

Report to: Standards Committee

Date of Meeting 16 January 2025

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Appointment of Independent Representatives, Independent Persons and Town and Parish Representatives

Report summary:

The Standards Committee includes two non-voting Parish Councillor representatives (with three spaces) and 3 non-voting independent members who play valuable input into the work of the Standards Committee. In addition, the Council has two Independent Persons who have a key role in the consideration of Code of Conduct complaints, alongside the Monitoring Officer. A number of those roles were due to expire this year and the Committee agreed a recruitment process to earlier this year. The first attempt at advertising only resulted in a couple of applications so the decision was made to re-advertise in September 2025. This report updates on the outcome of the advertising process, the interviews that followed and presents to the Committee the recommendation of the Interview Panel which consisted of the Chair, Vice Chair and Cllr Dumper together with the Monitoring Officer.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That the Standards Committee:-

1. Recommend to Council the appointment of:
 - i. Mr Steve Jupp and Mr Philip Wilde as co-opted non-voting Independent Members on the Standards Committee for a term of 4 years or until local government reorganisation, whichever is the sooner
 - ii. Cllr Chris Lockyer of Sidmouth Town Council and Cllr Francis Pullman of Westhill Parish Council as co-opted non-voting Town/Parish representatives on the Standards Committee for a term of 4 years or until the local government reorganisation, whichever is the sooner
 - iii. Mr Martin Goscomb and Mr Pat Coulter as Independent Persons for a term of 4 years or until local government reorganisation, whichever is the sooner

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that the critical Independent and Town and Parish perspective on the Committee is retained and that the Council is compliant with the Localism Act 2011 in relation to the appointment of Independent Persons.

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Assets and Economy
- ☒ Communications and Democracy
- ☒ Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- ☐ Environment - Nature and Climate
- ☐ Environment - Operational
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact**Climate change** Low Impact

Risk: Medium Risk; The Authority has a legal duty to appoint an Independent Person and would be unable to carry out its statutory duties relating to the Code of Conduct without appointing at least one IP. Any subject member who is subject to a Code of Conduct complaint or Standards Committee investigation has a statutory right to consult with the IP. If that is not possible because there is no IP, the Authority is at risk of challenge.

Links to background information None**Link to** [Council Plan](#)**Priorities (check which apply)**

- ☐ Better homes and communities for all
- ☐ A greener East Devon
- ☐ A resilient economy
- ☒ Quality Services

Report in full

1. The Localism Act 2011 requires the Authority to have arrangements in place for dealing with complaints of breaches of the Code of Conduct. This must include provision for the appointment of at least one Independent Person (IP). The Council currently has two IP's. In addition, the Council has three Independent Representatives and two Town and Parish representatives (with one vacancy) on the Standards Committee. These are co-opted non-voting appointments. These representatives provide critical independent and town and parish perspectives.
2. With the exception of Cllr Sexton and Mr Ken Bryant, all of these appointments were due to expire this year. The Committee therefore agreed to conduct a recruitment process and delegated authority was granted to the Monitoring Officer to prepare the recruitment paperwork in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and to conduct the recruitment process on our website and via social media, as well as circulating details to Town and Parish Councils.

3. The first recruitment attempt only resulted in two applications and the decision was therefore made to advertise a second time. In total, combining the applications for both recruitment processes, there were 21 applications for the three roles. Those applications were shortlisted by the Chair and Monitoring Officer and 12 applicants were invited to interviews on 2nd and 10th October 2025.
4. The interview panel comprised three members of the Committee namely the Chair, Vice Chair and Cllr Dumper, supported by the Monitoring Officer. After a robust interview process the highest scoring applicants and those recommended to the Committee for appointment were:-
 - a) Mr Steve Jupp and Mr Philip Wilde as co-opted non-voting Independent Members
 - b) Cllr Chris Lockyer of Sidmouth Town Council and Cllr Francis Pullman of Westhill Parish Council as co-opted non-voting Town/Parish representatives
 - c) Mr Martin Goscomb and Mr Pat Coulter as Independent Persons.
5. All six successful applicants are recommended to be appointed for a term of 4 years or until local government reorganisation, whichever is the sooner.
6. The appointees will receive an annual allowance of £400 in accordance with the adopted Scheme of Member Allowances.
7. As appointments to Committees are made by Full Council, the Committee are invited to recommend the above appointments to Full Council. The next ordinary meeting of Full Council will take place on 10 December 2025.
8. The opportunity is taken to thank Cllr Pauline Stott (Town/Parish Representative), Professor Diana Kuh (Independent Person) and Mr Robert Wood (Independent Member) whose terms of office will expire on 10 December 2025 for all their hard work, commitment and valued contribution to the work of the Committee over many years.

Financial implications:

There are no financial implications directly arising from this recruitment process as the positions will be advertised on our website, on social media and through Town and Parish Councils. The successful applicants will receive the same allowance as existing role holders in accordance with the Council's adopted Scheme of Member Allowances.

Legal implications:

The legal issues are dealt with in the body of the report.