

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 26 th January, 2021
Report Subject	Recruitment of Independent Members to the Standards Committee
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council must appoint people who are not councillors to the Standards Committee called Independent Members. This is so that the Committee is visibly more independent.

The term of office for one of those co-opted Members runs out in March. The Member has served two terms, which is the maximum permitted under the legislation. Therefore he must stand down. Another Independent Member has decided to retire as he finds it difficult to engage with remote meetings.

Both co-optees have worked hard in their role and have made a beneficial contribution to the governance of the Council. Full Council will be asked to approve the establishment of a recruitment panel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	The Council accepts the report and formally establishes an appointment panel with the membership described in the report.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE REQUIREMENT TO APPOINT CO-OPTees
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). The presence of Independent Members is to ensure that the Committee is visibly impartial and a-political in nature.
1.02	Those co-optees must be recruited via advertisement at first, but can be reappointed for a second term without re-advertising the position. An

	Independent Member can serve a maximum of two terms to ensure that s/he does not become too accustomed to the culture within the Council. The maximum second term of office for any Independent Member is 4 years.																		
1.03	<p>In 2013, 4 independent members completed their maximum period in office and needed to be replaced. The Council advertised and appointed replacements with differing terms of office so that, in future, the Committee would not lose the majority of its experienced members in one go. The term of office for each Independent Member expires as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Independent Member</th> <th>No. of Terms</th> <th>Expiry of Term</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Robert Dewey</td> <td>2</td> <td>01.03.2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ken Molyneux</td> <td>2</td> <td>01.12.2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Julia Hughes</td> <td>1</td> <td>12.12.2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Phillipa Earlam</td> <td>2</td> <td>07.05.2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mark Morgan</td> <td>1</td> <td>27.01.2026</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Independent Member	No. of Terms	Expiry of Term	Robert Dewey	2	01.03.2021	Ken Molyneux	2	01.12.2022	Julia Hughes	1	12.12.2022	Phillipa Earlam	2	07.05.2023	Mark Morgan	1	27.01.2026
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1.04	<p>Robert Dewey's term ends on 1 March. Whilst he is well regarded by the Committee, and is its chair, he cannot serve again.</p> <p>Ken Molyneux has also stepped down. He felt that he was struggling to contribute through the medium of remote meetings. He decided to retire to enable the Council to recruit to both vacancies at the same time, thereby reducing cost.</p>																		
1.05	The Council will need to advertise two vacancies. To do so it must place adverts in the local press and constitute an interview panel.																		
1.06	When establishing an appointment panel, I would suggest that it should consist of the Chair of the Council, 2 Independent Members and an elected Councillor from the Committee. Members of the Committee have already volunteered to serve. 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.																		
1.07	Interviews can take place during the latter part of February/early March based on availability of the panel members. The preferred candidate needs to be officially appointed by Full Council. There is a meeting of Full Council on 1 April 2021.																		

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The Council will need to advertise the vacancy in the local press. The adverts for a similar vacancy last year in the Flintshire Leader and Daily Post cost £6,267. These costs could be shared with the recruitment of the Lay Person for the Audit Committee. However, the recruitment process for the Independent Members is heavily legislated and the interview/appointment processes would be impractical to combine.

2.02	The role descriptions and adverts used last time are still available. They have been updated and it will be possible to place an advert quickly.
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3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
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3.01	The Standards Committee has been consulted on the process. Independent and elected members of the Committee have volunteered to serve on the recruitment panel.
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4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
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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.
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4.02	Adverts will 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.
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	None.
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	Not relevant Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer Governance Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: Gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk
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7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
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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. Co-opted members of the Standards Committee are called Independent Members (not to be confused with those elected councillors who are described as being politically independent i.e. not a member of one of the established political parties).
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