

Report to: Annual Meeting of the Full Council - 23 May 2023

Director Lead: Sue Bearman, Assistant Director Legal & Democratic Services, Monitoring Officer

Lead Officer: Nigel Hill, Business Manager Elections & Democratic Services, Ext. 5243

Report Summary	
Report Title	Appointment of Independent Persons
Purpose of Report	To consider the appointment of Paul Cox and Sarah Britton as Independent Persons to the Council for a further 4-year term.
Recommendations	That Paul Cox and Sarah Britton be appointed as Independent Persons to the Council for a further 4-year term to May 2027.
Reason for Recommendation	The Council is required by law to appoint at least one Independent Person.

1.0 Background

- 1.1** The Monitoring Officer is required to undertake the initial assessment of Code of Conduct complaints in consultation with an Independent Person. A Councillor who is the subject of an allegation must also be able to consult an Independent Person. In addition, the Council's Independent Panel, which will offer the Council advice, views or recommendations on any proposal for the dismissal of a statutory officer, has two Independent Persons as members. It is therefore recommended to appoint two Independent Persons, to fulfil both functions as required.
- 1.2** On 21 May 2019 Full Council appointed Paul Cox and Sarah Britton as Independent Persons to the Council for a four-year term until May 2023.
- 1.3** They were appointed following an advertisement and interview process. The interview panel comprised of the Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer, Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council, and the Leader of the Major Opposition Group.

2.0 Proposal/Options Considered

- 2.1** The current arrangements are working well. Following consultation with the Chairman of Audit & Governance Committee, the Monitoring Officer approached the current Independent Persons to discuss the possibility of a further term of appointment. Both expressed a willingness to continue.

- 2.2 On 6 April 2023 the Council's Audit & Governance Committee considered a report proposing their re-appointment for a further term. The Committee resolved to recommend to Full Council that the current Independent Persons are appointed for a further term.
- 2.3 The alternative is to undertake an advertisement and recruitment process. It is not considered necessary to incur the time and cost of such a process when the current arrangements are working well.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Financial Implications (FIN23-24/7069)

- 3.1 The annual rate for Independent Persons is £1,500 per annum.
- 3.2 For the 2023/24 financial year £3,500 has been budget for in terms of the cost of Independent Persons and therefore could accommodate a slight increase in inflationary cost.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Full Council report 21 May 2019 – Appointment of Independent Persons

Audit & Governance Committee report 6 April 2023 – Appointment of Independent Persons