

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Parish representation on the Joint Standards Committee

Summary

1. This report seeks the views of the Committee on how best to fill the current Parish vacancy.

Background

2. Under the previous statutory arrangements there was a requirement to have Standards Committees comprised, in the case of York, of City Councillors, Parish Councillors and Independent Members. These arrangements were very much valued locally.
3. The Localism Act 2011 abolished these arrangements and made the City Council entirely responsible for the dealing with complaints about breaches of codes of conduct by City and local Parish Councillors. Like many Councils the City Council chose to retain a Standards Committee to perform this work and to promote ethical standards. Because of the value placed on the previous arrangements the City Council invited Parish Councils to join that Committee and also invited the independent persons to attend and contribute at its meetings.
4. In order to ensure that Parish Councillors had the same status and voting rights at meetings of the Committee as their City colleagues, the City Council established a Joint Committee. Technically this is a Joint Committee between the City Council and each Parish Council which appoints Members. Parish membership has, since the Committee's inception, been arranged through the Yorkshire Locals Council's Association (YLCA).
5. Last year when a vacancy arose only one Parish Councillor put themselves forward for consideration and she therefore received the Association's nomination. The Committee currently has a

further vacancy and, once again, only one nomination has been received.

6. The small number of nominations may suggest that Parish Councils do not value the current arrangement. However, this does not appear to be the case. At a recent meeting of the Committee Members heard from the Chief Executive of the YLCA of the value that the Association place on this arrangement.
7. It may therefore be that there is a lack of knowledge in Parish Councils as to what the role of Standards Committee Member entails and this may be limiting the pool of volunteers. A suggestion has therefore been made that the Committee could host an event to try to develop some interest in its work.
8. At this stage the Committee has three main options. It could:
 - a) Recommend that the City Council approve the current nomination.
 - b) Consider ways in which more interest in the role could be created and, thereafter, ask YLCA to undertake a further recruitment exercise.
 - c) Undertake a review of the Joint Committee arrangements and consider whether an alternative arrangement might allow for more effective engagement with Parish Councils.

Recommendations

9. Members are recommended to:
 - 1) Consider the options identified in paragraph 8 of the report and identify a way forward.

Reason: To ensure that the City Council effectively engages with Parish Councils in promoting high standards of ethical conduct for all local Councillors.

Contact Details

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Report
Approved



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Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None