

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>LANGUAGE COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>18 JUNE 2015</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS</b>
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	<b>HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES</b>
<b>PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:</b>	<b>TO REPORT ON THE PROCEDURE TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>

## **Background**

The Gwynedd Council Standards Committee is a statutory committee which was established originally under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000.

There are nine members of the Committee:

- 3 – Gwynedd Council elected members
- 5 - Independent members
- 1 - Community Council member

The procedure for appointing members to the Standards Committee was adopted by the Council on 1 March 2012 (Appendix 1). However, the procedure for appointing independent members is based on a statutory procedure under the Standards Committee (Wales) Order 2001.

## **Appointment**

The regulations provide that advertisements must appear in no fewer than two newspapers with a circulation within the area. Advertising in a newspaper that the authority publishes is permitted in addition to this. For example, in the latest cycle, the advertisements were placed in the following:

- Advertisement in the Cambrian News, Herald and Bangor Mails -
- Gwynedd Council Website
- The Council's Facebook and Twitter pages

According to the regulations, a panel must be established to hold interviews, which then makes recommendations to the Council regarding appointing members. Although the appointment is in the hands of the Council in such

situations, there is a strong element of trust in the Panel to identify candidates and make recommendations. Usually, a report is submitted to the Council reporting on the appointment panel's recommendations. Despite attempts to avoid this, there are times where the timetable for determination means that the names of the successful candidates are reported verbally.

There are specific requirements regarding the membership of Standards Committees which mean that not everyone who expresses an interest is eligible. In terms of applications for independent members, for example, a member or officer or former member or officer of this authority would not be permitted to be appointed to the Committee.

The challenge with appointing members lies in attracting people who are eligible to do the work. It must be borne in mind that the committee will at times deal with challenging and difficult issues in terms of decisions and they have considerable decision-making responsibilities. The Panel must, therefore, implement its responsibilities within the criteria set out by the Council. A range of independent members, some Welsh-speaking and others non-Welsh-speaking have been appointed in this way.

## **Recommendation**

**That the Panel accepts the information**

## Appendix

### Criteria for appointing members to the Standards Committee

Applicants will be required to demonstrate independence and impartiality in assisting the Standards Committee in promoting, maintaining and improving ethical arrangements within Gwynedd Council and the county's community/town councils.

The work of the Committee will require the members to possess the following qualities and skills:-

- Listening skills;
- Ability to understand and weigh up evidence;
- Ability to come to an objective view and explain that view by reference to the evidence;
- Team working skills;
- Respect for others and an understanding of diversity issues;
- Discretion;
- Personal integrity.

### Additional Criteria for Independent members

A detailed knowledge of local government is not necessary although it would be an advantage if potential candidates were interested in matters relating to public life and services. In addition, independent members must: -

- Be eligible for selection as an independent;
- Be well respected in the community;
- Be able to meet the time commitment involved and be available at short notice;
- Be able to provide two references.

The ability to speak Welsh will be considered to be an advantage and the need to achieve a balance of skills, qualities and expertise on the Committee as well as the need to represent the community as a whole and achieve a geographical spread will all be taken into account.