

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

Member Code of Conduct & Standards



I. Background

- I.1. The Localism Act 2011 requires the appointment by the authority of at least one Independent Person (IP) to carry out a range of consultation functions in relation standards under the Localism Act 2011. A copy of the role profile and person specification are attached at Appendix I for information. Appointments must be confirmed by Full Council.
- I.2. As of 2015, in line with the Local Authority's (Standing Orders) England (Amendment) Regulations 2015, they also have a function in respect of the proposed disciplinary action against one of the three relevant statutory officer's (Head of Paid Service, S151 and Monitoring Officer). The requirement is that they form an independent panel and take into account any recommendation of that panel before taking a decision to discipline or dismiss.
- I.3. In the past an independent person has been appointed on a case by cases where their input was needed. Whilst the Monitoring Officer was receiving a consistently manageable number of complaints this was not an issue, however, there has been a very significant year on year increase in complaints to the Monitoring Officer, as shown below:

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (*ytd)
3	5	9	29	53	28*

- I.4. It is therefore proposed to appoint two Independent Persons on a 4 year basis, in line with normal practice, to support the Monitoring Officer and the standards function by providing views on complaints. It should be noted however that they are not investigators and will not undertake any investigations into complaints.
- I.5. A recruitment process has been undertaken following an advert being published for the posts in line with the legal requirements. In line with the legal requirements, it is offered on a maximum term basis of 4 years, which can then be extended as required. There is, however, a right to end the agreement on notice for both the Council and the IP. Interviews were conducted by the Head of Governance, Performance & Risk and the Monitoring Officer ("the Panel").
- I.6. The Panel decided to recommend the appointment of Rob Jeanes and Ian Brooking as Independent Persons to Council. Both candidates demonstrated a wealth of experience as an IP, had a good understanding of the role and an enthusiasm to support the Monitoring Officer in applying the Standards Regime.
- I.7. Subject to Council approving their appointment, the Independent Persons will be appointed for a four-year term commencing from the implementation of this decision.
- I.8. Once appointed, the Independent Persons will be invited to an induction session with the Monitoring Officer and that they have input into the proposals to amend the Arrangements which are being presented to Audit and Governance Committee on the 20 March 2023.