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Date: 23rd June 2026

Our Ref: KB

Addendum - Council – 1st July 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

I refer to agenda item no **13. Recommendations from Cabinet and other committees** and wish to add the following item:

ADDITIONAL ITEM

**13f) Recommendation from Audit and Standards
Audit and Standards Committee – 23rd June 2026**

Appointment of Independent Persons

A report on the above item (**copy of report attached Page 2**) was considered at Audit and Standards held on 23rd June 2026, and the following recommendation was approved to be put forward for Council approval:

It be recommended to full council that appointment of the persons listed in paragraph 3.6 of the report be approved to the Panel of Independent Persons required by the Localism Act 2011, from the date of the meeting of Council, 1 July 2026, to 30 September 2029.

Yours faithfully,

TOM SHARDLOW
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Council

AGENDA ITEM NO. 13f

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Audit and Standards Committee
Date of Meeting:	23 June 2026
Subject:	Appointment of Independent Persons
Portfolio:	Not Applicable
Responsible Officer:	Monitoring Officer
Corporate Plan – Theme:	Your Council
Corporate Plan – Aim:	Strive for transparency and accountability, in all that we do. Increase public scrutiny
Ward Relevance:	Not applicable
Public or Private:	Public
Amendment to Budget:	No Council Tax Related: No
Recommendation to Council :	Yes
Forward Plan:	Not applicable (not for Cabinet)
Subject to Call-in:	Not applicable (not for Cabinet)

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. This report advises of the appointment of Independent Persons pursuant to the requirements of the Localism Act 2011. Independent Persons are required by all local authorities to assist in the consideration of Member Code of Conduct complaints.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee recommends to Full Council that it confirms the appointment of the persons listed in paragraph 3.7 of this report to the Panel of Independent Persons required by the Localism Act 2011, from the date of the meeting of Council, 1 July 2026, to 30 September 2029.

3. Background

- 3.1. In accordance with Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011, all Councils must put in place arrangements to promote and maintain high standards of conduct amongst Councillors and co-opted members. A co-opted member is someone who has not been elected but has been appointed to a Council or one of its committees. The arrangements must include the appointment of at least one "independent person" whose views are to be sought and taken into account by the Council in certain circumstances.
- 3.2. For the district and borough councils in Warwickshire and any unitary councils participating in the arrangements, these arrangements must also cover complaints about parish councillors. There are no Parish Councils within Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough. The list of Independent Persons was last reviewed in 2021 and historically, the Council has worked with neighbouring authorities to jointly recruit Independent Persons.
- 3.3. In September 2025, Warwickshire County Council approved the appointment of Garth Murphy, Maureen O'Sullivan, Howard Darling and Ray Tomkinson for a further period from 1 October 2025 to 30 September 2029, retaining their role as Independent Persons.
- 3.4. A further round of recruitment activity was undertaken to supplement the current panel. That process involved a role profile and detailed applicant pack being advertised via the Warwickshire County Council's job pages, with neighbouring authorities involved via a collaborative exercise, Indeed and LinkedIn. Three applications were received.
- 3.5. Following shortlisting discussions between the Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer of Warwickshire County Council and the Monitoring Officer of Rugby Borough Council, three applicants were shortlisted for interviews. One applicant subsequently withdrew having been appointed as a co-opted member of a local Council. The applicants were interviewed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer of Warwickshire Council and the

Monitoring Officer of Rugby Borough Council, reflecting that the panel is available for use by a number of other neighbouring authorities. The interviews tested the applicants' knowledge of local government, their understanding of the sanctions regime, and their approach to the requirements of the role including integrity, handling difficult conversations and political neutrality. New Panel members receive introductory training to assist them to fulfil the role. Ongoing training and development is also provided for the Panel, often in conjunction with regional colleagues across the West Midlands.

- 3.6. Following the interviews and liaison with the revised and updated list of Independent Persons, it was considered that the following list be recommended to Full Council for appointment as an Independent Persons for the Council:

- Howard Darling
- Prodromos Mavridis
- Garth Murphy
- Maureen O'Sullivan
- Raymond Leslie Tomkinson

- 3.7. The Monitoring Officer is satisfied that the panel of Independent Persons have the necessary skills and qualities to fulfil the role in line with the requirement of the Localism Act 2011 and the standards regime. The Committee should note that Warwickshire County Council, at its meeting on 23rd September 2025 and 16 December 2025, endorsed and approved the same list of Independent Persons. This provides synergy across Warwickshire and some West Midlands based Local Authorities.

- 3.8. Each individual has given consent to the Monitoring Officer to be included on the list for committee and Full Council approval.

4. Body of report and reason for recommendations

- 4.1. This report confirms the arrangements for the appointment of Independent Persons as required by Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) for a four-year term of office, from 1 October 2025. The 2011 Act requires Councils to appoint at least one "independent person" to advise on matters of Councillor conduct and ethics. The role of an independent person under the Localism Act 2011 is to provide an impartial view on allegations of misconduct against Councillors, helping to ensure high standards in public life. They are consulted by the Monitoring Officer and by the Assessment Sub-Committee of Audit and Standards during the investigation and before a decision is made

on a complaint. The independent person offers objective opinions, promotes public confidence, and assists in maintaining ethical standards, though they are not part of the Audit and Standards Committee and cannot vote on complaints. They can also be consulted by any Member who is under investigation for a breach of the Code of Conduct.

- 4.2. The role of the Independent Person was widened under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) England (Amendment) Regulations 2015 which came into force on 11 May 2015 and changed the localised disciplinary process. A panel of at least 2 Independent Persons has to be convened to make recommendations to Council in connection with statutory Chief Officers (the Chief Executive, the Chief Finance Officer (section 151 Officer) and the Monitoring Officer).
- 4.3. The Act requires that any Independent Person must not be, or have been within the past 5 years, a Member, co-opted member or officer of the Council or any of the Parish or Town Councils in the Council's area; nor should they be a relative or close friend of a member, co-opted member or officer in the Council's area. Mr Mavridis meets the legislative requirements.

Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 4.4 If approved the persons named at paragraph 3.7 above will be approved and available for a term ending 30 September 2029.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.5 Section 28 (7) of the Localism Act 2011 requires that every Local Authority must appoint at least one Independent Person. Given that the Local Authorities in Warwickshire are each using the Independent Person Panel and the new standards regime being introduced by the Government, the retention of five Independent Persons is considered reasonable. This helps to manage potential conflicts of interest and ensures the demand on any one Independent Person is not overwhelming.
- 5. Consultation with the public, members, officers and associated stakeholders
 - 5.1. The appointment of Independent Persons is a legal obligation and not therefore appropriate for wider consultation. The Committee should however note the collaborative work undertaken across Warwickshire as mentioned in the report.

- 5.2. As per 3.7 and 3.8 of the report, the list of Independent Persons have given consent to the Monitoring Officer to be included on the list and to be named in this report.
6. Financial Implications
- 6.1. As the roles are not remunerated, there are no financial implications arising from this report. On rare occasions expenses may be payable for travel to standards meetings if held in person and these will be covered, along with the costs of delivering training, from existing budgets.
7. Legal Implications
- 7.1. In accordance with Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council must have in place arrangements under which allegations that an elected councillor or a co-opted member of the Council has failed to comply with the relevant Code of Conduct, can be considered and decisions made. It is for the Council to decide the details of those arrangements, but it must appoint at least one Independent Person whose views are to be considered before making a decision on an allegation that it has decided to investigate.
- 7.2. Complaints are received in accordance with the arrangements for dealing with alleged breaches of the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council Members' Code of Conduct. The Council has a legal duty to respond to such complaints.
8. Equalities implications
- 8.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.
9. Health implications
- 9.1. No specific health implications have been identified following the completion of an impact assessment.
10. Climate and environmental implications
- 10.1. No direct climate and/or environmental implications have been identified.
11. Section 17 Crime and Disorder Implications
- 11.1. No direct Section 17 crime and disorder implications have been identified.

12. Risk management implications

12.1. No direct risk management implications have been identified.

13. Human resources implications

13.1. No direct human resource implications have been identified.

14. Biodiversity Implications

14.1. No direct biodiversity implications have been identified.

15. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Implications

15.1. No direct LGR implications have been identified.

16. Options considered and reason for their rejection

16.1. In formulating this report and recommendations, the following other options were identified. Reasons for their rejection or why the option and recommendation proposed in section 2 of the report has been selected are outlined below.

Option Ref	Option Title	Reason for rejection or why the option and recommendation proposed in section 2 of the report has been selected
A	Do nothing	The Independent Person has been recruited; and the Committee is requested to ask full Council to note this appointment to the role of Independent Person. Additionally, the appointment of Independent Persons is a legally mandated and is the responsibility of full Council.

17. Conclusion

17.1 The Committee is requested to recommend to Council that it confirms the appointment of the persons listed in paragraph 3.7 of this report to the Panel of Independent Persons required by the Localism Act 2011, from the date of the meeting of Council, 1 July 2026, to 30 September 2029.

18. Appendices

18.1. Please note there are no appendices attached to this report.

19. Background papers

19.1. Please note there are no background papers attached to this report.

20. Report Writer Details:

Officer Job Title: Elections and Democratic Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer

Officer Name: Tracy Tiff