

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 September 2016	 TOWER HAMLETS
Melanie Clay, Director of Law, Probity & Governance	Classification: Unrestricted
Recruitment of two (2) independent co-opted representatives to the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee	

Originating Officer(s)	Mark Bursnell, Senior Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer
Wards affected	All wards

Summary

The report sets out the process for recruiting two (2) independent, resident co-opted representatives to the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the municipal years 2016/17-2017/18.

Recommendations:

1. Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to agree the appointment of the two (2) independent co-opted representatives onto the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee as detailed in paragraph 1.2.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 9th May 2016 authorised that two (2) external independent co-opted representatives be appointed to the new Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee. The Committee agreed that one (1) of these co-opted members should be a tenant and the other a leaseholder. Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested that these vacancies should be filled through a competitive recruitment process, so as many eligible local residents as possible could apply for these positions. The aim was to ensure that well qualified and experienced candidates were recruited, who might not previously have had direct contact with the Council or its key partners.
- 1.2 An advert, promoting the two (2) positions, was put on the Council's website on 29th June. The positions were also advertised through social media. Nine (9) requests for applications were received, but only four (4) completed applications were submitted. All of the received applications were of a sufficient quality to justify an interview. The interviews were held on 4th August by an interview panel chaired by Councillor Amina Ali, the Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee and officers. As a result of the interviews two (2) candidates were selected. Mr Moshin Ahmad Hamim as the leaseholder representative and Ms Anne Elizabeth Ambrose as the tenant representative. In order that these co-opted representatives are able to attend the next meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 10th October their appointment needs to be approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.3 Training will be provided by Legal Services to the co-opted representatives on the Code of Conduct for Members which will include declarations of interest, exempt reports and data protection. An induction session will also be held to explain their role and how this can be developed.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee authorised the recruitment of the two (2) co-opted vacancies through an open, competitive route. An alternative that was considered, but rejected, involved directly appointing the co-opted members from an established housing scrutiny or engagement forum familiar to the Council.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 9th May agreed to establish the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee and delegate its housing responsibilities and functions to this Sub-Committee. The terms of reference of the Sub-Committee and its membership were also agreed at the same meeting, as was the decision to appoint the two vacant co-opted positions through an open competitive process.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 This report provides an update on the selection of two independent co-opted representatives for the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee and asks the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to endorse the candidates selected. The only financial implication as a result of the recommendation within this report is to note that each co-opted representative is entitled to claim an attendance allowance of £123 per meeting.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1 Pursuant to section 9FA(4) and (5) of the 2000 Act, an overview and scrutiny committee of a local authority, or any sub-committee of such a committee, may include persons who are not members of the authority but any persons who are not members of the local authority are not entitled to vote at any meeting of its overview and scrutiny committee, or any sub-committee of such a committee.
- 5.2 Rule 3.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules provides that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be responsible for approving co-opted representatives for the Scrutiny Panels (and which includes Sub-Committees). This report is asking for the Committee to approve the appointment of two (2) co-opted representatives to the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee and such request is within the Committees powers. Until such time as the Committee approves the appointment, the co-opted representatives cannot sit on the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee
- 5.3 When taking action, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (the public sector equality duty). Matters relevant to this duty are set out in the One Tower Hamlets section of the report.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The open, competitive recruitment process was designed to encourage applicants from a broad range of different backgrounds and interests within the local community. This is consistent with the aim of recognising and promoting the Council's equality duty. The appointment of co-opted members also brings local people's views to the committee's meetings and will help strengthen local community leadership.

7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The recruitment of two co-opted members, with experience of work outside of local government, will encourage a wider ranging debate to occur regarding how the Council secures Best Value and looks at different ways of managing services and working with partners.

8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 8.1 The direct experience of co-opted members who live in the Borough and are engaged with their local community will contribute to discussions around the Greener Environment. An example could be protecting green public space, especially in areas of high housing density.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no obvious implications for risk management arising from the appointment of the co-opted members.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no direct crime and disorder reduction implications arising from this report.

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