

Report of : Director of Corporate Resources
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Meeting of Standards	Date 31st March 2008	Agenda Item 5	Ward(s)
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Delete as appropriate	Exempt	Non-exempt
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Subject: MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

1. Synopsis

The Council, at their meeting on 3rd April, will be asked to increase the number of independent members on the Standards Committee from 4 to 5 and approve the appointment of Jane McNeill, Q.C., as an Independent Member until April 2012.

This is to enable the Committee to have greater flexibility and have appointed independent members on their Sub-Committees which will deal with the new duties of: the local assessment of complaints; reviewing that decision and conducting a hearing following an investigation.

2. Recommendations

To note the action taken to increase the membership of the Committee.

3. Background

3.1 The requirements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 were reported to the January meeting of the Standards Committee.

3.2 It is expected that the reformed conduct regime will take effect from May 2008. The Committee at their January meeting asked officers to look at increasing the numbers of independent members on the Committee from 4 to 5 and appointing substitutes to the 2 Councillor positions on the Committee.

3.3 This will enable the Committee establish Sub-Committees, each of which will be chaired by an Independent Member to undertake three separate and distinct roles:

- the local assessment of complaints
- reviewing the decision

➤ conducting the hearing following an investigation

- 3.4 An advertisement and interview process was conducted by Personnel Sub-Committee for the last independent member vacancy on the Committee in May 2007.
- 3.5 Two suitable candidates were chosen by the Sub-Committee but following the interviews one of them withdrew from the process.
- 3.6 That candidate, Jane McNeill has been contacted again and has re-considered her decision and would be happy to be appointed as an independent member.
- 3.7 Jane has lived in the borough for over 20 years and is a practising barrister with part-time judicial positions in both the County Court and Employment Tribunal. She has all the qualities required for an independent member on the Committee.
- 3.8 Council, at their meeting on 28th February, appointed Councillors Belford and Kelly, respectively as substitutes for Councillors Stacy and Watts.

4. Implications

4.1 Finance Implications

The cost of the small allowance paid to independent members will be met from existing budgets.

4.2 Legal Implications

Increasing the size of the Committee will help the Council meet the requirements for the revised conduct regime set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

4.3 Equality Impact Assessment

The increase in the number of independent members will help the Committee conduct the local assessment of complaints against Members and hearings in a fair and clear way and ensure high standards of ethics and conduct are maintained in Islington.

Background Papers

Final Report Clearance

Signed by

Louise Round
Director of Corporate Resources

Date

Received by

Head of Democratic Services

Date

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