
THE NEW STANDARDS REGIME

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the final decisions required by the Council to put in place the new standards regime.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In order to accord with the standards regime introduced through the Localism Act 2011, the Council needs to appoint Members to the new Standards Committee and individuals to the new role of Independent Persons.
- 2.2 It would also be appropriate for the Council to formally adopt the new Members' Code of Conduct as amended to take account of the provisions of the Relevant Authorities' (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

3 NEW STANDARDS COMMITTEE

- 3.1 At its meeting of 17 April 2012 the Council agreed that a Standards Committee comprising eight elected Members of the District Council, appointed proportionally, and three Parish Council co-opted non-voting Members be established. The Committee will deal with Standards issues and associated case work and will continue the predecessor Committee's involvement with Member training.
- 3.2 In terms of the three Parish Council Members, the Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils is scheduled to confirm the nomination of three Councillors for a term of four years commencing in the 2012/13 municipal year at its meeting on 19 July 2012. This term of office worked well under the previous regime.
- 3.3 In terms of eight District Council Members, appointment on the basis of political proportionality means that the Committee should comprise six Conservative Group Members, one Liberal Democrat Group Member and one Member from either the Green Party or Rochford District Residents Group. Each Group Leader has been asked to nominate, and details received of proposed membership will follow.
- 3.4 There is also a need to appoint District Members to the role of Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman. In accordance with usual practice the Leader of the Conservative Group, as the majority party, has been asked to nominate.
- 3.5 The first meeting of the new Committee has been scheduled for Tuesday, 31 July 2012 to facilitate early consideration of revised rules of procedure for the investigation and determination of complaints and the appointment of hearing panels.

4 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

4.1 Since the Council meeting on 17 April regulations have been published that provide for the former Standards Committee Independent Members to be considered for the new role of Independent Persons, recognising the value of their knowledge and experience gained under the current regime. In view of the need for expediency to have arrangements in place to meet the time frame confirmed in the regulations the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, placed the required advertisement for the recruitment of Independent Persons.

4.2 Applications have been received from the four former Independent Members. The Council has already recognised that it would be appropriate to appoint three Independent Persons. Given the aforementioned knowledge and experience of the four applicants, and the challenges associated with development of the new role, there would be clear merit in appointing all four candidates to the role. The following candidates are, therefore, recommended for appointment for a four year term commencing in the 2012/13 municipal year:-

- Mr D J Cottis
- Mr M G Drage
- Mr S Shadbolt
- Mrs L Waker

4.3 It should be noted that in accordance with delegation, appointees will attract the allowance for Independent Members of the Standards Committee identified in the Constitution (£425 per annum).

5 NEW CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

5.1 In accordance with a decision of Council on 17 April 2012 the Monitoring Officer, after consultation with the Leader of the Council and the former Standards Committee Chairman, amended the agreed Code of Conduct for Members to take account of the provision of the Relevant Authorities' (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012. A copy of the amended Code was issued to all Members on 26 June 2012 and included in the Council's Constitution with effect from 1 July 2012 (commencing on page 5.1 of Part 5). It would be appropriate for the Council to formally adopt the amended Code.

6 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The new Standards regime covers both District and Parish Councillors.

7 RECOMMENDATION

7.1 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES**

- (1) To endorse the appointment of the three Parish Councillors, to be nominated by the Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils, to the new Standards Committee for a four year term commencing in the 2012/13 municipal year.
- (2) To appoint eight District Council Members (six Conservative Group, one Liberal Democrat Group and one from either the Green Party or the Rochford District Residents Group) to serve on the new Standards Committee for the remainder of the 2012/13 municipal year.
- (3) To appoint the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the new Standards Committee.
- (4) To appoint Mr D J Cottis, Mr M G Drage, Mr S Shadbolt and Mrs L Walker as Independent Persons for a four year term commencing in the 2012/13 municipal year.
- (5) To formally adopt the Code of Conduct for Members, as amended to take account of recent regulations and incorporated in Part 5 of the Council's Constitution.

Albert Bugeja

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Background Papers:-

None.

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If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

Addendum 1

CHAIRMAN, VICE-CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERSHIP NOMINATIONS FOR THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP NOMINATIONS

STANDARDS COMMITTEE	NOMINATION
<p>(8 District Members)</p> <p>(Note: There are 9 nominations for 8 available seats. According to the pro rata rules, there should be 1 nomination from either the Rochford District Residents Group or the Green Party).</p>	<p>Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill Cllr D Merrick Cllr T E Mountain Cllr I H Ward Cllr Mrs M J Webster</p> <p>Cllr C I Black</p> <p>Cllr M Hoy</p> <p>Cllr Mrs C M Mason</p>

CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN NOMINATIONS

NOMINATION FOR CHAIRMAN	NOMINATION FOR VICE-CHAIRMAN
Cllr Mrs M J Webster	Cllr D Merrick