



<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>MONITORING OFFICER</b>
<b>TO:</b>	<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>
<b>ON:</b>	<b>17<sup>th</sup> March 2016</b>

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**SUBJECT: Appointment of Independent Person**

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To seek approval for the recruitment and appointment of the Independent Person for Standards, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Standards Committee is asked to receive the report and authorise the Monitoring Officer to advertise for and recruit a new Independent Person and recommend to annual council, their appointment at the meeting in May 2016.

**3. BACKGROUND**

Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, the way that the council maintains high standards of conduct and deals with complaints about its elected members and town and parish councillors requires the appointment of an Independent Person.

At its meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2012, the Council received a report setting out the changes made to the Standards Regime under the Localism Act 2011.

The Council agreed to approve the new arrangements, which included the statutory requirement to appoint an Independent Person.

**4. RATIONALE**

The Localism Act provides that the Independent Person is to be consulted by the Council before a decision is made on an allegation that it has decided to investigate. Their views may also be sought on other matters and by Members who are the subject of an allegation.

The Council's Role of Independent Person was last publically advertised in 2012.

Our current Independent Person, Mr Alan Eastwood, was interviewed and appointed at the Council Meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012. Mr Eastwood is an experienced former Monitoring Officer at Bolton Council.

The Standards Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Eastwood for his valued contribution to the authority in his role as Independent Person.

The Legislation permits the appointment of the Independent Person for any period. Mr Eastwood has held the position for 4 years. It is suggested that the new appointment should also be for a period of 4 years, to provide consistency and reflect the same term of office as the independent members.

The Localism Act requires the appointment to be made by Full Council. Council appointments are approved at Annual Council in May.

## **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The Independent Person, as part of the standards regime, is responsible for embedding compliance with The Code of Conduct which is included in our Constitution. The Constitution sets out the governance framework for local authorities, which provides the foundations for any local authority that aspires to be effective, progressive and successful.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Independent Person is paid £35 per hour. Some authorities pay an allowance and some an hourly rate.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Council is required to appoint an Independent Person to comply with the Localism Act 2011.

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

In the last 12 months there has not been any significant activity involving the Independent Person from a costs perspective.

## **9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

Any recruitment process would be subject to the Council's equal opportunities, recruitment and selection policies.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

Not applicable.

### **Chief Officer/Member**

Contact Officer: Sian Roxborough, Head of Legal Services  
Date: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016  
Background Papers: Council Constitution as published.  
Council Reports - The Localism Act 2011- Code of Conduct for Members.