



Walsall Council

Standards Committee

6 April 2009

Recruitment of Independent Members to Standards Committee – 2009/10

Summary of Report

This report provides the Committee with an update on the recruitment of Independent Members for the period 2009/10 onwards.

Recommendations

- (1) That the content of the report be noted;

Resource Considerations:

Financial:

The Council will incur costs relating to recruitment which will be met from existing corporate budgets.

The Council will incur costs in reimbursing independent members reasonable out of pocket expenses (such as travelling and subsistence and other related expenses). These are difficult to quantify in advance and will be dependent on the Committee's level of activity during an independent member's period of office.

It is expected for these costs to be met from existing corporate budgets.

Legal:

There is a requirement to recruit independent members to the Standards Committee which ensures its proper constitution in accordance with current legislation.

Staffing:

None arising from this report

Citizen Impact:

Standards Committees were devised in part to bring about an improvement in standards in local government and also to raise public confidence. By adopting an open and transparent recruitment procedure, the Committee will be contributing to raising the public's perception and confidence of standards in the authority. The ability to apply for positions also enables citizens to participate and contribute to local democracy.

Community Safety:

None arising from this report

Environmental:

None arising from this report

Performance and Risk Management:**Risk:**

The risk of members not being trained could lead to unsafe decision making.

Performance Management:

None arising from this report

Equality Implications:

Independent members will be recruited to the Standards Committee having regard to the Council's Equal Opportunity Policy and best practice recruitment and selection procedures.

As co-opted members to a Committee of the authority, the independent members will need to observe and comply with the Council's Code of Conduct for Elected Members.

The Code requires that members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers and its other employees.

Consultation:

None arising from this report

Background papers

All published

Signed:

Assistant Director of Legal and Constitutional Services

Date: 17 March 2009

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Background

At the Standards Committee meeting on 5 January 2009, the Committee received a report relating to the appointment of independent members to Standards Committee.

Following a full discussion the Committee considered ways of attracting new independent members and it was agreed that Walsall Pride should be used as a recruitment tool.

Discussions have subsequently been undertaken with Communications (who publish Walsall Pride on a quarterly basis) and we have been advised that the next edition should be published at the end of May. However, this may be put back following the publication of a special "Credit Crunch/Recession" edition which is to be delivered to local homes in April. We have spoken to Communications who will prepare an article for inclusion in the next regular edition of Walsall Pride.

We have also spoken to HRD regarding the building of a mini-web site similar to that used in 2008.

We are currently awaiting costings and agency deadlines before proceeding further.