

# Council

14 December 2023



<b>Title</b>	<b>Appointment of Chair of Standards Committee</b>
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report Author</b>	Farida Hussain, Monitoring Officer
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Exempt</b>	No but Appendix A exempt
<b>Exemption Reason</b>	Report - Not applicable Appendix A - On the grounds that it contains information relating to an individual and is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 (Information relating to any individual) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	This item is not in the current list of Corporate Priorities but still requires a Council decision.
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Council is asked to appoint:</b>  <b>Gareth Young as the Chair of the Standards Committee for two years, until December 2025.</b>
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	<b>Following a recruitment process, Mr Young was considered the most suitable applicant for the role.</b>

## 1. Requirement for appointments

- 1.1 The Council's constitution specifies that the Standards Committee shall consist of 9 councillors and two independent members who are not staff or councillors.
- 1.2 The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee shall be the two independent members. They are present in an advisory capacity and are not entitled to vote at meetings. Initial appointments are for two years with a possibility of renewing the appointments once for another two-year period.
- 1.3 The current Chair, Ian Winter resigned from his position in September 2023 leaving a vacancy for that role. The current Vice-Chair was appointed in 2020 and remains in post till December 2024.

## **2. Recruitment process**

2.1 A recruitment process has been undertaken. The recruitment pack included a person specification stating the essential and desirable requirements for the role, these being:

### **(a) Essential**

As well as being of good character, Independent members of the Standards Committee must:

1. Bring the qualities of impartiality to any decisions which have to be made by the committee;
2. Possess the ability to take an objective approach to decision making without being swayed by popular opinions or influenced by more powerful and articulate councillors taking part in the decision making;
3. Demonstrate the ability to consider contentious matters fairly;
4. Understand and weigh up evidence objectively;
5. Be able to deal with substantial documentation and to analyse and interpret that which is important, meaningful and relevant;
6. Respect others and have respect for strong ethical values;
7. Be a good listener with an open mind;
8. Be able to constructively challenge the accepted views of others and put forward clear and logical alternatives; and
9. Possess good written and oral communication skills.

### **(b) Desirable**

It would be desirable for the Independent member to the Standards Committee to have:

1. Had involvement in or knowledge of public authorities or voluntary organisations;
2. Experience for working in a committee setting, research groups, investigations panels or other similar situations;
3. Experience in dealing with complaints;
4. Knowledge of the role of Councillors in a public authority; and/or
5. Knowledge of the Nolan Principles.

2.2 The role was advertised on the Council's website, in its e-newsletter and on all social media channels from 28 September until 30 October 2023.

2.3 There was a positive response to the advertisement with five applications for the role. However, two applicants subsequently withdrew. The remaining three candidates were interviewed.

2.4 The interviews were undertaken by the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Paul Hoey as an independent advisor. Paul Hoey was selected to be on

the interview panel due to his expertise in this area. He was Director of Strategy at Standards for England from 2001 until its closure in 2013, and he has worked with over 400 authorities in one form or another through provision of training, investigative support and wider governance advice. He most recently assisted the Council to deliver its training to Standards Committee at the induction earlier this year.

2.5 The interview panel were unanimous in their decision on the recommendation to put before the Council.

### **3. Recommendation for appointments**

3.1 It is recommended that the Council appoints Gareth Young as Chair of the Standards Committee as he clearly demonstrated the essential and desirable skills, knowledge, abilities and personal qualities required for the role.

3.2 Mr Young is a senior civil servant and prior to that role has worked for two local authorities. He has considerable experience of working in committees, leading independent reviews and dealing with formal complaints or investigations, in his professional capacity. He demonstrated an ability to analyse substantial documentation and take a fair, balanced and thorough approach to decision making and contentious matters. Further details regarding Mr Young's professional background are contained at Appendix A.

3.3 Mr Young demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of local government and respect for the Nolan Principles.

### **4. Next steps**

4.1 If the Council is minded to approve the appointment, training for the Standards Chair would be provided early in the new year prior to the first scheduled meeting of the Committee in 2024.

### **5. Contact**

5.1 Farida Hussain, Group Head Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer  
[f.hussain@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:f.hussain@spelthorne.gov.uk)

## **APPENDICES**

### **Exempt Appendix A – Summary of Mr Young's professional background**