

Council

27 February 2025



Title	Appointment of Vice-Chair of Standards Committee
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	Linda Heron, Interim Monitoring Officer
Wards Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No but Appendix A exempt
Exemption Reason	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.
Corporate Priority	This item is not in the current list of Corporate Priorities but still requires a Council decision.
Recommendations	Council is asked to appoint: Martin Hull as the Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee for two years, until February 2027.
Reason for Recommendation	Following a recruitment process, Mr Hull was considered the most suitable applicant for the role.

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 Vice-Chair, Dylan Price has held his position since 2020 and consequently a vacancy now exists for that role.

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 16 December 2024 until 20 January 2025.
- 2.3 There was a positive response to the advertisement with four applications for the role. Three candidates were interviewed.
- 2.4 The interviews were undertaken by the Chief Executive, Interim 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 in 2023.

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 Martin Hull as Vice-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 Hull is a business leader with 25 years of international experience steering organisations through complex transitions, as well as dealing with public reporting, ethical standards, and potential conflicts of interest. He also has experience of managing sensitive executive remuneration discussions. Mr Hull demonstrated an ability to handle contentious issues fairly and diplomatically, remaining open-minded and impartial in decision-making processes. Further details regarding Mr Hull's professional background are contained at Appendix A.

3.3 Mr Hull 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 Committee Vice-Chair would be provided prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Committee in June 2025.

APPENDICES

Exempt Appendix A – Summary of Mr Hull's professional background