**Sunderland City Council Independent Remuneration Panel**

**Background Information**

**Introduction**

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires the Council and certain other local authorities to establish and maintain a scheme for members’ allowances. Regulations made under the Act provide that it is for each local authority to decide its scheme and the amounts to be paid under it.

The Council is required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel, to make recommendations to the Council about the allowances to be paid to elected and co-opted members under the scheme. Whilst the Council must have regard to the advice of the Panel, it does not have a duty to follow its recommendations. However, it must have good reasons for departing from them.

Sunderland City Council is also the lead authority for the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority (the Fire Authority), which has its own allowances scheme. Traditionally, the Fire Authority has used Sunderland’s Remuneration Panel to advise it on the Fire Authority Scheme.

The Council’s and Fire Authority’s current schemes of allowances may be viewed on their respective websites.

**Composition of the Panel**

To date, the Council’s Panel has been made up of three members (the minimum number required by the Regulations). It is now proposed that a “pool” of up to six persons will be appointed, from which a Panel comprised of between three and six members, will be convened, as and when required.

**Terms of Reference**

Each year the Panel produces a report, with recommendations, on:

* the level of basic allowances for all elected members.
* the categories of responsibility and level at which special responsibility allowances should be paid.
* the rate of childcare/dependent carers’ allowance.
* travel and subsistence allowance
* the level of allowance for co-opted members

**Meetings**

The Panel typically commences a review in September/October, in respect of allowances to be paid for the following financial year and may need to meet a number of times during the review period.

The Panel may also be requested to meet and make recommendations at other times during the year, for example, if the Council makes mid-year changes to its governance arrangements.

In undertaking a review, the Panel may wish to:

* research Members’ Allowance Schemes in other relevant authorities,
* gather evidence from interested persons and relevant organisations,
* conduct interviews with relevant persons.

Officer support will be provided to assist the Panel.

**Term of Office**

To assist with the continuity of the Panel’s work, appointments to the “pool” will be made for an initial term of four years and may be renewed on expiry of the term.

**Eligibility**

You are not eligible for appointment if you

* have been a member or officer of the Council or Fire Authority within the last 5 years.
* are a close friend or relative of any member, co-opted member or officer of the Council or Fire Authority.
* have close business or professional links with the Council or Fire Authority or other relationship which may give rise to a conflict of interest
* are politically active
* are disqualified from being a councillor.

**Payment for Panel Membership**

Panel members who have taken part in undertaking a review and making recommendations to the Council or Fire Authority, will receive a small allowance.

**Applications**

Applications should be by letter, which may be accompanied by a CV, and should explain why you would like to undertake the role and provide details of any relevant knowledge, experience and skills, having regard to the person specification.

You should also provide details of two referees.

Application should be submitted to Elaine Waugh, Head of Law and Governance, Sunderland City Council, PO Box 100, Civic Centre, Burdon Road, Sunderland, SR2 7DN.

**The closing date for the receipt of applications is Monday 30th July 2018**

**Appointment Process**

Following receipt of applications, a short listing exercise will be undertaken and short listed candidates will be contacted and invited to attend an interview. It is proposed that interviews will be held on 16th August 2018.

**Further Information**

If you have any further queries regarding the work of the Panel and the application process please contact:

Elaine Waugh,

Head of Law and Governance,

Sunderland City Council,

PO Box 100,

Civic Centre,

Burdon Road,

Sunderland,

SR2 7DN.

Telephone: 0191 5617849

Email: elaine.waugh@sunderland.gov.uk

or

Karen Davison

Head of Financial Management

Telephone: 0191 5617849

Email: karen.davison@sunderland.gov.uk