

(This report is not a key decision. This report has been subject to appropriate notice of publication under the Council's Access to Information Rules)

**WEST SUFFOLK  
 JOINT STANDARDS  
 COMMITTEE**

**3 MARCH 2014**

**JST14/005**

**Report of the Monitoring Officer**

**APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS**

- 1. Summary and reasons for recommendation(s)**
- 1.1 At its meeting on 16 December 2014 the Joint Standards Committee agreed in principle that West Suffolk should recruit its own Independent Persons (IPs) and approved an outline timetable for this process.
- 1.2 This report provides more detail on the process and its implications and seeks authority to take the necessary steps.

- 2. Recommendation(s)**
- 2.1 That the recruitment of two Independent Persons proceed in accordance with the steps set out in Paragraph 4.3 below;**
- 2.2 That the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Joint Standards Committee, be authorised to select a short-list of candidates for interview; and**
- 2.3 A further report on the candidates recommended for appointment be brought to the next meeting of the Joint Committee on 16 June 2014.**

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### **3. How will the recommendations help us meet our strategic priorities?**

3.1 The recommendations meet the Councils' priorities for efficient operation by ensuring that the standards regime is underpinned by independent local scrutiny.

### **4. Key issues**

4.1 Report No JST13/004 to the December meeting of this Committee set out the current position and recommended an outline timetable for recruitment of two Independent Persons for West Suffolk.

4.2 Since then it has been confirmed that the appointment of the original Independent Persons for both Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury will terminate on 30 June 2014, so there will be no liability for further payments after then. The Joint Committee is asked to consider what payment should be offered to the new Independent Persons. The present amount is a retainer of £300 pa plus payments of £50 on each occasion that the Independent Person considers a report following investigation.

4.3 More details can now be put forward for the previously agreed timetable leading to appointment of new Independent persons:

**Press advertisements/other publicity:** In order to cover both Council areas adequately, it is proposed that there be publicity including press releases to newspapers in the area, together with information and links on our websites. This will take place in weeks beginning 31 March, 7 and 14 April.

Application packs will be sent out during this time and up to the end of April.

**Return of applications deadline:** 18 May. 19 – 30 May, applications to be assessed by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman in order to select a shortlist of candidates for interview.

**Interviews and selection:** Weeks beginning 2 and/or 9 June.

**Report on the candidates recommended for appointment:** To the meeting of the Joint Standards Committee on 16 June.

**Appointment by Full Councils:** 30 June (St Edmundsbury) and 16 July (Forest Heath). Both Independent Persons will be appointed by each Council and their terms will commence immediately.

**Induction and Training:** As the IPs may be called upon immediately after appointment, it is proposed that their training should commence as soon as they are selected for nomination.

### **5. Other options considered**

5.1 As it is a statutory requirement for each Council to appoint at least one Independent person, the alternative would be to participate in a joint recruitment with all or some of the other Suffolk authorities.

5.2 Currently, the other Suffolk authorities have not confirmed whether or not they intend to set up such a recruitment process. As West Suffolk has already indicated firm commitment to selecting its own Independent Persons it is considered appropriate to proceed with this.

**6. Community impact**

6.1 **Crime and disorder impact** *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)*

6.1.1 None arising from this paper.

6.2 **Diversity and equality impact** *(including the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment)*

6.2.1 The aspiration of a recruitment process is to appoint IPs who reflect the gender and racial diversity of the area.

6.3 **Sustainability impact** *(including completing a Sustainability Impact Assessment)*

6.3.1 None arising from this report.

6.4 **Other impact** *(any other impacts affecting this report)*

6.4.1 None arising from this report.

**7. Consultation** *(what consultation has been undertaken, and what were the outcomes?)*

7.1 Not applicable at this stage.

**8. Financial and resource implications** *(including asset management implications)*

8.1 There may be some limited costs associated with the publicity but these will be met from existing budgets. The only other resource required will be Officer and Member time associated with the recruitment process but this will not result in additional costs to the Councils.

**9. Risk/opportunity assessment** *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*

Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Failing to attract candidates of high quality	Medium	Wide publicity for the IP roles and encouragement for women and ethnic minorities to apply	Low

**10. Legal and policy implications**

10.1 It is a legal requirement for every Council to appoint at least one IP.

**11. Ward(s) affected**

11.1 All wards of the Borough and the District.

**12. Background papers**

12.1 None.

**13. Documents attached**

13.1 None.