

**Blaby District Council
Council**

Date of Meeting	20 May 2025
Title of Report	Appointment of Independent Persons 2025-2029 This is not a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan
Lead Member	Cllr. Terry Richardson - Leader of the Council
Report Author	Elections and Governance Manager
Strategic Themes	Ambitious and well managed Council, valuing our people

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 The report asks Council to consider and approve the appointment of 7 Independent Persons in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

2. Recommendation(s) to Council

- 2.1 That council appoint the Independent Persons detailed in the report for a term of office of four years until Annual Council in May 2029 to perform the roles set out in section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 Section 7 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to appoint at least one Independent Person to assist in maintaining and promoting the high standards of conduct amongst elected and co-opted members.

4. Matters to consider

- 4.1 Background

The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to put in place arrangements for investigating and taking decisions on complaints relating to District Councillors and parish and town councillors in the District, including the appointment of one or more Independent Persons who must be consulted before decisions in respect of complaints are taken, and who may be consulted by councillors who are the subject of complaints.

In addition, as a result of the changes introduced by The Local Authorities (Standing Orders)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2015 where an authority is considering the dismissal of a Statutory Officer it is required to

appoint a committee (referred to in the regulations as ‘the Panel’) to consider the proposed dismissal which must include at least 2 ‘Independent Persons’.

Since 2012 the District and Borough Councils for Blaby, Charnwood, Harborough, Melton, Northwest Leicestershire, Hinckley and Oadby and Wigston have been part of an Independent Persons pool arrangement. Rutland County Council have now also elected to join the District and Boroughs to share the pool arrangements. Appointment to the pool has been via a joint recruitment exercise led by a working group comprising 3 Monitoring Officers. Appointments were made to the pool in 2012, 2016 and 2021. The term of office of the current pool of independent persons has now expired.

In March 2025 a joint recruitment exercise commenced, led by the Monitoring Officers from Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, Charnwood and Blaby. As set out above, this approach has been used to appoint the Independent Persons in the past and it is felt that this secures a selection of strong candidates and provides resilience by continuing the pool arrangement.

Following a recruitment exercise, the following 7 candidates are recommended for appointment as Independent Persons:

- Mr Michael Chad Smith
- Mr Gordon Grimes
- Mr Laurence [Laurie] Faulkner
- Mr Michael Gibson
- Mr Matthew Johnson
- Mr Mark Shaw
- Mr Richard Gough

A brief resume for each of the above is contained at Appendix A; due to the nature of the data contained within the appendix, officers have deemed that it should be made exempt. Any details will be discussed in closed session.

4.2 Proposal

That council appoint the Independent Persons listed in paragraph 4.1 of the report for a term of office of four years until annual council in May 2029.

4.3 Relevant Consultations

Monitoring Officer interview panel.

4.4 Significant Issues

None.

4.5 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities and there are no areas of concern.

5. Environmental impact

- 5.1 No Net Zero and Climate Impact Assessment (NZCIA) is required for this report.

6. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

- 6.1 The Independent Persons receive no remuneration for the role but are entitled to reasonable expenses in accordance with the Travel and Substance Allowance for Members. It is expected that any such cost would be met from existing budgets. Training will also be arranged for the Independent Persons to equip them to perform their role, the cost of which will be shared between Districts, Boroughs and Rutland County Council.

7. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

7.1

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
Failure to appoint at least one Independent Person will mean that the Council is in breach of its statutory responsibilities	Appointment of at least 1 Independent Person

8. Other options considered

- 8.1 None.

9. Appendix

- 9.1 Appendix A – Brief Resume of Independent Persons recommended for appointment (EXEMPT)

10. Background paper(s)

- 10.1 None

11. Report author's contact details

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