

Council – 14th January 2008

Appointment of independent member to Standards Committee

Summary of report

This report seeks approval to the appointment of an independent member to the Standards Committee.

Independent members of the Standards Committee are appointed by rotation, with two members of the Committee retiring each municipal year. Approval is sought to the appointment of one independent member to the Standards Committee.

Recommendations

That Mrs. Harjan Bashir be appointed as an independent member to the Standards Committee for a period of three years until the end of the municipal year 2009/10.

Resource and legal considerations

Independent members are entitled to reasonable out of pocket expenses such as travelling/subsistence/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.

Equality implications

When independent members have been recruited, regard has been taken to the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and best practice in recruitment and selection procedures has been observed.

Independent members are bound by the Member's Code of Conduct and as such are required to promote equality. The independent member understands that she cannot unlawfully discriminate against any person and will treat people with respect regardless of their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender or disability.

Background

The Local Government Act 2000 and regulations thereunder require each authority to establish a Standards Committee of which 25% of that membership must comprise of independent members. The Committee currently consists of four elected members and six independent members.

The recruitment process

The recruitment of independent members to the Committee follows publication of a public advertisement in local and ethnic press.

The appointments can only be made if they are approved by a majority of the members of the authority and are not related to or a close friend of any Councillor or officer of the authority. Further they cannot have been a member or officer of the authority in the preceding five years.

An interview panel comprising of Councillor E. E. Pitt (nominee of Councillor I. Shires), Councillor J. G. O'Hare, Councillor I.S. Robertson (nominee of Councillor T. S. Oliver) and Councillor D. J. Turner (Chairman of the Audit Committee) interviewed all of the applicants.

Following deliberation the panel unanimously agreed to appoint Mrs. H. Bashir to the Standards Committee.

To ensure continuity and retention of service, the Standards Committee have agreed a system of "retirement by rotation" for their independent members. This means that two of the longest serving members of the six retire each year. Therefore, it is recommended that the appointment to the Standards Committee be for a period of three years or until the end of the municipal year 2009/10.

Signed:

**Assistant Director of Legal and
Constitutional Services**

Date: 4th January 2008