

**CITY OF YORK COUNCIL – APPOINTMENT OF TWO  
“INDEPENDENT PERSONS”**

**Role Description**

1. The City of York Council is seeking to appoint two people to assist in maintaining and promoting high ethical standards in the City Council and the parish councils in York. The role of “independent person” has been created by the Localism Act 2011. The Act requires all local authorities to adopt a code of conduct for their elected members and to appoint at least one independent person to assist the Council in dealing with complaints that the code of conduct may have been breached.
2. If the Council has decided to investigate an allegation that the code of conduct has been breached then the views of the independent person must be sought, and taken into account, before the Council makes its decision on any such allegation. The Council may also seek the views of the independent person in relation to allegations where no decision to investigate has been made. In addition any Councillor, who has been complained about may seek the views of the independent person(s).
3. It is anticipated that the views of the independent person(s) will usually be sought by the Monitoring Officer by e-mail but, on occasions, contact may be by telephone or in face to face meetings. It is also anticipated that local procedures will be adopted requiring the independent person to be consulted on any allegation received not just those which have been investigated.
4. An independent person is likely to be invited to attend any meeting of the Standards Committee which is considering an allegation of a breach of the code of conduct. As well as dealing with complaints the Committee meets approximately six times each year to undertake its general role of supporting the achievement of high ethical standards. The Committee may invite the independent person(s) to attend those meetings.

5. The Independent Person will be encouraged to develop and apply knowledge of the codes of conduct, and to analyse and to exercise fair and impartial judgment on conduct issues, and to set high standards of ethical behaviour, and develop a sound understanding of the ethical framework
6. The Independent Person will be expected to provide a view on the conduct of city and parish/town councillors from an external perspective, reflecting the expectations and views of the local community on ethical standards.
7. The Independent Person will be encouraged to acquire some understanding of the work of the City Council and Parish councils and how they operate, and must be prepared to undertake training and also to participate in training events organised by the Council to promote awareness of the Code of Conduct.
8. Support will be provided by the Council's Monitoring Officer, who will arrange any necessary training and provide such information and assistance as is necessary to enable the Independent Person to perform the role effectively.
9. The Independent Person will not be an employee of the Council and the post is not remunerated although travel expenses may be claimed for attending meetings. The term of office will be for a fixed term as notified to the Independent Person on appointment and will be subject to the Independent Person maintaining high standards of personal conduct. The City Council may terminate an appointment at any time.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

**Please note that by law a person may not be appointed as an Independent Person if that person:**

- (a) is a member or co-opted member or officer of the Council or a parish/town council in the Council's area, or**
- (b) is a relative, or close friend of such a person, or**
- (c) has been a member or co-opted member or officer of the Council or a parish/town council in the Council's area in the previous 5 years.**

### **Essential Qualities**

1. To demonstrate a keen interest in promoting high ethical standards in local government, and to have a general understanding of the principles behind the members' Code of Conduct.
2. To have good communication and interpersonal skills, and to be able to operate with tact and diplomacy.
3. To be able to demonstrate an understanding of the standards of accountability and objectivity demanded of public authorities, and the continuous scrutiny under which they are placed.
4. To be able to use logical reasoning and bring qualities of open-mindedness and impartiality.
5. To be able to deal with substantial documentation and to analyse, interpret and absorb information and evidence effectively and quickly.
6. To understand and comply with confidentiality requirements

## **Annex A**

7. To be a person of good standing in whose impartiality and integrity elected members and the general public can have confidence.
8. To be able to attend meetings and be available for telephone or email consultation, sometimes at short notice.
9. Not to be a member of any political party or have a public profile in relation to political activities.
10. To be willing to disclose to the Council any matter which, if it became public, might cause the Council to reconsider the appointment.

### **Desirable Qualities**

1. To have had involvement in or knowledge of public authorities, voluntary organisations, commercial institutions, professional or employee organisations or other similar activities.