

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 7th May 2019
Report Subject	Standards Committee Independent Members
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council must appoint people who are not Councillors to the Standards Committee. This is so that the Committee is seen to be more independent.

The term of office for two of those co-opted Members runs out in May. The Members are eligible to be reappointed for a further term. Thereafter, they must stand down, as a co-optee cannot serve more than two terms of office under the relevant legislation. In addition, the legislation relating to Standards Committees currently specifies that the second term of office can be a maximum of four years.

The co-optees have worked hard in their roles and have made a beneficial contribution to the governance of the Council. One of them is willing to serve a further term if reappointed, but the other wishes to step down due to work commitments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Council reappoints Phillipa Ann Earlam to the Standards Committee for four years and advertises the vacancy for the remaining position jointly with Wrexham County Borough Council.
2	That the Chair of the Council write to Edward Hughes thanking him for his hard work on the Committee during his term.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE REQUIREMENT TO APPOINT CO-OPTEEES
1.01	Under the Standards Committee (Wales) Regulations 2001 (as amended) the Committee must include a majority of co-optees (termed “independent members” within the legislation). Those co-optees must be recruited via advertisement at first but then can be reappointed for a second term without re-advertising the position.
1.02	The Council appointed a number of co-optees in 2013 following advert. They were appointed for varying terms so that their positions did not all fall vacant at the same time (resulting in a complete loss of their combined experience). The next terms of office to expire will be Edward Hughes and Phillipa Earlam whose terms come to an end in May 2019.
1.03	Phillipa Earlam is well regarded by the Committee and is willing to serve again. Edward Hughes is well regarded by the Committee but wishes to step down due to work commitments.
1.04	The Council will need to advertise at least one vacancy. To do so it will need to place adverts in the local press and constitute an interview panel. Wrexham County Borough Council will also be advertising soon and have indicated a willingness to share the recruitment process.
1.05	The Council will need to create an appointment panel and I would suggest that it should consist of the Chair of the Council, and the Chair of the Committee (himself a co-optee) plus the same from Wrexham. In addition, any panel to appoint a co-optee to the Standards Committee, must include a lay person who has themselves been recruited via advert. This would give the maximum allowed complement of 5.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	If the Council does not reappoint the incumbent then it will need to advertise both of the vacancies in the local press. The adverts for a similar vacancy two years ago cost £3600.00 (though this cost may be shared with Wrexham County Borough Council).
2.02	The role descriptions and adverts used last time are still available. They have been updated and it would be possible to place an advert relatively quickly.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	None.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The interview process includes a number of restrictions on candidates to ensure that only people who are truly independent of the Council may be appointed, and careful interviewing is used to ensure that candidates of the right calibre are selected.
4.02	Adverts would be placed bilingually in order to attract applications from Welsh speakers, and would be sent to local community groups representing people with disabilities to ensure that no potential candidate is accidentally excluded by the medium through which the vacancies are advertised.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Not relevant Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer Governance Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: Gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Co-optee – the Council consists of a Chairman and 69 Members who are all elected. By contrast, legislation sometimes provides for a person to be appointed to a Committee without being elected through a process called co-option.