

# **Independent Person**

## **Application Pack**

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## 1. Background Information

Telford and Wrekin Council are seeking to appoint two Independent Persons to assist the authority in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst its Members.

Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, local authorities have a duty to:-

- promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors and Co-opted members and by Councillors of the Town and Parish Councils;
- adopt a Code of Conduct which Councillors and Co-opted Members are required to observe; and
- appoint an Independent Person to assist in discharging these responsibilities.

The Independent Person will be required to be contactable during normal working hours by telephone or by email, and be able to attend meetings of the Standards Committee which meets approximately 4 times per year, Standards Sub-Committee meetings/hearings as and when necessary and other relevant meetings with the Monitoring Officer and/or Members in connection with standards complaints when required. All formal meetings are usually held during the evening and sometimes at relatively short notice.

Following legislative changes in May 2015, the Independent Persons are also required to sit on a Panel that would make recommendations to the Council on matters relating to the dismissal of senior officers of the Authority.

Further details concerning the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person are included in this recruitment pack.

The vacancies will be for an initial period of 4 years with a possible renewal for a further period of 4 years.

For further information and an application form, please visit the Council's website [www.telford.gov.uk](http://www.telford.gov.uk) or contact Anthea Lowe (Associate Director: Policy & Governance) at [anthea.lowe@telford.gov.uk](mailto:anthea.lowe@telford.gov.uk).

Any appointments are subject to approval at Full Council.

The closing date for receipt of applications is **XXXXX**.

## 2. Role Description

**Responsible to:** Telford and Wrekin Council

**Liaison with:** Council's Monitoring Officer and/or Deputy Monitoring Officer; Members of the Authority; Officers of the Council; Key stakeholders within the community (including Parish/Town Councillors)

The main function is to undertake the statutory role of Independent Person appointed under Section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 and to help the Council discharge its duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct amongst members and co-opted members.

1. To assist the Council in promoting high standards of conduct by elected, appointed and co-opted members of the Council and in particular to uphold the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.
2. To assist the Council in promoting high standards of conduct by Parish and Town Councillors within the borough of Telford.
3. To uphold, and promote, the seven principles of public office, namely selflessness, honesty, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and leadership.
4. To be available for consultation by the Monitoring Officer/Deputy Monitoring Officer and/or the Standards Committee before a decision is taken as to whether or not to investigate a complaint or to seek local resolution of the same.
5. To be consulted by the Council through the Monitoring Officer/Deputy Monitoring Officer and/or the Standards Committee before it makes a decision on an investigated allegation and to be available to attend meetings of the Hearing Panel of the Standards Committee for this purpose, as necessary.
6. To be available for consultation by any Council Member and/or Town/Parish Councillor who is the subject of a Standards complaint.
7. To develop a sound understanding of the ethical framework as it operates within the Council.
8. To participate in training events to develop skills, knowledge and experience and in networks operating for Independent Persons (both within and outside the Council's area).
9. To reach balanced and reasoned conclusions having considered complex material and applied an impartial and fair approach to all of the written and oral material provided.
10. To act as an ambassador for the Authority in promoting ethical behaviour.
11. To participate as an Independent Person in any Panel set up to make recommendations in respect of the employment of a Chief Officer.

### 3. Selection Criteria – Skills and Competencies

	Essential	Desirable	Method of Assessment
<b>Experience</b>			
1. Experience of dealing with complaints and knowledge of judicial/quasi-judicial complaints processes		√	Application Form/Interview (AF/I)
<b>Qualifications and Training</b>			
2. A good general education, sufficient to deal with relevant paperwork and issues	√		AF/I
<b>Special Skills and Knowledge</b>			
3. Analysis of complex information and ability to form a balanced opinion	√		AF/I
4. Ability to exercise sound judgement	√		AF/I
5. Ability to take an objective view of sometimes emotive situations	√		AF/I
6. Ability to communicate well and express ideas or points of view effectively	√		AF/I
7. An effective listener	√		AF/I
8. Ability to analyse and solve complex problems	√		
9. Ability to persuade and Influence	√		AF/I
10. Knowledge of local government or large organisations and the sensitivity to the political process		√	AF/I

<b>Personal Qualities</b>			
11. High standards of personal integrity and a commitment to equal opportunities	√		AF/I
12. Firm belief in the importance of high standards of probity and conduct in public life	√		AF/I
<b>Other criteria</b>			
13. Be available to attend meetings in the day time or early evening and at relatively short notice	√		AF/I
14. Contactable during normal office hours	√		AF/I

**Important Notes:**

- Successful candidates will be required to observe the Council's Code of Conduct for Members including completing a Register of Interests (which will be publicly available).
- Candidates must not currently have and, if appointed, must not enter into any contractual relations with Telford and Wrekin Council under which you gain personally.
- Applicants must disclose whether they are a party to any outstanding complaint or grievance against the Council.
- Canvassing by the candidate will result in disqualification of the application.

#### **4. Independent Person: Eligibility Criteria**

- i. A person cannot act as an Independent Person if they are:-:
  - a) a councillor, co-opted member or officer of Telford and Wrekin Council;
  - b) a councillor, co-opted member or officer of a Parish or Town Council which falls within the area of Telford and Wrekin Council; or
  - c) \*a relative or close friend of a person in (a) or (b) above.
  
- ii. In addition, a person may not become an Independent Person if, during the last five years preceding the date of the appointment, they were:
  - a) a councillor, co-opted member or officer of Telford and Wrekin Council; or
  - b) a member, co-opted member or officer of a Parish or Town Council within the area of Telford and Wrekin Council

\*A relative is defined as:

- (a) The candidate's spouse or civil partner;
- (b) Any person with whom the candidate is living as if they were spouse or civil partners;
- (c) The candidate's grandparent;
- (d) Any person who is a lineal descendent of the candidate's grandparent;
- (e) A parent, brother, sister or child of anyone in paragraphs (a) or (b);
- (f) The spouse or civil partner of anyone within paragraphs (c), (d) or (e);  
or
- (g) Any person living with a person within paragraphs (c), (d) or (e) as if they were spouse or civil partner to that person.

## **5. Seven Principles of Public Life**

The Localism Act 2011 specifies that the Council's adopted Code of Conduct should be consistent with the following seven principles of public life.

### **SELFLESSNESS**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

### **INTEGRITY**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

### **OBJECTIVITY**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

### **OPENNESS**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

### **HONESTY**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

### **LEADERSHIP**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

# APPLICATION FORM FOR THE POSITION OF INDEPENDENT PERSON

*Telford and Wrekin Council is committed to ensuring the responsible collection and use of personal data in the course of its business, in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulations 2016. We will ensure that personal data is processed fairly and lawfully and that the rights of data subjects are properly respected.*

Please use a separate continuation page if you wish to expand upon your answer to any of the questions.

## 1. PERSONAL DETAILS

Name:

Address:

Daytime Tel No:

Email address:

National Insurance Number:

## 2. QUALIFICATIONS

In particular, please list any qualifications which you think are relevant to the position of Independent Person

### **3. EXPERIENCE**

Please give a brief account of your experience including career, public and voluntary work, together with the nature of your current or most recent occupation.

#### **4. RELEVANT EXPERTISE/SKILLS**

Please provide a brief outline of any knowledge and/or expertise that you believe would be particularly relevant to the role of Independent Person, having regard to the selection criteria and role description

**5. Why do you wish to be considered for appointment as Independent Person, and what particular attributes would you bring to the role?**

**6. Please provide any additional information you feel is relevant in support of your application.**

**7. REFEREES**

References will be sought for successful application. Please provide the names and addresses for two referees.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TEL NO:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TEL NO:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

## 8. PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS

Please give any details of convictions you have for criminal offences.

**NOTE: Some convictions become “spent” after a specified period of time and need not be declared – Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974)**

I have a criminal conviction (*please tick as appropriate*)

YES  NO

If **YES**, please give details:

I wish to apply to be an Independent Person for Telford and Wrekin Council. In submitting this application, I declare that:-

- I am not, and during the past five years have not been, a Member or Officer of Telford and Wrekin Council;
- I am not related to, or a close friend of, any current Member or Officer of Telford and Wrekin Council;
- I am not a Member of any Town/Parish Council located within the area of Telford and Wrekin Council;
- That I am not actively engaged in local/national party political activity;
- That I or any legal entity in which I have an interest or hold a position do not hold any contract with the Council; and
- That I am not a party to any outstanding complaint or grievance against the Council.

Signed .....

Dated .....

Please return the completed form by **XXX** to:

Anthea Lowe  
Associate Director: Policy & Governance  
Telford and Wrekin Council  
Darby House  
Lawn Central  
Telford  
TF3 4NT

Or by email to: [anthea.lowe@telford.gov.uk](mailto:anthea.lowe@telford.gov.uk)