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**REPORT TO: MORAY INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD ON 25 JANUARY 2024**

**SUBJECT: REAPPOINTMENT OF STANDARDS OFFICER AND DEPUTE STANDARDS OFFICER**

**BY: CHIEF OFFICER**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

1.1 To ask the Board to consider the reappointment of its Standards Officer and one Depute, whose current terms of appointment are due to expire on 1 April 2024.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB):**

- i) formally nominates for approval by the Standards Commission, Alasdair McEachan, Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Moray Council, as the Standards Officer of the MIJB, for a further period of two years until 1 April 2026;**
- ii) formally nominates for approval by the Standards Commission, Aileen Scott, Legal Services Manager, Moray Council, for a further period of two years until 1 April 2026;**
- iii) tasks the Chief Officer with writing to the Standards Commission with the relevant information; and**
- iv) notes that the arrangements will be reviewed prior to April 2026.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 At its meeting on 31 March 2022, the Board agreed to nominate its current Standards Officer and Depute for the approval by the Standards Commission (para 10 of minute refers). Subsequent to this meeting, approval from the Standards Commission was obtained for the appointments.

3.2 Prior to January 2019 there was a legal representative at MIJB meetings and concerns had been raised that there would be a conflict of interest to continue to have the Standards Officer as a Member of the Board. Since January 2019

there has not been any legal representation at MIJB meetings due to a reduction in the size of the Moray Council legal team. For assurance, discussions are held with legal advisors where necessary and all reports are reviewed by the Standards Officer (or Depute) prior to circulation to members. The Standards Officers are “on standby” during meetings and should there be a need for legal clarification they would be available. No complaints over the conduct of Board members (in terms of the Code) have been received.

#### **4. KEY MATTERS RELEVANT TO RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 The two year appointment period for the Standards Officer and Depute is due to expire 1 April 2024. The Standards Officer post is a statutory requirement and further nominations are required.
- 4.2 Following discussion with the Standards Officer it is recommended that the existing arrangements continue and that the nominations identified in Section 2 be approved. There is recognition that further Induction training is required for MIJB members, and this will be scheduled for early 2024.
- 4.3 The Standards Commission has to approve the MIJB nominations. Following the Board’s decision on this matter, the Chief Officer will write to the Standards Commission with the appropriate information, setting out the MIJB’s agreement of the nominations.

#### **5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)) and Moray Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan “Partners in Care 2022 – 2032”**

Good governance arrangements will support the Board to fulfil its objectives. An appointment of a Standards Officer is one aspect of good governance.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

The Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 (Register of Interests) Regulations 2003 (Scottish Statutory Instrument 2003/135) requires the Board to appoint a Standards Officer. The Standards Commission has to approve the appointment of the Standards Officer. Any individual appointed requires to be suitably qualified and experienced. The role of the Standards Officer is to promote awareness of the Code of Conduct for IJB members and to act as a point of contact for both Standards Commissioners.

**(c) Financial implications**

None arising directly from this report.

**(d) Risk Implications and Mitigation**

Elements of the work of the Standards Officer are requirements of the 2003 Regulations. The Board is required to comply with these Regulations and make an appointment. An appointment of a Standards Officer will help assist members with compliance with the Code of Conduct.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

The nominated Standards Officer and Depute are employed by the Moray Council. Once reappointed, they will continue to be employed by the Council. Duties for the Board will continue to be added to what are already full remits. This arrangement will need to be reviewed to determine whether it will be a reasonable long term proposition.

**(f) Property**

None arising from this report.

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required because there are no service, policy or organisational changes being proposed.

**(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

None arising directly from this report.

**(i) Directions**

None arising directly from this report.

**(j) Consultations**

Consultation on this report has taken place with the Chief Officer; Interim Chief Financial Officer; Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance; Legal Services Manager and Caroline O'Connor, Committee Services Officer, all Moray Council; who are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective responsibilities.

**6. CONCLUSION**

**6.1 The previous appointments of Standards Officer and Depute are due to expire and further appointments are necessary to meet statutory requirements. This report sets out the proposal for the next two years.**

Author of Report: Isla Whyte, Interim Support Manager, HSCM

Background Papers: with author

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