

SC/005/10

Committee Standards Committee

Date 29 April 2010

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Process for the recruitment of new independent members

1. Purpose of the Report

To advise Members of the requirements for recruitment of new Members and to agree the details of the recruitment process.

2. Background

The guidance provided by Standards for England indicates "Independent members are important in helping increase public confidence in local government. They provide a clear signal that the standards committee acts fairly and impartially. Independent members also bring a wider perspective from their outside experiences. There is no limit to the number of independent members you can have on your standards committee. Indeed some authorities may wish to have a majority of independent members. Your authority decides how to select independent members and how long an independent member should sit on the committee. We recommend that you set a fixed period of four years. This will be long enough for them to gain an understanding of the committee, the authority and its workings, but not so long that they could be perceived as losing their independence."

Professor Atkinson has been an independent member of the Committee since there was a requirement for independent members and it has been agreed that his tenure will cease in July 2010. Accordingly a new independent member must be recruited.

3. Proposal

It is proposed to advertise in similar form to that adopted on the last occasion when independent members were recruited. A copy of the proposed advertisement is attached as annexe 1. It is suggested that this should be advertised locally and on the internet. A role profile was developed for the last occasion and this has been amended and is attached as annexe 2. It is proposed that applicants should be short listed in accordance with the criteria in the profile by the Deputy Monitoring Officer, a governance officer and an independent member and that an interview panel be convened consisting of those mentioned above together with an elected

member of the committee. At the conclusion of the process the successful candidate will be recommended to full Council as the new independent member.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the process is commenced to ensure that an additional independent member is available as close as possible to the time when Professor Atkinson will no longer be available as a committee member.

Independent Member of the Essex County Council and Essex Fire Authority Joint Standards Committee

Independent Members are required for the Essex County Council and Essex Fire Authority Joint Standards Committee.

Standards Committees are taking on new responsibilities and will be responsible for receiving allegations against county councillors and deciding whether any action needs to be taken. These committees will be chaired by an independent member.

To be a member of the Standards Committee you will need good interpersonal skills, and be a good judge of character. Experience of chairing meetings is an advantage but not essential. The business will be conducted at County Hall, Chelmsford during the working day.

The position is voluntary and unpaid, although expenses may be claimed.

For an application form or more information, contact ???, on telephone ???, or email ???

Closing Date

Interview Date

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Annex 2

**Independent Member - Essex County
Council and Essex Fire Authority Joint
Standards Committee Role Profile**

Role Accountabilities:

- To contribute to the promotion of high standards of conduct by Councillors and co-opted members of Essex County Council and Essex Fire Authority Joint Standards Committee
- To assist Councillors and co-opted members of Essex County Council and Essex Fire Authority Joint Standards Committee observe the Member's Code of Conduct.
- To contribute to the monitoring of the operation of Essex County Council and Essex Fire Authority Joint Standards Committee Members' Code of Conduct.
- To consider the granting of dispensations to Councillors and co-opted members of Essex County Council and Essex Fire Authority Joint Standards Committee from requirements relating to interests contained in the Members' Code of Conduct.
- To consider allegations made against Essex County Council and Essex Fire Authority Joint Standards Committee Councillors in accordance with the guidance issued by Standards for England.
- To consider any reports referred from an Ethical Standards Officer of Standards for England or the Monitoring Officer relating to an alleged breach of the Members' Code of Conduct and to determine any sanctions that are deemed appropriate.
- To consider any other matter that may be determined by the Essex County Council and Essex Fire Authority Joint Standards Committee as forming part of the it's terms of reference from time to time.

Education, Training and Experience

- Experience in Local Government or similar public sector procedures
- An understanding of public service delivery and Public Sector ethical standards (D)
- A minimum of 3 GCSE's or equivalent (including English & Maths) (E)
- Previous experience of Committee/Local Government procedures
- Previous experience of chairing committee meetings (D)
- Skilled in effective communication in particular verbal (E)
- Ability to interpret and apply procedures (E)
- A proven sound judgement in decision taking (E)
- Experience of dealing with confidential matters (E)
- Ability to acquire knowledge quickly (E)
- Level headed (E)
- Ability to work with others (E)
- To be willing to undertake any necessary training (E)
- To maintain a high level of personal integrity (E)
- Availability to attend meetings during the working day (E)
- Other accountabilities that might reasonably be expected of this role (E)

D - Desirable

E - Essential