

Background

Arun District Council is required to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel to review its Members Allowances Scheme to comply with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The Council is currently looking to recruit a maximum of five members to make up a new Panel. The existing Panel's term of office expired on 31 March 2024.

The Panel is also required to consider the Allowances Scheme for Parish and Town Councillors. The Panel can decide to do this as part of the District Council review or undertake a separate review.

Skills we are looking for

The skills that would be useful for a candidate to have are:

- an understanding of the public sector, particularly local government
- experience of working within the District
- some knowledge of pay and allowances within other organisations
- an ability to undertake research and compile reports
- communication and presentation skills
- the ability to act independently
- the ability to work positively with Members and openly scrutinise and challenge
- the ability to manage the commitment and workload involved

Workload

When undertaking a full review of the Members' Allowances Scheme, the review generally takes about 4 to 5 months – this allows time to undertake research in the early stages of the review and then to present the report to the Council through its decision making process.

Panel members would be required to commit between 10-15 hours per month to do this work which will involve attendance at meetings, background research, interviews with Councillors and relevant officers; and report preparation. The last review of the Panel was concluded in March 2024 and the next review is not planned for a while. However, it is a statutory requirement for the Council to have a Panel in place in case requests to review any aspects of the Members' Allowances Scheme are received or if anything else could require the Panel to convene to revisit any aspects of the scheme in place.

Generally, a light touch review is undertaken around November each year to consider allowances increasing in line with the annual staff pay award. A full review of the Members' Allowances scheme is held far less regularly.

The scope of each full review is defined by Councillors, through the Audit & Governance Committee, and is dependent on changes in the roles and responsibility of Members.

Appendix B

The Audit & Governance Committee, made up of 11 Councillors, is responsible for directing the Panel on the issues to be covered in the review; receiving the final report from the Panel; and making recommendations to the Full Council on any changes to be made to the Members Allowances Scheme. It is the Full Council that must agree any changes based on the Independent Panel's report. The review process sometimes includes holding a Seminar for Councillors either to confirm what the Review will cover or for the Panel to present its initial findings from the review and the draft report on an informal basis to allow time for any further issues or concerns to be raised. Panel members are invited to attend the meetings of the Audit & Governance Committee, the Full Council and the Seminar held during the review process. A timetable would be agreed for the review so there would be plenty of notice of the likely commitment. There would always be one of the officer team present at these meetings and the seminar to support the Panel.

The Panel may also decide to meet as a group throughout the review process to discuss progress and share information.

Support and Training to Panel Members

Officer support to the Panel comes from Daniel Bainbridge, Group Head of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer and Jane Fulton, Committee Services Manager. Their role is to assist with research; provide background information on the issues raised by Members and other officers; offer guidance and support throughout the review process; liaise with the Councillors on the Panel's behalf; and organise any meetings that the Panel might request.

There are training courses and seminars available to explain the review process and the issues that need to be considered for Panel members to attend if they wish.

New members to the Panel would be invited to an introductory session with the officer team to explain the background to the current Members Allowances Scheme and the process for a review. Ongoing support and guidance would then be provided by the officer team.

Terms of Appointment

The appointment is undertaken on a voluntary basis with the current remuneration arrangements being a meeting allowance of £65 per meeting attended and travelling expenses on the basis of Members' rates – currently 45p per mile. This level of allowance forms part of the Members Allowances Scheme and is payable to any independent member.

A claim form will need to be completed on a monthly basis and payment will be direct to a bank/building society account. The appointment is terminable by two month's notice on either side.

Candidates cannot be Elected Members of any local authority (including parish councils) and it is advised that they should not be connected to any political party.

Appendix B

The appointment process involves an interview with the Chief Executive, a representative from the officer team and two Members of the Audit & Governance Committee. The appointment is subject to consultation with the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee.

For more information contact:

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To view the latest reports of the Independent Panel, visit the Council's website on the following link:

[Review of the Members Allowances Scheme - Appendix 1.pdf \(arun.gov.uk\)](#)