



# **Recruitment Pack for appointment of Independent Person**



## **APPOINTMENT OF LEAD AND DEPUTY INDEPENDENT PERSON**

### **Councillors' Code of Conduct and Complaints Process**

Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, the Council is required to appoint an Independent Person to assist the Council in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst its elected members and town and parish councillors.

The Independent Person will be consulted before a decision is made on an investigated complaint and usually on receipt of the initial complaint. The Independent Person may also be consulted on other standards matters, including by a Councillor who is the subject of an allegation.

To cover cases where the Independent Person has a conflict of interest or is unavailable for any reason, the Council also propose to appoint a 'deputy' Independent Person.

A fixed allowance of £1,000 per annum is payable to the Independent Person and £500 for the reserve Independent Person, together with reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses.

For further details, including an information pack and eligibility criteria, please visit the Council's website [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk) or contact:

Colin Meadowcroft  
Monitoring Officer  
Huntingdonshire District Council  
Pathfinder House  
St Mary's Street  
Huntingdon PE29 3TN

Tel No: 01480 388021

Email: [colin.meadowcroft@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:colin.meadowcroft@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

The closing date for applications is 25 August 2012. Interviews will be held during the week commencing 3 September 2012. Any offer of appointment is subject to the approval of Full Council on 26 September 2012.

## **APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON**

### **Background Information**

Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 (the “Act”) the way that Huntingdonshire District Council (the “District Council”) deals with conduct complaints about its elected members and town and parish councillors in its area changed with effect from 1 July 2012.

The previous national statutory framework has been abolished and the District Council is now 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 Council adopted a new Code of Conduct at its meeting on 4 July 2012. Town and Parish Councils will also have to adopt a Code that will apply to its Councillors and this may or may not be the same District Council Code.

The Act provides that the Council must appoint an Independent Person to assist in discharging these responsibilities. The Independent person will be consulted before a decision is made on an investigation that has been carried out and may be consulted before a decision is taken as to whether to reject a complaint, or refer it for investigation or to seek some other resolution. Full details of the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person are included in this Recruitment Pack.

It is intended to appoint an Independent Person together with a “Deputy”, to act as Independent Person in the event that the person appointed is unable to act for any reason.

Appointment is likely to be for a three year, subject to annual ratification by the Council. Under the legislation, anyone appointed who was previously an Independent Member on the District Council’s Standards Committee, can only be appointed until 30 June 2013.

The exact detail of the complaints process is currently being finalised and when completed training shall be provided to the successful applicants.

## SELECTION CRITERIA FOR INDEPENDENT PERSON

### 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.

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.

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 short-listing process. Selection will be by application form and by interview.

*NOTE: You will be required to be contactable at all times during normal working hours by telephone or by email and to be available to attend hearings 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 5 years prior to the appointment:

- a member, co-opted member or officer of the authority;
- A member, co-opted member or officer of a parish council in the District Council's area;
- or a relative or close friend of either of the above.

However, by virtue of transitional arrangements, **former independent members** of the Council's Standards Committee **are eligible** to apply for the role, but their term of appointment will only be to 30 June 2013.

You can check the lists of elected Councillors on the Council's website at:

<http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/Councils%20and%20Democracy/Council/Councillors/Pages/default.aspx>

## **ROLE OF INDEPENDENT PERSON – HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Role Description**

Responsible to: The Council

Liaison with: Monitoring Officer, Members of the Standards Committee, Officers and Members of the District Council and Town and Parish Councillors within the District and other Independent Persons.

1. To assist the Council in promoting high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted Members of Huntingdonshire District Council and Town and Parish Councillors within its area 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 before a decision is made on an investigation that has been carried out and to be available to attend meetings of the Hearing Panel of the Standards Committee for this purpose.
3. To be available as required for consultation by the Monitoring Officer and/or the Standards Committee before a decision is taken as to whether to reject a complaint, or refer it for investigation or to seek some other resolution.
4. To be available for consultation by any elected Member, including any Town and Parish Councillor, who is the subject of a standards complaint.
5. To develop a sound understanding of the ethical framework as it operates within Huntingdonshire District Council and its Town and Parish Councils.
6. To participate in training events to develop skills, knowledge and experience and in networks developed for Independent Persons operating outside the District Council's area.
7. To attend training events organised and promoted by the Council's Standards Committee.
8. To act as advocate and ambassador for the Council in promoting ethical behaviour.





## APPLICATION FOR THE POSITION OF INDEPENDENT PERSON

Individuals who wish to be considered for appointment as Independent Person at Huntingdonshire District Council (the "District Council") are requested to provide the following information to support their application. All information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and will only be used for the purposes of selection. Please feel free to use a separate continuation page if you wish to expand upon your answer to any question outlined below.

### 1. PERSONAL DETAILS

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Postcode .....

#### Contact Details

Daytime Tel No: .....

Daytime Fax No: .....

Email Address: .....

### 2. QUALIFICATIONS

*(Please list in particular any qualifications which you think are relevant to the position of Independent Person)*

**3. SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE**

*(Please give a brief account of your experience including career, public and voluntary work together with the nature of your current or most recent occupation)*

**4. RELEVANT EXPERTISE/SKILLS**

*(Please outline briefly any knowledge or expertise which you believe would be particularly relevant to your role as an Independent Person having regard to the selection criteria and role description)*

**5. Why do you wish to be considered for appointment as Independent Person and what particular attributes do you believe you would bring to the role?**

**6. Please provide any additional information you may wish to give in support of your application:**

**7. References will be taken up for all applicants who are invited for interview**

1. Name: .....	2. Name: .....
Address: .....	Address: .....
.....	.....
.....	.....
Postcode .....	Postcode .....
Tel No: .....	Tel No: .....

**8. Please indicate below for which role(s) you wish to be considered**

- Lead Independent Person YES/NO\*
- Deputy Independent Person YES/NO\*

In submitting this application, I declare that:

- I am not currently and have not during the past five years been a Member or Officer of the District Council; and
- I am not currently and have not during the past five years been a Member or Officer of any Town or Parish council within the area of the District Council; and
- I am not related to, or a close friend of, any person who is currently a Member or Officer of the District Council or of any Town or Parish Council within the area of the District Council; and
- I am not actively engaged in local party political activity.\*

**OR**

- I was an Independent Member of the District Council's Standards Committee.\*

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Please return this application form by **25 August 2012** addressed to:

Colin Meadowcroft  
Monitoring Officer  
Huntingdonshire District Council  
Pathfinder House  
St Mary's Street  
Huntingdon PE29 3TN

or **email** the completed form to [colin.meadowcroft@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:colin.meadowcroft@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

**\* Please delete as applicable**