

19 May 2021

Appointment of Independent Persons

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 sets out the arrangements that local authorities must have in place to promote and maintain high standards of councillor conduct. Councils have the freedom to decide how they will investigate and determine allegations of misconduct made against members and co-opted members relating to breaches of the member code of conduct as long as an Independent Person is appointed to help councils make good decisions.
- 1.2 The Council's existing Independent Persons were appointed in 2013 to serve a maximum term of 8 years. As a result, the Council is looking to appoint committed individuals to undertake the role. Their role will be to assist the Monitoring Officer and a councillor-led Hearings Panel in determining if members and co-opted members subject to allegations of misconduct have broken the Council's Code of Conduct.
- 1.3 An advertisement for Independent Persons was placed on the Council website in March and three applications were received. The candidates were interviewed on 8th and 23rd April 2021 by Cllr Nigel Robbins, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee and fellow committee members Cllr Brian Oosthuysen and Cllr Shaun Parsons, advised by the Monitoring Officer, Rob Ayliffe. Each candidate was asked a number of questions covering their knowledge and experience and their understanding of the role of the Independent Person.
- 1.4 After detailed consideration, the interview panel was unanimous in recommending that the following two candidates should be appointed as Independent Persons:
 - Bernard Barton-Ancliffe – Bernard lives in Tewkesbury District and is an active member of the local community. He is currently a Parish Councillor and is Chair of the Gloucestershire Association of Town and Parish Councils. Retired, he has a background in the Armed Forces and as a Civil Servant. He has a wealth of experience and knowledge in equality, diversity and impartiality.
 - Stephen Pearman – Stephen lives in Gloucester and is currently the Interim Chief Information Officer for English Heritage with responsibility for Information Technology (IT) Strategy and running IT services for a large number of staff and volunteers. He has also served as a Chair of Governors at a local primary school and is active member of the local community. He brings extensive knowledge of governance issues to the role.

1.5 References have been taken up for both candidates which confirm their suitability for the role.

1.6 **Recommendations**

- a) That Bernard Barton-Ancliffe and Stephen Pearman are appointed as Independent Persons.
- b) That their initial term of office runs until the County Council election in May 2025.
- c) That their appointments be subject to review before May 2025 and they be allowed to serve for a maximum of a further four years.

Rob Ayliffe

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