

# **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON**

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### **Job Pack – Contents:**

- ! Introduction to the Job**
- ! Job description**
- ! Person specification**

## **APPOINTMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT PERSON FOR THE COUNCIL**

The provisions of the Localism Act 2011 include a statutory duty for the Council to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its Members and Co-opted Members. Within the framework set out in the Act, the Council has made a number of arrangements to enable it to carry this out:

- a Code of Conduct for Members
- a complaints process
- arrangements for the investigation and determination of complaints
- an Audit and Corporate Governance Committee
- an Independent Person with whom to consult

The term of office for the appointment of the Council's current Independent Person is due to end in May 2018.

### **THE ROLE OF THE INDEPENDENT PERSON**

The Independent Person must be consulted by the Council before it makes a finding that a Member has failed to comply with its Code of Conduct or imposes any sanction, and can usefully be consulted by the Council at other times, such as whether to resolve or to investigate a complaint. The Independent Person may also be consulted by a Member against whom a complaint has been made.

In addition to these core duties, the Council has also put in place arrangements for the Independent Person to:

- receive agenda and minutes for all meetings of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, with the right to request for items to be added to the agenda with the agreement of the chair, and to speak at the Committee.
- raise any concerns about standards issues or implementation of the process with the authority's chief executive, and to have the right to address a meeting of the full council about any concerns.
- be consulted on any proposed changes to the Code of Conduct or procedures for handling allegations.
- sign an undertaking to comply with the code of conduct, including completion of a notification for the register of interests.

### **RESTRICTIONS ON APPOINTMENT**

There are some restrictions as to who may be appointed as an Independent Person. The Localism Act 2011, requires that an Independent Person must not have been an elected Member, co-opted Member or officer of the Council (or of any of the Parishes within it), or a relative or close friend of such a Member or officer, during the previous five years.

## **DESIRABLE QUALITIES**

The role of Independent Person calls for someone who can make themselves available for consultation on matters of conduct, often of a complex or sensitive nature, and deal with matters on a confidential basis. The Independent Person will need to consider with impartiality and objectivity patterns of behaviour which have been the subject of complaint, against the background of the Council's Code of Conduct, and be prepared to take a view and advise the Council's Monitoring Officer as to an appropriate course of action.

## **TIME COMMITMENT**

The amount of time needed for the role will vary according to the number of complaints received. The monthly commitment could range from as little as one 20 to 30 minute telephone conversation with the Council's Monitoring Officer to perhaps two or three such consultations, which may involve attending the Council Offices to discuss cases face to face with the Monitoring Officer. Attendance at Committee meetings (normally held in the evening) would typically be in the region of two to three per year. The Independent Person will meet with the Monitoring Officer at least once per quarter.

## **ALLOWANCE**

An allowance of £1,263 per annum is payable to the Independent Person. Expenses would also be payable for attendance at any Committee meetings required.

## **TO APPLY**

If you are interested in applying, you will need to complete the application form included with this job pack, and return to the address at the foot of this letter. The closing date for applications is **16<sup>th</sup> February 2018**. Suitable applicants will be selected for interview with the Council's political Group Leaders.

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL INDEPENDENT**

### **PERSON – JOB DESCRIPTION**

#### **Main Purpose of Job**

To undertake the statutory role of the Independent Person appointed under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 and to assist the Council generally in discharging its duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of Slough Borough Council.

**Responsible to:** The Borough Council

#### **Main Contacts**

- Elected and Co-opted Members of Slough Borough Council and of Parish Councils in Slough
- Slough Borough Council officers, principally the Monitoring Officer
- Key stakeholders in the community, members of the public

#### **Main Accountabilities**

1. To assist the Council in promoting high standards of conduct by elected, appointed and co-opted members, and in particular to uphold the adopted Code of Conduct and the seven principles of public life, namely selflessness, honesty, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and leadership.
2. To be consulted by the Council through the Monitoring Officer and/or the relevant Committee before it makes a decision on an investigated allegation and to be available to attend any meetings of the relevant Committee or Sub-Committee for this purpose.
3. To be available for consultation by the Monitoring Officer and/or the relevant Committee before a decision is taken as to whether to investigate a complaint or to seek a local resolution of it.
4. To be available for consultation by any member who is the subject of a standards complaint.
5. To develop a sound understanding of the Council's ethical framework and the operation of it.

6. To participate in training events to develop skills, knowledge and experience and in networks developed for Independent Persons operating outside the Borough.
7. To attend training events organised and promoted by the Council's Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.
8. To act as advocate and ambassador for the Council in promoting ethical behaviour.

## SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

### INDEPENDENT PERSON – PERSON SPECIFICATION

No.	Item	Essential/ Desirable
1.	Must be a person in whose impartiality and integrity the public can have confidence.	E
2.	Must have a demonstrable commitment to upholding high standards of conduct and an awareness of the importance of ethical behaviour.	E
3.	Able to understand and comply with confidentiality requirements.	E
4.	Able to exercise sound judgement and must be able to consider and analyse complex issues in a fair and objective manner.	E
5.	Must be a good listener and an effective communicator, with the ability to express their ideas and point of view clearly.	E
6.	Contactable during normal working hours by telephone or email and available to attend occasional meetings which may be in the evening.	E
7.	Must not have been an elected member, co-opted member or officer of Slough Borough Council (or any of the parishes within it) at any time since 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2013.	E
8.	Must not be a relative or close friend of a member or officer of the Council.	E
9.	Must not be a member of a political party or have a public profile in relation to political activities.	E
10.	Must not be employed by the Council, have a contractual relationship with it, or be otherwise connected to any organisation in receipt of grant aid from the Council.	E
11.	Knowledge/experience of standards in public life /public service and/or awareness of the political process.	D
12.	Knowledge and understanding of quasi-judicial or complaints processes.	D