



RECRUITMENT PACK FOR

APPOINTMENT OF

RESERVE INDEPENDENT PERSON¹

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON (IP)

We are looking for a member of the public to take on the role of a reserve 'Independent Person' IP for North Hertfordshire District Council.

About North Hertfordshire:

North Hertfordshire is a large rural district with approximately 125,000 residents with four historic towns, Hitchin, Baldock, Royston and Letchworth Garden City. The Council has a clear vision: to make North Hertfordshire a district in which everyone who lives, works or visits is able to flourish. The District has 49 elected District Councillors and 27 Parish, Town and Community Councils.

More information can be found on the Council's website:

<https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/council-and-democracy/about-council>

Your Role:

Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, the Council is required to appoint an Independent Person to assist the Council in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst its District, Parish, Town and Community Councillors. The IP also has a role in potentially reviewing any complaint against a statutory officer (Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer or Monitoring Officer) if there is a recommendation to dismiss them.

The IP will be consulted on complaints, prior to an initial assessment, after any investigation and before the Standards Sub-Committee makes a decision on the complaint and any sanctions. The Independent Person may be consulted on other standards matters, including by the Councillor who is subject to an allegation. The Reserve IP can be contacted by an elected Councillor that is subject to a complaint for procedural advice. The Council receives around 10-20 formal complaints per year.

There is also an expectation for the IP and Reserve IP to attend quarterly meetings (currently virtual) with the Monitoring Officer to discuss ethical standards issues, to participate in consultations on such issues and attend the twice yearly meetings of the main Standards Committee.

You should be able to demonstrate a commitment to maintaining high standards in public life and be interested in local government.

A fixed allowance currently of £2205 for the IP and £550 for a Reserve IP per annum is payable together with reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses. The Council will also fund reasonable pre-agreed costs for training (course costs and travel) if this is relevant to the role.

¹ WHICH MAY BECOME THE INDEPENDENT PERSON IN EVENT OF VACANCY



The role is initially for a fixed term period of up to 4 years (two-years, with the possibility of a two-year extension with confirmation by the Monitoring Officer in consultation to the Chair/ Vice Chair of Standards Committee). This is subject to it continuing to be legally possible to appoint for such a term*, or that person no longer wishes to act as an IP or Reserve IP, or no longer meets the criteria for appointment (see **exclusions** – Legal and special conditions below), then the appointment will cease.

The Skills and Competencies for the role is at **Appendix A** below.

A description of the IP role from the Complaints Handling Procedure is set out in **Appendix B** below. Further information on the role can also be found in the Complaints Handling Procedure ([CLICK HERE](#)).

Exclusions

Legal conditions

Applicants cannot be appointed as an IP or Reserve IP if they are:

- i) a Councillor, co-opted Councillor or officer of NHDC or a Parish, Town or Community Councillor within the North Hertfordshire District Council area;
- ii) related to, or be a close friend of (i) above;
- iii) have been a Councillor or co-opted Councillor or officer of NHDC or a Parish, Town or Community Councillor within the North Hertfordshire District Council area at any time during the last 5 years;

Special conditions

If appointed the successful applicant will be required to:

- iv) *[whilst not a Councillor]* sign an undertaking to comply with and continue to comply with the requirements of the NHDC Code of Conduct for Councillors;
- v) *[whilst not a Councillor]* annually disclose interests akin to those that should be disclosed by District Councillors to the Monitoring Officer;
- vi) disclose whether they are a party to any outstanding complaint or grievance against the Council.

See this list of the types of things you would be expected to disclose:

See **Appendix C**.

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

Jeanette Thompson
Service Director: Legal and Community
Monitoring Officer
01462 474370

The closing date for applications is midday on Monday **17 August 2020**.

Remote Interviews will be held in the morning of Thursday **3 September 2020**.



APPENDIX A
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:

Essential criteria

- 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.
- have a credible and authoritative personal style.
- have strong oral and written communication skills.
- be a local resident of North Hertfordshire.

Desirable additional criteria are:

- working knowledge and/or experience of local government or other public service and/or of large complex organisations
- experience or knowledge of public sector governance.
- awareness of and sensitivity to the political process.
- having an understanding of the pressures and constraints of elected or co-opted Councillors operating in a democratically accountable public body.
- knowledge and understanding of judicial/quasi-judicial or complaints processes.
- experience of a managing or advising on misconduct matters (possibly in the context of employment, a professional body or the voluntary sector).

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 interview.

NOTE: It is expected that the appointed Independent Person and “Reserve” will be contactable at all times during normal working hours by telephone or by email and to be available to attend hearings which may have to be convened at relatively short notice.



APPENDIX B

**ROLE OF INDEPENDENT PERSON AND RESERVE INDEPENDENT PERSONS –
NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Appointed by: The Council

Liaison with: Monitoring Officer, Members of the Standards Committee, officers and Councillors of the District Council and Town and Parish Councillors within the district, key stakeholders within the community.

Reference to the IP includes the Independent Person and Reserve Independent Persons (except number 8 which is just the Reserve IP). The role is:

1. To assist the Council in promoting high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted Councillors of North Hertfordshire District Council and Parish/Town/ Community Councillors and in particular to uphold the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council and the seven principles of public life, namely selflessness, honesty, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and leadership.
2. To assist the Council by acting as advocate and ambassador in promoting ethical behaviour and by developing a sound understanding of the ethical framework as it operates within North Hertfordshire District Council and its local councils.
3. To be available for ad hoc consultation by the Monitoring Officer where the Monitoring Officer is dealing with a matter that has not reached the stage of a formal complaint.
4. To be available for consultations on preliminary assessment of a complaint with the Monitoring Officer.
5. To be available for consultation by the Monitoring Officer and/or the Standards Committee before a decision is taken as to whether to investigate a complaint or to seek local resolution of the same.
6. To be consulted by the Council through the Monitoring Officer and/or the Standards Committee before it makes a decision on an allegation that has been investigated and to be available to attend meetings of the Standards Committee in a non-voting advisory capacity.
7. If attending a FDH meeting of the Standards Sub- Committee to confirm the IP's views as to whether a breach of the Code of Conduct has occurred and any subsequent penalty (which will be taken into account).
8. To be available for consultation by any Councillor, including Parish/ Town or Community Councillor. This may be on an ad hoc basis for views on the complaints' procedure or process as pre-arranged between the parties, either by telephone or at the Council's offices. It is not the role of the IP to act as advocate for the Councillor who is subject to the complaint, to negotiate complaint matters, or to provide substantive advice (legal or otherwise) on the allegations themselves. This will generally be confidential between the Councillor and IP, unless there the Councillor confirms they have acted illegally or has a complaint about the Procedure. This will then be confirmed to the Monitoring Officer.
9. To participate in training events to develop skills, knowledge and experience and in any networks developed for Independent Persons operating outside the District

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**



Council's area. To share information and promote debate and discussion amongst the Standards Committee following such training. To attend training events organised and promoted by the Council's Standards Committee and Monitoring Officer.



APPENDIX C
INTERESTS THAT A SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT WOULD NEED TO SUPPLY AT
APPOINTMENT AND ANNUALLY THEREAFTER:

1. Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation
Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on by you or a relevant person for profit or gain (includes any payments or benefits in kind).
2. Sponsorship/ other payments received in respect of your role as a Councillor
Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit made or provided within the last 12 months in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a Councillor or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. You are not required to declare allowances or expenses received from NHDC on this form.
3. Contracts
Any contract for goods, services or works made between you, a relevant person (or a body in which you or the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the Council, which has not been fully discharged.
4. Land
Any beneficial interest in land that you or a relevant person has within the Council area. Note this includes the full address for residential or commercial premises and for other land, a road/ map identification or TR/OS Grid reference.
5. Licences
Any licence (alone or jointly with others) which you, or a relevant person has to occupy land in the Council area for a month or longer.
6. Corporate tenancies
Any tenancy between the Council as landlord and you, or a relevant person (or a body you or a relevant person has a beneficial interest in).
7. Securities
Any beneficial interest you or a relevant person has in securities of a body, where (to your knowledge):
 - a) that body has a place of business or land in the Council area; and
 - b) either
 - (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issue share capital of that body; or
 - (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you have or a person referred to above has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issue share capital of that class.
8. Gifts & Hospitality
That you have received in the last 6 years related to your role as Councillor with an estimated value of at least £50. You are not required to detail facilities or hospitality provided by the Council. Otherwise, please detail:
 - the gift or hospitality received,
 - date it was received, and
 - Person/ company/ body who provided this and their full address.
9. Outside bodies
Any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management



which:

- (i) you are appointed or nominated to by the authority; or
- (ii) exercises functions of a public nature; or
- (iii) is directed to charitable purposes; or
- (iv) includes as one of its principal purposes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union).

Detail: Date of appointment & position (i.e. Director, Trustee, member/ representative/ non-voting observer).