



Northumberland County Council

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

12 October 2023

INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Report of the Director of Law and Corporate Governance

Purpose of report

To advise members of the need to undertake a fresh recruitment process in respect of the Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee and to agree the detail of that process.

Recommendations

- i. To note the position relating to the need to reappoint to the position of Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee, and
- ii. To establish an interview panel to make a recommendation to Council regarding the appointment to such position.
- iii. That in the event of a conflict of interest or other reason a member of the appointed panel is precluded or unable to attend the interviews, the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee may appoint a replacement member.

Link to Corporate Plan

Achieving Value For Money - The appointment of an independent Chair of the Committee provides independence and fairness, making best use of Council resources.

Tacking Inequality - The recruitment process follows internal HR processes ensuring equality and transparency.

Key issues

1. Need to re-appoint to the position of Independent Chairman of Standards Committee.
2. The Independent Chair will be paid an allowance of £2,700 per annum which is already provided for within the Council's General Fund Budget.

3. Recommendation to create an interview panel with delegated authority to make a recommendation to Council following consideration of the applications received including interview process.

Background

1. The current composition of this Committee provides for an Independent Chair to preside over its meetings and to be a member champion for the promotion and maintenance of the Council ethical framework in respect of member conduct. While there is no statutory requirement for the Chairman of the Standards Committee to be independent the authority have previously determined that the position would benefit from such a status and the current incumbent, Mr Joe Jackson, was appointed in October 2018, which was the third time his appointment was renewed. Again, there is no statutory requirement as to the length of appointment, but it is considered that the position should be exposed to a further open recruitment process.
2. An advertisement in respect of this position was published last month inviting applications to be submitted by the 8th October 2023.
3. It is recommended that an interview panel be set up comprising such members of the Committee that seem appropriate to make a recommendation to Council as to whom should be appointed to the position of Independent Chairman. It is suggested to members that a panel of three with assistance from the Monitoring Officer (or Deputy) would be appropriate.
4. Following creation of the panel, if that is agreed, interviews will be arranged with a view to a recommendation regarding appointment being made to the next Council meeting, which will be January 2024. The appointment will be for a period of four years.

Implications

Policy	N/A
Finance and value for money	The Independent Chair will be paid an allowance of £2,700 per annum which is already provided for within the Council's General Fund Budget.
Legal	These are set out in the body of the report
Procurement	N/A
Human Resources	A role definition and person specification have been prepared and form part of the proposals recommended for approval.
Property	N/A
Equalities	N/A

(Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Risk Assessment	N/A
Crime & Disorder	N/A
Customer Consideration	The appointment to these two positions gives customers an assurance in relation to the operation of the ethical standards regime
Carbon reduction	N/A
Health and Wellbeing	N/A
Wards	All divisions

Background papers

Constitution of the Council

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