



**HAMPSHIRE
FIRE AND
RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Standards and Governance Committee

Purpose: Approval

Date 24 February 2021

Title INDEPENDENT PERSON TO HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Report of Committee Clerk

SUMMARY

1. The provisions of the Localism Act 2011 require that the Authority appoint an Independent Person or Persons whose view must be sought before reaching a decision following investigation of an allegation of a breach of the Code of Conduct. The current holder of this position was appointed in June 2017 by the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority for a four-year period and therefore a new appointment to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire Authority will be required with effect from June 2021.
2. The Standards and Governance Committee has delegated authority to progress such processes as may be required for the recruitment of an Independent Person or Persons in order to make a recommendation for an appointment to the Full Authority. This report sets out proposals to take such a process forward.

BACKGROUND

3. The Localism Act 2011 introduced a number of changes to the arena of local government "Standards". Amongst these was the creation of the position of at least one "Independent Person" to each Authority.
4. The role of the Independent Person is to provide a view which must be taken into account before an Authority reaches a decision following investigation of an allegation of a breach of the Code of Conduct by a Member. The Independent Person is also available to give their view to a Member of the Authority about whom a complaint has been made.
5. In the Authority's Constitution, authority is delegated to the Standards and Governance Committee to oversee the recruitment process for an Independent Person, including the ability to establish a selection panel from

amongst its members to interview candidates and make a recommendation to the Authority for appointment.

6. The current incumbent of the position for Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority was appointed in June 2017, as a result of a shared recruitment exercise with Winchester City Council where three Independent Persons were appointed to both Authorities.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

7. On the 17 November 2020, the Standards and Governance Committee approved the commencement of the recruitment process for the Independent Person(s), and for the position to be advertised for appointment from June 2021 with an annual allowance of £100.
8. At the 17 November Committee meeting, Councillors Mintoff, Glen and Price were nominated to form a cross party working group and undertake shortlisting and interviews as required in order to inform a recommendation to the Authority.
9. A recruitment process was undertaken, and Members of the working group considered the two applications received. In light of both candidate's considerable experience as Independent Persons, Members agreed that both should be recommended for appointment to provide greater resilience to the Authority.
10. It is proposed that the Standards and Governance Committee note the progress that has been made with regard to this recruitment process and make a recommendation for appointment to the Full Authority.

CONSULTATION

11. No consultation was required for this report.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

12. In accordance with the agreement of the Full Authority, an allowance of £100 per annum is currently payable for the role of Independent Person. It is recommended that this should continue.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

13. It is a legal requirement that the Authority appoint at least one Independent Person or Persons.

PEOPLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

14. There are no direct impacts on people as a result of this report.

OPTIONS

15. As this is a legal requirement, there are no options for consideration in this report.

RISK ANALYSIS

16. As this is a legal requirement, it is proposed that an appointment is made in case there are any allegations of breach of the Code of Conduct, whereby the involvement of an Independent Person would be necessary.

CONCLUSION

17. The Standards and Governance Committee are asked to consider and recommend the two appointments to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority at its Annual General Meeting (AGM) in June 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

18. That the Standards and Governance committee RECOMMEND to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority at its AGM in June 2021, the appointment of two Independent Persons, recommended by the working group and as detailed in the Exempt Appendix, for a four-year term with an allowance of £100 per annum each.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

Exempt Appendix

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 – background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report.

None

Documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act:

None