

**County Council – 13 November 2014****Recommendation from the Standards and Governance Committee meeting held on 21 October 2014****Standards and Governance Committee Independent Members**

80.1 The Chairman proposed the recommendation to extend the term of office of the three existing independent members for a further three year period. He wished to record the Committee's gratitude to the independent members and said that he was delighted that they had indicated that they were prepared to continue for a further three year term.

80.2 There were differing views with respect to whether to the size of the Committee should be reduced to 9 members and whether to fill the vacancy for the outstanding independent member. The Chairman held the view that the Committee functioned well with three independent members. The view was also expressed by Committee members that a fourth independent member was necessary to maintain presence at meetings if other independent members were unable to attend and that advertising of this position would invite people to come forward and become involved.

80.3 The Monitoring Officer advised that there was no reason why the Committee could not continue to operate with a vacancy and defer recruitment until a situation arose whereby this became necessary.

**RECOMMENDED**

81. That the County Council agree:

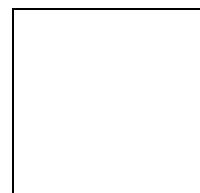
- (i) that the membership of Mrs Judith Anstice, Mrs Elizabeth Bird and Mr Ronald Manley as independent members of the Standards and Governance Committee be extended for a further three years from 28 April 2015 to 28 April 2018;
- (ii) that the Standards and Governance Committee remains at 10 members to comprise of six elected members and 4 independent members and that the fourth place for an independent member on the Standards and Governance Committee remains vacant.

**Reason for Recommendations**

82. Independent members help the Standards and Governance Committee with their role to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the County Council.

*Note: The report relating to this recommendation is attached.*

Agenda Item:



# Standards and Governance Committee

**Dorset County Council**



Date of Meeting	21 October 2014
Officer	Acting Director for Corporate Resources
<b>Subject of Report</b>	<b>Standards and Governance Committee Independent Members</b>
Executive Summary	<p>Dorset County Council's Standards and Governance Committee is made up of six members of the County Council and four Independent, non-voting members. Independent members of the Committee are appointed for a three year term, and there are currently three Independent members of the Committee and one vacancy. The existing Independent members of the Committee had their term extended for an additional year and this will end on 28 April 2015.</p> <p>All of the existing Independent members have indicated that they would be happy to continue to serve a further term until April 2018. As these members are experienced and have provided a highly valued contribution to the Committee it is recommended that their appointments be renewed.</p> <p>The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the existing Independent members have been asked for their views on the appointment of an additional person to fill the Independent member vacancy, and these are summarised in the report. There is an option to appoint a new Independent member which would require an advertisement in one or two local newspapers and convening an appointments panel. Any appointment would also be until April 2018.</p> <p>An alternative option would be for the County Council to set the size of the Standards and Governance Committee at nine members rather than ten, with six members of the County Council and three Independent members. This would not diminish the work of the</p>

	Standards and Governance Committee and would enable continued compliance with the Localism Act 2011. It would also avoid the costs of advertising and appointing a replacement Independent member.
Impact Assessment:	Equalities Impact Assessment: This report relates to a review of current arrangements and therefore an EqlA is not required.
	Use of Evidence: The report draws on advice from the Monitoring Officer, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Standards and Governance Committee and the Independent members of the Committee.
	Budget: Reduction in the size of the Standards and Governance Committee from nine members to eight would avoid the costs of advertising and interviewing for a replacement Independent member. There would also be marginal savings in reduction in the claim for the co-opted member's allowance, and on-going travel allowance.
	Risk Assessment:  Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the County Council's approved risk management methodology, the level of risk has been identified as: Current Risk: LOW Residual Risk LOW
	Other Implications: None.
Recommendation	<p>1) That the County Council agrees that the membership of Mrs Judith Anstice, Mrs Elizabeth Bird and Mr Ronald Manley as Independent members of the Standards and Governance Committee be extended for a further three years from 28 April 2015 to 28 April 2018.</p> <p>2) That the County Council either agree to reduce the size of the Standards and Governance Committee from ten to nine members to comprise of six elected members and three Independent members, or alternatively agree to the commencement of an appointment process to fill the vacancy for an Independent member of the Standards and Governance Committee.</p>
Reason for Recommendation	Independent members help the Standards and Governance Committee with their role to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the County Council.
Appendices	None.

Background Papers	Previous reports to the Standards and Governance Committee and County Council on appointment of Independent members.
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## **1. Background**

- 1.1 Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 it was not possible to retain Independent voting members on the new Standards and Governance Committee. However elected members greatly valued the contributions made by Independent members and wished to see this retained for the future. Following implementation of the Localism Act the existing Independent members of the Standards Committee agreed to continue to fulfil the role of providing the perspective of non elected members with regard to member conduct and the broader remit of the Committee in a non voting capacity.

## **2. Existing Independent Members**

- 2.1 Mrs Judith Anstice, Mrs Elizabeth Bird and Mr Ronald Manley were appointed as Independent members for an initial term of three years from 2008. These appointments were renewed in 2011 for a further four years until 28 April 2015.
- 2.2 All three existing members have indicated their willingness to continue for a further term of three years and, if this is approved, they would remain as Independent members of the Standards and Governance Committee until 28 April 2018.
- 2.3 Mrs Anstice, Mrs Bird and Mr Manley have all made valuable contributions to the work of the Committee and given the experience built up over the years since their first appointment it would be beneficial to retain their membership of the Standards and Governance Committee for a further term.

## **3. Appointment to Vacant Independent Member Position**

- 3.1 There has been a vacancy for an Independent member of the Standards and Governance Committee for the previous two years.
- 3.2 The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, as well as the three existing Independent members were recently asked for their views on whether an appointment should be made to the vacancy. The general view of the Vice-Chairman and current Independent members is that the County Council should attempt to fill the position and, as a new term for Independent members is due to start from 28 April 2015, this would be a good opportunity to start that process. The Chairman has expressed an alternative view that the vacant position should not be filled.
- 3.3 Should the Committee agree to recommend that the County Council start a recruitment exercise, advertisements would be placed in one or two local newspapers and an appointment panel would be convened to consider any applications which had been received. If appropriate a further recommendation on appointment would be considered by the County Council in due course.
- 3.4 If, however, if the Committee agree that there is no need to appoint to the vacant position a recommendation could be made to the County Council to reduce the size of the Committee from ten to nine members, comprising of six members of the County Council and three Independent members.