

Council Meeting

1 March 2005

REPORT OF THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

Agenda item 11.2

1. Standards Committee : Independent Members

1. Article 9 of the Council's Constitution stipulates that the Council's Standards Committee will be composed of three councillors and four persons who are not councillors. Following the resignation of Mr Anil Goonewardene, one of the independent members of the Standards Committee, a replacement has been sought.
2. I sought expressions of interest by public advertisement with a view to making a recommendation to Council for appointment. The advertisement was placed in the Press Group of Newspapers at the end of November 2004.
3. The criteria for selection were set out in the advertisement, which stated that an independent member of the Standards Committee would be likely to:-
 - have a substantial background in public service, the professions, industry, commerce, trades unions or religious or community life that enables him or her to make judgements about ethical issues that will command respect within the Council.
 - have the analytical skills needed to assess detailed allegations of impropriety
 - be able to show a continuing interest in public life and in probity issues generally.

It also stated that political allegiance would not be taken into account, and the Council's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity.

4. I received 3 expressions of interest, all accompanied by a personal history and statement. I undertook up references on all the people who applied. Despite the relatively low number of expressions of interest, the applicants were of a very high calibre and met the criteria well. Each applicant was interviewed by a panel comprising myself and the Deputy Borough Solicitor. We assessed the applicants against the criteria to decide whom to recommend. We also had regard to the need to balance legal and ethical input to the Committee.
5. A synopsis of all the applicants is attached.
6. The Chairman of the Committee, Professor Brian GOMES da COSTA BSc MA JP has confirmed his intention to stand down at the end of the current Council year.
7. Accordingly, I recommended the following as independent members of the Committee.

Mr Stephen Ross (with immediate effect)
Mrs Susan Riddle (from the Council's annual Meeting in May 2005).
8. The new Members will undergo an induction process so as to familiarise them with the workings of the Council and the Standards Committee.
9. The Council will be asked to appoint a new Chairman of the Standards Committee at the Annual Meeting in May 2005.

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Jeff Lustig
Borough Solicitor & Monitoring Officer

MR ROY BOHRER JP MA CQSW

Mr Bohrer is a resident of Barnet. He is a retired Local Authority Social Services Area Director with experience of working in a number of local authority settings. He is non-executive Director and Vice-Chair of the Barnet Enfield & Haringey Mental Health Trust and also non-executive Director of Enfield Community Care Trust. He has been a magistrate since 1983.

MRS SUSAN RIDDLE BA JP

Mrs Riddle is a resident of Barnet. Following various posts in Children's and Social Services departments, Mrs Riddle served for 13 years as an investigator for the Commission for Local Administration (Ombudsman) and since 2001 as the London Borough of Brent's Corporate Complaints Officer.

A magistrate for several years, Mrs Riddle has recently acted as Bench Chairman.

MR STEPHEN ROSS ACII FRSA

Mr Ross is a resident of Barnet. He is Director, Finance & Administration, Company Secretary and Member of the Board of Governors. Leo Baeck College – Centre for Jewish Education. He is a chartered accountant with over 25 years experience as a financial controller or director in the private sector. Mr Ross has been a member of the Charity Finance Directors Group, Chief Executive's Forum, British Insurance Brokers Association IT Forum, lay member of South Barnet Primary Care Group Board (1999-2001) delegate Barnet Racial Equality Council (1989-1993) and Regional Chairman British Insurance Brokers Association (1999).