



## **Safest People, Safest Places**

### **Combined Fire Authority**

**05 January 2024**

### **Appointment of Independent Persons Combined Fire Authority**

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#### **Report of the Clerk to the Authority**

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#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To update the Fire Authority on the outcome of the Appointments Panel on 9<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and the appointment of three new Independent Persons.

#### **Background**

2. The Localism Act 2011 provides the framework intended to secure high standards of conduct in public office, and it requires the appointment, by the Authority, of at least one independent person.
3. The independent person must be consulted by the Authority and their views taken into account before it makes a finding as to whether a member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct or decides an action to be taken in respect to that member. They may also be consulted by the Authority in respect of a complaint at any other stage and, they may be consulted by a member of the Authority against whom the complaint has been made.
4. At its meeting on 20 July 2021, the Authority authorised the commencement of a recruitment proceed for an Independent Person/s and delegated responsibility for the process and appointments to the Clerk and the Appointments Panel.

## RECRUITMENT PROCESS

5. The positions were advertised on the Authority's website with a closing date of 31 May 2023. Three applications were received and three candidates were shortlisted and invited to interviews on 9<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023. All three applicants were already fulfilling the role of Independent Person for Durham County Council.
6. The interviews were conducted by the Appointments Panel with the Clerk in attendance. The Panel decided to appoint all three candidates namely Alan Fletcher, Steven Winder and Chris Hugill to act as Independent Persons to the Combined Fire Authority. The Authority has written to them to confirm their appointments for a 4-year term, expiring on 26 October 2027. The Clerk also wrote to the Independent Persons on 1 November to offer the opportunity to discuss the role in more detail and to confirm that they were entitled to attend the CFA meetings should they wish to do so.
7. Two of the three newly appointed Independent Persons recently attend the LLG '*Independent Persons: The Role of the IP in Ensuring High Standards of Conduct*' training course on 13 November 2023 and the training materials were shared with the Independent Person who was unable to attend.

## Recommendation

8. Members are recommended to:
  - i. Note the outcome of the Appointments Panel held on 9<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023.