**Independent Person Recruitment – North East Lincolnshire Council**

Information for Applicants

You can access information about North East Lincolnshire Council on the Council’s website at: [www.nelincs.gov.uk](http://www.nelincs.gov.uk)

**Information about the ethical standards regime at North East Lincolnshire Council**

The Localism Act 2011 brought about substantial changes to the ethical standards regime for local authorities.

Under the new regime, which came into effect in July 2012:

Relevant Authorities are required by law to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members of the Authority and to put in place a Code of Conduct for those Members;

The operation of the Code and the determination of complaints regarding breaches of that Code are the responsibility of either a Standards Committee of the Authority or the Monitoring Officer of the relevant Authority

Authorities must appoint at least one Independent Person whose role will be:

* To review material relating to relevant complaints against a Member of the Authority and to give formal views, which must be taken into account, before a decision can be taken on a complaint it has decided to investigate;
* To give views, if requested by the Monitoring Officer, on any other allegation that has been received; and
* To give views, if requested by any member, or co-opted member, of the authority, if that person’s behaviour is the subject of an allegation.

The Council’s Code of Conduct for elected and co-opted Members is attached at Appendix 1.

# How much time commitment will the role of Independent Person involve?

The time commitment will vary, depending on the volume of complaints received during any given period and, therefore, it is difficult to provide a robust estimate of the time requirements at this point. However, as a rough guide, it is estimated that the time commitment could be in the region of up to 6-12 hours per month.

In many cases, the work – much of which will involve reviewing written material and giving consideration to all relevant facts before providing views - could be undertaken flexibly, working around other commitments and from home. However, there will be a need for some meetings, usually held at Grimsby Town Hall, perhaps around once a month (depending on the volume of complaints which are referred for formal investigation and any other requirements).

# How will the Council choose the Independent Person?

The Council is advertising openly in North East Lincolnshire for an Independent Person. People who are interested in applying should request and complete an application form.

The Council will appoint a Selection Panel which will agree a shortlist and shortlisted applicants will be asked to meet the Panel for a short interview. After meeting with applicants, the Panel will recommend applicants for appointment to the Council.

An Independent Person is likely to be appointed for a period of 4 years running from May, 2018, but this is subject to the decision of the Council.

# What criteria will be used to assess applicants?

To be considered for the position of Independent Person you must be able to demonstrate:

* A keen interest in and understanding of standards and propriety within public life;
* awareness of the Standards regime;
* understanding or experience of working with or serving on public bodies, and the role of elected representatives and the ability to apply this to practical situations and give advice;
* high standards of personal integrity
* ability to question, think logically and evaluate information; and
* ability to be objective, independent, and impartial.

In addition, applicants must **not:**

* currently be an elected Member or an officer of North East Lincolnshire Council;
* have been a Member or officer of North East Lincolnshire Council in the previous five years;
* be a relative[[1]](#footnote-1) or close friend of the a Member or officer of the Council;
* be politically active (meaning that you may of course be a member of a political party but you must not hold office within that political party or seek to hold elected office, or seek election as an independent candidate).
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# Will I get paid?

There is no allowance payable for this role but travel and subsistence expenses will be paid where appropriate and where approved in advance by the Monitoring Officer.

# The Code of Conduct for Members

Members of North East Lincolnshire Council are expected to demonstrate high standards in public life.

In accordance with the Localism Act, Authorities are required to maintain a standards regime. As part of this, the Council approved a revised Code of Conduct in May 2012 (effective from 1 July 2012) which applies to all Members - elected and co-opted - and the Independent Persons appointed to assist the Council’s Monitoring Officer in the discharge of his functions.

The Code will apply when a Member of the Council acts in his or her capacity as a member of the Council.

The Codes set out the principles of public life, which are selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

In addition, the Council’s Code sets out some general obligations, including the requirement for persons covered by the Code:

* To treat others with respect;
* To not to do anything which would cause the Authority to breach the Equality Act 2010;
* To not bully any person;
* To not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be a complainant, a witness, or involved in the administration of any investigation or proceedings in relation to an allegation that a member has failed to comply with the Council’s Code;
* To not disclose information given in confidence by anyone, or information which he or she believes or ought to be reasonably aware is of a confidential nature;
* To conduct themselves in a manner which could be reasonably be regarded as bringing their office or Council into disrepute;
* To not use or attempt to use his or her position as a Member improperly to confer on or secure for themselves or any other person an advantage or disadvantage; and
* To have regard to relevant advice provided by the Council’s Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer when reaching a decision on any matter, where those officers are acting pursuant to their statutory duties.

The Code also contains requirements to declare and register pecuniary interests. Members are required to sign a commitment to abide by the Code when they are elected to office.

In cases where a complaint is upheld, there are no legal powers to apply formal sanctions – but there would like be an opinion given as to the conduct of the Member concerned as compared to the provisions and expectations contained within the Code of Conduct.

Members and Independent Persons will be required to sign the Register of Interests, which records any relevant pecuniary interests they may have. These are yet to be defined by Government regulations but are likely to include their employment, any sponsorship, contracts, land interests, licences and securities) and any non-financial interests (e.g. membership of other local authorities, national public bodies, voluntary organisations and companies or charities) as well as any gifts and hospitality received in their capacity as a Member.

# Returning the form

If you have the experience and personal qualities to undertake this role, please complete the application form and declaration and return them to the Deputy Monitoring Officer, Eve Richardson-Smith.

The closing date for the receipt of your application form is noon on 31st March, 2018.

# Further Information

If you would like an informal discussion about the role of Independent Persons at North East Lincolnshire Council please contact the Deputy Monitoring Officer, Eve Richardson-Smith, on 01472 324159 or via email at Eve.richardson-smith@nelincs.gov.uk;

1. “Relative” is defined in section 28(10) of the Localism Act 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)