

From: Petra Der Man, Monitoring Officer

To: County Council – 18 December 2025

Subject: Independent Person (Standards) Appointment

Classification: Unrestricted

1. Introduction

- a. The Localism Act 2011 requires that the County Council appoint an Independent Person from whom the Monitoring Officer can seek advice when they are in receipt of an alleged breach of the Kent Member Code of Conduct.
- b. As reported to the Selection and Member Services Committee on 4 September 2025, Mr Michael George has held this position since October 2012. A recruitment exercise was begun to recruit a second Independent Person to add resilience to the ethical framework of the Council.
- c. Mr Michael George has decided to step down from the role and so the recruitment exercise has been able to take this into consideration and look at the possibility of recruiting two Independent Persons at the same time.

2. The Role of the Independent Person

- a. In sum, the role of the Independent Person is as follows:
 - i. To advise KCC on any allegation of breaches of the Member Code of Conduct by elected or co-opted Members that it has decided to investigate.
 - ii. If required, to be consulted by either authority in respect of allegations in other circumstances.
 - iii. If required, to be consulted by any elected or co-opted Member of either authority who is the subject of an allegation.
- b. The remuneration for this post is a £500 annual retainer (payable over 12 months) plus a daily rate of £100 (pro rata for part of a day) when required to undertake any duties, and travel expenses at the same rate as for elected Members (currently 45p per mile). This may be reviewed by the Member Remuneration Panel as part of their current review of the Members' Allowances Scheme.

3. Recruitment of the Independent Person

- a. The Selection and Member Services Committee delegated responsibility for the recruitment process to the Monitoring Officer. However, it is a County Council responsibility to formally appoint any Independent Person. Appointments are usually to a four year term.

- b. As a result of the recent recruitment exercise, as Monitoring Officer, I am recommending that County Council appoint the following as Independent Person(s) for Standards:
 - a. David Mercier.
 - b. Michael Turner.
- c. A summary of the CV of the above is available for Members on request from Tristan Godfrey and Katy Reynolds. See below for contact details.
- d. Because of the nature of the role, appropriate background checks will be carried out and no appointment will be made until these have been carried out satisfactorily. Due to Mr George stepping down from the role, and the statutory requirement for the Council to have at least one Independent Person, it has not been possible to complete these checks ahead of this meeting.

4. Recommendation

County Council is asked to:

- a. Thank Mr George for his work as Independent Person; and
- b. Appoint David Mercier and Michael Turner to four-year terms as Independent Persons for Standards for Kent County Council, subject to satisfactory completion of the relevant background checks overseen by the Monitoring Officer.

5. Background Documents

None.

6. Report Author and Relevant Director

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