

Appointment of Non-Elected, Independent Members to the Standards Committee

Report of the Deputy Monitoring Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

To recommend the appointment of two candidates as non-elected, Independent Members of the Fire Authority's Standards Committee.

2 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- a) Consider the recommendation of the recruitment panel; and
- b) Appoint **Mr Paul Brereton** and **Mr David Turner** as two additional, non-elected, Independent Members of the Fire Authority's Standards Committee.

3 Background

At its meeting on 19 December 2007, the Fire Authority agreed that the independent membership of its Standards Committee should be increased from two to four, to ensure that the Committee would be able to perform additional responsibilities introduced by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and subsequent regulations. The Authority also gave permission for a recruitment exercise to commence.

4 Recruitment Exercise

In accordance with legislative requirements, an advertisement was placed in the local press, seeking candidates for the two positions. As the response to such advertisements has been limited in the past, the Standards Committee agreed that additional measures should be taken to increase the number of applicants. Accordingly, the Chair of the Committee wrote to those already sitting as non-elected, Independent Members on other local authority Standards Committees in the County, inviting them to apply. Officers had previously sought advice from the Standards Board for England to ensure that this was in order.

The response to the recruitment campaign was excellent – there were 19 applicants, of which 8 were short listed and attended for interview. The number interviewed was high, as all of these candidates (being current, non-elected, Independent Members of other Standards Committees in the County) have the skills, knowledge and experience required. The recruitment panel, which consisted of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority (the latter is also a member of the Standards Committee) and the non-elected, Independent Chair of the Committee, supported by the Chief Fire Officer and the Deputy Monitoring Officer, conducted interviews on 8 and 9 April and decided upon two candidates, who are now recommended to the Fire Authority for appointment.

5 Recommendation

Following interview **Mr Paul Brereton** and **Mr David Turner**, both of whom fulfil the criteria for independent membership of the Standards Committee, are recommended to the Fire Authority for appointment.

Mr Brereton has been a non-elected independent member of Shropshire County Council's Standards Committee for several years. He runs his own business and is a member of the Institute of Agricultural Engineers.

Mr Turner has extensive experience in senior management and has more recently been involved in public appointments, including Chair of the Finance and General Personnel Committee of Bridgnorth Endowed School governing body and member of Bridgnorth District Council's Independent Remuneration Panel. He is also currently a non-elected independent member and Vice-Chair of Shropshire County Council's Standards Committee.

Both candidates have confirmed that they do not have any close friendship or relationship with any Member of the Fire Authority or any employee in Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service. Furthermore, neither of them is a Member of any local council or political party.

As both candidates already sit on a Standards Committee, they have an excellent grasp of issues relating to ethical issues, the Members' Code of Conduct and the changes, which are to take place regarding the local filter and investigation and determination of complaints.

6 Financial Implications

The appointment of two, additional, non-elected Independent Members will cost the Fire Authority an additional £526 per annum in co-optees' allowances (plus the percentage increase agreed in due course by the National Joint Council, which will apply with effect from 1 April 2008).

They are also entitled to claim travel allowances and an additional allowance of £51 for up to 4 hours and £102 for over 4 hours, should they be required to consider locally any allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct. It is anticipated that it will be possible to meet these additional allowances from existing budgets.

7 Legal Comment

The Local Government Act 2000 and associated Regulations require that the Fire Authority advertises for Independent Members of its Standards Committee in at least one local paper and appointment of an Independent Member can take place only if that person has submitted an application and has been approved by the majority of Members of the Fire Authority.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this report.

9 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

10 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity	*	Member Involvement	*
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial	*	Staff	
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*