairman of the Council. There are four other district councillors appointed at Annual Council on the basis of political balance rules. There are also then 2 non-voting parish councillor representatives and 2 non-voting independent members also appointed by Council and confirmed at Annual Council each year. The Independent Person is entitled to attend the committee given their role in relation to standards matters.
2. There are certain limitations imposed in relation to the composition of the committee, as detailed in Article 9 of the Constitution. These are that there may be one Cabinet member on the committee but this may not be the Leader. The independent members may not be councillors or officers of the Council or any other body having a standards committee. Parish members must be a member of a parish or town council wholly or mainly in the Council's area and not be a councillor or officer of the Council. Finally, both the independent and parish councillor members are appointed for a four year term (although a parish councillor member shall automatically cease if they cease to be a parish councillor), although Council may renew this for a further four year term.

3. In terms of recruiting for both the independent and parish councillor representatives the process is broadly the same with only the advertising of the vacancy varying. The post is advertised, for the independent representative this entails adverts in the local press and on our website while for the parish representative all of the Parish and Town Clerks are emailed informing them of the vacancy and asking that they pass it on to all their members. Anyone interested in a vacancy is expected to complete an application form with their personal information and detailing relevant experience and explaining what they can bring to the role. Candidates would then be shortlisted, although where we only have a handful of applicants, as is generally the case, then all applicants are interviewed. Interviews are conducted by the Chair of the Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer where all candidates are asked a standard set of questions. Supplementary questions are asked to clarify detail on the application form or to explore pertinent points further. The best performing candidate is then recommended for appointment. Council votes on the appointment on the basis of a clear majority vote.
4. The Standards Committee had its inaugural meeting in January 2002. There is no record of the Committee specifically considering the recruitment process, although there is reference to the committee resolving that '*appropriate steps be taken to appoint*' when vacancies arose in October 2007. Notwithstanding this, the process identified above essentially appears to have been in place and followed since the early 2000s.
5. The only other committee of the Council that has co-optees that specifically need to be recruited for is the Housing Review Board ('HRB'). It too has different types of co-optees to recruit for. It has adopted procedures for these various types in 2006 and 2008. More recently in January 2017 it has reviewed the procedures and adopted a standardised approach. The report to HRB can be found in the background links, which in turn has hyperlinks to the 2006 and 2008 reports. The minutes record the decision taken as follows;

***'57 Housing Review Board recruitment***

*Consideration was given to the Democratic Services Officer's report which reviewed the recruitment and selection procedures for tenant and leaseholder members of the Housing Review Board and for independent community representative Board members. The revised process ensured that the recruitment and selection process for all co-opted members of the HRB was consistent. Arrangements would also be put in place to avoid the necessity for holding an election, which would be a costly exercise.*

*The report proposed that in order to involve existing members of the Board in the selection of new co-opted members, three Board members put their names forward to work with officers on the selection process when a vacancy on the Board occurred. Alternatively all existing Board members could be involved in the process, in which case a 'meet the Board' event could be organised for applicants and an opportunity for the Board to choose the new Housing Review Board 12 January 2017 member(s). The Board agreed that three members (one tenant, one councillor and one independent representative) should be selected and members were asked to put their names forward.*

***RECOMMENDED:***

- 1. that the revised recruitment and selection process of co-opted members of the Housing Review Board be adopted.*
  - 2. that three current Board members be selected to assist in the selection of co-opted members; these were Councillor Jim Knight, tenant Mike Berridge and independent community representative Christine Drew.*
  - 3. that the terms of reference of the Housing Review Board be updated accordingly.'*
6. The process now in place for the HRB is very close to the procedure used to recruit to the Standards Committee with some variations.
  7. Members are invited to consider the suitability of the current arrangements, in light of the approach formally adopted by the HRB, and Members can ultimately decide on alternative recruitment arrangements should they so wish. However it should be noted that it is preferable to maintain a degree of consistency in our approach to recruitment.