

REPORT FOR: **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	22 April 2010
Subject:	Appointment of Independent Members to the Standards Committee
Responsible Officer:	Hugh Peart, Director of Legal and Governance Services
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

The report sets out the recommendations made by the Selection Panel in relation to the appointment of Independent Members to the Standards Committee.

Recommendations:

1. To approve the appointments of
 - (a) Dr John Kirkland
 - (b) Mohammed Rizvi
 - (c) Derek John Lawrence
 - (d) Anand Mantrias Independent Members of the Standards Committee and recommend that Council confirm the appointments from 25 May 2010 until the Annual Council meeting in May 2014
2. To approve the appointment of Mr James Coyle as a Reserve Independent Member of the Standards Committee and recommend that Council confirm the appointments from 25 May 2010 until the Annual Council meeting in May 2014

Section 2 – Report

Background

1. Section 53 of the Local Government Act 2000 requires every Council to establish a Standards Committee. The size and composition of the Standards Committee and the appointment of independent members is governed by The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008. At least 25% of the membership of a Standards Committee must be Independent Members, and the Chairman of the Standards Committee must always be an Independent Member.
2. The Regulations state that a person may not be appointed as an Independent Member of the Standards Committee unless the appointment is: approved by a majority of the Members of the authority; advertised in one or more newspapers circulating in the area of the authority, and in such other publications or websites as the authority considers appropriate; of a person who has submitted an application to the authority; of a person who has not within the period of five years immediately preceding the date of the appointment been a member or officer of the authority; and of a person who is not a relative or close friend of a member or officer of the authority. Standards for England recommends that Authorities should set a fixed term of office for Independent Members of Standards Committee of four years, and that Independent Members should serve no longer than two terms. Standards for England also recommend that an Independent Member of the Standards Committee should not be politically active.
3. Full Council agreed at its meeting on 27 October 2009 that four Independent Members be appointed to serve on the Standards Committee for 4 years from May 2010 and that, in addition, one reserve Independent Member be appointed to act (a) only in the event that one of the appointed Independent Members resigns or is unable to continue until the expiry of their term of office and (b) as and when appointed by Council.
4. Full Council also agreed that a Selection Panel comprising 4 Members of Council (2 Conservative; 1 Labour; 1 Liberal Democrat) be established by the Standards Committee providing them with full delegation for the purposes of recruiting the Independent Members of the Standards Committee from May 2010.

Process

5. The Selection Panel met on 5 occasions to carry out the following:
 - (i) agreeing a job description and person specification, information pack and shortlisting criteria; agreeing the advert, where the advert should be placed and arrangements for the circulation of the advert to stakeholders;

- (ii) carrying out a shortlisting exercise from the applications received; and
 - (iii) interviewing shortlisted applicants, prior to recommending appointment to the Standards Committee.
6. The meetings took place on 21 January, 9 March, 23 March, 25 March and 8 April 2010.

Application Pack

7. An application pack was agreed by the Panel and prepared by studying other examples provided by other London Authorities such as Southwark, Lambeth and Croydon. The Application Pack comprised of a Job Description and Person Specification.

Advertisements

8. The Panel agreed that to ensure maximum exposure to all community, faith and other groups, advertisements publicising the role be published in the following:

Harrow Times
Harrow Council Website
Harrow People
Jobs Go Public Website
Letter to all Community / Faith Groups in the Borough (to be sent out by the Policy and Partnerships Team).
Asian Voice Newspaper

These forms of publicity were all utilised.

Shortlisting and Interviewing

9. The Panel conducted a shortlisting exercise on 9 March 2010. 22 applications were received for the positions. The Panel identified those candidates who satisfied the person specification and who they wished to invite for an interview. Shortlisting was performed in line with the usual Council practices.
10. The interviews took place on 23 and 25 March and 8 April 2010. The Panel identified those candidates who it is believed are suitable to be appointed as Independent Members of the Standards Committee.
11. The Committee is requested to recommend to Council that the appointments of Dr Kirkland, Mohammed Rizvi, Anand Mantri and Derek Lawrence as members of the Standards Committee from Annual Council on 25 May 2010 for a period until the Annual Council in May 2014 be confirmed.

12. The Committee is also requested to recommend to Council that the appointment of Mr James Coyle as a Reserve Member of the Standards Committee from Annual Council on 25 May for a period of 4 years be confirmed. The Reserve Independent Member can only act (a) in the event that one of the appointed Independent Members resigns or is unable to continue until the expiry of their term of office and (b) as and when appointed by Council.

Financial Implications

13. All costs including for the recruitment of Independent Members were contained within existing budgets.

Risk Management Implications

14. Not making the necessary appointments will result in Independent Members not being appointed to the Standards Committee and ultimately in the Council's statutory obligations not being fulfilled.

Corporate Priorities

15. The recruitment of Independent Members to the Standards Committee promotes the Council's Corporate Priority of Building Stronger Communities by encouraging all members of the community to apply and play an important role in the integrity, transparency and accountability of the Council.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Steve Tingle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 14 April 2010		
Name: George Curran	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
Date: 14 April 2010		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Vishal Seegoolam, Acting Senior Professional – Democratic Services, 020 8424 1883

Background Papers:

Agenda and Minutes – Selection Panel – 21 January 2010, 9 March 2010, 23 March 2010, 25 March 2010 and 8 April 2010

If appropriate, does the report include the following considerations?

1.	Consultation	NO
2.	Corporate Priorities	YES