



APPLICATION PACK

INDEPENDENT PERSON

**Cambridgeshire County Council and
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority**

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 the way that Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority deal with complaints about the conduct of their elected Councillors and Members is changing.

The statutory regulatory framework has been abolished and the Council is now responsible for deciding how to deal with standards of conduct issues at a local Level, including adopting a local Code and determining what arrangements it will adopt to deal with complaints.

The Act provides that the Council must appoint at least one Independent Person to assist in discharging these responsibilities. Full details of the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person are included below.

A new Code of Conduct and arrangements were adopted by the County Council on 17th July 2012 with supporting procedures also approved at the same meeting and these included the establishment of two posts for Independent Persons. The Council is now seeking to recruit and appoint two people to these roles. Any offer of the position is subject to the approval of Full Council and by the Fire Authority.

The Independent Person may be consulted on a complaint by the Council to seek views and whether to reject or undertake other action on the complaint and must seek the views and take these into account before it makes a decision on an investigated complaint. The Independent Person may be consulted on other ethical standards matters, including by the Councillor who is subject to an allegation.

A fixed allowance of £500 per annum is payable to each Independent Person by the Council and £250 per annum by the Fire Authority together with reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses. The appointment will be for a period of one year and renewable annually thereafter.

The exact details of the complaints system and how this will work are set out in the attached appendices which include a copy of the recently adopted code of conduct for Cambridgeshire County Council. It is anticipated that the Fire Authority will adopt a very similar model in the near future. Full training shall be provided to any successful applicant.

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.
- leadership qualities, particularly in respect of exercising sound 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 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, past experience 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 at all times during normal working hours by telephone or by email and to be available to attending hearings which may be held in the day time. You will normally be given at least 28 days notice of any hearings, but the notice period may be shorter in cases of urgency, if, for example, a hearing has been adjourned for any reason and your attendance is required.

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 the appointment:

- A Councillor, co-opted Councillor/Member or Officer of the County Council/Fire Authority, (n.b. does not include former co-opted independent members of Standards Committees).
- A relative or close friend of either of the above.

Given the nature of the role it is considered important that the persons appointed are not actively involved in any local party political activity.

Note that transitional arrangements have now been published which will not prevent existing independent members of the Council's Standards Committee from being eligible to apply for the role.

You can check the lists of elected County Councillors on the Cambridgeshire County Council's website at:

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/cmswebsite/apps/committees/members.aspx

ROLE OF INDEPENDENT PERSON

Role Description

Responsible to: Cambridgeshire County Council and to Cambridgeshire Fire Authority

Liaison with: Monitoring Officer, Members of the committees administering the conduct complaints system, officers and Councillors/Members of the County Council and Fire Authority, key stakeholders within the community.

1. To assist the Council and Fire Authority in promoting high standards of conduct amongst elected and co-opted Councillors and Members and in particular to ensure that these Councillors/Members uphold the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council and the Authority and act in accordance with the seven principles of public office, namely, selflessness, honesty, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and leadership.
2. Shall be consulted by the County Council through the Monitoring Officer or the Solicitor to the Fire Authority before he/she makes a decision on whether to reject a complaint or to refer the matter for investigation or other action.
3. To be consulted by the panel members of the committee administering conduct complaints before it makes a decision on an investigated allegation and to be available to attend meetings of the Hearing Panel for this purpose.
4. To be available for consultation by any elected County Councillor or Fire Authority Member who is the subject of a conduct complaint.
5. To develop a sound understanding of the ethical framework as it operates within the Council and Fire Authority.
6. To participate in training events to develop skills, knowledge and experience and in networks developed for Independent Persons operating outside the county of Cambridgeshire.
7. To attend training events organised and promoted by the Council/Fire Authority.
8. To act as advocate and ambassador for the Council/Fire Authority in promoting ethical behaviour.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
APPLICATION FOR THE
POSITION OF INDEPENDENT PERSON

Individuals who wish to be considered for appointment as Independent Person are requested to complete and submit the following application form. All information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and will 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:	

2. CONTACT DETAILS

Daytime Telephone Number:	
Mobile Telephone Number:	
Email Address:	

3. QUALIFICATIONS

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

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4. SUMMARY OF 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)

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

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

References will be taken up for all applicants who are invited for interview:

Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:

Telephone No.	Telephone No.

DECLARATION

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 Councillor, Co-opted member, (N.b. does not include co-opted independent member of Standards Committee), or Officer of the County Council or Fire Authority.
- I am not related to, or a close friend of, any Councillor or Officer of the Council.
- I am not actively engaged in local party political activity.

Signed _____

Dated _____

Please return this application form by 20th August 2012 addressed to:

**Quentin Baker, Director of Law & Governance
Cambridgeshire County Council
Box RES 1001
Shire Hall
Cambridge CB3 0AP**

Or by email to: kim.farebrother@cambridgeshire.gov.uk