



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All Wards

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
COUNCIL

8th September 2010
16th September 2010

Term of Office for Independent Members

Report of the Monitoring Officer

1. Purpose of Report

To propose changes to the term of office of the Independent Members and the Chair of the Standards Committee subject to further discussion of the options.

2. Recommendations

Members approve the proposal to appoint Independent Members of the Committee for three and four year terms from May 2011 following recruitment.

Members to approve the proposal to stagger future appointments, to provide continuity of experience on the Committee.

Members approve the proposal to have a maximum of two four year terms for any one independent Member.

Members approve the proposal to appoint a Chair of the Standards Committee for a four year term in May 2011.

Members recommend the changes to Council for approval and for the necessary amendments to the Constitution to be made.

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, i.e. through an interview process, following the publication of vacant positions in a least one 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. Currently appointment is on an annual basis. There is no fixed term of office which is currently at the discretion 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. There is a need to balance giving an independent member a term long enough to gain an understanding of the committee, the authority and its workings, but not so long that their 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** Members of the Committee considered at their March meeting a number of options, including the following, :-
- 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** Members indicated they were in favour of the changes set out below but wished to take into account other Members of the Committee's views particularly elected Councillors:
- a) A 3 or 4 year fixed term of office, with a maximum of two terms per independent member.
 - b) The principle of staggering appointments to allow for continuity of experience on the Committee.
 - c) The Chair of Standards Committee to be appointed for a 4 year fixed term.

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. Other Implications

Others Implications	YES/NO	References with supporting Information
Equal Opportunities	Yes	Recruitment will accord with our EO responsibilities
Policy	No	
Sustainable and Environmental	No	
Crime and Disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	No	

6. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

None

7. Consultations

Chair of the Standards Committee

8. Report Author

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