

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING: **Council**

MEETING: **24 March 2022**

TITLE: **Appointment of the Independent Person & Independent Member**

WARD: All

AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

List of attachments to this report:

Appendix 1: Biography

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 The report invites the Council to appoint the Independent Person and an Independent Member.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Council is asked to approve the appointment of the Independent Person with responsibility for supporting the Standards Committee, as set out in section 5.

2.2 Note the resignation of Ms Russell and record the thanks of the Council for her contrive to maintaining high standards of behaviour during her tenure as an independent member of the Standards Committee.

2.2 Confirm the appointment of an Independent Member of the Standards Committee, as set out in section 5.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None

4 STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Council is required by law to adopt a Code of Conduct and to make arrangements under which allegations can be investigated and decisions on allegations can be made. This includes the appointment of at least one Independent Person (IP) whose views must be sought and considered on any Code of Conduct complaint under investigation. B&NES has decided to appoint

two IPs in accordance with recommendations by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, and Guidance produced by the Local Government Association.

- 4.2 The current membership of the Standards Committee is:
- 5 elected Members (2 from the Conservative, and 1 each from the Liberal Democrat, Labour, and Independent groups, plus 1 substitute from each of those groups);
 - 3 Independent Members (one of the Independent Members shall chair the Committee);
 - 3 Parish Representatives (with 3 substitutes)

5 STANDARDS INDEPENDENT PERSON

- 5.1 The role is complementary to but distinct from the role of independent co-opted members of the Standards Committee. The co-opted members participate fully in the deliberations of the Committee, both on complaints cases and policy and procedural matters. The Independent Person's role is to be a source of advice to the Committee, members against whom complaints are made and the Monitoring Officer in the effective operation of the Standards regime.
- 5.2 As required by law, the position of Independent Person has been advertised and several applications were received and considered. Council is recommended to appoint Roger Morris. Brief biographical details are set out in Appendix 1.

STANDARDS INDEPENDENT MEMBER

- 5.3 A co-opted independent member of the Standards Committee recently resigned, and Council is recommended to appoint Sophie Sidonio as a replacement co-opted member of the Standards Committee. For the last 16 years Ms Sidonio worked as a civil servant In HM Revenues and Customs and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office as a senior manager on IT and Data projects, Senior Policy Adviser in Law Enforcement and as an Intelligence Manager in Border Management. As a long-standing Civil Servant, she has a good understanding of, and history of delivering and upholding, the Nolan Principles.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 No risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken as the Council needs to put in place the arrangements contained in this report.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 Equalities Impact Assessments have been carried out and are available for public inspection.

8 ADVICE SOUGHT AND CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Council's Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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| Contact person | Michael Hewitt, Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Ext 5125) |
| Background papers | The Council's Constitution |
| Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format | |