

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 14 February 2017
Report Subject	Co-opted Members
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council must appoint people who are not councillors to, amongst others, the Audit Committee and Standards Committee. This is so that these committees are seen to be more independent.

Since the last elections council has made a number of such appointments and the term of office for 2 of those co-opted members runs out in May. Both are eligible to be reappointed for a further term. Thereafter they must stand down because they cannot serve more than 2 terms of office under the relevant legislation for those committees. In addition, the legislation relating to Standards Committees currently specifies that the second term of office can be a maximum of 4 years.

Both have worked diligently in their roles and have made a beneficial contribution to the governance of the Council. However only the member on the Standards Committee is willing to be reappointed. There therefore needs to be a recruitment process for a replacement on the Audit Committee

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Council reappoints Rob Dewey to the Standards Committee for 4 years.
2	That Council thanks Paul Williams for his work and efforts on the Audit Committee
3	That Council advertises for a new co-optee on the Audit Committee and that applications be interviewed by a panel consisting of the Leader of Council, the Chair of Audit, the section 151 officer and the Monitoring Officer

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	Explaining the requirement to appoint co-optees
1.01	Under the Standards Committee (Wales) Regulations 2001 (as amended) the committee must include a majority of co-optees (termed “independent members” within the legislation). Those co-optees must be recruited via advertisement at first but then can be reappointed for a second term without re-advertising the position.
1.02	The Council appointed a number of co-optees in 2013 following advert. They were appointed for varying terms so that their positions did not all fall vacant at the same time (resulting in a complete loss of their combined experience). The first term office to expire will be Rob Dewey whose term comes to an end in May 2017.
1.03	Rob Dewey is the vice chair of the committee. He is well regarded by the committee and is willing to serve again.
1.04	The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Council to appoint at least 1 co-optee to its Audit Committee (called a “lay member” in the legislation). The Council appointed Paul Williams to the Audit Committee (following advert) in June 2012. His term also ends May 2017. Whilst he is equally well regarded he does not wish to be re-appointed so the council must advertise for a replacement.
1.05	The legislation requires the council to place an advert in the local press seeking applications. I would propose that the applicants should be interviewed by panel consisting of the Leader of Council, the Chair of Audit, the section 151 officer and the Monitoring Officer. That panel will then make recommendations to council for its approval.
1.06	If the Council does not reappoint the Rob Dewey then it will need to advertise that position in the local press as well. If both positions are to be advertised then I would suggest adding the chair of the Standards Committee to the appointment panel. In addition, any panel to appoint a co-optee to the Standards Committee must include a lay person who has themselves been recruited via advert.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	If the Council does not reappoint the incumbents then it will need to advertise the vacancies in the local press. Based on the cost of recent adverts this is likely to be around £3,000.00. There is nothing to prevent the same advert being used for the positions on both committees.
2.02	In addition the Council will need to appoint (via advertisement) a lay person to serve on the appointment panel to the Standards Committee at similar cost. The total expenditure on advertising is therefore likely to be £6,000.

2.03	The role descriptions and adverts used last time are still available for both committees. They would need a updating but it would be possible to place an advert relatively quickly.
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3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	None.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The terms of office for each co-optee expire in May 2017 so there is plenty of time to advertise if that is the chosen course of action. The interview process includes a number of restrictions on candidates to ensure that only people who are truly independent of the Council may be appointed, and careful interviewing is used to ensure that candidates of the right calibre are selected.
4.02	Adverts would be placed bilingually in order to attract applications from Welsh speakers, and would be sent to local community groups representing people with disabilities to ensure that no potential candidate is accidentally excluded by the medium through which the vacancies are advertised.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	There are no appendices

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Not relevant Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer Governance Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: Gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Co-optee – the council consists of a chairman and 69 members who are all elected. By contrast, legislation sometimes provides for a person to be appointed to a committee without being elected through a process called co-option.