

Meeting of:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	9 APRIL 2024
Report Title:	APPOINTMENT TO THE COMMITTEE
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	MONITORING OFFICER
Responsible Officer:	LAURA GRIFFITHS GROUP MANAGER LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules; however the Standards Committee contributes to the maintenance of probity in the Council.
Executive Summary:	To advise the Committee of proposals to appoint an Independent Member to the Committee.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of proposals to appoint an Independent Member (co-opted) to the Committee.

2. Background

- 2.1 The membership of Standards Committees shall consist of not less than five nor more than nine members in accordance with the Standards Committees (Wales) Regulations 2001, and shall not consist of persons other than members of the relevant authority, independent members (co-opted) or community committee members.
- 2.2 The Standards Committee of this Council has a current membership of eight members.
- 2.3 As prescribed by Regulations, where the total number of members of the committee is an even number at least half that number shall be independent members or if an odd number, a majority of that number shall be independent members.
- 2.4 Independent Members are appointed for a period of not less than four and not more than six years and may be reappointed for a consecutive term. Members of local authorities who are Members of the Standards Committee will have a term of office until the next ordinary local government election following their appointment. They may be reappointed for one further consecutive term.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 A meeting of the Standards Committee will only be quorate when at least three Members, including the Chairperson, are present; and at least half the Members present (including the Chairperson) are Independent Members. A quorum of the committee cannot therefore be constituted by the County Borough Members and Town and Community Council Member themselves as the majority should rest with the Independent Members. This places an unduly heavy burden on the Independent Members, and the committee being in danger of not having adequate or required numbers (a quorum) for meetings. On 20 July 2022, Council approved that the membership of the Committee be increased to eight Members and an additional Independent Member (co-opted) be appointed to the Committee.
- 3.2 A vacancy of Independent Member has arisen on the Committee following the recent resignation of the Chairperson, Mr Shawn Cullen.
- 3.3 The Council has previously provided delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer to oversee recruitment processes and appointment to the Standards Committee, and to report back to Council any successful appointment.
- 3.4 In accordance with the Regulations, it is proposed that the Monitoring Officer go through the usual process of advertising the vacancy of Independent Member in two newspapers circulating in the area and that a Panel (consisting of not more than five Members and at least one Independent Member and one Town and Community Council Member) be convened to consider applications and conduct interviews. Following interviews, the Panel will make a recommendation on the appointment to Council.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report. This report also assists in the achievement of the following well-being objective under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:-

A county borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community.

- 5.2 The Standards Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members. Standards are an implicit requirement in the successful implementation of the corporate well-being objectives.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 In accordance with the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report for 2024-25, the remuneration for Chairs of Standards Committees is £268 (4 hours and over), £134 (up to 4 hours) and for ordinary members of the Committee - £210 (4 hours and over) and £105 (up to 4 hours).

8.2 The changes to the remuneration of Elected Members for the financial year 2024/25 increased the financial commitment required from this Authority. Some of the cost may be negated by members electing to forgo some or all of their salaries or choosing not to opt into the Local Government Pension Scheme. The additional costs are being met from the centrally held provision for pay and price increases during the 2024/25 financial year.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the report.

Background documents:

None