

**RECRUITMENT PACK FOR**

**APPOINTMENT OF**

**INDEPENDENT PERSON**

## **HYNDBURN COUNCIL**

### **LOCALISM ACT 2011 : NEW STANDARDS REGIME FOR COUNCILLORS**

#### **APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS**

Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, the Council is required to appoint at least one person to act as an “Independent Person” to assist the Council in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst its elected members and parish councillors. The Independent Persons support the work of the Council’s Standards Committee and are invited to attend Standards Committee meetings in a non-voting capacity.

Currently, we are looking at appoint 3 people to act as “Independent Persons”.

So what would you actually do ?

An Independent Person will be consulted before the Council makes a decision about whether a councillor has breached the Council’s member code of conduct. The Independent Person may also be consulted on other standards matters, and may be consulted for advice and assistance by any councillor who is the subject of a complaint.

This is a voluntary position. However, each Independent Person will receive reimbursement of their travel and subsistence expenses. We will also provide you with the training you need to enable you to carry out your role.

For further details, including an information pack and eligibility criteria, please visit the Council’s website or contact:

Jane Ellis  
Executive Director (Legal & Democratic Services)  
Hyndburn Borough Council  
Scaitcliffe House  
Ormerod Street  
Accrington BB5 0PF.

Tel: 01254 388111

Email: [jane.ellis@hyndburnbc.gov.uk](mailto:jane.ellis@hyndburnbc.gov.uk)

Website: [www.hyndburnbc.gov.uk](http://www.hyndburnbc.gov.uk)

Interviews will be held by arrangement.

## **APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON – BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

As a result of the Localism Act 2011, the way that Hyndburn Council will deal with complaints about the conduct of its elected members, and the parish councillors in its area, is changing.

The Council is now responsible for deciding how to deal with standards issues at a local level, including adopting its own local code of conduct for councillors and determining what arrangements it will adopt to deal with complaints about councillors.

The Localism Act 2011 provides that the Council must appoint one or more Independent Persons to assist in discharging these responsibilities. Full details of the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person are included in this Recruitment Pack.

The new arrangements came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012. The Council appointed 3 independent persons at that time. However, because the 3 individuals appointed had all previously served as independent members of the Council's Standards Committee, the law only allowed them to fulfil the new role until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

The Council therefore wishes to appoint three new Independent Persons. Everyone appointed will be provided with training.

## **INDEPENDENT PERSON**

### **SELECTION CRITERIA**

#### **SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES**

The Independent Person will have:

- a keen interest in standards in public life.
- a wish to serve the local community and uphold local democracy.
- the ability to be objective, independent and impartial.
- sound decision making skills

The Independent Person will:

- be a person in whose impartiality and integrity the public can have confidence.
- understand and comply with confidentiality requirements.
- have an interest in local issues.
- have an awareness of the importance of ethical behaviour.
- be a good communicator.

#### **Desirable additional criteria are:**

- working knowledge/experience of local government or other public service and/or of large complex organisations and awareness of and sensitivity to the political process.
- knowledge and understanding of judicial/quasi-judicial or complaints processes.

You should demonstrate in your application how you meet the above criteria as this will assist the short-listing process.

Means of assessment will be by application form and by interview.

**NOTE:** You will be required to be contactable during normal working hours by telephone or by email and to be able to attend hearings which may be held in the day time or in the evening. However, most meetings take place in the evening, starting between 6.00pm to 7.30pm.

#### **Eligibility for Appointment**

A person cannot be appointed as an Independent Person if they are or were within a period of 5 years prior to their appointment:

- a member, co-opted member or officer of Hyndburn Borough Council, or a relative or close friend of the above.
- A member, co-opted member or officer of Altham Parish Council, or a relative or close friend of the above.

## **ROLE OF INDEPENDENT PERSON – HYNDBURN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **ROLE DESCRIPTION**

Responsible to:       The Council

Liaison with:         Monitoring Officer, members of the Standards Committee, officers and members of the Hyndburn Borough Council and Parish Councillors, key stakeholders within the community.

1. To assist the Council in promoting high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted members of Hyndburn Borough Council and Altham Parish Council and, in particular, to uphold the code of conduct adopted by the Council and the seven principles of public office, namely selflessness, honesty, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and leadership.
2. To be consulted by the Council through the Monitoring Officer and/or the Standards Committee before a decision is made in respect of investigations into member conduct and to be available to attend meetings of the Hearing Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee for this purpose.
3. To be available for consultation by any elected member, including Altham parish councillors, who are the subject of a standards complaint.
5. To develop a sound understanding of the ethical framework as it operates within Hyndburn Borough Council and Altham parish council.
6. To participate in training events to develop skills, knowledge and experience and in networks developed for Independent Persons operating outside the Council's area.
7. To attend training events organised and promoted by the Council's Standards Committee.
8. To act as advocate and ambassador for the Council in promoting ethical behaviour.

**HYNDBURN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**APPLICATION FOR THE POSITION OF INDEPENDENT PERSON**

Individuals who wish to be considered for appointment as Independent Persons by the Council are requested to provide the following information to support their application. All information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and will only be used for the purposes of selection. Please feel free to use a separate continuation page if you wish to expand upon your answer to any question outlined below.

**1. PERSONAL DETAILS**

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Postcode:**

**National Insurance Number:**

**Contact Details:**

**Daytime Telephone Number:**

**Daytime Fax Number:**

**Email Address:**

**2. QUALIFICATIONS**

(Please list in particular any qualifications which you think are relevant to the position of Independent Person)

**4. RELEVANT EXPERTISE/SKILLS**

(Please outline briefly any knowledge or expertise which you believe would be particularly relevant to your role as an Independent Person having regard to the selection criteria and role description)

**6. Please provide any additional information you may wish to give in support of your application:**

I wish to apply to be an Independent Person.

In submitting this application, I declare that:

EITHER

- I am not and have not during the past five years been a Member or Officer of Hyndburn Borough Council or Altham Parish Council.
- I am not related to, or a close friend of, any Member or Officer of Hyndburn Borough Council or Altham Parish Council.
- I am not currently an Officer or Member of any other relevant authority (this includes parish, district, county and unitary councils and Police and Fire Authorities).
- I am not actively engaged in local party political activity.

Signed .....

Date .....

Please return this application form to:

Jane Ellis  
Executive Director (Legal & Democratic Services)  
Hyndburn Borough Council  
Scaitcliffe House  
Ormerod Street  
Accrington, BB5 0PF.

Or the completed form to [jane.ellis@hyndburnbc.gov.uk](mailto:jane.ellis@hyndburnbc.gov.uk)