

Appointment of Independent Persons

Someone to help us maintain high standards of conduct by councillors

Councils have a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by their elected councillors and co-opted members.

The Localism Act 2011 (the Act), requires every council to have in place a process under which allegations that a member or co-opted member of that council has failed to comply with the relevant council's code of conduct can be investigated and decisions made on such allegations. The same process will also apply to any member or co-opted member of a town or parish council within an individual district/borough council's area.

The Act requires a council to appoint at least one Independent Person whose views must be sought by the council before it takes a decision on an allegation that it has decided shall be investigated and whose views can be sought by the council at any other stage, or by a councillor against whom an allegation has been made.

The councils listed below have agreed to work in partnership to appoint at least **three** independent persons, with any such person being available to act as an independent person for any of those councils:

1. Epsom & Ewell Borough Council
2. Guildford Borough Council
3. Mole Valley District Council
4. Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
5. Spelthorne Borough Council
6. Surrey Heath Borough Council
7. Waverley Borough Council

Am I eligible?

Under the Act, a person is not eligible to be an independent person for a particular council if that person:

- (i) is, or has been within the past 5 years, a member, co-opted member or officer of that council; or
- (ii) is, or has been within the past 5 years, a member, co-opted member or officer of any town or parish council situated within the district/borough of that council; or
- (iii) is a relative, or close friend, of a member, co-opted member or officer of any of that council.

For this purpose, "relative" means –

- Spouse or civil partner;
- Living with the other person as husband and wife or as if they were civil partners;
- Grandparent of the other person;
- A lineal descendent of a grandparent of the other person;
- A parent, sibling or child of the person.

If you are not eligible to be an independent person for one of the above-mentioned councils, you may still be eligible to be an independent person for one or more of the others.

How long will my appointment be?

The appointment will be for a four-year term of office commencing in May 2019 and expiring in May 2023, with serving Independent Persons being eligible for re-appointment by the above named councils.

Do I have to live or work in any of the district/borough areas of the above named councils?

Not necessarily, but local knowledge of any, or all, of these areas will be an advantage.

What sort of person are you looking to appoint?

Ideally, the person should be involved in the local community, but not politically active within it, and should have an interest in local government. The person should be a respected figure in the community. No particular professional background is specified, but the person should be able to demonstrate probity and high ethical standards. It is important that the Independent Person has the profile and experience that the community would recognise and respect as bringing an independent, objective and informed perspective to the investigative process. If you have experience in developing or interpreting codes of conduct, that would be an advantage as would knowledge of local government or the public sector and the need for propriety in the public sector.

How will the successful candidates be appointed?

All seven councils are advertising this position publicly on their respective websites. We may only appoint someone who makes an application in writing to us and the deadline for receipt of applications is 5pm on **FRIDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2019**.

A Joint Appointments Panel of the respective Monitoring Officers from some or all of the seven councils referred to above will conduct interviews of shortlisted candidates, which will take place during the week commencing **4 MARCH 2019** at the offices of Guildford Borough Council, Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford.

Each of the above-mentioned councils will approve the appointments of their respective independent persons.

Is the appointment paid?

Travel expenses for attendance at meeting will be provided based on the Council's allowances scheme.

If you wish to make an application for appointment to this role please send your CV together with a personal statement indicating your suitability for it, preferably by email, by no later than **FRIDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2019** to:

Caroline Waterworth, Monitoring Officer, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council:
Caroline.Waterworth@reigate-banstead.gov.uk