

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO STANDARDS COMMITTEE ON 18 FEBRUARY 2021

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| SUBJECT: | Recruitment of a Replacement Independent Person to the Standards Committee |
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| REPORT AUTHOR: | Solomon Agutu - Interim Monitoring Officer |
| DATE: | 18 February 2021 |
| EXTN: | ext 37432 |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

To seek Committee's authority to recruit a replacement Independent Person, following the resignation of one Independent Person, in order to maintain the pool of four.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

If the Committee wish to pursue the appointment of a replacement Independent Person, it is recommended that:

- (1) the option for recruiting a replacement Independent Person to the Standards Committee, as set out in the report, be endorsed with authority being given to the Interim Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, to agree the application pack and advertisement;
- (2) two Members of the Committee and an Independent Person, as confirmed at the meeting, be appointed to sit on the Interview Panel; and
- (3) a vote of thanks be minuted to Brian Green for his service to the community in his role as an Independent Person.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to appoint at least one Independent Person to its Standards Committee. Currently, the Committee has a 'pool' of four Independent Persons on which to draw support with regard to Code of Conduct allegations against Members.
- 1.2 The Council's current Constitution (Part 3; Para 4.5) states that Standards Committee should have access to 3 Independent Persons. The new constitution requires 4(four)IPs
- 1.3 On 22 January 2021, the Interim Monitoring Officer received an email from one Independent Person, Brian Green, giving notice to retire from the role at the end of the municipal year i.e. 31 March 2021.

- 1.4 The 'pool' of Independent Persons includes two new appointments who will shortly complete their first year in the role (Committee will consider a separate report to request approval to formally confirm the continuation of their role until July 2024). The third – John Thompson – is an experienced Independent Person who has supported the Committee for a number of years and his appointment expires in 2023.
- 1.5 At its meeting on 21 June 2018, Committee Members expressed concern over the number of Independent Persons available to them (two at that time) and whether the workload demanded a larger 'pool' to draw from. A subsequent recruitment drive resulted in two new Independent Persons being appointed in 2020, bringing the 'pool' to a total of four.
- 1.6 If Committee wish to maintain the number of Independent Persons, a recruitment drive will be required to achieve a fourth member of the 'pool'.
- 1.7 The Interim Monitoring Officer's view is that the current arrangements with the Independent Persons are working well under the Local Assessment Procedure and recommends that the Committee support the recruitment of a fourth Independent Person to fill the vacant role.
- 1.8 With regard to financial implications, Committee are respectfully reminded that the Members Allowances Scheme requires that the overall allowance be divided equally between the number of Independent Persons, therefore there will be no additional financial demand.
- 1.9 The recruitment exercise undertaken in 2019/20 incurred no costs for advertising etc as this was carried out via the Council's own website, promotion via our own social media accounts and press releases, and via the Council's own external publications. However, should that exercise not be successful, then a subsequent round of wider advertising via the local press is likely to incur costs.
- 1.10 In line with the Council's Constitution [Part 3, Paragraph 4.5(7)], any subsequent appointment of an Independent Person will be recommended to Full Council for approval.

2.0 PROPOSALS

- 2.1. If a recruitment exercise is to be pursued, then it is proposed that a similar approach is undertaken to that adopted for the 2019/20 recruitment drive
- 2.2. The first stage of this approach would be to:
 - a) place an advert in the Council's e-newsletter (organised by Economic and Cultural Development) which is circulated to around 3,500 businesses on a monthly basis;
 - b) post the advert onto the Business Partnership webpages; and
 - c) post the advert on the Job Vacancies page of the Council's website
- 2.3. This would be on a 'no cost' basis. The posting of the advert would be accompanied by a news release promoting the advert on the Council's website thereby bringing it to the attention of the public as is required by the Localism Act 2011.

2.4. Should this approach be unsuccessful then the second stage would be for an advert to be placed in the local media – Bognor Regis Observer, Littlehampton Gazette and West Sussex Gazette. This option is not being recommended at the initial stage due to the costs involved and the success that the previous recruitment drive had from the no-cost options.

2.5. The advert would include an information pack explaining more about the role and this would be developed in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and seek the views of the existing Independent Persons.

2.6. In terms of selecting a candidate(s), it is suggested that an interview panel is established comprising two members of the Committee, an existing Independent Person (all to be confirmed at this meeting) and the Interim Monitoring Officer. Any recommendation for appointment of additional Independent Persons would need to be made by the Committee to Full Council in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

3.0 OPTIONS:

1. To pursue the appointment of a replacement Independent Person and endorse the approach proposed for the recruitment exercise; or
2. To not take any further action based on the existing three Independent Persons being sufficient to cover the workload of this role.

4.0 CONSULTATION:

| Has consultation been undertaken with: | YES | NO |
|--|-----|----|
| Relevant Town/Parish Council | | ✓ |
| Relevant District Ward Councillors | | ✓ |
| Other groups/persons (please specify) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian Green and John Thompson, Independent Persons | ✓ | |

| 5.0 ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail below) | YES | NO |
|--|-----|----|
| Financial | | ✓ |
| Legal | ✓ | |
| Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment | | ✓ |
| Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act | | ✓ |
| Sustainability | | ✓ |
| Asset Management/Property/Land | | ✓ |
| Technology | | ✓ |
| Other (please explain) | | ✓ |

6.0 IMPLICATIONS:

None as this is a replacement for an existing role in accordance with the requirements of Section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011.

No financial implications as outlined in para 1.8 of this report.

7.0 REASON FOR THE DECISION:

To take forward the request of the Committee to recruit a replacement Independent Person.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Localism Act 2011, section 28

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/section/28/enacted>