

Independent Remuneration Panel

Applicant Information Pack

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Section 1

About the Council

Worcestershire Overview

- 1.1 Worcestershire is a diverse County with a mix of rural and urban areas that present their own benefits and challenges. The County covers an area of 173,529 hectares and has six district councils; Bromsgrove; Malvern Hills; Redditch; Worcester City; Wychavon; and Wyre Forest, with a combined population from the 2021 census of 606,300.
- 1.2 Worcestershire County Council provides key public services to meet the needs and expectations for local residents and visitors alike. These services touch all aspects of daily life: schools and lifelong learning; care for children in need; care for older and disabled people; public health, roads, passenger transport and libraries. This is in addition to protecting the rich environment and diverse communities in which we live and at the same time ensuring that the aspirations of the residents for quality jobs and homes are met.
- 1.3 Worcestershire County Council has 57 elected members (councillors) who have a number of key roles and functions in relation to how and what decisions are made.

Section 2

Democratic Structures

Organisational Structures

2.1 Worcestershire County Council has four Directorates, which enables the County to proactively respond to a number of national, regional and local agendas; whilst continuing to improve the quality of services it delivers to the people of Worcestershire.

2.2 These Directorates are:-

- Commercial and Change
- Economy and Infrastructure
- People (Adult and Community Services)
- Public Health

2.3 The Director of Children's Services – a statutory position - is also Chief Executive of Worcestershire Children First. This is a Council owned company which runs its children's services functions

Political Structures

2.4 The political composition of the Council is currently:-

43 Conservative

7 Unity (4 Labour and 3 Liberal Democrats)

7 Green and Independent Alliance (5 Green and 2 Independent)

All 57 councillors have a number of functions which they carry out as part of their roles which are outlined in the Council's constitution.

2.5 The Cabinet is the Council's executive body responsible for making most of the big decisions within the boundaries set by full Council. The Cabinet comprises the Leader of the Council, who is also responsible for finance, and 9 Cabinet Members with Responsibility covering the following portfolios:-

- Adult Social Care
- Children and Families
- Communities
- Corporate Services and Communication
- Economy, Infrastructure and Skills
- Education
- Environment
- Health and Wellbeing
- Highways and Transport

- 2.6 The Council has Overview and Scrutiny arrangements which are a key part of the checks and balances necessary to hold the Cabinet to account and review the services provided by the County Council and other organisations.
- 2.6 Overview and Scrutiny is seen as key to improving policies and performance. It can help ensure that services respond to the needs of the local community and are efficient, cost-effective and easy to use. It aims to ensure that the Cabinet is taking the right decisions and that policies are being implemented effectively.
- 2.7 The Council's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements comprise an overarching Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board supported by the following Panels:-
- Corporate and Communities
 - Health
 - Adult Care and Wellbeing
 - Children and Families
 - Economy
 - Environment

Section 3

About the Independent Remuneration Panel

3.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003 provide for local authorities to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to be responsible for the monitoring of the Members' Allowances Scheme and to make recommendations to the Council regarding the scheme.

3.2 Independent Remuneration Panels make recommendations about:

- the level of basic allowance for all members
- special responsibility allowances which can be paid and the levels of these allowances
- dependent carers' allowances
- the level of any travel and subsistence allowances payable, and
- whether annual adjustments of allowance levels may be made by reference to an index, and, if so, for how long such a measure should run.

3.3 Worcestershire's Independent Remuneration Panel currently comprises five members and three remain in office for continuity:-

Professor Paul Jackson

Andrew Manning-Cox

Richard Quallington, representing the community and Voluntary sector

3.4 Members of the Panel can come from all walks of life and backgrounds. There are no specific qualifications needed to be a Panel Member. Personal qualities such as the ability to approach questions with an open mind, to examine critically and to draw conclusions are important. Experience of working with others on committees or boards would be helpful in this respect as well as an interest in local services.

3.5 There are however certain restrictions to membership which exist to help, in part, maintain the independence of the Panel.

3.6 You cannot be a panel member if you -

- are already a Member (Councillor) of Worcestershire County Council or a Member (Councillor) of any committee or sub-committee; or
- are disqualified from being or becoming a Member of the authority.

Further details about disqualification are set out by the Electoral Commission in advice on its website here: [Part 1 Can you stand for election LGEW \(electoralcommission.org.uk\)](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/part-1-can-you-stand-for-election-lgew)

- 3.8 The Panel usually meets up to 3 times a year at County Hall in Worcester, although meetings may also be held on-line. More meetings may be required when a full review of the scheme is being carried out. Such reviews usually take place in the year or so prior to Local Government elections, and the Council is seeking a review of the scheme ready to report in the first half of 2024.
- 3.9 The post is undertaken on a voluntary, four-year term of office. The terms of office are staggered to enable continuity of knowledge and experience. The duties of the post may require travelling and expenses will be re-imbursed.

Section 4

The Functions of the Independent Remuneration Panel and Role of the Panel Member

Functions of the Independent Remuneration Panel

4.1 The functions of the Independent Remuneration Panel are to make recommendations to the Council:-

- on the amount of basic allowance which should be payable to its elected members
- about the responsibilities or duties which should lead to the payment of a special responsibility allowance and as to the amount of such an allowance
- about the duties for which a travelling and subsistence allowance can be paid and as to the amount of this allowance
- on the amount of co-optees allowance
- as to whether the authority's allowances scheme should be backdated to the beginning of a financial year in the event of the Scheme being amended, and
- as to whether annual adjustment of allowance levels may be made by reference to an index, and, if so for how long such a measure should run.

The Council may refer other issues to the Panel for advice.

The Panel has also made recommendations to Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority in relation to its Councillors.

Role of the Panel Member

4.2 Each member of the Panel has the following duties and responsibilities:-

1. To attend a number of meetings to receive and consider information and advice presented by the Council's officers concerning:-
 - available statutory guidance on Members' Allowances
 - the role of elected members and work and time commitment involved for the average elected member to effectively represent the interests of the community they represent
 - the comparative levels of allowances and expenses paid to members of various bodies both in local government and in other organisations and sectors

- the elements of cost likely to be incurred by elected members effectively discharging their roles and responsibilities
 - the financial implications of various levels of allowances
 - the additional work involved with various levels of special responsibility of some members over and above that of the average member.
2. To consult directly with elected councillors as appropriate as part of gathering evidence to inform the Panel's recommendations or explaining the Panel's report.
 3. To consider and discuss the information provided with a view to forming a judgement on the proper balance between reasonable remuneration and the concept of voluntary public service. It is important that some element of members' work continues to be voluntary. This must be balanced against the need to ensure that financial loss is not suffered by elected members, and further, to ensure that despite the input required, people are encouraged to stand for election to public office and that their service to the community is retained.
 4. To make proposals for Members' allowances based on the evidence provided and which clearly address the question of the need to balance voluntary work against financial loss.

Section Five

Personal Qualities Required

5.1 The following assessment criteria will be used when assessing whether you are a suitable applicant for the role

		Essential/Desirable
1	Personal integrity	E
2	Commitment to upholding high standards	E
3	Commitment to confidentiality in accordance with the Council's wishes	E
4	Ability to work as a member of a Team with other members of the Independent Remuneration Panel	E
5	Ability to analyse detailed information and form conclusions from it	E
6	Ability to make informed judgement based on evidence gathered	E
7	Knowledge of the role and functions of a modern local authority and the workings of local government in general	D
8	Understanding of rules of natural justice	D
9	No formal party political affiliations or relationships that might undermine the independence of the Panel	D

Section Six

Application Process

6.1 The closing date for the receipt of applications is **no later than Friday 24 November 2023**

6.2 Please submit your completed application form, ideally by e-mail, to DemocraticServices@worcestershires.gov.uk

Or by post, marked confidential, to:-

Assistant Director for Legal and Governance (IRP)
Worcestershire County Council
County Hall,
Spetchley Road,
Worcester,
WR5 2NP

6.3 Interviews are likely to be held on 7 December.

Additional information for applicants

Expenses

6.4 Travelling expenses for attendance at the Independent Remuneration Panel meetings will be paid in accordance with the Council's Allowances Scheme.

Availability

6.5 Whilst the time commitment is variable, it is expected that the Panel will normally meet three times a year and on occasions more frequently. Meetings are usually in the daytime and are normally held in County Hall, Worcester. They may also be held remotely using Teams.

Acknowledgements

6.6 No acknowledgements for an application will be given unless specifically requested.

Selection

6.7 Short listing for these appointments will be based upon an assessment of how applicants meet those criteria in the personal qualities section of this document that are tested from the application form. When completing the statement in support of your application section of the form, please set out how you consider you meet these criteria. Appointments will be made by full Council on the recommendation of the interviewing panel.

Progress of Application

- 6.8 If you have heard nothing further concerning your application within 28 days of the closing date for applications, then you should assume that you have not been selected.

Section Seven

ADVERTISEMENT

Independent Remuneration Panel Member

Are you interested in local democracy?

Worcestershire County Council is looking for two members of the public to join its Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) which advises the Council on the allowances to be paid to Councillors.

Meetings normally take place no more than 3 times per year at County Hall, Worcester, although some may be held on-line. More frequent meetings will be required when a full review of the scheme is being undertaken. Such reviews usually take place in the year prior to Local Government elections. The next full review is taking place during 2023/early 2024. The IRP, whilst supported by officers, is entirely independent of the elected members of the Council. It considers evidence and views on the payments to elected members and makes recommendations to the Council.

This post is on a voluntary basis and the appointment will be for an initial four-year period, which may be renewed. The duties involved may require travelling and such expenses will be re-imbursed.

Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel can come from all walks of life and backgrounds. There are no specific qualifications needed to become a Panel Member. Personal qualities are more important, such as the ability to approach questions with an open mind, to examine critically and to draw conclusions. Panel Members cannot be an elected Member of the Authority or a Member of any committees of the authority and must not be disqualified from becoming a member of the Authority.

If you would like to know more about this appointment, please email democraticservices@worcestershire.gov.uk

An application form, together with full details of the requirements of the appointment, the type of person we are seeking and additional background information, is available to download from the Council's website [Councillors area | Worcestershire County Council](#) or details can be obtained from **Democratic Services, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP**

Applications must be received by the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance by

Friday 24 November 2023

Interviews are likely to be held on 7 December.