Governance and Audit and Standards Committee - Independent Person

Responsible to: The Council

Liaison with: Monitoring Officer, members of the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee, officers and members of the City Council, and relevant key stakeholders.

1. To assist the Council in promoting high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted members of Portsmouth City 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, Democratic Services Officer and/or the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee before it makes a decision on an investigated allegation and to be available to attend meetings of the Sub Committee of the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee for this purpose.

3. To be available for consultation by the Monitoring Officer, Democratic Services Officer and/or the Governance and Audit and Standards Committee before a decision is taken as to whether to investigate a complaint or to seek local resolution of the same.

4. To be available for consultation by any elected member who is the subject of a Code of Conduct complaint.

5. To develop a sound understanding of the ethical framework as it operates within Portsmouth City Council and to be available to attend and advise the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee on such matters.

6. To participate in training to develop skills, knowledge and experience.

7. To attend training events organised and promoted by the Council's Governance and Audit and Standards Committee.

8. To act as advocate and ambassador for the City Council, adopting, applying and promoting ethical behaviour, as per the Code of Conduct..

Background Information:

The way that the City Council will deal with conduct complaints about its elected members follows the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

The Act provides that the Council must appoint at least one Independent Person to assist in discharging these responsibilities.

Under this Act, the City Council is responsible for deciding how to deal with standards issues at a local level, including adopting its own local code and determining arrangements for dealing with complaints. Such arrangements are set out on Portsmouth City Council's website at the following link:

https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/your-say/complaints/complaining-about-a-councillor/

These arrangements were last amended and approved in 2016.

Selection Criteria - Skills & 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.
- leadership qualities, particularly in respect of exercising judgement.

The Independent Person will:

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

Desirable additional criteria:

- 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.

Interviews: Interviews for the Independent Person are carried out by Panel. Panel consists of the Monitoring Officer, GAS Committee members and any others as required (Democratic Services). The Panel decision goes to GAS Committee for approval. The decision to then appoint you goes to a meeting of the Full Council.