

Meeting of the Council - 26th April, 2010

Report of the Director of Corporate Resources

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 an 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 three independent members one of whom, the Bishop of Dudley, is the Chairman.
3. As the Bishop's current four year term of office expires on 26th April, 2010, the Standards Committee at its meeting held on 20th January, 2010, agreed the process, including the advertisement and interviewing of candidates, for the appointment of an independent member to the Committee.
4. In so doing, the Committee noted that the Standards Board for England had issued guidance that the appointment of independent members should be on the basis of a term of four years with a maximum of two terms, although this was at the discretion of each authority and that independent members could not be re-appointed without a recruitment process being undertaken.
5. As this was the Bishop's second term of office, the Committee proceeded to give consideration to the guidance, in the absence of the Bishop who left the meeting during discussion on this item, and concluded that, given difficulties experienced by the authority in recruiting and retaining independent members of the Committee, the local circumstances would be such as to justify the waiving of an appointment for two terms only.
6. Following a public advertisement inviting applications by 5th March, 2010, applicants were invited to attend for interview by a Panel of the Standards Committee, comprising a Member from each of the three political groups and an independent member, on Monday, 22nd March, 2010.

7. Arising from the interviews held the Panel were unanimous in their recommendation that the appointment of the Bishop of Dudley be referred to the Council.

Finance

8. The post of Independent Member is unpaid but an independent member is entitled to receive travelling expenses.

Law

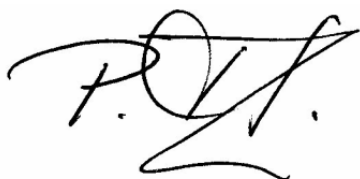
9. The appointment of independent members to a Standards Committee is governed by Section 56 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008. At least 25% of the membership of the Standards Committee must be independent members and their appointment must be confirmed 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 the Bishop of Dudley, the Right Reverend David Walker, be appointed as an Independent Member of the Standards Committee for a term of four years with effect from 27th April, 2010.



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Philip Tart
Director of Corporate Resources