



## COUNCIL MEETING

26 May 2010

### Report from the Borough Solicitor

For Action

Wards Affected:  
None

### Independent members on Standards Committee

#### 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the Borough Solicitor's recommendation to increase the number of alternate Independent Members on Standards Committee.

#### 2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Council:

Agrees to amend the Member Allowance Scheme in Part 8 of the Constitution to provide for an additional alternate member of the Standards Committee

#### 3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Under the present arrangements set out in the Constitution the Council appoints three independent members to the Standards Committee. Two independent members are required to sit on the Standards Committee and one must act as chair. The third member is an alternate. The independent members are also required to chair the sub committees. When considering a particular case the chair of the review sub committee cannot be the same as the person who chaired the initial assessment sub committee. The independent members are appointed every two years. The term of office of the three current members expires in May 2010.
- 3.2 The advert for new independent members resulted in a high number of applicants. Following short listing and interviews four of the applicants are considered suitable they are the present chair, one current member and two new persons. Members are advised that there are advantages to appointing all four as Independent members. It is recommended that the committee

membership numbers remain the same, but there be two, instead of one, alternate. The benefits of appointing all four people are that:

- i) more alternates will be available in the event that one or more of the committee members are unavailable or resign (of particular value in relation to the sub committees where the chair of the original decision making committee is 'conflicted out' of participating in the review committee),
- ii) it enables the Council to develop new and less experienced members to become chairs while retaining the present Chair until the succession plan is complete,
- iii) there have been considerable difficulties in the past recruiting suitable persons to the role of independent member and the Council is currently presented with an opportunity to secure four persons,
- iv) it achieves maximum benefit from the cost and time spent on the recruitment process.

3.3 There is a small cost implication namely an increase of £411 p/a in the member's allowance scheme to provide for the fourth independent member's annual allowance.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 There will be an increase to the member's allowance scheme of £411

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 The Standards Committee(England) Regulations 2008 require that at least 25% of the members of a Standards Committee be independent and that the chair of the Standards Committee and Sub committees be independent members.

#### **6.0 Diversity Implications**

6.1 This report has been screened by officers and there are not considered to be any diversity implications arising from it.

#### **Background Papers**

The Brent Constitution

#### **Contact Officers**

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