

13. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

1. Purpose

To recommend the appointment of two Independent Persons to fulfil the Authority's arrangements and to support the Monitoring Officer in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst all Members.

2. Context

2.1 The Authority's arrangements for dealing with complaints against Members and disciplinary action against Statutory Officers and Heads of Service require the appointment of two Independent Persons.

2.2 In relation to Member complaints, an Independent Person will be consulted by the Monitoring Officer and their views will be taken into consideration before a decision is made. The subject Member, against whom an allegation has been made, will also be given the opportunity to consult an Independent Person.

2.3 In relation to disciplinary action against Statutory Officers and Heads of Service where dismissal is proposed, two Independent Persons are required to sit on the Independent Panel which reviews the proposal and prepares the report to the Authority for final decision.

2.4 At the Authority AGM on the 5th July 2024, the term of appointment of the Authority's Independent Persons, Mr Philip Sunderland and Mrs Jean Walker, came to an end.

2.5 The Authority undertook a recruitment exercise during April and May 2024, which generated a good level of interest and applications from high quality candidates were received. On 20th June 2024, the Chair of the Authority and the Monitoring Officer interviewed three shortlisted applicants for the two roles available.

3. Proposals

3.1 That the two highest scoring applicants from the interview process, namely Wendy Amis and Ian Orford, be appointed as the Independent Persons for the Authority for a term of office of four years ending at the Authority AGM in 2028.

4. Recommendation

1. That Wendy Amis and Ian Orford be appointed as Independent Persons for the Authority for a term of four years ending at the Authority AGM in 2028.

5. Corporate Implications

a. Legal

Pursuant to section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011, the Authority must have arrangements in place for the appointment of at least one Independent Person whose views must be sought and taken into consideration before a decision is made on a Member complaint following an investigation, and whose views may be sought in relation to any other Member complaint generally.

Pursuant to Regulation 6 and Schedule 3 of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001, the Authority must appoint at least two Independent Persons to the panel composed for the purposes of advising the Authority on the dismissal of relevant officers.

b. Financial

There will be a call on existing resources for the training and induction of those appointed as Independent Persons. In addition, a fixed allowance of £1,341.00 per annum is payable to each Independent Person together with reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses. These expenses will be covered by existing budgets.

c. National Park Management Plan and Authority Plan

The Authority Plan includes Objective F (Governance) - to have best practice governance arrangements in place. The Authority also has a statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct for its elected, appointed and co-opted Members. Appointing the Independent Persons supports this and ensures good governance.

d. Risk Management

The Independent Persons will require ongoing support to be able to respond in their consultative capacity; this will be provided by the Monitoring Officer.

e. Net Zero

No adverse implications.

6. Background papers (not previously published)

None.

7. Appendices

None.

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

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