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## Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance)

Council

Date: 22 April 2009

Subject: Amendments to Article 9 Standards Committee Membership.

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### Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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## 1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 This report sets out recommendations to Council from the General Purposes Committee in relation to the Standards Committee membership.

## 2.0 Background Information

2.1 The General Purposes Committee is authorised to consider proposals to amend the constitution and make recommendations about this to Council.

2.2 At its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2009, the Committee met to consider the membership of the Standards Committee in relation to the numbers of Leeds City Councillors, Independent Members and Parish and Town Councillors.

## 3.0 Main Issues

3.1 The Head of Governance Services presented a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) outlining issues which had been raised by both the Standards Committee and Member Management Committee relating to the current membership of the Standards Committee.

3.2 In particular the following points were discussed:

- the merits of 50% of the Standards Committee membership being drawn from Leeds City Council Members;
- the merits of and difficulties in establishing a pool of Parish and Town Council Members of the Standards Committee; and
- the need for a procedure and protocol whereby Independent Members from other Standards Committees might substitute for Independent Members on the Leeds Standards Committee.

3.3 The General Purposes Committee resolved to recommend that full Council amend the membership of the Standards Committee to include two additional Leeds City Councillors, one additional Independent Member and one additional Parish and Town Councillor.

3.4 The changes to the membership will require amendments to Article 9 of the Council's Constitution which are shown in Appendix 1 to this report.

#### **4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance**

4.1 The changes to the Standards Committee membership will require amendments to Article 9 of the Council's Constitution, as paragraph 9.3.1 of the Article outlines the membership of the Standards Committee.

4.2 Increasing the Membership of the Standards Committee will assist in ensuring that that the local assessment of complaints about Councillors conduct is dealt with efficiently.

#### **5.0 Legal And Resource Implications**

5.1 The Parish Members of the Standards Committee currently receive an allowance of £557 per annum<sup>1</sup>. Each Independent Members currently receive an allowance of £2,310 to reflect their additional responsibilities with regard to chairing meetings of the Assessment and Review Sub-Committees.

5.2 Under Article 15 of the Constitution, these amendments to the Constitution must be approved by full Council, after consideration by the General Purposes Committee.

5.3 The Monitoring Officer can make any additional consequential amendments under her delegated authority set out in Article 15.

#### **6.0 Conclusions**

6.1 Increasing the Membership of the Standards Committee will assist in ensuring that that the local assessment of complaints about Councillors conduct is dealt with efficiently.

6.2 The changes to the Standards Committee membership will require amendments to Article 9 of the Council's Constitution, as paragraph 9.3.1 of the Article outlines the

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<sup>1</sup> General Purposes Committee resolved that the Independent Remuneration Panel should be asked to review the allowances payable to the Parish and Town Council Members of the Standards Committee when they next review the Members' Allowances Scheme, in light of their increased activity as a result of the local assessment of Councillor conduct complaints.

membership of the Standards Committee. The amendment are shown in Appendix 1.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

Council are recommended to resolve to:

- a) Agree the changes to the membership of the Standards Committee as set out in paragraph 3.3 above.
- d) Agree the proposed amendments to Article 9 of the Council's Constitution as shown in Appendix 1.

### **Background documents**

Report to General Purposes Committee 20<sup>th</sup> January 2009 on the Standards Committee Membership.