



APPLICATION FORM

INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE



INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

A BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Localism Act 2011 (the “Act”) requires Northampton Borough Council to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members of the Council.

The Council has therefore adopted a Members’ Code of Conduct which reflects the Nolan Principles of Public Life as required by the Act. The Nolan Principles are Selflessness; Integrity; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Honesty and Leadership.

Standards Committee

The Council’s Standards Committee has specific responsibility for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst Members (Councillors) and co-opted Members including involvement in the process for dealing with complaints that Members have breached the Code of Conduct.

The Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee set out in Article 10 of the Council’s Constitution state:

The Standards Committee will be composed of 9 Councillors. In addition the Standards Committee shall appoint:

- **such Independent Members** as the Committee considers appropriate. *The Independent Members shall not have the right to vote;*
- *two Parish Council Members without the right to vote*

The Standards Committee is currently recruiting Independent Members.

Arrangements for dealing with allegations of breaches of the Members’ Code of Conduct

The Council has adopted formal arrangements for dealing with allegations of breaches of the Northampton Borough Council Members’ Code of Conduct and of Codes of Conduct adopted by Parish Councils (the “Arrangements”).

Some complaints about Councillors, depending on the circumstances, will progress to a Hearing stage. A case will only progress to a Hearing where the complaint has been investigated and the investigating officer has concluded there is evidence of a failure by the Councillor who is the subject of the complaint to comply with the Code of Conduct. A Hearing is conducted by the Hearings Panel. The Hearings Panel is established by the Standards

Committee and is made up of any three Councillors of the Standards Committee, plus an Independent Member (without the right to vote) plus a Parish Council Member (without the right to vote) where a Parish Council issue is to be considered.

Parish Councils

There are ten Parish Councils within the Borough of Northampton:

- Billing Parish Council
- Collingtree Parish Council
- Duston Parish Council
- East Hunsbury Parish Council
- Great Houghton Parish Council
- Hardingstone Parish Council
- Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council
- Upton Parish Council
- West Hunsbury Parish Council
- Wootton Parish Council

Each Parish Council is responsible for adopting its own Code of Conduct which accords with the Nolan Principles. Northampton Borough Council is responsible for dealing with allegations that Parish Councillors have breached their Parish Council's Members' Code of Conduct. The Arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints adopted by the Borough Council, therefore also apply to Parish Councils within the Borough.

B FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

1. To sit as a co-opted, non-voting member of the Standards Committee.
2. To develop a sound understanding of the ethical framework as it operates within Northampton Borough Council and the Parish Councils within the Borough.
3. To sit as a non-voting member of the Hearings Panel of the Standards Committee as required.
4. To participate in training events to develop skills, knowledge and experience relevant to assisting the Council in promoting high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted Members of the Borough Council and by Parish Councillors within the Borough.
5. To act as an advocate and ambassador for the Council in promoting ethical behaviour.

C CRITERIA - INDEPENDENT MEMBER

An Independent Member will:

1. not be required to have any specific qualification or background, save a general interest in Local Government and public service;
2. be committed to the need for high standards in public life and be aware of the views of the local community in relation to ethical standards;
3. have the ability to be objective, independent and impartial;
4. understand and comply with confidentiality requirements;
5. have a demonstrable interest in local issues and desire to serve the local community and uphold democracy;
6. develop a sound understanding of the ethical and wider regulatory framework within which the Council operates;
7. be of good standing in the community;
8. be able to attend meetings of the Standards Committee;
9. be able to make a significant contribution to the work of the Standards Committee;
10. have the ability to assimilate information and make enquiries as appropriate; and
11. be a good communicator.

Please note, if appointed, you will be required to attend evening meetings of the Standards Committee at the Guildhall, Northampton.

Additional desirable skills/knowledge are as follows:

1. Working knowledge/experience of local government or other public service organisations or other large complex organisations.

Means of Assessment

Means of assessment will be by assessment of application form and by interview. You should demonstrate in your application form how you meet the above criteria as this will assist in the short listing process.

D ELIGIBILITY FOR APPOINTMENT

A person **cannot** be appointed as an Independent Member **if**:

- that person has been a member or employee of Northampton Borough Council or any of the Parish Councils within the Borough within the previous five years;
- that person is a relative or close friend of a Member or employee of either Northampton Borough or any of the Parish Councils within the Borough;

For these purposes a 'relative' means:

- *Partner (spouse, civil partner or someone a person lives with in a similar capacity)*
 - *Parent*
 - *Parent of a partner*
 - *Son or daughter*
 - *Step son or step daughter*
 - *Child of a partner*
 - *Brother or sister*
 - *Brother or sister of a partner*
 - *Grandparent*
 - *Grandchild*
 - *Uncle or aunt*
 - *Nephew or niece*
 - *Partner of any of the people mentioned above*
- that person is or has within the last five years been a member of any political party, or, is actively engaged in party political activity;
 - any of the disqualifications (in relation to being elected or holding office as a member of a local authority) set out in section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 apply, which are **in summary**:
 - Being employed by the local authority or holding any paid office under the authority.
 - Being the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim bankruptcy restrictions order, or a debt relief restrictions order or interim debt relief restrictions order.
 - Having been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more (including a suspended sentence) without the option of a fine, in the previous five years.
 - Being disqualified for being elected as or for being a member of the authority, under the Representation of the People Act 1983, for corrupt or illegal electoral practices and offences relating to donations.

I confirm that I am not prevented from being appointed as an Independent Member of the Standards Committee for any of the reasons stated above and I will notify the Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer of any relevant change in my circumstances.

Please tick to confirm

E TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

- Appointment will be on a fixed basis until the Annual Council meeting of Northampton Borough Council in May 2019.
- Appointment will be terminable by the Council at any time in the event of:
 - Failure to comply with any training requirements.
 - Persistent failure to sit on the Committee without good reason.
 - Incapacity.
 - Failure to observe the standards reasonably expected from an Independent Member of the Standards Committee (AND in this context the Independent Member would be expected to refrain from any activity, political or otherwise, which would conflict with the independent nature of the appointment).
 - The Council giving two months' written notice
 - Any other reason/action which, in the view of the Council, is considered not to be commensurate with the expected standards from an Independent Member involved in the work of the Standards Committee and warrants termination.
- Additionally, the Independent Member may by giving two months' written notice, resign the appointment at any time.
- Independent Members will be required to complete and keep updated a Register of Interests Form of specified categories of personal and pecuniary interests.
- The role of the Independent Member is unpaid. Although, an Independent Member will be entitled to claim reasonable expenses for travel and subsistence when they attend meetings, but otherwise, the work is entirely voluntary. However, this is subject to review by the Council's Monitoring Officer and/or its Independent Remuneration Panel.
- The appointment of an Independent Member has to be approved by the Standards Committee.



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

F APPLICATION TO BECOME AN INDEPENDENT MEMBER

1. Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Day Time Telephone Number: _____

Mobile Number: _____

E-mail address: _____

2. Current or most recent appointment or employment (*if considered relevant*)

Employer: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Title of post: _____

Dates: From: ____ / ____ / ____ To: ____ / ____ / ____

Summary of duties: _____

3. Previous relevant appointments/employment
(list most recent first with dates and titles of post)

4. What experience do you have of dealing with local authorities?

5. Do you have experience of meetings practice?

6. Do you have knowledge of disciplinary/ethical processes or codes of conduct?

7. Why do you wish to serve as an Independent Member and what particular attributes do you believe you can bring to the work of the Standards Committee?

8. **Referees**– *please give the name of two referees, each of whom should have been known to you for at least two years.*

Referee 1

Referee 2

Name:

Name:

Address
and e-mail:

Address
and e-mail:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Telephone
Number:

Telephone
Number:

9. Additional information

Please set out below any additional information relating to your suitability to carry out the role of an Independent Member of the Standards Committee. (Please use extra sheets as required).

G DECLARATION

To the best of my knowledge and belief, the information given on this Application Form is correct.

Signature: Date:

Print Name (in block capitals):

H CLOSING DATE and CONTACT

The closing date for receipt of applications is **Friday 15 November 2019 at 12 noon.**

It is anticipated that interviews will be held from **5pm on 26 November 2019**

Please return this form to the Borough Secretary's Department, Legal Services, Northampton Borough Council, The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE for the attention of Monitoring Officer (tel: 01604 837408) or by e-mail to monitoringofficer@northampton.gov.uk