

COUNCIL

DATE: 3RD JANUARY 2018

APPOINTMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Cabinet Member: Councillor Nick Oliver - Corporate Services & Cabinet Secretary

Purpose of report

To apprise members of the progress made with the appointment of the three Parish Council representatives to the Standards Committee and to seek agreement to make the relevant appointments

Recommendations

(i) to note the position, thus far, with the appointment process relating to the vacancies for the three Parish Council representatives on the Council's Standards Committee and

(ii) to agree to appoint the following parish councillors to the three vacancies on the Council's Standards Committee:-

(a) Councillor Bryn Owen of Craster Parish Council;

(b) Councillor Andrew Tebbutt of Morpeth Town Council and

(c) Councillor Alex Wallace of East Bedlington Parish Council

and in doing so

(iii) to agree to amend the Council's Constitution to remove the requirement for an area based appointment in respect of these appointments and

(iv) to express the Council's gratitude to the recently retired former incumbents of these positions for their contribution to the work of the Standards Committee over the last number of years and

(v) to agree to amend the Council's Constitution to remove from the Council's Standards Committee the responsibility for granting dispensations to Parish and Town Council members from requirements relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the "We want to be efficient, open and work for everyone" or "How" priority included in the draft NCC Corporate Plan 2017-2021

Key issues

Need to appoint parish council representatives to the Standards Committee following vacancies arising

Recruitment process undertaken with the assistance of the Northumberland Association of Local Councils.

Council asked to consider appointment of three parish council representatives

Background

1. The current composition of the Council's Standards Committee provides for three parish council representatives to be appointed to the Committee in addition to eight county councillors and one independent member. Following the resignation of the previous parish council representatives towards the end of the term of the last Council, expressions of interests from serving parish councillors to join the Committee were invited on two occasions through the offices of the Northumberland Association of Local Councils and otherwise directly to the Council.

2. As a result a total of four applications for appointment were received and an interview panel was set up by the Standards Committee, comprising the Council's independent person, and Councillors Susan Dungworth and Cath Homer, to identify the preferred candidates from the applications received and, as a consequence, make an appropriate recommendation to Council as to whom should be appointed to the vacant positions.

3. Ultimately only three candidates were interviewed by the Panel as one of the four applicants withdrew their application shortly before interview. The Panel's recommendation as to appointment is contained in the recommendation (ii) above.

4. The Council's Constitution at Article 9 currently provides for an area based approach to be taken to the appointment of these positions. In light of the relative difficulty in attracting applications in respect of this current round of appointments as well as the expansion of

the number of areas within the county from when the original area based approach was devised it is recommended that this approach is no longer pursued.

5 Members are reminded that the three recently retired parish council representatives with details of their respective years of service are as follows:-

Councillor David Buckle of Cornhill Parish Council (2009-2017)

Councillor David Parker of Morpeth Town Council (2013-2017)

Councillor Carl Rawlings of Ponteland Town Council (2013-2017)

6. In reviewing the content of the Constitution in progressing this matter it was noted that one further, unrelated, amendment is required to Article 9. The current role and functions of the Standards Committee provides for that Committee to grant dispensations to Parish and Town Council members from requirements relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests under their respective member codes of conduct. Under the Localism Act 2011 the responsibility for granting dispensations in respect of Parish and Town Council members was given to the parent authority of the individual member concerned. As a consequence that power should be removed from the role and functions of the Standards Committee as outlined under Article 9 of the Council's Constitution.

Implications

Policy	N/A
Finance and value for money	None significant
Legal	These are set out in the body of the report
Procurement	N/A
Human Resources	N/A
Property	N/A
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Risk Assessment	N/A
Crime & Disorder	N/A

Customer Consideration	The appointment of parish council representatives will give customers, and in particular, members of local councils, an assurance in relation to the operation of the ethical standards regime
Carbon reduction	N/A
Wards	All divisions

Background papers:

Council constitution

Report sign off

	initials
Finance Officer	n/a
Monitoring Officer/Legal	LH
Human Resources	n/a
Procurement	n/a
I.T.	n/a
Executive Director	KA
Portfolio Holder(s)	NO

Author and Contact Details

Liam Henry - Monitoring Officer
 Telephone - 01670 622324
 Email: liam.henry@northumberland.gov.uk