

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Membership of the Committee

Meeting/Date: 6th March 2014

Executive Portfolio: Councillor T D Sanderson – Executive Councillor for Strategic Economic Development and Legal

Report by: Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

When the Council considered new arrangements for “Standards” required by the Localism Act 2011, it was agreed to retain a Standards Committee. It no longer remained a duty for Parish Council representatives to be appointed but the Council decided that Parish Councils should be invited to nominate two Parish Councillors to be co-opted as non-voting Members on the new Committee. Subsequently, two Parish Council representatives were appointed to serve until 30th April 2014.

The Act also established the concept of “Independent Persons” and the appointment of Lead and Deputy Independent Persons was subsequently confirmed by the Council in September 2013 for a three-year term subject to further ratification in each year by the Council at its Annual Meeting.

Recommendation:

This report recommends:-

- ◆ subject to the consent of current appointees, an extension to the term of office of the Parish Council representatives for a further two-year period to 30th April 2016 or until such time as their Parish Council office expires;
- ◆ that the Council reaffirms the appointment of Mrs Gillian Holmes and Mr Peter Baker to the posts of Lead and Deputy Independent Persons respectively for the remainder of the three-year term to 30th April 2016 without the requirement for further annual ratification.

This page is intentionally left blank

1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?

1.1 The Standards Committee currently comprises:-

- ◆ 8 Members of the Council including one Member who is a Member of the Executive;
- ◆ 2 Town or Parish Councillors, representing Town and Parish Councils in the District who are co-opted and non-voting Members of the Committee;
- ◆ the Independent Person (and Deputy) appointed to serve on the Committee for a term of three-years from the date of their appointment as required under Section 28 (7) of the Localism Act.

1.2 The terms of office of the Parish Council representatives are due to expire on 30th April 2014 having been appointed by the Monitoring Officer after consultation with the Chairman in December 2012. The appointments of the Lead and Deputy Independent Persons are required to be reaffirmed by the Council at its Annual Meeting.

1.3 The position of the Parish Council representatives is subject to the continuing retention of the Standards Committee in its current form. The appointment of the 'Independent Person' is required by law.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/FURTHER DETAILS

2.1 Given the valuable contributions made by the Parish Council representatives to the Standards Committee and training events thus far and the excellent working relationship established by the Monitoring Officer with the Lead and Deputy Independent Persons in the period since their appointments, it is suggested that the terms of office of both the Parish Council representatives and Lead and Deputy Independent Persons be extended to 30th April 2016 (equivalent to a four-year and three-year term respectively) without the requirement in the case of the Independent Persons for any further ratification by the Council.

2.2 Under the former Standards regime, the Parish Council representatives and Independent Members were all appointed for four year terms to ensure that the benefit of understanding, experience gained and training received were retained for a reasonable period.

2.3 Should Members be concerned about attendance at meetings over such an extended period, the Committee might suggest that failure to attend meetings for a period of nine months would require the Monitoring Officer to question future commitment to the position.

2.4 For information, Parish Council representatives continue to receive a modest allowance of £231 per annum plus reimbursement of the costs involved in attending meetings of the Committee and training events. Given their greater involvement in the assessment of complaints, the Lead and Deputy Independent Persons receive an allowance of £1,000 and £500 respectively plus similar expenses.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

District Council's Constitution
Reports/Minutes to the Standards Committee.

CONTACT OFFICER

Christine Deller, Democratic Services Manager, (01480) 388007.