



**AGENDA ITEM:**

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE:  
1 NOVEMBER 2007**

**COUNCIL:  
12 DECEMBER 2007**

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**Report of: Council Secretary and Solicitor**

**Contact for further information: Mrs Jacky Denning (Extn 5384)**

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**SUBJECT: STANDARDS COMMITTEE – APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER**

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**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To consider the appointment of an Independent Member to the Standards Committee for 2007/08.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the Committee continues to comprise 11 members namely 5 independent members, 2 Parish Councillor representatives, 2 Conservative and 2 Labour members.

2.2 That Mr Robert Patterson be appointed as an Independent Member of the Standards Committee, to serve for a term of 3 years 5 months, expiring on the date of the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2011.

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**3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Council appointed its Standards Committee with independent members in 1999, in advance of the statutory requirement arising from the Local Government Act 2000.

3.2 The Relevant Authorities (Standards Committee) Regulations 2001 set out the rules governing the size and membership of the Standards Committee and how it should run its business.

3.3 At least two of the Standards Committee members must be Councillors; at least 25% must be 'independent representatives', (there is no limit on the number you can have); and at least one member must be a parish council

representative. The parish council representative must not also be a member of West Lancashire District Council.

- 3.4 The current Committee comprises 11 members namely 5 independent members, 2 parish representatives, 2 Conservative and 2 Labour Councillors. This size of Committee leaves us well placed to meet the demands and challenges of the 'local filter' from April 2008.

#### **4.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 4.1 The Role and Functions of the Standards Committee is detailed in "Section 3.9 of the Constitution, Article 9 – The Standards Committee".

#### **5.0 INDEPENDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

- 5.1 This Council decides how long an independent representative should sit on the Committee. The Standards Board advice is that this should be long enough for them to gain an understanding of the committee, the Council and its workings, but not so long that they lose their independence.

- 5.2 A vacancy arose for an Independent Member in June 2007 and in accordance with the usual procedure the position was advertised and a press release was also distributed.

- 5.3 Four applications were received in response to the advertisement for an independent member of the standards committee and the press release and short listing was undertaken by the Council Secretary and Solicitor, the Member Services Manager and the Assistant Member Services Manager which was carried out based on the following qualities:

- Familiarity with ethical dilemmas
- Experience with Committee work
- Questioning skills
- Assertive
- Independence of any political party and local government
- Independence of West Lancashire District Council

- 5.4 Using the criteria in paragraph 5.3 above, Mr Robert Patterson was short-listed for interview, this interview took place on Wednesday 10 October 2007 and he was found to be an excellent candidate for the position in view of his previous experience as a magistrate, his knowledge of quasi judicial committees and also because of his independence from the Council, it is on this basis that I recommend him for appointment.

#### **6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 6.1 Promotion of high ethical standards at a local level assists in demonstrating that the Council is an ethical organisation.

## 7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Allowances are paid to the following members of the Standards Committee in recognition of their respective roles and are covered in existing budgets as follows:

<b>Role</b>	<b>Allowance per annum</b>
Independent Member	£200
Parish Council Representative	£200
Chairman	£400 (+£200)
Vice Chairman	£200 (+£200)

7.2 Should Mr Patterson be appointed, any allowance will be paid on a pro-rata basis following the date of his appointment.

## 8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

8.1 There are no significant management risks arising from this report.

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### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of an adverse impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups.

### **Appendices**

None