

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Lead and Deputy Independent Persons

Meeting/Date: Council - 23rd March 2016

Executive Portfolio: Councillor R Harrison – Executive Councillor for Strategic Economic Development and Legal

Report by: Corporate Director (Resources) and Monitoring Officer

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

The Localism Act 2011 established the requirement for every principal authority to appoint one or more Independent Persons. Accordingly, the appointments of Lead and Deputy Independent Persons were confirmed by the Council in April 2014 for a two-year term. The terms of office of the Lead and Deputy Independent Persons expire on 30th April 2016. The Council is responsible for ensuring that the requirement to have Independent Person(s) is complied with. The Standards Committee has recommended that the current Lead and Deputy Independent Persons are reappointed.

Recommendation:

That the Council 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 This report provides the Council with an opportunity to appoint Independent Person(s) as required by the Localism Act 2011.

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 Mrs Gillian Holmes and Mr Peter Baker, the the Lead and Deputy Independent Persons respectively, and the excellent working relationship established with the Monitoring Officer in the period since their appointment, the Standards Committee has suggested that their terms of office should be extended to 30th April 2018.
- 2.4 The Standards Committee also has decided to retain Mrs D Townsend and Mr P McCloskey as the two existing Parish Council representatives.

3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 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.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Lead and Deputy Independent Persons receive an allowance of £1,000 and £500 respectively plus reimbursement of the costs involved in attending meetings and training events.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

District Council's Constitution
Standards Committee Reports/Minutes.

CONTACT OFFICER

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