



South Tyneside Council

item 10

# **Continued Appointment of Independent Chair of Standards Committee**

This document has been classified as: **Not  
protectively marked**

**Lucy Keating, Director of Legal and Governance  
(Monitoring Officer)**

**Borough Council – 19 May 2026**

## **Report to Borough Council**

**Cabinet Portfolio/Lead Member: Leader of the Council**

**Report of the Director of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer).**

**Subject: To consider a report of the Monitoring Officer providing an update regarding Continued Appointment of Independent Chair of Standards Committee**

**Date: 19 May 2026**

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**Wards affected:** All

**Council ambitions:** Financially Secure, Part of Strong Communities and Targeting support to make things fairer

**Does the report and any appendices contain information which has been identified as confidential or exempt?**

- No, this report does not contain information identified as confidential or exempt.

**For Executive Decisions only:**

Is the decision a Key Decision? No

Is it included in the Forward Plan? Yes

If not in the Forward Plan is the report: General Exception Rule / Special Urgency Rule

**Relevant Scrutiny Chair:** NA

**Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?** No

(If the decision is anything other than any executive decision made by the Cabinet or a Key Decision made by an officer under delegated powers, call-in is not applicable. This should be explained in the report).

# **Purpose of Report**

1. To consider and agree to extend the current appointment of Professor Grahame Wright as the Independent Chair of the Standards Committee.

## **Background Information**

2. On 22 February 2018 Borough Council agreed the appointment of Professor Grahame Wright as the Independent Chair of Standards Committee for a 4-year period following a strong recommendation from the Interview Panel.
3. The Interview Panel consisted of former late Councillor Boyack, as the then Chair of the Standards Committee in 2018. The Interview Panel also included former Councillors Kerr, M. Smith & A. Hetherington. The then Chief Executive and the then Monitoring Officer were also in attendance.
4. At the time of appointment, Borough Council recommended an initial appointment for 4 years with a possible extension of up to a further 4 years.
5. An extension of Professor Grahame Wright was agreed at Borough Council 30 June 2022 as Independent Chair of the Standards Committee for a further 4-year term to offer stability and consistency in the role.
6. With regards to the Independent Chair of Standards Committee, it is important that the Chairperson has the capability, motivation and time to lead the Standards Committee and be prepared to invest in gaining a deep understanding of the business and the role of the Chairperson itself. This could take up to 24 months or more, due to the complexity of the business of the Standards Committee, which is likely why the Interview Panel had the foresight to build in such an extension.

## **Main issues and Options to be Considered**

7. It is recommended that Professor Grahame Wright's appointment as Independent Chair of the Standards Committee be extended for a further 2 year term to offer stability and consistency in the role.
8. If agreed, it is recommended that the Chair of Standards Committee works with the Constitution Committee to explore recruiting an Independent Vice-Chair to work alongside Professor Wright in the future as part of his succession plan.

## **Financial and Resources Implications**

9. If agreed, the Independent Chair would continue to receive the allowance payable to the Independent Chair of the Standards Committee under the Special Responsibility Allowances in the 26/27 Member's Allowances Scheme (£5,112 per annum). The continued appointment will not result in any additional financial cost as an Independent Chair would always be required.

## **Legal and Governance**

10. There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.
11. Notwithstanding, it is important that if the extension to the appointment is agreed, the extension to the appointment should be made with a succession plan in mind. Borough Council may want to start to explore recruiting an Independent Vice-Chair to work alongside Professor Wright in the future. This would allow Professor Wright to be involved in any recruitment exercises and hand-over arrangements.

## **Risk**

12. Appointing an Independent Person to Chair the Standards Committee is a constitutional requirement and helps to ensure that the impartiality and integrity of the Council's standards regime is maintained.

## **Equality and Diversity and Community**

13. The decision recommended in this report does not give rise to any equality or diversity concerns. Equality and diversity are terms used to define and champion equality, diversity, and human rights as defining values of society. It promotes equality of opportunity for all, giving every individual the chance to achieve their potential, free from prejudice and discrimination. The initial recruitment exercise championed this approach and actively welcomed applicants from a variety of backgrounds. This attitude will of course be reflected in any future recruitment exercise.

## **Environmental and Sustainability**

14. The decision recommended in this report do not give rise to any environmental or sustainability implications.

## **Council Ambitions, Policies, Strategies and Plans**

15. It is important that this report is considered in the wider context of the Council's corporate policies and work to assist the Council in delivering its priorities and objectives.
16. Our Council Values are the things that matter most to us in terms of how we behave and work. They are our guiding principles, and they apply to every person who works for or represents the Council. They are the things we most care about and are our promise to residents, each other and to all who interact with the Council. We are progressing with an exciting programme of engagement to ensure Our Council Values are deeply ingrained principles at the heart of our workplace culture and guide all that we do, individually and collectively.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

17. This report is publicly available to the press and public.

## **Recommendations**

18. It is recommended that Professor Grahame Wright's appointment as Independent Chair of the Standards Committee be extended for a further 2 year term expiring on the date of the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2028 to offer stability and consistency in the role.
19. If agreed, it is recommended that the Chair of Standards Committee works with the Constitution Committee to explore recruiting an Independent Vice-Chair to work alongside Professor Wright in the future as part of his succession plan.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

20. To help ensure continuity and stability for Standards Committee and to ensure the impartiality and integrity of the Council's standards regime is maintained.

# List of Appendices

None.

## To consider a report of the Monitoring Officer regarding Continued Appointment of Independent Chair of Standards Committee

The following is a list of the background papers (excluding exempt papers) relied upon in the preparation of the above report:

| Background Paper | File Ref: | File Location |
|------------------|-----------|---------------|
| None             |           |               |