

Item No. 78.1	Classification: Open	Date: 26 th March 2003	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Recruitment Of Two Independent Members To Standards Committee	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All Wards	
From:		Chief Executive (Borough Solicitor & Secretary)	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council Assembly be recommended to increase the number of Independent Members on the Standards Committee from three to four.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Currently there are three Independent voting members on the Committee. The total membership is nine; made up of six councillors and the three independent members. At the beginning when the Committee was established, a case was made to have reserves for the Councillors but not for the independent members.
3. After operating for a year, the Committee have agreed that there may be a case for a fourth independent member.
4. The Standard Committee's terms of reference requires an independent member to be present for the committee to be quorate, increasing the number to four will cater for any absences.
5. Advertisements were placed in the South London Press and Southwark News. The timetable agreed in December 2002 for the recruitment was as follows:
 - Public advertisement, 10 February 2003 onwards
 - Deadline for applications, 5 March 2003
 - Short listing of candidates, 12 March 2003
 - Interviews, 26 March 2003
 - Report to Standards Committee, 23 April 2003
 - Report to Constitutional Council Assembly, 21 May 2003
6. Currently, five applications have been received and the Panel will recruit the agreed independent member or members on 26th March 2003.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

7. If the Council Assembly agrees to a fourth independent member, the addition would be made during the approaching recruitment.

Legal Issues

8. Section 53(4) of the Local Government Act 2000 provides that a Standards Committee of a London borough council must include at least two members

of the authority and at least one person who is not a member or an officer of the authority or any other relevant authority. The Relevant Authorities (Standards Committee) Regulations 2001 specify that an authority must ensure that, where its Standards Committee has more than three members, at least 25% are independent members.

9. The Regulations specify that a person may not be appointed as an independent member of a standards committee unless the appointment is:
 - approved by a majority of the members of the authority;
 - advertised in one or more newspapers circulating in the area of the authority;
 - of a person who has submitted an application to the authority;
 - of a person who has not within the period of five years immediately preceding the date of the appointment been a member of the authority; and
 - of a person who is not a relative or close friend of a member or officer of the authority

10. The regulations stipulate that an independent member should be a person:
 - who has not within the period of five years immediately preceding the date of their appointment been a Member of the authority;
 - who is not a relative or close friend of a Member or Officer of the authority;
 - who is not a Member or Officer of any other local authority; and
 - who has no criminal convictions

Other London Boroughs

11. A comparative analysis was carried out on other London boroughs and the findings are shown below: -

NAME	COUNCILLORS	INDEPENDENT	CHAIRING
SOUTHWARK	6	3	INDEPENDENT
CAMDEN	3	3	INDEPENDENT
NEWHAM	5	2	INDEPENDENT
TOWER HAMLETS	3	2	COUNCILLOR
WESTMINSTER	1	3	COUNCILLOR
KENSINGTON	2	3	INDEPENDENT
LEWISHAM	4	4	INDEPENDENT
REDBRIDGE	5	2	INDEPENDENT
BRENT	2	3	INDEPENDENT
BARNET	4	3	INDEPENDENT

LAMBETH	3	2	NOT STATED
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Resource Implications

12. Expenditure relating to recruitment can be contained within current budgets.

Equal Opportunities Implications

13. Applications for the position of independent member are open to all sectors of the community on the basis of the following criteria:
- an independent and analytical mind;
 - tact and good interpersonal skills;
 - ability to give clear and reasoned advice; and
 - an understanding of issues affecting inner-city areas like Southwark

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Standards Committee agenda and Minutes Files	Constitutional Support Services, Southwark Town Hall, Peckham Road SE5 8UB	Tina Akumanyi 020 7525 7225
National Standards Board Regulations	www.Standardsboard.com	Internet

APPENDIX A

Audit Trail

Lead Officer	Shelley Burke, Constitutional Support Manager (Scrutiny)	
Report Author	Tina Akumanyi, Constitutional Support Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	11.03.03	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Borough Solicitor & Secretary	Yes	
Executive Member	No	
Date final report sent to Constitutional Support Services		