

Committee: Council

Date: 5 February 2020

Subject: Appointment of an Independent Person

Lead officer: Louise Round, Managing Director, South London Legal Partnership

Lead member: Councillor Mark Allison, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

Contact officer: Amy Dumitrescu, Democratic Services Officer, 0208 545 3357

Recommendations:

- A. That Council agrees to appoint Katy Willison as an Independent Person for the purposes of Chapter 7 of the Localism Act for a period of three years from 6 February 2020;
 - B. That Ms Willison also be appointed as an advisory non-voting member of the Standards and General Purposes Committee for the duration of her tenure as an Independent Person
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report seeks Council's approval of the appointment of one Independent Person which we are required to appoint under section 28(7) of the 2011 Localism Act.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. The functions of the Independent Person, set out in the Council's constitution are:
 - The Independent Person must be consulted and views taken into account before the authority takes a decision on any allegation that a member has breached the Code of Conduct for members it has decided to investigate;
 - The Independent Person may be consulted by the authority in circumstances where the authority is not taking a decision whether to investigate the allegation;
 - The Independent Person may be consulted by a member of the authority against whom an allegation has been made.
- 2.2. The Independent Person will also be invited to attend meetings of the Standards and General Purposes Committee in that capacity.
- 2.3. Independent Persons are appointed for a maximum of two terms of three years. Following the end of the term of office of one Independent Person, Pam Donovan, the Standards and General Purposes Committee agreed to the appointment of an interview panel, comprising one councillor nominated from each political group to interview and recommend the appointment to Council. In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act, the vacancy was advertised and one application was received from Katy Willison. Ms Willison is a senior civil servant with many years' experience working in a

political environment, having to balance competing arguments and uphold high standards of governance.

- 2.4. The interview panel comprised Councillors Nick Draper, Oonagh Moulton, Peter Southgate and Hina Bokhari. Louise Round, Managing Director, South London Legal Partnership attended as an observer. The interview took place on 20 January 2020 and the panel concluded that Ms Willison was eminently suitable for the post and accordingly recommended the appointment of Katy Willison to the post.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. The Council must appoint at least one Independent Person. The appointment of Ms Willison will increase the number of independent persons to two which will provide some resilience in this area and allow for any situations where one of the incumbents is unable to act for any reason.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. None.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. The appointment made by Council will take effect on 6 February 2020 for a period of three years.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Independent Persons are paid £100 per meeting. The recommendations in this report will not lead to any increase in the overall budget for allowances.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. Section 28(8) sets out a number of criteria which an applicant to be and Independent Person has to fulfil to be eligible for the role. The panel was satisfied that Ms Willison meets those criteria.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. None specific to this report.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None specific to this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. None.

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- 11.1. None.

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1. None.