

Rother District Council

Report to: Audit and Standards Committee

Date: 22 March 2021

Title: Independent Person Recruitment

Report of: Lisa Cooper, Monitoring Officer

Purpose of Report: To recommend the appointment of an Independent Person to take office in July 2021.

Officer

Recommendation(s): **Recommendation to COUNCIL:** That Robert Brown be appointed as an Independent Person in accordance with Chapter 7, Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, for a term of four years commencing from 10 July 2021.

Monitoring Officer: Lisa Cooper

Introduction

1. As Members will recall at the last meeting held in December, the Committee was advised of the need to appoint at least one other Independent Person (IP) following the expiry of the Term of Office of two of the Council's three IPs in July 2021. The process to be undertaken was agreed and the Committee decided to recommend just one appointment, making a total of two IPs.
2. The Committee agreed that the Chairman of the Committee, the Chief Executive together with the Monitoring Officer comprise a panel to interview the suitable applicants and make a recommendation, via this meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee and then on to full Council on 17 May 2021.

Publicity

3. The Independent Person vacancy was advertised by way of a press release, the Council's website and promoted via social media and MyAlerts, as well being notified to all Councillors and all Parish and Town Councils within the Rother area. Each applicant was provided with a recruitment pack that set out the Role Profile and Person Specification.

Selection and Interview Panel

4. At the closing date (29 January 2021), 9 applications had been received and four candidates were shortlisted for interview, held on 18 February 2021 via MS Teams; two applicants from the 2019 recruitment exercise were also considered (included in the 9 above). Given that there was only one position and having to conduct the process over MS Teams, it was agreed with the Chairman that we would shortlist down to four applicants, plus the two 2019 candidates. One applicant withdrew from the process a few days before the interview date.

5. The expectations of the role in terms of regular attendance at meetings and contributions to committee discussions on standards matters were explained to each applicant at interview.
6. At the request of one of the applicants, all applicants were offered an informal telephone conversation with one of the Council's existing IP to gain an understanding of the role, time involved and working arrangements; the majority of applicants took up the offer.
7. The decision of the Panel is outlined below in order that the Committee can then make a recommendation to full Council on 17 May 2021. The calibre of the applicants was high, and it was a difficult decision to make.

Risk Management

8. Failure to appoint an additional Independent Persons will result in a lack of resilience leaving only IP in post following the expiry of two of the current three IPs' Terms of Office.

Appointments

9. Having interviewed several very good candidates, the Panel are confident to recommend that Mr Robert Brown be appointed to serve as one of the Council's Independent Persons. A profile of Mr Brown has been circulated to Members separately from the Agenda.

Conclusion

10. Following the recruitment process to appoint an Independent Person, the Committee is asked to recommend to Council that Mr Robert Brown's name be put forward for approval by the full Council on Monday 17 May.

Lisa Cooper
Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	External Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Risk Management	Yes	Exempt from publication	No

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Report Contact Officer:	Lisa Cooper, Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer
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Appendices:	None.
Relevant Previous Minutes:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Reference Documents:	The Localism Act 2011, Chapter 7, Section 28