

AGENDA ITEM_____

REPORT TO COUNCIL

11 SEPTEMBER 2013

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

SUMMARY

This reports provides Council with the recommendations from the meeting of the Standards (Independent Persons) Appointment Panel ("the Panel") held on 18 July 2013 regarding the Panel's views on whether or not further terms of office for the Council's current Independent Persons should be recommended.

RECOMMENDED

It is recommended to Council that:-

1. Consideration is given to the information in this report.
2. The terms of office of the Independent Person and two reserve Independent Persons should be extended for a period expiring two months after the next local government elections in May 2015.
3. The remuneration of the Independent Persons should remain at its present level (i.e. equivalent to a Co-optee's allowance of £650 pa, together with travel and subsistence costs at member rates).

DETAIL

1. At the Panel's meeting on 5 July 2012 the Panel recommended to Council that:-
 - Norman Rollo be appointed as the Independent Person and that Jeff Bell and Mike Hill be appointed as the two Independent Person reserves; and that
 - Their terms of office be for an initial term of 15 months, with effect from 1 July 2012, with a review after 12 months to determine whether further terms of office should be recommended.
2. Council approved these recommendations at the meeting on 18 July 2012.
3. The Panel reviewed the three appointments on the 18 July 2013.
4. As a result the Panel has recommended as follows:-
 1. The terms of office of the Independent Person and two reserve Independent Persons should be extended for a period expiring two months after the next local government elections in May 2015.

2. The remuneration of the Independent Persons should remain at its present level (i.e. equivalent to a Co-optee's allowance of £650 pa, together with travel and subsistence costs at member rates).
5. Attached at **Appendix 1** is a copy of the report to the Panel, together with a copy of the Independent Person's role description, duties and responsibilities and the selection criteria/eligibility for appointment.
6. Also attached at **Appendix 2** is a copy of the relevant minutes from the Panel's meeting.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial

7. Council has agreed that Independent Persons should receive a co-optees allowance of £650 pa, and that they should be entitled to travel and subsistence at member rates. The costs are being met from existing budgets.

Legal

8. The appointment of at least one Independent Person satisfies the requirements of the Act.

RISK ASSESSMENT

9. A re-assessment of risk will be undertaken as part of the review of the Council's new standards arrangements. However, based on experience since the new standards arrangements were introduced in July 2012 and the measures in place regarding promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct, the risk is considered to be low.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

10. Effective corporate and ethical governance is critical to an authority's performance. Probity and high standards are an inherent part of ethical and hence corporate governance. The Act envisages that local authorities have a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

11. It is not considered that an assessment is necessary.

CONSULTATION

12. Developments relating to the standards regime, including proposals for appointing Independent Persons have previously been reported to and discussed with the former Standards Committee, Parish Liaison Forum, Town/Parish Clerks, Cabinet and with Officers and Members of the Council, as well as being reported to and discussed at full Council meetings.

Director of Law & Democracy

Contact Officer: David E Bond

Telephone No: 01642 527060

E-mail: david.bond@stockton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Not ward specific

Property Implications:

None