

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE INDEPENDENT PERSON

RECRUITMENT PACK

August 2018

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL – APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON

Background Information

1. Epping Forest District Council is looking to appoint at least two members of the public to serve as Independent Persons to support its arrangements for dealing with Standards matters in the District.
2. The appointment of the Independent Person is a decision of the Council and the term of appointment is an initial period of four years. Training will be provided prior to commencement of the role and there will be support to you from the Monitoring Officer.
3. The Localism Act 2011 places a duty on Epping Forest District Council and the 24 Town and Parish Councils in the area, to promote and maintain high standards of conduct for elected and co-opted members. This includes the requirement to have a Code of Conduct with which members must comply.
4. The Act also requires that authorities adopt arrangements for dealing with complaints about breaches of the Code of Conduct both by the District Council members and by Town and Parish Council members in the District. This must include provision for the appointment of at least one Independent Person per authority.
5. The Act states that the Independent Person will have the following functions:
 - (a) they must be consulted by the Council before making a finding as to whether a member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct following an investigation and decides on any action to be taken in respect of that member found to have breached the Code;
 - (b) they may be consulted by the Council in respect of a standards complaint at any other stage; and
 - (c) they may be consulted by a member of the District Council or a member or co-opted member of a Town and Parish Council within the appointing authority's area against whom a complaint has been made.
6. The essential qualities for the position are that you should:
 - (a) be over 18 years of age
 - (b) have a commitment to public service
 - (c) have personal integrity and a commitment to upholding high standards
 - (d) be independent and impartial
 - (e) be able to assess critically written and oral evidence to reach balanced and objective decisions
 - (f) possess tact, diplomacy and good communication skills

- (g) demonstrate excellent listening, problem solving and evaluation skills
 - (h) be reliable and committed
 - (i) have the ability and willingness to work with other members of other councils, their committees/panels and officers where necessary
7. It would also be helpful to have knowledge of how local government operates, awareness of the role of elected members, and a general understanding of the principles of Codes of Conduct and Standards Regimes.
 8. It is important that you are independent of the Council. Therefore you should not, pursuant to Section 28(8) of the Localism Act 2011:
 - (a) be, or have been, within the last five years, an elected or co-opted member or an officer of Epping Forest District Council or of any of the Town and Parish Councils within its district;
 - (b) be, or have been within the last five years, an elected or co-opted member of any Committee or Sub-Committee of the District Council or of any Town and Parish Council within its district;
 - (c) be a relative or close friend of a current elected or co-opted member or officer of the District Council or any Town and Parish Council within its district, or of any elected or co-opted member of any committee or sub-committee of that Council.
 9. A connection with any other Town or Parish Council or District Council is not a bar to appointment. If any potential applicant is uncertain about whether they are qualified to apply, they should contact the Monitoring Officer by telephone or e-mail. The contact details are at the end of this document.
 10. The District Council reserves the right to remove an Independent Person from his/her post if their independence is in anyway compromised, and/or they bring the reputation of the Council into disrepute.

Allowance and Expenses

11. The independent Person receive a small annual allowance and expenses. The level of allowance is currently £500 per annum.

Time Commitment

12. The expected time commitment will depend on the number of complaints received and could upto one day per month.
13. Independent persons will be able to attend Standards Committee meetings as non voting co-optees.

Possible sharing of Independent Person's by adjoining authorities

14. Proposals are being discussed with adjoining Councils to share independent persons so that any Council could call on the services of those individuals in respect of any matters listed in paragraph 5 above.

Involvement in other processes

16. There is provision within the Council's constitution for appointed Independent Persons to form part of the panel that would consider disciplinary action against the most senior officers. Such action is rare. Relevant experience for this element of the post should be outlined within your application.

Application

You should complete **ONLY** the attached application form, which will be acknowledged upon receipt. (You are not required to submit a CV).

Applications should be received by no later than **5.00 pm on 14th of September 2018** and be sent by email or post to:

Simon Hill
Monitoring Officer
Epping Forest District Council
Civic Offices
High Street
Epping
Essex CM16 4BZ

Telephone 01992 564249
Email: shill@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Selection

Short listing for interview will be based upon an assessment of how applicants meet the criteria in the 'person specification' document (enclosed) which are evaluated on the basis of the application form.

It is suggested, therefore, that you include information on how you consider you meet those criteria.

Selection will be by interview conducted by an interview panel comprising the Chairman of the Standards Committee, District Councillors from the Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer. By statute, the decision to appoint on the basis of recommendations by that panel will be made by a full Council meeting. These appointments are likely to be made by October 2018.

Role Description

1. To assist the authorities in the discharge their duty to uphold high standards of conduct as required by the Localism Act 2011.
2. To act as a consultee to the Epping Forest District Council on a range of matters appertaining to the its Local Code of Conduct (and any other relevant code) concerning complaints about breaches of the Code(s) and as required by the Localism Act 2011.
3. To provide advice to the District Council following the completion of investigations into alleged breaches of the Code, and before any decision is taken following investigation, as to findings of fact and compliance with the Code and their decision as to sanctions.
4. To advise Standards Committees or the Monitoring Officer in connection with any aspect of their consideration or determination of an alleged breach of the Code where these would be assisted by receiving the views of an independent person.
5. To provide advice to any local authority Councillor or co-opted member serving on a Council in the District if that person's behaviour is the subject of an allegation.

Person Specification

	Essential Competencies	Desirable Competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An interest in public sector governance issues 	√	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience or knowledge of public sector governance issues 		√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of the pressures and constraints of serving as an elected or co-opted member of a democratically accountable public body 		√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of the current policy agenda for local services 	√	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of handling misconduct or disciplinary issues (gained in the context of employment, a professional body or the voluntary sector) 	√	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of reviewing data and evaluating other forms information to reach evidence based conclusions 	√	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong oral and written communication skills 	√	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Credible and authoritative personal style 	√	