

Non-Executive Report of the: Council Wednesday, 29 September 2021	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Open (Unrestricted)
Re-appointment of Standards Advisory Committee Co-Opted Members	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	(All Wards);

Executive Summary

The Terms of Reference of the Standards Advisory Committee allow for the inclusion of five Independent Co-opted Members to be appointed on four-year terms.

Four of the current Co-opted Members have terms of office which expire on 30 September 2021. Council is therefore requested to approve their re-appointment for a new four-year term.

Recommendations:

The Council is recommended to:

1. Agree the re-appointment of the following Independent Co-Opted Members of the Standards Advisory Committee for a new four-year term ending on 30 September 2025:
 - Nafisa Adam
 - Fiona Browne
 - Mike Houston
 - John Pulford MBE

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Four of the five current Independent Co-opted Members of the Standards Advisory Committee have terms of office which expire at the end of September.
- 1.2 A fully effective Committee, requires the input of its Independent Co-opted Members and so it is proposed to re-appoint the current, experienced Members for a new four-year term.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Council may choose not to re-appoint some or all of the current Independent Co-opted Members and/or to vary the number of Independent Co-optees appointed to the Standards Advisory Committee. This action is not recommended.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Terms of Reference of the Standards Advisory (last agreed by Council at its Annual Meeting as part of the Constitution) state that the Committee should have five Independent Co-opted Members.
- 3.2 Four of the existing Co-opted Members have terms of office which expire at the end of September.
- 3.3 It is considered that the Standards Advisory Committee is currently functioning well with a good interaction between Co-opted and Councillor Members. The five Co-opted Members have a good mix of cultural backgrounds and genders.
- 3.4 The four Co-opted Members whose terms of office are due to expire have good experience of dealing with Standards issues and have a good understanding of the new Code of Conduct. In addition, it would be valuable to have an experienced Committee to support the Monitoring Officer in the lead up to, and following, the local elections in May 2022.
- 3.5 Officers therefore consider it appropriate to request that Council approve the extensions for all four Co-opted Members whose terms are due to expire. They have all indicated a willingness to continue undertaking the role.
- 3.6 The Co-opted Members of the Committee are:
- John Pulford MBE (Chair) – first appointed 18 September 2013
 - Fiona Browne (Vice-Chair) – first appointed 18 January 2017
 - Nafisa Adam – first appointed 20 February 2015
 - Mike Houston – first appointed 20 February 2015
- (Note – they have all previously been extended to 30 September 2021)
- Denzil Johnson – first appointed 17 March 2021 (and not required for re-appointment as part of this report.
- 3.7 Should Council not agree to the re-appointments then the Monitoring Officer will direct officers to undertake a recruitment exercise to look to select replacement Members.

Independent Person Vacancy

- 3.8 Council are asked to note that Elizabeth Hall's Term of Office as an Independent Person has now expired and Elizabeth has stood down from the role.
- 3.9 An initial recruitment exercise was not successful and so the Council will be undertaking a new recruitment effort soon. Rachael Tiffin continues in the other Independent Person position.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no specific equalities implications arising out of this report but the consideration of equalities issues is an important part of the work of the Standards Advisory Committee and so a well-functioning committee is important in relation to the Council's equalities duties.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

- 5.2 The re-appointment of the Co-opted Members will create stability for the important work undertaken by the Advisory Committee and will assist in the continued efficiency and effectiveness of that work.

- 5.3 In regard to risk management, the appointment of Independent Co-opted Members to the Advisory Committee assists in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct and improving confidence in local democracy.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 Attendance allowances will be funded within the existing annual budget for Member's allowances.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 Local Authorities are required by section 27(1) of the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority. The Constitution sets out that the Standards

Advisory Committee has been established to undertake this task. The Constitution sets out the membership, quorum, functions and procedures of the Standards Advisory Committee. The proposals in this report in relation to the appointment of independent co-opted members of the Standards Advisory Committee comply with the Constitution and the above legislation.

- 7.2 Section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 requires a local authority to appoint at least one independent person to be involved in decisions concerning investigations into complaints against Members and the Constitution sets out their role. The proposals in this report in relation to the appointment of an Independent Person comply with the above legislation and with the Constitution.
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- None

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- None

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A