

DRAFT PROTOCOL ON THE APPOINTMENT OF PARISH/TOWN COUNCILLOR MEMBERS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

1 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

1.1 Commencing the recruitment process

The Monitoring Officer will be responsible for initiating the process of recruitment and selection of Parish/Town Councillor Members of the Standards Committee. Where possible this will be prior to the term/s of office of the current incumbent/s coming to an end.

1.2 Advertisement

The Monitoring Officer will arrange for Parish Council vacancies to be notified to the Hertfordshire Association of Local Councils and to Parish Councils in the District.

The Monitoring Officer may arrange for an advertisement of the vacancy/ies to be placed in a newspaper circulating in the area and on the Council's website inviting applications for the appointment of Parish/Town Councillor Member/s. Displays could be made in public buildings. Job adverts will include the phrase "positively welcoming applications from all parts of the community." A short news item in one of the local papers might be a useful way of attracting people who are not necessarily looking at job advertisements. A letter could be sent to all the parish clerks of each of the town and parish councils within the District of North Hertfordshire asking them whether they are aware of any potentially suitable candidates if appropriate.

1.3 Shortlisting

Once applications have closed, a panel of the Standards Committee will meet to consider the applications and select a short-list of applicants for the interview panel. The panel will consider the suitability of candidates for appointment and their ability to contribute to the work of the Standards Committee, having regard to the criteria set out in this protocol, by reference to the candidate's application form, and information provided by their referees. Short listing will have regard for the Council's interview guarantee scheme for people with a disability. Those candidates who appear to the panel most clearly to meet the requirements for appointment will be invited to interview with the panel.

1.4 Interview

The interview panel will consist of the Council's Monitoring Officer, Chairman of the Standards Committee and 3 Members, drawn from the Standards Committee at least one of whom will have attended the Council's Corporate Recruitment and Selection course. Notes will be taken of the interview.

Selection shall be made with reference to the following criteria:

Attributes:

- Awareness of the background to the introduction of the new ethical framework for local government
- General understanding of the principles behind the Members Code of Conduct
- Understanding of the Standards Committee's main functions
- Perception of the potential contribution of Town/Parish Members appointed to the Committee

- Experience in Committee work/weighing evidence and dealing with ethical issues.
- A person in whose impartiality and integrity the public can have confidence.
- Assertive
- A demonstrable interest in local issues
- Ability to attend meetings
- An enquiring mind
- A good communicator with questioning skills
- Understand and comply with confidentiality requirements
- Able to make a significant contribution to the work of the Committee

1.5 Diversity

Subject to the eligibility criteria indicated above, the Council welcomes applications from candidates irrespective of age (subject to a minimum of 18 years), disability, ethnic origin, gender or sexual orientation. The recruitment process must reflect equalities good practice.

1.6 Appointment

Upon the selection of the most suitable candidate from those applicants interviewed, the Panel will submit a report to the Standards Committee, which will then report to the Council, recommending the appointment of that person. The District Council will formally appoint the Parish/Town Councillor Member/s to the Standards Committee, approval for which will be required by a majority of members of the Council.

2 TERM OF OFFICE

It is proposed that Parish/Town Councillor Members on North Hertfordshire District Council's Standards Committee shall serve for a period of four years subject to remaining in office in that period.

3 FACILITIES, INDUCTION, TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Parish/Town Councillor Members will have a range of training needs including in relation to:

- the structure and operation of local government;
- the operation of Standards Committees;
- the Code of Conduct;
- the hearing process for alleged breaches of the Code.

An introduction for new Parish/Town Councillor Members joining the Standards Committee will be the same as is offered to District Councillors.

The Monitoring Officer will be available to offer training and support.