



<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>MONITORING OFFICER</b>
<b>TO:</b>	<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>
<b>ON:</b>	<b>17<sup>th</sup> March 2016</b>

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**SUBJECT: Appointment of Independent Members to the Standards Committee**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To review and agree arrangements for the appointment of independent members of the Standards Committee.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Standards Committee is asked to receive the report and agree one of the following options:

- 1) Recommend to annual council to keep the existing independent member arrangements to continue for a second term of 4 years, with 2 terms being the maximum for all independent members.

Or

- 2) Authorise the Monitoring Officer to advertise for and recruit 2 new independent members and recommend to annual council, their appointment.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to establish a Code of Conduct for Members. This provides the mechanism by which the Council can ensure that it maintains the highest standards of ethical behaviour from its Members.

On 30<sup>th</sup> August 2012, at Council Forum, the Council adopted its Code of Conduct for Members. This is based on the Model Code approved by the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities ('AGMA').

Our Code of Conduct includes details of our arrangements to deal with complaints.

The Composition of the Standards Committee is set out as follows:-

-9 Councillors (politically balanced – currently 7 Labour and 2 Conservatives)

-2 People who are not a Councillor or an Officer of the Council (Independent members) co-opted onto the Committee without voting rights.

-2 Members of Parish/Town Council co-opted on to the Committee and without voting rights

The current 2 independent members are Paul Fletcher and Tassadaq Hussain. Both members were appointed by the Standards Committee at their meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2013, following local advertisement, recruitment and selection.

Over the last 4 years our current independent members have been very committed and have developed valuable experience.

The Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their service and to recognise their respective contributions.

Members may consider that a change of membership could bring new knowledge and a further skills base to the committee.

#### **4. RATIONALE**

The Councillor members on the Standards Committee are appointed annually. Independent members serve for four years.

As our current independent members have been in office for almost 4 years, it is appropriate for the committee to review their appointment and explore options.

Members are requested to consider whether a second term could be completed by independent members, should they be willing to continue with their appointment. This would be consistent with, for example, the independent members of the Crime and Police Panel for Lancashire, who serve for 4 years with a maximum of 2 terms of office.

In order to demonstrate independence, the following categories of persons are excluded from applying to be an independent member:

- Anyone who has been an Officer of the Council during the past five years;
- Anyone who has been a Member of the Council during the past five years: or
- A close friend or relative of an Officer or Member.

The appointment process to the Standards Committee is undertaken by the Council, although an independent member is obviously not an employee.

Successful applicants would require specific training to enable them to undertake their new role effectively.

The Hearings Panel of the Standards Committee requires at least 1 independent member co-opted and 3 council members drawn from at least 2 different political

parties, to sit on it.(There will also be 1 Parish/Town councillor if the matter relates to a complaint against a Parish or Town Councillor.)

## **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Independent Members, as part of the Standards Committee, are responsible for embedding compliance with The Code of Conduct which is included in our Constitution. The Constitution sets out the governance framework for local authorities, which provides the foundations for any local authority that aspires to be effective, progressive and successful.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

An allowance of £287.10 is payable for independent members of the Standards Committee as set out in the member allowance scheme. Furthermore, they are entitled to reimbursement of the expense of attending meetings. This is provided for within existing resources.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Legal background to appointment of independent members is set out in the body of the report.

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

Should the independent members sit for another term this would avoid the time and cost of administering the recruitment and training process.

## **9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

Any recruitment process would be subject to the Council's equal opportunities, recruitment and selection policies.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

Not applicable.

### **Chief Officer/Member**

Contact Officer: Sian Roxborough, Head of Legal Services  
Date: 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016  
Background Papers: Council Constitution as published.  
Council Reports - The Localism Act 2011- Code of Conduct for Members.