

**APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS AND TOWN AND PARISH
COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES
(Report by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services
and Monitoring Officer)**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Members may recall that at their last meeting, the Committee:-

- ◆ authorised the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Councillor T D Sanderson together with the Monitoring Officer to interview candidates for appointment to posts of Lead and Deputy Independent Persons; and
- ◆ Requested the Monitoring Officer to invite expressions of interest from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils, Town and Parish Councils and the former representative for the two new positions of Town and Parish Council representatives on the Committee

1.2 This report describes the steps taken thus far to comply with the Committee's wishes.

2. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

2.1 In response to a public advertisement, four applications were received for the posts of Lead and Deputy Independent Person. Following interviews on 20th and 21st September, the Panel recommended two candidates to the Council for appointment as Lead and Deputy Independent Persons. Subsequently, the Council endorsed the recommendation of the Interviewing Panel and Mr M Lynch and Mr D Hall were appointed to the posts of Lead and Deputy Independent Persons respectively for the period to 30th June 2013. The appointees will be entitled to receive allowances of £1,000 and £500 respectively plus reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses.

2.2 Since their appointment both the Lead and Deputy Independent Persons have observed training sessions on the Code of Conduct for Town and Parish Councils and attended a workshop for Independent Persons held at Camden Town Hall on 15th November 2012. The Lead Independent Person also has, after consultation with the Monitoring Officer, reviewed the first complaint received under the new arrangements required to be put in place by Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011.

2.3 The workshop attended by the Independent Persons presented an opportunity to gain an insight into the early challenges experienced by other Authorities and discussed:-

- ◆ the role of the new Independent Person;
- ◆ the key principles of the Code of Conduct;
- ◆ the handling of investigations;
- ◆ how the Independent Person can help the Monitoring Officer to make the local process work well.

2.4 The session has revealed a number of issues which require further attention and these are to be explored by the Monitoring Officer and Independent Persons in advance of the Committee. Briefly these concern the administrative matters relating to the appointment, the process for dealing with complaints, publicity and the protocol for attendance at Council meetings. The Monitoring Officer will update the Committee on the outcome of these discussions.

3. APPOINTMENT OF TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

3.1 The Committee had decided to appoint two Town and Parish Council representatives as co-opted and non-voting Members on the Committee. It was agreed that an allowance of £231.00 per annum should continue to be payable to the appointees plus reimbursement for subsistence/travelling costs when attending meetings of the Committee and training events.

3.2 In accordance with the Committee's instructions:-

- ◆ the former Town and Parish Council representatives were invited to express an interest in the two posts;
- ◆ the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils were invited to comment on the appointments process and to seek nominations through their membership;
- ◆ members of Parish Councils were directly asked to express an interest in the positions.

3.3 A copy of the guidance notes circulated to Town and Parish Councils via the "Parish Alert" is appended hereto.

3.4 Following the Committee's approach, six expressions of interest together with supporting statements have been received from Parish Councillors.

3.5 The Monitoring Officer has been authorised, after consultation with the Chairman, to select the two Parish Councillors best suited to the role of Town and Parish Council representative on the Committee.

3.6 An update on the progress of this process will be reported at the meeting.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 The Committee is requested to note the progress achieved with the support of an independent person in the new complaints arrangements and the steps taken thus far to appoint two Town and Parish Council representatives to the Committee.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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