
PARISH MEMBER ON THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report addresses the way forward with regard to the appointment of a Parish Member to the Standards Committee.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Constitution of the Council requires that the Standards Committee be composed of at least one Member of a Parish Council wholly or mainly in the District Council's area (a Parish Member). A Parish Member (who is not also a District Councillor) must be present when matters relating to Parish Councils or their Members are being considered.
- 2.2 As part of the arrangements for first establishing the Standards Committee, all town/parish councils were invited to submit nominations to a specially convened meeting. Each council was allowed one vote. Councillor M Steptoe of Barling Magna Parish Council was elected as the first Parish Member.
- 2.3 Since Councillor Steptoe's appointment, there has been further communication with the town/parish councils indicating that it would be appropriate for the Standards Committee to now have an opportunity to consider the role of the Parish Member/mechanism for appointments and proposing that Councillor Steptoe be retained as the Parish appointee pending the outcome of Committee deliberations.

3 DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The Standards Committee is invited to consider the way forward with regard to the Parish Member position.
- 3.2 As part of recent communication, the parishes were asked for any comments they may have on the appointment and role of the Parish Member that they would like brought to the attention of the Standards Committee. To date, nothing specific has been received.
- 3.3 Whilst the Standards Committee has yet to consider any matters directly relating to parish councils, the current appointee has been actively involved in the Committee's work and in developing an understanding of the role expected of all Committee Members. Experience is pointing to the value of achieving some consistency for the Parish Member role, particularly in terms of maintaining effective and knowledgeable interaction between the Parish Member and the parishes.
- 3.4 Subject to the views of the Committee, it is felt that there would be merit in aligning the length of the Parish Member appointment with that of Independent Members, i.e. a four year period. In the first instance, should the

current appointee stay in office for the remainder of this year, the next appointment could be for a two year period so that retirement is co-terminus with that of the Independent Members.

- 3.5 In terms of a mechanism for determining the next Parish Member appointment, a practicable way forward would be to engender the involvement of the Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils. This body, together with its umbrella - the Essex Association of Local Councils, has a role in representing parish/town councils across the District and could be asked for a nominee. Another possibility would be to invite each of the Parishes to submit nominations for consideration by the Standards Committee (with candidates short-listed/interviewed as appropriate).
- 3.6 At this stage it is felt that a formal approach to the representative body could be the most appropriate.

4 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 A Parish Member must be present when matters relating to parish councils or their Members are being considered by the Standards Committee.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**
- (1) To confirm the continuation of the current Parish Member appointment for the remainder of the Municipal Year.
 - (2) That the Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils be asked to determine a nomination for the Parish Member appointee position for a two year period with effect from the next Municipal Year and for all future appointments.
 - (3) That the Parish Member appointment be co-terminus with that of the Independent Members. (CD(LPA))

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Background Papers:

None

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