

WYFRA	AUTHORITY	5 SEPTEMBER 2008	ITEM No
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REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES
(MONITORING OFFICER)

PURPOSE OF REPORT: TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF
INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO THE STANDARDS
COMMITTEE.

RECOMMENDATION: 1) THAT THE AUTHORITY APPROVE THE
APPOINTEMENT OF MR M WILKINSON, MR A
JOHNSON AND, MR A AHMED AS INDEPENDENT
MEMBERS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THE RECOMMENDATION OF
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND FOR THE
INDIVIDUAL TERMS OF OFFICE RECOMMENDED
IN THIS REPORT.

2) THAT MR M WILKINSON BE APPOINTED AS
CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE
UNTIL THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
AUTHORITY IN 2009.

3) THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO
INCREASE THE REMUNERATION LEVEL AS
OUTLINED IN PARAGRAPH 1.8

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT DETAILS

Exemption Category: NIL

Contact Officer: M G Barnes – Director of Corporate Resources
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Background Papers: None

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following changes to the statutory regime for the investigation and adjudication of complaints against local councillors which transferred the responsibility for such matters from the Standards Board for England to local standards committees, the Authority determined to expand the size of the Standards Committee from five to nine members, including three Independent Members. Unfortunately it became necessary to recruit entirely new Independent Members to the Standards Committee following the resignation of one member of the Standards Committee and the notification of intended resignation of the Independent Chair (both for personal reasons).
- 1.2 The Executive Committee considered five applications in response to a public advertisement and shortlisted and interviewed four candidates and has recommended appointment of three candidates as Independent Members of the Committee. The three are:
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| Mr M Wilkinson | a magistrate and current chair of the Leeds City Council Standards Committee |
| Mr A Johnson | a magistrate and current member of the Calderdale Council Standards Committee |
| Mr A Ahmed | a mature student and volunteer community worker in the Bradford area. |
- 1.3 Under Regulation 5 of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008, the appointment of Independent Members to a Standards Committee must be approved by a majority of the members of the Authority as a whole – hence this report.
- 1.4 The fact that it has been necessary to recruit all three new Independent Members at the same time could cause continuity and replacement problems if all three are appointed for the same fixed term and for that reason it is recommended that the terms of office offered be of different lengths. It is therefore recommended that the terms of appointment be as follows:
- (i) Mr Wilkinson – 5th September 2008 to 30th June 2012
 - (ii) Mr Johnson – 5th September 2008 to 30th June 2011
 - (iii) Mr Ahmed – 5th September 2008 to 30th June 2010
- This will facilitate their reappointment on a continuing basis at the annual meetings in each year, or should it be considered appropriate, public advertisements can be placed in order to secure further applications.
- 1.5 It is further recommended that the terms of office of an Independent Member should determine earlier if any member should fail to attend at least two consecutive meetings of the Standards Committee without providing a satisfactory explanation which is accepted by the Standards Committee.
- 1.6 The Executive Committee further recommended that Mr M Wilkinson be offered appointment as Chair of the Committee. It is recommended that this be confirmed on the basis that the appointment shall last until the annual general meeting of the Authority in June 2009, when the question of the continuance of that appointment can be considered and determined and it may well be appropriate for the Authority to do this on an annual basis.

- 1.7 The Standards Committee itself is required under the 2008 Regulations and Section 54a of the Local Government Act 2000, to make appointments to sub committees as necessary, each of which will need to be chaired by an Independent Member. This will therefore be an item on the agenda of the next Standards Committee.

Remuneration

- 1.8 During the process of reviewing the establishment of the Standards Committee it was discovered that the allowances paid to West Yorkshire Independent Members are amongst the lowest. It is recommended that consideration be given to an increase in the level of allowances from £278 for an Independent Member and £555 to the Chairman to £350 and £700 respectively with annual inflation increase from 2009 onwards under the terms of the approved Allowance Scheme.

Conclusion

- 1.9 The Authority is invited to confirm the appointment of three Independent Members as detailed in this report, including the appointment of Mr M Wilkinson as Chair of the Standards Committee and to determine whether it wishes to increase the remuneration as indicated above.

Standards Committees Independent Members - Remuneration Comparisons

Authority	Member	Chair
Tyne & Wear	£1545	£3091
Merseyside	£600	£600
LFEPA	£558	£1176
Humberside	£535	£772
South Yorkshire	£412	£824
West Midlands	£350	£500
Greater Manchester	£286	£572
West Yorkshire	£278	£555