

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Standards Committee
2.	Date:	13th March 2014
3.	Title:	Recruitment of Independent Members, Update from the Parish Council Joint Working Group and Summary Notes on the Role of the Independent Person.
4.	Directorate:	Resources

5. Summary

To update the Committee with regard to these issues.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:-

- notes the position with regard to recruiting two new independent members and resolves how to proceed with the appointment process;
 - considers the comments made at the Parish Council Joint Working Group; and
 - notes the content of the summary notes on the Role of the Independent Person
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7. Proposals and Details

Recruitment of Independent Member

The Standards Committee resolved at its last meeting to re-advertise the vacancies for two Independent Members of the Committee.

This has been done with the advertisement being sent to Local Area Committees, voluntary groups, Parish Councils and previous applicants for the position of Independent Person.

The Committee will be updated upon the total number of applicants at the meeting.

The Committee should determine how the selection of new Independent Members will be made. It would be appropriate for any Panel to reflect the composition of the Standards Committee in terms of both political membership and the Borough Council / Parish Council representation.

The appointment will require approval by Council.

Parish Council Joint Working Group

The Monitoring Officer attended a meeting of the Parish Council Joint Working Group on 9th January 2014.

As the result of the useful discussion of the issues, the following conclusions were reached:-

Charging the Parish Councils for the cost of undertaking investigations or informal resolution of their matters

This may be a legitimate step. However the Standards Committee should be fully aware of the potential costs it may seek to charge the Parish Councils.

That Parish Council should be informed of the costs of investigation / informal resolution of their issues

Agreed.

Where matters do not reach the level to warrant formal investigation, those matters may be referred back to the Parish Council for consideration

Agreed that the Committee should give consideration to this.

The Standards Committee should consider in principle, if it wishes to adopt this approach and, if so, receive a further report from the Monitoring Officer.

Summary note upon the Role of the Independent Person

David Roper-Newman, Independent Person, attended a course in October 2013 run by Hoey Ainscough Associates Ltd, a well-known, national trainer in the field of ethical standards of elected members. The company has provided the attached note summarising their findings from the courses they conducted (at Appendix 1). Whilst the company focuses on training and they do provide a good general overview, they do not provide definitive legal advice.

The Committee is asked to consider the contents of the summary. The Council's arrangements are largely in accordance with the findings of the trainers.

8. Finance

None

9. Risks and Uncertainties

None

10. Background Papers and Consultation

None

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