

Localism Act 2011 – Appointment of Independent Persons

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Kidd – Leader of the Council
Lead Director:	Richard Phillips – Service Director – Legal and Governance
Service Area:	Legal and Governance
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Electoral Divisions Affected	All
Key Decision?	Non Key Decision
Cabinet Forward Plan	Not applicable
Report considered by	Council – 16 July 2026

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. Shropshire Council is required by the Localism Act 2011 to have in place at least one Independent Person whose views are to be sought in certain circumstances and taken into account when dealing with allegations that its Councillors, and those of the Town and Parish Councils in Shropshire, have failed to comply with the code of conduct.
- 1.2. Shropshire Council last appointed two Independent Persons for a term of 4 years in 2022.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Full Council is asked to

- a) Agree the appointment of Alan Boyd, Tim Griffiths and Tom Senior as Independent Persons for an initial period of four years.

3. Background

- 3.1 Shropshire Council is required by the Localism Act 2011 to have in place at least one Independent Person whose views are to be sought in certain circumstances and taken into account when dealing with allegations that its Councillors, and those of the Town and Parish Councils in Shropshire, have failed to comply with the code of conduct.

4. Summary of Main Proposals

- 4.1. Following an open recruitment exercise, in which four candidates were invited to interview, three candidates have been identified who are suitable for appointment as Independent Persons. The interview panel comprised the Chairman of the Council, the Monitoring Officer, and the former Service Director – Legal & Governance.
- 4.2. Details of each candidate have been set out below. They each demonstrated a working knowledge of local government, a commitment to impartiality, meet the eligibility criteria set out in the Localism Act 2011 and are committed to good governance and the ethical framework relating to the member standards regime.
- 4.3. Alan Boyd lives in the County and has 43 years' public sector/local authority experience, including emergency planning, business continuity, incident response, member engagement, investigations, scrutiny work and partnership working. He also has over 23 years' experience as a Magistrate.
- 4.4. Tim Griffiths has lived in the County all his life and has extensive public service experience and is the current Independent Person. He has strong skills in impartial decision-making, communication, confidentiality, leadership, community service and accountability.
- 4.5. Thomas Senior resides within the Borough of Telford and Wrekin. He is a Senior Lawyer and Deputy Monitoring Officer at a large West Midlands local authority. He has direct experience of standards work through his employment.
- 4.6. All three candidates are, in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer, suitable for appointment to the role of Independent Person. Although the Localism Act 2011 only requires a Council to appoint a single independent person, Members may recall that the Committee for Standards in Public Life considers it to be good practice to have at least two Independent Persons appointed, to account for any potential conflicts of interest. Members will note that the role is not remunerated and the Council's Independent Persons volunteer in the role.

5. Key risks and Opportunities

- 5.1. The recommendations in this report, if approved, will have no impact on Children and Vulnerable Adults, Risk Management, Human Rights, Equalities, Community, and other Consultation

6. Alternative Options

- 6.1 The Council must, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, appoint an Independent Person to be consulted by the complainant, any elected member subject to a complaint and the Monitoring Officer when determining Code of Conduct complaints.
- 6.2 If the Council does not appoint new Independent Persons, it will not be acting in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee for Standards in Public Life.
- 6.3 The appointment of at least two Independent Persons is a recommendation of the Committee for Standards in Public Life, allowing for flexibility should conflicts of interest arise or for the unavailability of a single Independent Person. It would be open to the Council to only appoint a sole Independent Person but for the reasons identified, it is not considered best practice to do so.

7. Council Priorities

- 7.1. The appointment of Independent Persons is a requirement of the Localism Act 2011 and contributes to good ethical governance supporting the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

9. Legal and HR implications

- 9.1. The Council is obliged by the Localism Act 2011 to appoint at least one Independent Person.

10. Electoral Division Implications

- 10.1. The proposals in this report do not impact on specific electoral divisions.

11. Health, Social (including “Child Friendly Shropshire”) and Economic Implications

- 11.1. There are no Health, Social or Economic implications arising from this report.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1. There are no equality and diversity implications associated with this report

13. Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

13.1. There are no climate change, biodiversity or environmental implications associated with this report.

14. Background Papers

14.1. None

15. Appendices

15.1 None