

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: WEDNESDAY, 15 JUNE 2011  
title: RECRUITMENT OF ADDITIONAL MEMBERS  
submitted by: HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES  
principal author: DIANE RICE

## 1 PURPOSE

### 1.1 To inform Committee of:

- the current vacancies on the Committee;
- the progress of the relevant sections of the Localism Bill; and
- to formulate a selection procedure to fill the vacancies.

### 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions - The Council aims to be a well-managed Council. There is a legal requirement to have a Standards Committee, a full complement of Members ensures the Committee can meet the requirements of the Initial Assessment regime.
- Community Objectives -
- Corporate Priorities -
- Other Considerations -

## 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Since the Council's Annual Meeting in May 2008, the Standards Committee has comprised 12 Members namely, four Borough Councillors, four Parish Councillors and four Independents.

2.2 Recently, two of the Parish Council Members have ceased to be Parish Councillors, and an Independent member has been elected as a Borough member.

2.3 The effect of this is that the Council now needs to recruit three additional Members to its Standards Committee.

2.4 At the Council's Annual Meeting on 17 May 2011, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services received delegated authority to arrange for the recruitment of additional Members. The process will be carried out under the auspices of the Standards Committee; the final appointments will be made by Full Council. No selection methods were specified.

## 3 ISSUES

3.1 Members of the Committee will be aware that in the Localism Bill, the current Coalition Government indicated their intention to abolish the Standards regime.

3.2 The work of the committee is therefore subject to some uncertainty, however, the requirement to have a functioning Standards Committee has not yet been removed.

- 3.3 The current progress of the Localism Bill is such that the second reading of the Bill in the House of Lords will take place on 7 June 2011.
- 3.4 Attached as Appendix 1 is the most recent version of the explanatory notes to the Bill, which sets out the current position in relation to Chapter 5 of the Bill which deals with standards.
- 3.5 The Council's Parish Councils' Liaison Committee meets on 9 June 2011 and a report will be submitted to that Committee informing its Members about the current Parish Council member vacancies and requesting expressions of interest. A verbal report will be provided to Standards Committee about any expressions of interest that have been received.
- 3.6 The Council's Standards Committee now needs to decide how to carry out the process of recruiting additional Parish and Independent Members.
- 3.7 On the last occasion, this was managed by a recruitment panel comprising the Chairman of Personnel Committee, Head of Human Resources, Monitoring Officer, 1 Independent Member and 1 Parish Member. A formal application process was used, together with interviews etc. The vacancies were advertised in the Clitheroe Advertiser and Times, and Longridge News. Details were placed on the Council's website and circulated to all Parish Councils. There is a legal requirement to advertise the vacancy for an Independent member in a newspaper circulating in the local area.
- 3.8 The likely term of any member appointed to the Committee may be relatively short as the appointment cannot be confirmed until Full council meets. The timetable for meetings of Full Council is as follows: 12 July, 30 August and 11 October.
- 3.9 Members may wish to consider a selection process which, whilst less formal than on the last occasion, can be completed more quickly, possibly by separating the recruitment of Parish Members, where the eligible applicants can be contacted individually, from the process of recruiting an Independent Member. In which case the Committee might consider the following procedure for Parish Members:
1. Letter to all Parish Clerks requesting expressions of interest by mid July.
  2. Potential applicants to complete a similar application form to that used for employment with the Council, modified to reflect the role of a Parish Council Standards Member.
  3. Selection to be by way of a Panel, comprised as before, short-listing then interviewing (early-mid August).
  4. Recommendation to Full Council 30 August 2011.
- Recruitment of the Independent member could then proceed in a similar basis, but after the vacancy was advertised in the local paper.

#### 4 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:
- Resources – N/A.

- Technical, Environmental and Legal – N/A.
- Political – N/A.
- Reputation – N/A.

## **5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 Authorise the Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services to place an advert in the Clitheroe Advertiser and Times requesting applicants for the Standards Committee post of the Independent Member.
- 5.2 Authorise recruitment of Parish Council Members in accordance with 3.9 above.
- 5.3 Confirm the composition of the selection panel as at 3.7 to vet the applications and select candidates for recommendation to Full Council.

## HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. None.

For further information please ask for Diane Rice, extension 4418.