



**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**Item No 9**

**FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING: 24 JUNE 2024**

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**SUBJECT: APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE (THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY) AND THE DEPUTY CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Under the Localism Act 2011, the Authority is required to appoint an Independent Person (IP), whose views are sought and taken into account in connection with complaints about members' conduct. The IP receives an annual allowance of £200 and reasonable travel and subsistence expenses are reimbursed.
- 1.2 The Authority's current IP, Mr. Dennis Hall, has served in post since December 2017. In September 2023, as both the Authority and Sunderland City Council were due to place public advertisements inviting applicants for the IP role, the Authority agreed that the Deputy Clerk would advertise the roles for both authorities at the same time and that the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Clerk would consider applications received and recommend a candidate to the Authority for appointment. In the interim, Mr Hall's appointment was extended.
- 1.3 Three applications were received, one of which was from Mr Hall. The Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Clerk consider there is merit in reappointing Mr Hall, who has many years of experience. He is a retired local government solicitor and former monitoring officer, with extensive knowledge and experience of local government. He has also served as IP for Sunderland City Council since 2017. While there have been no complaints about members of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority to consider, Mr Hall has provided valuable input and support to the Standards Committee / Members' Code of Conduct complaints process at Sunderland City Council, which has reappointed him following the recent recruitment exercise. It is therefore recommended that Mr Hall also be reappointed by the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The Authority is recommended to reappoint Mr Dennis Hall as Independent Person for a period of two years from 24 June 2024, with the option for the Authority to extend the appointment for two further two-year terms (i.e. six years in total) and to confirm the award of an annual allowance of £200 plus reasonable travel and subsistence.

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (TBC)**

- 3.1 The funding for the post of Independent Person can be met from existing resources.

## **4 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 4.1 None