

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, the Council is responsible for deciding how to deal with standards issues at a local level, including adopting its own local code and determining what arrangements it will adopt to deal with complaints.

The Act provides that the Council must appoint an Independent Person to assist in discharging these responsibilities.

The arrangements came into effect on 1st July 2012 and the Council agreed what its new arrangements will be.

INDEPENDENT PERSON

SELECTION CRITERIA

SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

The Independent Person will have:

- a keen interest in standards in public life;
- a wish to serve the local community and uphold local democracy;
- the ability to be objective, independent and impartial;
- sound decision-making skills;
- leadership qualities, particularly in respect of exercising sound judgement.

The Independent Person will:

- be a person in whose impartiality and integrity the public can have confidence;
- understand and comply with confidentiality requirements;
- have a demonstrable interest in local issues;
- have an awareness of the importance of ethical behaviours;
- be a good communicator;
- be politically neutral

Desirable additional criteria are:

- working knowledge / experience of local government or other public service and/or of large complex organisations and awareness of and sensitivity to the political process;
- knowledge and understanding of judicial / quasi judicial or complaints processes.

You should demonstrate in your application how you meet the above criteria as this will assist the shortlisting process.

Means of assessment will be by application form and by interview.

NOTE: You will be required to be contactable during normal working hours by telephone or by email and to be available to attend meetings which may be held in the day time and at relatively short notice.

Eligibility for Appointment

A person cannot be appointed as an Independent Person if they are or were within a period of five years prior to the appointment:

- an elected or co-opted member or an officer of the Council;
- an elected or co-opted member of any committee or sub-committee of the Council; or
- a relative or close friend of a current elected member or co-opted member or officer of the Council.

ROLE OF INDEPENDENT PERSON – SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Responsible to: The Council

Liaison with: Monitoring Officer, members of the Governance Committee, officers and members of the Council, key stakeholders within the community.

1. To assist the Council in promoting high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted members of Southampton City Council and in particular to uphold the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council and the seven principles of public office, namely selflessness, honesty, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and leadership.
2. To be consulted by the Council through the Monitoring Officer and/or the Governance Committee before it makes a decision on an investigated allegation and to be available to attend meetings of the Hearing Panel of the Governance Committee for this purpose.
3. To be available for consultation by the Monitoring Officer and/or the Governance Committee before a decision is taken as to whether to investigate a complaint or to seek local resolution of the same.
4. To be available for consultation by any elected or co-opted member, who is the subject of a standards complaint.
5. To develop a sound understanding of the ethical framework as it operates within Southampton City Council.
6. To participate in training events to develop skills, knowledge and experience and in networks developed for Independent Persons operating outside the Council's area.
7. To attend training events organised and promoted by the Council's Governance Committee.
8. To act as advocate and ambassador for the Council in promoting high standards of ethical behaviour.