

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Membership of the Committee
Meeting/Date:	Satndards Committee - 3rd March 2016
Executive Portfolio:	Councillor R Harrison – Executive Councillor for Strategic Economic Development and Legal
Report by:	Services Director (Resources) 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 is no longer 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, the two Parish Council representatives were re-appointed for a further two years.

The Act also established the concept of “Independent Persons” and the appointment of Lead and Deputy Independent Persons was confirmed by the Council in April 2014 for a two-year term.

The terms of office of the Lead and Deputy Independent Persons and of the Parish Council representatives expire on 30th April 2016.

Recommendation:

This report recommends:-

- ◆ that the term of office of the current Parish Council representatives, Mrs D Townsend and Mr P McCloskey, be extended for a further two-year period to 30th April 2018 or until such time as their Parish Council office expires; and
- ◆ that the Council be recommended to affirm the re-appointment of Mrs Gillian Holmes and Mr Peter Baker to the posts of Lead and Deputy Independent Persons respectively for a further two-year period to 30th April 2018 without the need for further ratification in each year by the Council at its Annual Meeting.

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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 Independent Person who are appointed to serve on the Committee for a term of two 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 2016. The appointments of the Lead and Deputy Independent Persons are required to be reaffirmed by the Council at its Annual Meeting.

2. FURTHER DETAILS

2.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires every principal authority to appoint one or more Independent Persons. The Act contains strict rules preventing a person from being appointed if they are a friend or relative to any member or officer of the authority, or of any Parish Council within the authority's area. It also prescribes the role of Independent Persons. They must be consulted before the authority takes a decision to investigate any allegation.

2.2 Independent Persons, furthermore, may be consulted by a Member of the authority against whom an allegation has been made, as well as by a Parish Councillor in similar circumstances.

2.3 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 2018.

2.4 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.

3. CONSULTATION

3.1 The Standards Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman have been consulted and have expressed support for the retention of the current post-holders. The Lead and Deputy Independent Persons and the Parish Council representatives also have been consulted and have indicated they are willing to continue with their membership of the Committee.

3.2 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils has confirmed that it wishes Mrs D Townsend and Mr P McCloskey to continue as its representatives.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The appointment of at least one Independent Person is required by law.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Parish Council representatives 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

Tony Roberts, Democratic Services Officer, (01480) 388015.