

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	12 December 2023
Subject:	Standards Committee Future Membership
Report of:	Monitoring Officer
Head of Service/Director:	Monitoring Officer
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Corporate Governance
Number of Appendices:	None

Executive Summary:

The Standards Committee has operated for many years with two independent persons advising the Monitoring Officer and the Standards Committee, and just one Parish Council Member.

The report proposes to increase the number of independent persons and Parish Council Members to three to facilitate them having more involvement in the complaints process at an earlier stage with panels similar to those used for licensing hearings.

This was supported by the Standards Committee on 16th October 2023 and a number of members of Parish Councils have expressed an interest in joining the Standards Committee as non- voting members.

Recommendation:

To AGREE to:

- 1. Increase the number of independent persons assisting the Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee from two to three**
- 2. Increase the number of Parish Council Members on the Standards Committee as non –voting members from one to three.**

Financial Implications:

The independent persons are paid a small allowance so a further allowance will be paid to the additional independent person.

Legal Implications:

Tewkesbury Borough has a large number of Parish Councils. The Borough Council is responsible for looking at Code of Conduct complaints from Parish Councils and the process would benefit from additional Parish Council input based on the earlier experience of the Monitoring Officer.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications:

The panel meetings can be on Teams to avoid additional travel.

Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):
The Monitoring Officer can resource the additional appointments and the panel meetings.
Safeguarding Implications:
None.
Impact on the Customer:
The process will be more transparent and include a wider set of views.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The Borough Council is required to deal with its own Code of Conduct issues and those arising in its 20+ Parish Councils in the borough. Complaints from Parish Councils is a large body of work and the costs fall on the Borough Council.

2.0 ADDITIONAL INDEPENDENT PERSONS AND PARISH COUNCILLORS HAVING A ROLE IN THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

- 2.1** To facilitate the greater involvement of Members in the early stages of the Standards complaints process, it is proposed to increase the number of independent persons from two to three and the number of Parish Councillors from one to three. This will increase the variety of persons involved in the process which should provide those involved with greater confidence in its objectivity.

3.0 CONSULTATION

- 3.1** The change is supported by the present Standards Committee who considered a report in relation to item at its meeting in October. Over 15 Parish Councillors have expressed an interest in joining the Committee. There will be an interview process involving the Monitoring Officer and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee to appoint the additional independent person and the three Parish Councillors.

4.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS

- 4.1** There is a risk that those brought into the process might seek to act politically. This has not been the experience of your Monitoring Officer.

5.0 MONITORING

- 5.1** The Standards Committee will report to Council on its work annually.

6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

- 6.1** None

Background Papers: Standards Committee report from 16 October 2023

Contact Officer: Monitoring Officer
01684 272211 tom.clark@teWKesbury.gov.uk

Appendices: None