

## **Meeting of the Council - 27th April, 2009**

### **Report of the Interim Director of Law and Property**

#### **Appointment of Independent Member to the Standards Committee**

##### **Purpose of Report**

1. To consider a recommendation of the Interviewing Panel of the Standards Committee regarding the appointment of a third Independent Member of the Standards Committee.

##### **Background**

2. The Council is required to appoint a Standards Committee and at least 25% of its membership must be independent members. Currently the Standards Committee comprises six elected members (i.e. two members from each of the three political groups) and two independent members one of whom, the Bishop of Dudley, is the Chairman. Sadly, a third independent member, a Mr John Beards, appointed by the Council in April, 2008, passed away in October, 2008, creating a vacancy.
3. At its meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2009 the Standards Committee agreed the process regarding the appointment of a third independent member.
4. Following a public advertisement inviting applications by the 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2009, an applicant to become the third independent member was interviewed by a Panel of the Standards Committee but subsequently declined to take up the offer of appointment.
5. Given the difficulty experienced in securing an appointment approaches were made to neighbouring authorities to ascertain whether a serving member on their Standards Committees would wish to serve on the Council's committee.
6. Arising from this a panel of Members of the Standards Committee, comprising Councillors Mrs Martin and Ms Boleyn, interviewed a Mrs Valerie Ainsworth, and were unanimous in their recommendation that her appointment be referred to the Council. Their recommendation was subsequently endorsed by the Chairman of the Standards Committee, the Bishop of Dudley.
7. **Finance**
8. The post of Independent Member is unpaid but an independent member is entitled to receive travelling expenses.

## **Law**

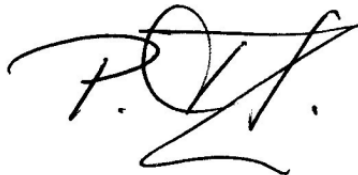
9. The appointment of independent members to a Standards Committee is governed by Section 56 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008. At least 25% of the membership of the Standards Committee must be independent members and their appointment must be confirmed by full Council.

## **Equality Impact**

10. The process of recruiting and interviewing for the post of Independent Member has complied fully with the Council's policies on equality and diversity.

## **Recommendation**

11. That Mrs Valerie Ainsworth be appointed as an Independent Member of the Standards Committee for a term of four years with effect from the 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2009.



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**Philip Tart**  
**Interim Director of Law and Property.**