



## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

4 AUGUST, 2004

AGENDA  
ITEM: 6

### APPOINTMENT OF THREE INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO STANDARDS COMMITTEE

#### Summary of report

This report advises the Committee of the decision of Council from its adjourned meeting on 30 June, 2004 appointing the following persons as independent members on this Committee:

Mr. M. Hodgson  
Mrs. S.F. Parsons  
Mr. R. Taylor

#### Recommendations

That the content of the report be noted.

Signed .....

Assistant Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

Date: 26 July, 2004

#### Background papers:

Report to Standards Committee on 29 April 2004.

#### Financial implications

There will be a cost to the Council in reimbursing independent members reasonable out of pocket expenses, such as travelling (subsistence) and other related expenses. These are difficult to quantify in advance and will be dependent on the level of activity of the Standards Committee. It is expected that all associated costs will be met from current budgets.

**Equal opportunity implications**

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

As a co opted member to a committee of the authority the independent members will need to observe and comply with the Councils code of conduct for elected members. That 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.

**Environmental impact**

None

**Legal implications**

Legal implications arising from this report are set out in the body of this report.

**Contact officer:**

Frazer Powell, Walsall 652015

**REPORT DETAIL**

Following my report to the meetings on 18 March and 29 April, 2004, an advert for the three vacancies for independent members was placed in the local press, the Council's job shop website, local ethnic minority press and a mail shot was sent to all women's groups in the Borough. The purpose of this was to ensure that the recruitment process complied with statutory requirements and that applications were drawn from the widest range of potential applicants.

Six applications were received, however, one was subsequently withdrawn. The remaining five applicants met the application criteria and were called to attend an interview panel held on Tuesday 22 June 2004. The panel comprised of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Ansell, the Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor Withnal. The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group requested that Councillor Mrs. E.E. Pitt substitute for him on the panel. The substitution was approved by the Monitoring Officer.

Each applicant was interviewed by the panel. The interview consisted of a 10 minute presentation on the principles that govern the conduct of elected Members and examples of those principles being applied and a number of questions on the role of the Standards Committee and the role of the independent member on that Committee . Each application was considered carefully and advice was given by the Monitoring Officer. The panel recommended that Mr. M. Hodgson, Mrs. S. Parsons and Mr. R. Taylor would best fulfil the requirements of the position and recommended that they be appointed by the Council, subject to satisfactory Criminal Record Bureau checks and suitable references. Some of this information is still outstanding at the date this report had to go to print, but we hope to have received the information by the date of this Committee meeting. Officers will advise further at the meeting. At its adjourned meeting the Council was advised of this and approved the appointments, subject to satisfactory information being received.

During the recruitment process all applicants were advised of the need to stagger the periods of office of independent members and were asked to express a preference for a period of office. This was done to ensure that the knowledge and experience gained by members would be retained by the Committee and shared with newcomers. It also ensured that the process was seen to be fair and transparent. The period of office of the independent members appointed are as follows:-

Mr. M. Hodgson	One year (until the end of the Municipal Year 2004/2005)
Mrs. S. Parsons	Three years (until the end of the Municipal Year 2006/2007)
Mr. R. Taylor	Three years (until the end of the Municipal Year 2006/2007)

The details of the existing independent members periods of office on the Committee are as follows:-

Mr. L. Bates	- until the end of the Municipal Year 2005/2006
Miss K. McLeod	- until the end of the Municipal Year 2004/2005
Mr. R. Meller	- until the end of the Municipal Year 2005/2006