

Report to: **COUNCIL**

Relevant Officer: Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships

Date of Meeting: 31 January 2024

STANDARDS INDEPENDENT PERSONS

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider an extension of the term of office for the independent persons appointed by the Council to support the standards framework.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 Pursuant to Section 28 (7) of the Localism Act 2011, to extend the appointment of Mrs Helen Broughton, Mr Peter Clements and Mr Brian Horrocks as Independent Persons until 28 February 2027.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The three independent persons have developed a sound knowledge and experience of the standards framework.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 A recruitment process could be conducted to replace the current members however this is not being recommended as all three Independent Persons are well versed in the Code of Conduct and standards process and are willing to continue in the role.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 All Council priorities are addressed.

6.0 Background information

6.1 The role of Independent Person is required in law as part of the standards process in dealing with allegations of member misconduct. All three of the current Independent

Persons were recruited in line with the criteria (i.e. no formal political party affiliation, not be an employee of or an elected member of Blackpool or Fylde Councils (as it is a position jointly held with Fylde Borough Council) and not be currently a close friend/relative of an elected member of Blackpool or Fylde Council).

6.2 Each independent person has served in the role for varying lengths of time during which they have supported the Council (and Fylde Council) in dealing with matters under the standards framework, as well as helping to develop standards codes, protocols and processes. Their term of office was extended by Council in February 2021 and it is recommended that a further three year extension is agreed. A similar recommendation is due to be considered by Fylde Borough Council.

6.3 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 None.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 The Members' Allowances Scheme provides for special responsibility allowance for Independent Persons.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 Section 28 (7) of the Localism Act 2011 states the requirement to appoint at least one Independent Person for standards matters.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 There are no significant risk management considerations other than not having sufficient members to serve as part of the standards process.

11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people:

11.1 None associated with this report.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None associated with this report.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 All three Independent Persons have indicated their willingness to stay in the role subject to approval by Council.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.