

## **Committee: Standards Committee**

**Date: 24 October 2012**

Agenda item: 7

Wards: All

### **Subject: Appointment of co-opted members of the Standards Committee**

Lead officer: Paul Evans, Monitoring officer

Lead member: Cabinet Member for Finance

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#### **Recommendations:**

- A. That the Standards Committee appoints an interview panel to interview and recommend to Council the appointment of a third co-opted member of the Committee from 1 July 2013.
  - B. That the panel, advised by the Monitoring Officer, agrees the arrangements to advertise the position of co-opted member.
  - C. That the Standards Committee agrees to recommend to the Council that the term of office for co-opted members will be for three years and that a maximum of two consecutive terms can be served and that Part 3B of the Constitution is amended accordingly.
  - D. That the Standards Committee determines whether the current co-opted members would be eligible to be appointed for a second consecutive term and recommends to Council accordingly.
  - E. That, subject to the Council agreeing recommendation C above, the term of office of the two current co-opted members be three years from 1 July 2012.
  - F. That the Standards Committee recommends to the Council that persons who have served as Councillors or co-opted members, or are close friends or relatives of such persons, within five years prior to the appointment date are not eligible to serve as a co-opted member and that Part 3B of the constitution be amended to include this eligibility criteria.
  - G. That eligibility for co-opted members is restricted to persons who live or work in Merton and that Part 3B of the constitution be amended to include this eligibility criteria.
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#### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. On 11 July 2012 the Council agreed that there should be 3 non-voting co-opted members appointed to the Standards Committee. Nigel Brotherton and Beverley Huie were asked to take up two of these posts and have agreed to do so. The third post is currently vacant. It is necessary to make arrangements for the filling of this vacancy and to determine the criteria and terms of office for co-opted members.

## **2 DETAILS – TERMS OF OFFICE**

- 2.1. The Independent Persons have been appointed for a period of three years and can be re-appointed for one further period of three years. The appointments run from July 2012.
- 2.2. It is recommended that the co-opted member appointments should have the same arrangements and that the third co-opted member be appointed from 1 July 2013.
- 2.3. The current co-opted members were first appointed in September 2009 to the former Standards Committee and have, therefore, already served three years although this was in a different capacity. Committee will need to determine whether they would be eligible to be re-appointed at the end of their current terms.
- 2.4. The five year exclusion period between appointments and for former Councillors and co-opted members and their close friends and relatives in recommendation F is the same as for the Independent Persons.
- 2.5. The terms of office agreed by Committee will need to be agreed by the Council as amendments to the Standards Committee's terms of reference in Part 3B of the Constitution.

## **3 DETAILS – CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY**

- 3.1. The only formal criteria suggested is that the co-opted member should live or work in the Borough. The interview panel will agree an advertisement for the position which will set out the suggested experience and background which may be useful in undertaking this position.
- 3.2. Eligibility criteria will need to be agreed by the Council as amendments to the Standards Committee's terms of reference in Part 3B of the Constitution.

## **4 DETAILS – INTERVIEW PANEL**

- 4.1. It is recommended that an interview panel be appointed and that this panel will recommend direct to Council. The panel would also agree the advertising and shortlist applicants. The constitution of the panel in respect of political representation is a matter for the Committee. The panel will not be decision making so co-opted members of the Committee are eligible to be appointed.
- 4.2. Possible configurations are:
  - (i) A four person panel with one member from each group on the Committee plus a co-opted member
  - (ii) A three person panel with one co-opted member and two political groups represented
  - (iii) A three person panel with one member from each group and no co-opted member
- 4.3. The Committee should determine who will Chair the panel. The Chair would not normally have a casting vote.
- 4.4. Committee, however, is free to make any alternative arrangement it wishes for the panel.

## **5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 5.1. Committee can make any arrangements for the panel that it wishes.
- 5.2. Committee can recommend to Council any terms of office and eligibility criteria that it considers appropriate. Part 3B of the Constitution will need to include details of the terms of office and eligibility criteria.

## **6 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

- 6.1. None.

## **7 TIMETABLE**

- 7.1. General Purposes Committee will consider the constitutional changes required at its meeting on 7 November 2012.
- 7.2. Council will determine any constitutional changes at its meeting on 21 November 2012.

## **8 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. Co-opted members of the Standards Committee are entitled to an allowance of £100 per meeting attended totalling £300 per year per member. This is within the current budgetary provisions for members' allowances.

## **9 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. These posts are entirely discretionary. Co-opted members are non-voting members of the Committee.

## **10 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. None

## **11 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1. None

## **12 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1. None

## **13 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

- None

## **14 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 14.1. None

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