

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on Tuesday, 1 February 2022 at 6.00 pm in Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT**

**Present:** Councillors G H Cook (Chair), A J Eade, A D McClements (Vice-Chair), I Preece, P J Scott and J M Seymour

**In Attendance:** R Attwell (Democracy Officer (Democracy)), J Clarke (Senior Democracy Officer (Democracy)), A Lowe (Director: Policy & Governance) and R Phillips (Service Delivery Manager, Legal & Democracy)

**Apologies:** N A M England

#### **ST1      Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **ST2      Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021 have been confirmed and signed by the Chair.

#### **ST3      Proposed recruitment exercise**

The Associate Director for Policy and Governance presented the report in respect of the recruitment of two Independent Persons. This was in furtherance of the recommendations of the Committee for Standards in Public Life (CSPL) who recommend that Councils have more than one independent person in case of a conflict of interest. In addition, it also ensured that the ethical framework and the code of conduct processes would be easier to uphold.

The Associate Director stated it was important to have two Independent Persons for logistical reasons and to support the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer during investigations concerning code of conduct complaints. The recruitment pack gave details of the role, legislation and desirable skills required. It was preferable that applicants had good communication skills, experience of carrying out investigations and that they supported and understood the principles of public life. If Members were minded to approve the recommendation, delegated authority was sought for the recruitment pack to be released to other local councils, community groups and the Fire Authority.

During the meeting, some Members asked if the current Independent Person would be able to apply for the position and were there any rules on diversity. Other Members, asked if the Independent Person could attend Standards Committee meetings and how the selection process would be undertaken.

The Associate Director stated that the aim was to appoint two independent persons who ideally would better reflect the population of the Borough. Clearly, a higher number of applicants would ensure that the pool of candidates was more diverse.

Other Members questioned whether the Independent Person was required to attend committee meetings and expressed support such an approach. The Associate Director confirmed that the Service Delivery Manager in his role as Independent Person at Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council did attend committees and that this was a positive things. It was confirmed that the recruitment pack would be amended to include a requirement to attend Standards Committees throughout the year.

The Associate Director confirmed that the Chair's input would be sought throughout the recruitment process.  
Upon being put to the vote it was

**RESOLVED – that:**

- a) The recruitment of two Independent Persons be approved; and**
- b) Delegated authority be granted to the Associate Director: Policy & Governance, in consultation with the Chair of the Standards Committee to undertake the necessary recruitment activity.**

The meeting ended at 6.12 pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** Wednesday, 28 September 2022