

Minutes of: STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 28 September 2017

Present: Councillor (in the Chair)
Councillors T Cummings, J Harris, T Holt, D Jones, J Kelly
and Y Wright

**Also in
attendance:**

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor R Hodgkinson and Councillor T Pickstone

183 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

**184 RECRUITMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH
LOCALISM ACT 2011**

A report of the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services was submitted requesting that the Committee take steps to implement a "pool" of Independent Persons.

Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 imposes a duty on the Council to "promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members" of the Council. The Council is required to adopt a Code dealing with the conduct that is expected of Members and Co-opted Members of the Council and they are acting in that capacity; and must have in place arrangements under which allegations that a member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and be investigated.

The arrangements to deal with Code of Conduct allegations must include the appointment of at least one "Independent Person", whose views must be sought and taken into account before any decision on an allegation which has been investigated is taken.

When the provisions came into force and in 2012 the Monitoring Officer advertised vacancies for the appointment of one Independent Person and two reserve Independent Persons. A Committee comprising the Chair and three other members of the Standards Committee was set up to short list and interview candidates and to make a recommendation to Council for appointment. The function of setting the initial expenses for an Independent Person and in reserve Independent Persons was delegated to the Standards Committee. At that time an Independent Member was appointed to the Standards Committee and an Independent Person was appointed following an Appointments Panel.

The report set out details of the role and function of the Independent Person, along with options in respect of the appointment process and remuneration arrangements.

Delegated Decisions:

1. That the Committee agrees that three potential Independent Persons should be selected for recommendation to full Council.
2. That the Committee approves the recruitment pack for advertisement with adverts to be placed in the local press.
3. That the interview panel comprise of 3 Members from the Standards Committee with representation drawn from each of the 3 Groups.
4. That the Independent Persons be appointed for a fixed term period of 4 years
5. That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to finalise the recruitment and make the necessary arrangements, in consultation with the Chair of this Committee.
6. That an Annual Payment of £500 be paid for the role of Independent Person (to be approved with the appointment of the Independent Persons by full Council).

185 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS AND ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER 2016/17

The Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report setting out the findings and recommendations of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in respect of complaints during 2016/17. The report provided a brief commentary on the Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter, including changes implemented and proposals for future working.

A breakdown of referrals and complaints by Service was provided within the report.

It was agreed:

1. That the content of the Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter to the Council be noted
2. That the complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman referred to the Council during 2016/17 and their outcomes be noted

186 DISQUALIFICATION CRITERIA FOR COUNCILLORS AND MAYORS

The Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted details of a consultation by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The consultation concerns proposals for updating the criteria disqualifying individuals from standing for, or holding office as, a local authority member, directly elected mayor or member of the London Assembly.

It was agreed:

That individual comments or views on the consultation be submitted to the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services to formulate a response in consultation with the Chair of the Standards Committee.

**COUNCILLOR
Chair**

(Note: The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.25 pm)