

Role Profile

About The Borough

Southend-on-Sea City Council provides vital services to meet the needs of the local community. Employing about 1,800 people, we are responsible for all local government functions ranging from social services, transport, public health and parks through to planning, trading standards, community safety and education. The Council has 51 Councillors and 17 wards.

Acting as Independent Person for Southend-on-Sea City Council offers a challenging and rewarding opportunity to contribute to local government transparency and good governance, within a collaborative and innovative environment.

About The Role

As an Independent Person, you will support the Monitoring Officer of Southend-on-Sea City Council and provide an independent view on Code of Conduct complaints submitted against members of the council (elected Councillors). The Monitoring Officer of Southend-on-Sea Council also considers complaints against Leigh-on-Sea Town Council.

The expected average time commitment is only one or two hours per week and is dependent on the number of complaints received. The Council aims to maintain a small panel of independent persons, 2 or 3 at any one time, both to allow for any conflicts of interest and to share the workload. The Council aims to appoint an independent to serve for a fixed period up to a maximum of four years.

Key Aspects of The Role Include

- Providing advice to the Monitoring Officer in considering allegations that a councillor/co-opted member has breached the council's Code of Conduct.
- If requested, sharing your views on a complaint with the councillor against whom it has been submitted.
- If necessary, attending meetings of the Standards Sub-Committee and any panels called to consider complaints, for which reasonable expenses will be paid

About You

It is essential that you:

- wish to serve the local community and uphold the standards of local democracy
- have high standards of personal integrity, the ability to be objective, independent and impartial
- have sound questioning, analytical and decision-making skills
- have leadership qualities, particularly in exercising sound judgment
- have good interpersonal and communication skills

- be discrete, and able to maintain confidentiality in handling personal and sensitive information
- Are a resident of the Southend -on-Sea City Council area
- Are prepared to attend the Council in person when required (for example attending panels and committees).

It Is Desirable That You

- are familiar with the Seven Principles of Public Life (the “Nolan Principles”)
- are qualified or experienced in legal or governance matters
- have previous experience as an Independent Person or similar role

An Independent Person Cannot Be

- A member, co-opted member or officer of Southend-on-Sea City Council or Leigh-on-Sea Town Council.
- A relative or close friend of a person who fulfils the criteria above
- Have been a member, co-opted member or officer of either the City or the Town Council during the last five years.

As an Independent Person, you will not be a council employee, however, you will work closely with the Monitoring Officer, their deputies, and colleagues in reviewing Code of Conduct complaints.

As a voluntary position, you will not be expected to work to a specific schedule but will correspond with the Monitoring Officer and other officers via phone and/or email when your advice is sought.

An annual allowance of £1,300 will be payable, together with reimbursement of reasonable travel and subsistence expenses in discharge of your role. Southend-on-Sea City Council is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in employment and welcomes applications from all members of the community.