

# Recruitment Pack

**Independent Person and Reserve Independent Person for Standards Committee**

**June 2025**

# Recruitment Pack Contents

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|  | Contact: | Members Services  |
| Direct Line: | 01234 228799/ 228256 |
| Fax no: | 01234 718391 |
| Email: | MemberServices@bedford.gov.uk  |
|  |  |
| Date:  | June 2025 |
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Dear Applicant,

**APPLICATION TO SERVE AS AN INDEPENDENT PERSON OR RESERVE INDEPENDENT PERSON ON THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Thank you for your interest in becoming a member of the Standards Committee. This pack aims to provide useful information to aid you in completing your application form.

The role of the Standard Committee Independent Person is voluntary, with an annual allowance of £350 plus reasonable travel expenses. Standard Committee members are required to attend, in person, and participate in meetings of the Council’s Standards Committee, and to independently assist the Standards Committee and to be consulted, as appropriate, when there is any allegation of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct.

Detailed information about the role is given in the enclosed pack. I hope that having read this letter and the material enclosed with it, you will wish to apply to join the committee. If you would like to be considered, please complete the application form and submit it by email to: MemberServices@bedford.gov.uk or by post: **Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP.**

Deadline for applications **is midnight on Wednesday 9 July 2025**

Your application will be considered, and you will only be notified if you have been short-listed and invited for interview. If shortlisted, interviews will take place on Tuesday 15 July 2025.

If you would like an informal discussion about the role, please contact Members Services on (01234) 228799 or 228256.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Blue

Democratic and Member Services Manager

# Audit Committee Member recruitment timeline

1. June 2025: Advertisement of vacancy
2. 10 July 2025: Shortlisting
3. 15 July 2025: Interview
4. 24 July 2025: Full Council to consider appointing nominee
5. September 2025: First meeting of the Standards Committee/ training session

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT BEDFORD AND BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

1. The Borough of Bedford

Bedford Borough Council is a unitary authority with borough status in the ceremonial county of Bedfordshire, England. The borough contains one large urban area that comprises Bedford and the adjacent town of Kempston, surrounded by a rural area compromised of villages.

###### The Council’s Democratic Structure

Bedford Borough Council is made up of 47 Councillors; each elected to serve one of the 28 Wards in the Borough, and an elected Mayor. Bedford Borough Council is one of only 12 Unitary Authorities in the country to have a directly elected Mayor, who is elected every four years. Councillors are also elected to the Council every four years. The last local and mayoral elections were held in May 2023.

There are four Political Groups represented at Bedford Borough Council and the number of Members in each of those Groups is as follows:

Conservative (15 including the Mayor)

Liberal Democrat (13)

Labour (13)

 Green (3)

Independent (3)

The Council’s budget and its major policies, such as the Corporate Plan, are decided by Full Council. However, the main decision making body is the Executive, which is responsible for decisions about the majority of Council services. There are Executive Members, including the Mayor who provides the political leadership of the Council and chairs meetings of the Executive. There are some Council functions for which the Executive is not responsible, such as decisions on planning, licensing applications and arrangements for Elections, these are dealt with by separate “Regulatory” Committees of Councillors.

In addition to the Full Council and the Executive, the other key Council Committees are:

* (Licensing Act 2003) Licensing Committee
* (Licensing Act 2003) Licensing Sub-Committee
* Adult Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
* Appointments Committee
* Audit Committee
* Bedford Schools' Forum
* Bedfordshire Local Pension Board
* Budget & Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
* Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
* Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
* General Licensing Committee
* General Licensing Sub-Committee
* General Purposes Committee
* Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
* Health and Wellbeing Board
* Housing Committee
* Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee for Primary and Secondary Education
* Pension Fund Committee
* Planning Committee
* Standards Committee
* Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education
* Trustees of the House of Industry Estate Management Committee
* Trustees of the Mayor of Bedford's Charity

The Council has also established, with others, the following joint committees:

* Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel
* Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel Complaints Sub-Committee
* Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
* Wixams Joint Development Control Committee

Further information about the Borough Council is available on our website: <http://www.bedford.gov.uk>

# INFORMATION ABOUT THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Council was required to set up a Standards Committee under the Localism Act 2011. The main role of the Standards Committee is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and to monitor the operation of the Council’s Code of Conduct for Members.

The Council’s first Standards Committee was set up in 1998, but this Committee was not established under the Localism Act 2011 (or even the immediately predecessor legislation of the Local Government Act 2000).

The Council’s current Standard Committee comprises of seven Members. The members of the Standards Committee are Councillors, drawn from the main political groupings represented on the Council. The Parish Councillors representing the 46 Parish Councils within the Borough have observer status at the Standards Committee. Only the seven Member of the Committee have the right to vote at meetings. The Independent Persons and the Reserve Independent Persons are invited to attend meetings of the Committee and may address the meetings with the consent of the Committee’s Chair.

The Council was required by law to adopt a Code of Conduct for Members, which regulates the standards of conduct which its Members must observe. Complaints of a breach of this Code may be reported to the Standards Committee.

The Standards Committee has four scheduled meetings every year to consider such issues as the operation of the Code of Conduct, training and guidance for Members of the Council, and consultation documents issued by the Government.

The Standards Committee might also meet on other occasions to consider issues that ought not to wait until the next scheduled meeting. Meetings of the Council Committees are usually held at 6.30pm.

The Independent Persons and the Reserve Independent Persons appointed following this recruitment process will receive an allowance in recognition of the need for them to develop and maintain an understanding of the Code of Conduct and the matters likely to be presented to them. For each case referred to the Independent Person there will be an additional payment of £80 in recognition of the need for the Independent Person to review the material/engage with the matter referred to them. The role is initially for a fixed term period of up to 4 years.

Further information on the role can also be found in the Complaints Handling Procedure, which can be found on the Councillor complaints page [here](https://www.bedford.gov.uk/your-council/have-your-say/complaints-and-feedback/complaints-about-councillors/arrangements).

The Council’s Code of Conduct can be found [here](https://councillorsupport.bedford.gov.uk/documents/s66420/Part161CodeofCoduct.pdf).

Information on how to watch the Council’s Virtual Committee Meetings can be found[**here**](https://www.bedford.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/decision-making-and-meetings/virtual-committee-meetings/)**.**

# THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

**Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

**Integrity:** Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

**Objectivity:** Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

**Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

**Openness:** Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

**Honesty:** Holders of public office should be truthful.

**Leadership:** Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

**BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**ROLE DESCRIPTION**

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| --- | --- |
| **JOB TITLE:**  | **Independent Person of the Standards Committee** |
| **DIRECTORATE:**  | **Chief Executive**  |
| **SECTION/DIVISION:**  | **Democratic & Member Services**  |
| **DATE PREPARED:** | **April 2025** |
| **REPORTS TO:** | **Full Council** |
| **PURPOSE:** |
| To serve as an Independent Person with the Standards Arrangements of Bedford Borough Council’s Standards Committee. |

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| KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES:  |
| To assist the Council in promoting high standards of conduct by Members of the Council elected and co-opted Councillors of Bedford Borough Council and in particular to uphold the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council and underpinned by the seven principles of public life. The Standards Committee meets four times per year. Independent Persons are expected to make arrangements to attend in person the majority of meetings. The business of the council may, on occasion, require additional meetings.  |

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| Skills required (see also Person Specification) |
| * High ethical standards.
* Good communication skills both written and oral
* A willingness to participate in meetings
* Ability to take an independent, unbiased and objective view
* Ability to examine evidence and complex documentation
* Ability to ask searching questions
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| Time commitment: It is expected that the appointed Independent Person and Reserve Independent Persons will be contactable at all times during normal working hours by telephone or by email and to be available to attend hearings which may have to be convened at relatively short notice (no less than 5 working days). |
| **Remuneration:** A £350 per annum allowance (subject to annual indexation), plus reasonable travel expenses. |

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| SPECIAL CONDITIONS:  |
| The following are not eligible to serve as an Independent Person:* a serving Councillor or Officer (or the spouse or civil partner of a Councillor

or Officer) of Bedford Borough Council, or any Bedford Borough Town or Parish Council;* a former Councillor or Officer of Bedford Borough Council;
* an individual who has a material business connection with the Council; or
* those disqualified from serving as a co-opted member (see section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 34 of the Localism Act 2011).

The Council has further agreed that the Independent Person should not:* be active in local or national politics;
* have had significant previous dealings with the Council which compromise their impartiality; or
* have a close relationship with any Member or Officer of the Council.

In addition:* You will be required to sign an undertaking to comply with the Council’s Code of Conduct for Members; and
* Canvassing by the candidate will disqualify your application.

It is anticipated that the initial period of the appointment would be for four years. |

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| **PERSON SPECIFICATION** |
| **Assessment Areas**  | **Essential Criteria**  | **Desirable Criteria** |
| **Relevant Experience** | Practical experience in thefinancial and / or generalmanagement of businessesor public sector organisations. | Working knowledge and/or experience of local government or other public service and/or of large complex organisations.Experience or knowledge of public sector governance. |
| **Specific Skills, Abilities and****Qualities** | To be a person whose impartiality and integrity the public can have confidence. Understand and comply with confidentiality requirements.Ability to demonstrate objectivity, independence and impartiality.Have an awareness of the importance of ethical behaviours.Have a credible and authoritative personal style. | Awareness of and sensitivity to the political process.Understanding the pressures and constraints of elected or co-opted Councillors operating in a democratically accountable public body.Knowledge and understanding of judicial/quasi-judicial or complaints processes.Experience of managing or advising on misconduct matters (possibly in the context of employment, a professional body, or the voluntary sector). |
| **Required Qualifications** | Must have a good standard of education, sufficient to understand information that might be complex. | Educated to degree level |
| **Any Additional Job Related****Requirements** | Available to attend and undertake appropriate preparation for each meeting of the Council’s Standards Committee.Ability / willingness to attend any relevant training or development activities associated with the role. | Standards Committee members do not necessarily have to be residents of the borough but preferably would have a connection with the borough. |
| **Equality** | Knowledge of and commitment to Equality and Diversity. |  |

# **Declaration**:

Can you outline any and all debts owed by you to Bedford Borough Council? This includes but is not limited to arrears of council tax, National Non-Domestic Rates, rent or payment for individual services. Arrangements to payment of current invoices/ bills such as by way of direct debit need not be disclosed. **Please give details below:**

I have read through all the information and can confirm that none of the disqualifications, which are listed on page 8 of this document in the section entitled ‘Role Description, Special Conditions’, apply to me.

Please tick to confirm: 🞏

I agree to commit to follow the seven principles of public life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership) if I gain a position on the Standards Committee.

Please tick to confirm: 🞏

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| **Signature:** |  |
| **Name:** |  |
| **Date:** |  |

**INDEPENDENT PERSON - STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEMBER**

**APPLICATION FORM**

**Please complete all sections below.**

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| **Forename:** |  |
| **Surname:** |  |
| **Home Address in full:** |  |
| **Home phone number:** |  |
| **Mobile phone number:** |  |
| **E-mail address:** |  |
| **Date of Birth:** |  |
| **Employment Status:** Employed / Self-employed / Unemployed / Retired (delete as appropriate)  |
| **If employed or self-employed, please give the following details. If retired please give the relevant details at the time of retirement.** **Name of Employer/Business:** **Nature of Business:** **Position Held:**  |
| **Please describe any links which you have or have had with the Borough or with the community of the Borough** e.g. living or working in the Borough, through work or business, through voluntary bodies, public bodies etc.  |

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| **Are you currently a Member of any other Local Authority?** (This includes Parish Councils, Police and Fire Authorities) Yes / No (delete as appropriate)**If yes please provide the name of the Authority:**  |
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| **Are you a *relative* or a *close friend* of any Member or Officer of the Council?** Yes / No (delete as appropriate)**If yes, please give details:**  |

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| **Please provide details of any organisations (including political parties) you are, or have been a Member of during the past 5 years.**  |
| **Relevant Experience and Qualities** Please explain why you wish to be a Member of the Standards Committee and give details of any relevant experience. You may wish to refer to the person specification. **(Please continue on a separate sheet as necessary).**  |
| **Please supply the name and contact details of a person whom we may contact for a character reference as to your suitability for the role.** **Name:** **Tel:**  |

**DECLARATION**

**I confirm that:**

* I have read the background information, and I understand and accept the commitment needed to be an active member of the Standards Committee.
* The information that I have provided on this application form is correct.
* I would fully respect the confidentially of the information provided to me as a member of the Standards Committee.
* I would observe any rules set by the Standards Committee and act in good faith in the interests of the Standards Committee.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Please return this form to:**

**Lesley Blue**

**Manager for Democratic and Members**

via email: MemberServices@bedford.gov.uk

or by post:

Room 326

Borough Hall

Cauldwell Street

Bedford

MK42 9AP