

DEMOCRACY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

7 October 2024

Report Title	Appointment of co-opted Town and Parish representatives to the Democracy and Standards Committee
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Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	
Which Corporate Plan priority does the report most closely align with? <u>Our priorities for the future North Northamptonshire Council (northnorthants.gov.uk)</u>	Modern public services

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To update on the progress for the nomination and selection of the appointment of co-opted town and parish council representatives to the Democracy and Standards Committee.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. On 4th June 2024, the Democracy and Standards Committee considered a report on behalf of the Monitoring Officer relating to the appointment of the co-opted Town and Parish council representatives.
- 2.2. A process for nominations was agreed and this report details the process followed. This report proposes a recommendation to be made to full Council to appoint the three candidates as co-opted Town and Parish Council representatives to the Democracy and Standards Committee.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Democracy and Standards Committee:
 - (a) Note the process undertaken for the nominations and selection of co-opted Town and Parish representatives to the Democratic and Standards Committee and the candidates proposed for appointment.
 - (b) Recommend to full Council the appointment of the three candidates to be appointed as co-opted Town and Parish representatives to the Democracy and Standards Committee for a term of office until May 2025 with the provision to extend to May 2029 provided eligibility criteria is met.
- 3.2. Reason for Recommendations – The terms of reference for the Committee require co-opted Members, this recommendation to fill the vacancies ensures that the membership of the Committee is in line with the terms of reference. This recommendation arises from the earlier decision of the Committee to progress the appointment process for co-opted Town and Parish representatives.
- 3.3. Alternative Options Considered – To pause the appointment process and appoint after the election 2025. This option was disregarded on the basis the terms of reference for this committee require representatives. To pause the appointment until May 2025 further delays securing the full membership for this committee.
- 3.4. To appoint until May 2025 and have a new nomination and selection process for the term of office 2025-2029. This option was considered to have a disproportionate impact on resources including duplication of an induction training. In the event a representative is not eligible to serve as a co-opted member following the 2025 election the appointment process can be re-run for the number of vacancies. This would apply in the event of any ineligibility or inability to serve at any time during the term of office.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. On 23rd August 2023, nominations were sought for three town and parish council representatives for the purpose of assisting with the Authority's obligations to deal with allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct. Representatives may also be invited to meetings of the Committee by the Chair. This was offered on the basis the term of office for the initial appointments to end in May 2025 to coincide with the elections to NNC and town and parish councils. Should a town and parish councillor be re-elected they can be invited to have their appointments extended to May 2029 which will be considered for approval at full Council.
- 4.2. Clerks to all town and parish councils were approached and asked to support the process. The indicative timeline was as follows:

DATE	INDICATIVE MILESTONE
22 nd August 2024	Town and Parish Councils invited to nominate representatives for co-opted membership of North Northamptonshire Council (code of conduct matters)
Sunday 8th September 2024 (11.59pm)	Deadline for Receipt of Nominations to be emailed to <u>democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk</u>
w/c 9 th September 2024	Confirmation of Nominations received and call for election (if required) to Town and Parish councils
w/c 23 rd September 2024	Election period (if required) closes and results confirmed to Town and Parish councils
w/c 30 th September 2024	Report Issued to Democracy and Standards Committee meeting (date tbc)
24 th October 2024	NNC full Council Confirmation of Co-Optee Appointments

4.3. A total of seven nominations were received and an election period was opened from 20th September 2024 to 6th October 2024. Biographies were supplied and presented to each Council for consideration. The process by which councils exercise their vote/s was for each individual council to determine with the following restrictions:

- 4.3.1. Only one form may be completed on behalf of each Council;
- 4.3.2. In completing the form no more than three votes may be exercised by each council; and
- 4.3.3. Votes must be cast on behalf of the council by the clerk online no later than Sunday 6th October 2024.

4.4. The proposed timeline set out at 4.2 was adjusted to reflect a change in date of the planned council meeting from 24th October to 17th October which has resulted in the election not having concluded before publication of this report. It is intended that the names of the candidates for appointment will be presented at the meeting of the Democracy and Standards Committee.

5. Issues and Choices

5.1. As part of good governance and representation, the Committee has previously agreed that it is timely for the Council to formalise its arrangements for the appointment of co-opted town and parish representatives.

- 5.2. The nominations and election process has been agreed by the Democracy and Standards Committee and following its conclusion the Committee is now asked to recommend the three candidates for appointment to full Council.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. Subject to approval by the Committee, a report containing the biographies will be presented to full Council to recommending approval of the appointment. Upon the Council confirming the appointment, the candidates will be advised of their appointment and an induction undertaken by the Monitoring Officer or her deputy. The initial appointment will run until May 2025 and subject to eligibility criteria being fulfilled an extension of their term of office to May 2029 will be considered at annual Council following the May election.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1. The member allowance scheme contained within the constitution details the member allowance for co-opted members. The current member allowance is £400 per meeting to a maximum of £2,000 over a municipal year.

7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1. The recommendation fulfils the legal requirement under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 to appoint at least one independent person, and the Constitution's requirement to appoint at least one town and parish councillor to assist with the authority's obligations to deal with allegations of breaches of the code of conduct.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

This report aligns with the key commitment in the Corporate Plan 2020-25 of modern public services, by providing effective oversight of the Members' Code of Conduct.

7.4. Risk

- 7.4.1. There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

7.5. Consultation

- 7.5.1. As part of this process there has been a consultation with the Town and Parish Councils

7.6. Equality Implications

- 7.6.1. The Council is committed to treating people fairly and in compliance with the Equality Act. Applications from a range of backgrounds will be encouraged.

7.7. Climate Impact

7.7.1. Not applicable.

7.8. Community Impact

7.8.1. Not applicable.

7.9. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.9.1. Not applicable.

8. Background Papers

8.1. Localism Act 2011

8.2. North Northamptonshire Constitution

8.3. Report of Democracy and Standards 04th June 2024