

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	<b>Council</b>	
MEETING DATE:	<b>19<sup>th</sup> February 2019</b>	
TITLE:	<b>Appointment of Standards Committee Independent Members</b>	
WARD:	All	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		

### **1 THE ISSUE**

- 1.1 The Council is asked to approve the appointment of Mr Axel Palmer as an Independent Member of the Standards Committee, following the resignation of Ms Susan Toland as Chair and Independent Member, and confirm the appointment of the existing members.

### **2 RECOMMENDATION**

The Council is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the resignation of Ms Toland and record the thanks of the Council for her contribution to maintaining high standards of behaviour during her 15 years as an independent member and Chair of the Standards Committee.
- 2.2 Confirm the appointment as independent members of the Standards Committee for a period of four years of Dr Palmer and the current independent members, Mr Cyril Davies and Ms Deborah Russell.

### **3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report.

### **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 The Council was required to set up a Standards Committee under the Local Government Act 2000. The main role of the Standards Committee is to promote

and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and to monitor the operation of the Council's Statutory Code of Conduct for Members.

- 4.2 The Localism Act 2011 made fundamental changes to the system for the regulation of standards of conduct and required new Arrangements to be agreed for dealing with allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct. The Council agreed that the Standards Committee should continue under the new regime, recognising the value of independent members in this role.

## **5 THE REPORT**

5.1 The current membership of the Standards Committee is:

- 5 elected Members (2 from the Conservative, and 1 each from the Liberal Democrat, Labour and Independent groups, plus 1 substitute from each of those groups);
- 3 Independent Members (one of the Independent Members shall chair the Committee);
- 3 Parish Representatives (with 3 substitutes).

5.2 Sue Toland has served 15 years as an independent member and independent Chair of the Standards Committee. She has successfully steered the Standards Committee through the introduction of local assessment of complaints to the new arrangements introduced in 2012. Under her chairmanship, the Standards Committee has reviewed numerous policies, dealt appropriately with complaints and presents an annual report to Council explaining the work of the Standards Committee.

5.3 Dr Axel Palmer is a Visiting Lecturer at Bristol Law School, The University of the West of England, specialising in Economic Crime (Fraud, Bribery and Corruption). He was formerly a Head of Debt Management and a Head of Litigation at a major international bank; a former Parish Council chairman and Standards Committee Parish Council representative. He is a Vice Chairman of The Bath and Wells Diocesan Board of Finance.

## **6 RATIONALE**

6.1 The composition of the Standards Committee requires at least three independent members.

## **7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

7.1 None.

## **8 CONSULTATION**

7.2 Consultation is not appropriate for this appointment process.

## 9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

<b>Contact person</b>	<i>Maria Lucas, Director of Legal &amp; Democratic Services (01225) 395171</i>
<b>Background papers</b>	
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	