

10: APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

- 1 When the membership of the Standards Committee was established as part of the move to the new political arrangements last November, it was decided that it should consist of six members of the Council plus one independent member. The six members of the Council were duly appointed and arrangements were put in hand to invite applications from the public to fill the independent place.
- 2 I am pleased to report that two applications have been received in response to this advertisement from Mr P Smith and Mr A F Blake-Pauley. The letters of application are appended to this report. Both applicants seem eminently suited to serve on the Standards Committee. Draft Regulations on the establishment of the Standards Committee, recently issued by the DETR, require independent members to be approved by at least 75% of the Authority's members, hence this report.
- 3 Although we have been seeking to fill just one place on the newly formed Committee, the draft Regulations advise that, for a Standards Committee of more than three members at least 25% are independent. Although the draft is out to consultation and therefore the requirement may change, the Council may feel it wise to follow the guidance contained therein and appoint both applicants to the Committee. The draft Regulations also contain a proposal that any action taken prior to the Regulations taking effect would remain valid for two years. This means that it would not be necessary to re-appoint, after the Regulations have been made, although annual review – as part of the normal committee membership review process – would be appropriate.
- 4 If the existing six elected member appointees were retained this of course would give a Committee of eight with the independent members representing exactly 25% of the total. The alternative – of retaining the overall membership at seven - would require one of the existing elected members to stand down, which would seem an unnecessary step to take.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a **That the Council's Standards Committee be enlarged from seven to eight members;**
- b **That the applications from Mr Smith and Mr Blake-Pauley be accepted, subject to annual review.**

**CHRIS M WILLIAMS
CHIEF OFFICER OF THE COUNCIL**