

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

At a Special Meeting of **Standards Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 10 May 2023 at 1.30 pm**

Present:

Councillor J Nicholson (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Atkinson, L Maddison (Vice-Chair), A Savory, G Smith, T Smith, T Stubbs, F Tinsley and C Varty

Co-opted Members:

Parish Councillor C Foote-Wood

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillor A Doig.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Appointment of Independent Persons to the Standards Committee

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer which provided an update on the recruitment of two new Independent Persons to the Standards Committee.

The report summarised the recruitment exercise undertaken. Following the interviews held on Thursday 4 and Friday 5 May 2023 an addendum to the report was circulated.

The addendum report asked the Committee to consider appointing three (rather than two) new Independent Persons in view of the calibre of the applicants, the different skills, experience and approach that they would bring to the role. The Panel considered that it would be advantageous to appoint

three new Independent Persons as it would provide additional resilience for the Monitoring Officer when dealing with complaints. It would also mean that there would be greater opportunity to use different Independent Persons at different stages of the same complaint.

The Committee were advised that it is Council's responsibility to appoint the Independent Persons. However, at the annual meeting of Council on 24 May 2023, Council would be asked to delegate this responsibility to the Standards Committee as part of the annual review of the Constitution.

Therefore Committee was asked to recommend the appointment of the candidates as Independent Persons for a two-year term. If Council delegates responsibility for the appointment to the Standards Committee then a further report will be presented to the Committee in June 2023. If Council decides not to delegate responsibility to the Committee, a report will be presented with the Committee's recommended appointments at the Council meeting in June 2023.

In response to a question, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer provided the Committee with details of the role of the Independent Persons and how they allocated these roles to the Independent Persons.

Resolved: (i) That the recruitment process undertaken for Independent Persons be noted.

(ii) That the Committee recommend to the appointment of three new Independent Persons to the Standards Committee with the appointments to be confirmed either by Council or the Standards Committee subject to Council's consideration of the proposed delegations to the Committee as part of the Annual Review of the Constitution at its meeting on 24 May 2023.