



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All Wards

Standards Committee

17th March 2010

Term of Office for Independent Members

Report of the Monitoring Officer

1. Purpose of Report

To discuss whether the Independent Members and the Chair of the Standards Committee should have a fixed term of office, and if so how long that should be.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to discuss and choose an option.

3. Report

- 3.1** Under the 2007 Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act a Standards Committee must consist of a least 25% independent members.
- 3.2** The Act specifies how independent members should be recruited, ie through an interview process, following the publication of vacant positions in a least on local newspaper and in other similar publications or websites.
- 3.3** The appointment of an independent member has to be approved by a majority of the members of council.
- 3.4** The legislation does not set a fixed term of office for an independent member. This is at the discretion of each local authority. The period of time needs to be long enough for the independent member to gain an understanding of the committee, the authority and its workings, but not so long that the independence is lost.
- 3.5** One of the three independent members in Leicester was appointed in May 2007, with the other two being appointed in February 2008.
- 3.6** There are a number of options, including the following, which could be considered for Leicester's independent members:-

- a) **No fixed term of office for independent members.** Standards for England recommend independent members should serve no longer than two four year terms, but this is at the discretion of each authority;
- b) **4 year term of office** similar to councillors. Would need to consider whether this should be at the same time as local elections, however this could mean that the whole membership of Standards changes at one time, with no continuity. Independent members cannot be automatically reappointed and must go through a recruitment process;
- c) **Staggered 4 year term of office**, so that not all independent members finish at one time;
- d) **Chair of Standards fixed term for 4 years** with one of the other independent members as chair in waiting for the last 6 - 12 months (if appointments are staggered).
- e) **Chair of Standards rotating on annual basis** would give opportunity for other independents to play a bigger role in the committee, but could disrupt the continuity of the committee.

3.7 The list above is not exhaustive and members are asked to discuss and agree the best option for Leicester.

4. Legal and Financial Implications

Legal implications are considered within the body of the report.

The Chair of Standards Committee receives a special responsibility allowance of £2,741 per annum and the independent members receive an allowance of £487, through the Members' Allowance Scheme.

5. Report Author

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