



## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

### APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

1. In accordance with the provisions set out in The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008, the Council has established a Standards Committee with 5 Independent Members, 3 Parish Council Representatives and 4 Borough Council Members. Two of these Independent Members are appointed as Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee.
2. 'Independent Member' means a person appointed to the Standards Committee or Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee who is not a Member or Officer of West Lancashire Borough Council or any other Local Authority, which includes parish, district, county and unitary councils as well as Police and Fire Authorities. However, a person who is an Independent Member of a Standards Committee of another Local Authority may be appointed.
3. No person who has been a Member or Officer of the Borough Council, within the period of 5 years preceding the date of appointment, may be appointed as an Independent Member of the Standards Committee. For the guidance of applicants, this period would be from 19 May 2005 to 19 May 2010.
4. No person who is a relative or close friend of a Member or Officer of the Council may be appointed as an Independent Member of the Standards Committee. For the guidance of applicants, the Regulations define "relative" as a partner (spouse, civil partner or someone that person lives with in a similar capacity), parent, parent of partner, son, daughter, stepson, stepdaughter, the child of a partner, brother, sister, a brother or sister of a partner, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece and the partners of any of the preceding persons. The Regulations do not provide a definition of a 'close friend'.
5. Only those persons who submit a completed application to the Council may be considered for appointment as an Independent Member of the Standards Committee.
6. Membership of a political party does not automatically bar applicants from being an Independent Member of the Standards Committee. However, the more politically active a member is, the less likely they will be seen as being independent.
7. Independent Members should preferably have some knowledge of local government and the way it works. Lack of familiarity with the functions of Councils, however, will not be a bar to appointment.

8. Independent Members should ideally reside in West Lancashire.
9. Independent Members will
  - (a) be appointed for a four year term of office.
  - (b) At the end of the term of office the Council shall either re-appoint the retiring member, if that member is prepared to be re-appointed, or take steps to appoint a replacement.
  - (c) After the first term of office, any subsequent period will be up to four years for each member, but no longer than eight years in total
10. The Council may remove an Independent Member from the Committee if he or she becomes discredited (for example if an Independent Member is found guilty of a criminal offence) or if an Independent Member fails to perform the duties required of them.
11. Independent Members must not misuse any information gained in the course of their service on the Committee for example for personal gain or political purpose, nor seek to use the opportunity of service on the Standards Committee to promote their private interests or those of connected firms, businesses or other organisations. A member who has any contractual relations with the Council is less likely to be seen as being independent.
12. Independent Members of the Committee must at all times observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the work of the Committee. In this respect the Independent Members will themselves be required to formally agree to abide to and act in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members including completing a Declaration of Personal Interests Form. This register is available to be viewed by members of the public on request.
13. It is likely that Independent Members will need to attend several meetings of the Committee and Sub-Committees during the year. Expenses are currently paid in accordance with the scheme approved by the Council to the independent Chairman and independent Vice Chairman (currently £600 and £400 respectively). Allowances will also be paid to other independent members (currently £200).
14. The Chairman of the Standards Committee is always an Independent Member as is the Vice Chairman who will Chair meetings of the Committee in the absence of the Chairman.
15. Short listed applicants who have not previously served on the Committee will be invited to attend a short interview in relation to their application. It is anticipated that such interviews will take place on Thursday, 14 January 2010. Applicants are requested to indicate if they are NOT available.