

LOCALISM ACT 2011 – APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 That the Council appoint the following Independent Persons for a four year term of office commencing 22 May 2023, until the Council's Annual Meeting in 2027:-

- Judy-Anne Clements
- Mark Edmonds
- David Hewitt

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 In accordance with Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council in making arrangements for dealing with complaints made against councillors, must include provision for the appointment by the authority of at least one independent person. The Independent Person's views may be sought, and taken into account, before a decision is made in respect of any allegations that a councillor has failed to comply with the relevant Code of Conduct.

2.2 At its meeting of 27 February 2023, the Council resolved to delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer, to commence a recruitment process for the appointment of new Independent Persons. It was agreed that recommendations should be made to the Council by a Panel comprising the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and the Service Manager for Democratic and Support Services.

3. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

3.1 Following the Council resolution in February 2023, the Council advertised the appointment of Independent Persons through a number of means, including the Council's website, local newspapers, resident email bulletins and social media.

3.2 A total of 18 applications were received. The standard of application was very high and the Chief Executive and officer team undertook a shortlisting and interview exercise. At interview, the role of the Independent Person was explored with candidates, the time commitment involved, the skills required to be effective in the role, and the relevant disqualifications under the Localism Act 2011.

3.3 Following the recruitment process, the Appointment Panel is recommending the appointment of three Independent Persons, as follows:-

Judy-Anne Clements

A justice of the Peace (Magistrate) for 26 years, Judy-Anne has had an extensive career of an administrative / secretarial nature in Local Government, Police, Social Services Departments and the NHS.

Mark Edmonds

A retired Local Government Officer of over 20 years, Mark has also worked closely with the Care Quality Commission, specialising in performance analysis, strategy and planning and corporate governance. Mark has significant experience in considering the outcome of complaint and grievance investigations.

David Hewitt

With a long standing career in technology, before running a Management Consultant and Training business, David served 13 years as a non-executive Chair of an NHS Finance Trust in addition to work as a Co-Opted Member of a Local Authority Education Committee. David has added significant value to the District Council as a serving Independent Person since 2012.

- 3.4 It is recognised that the recommended appointments include the re-appointment of David Hewitt, who has served very effectively as an Independent Person since 2012. In making new appointments alongside the Council's existing Independent Person, arrangements for shadowing and learning opportunities will be pursued with the new appointees and a smooth transition achieved.
- 3.5 Full training will be provided to the new Independent Persons, with refresher training for the re-appointed Independent Person.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The role of Independent Person attracts a modest allowance under the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances, currently £331 per annum for each Independent Person.

5. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

7. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 All candidates for the position of Independent Person were asked to commit to the public sector equality duty and the principle of equal opportunities as part of the application process.

For further information contact:

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Background Papers:

Localism Act 2011
[Procedures for dealing with complaints
made about councillors](#)