

<b>Report to</b>	Full Council
<b>Date of meeting</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	Gary Williams, Monitoring Officer
<b>Report author</b>	Lisa Jones, Legal Services Manager
<b>Title</b>	Review of the Composition of the Standards Committee Recruitment Panel.

## **1. What is the report about?**

A review of the composition of the recruitment panel that appoints the lay (independent non elected) members to the Council's Standards Committee.

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

2.1 The Standards Committee has recommended that this report be brought to the full council to consider whether to reduce the number of elected members on the panel to 2 (from 3) and replace the 1 elected member with the Chair of Standards Committee.

2.1 That the recruitment panel membership be formally agreed.

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

There are no officer recommendations and the Standards Committee is in principle supportive of the change; however, it is a matter for Council Members to debate and consider whether to support the change, taking into consideration the slight increase in costs as set out below and the loss of a third seat on the recruitment panel.

## **4. Report details**

- 4.1. Full Council will be aware that the majority of members forming the Standards Committee are non elected persons, appointed via public advert and interview.

- 4.2. Standards Committee discussed the possibility of the Chair of Standards Committee forming part of the decision making panel regarding any future interviews and recommendation decisions in relation to the appointment of independent (lay) persons sitting on the Councils' Standards Committee. The Standards Committee agreed that a report should be taken to Council.
- 4.3. The Standards Committee (Wales) Regulations 2001 paragraph 15 provides that every Council in Wales must establish a recruitment panel consisting of not more than 5 panel members. One panel member must be a member of the public who is not an elected or lay member of the Council ie completely independent of the Council; the panel must also include one panel member who is a member of a community council situated in the local authoritys' area. This therefore leaves 3 seats left, which Denbighshire County Council when it originally set up the recruitment panel, agreed these should remain for the three main political groups.
- 4.4. It is this membership of 5 members in total that are the formal panel recommending the appointments. The practice over recent years has also been to invite the current Chair of Standards Committee to attend the interviews as an observer, given the importance of establishing good working relationships and team work by the independent lay members of the Standards Committee.
- 4.5. The Council is therefore being asked to consider whether to reduce the number of elected County Council members on the recruitment panel to 2 rather than 3 members. This is a decision for the full Council only.
- 4.6. Whilst taking this report, the tenure of independent members is fixed in time and a recruitment process to replace the current Chair and Vice Chair will need to commence over the next year. It would therefore be expedient if the Council could also confirm if it is content to appoint the current 2 elected members sitting on the Standards Committee and the current community member to the recruitment panel and also the member of the public supporting the process in accordance with the regulations. These are named in 4.7 below.
- 4.7. The community council member is Gordon Hughes, Corwen Town Council. The 2 elected members to Standards Committee are Cllr Bobby Feeley and Cllr (tbc); The independent member of the public is Noela Jones.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

There are no negative or positive contributions to the Corporate Plan.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

There will be an additional cost of the standard day and preparation rate to be paid to the Chair if requested to also sit on the recruitment panel, as that person would be required to attend and therefore will be entitled to payment. The current full day rate is £268.00

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

A well being impact assessment is not required.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

Standards Committee have been consulted as set out in the body of this report.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

## **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

The main risk identified is that one of the three main political groups may not be represented on the recruitment panel if the change is made. Standards Committees have the ability to suspend from office any member found in breach of the Code of Conduct.

## **11. Power to make the decision.**

Standards Committee (Wales) Regulations 2001