



STANDARDS COMMITTEE
30 November 2009

RECRUITMENT OF INDEPENDENT REPRESENTATIVES

PURPOSE OF REPORT: to decide

This report informs the Committee of the steps that need to be taken with regard to the appointment of the Independent Representatives on the Committee and what process has been put in place.

Introduction:

1. Two Independent Representatives on Standards Committee are approaching the end of their second four-year terms of office. A process has begun to select two replacement Independent Representatives for ratification by Council at its Annual Meeting on 11 May 2009.

Background:

2. The Relevant Authorities (Standards Committee) Regulations 2001 requires that where its Standards Committee has more than three Members at least 25% are Independent Representatives (that is appointed rather than elected Members).
3. Independent Representatives must be selected from applicants who respond to a public advertisement placed in one or more newspapers circulating in the Council's area and must be approved by the majority of Members of the County Council.
4. In March 2008 the Council agreed (1) to increase the number of Independent Representatives on Standards Committee from three to four; (2) that Independent Representatives would serve a four year term, with effect from either the first or the third year of the Council (unless a casual vacancy arises); (3) a person who has served two terms as an Independent Representative on Surrey County Council's Standards Committee will be ineligible to make a further application to serve on the committee; and (4) Council would approve the appointment of Independent Representatives following a selection process carried out, following public advertisement by a panel comprising four county councillors chaired by the Chairman of the Standards Committee (unless he or she is applying for reselection in which case the longest serving

independent members not applying for reselection will be invited to act as chairman).

5. Mr Nicolas Davies and Mr Simon Rutter are both approaching the end of their second terms of office, which will come at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2010. A process has begun to select two replacement Independent Representatives for ratification by Council at its Annual Meeting on 11 May 2009.

Initial Tasks:

6. Officers have begun to develop and implement the process for recruiting two new Independent Representatives. The following tasks have been carried out:
 - Revision of the information pack for applicants (attached as Annexe 1)
 - Meeting with HR to discuss advertising and applications. Applications are to be via the website. Applicants will be asked to complete a personal details form, including Equality and Diversity information and then will be able to attach their CV and supporting document. Hard copies of the personal details form will be available.
 - Meeting with Tribal (the Council's advertising agency) to discuss advertising and a media strategy that will aim to increase the diversity of applicants. Applicants to the positions available in 2008 were all White/British, while half were over 60 years of age (the clear majority were over 50 years of age). The Chairman of Standards Committee attended the meeting to contribute his views on what would attract applicants to the position. Tribal will produce a draft advert and a media strategy for consideration by the Monitoring Officer.

Forward Planning:

7. It is proposed that the recruitment campaign begins on 29 January 2010 with the closing deadline for applications being 12 March 2010. This gives potential applicants six weeks to apply for the position of Independent Representative.
8. The selection of Independent Representatives of the Standards Committee has not been delegated to any Committee of the Council. It is suggested that Council is requested to agree to the appointment of a selection panel of Standards Committee Members and officers to short list and interview applicants with a view to that panel making a recommendation of appointment to Full Council at the next Annual Meeting (on 11 May 2010).

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9. In 2008, the selection panel for shortlisting and interviewing consisted of the Independent Chairman of Standards Committee, along with four County Councillors from the Committee. The Panel was supported by the Monitoring Officer. It has been suggested that the Panel was too large for purpose. It is proposed that the selection panel be streamlined, possibly consisting of an Independent Representative, a County Councillor, the Monitoring Officer and an HR representative.
10. It is proposed that shortlisting take place during the week commencing 22 March 2010 and interviews take place during the week commencing 12 April 2010. Final dates for shortlisting and interviews will be agreed with the selection panel shortly.
11. An induction programme for the incoming Independent Representatives will be developed in the New Year in collaboration with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Standards Committee.

Conclusions:

12. This report summarises actions taken so far and decisions required to take forward the recruitment process.

Financial and value for money implications

13. There are financial implications from the recruitment process, including officer time and the media strategy applied. There are further financial implications to the Council from the number of Independent Representatives recruited to Standards Committee.

Equalities Implications

14. A media strategy is being drafted that will reach out to diverse communities. Equality and diversity information will be monitored to allow officers to judge whether the strategy has been more successful than the previous recruitment campaign in attracting applications from diverse communities.

Risk Management Implications

15. The Council is required by statute to ensure that where its Standards Committee has more than three Members at least 25% are Independent Representatives.

Implications for the Council's Priorities or Community Strategy/Local Area Agreement Targets

16. None.

Recommendations:

- (a) That Council delegates responsibility to a selection panel of Standards Committee to short list and interview applicants to the position of Independent Representative of Standards Committee.
- (b) That Standards Committee agree a selection panel to short list and interview applicants to the position of Independent Representative of Standards Committee.

Next steps:

Dates will be agreed for shortlisting and interviews.

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Sources/background papers:

Standards Committee papers, 19 December 2007
Council papers, 4 March 2008
Standards for England (10 August 2008) The Role and Make up of Standards Committees (www.standardsforengland.gov.uk)