



Council

13 April 2026

Subject: Appointment of Three Independent Persons (Standards)

Report by:

Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

To approve the appointment of three Independent Persons until May 2030.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the following candidates be appointed to serve as Independent Persons (Standards), for a term of office expiring at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2030.

- Mr Stephen Beard (re-appointed)
- Mr Phillip Jones
- Mr Shawn Lewis

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

Under the Localism Act 2011 local authorities must appoint at least one Independent Person (IP) to undertake the role specified in the Act. This is a mandatory requirement.

Best practices suggest local Authorities should appoint at least two. There are no limits on the number of IPs a Council may appoint.

Financial : FIN/5/27/CL/SL

The role allows for the claiming of £60 per meeting, and mileage (£0.45p/mile) and subsistence, although most consultation meetings with IPs are now held remotely.

Increasing the number of IPs has no financial impact as only one Member will be used per complaint as is the current process.

Staffing : None

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights : None

Risk Assessment : None

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

None

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

x

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

x

1. Background

- 1.1 Under the Localism Act 2011, it is a mandatory requirement for a Local Authority to appoint at least one Independent Person (IP) who the Monitoring Officer must consult with on all decision made regarding complaints received against Councillors under the Code of Conduct. Those that make complaints and those who are subject to a complaint also have a right to consult with an appointed IP.
- 1.2 Best practice recommends that each Authority should appoint at least two such Independent Members.
- 1.3 The Council has for a number of years operated with two such Members. Mr Stephen Beard (appointed until May 2026), and Mr Andrew Middleton (Appointed until May 2028)
- 1.4 The role carries a small allowance of £60 per meeting plus 0.45p mileage and the term of office for the role is 4 years.
- 1.5 With the term of office for Independent Person, Mr Beard due to expire in May 2026, the role was advertised on the Council's website and social media platforms.
- 1.6 Recruitment to these roles has historically been difficult, with it not uncommon for Local Authorities to have to share their IP Members, however on this occasion a total of 6 applications were received, including a re-application from Mr Beard.
- 1.7 Interviews were held on Wednesday 5 March 2026, and the interview panel comprised Councillor Adam Duguid, Chairman of Standards Committee, and Mrs Lisa Langdon, Monitoring Officer.
- 1.8 Candidates were of a high calibre and given historic issues in recruiting to this position, the debilitating impact on the Council's ability to operate in the absence of an IP, and an opportunity to afford additional flexibility, it was considered prudent to make provisional offers of appointment (subject to Council approval) to three persons on this occasion.
 - Mr Stephen Beard
 - Mr Phillip Jones
 - Mr Shawn Lewis
- 1.9 Mr Beard, of course, has experience of serving as an Independent Person in this role and is regarded as having been highly effective in the role. It is therefore recommended that Mr Stephen Beard be re-appointed.
- 1.10 Mr Jones has a background in occupational psychology and has worked for over 30 years solely within public sector organisations, having worked extensively in the field of organisational governance, developing governance systems, investigating and repairing failures of governance.

- 1.11 Mr Lewis has a career grounded in the Royal Air Force and its Legal Services providing advice on a diverse range of legal disciplines and advising on complex, sensitive and nuanced cases.
- 1.12 The Council is in a very fortunate position to have received so many quality applications, and this additional capacity and independence is to be welcomed. It is therefore recommended that both Mr Lewis and Mr Jones also be appointed as an Independent Persons, bringing the total number of Standards Independent Persons to four.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that the following candidates be appointed to serve as Standards Independent Persons, for a term of office expiring at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2030.
- Mr Stephen Beard (re-appointed)
 - Mr Phillip Jones
 - Mr Shawn Lewis