

This report is public	
Appointment of Independent Persons for Standards	
Committee	Council
Date of Committee	15 December 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Chris Brant
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	5 December 2025
Report of	Assistant Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, Shiraz Sheikh

Purpose of report

To appoint statutory Independent Persons as part of the standards arrangements.

1. Recommendations

Council resolves:

- 1.1 To appoint Tom Edwards and Terry Williams as Independent Persons for a four-year term expiring on the date of the December Council meeting in 2029.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Localism Act 2011 (the Act) requires the standards arrangements adopted by the Council to include provision for the appointment of at least one independent person.
- 2.2 The Independent Person is a statutory role under Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 with the purpose of assisting the Council in promoting high standards of conduct by elected, appointed and co-opted Members of the Council and in relation to disciplinary matters concerning the Council's Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer.
- 2.3 Section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 states that local authorities must appoint at least one Independent Person and must ensure that the process to appoint Independent Persons must be open and transparent, and any appointment must be approved by a majority of Members of the authority
- 2.4 The Council currently have two Independent Persons appointed to the Standards Committee and were appointed on 13 December 2021 Full Council meeting. The four-year terms of the two appointed Independent Persons end on 15 December 2025.

- 2.5 The role was advertised and following an interview process, both Tom Edwards and Terry Williams were successful and the panel recommends their appointment. The biographical information is appended to this report.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary			
Finance	As set out in the Members' Allowance Scheme, each independent person receives an annual allowance of £900 (subject to annual increases as recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel and agreed by Council) and can claim travel expenses for attending meetings in person. This is provided for in the Members' Allowances budget. The guidance is clear that the payment of an allowance does not negate independence. The appointment of independent persons will also allow enhanced scrutiny of the Council's financial position. Rachel Ainsworth, Finance Business Partner for Resources, 4 December 2025.			
Legal	To comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 (section 28(7)), the Council should appoint at least one Independent Person. However, should it be necessary to set up a Panel in compliance with The Local Authorities (Standing Orders)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2015 referred to in paragraph 2.2 above it is recommended that the Council appoints two Independent Persons. Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer, 4 December 2025			
Risk Management	Failing to appoint Independent Persons would place the Council in breach of its statutory duty under the Localism Act 2011 and prevent or delay the Monitoring Officer from dealing with complaints in accordance with the Council's code of conduct complaints procedure Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 4 December 2025			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		X		There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report. The recent recruitment process was fair and open therefore ensures the Independent Persons to be appointed on merit.
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		N/A

B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		N/A
Climate & Environmental Impact				N/A
ICT & Digital Impact				N/A
Data Impact				N/A
Procurement & subsidy				N/A
Council Priorities	N/A			
Human Resources	N/A			
Property	N/A			
Consultation & Engagement	N/A			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 Independent Persons are key to Standards Committees including their role in the Councils arrangements for complaints of alleged breach of the relevant code of conduct by Members.
- 3.2 Independent Persons are consulted by the Monitoring Officer or Officer on behalf of the Monitoring Officer during the arrangements of allegations of alleged breach of the code of conduct by members of the District Council or Town/Parish Council's within the Cherwell District area. The Councils arrangements were adopted in May 2022 and reviewed in February 2024.
- 3.3 The current Independent Persons appointed to the Standards Committee are Tom Edwards and Dr Sadie Reynolds.
- 3.4 The Council currently have two Independent Persons appointed to the Standards Committee and were appointed on 13 December 2021 Full Council meeting. The four-year terms of the two appointed Independent Persons end on 15 December 2025.

4. Details

- 4.1 Having regard to the required formal procedure to comply with The Act, the Independent Person for standards role was advertised on the Council's website between 28 October and 14 November 2025.
- 4.2 Two applications were received in response to the advertisement. Interviews took place on 24 November and 4 December. The interview panel comprised of the Assistant Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, Executive Director – Resources and a Democratic and Elections Officer.
- 4.3 Following consideration of the application forms and interview responses, the interview panel concluded that the following two individuals should be recommended to Council for appointment as an Independent Person:
- Tom Edwards
 - Terry Williams
- 4.4 There is no prescribed time limit on the terms of office of Independent Persons and these are therefore within the discretion of the Council. The Standards Committee agreed in 2021 that the appointments for Independent Persons should be a four-year term.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to appoint Independent Persons. This is not recommended as failing to appoint an Independent Person would place the Council in breach of its statutory duty under the Act and prevent the Monitoring Officer from dealing with complaints in accordance with the Council's code of conduct complaints procedure.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 To comply with the statutory requirements the Council must appoint at least one Independent Person. Following the delegation from Council to the Standards Committee, supported by the Monitoring Officer, a process for the recruitment of Independent Persons was agreed and undertaken. Following this robust recruitment process, it is recommended that Council appoint Tom Edwards and Terry Williams as Independent Persons for a four-year term, renewable once.

Decision Information

Key Decision	N/A
Subject to Call in	N/A

If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	All

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Candidate biographical information
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Matthew Swinford, Democratic and Elections Officer
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Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Report of the Monitoring Officer