

Title of Report	APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS	
Presented by	Councillor Robert Ashman Deputy Leader	
Background Papers	Council Report 26 June 2012 – Localism Act 2011 – new Standards regime Council Report 17 May 2016 - Appointment Of Independent Persons Council Report 21 May 2019 – Appointment of Independent Persons	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	None	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	None except as stated in this Report	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	There are no specific staffing issues arising from this Report.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	To extend the term of office of the Independent Persons appointed under the Localism Act 2011	
Recommendations	TO EXTEND THE TERM OF OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT PERSONS TO THE END OF THE 2020-2021 MUNICIPAL YEAR	

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On 26 June 2012 Council considered a report which detailed the changes to the role of the Independent Person introduced to the Standards Regime under the Localism Act 2011.
- 1.2 A joint recruitment exercise was undertaken with other County Authorities and Members were asked to formally appoint the nine successful applicants to a pool of Independent Persons who would be available to be called upon by both Members and the Monitoring Officer during any standards investigations. This process was repeated in 2016 and six applicants were successful in being appointed to the pool for the period ending May 2019. One has since resigned which leaves 5 Independent Persons making up the current pool.

2.0 FUTURE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

- 2.1 A number of Monitoring Officers involved in the original joint recruitment exercise have expressed the view that the process was a success and produced a number of high quality candidates and they would like to see the process repeated when seeking to replace the current Independent Persons.

- 2.2 Existing Authorities currently utilising the pool of Independent Persons includes Blaby District Council, Charnwood Borough Council, Harborough District Council, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, North West Leicestershire District Council and Oadby & Wigston Borough Council. Melton Borough Council will be joining during this Municipal Year.
- 2.3 The Authority which led on the previous recruitment exercise has again agreed to lead on the 2020-2021 recruitment drive. However, due to difficulty in recruiting during the Covid 19 pandemic it is proposed to now run the exercise during the 2020-2021 municipal year with the new pool to be in place for the start of the 2021-2022 municipal year.

3.0 INTERIM MEASURES

- 3.1 Local Authorities are currently facing unprecedented challenges during from the Covid 19 pandemic with resources being diverted elsewhere and changes needing to be made in processes and practices. In addition there has also been a difficulty in recruiting a sufficient number of Independent Persons to create a wide enough pool from which to draw from in order to assist in delivering high standards of conduct amongst Councillors.
- 3.2 As an interim measure, and in order to facilitate an effective recruitment exercise, it is proposed that the term of appointment of this Council's Independent Persons is extended to the end of the 2020/21 Municipal Year. The Independent Persons have agreed in principle that they are willing to extend their term of appointment subject to Council confirming this extension.
- 3.3 It is recommended that this Council therefore extends the term of appointment of its remaining 5 Independent Persons and then participates in the joint recruitment exercise to appoint Independent Persons with effect from 2021/22. All the current IPs (listed below) have been contacted and have agreed to remain in post, with Council approval, until the end of the 2020/21 municipal year.

Mrs Christine Howell
 Mr Gordon Grimes
 Mr Michael Pearson
 Mr Richard Gough
 Mr Mark Shaw

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	Our communities are safe, healthy and connected
Policy Considerations:	List any relevant policies
Safeguarding:	Detail any safeguarding considerations made.
Equalities/Diversity:	Detail any equalities/diversity considerations made.
Customer Impact:	Detail any impact the decision will have on customers
Economic and Social Impact:	Detail any economic or social impact as a result of the decision.
Environment and Climate Change:	Detail any environment and climate change impact as a result of the decision.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Existing Independent Persons
Risks:	Outlined within the report
Officer Contact	Elizabeth Warhurst Head of Legal and Commercial Services elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk