

## **Report to Standards Committee**

**Subject:** Recruitment of Reserve Independent Person

**Date:** 2 September 2021

**Author:** Monitoring Officer

### **Purpose**

To seek approval to recruit to the vacant Reserve Independent Person role.

### **Recommendation**

#### **That Members:**

- 1) Approve the commencement of a recruitment exercise to the role of Reserve Independent Person as detailed in this report.

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 The Localism Act requires that the Council's arrangements for dealing with allegations of breach of the Code of Conduct include provision for the appointment of at least one independent person, whose views are to be sought and taken into account by the authority before it makes its decision on an allegation that it has decided to investigate. The arrangements provided by the Council include such provision.
- 1.2 In 2017 John Baggaley was appointed as the Independent Person for a period of 5 years and Susan Dewey OBE was appointed as Reserve Independent Person for the same period. Members will recall that shortly before the Committee meeting in June 2021 the Reserve Independent Person indicated that she was moving away from the area so would no longer be able to perform the role. As such, recruitment to this role needs to be considered.

## **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Committee agree to the commencement of a recruitment exercise to the role of Reserve Independent Person. The Localism Act requires the Independent Person role to be appointed through

a process of public advertisement, application and appointment by a positive vote of a majority of all members of the Borough Council. It is proposed that the vacancy of Reserve Independent Person be dealt with in the same way. An interview panel has already been established to interview candidates for co-opted members and independent persons. It is proposed that the interview panel conduct interviews with applicants following shortlisting of applications by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Standards Committee. The interview panel will recommend who should be appointed to the Committee, however Full Council will have to formally appoint to the role.

### **3 Alternative Options**

- 3.1 Not to recruit a reserve Independent Person, however it is considered necessary to have a reserve if possible, to ensure complaints can be managed where the Independent Person is unable to act, for example due to a conflict of interest, illness or absence. In addition, the Committee for Standards in Public Life (CSPL) best practice recommendations recommend an authority should have access to at least two independent persons.

### **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 On appointment, the Reserve Independent Person will be entitled to an allowance, agreed by the Council which can be met from existing budgets.

### **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Whilst there is no legal requirement to have a reserve Independent person, it is recommended best practice by the CSPL. Recruitment should follow the requirements of the Localism Act.

### **6 Equalities Implications**

- 6.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report. Arrangements for application and interview will ensure accessibility.

### **7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

- 7.1 There are no carbon reduction/environmental sustainability implications arising from this report.

### **8 Appendices**

- 8.1 None

### **9 Background papers**

9.1 None identified.

**Statutory Officer approval**

**Approved by the Chief Financial Officer**

**Date:**

**Drafted by the Monitoring Officer**