



MEETING: FIRE AUTHORITY 24 JUNE 2024

**SUBJECT: MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME FOR THE FINANCIAL
YEAR 2024/25**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE (THE
CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY) AND THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE,
ESTATES AND FACILITIES**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members are requested to note the report and approve the proposed scheme to be applied for the 2024/25 financial year commencing from 1 April 2024.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Authority is required to adopt and approve a Members' Allowances Scheme for each financial year. The practice of the Authority in past years has been to use the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) appointed by Sunderland City Council, to make recommendations regarding its Scheme.
- 2.2 In September 2023 the Authority received and approved a report that agreed to index link Members allowances to the annual firefighter (grey book) pay award increase each year unless there was a material change in the structure and / or composition of the Fire Authority when a full independent (Panel) review would then be undertaken. It was also proposed that every four years an Independent Panel Review would be scheduled to ensure the remunerations were still current and appropriate.
- 2.3 This revised approach was considered to be fair and equitable and aligned members allowance increases to the pay increases of its operational staff whilst still retaining an Independent Panel as required.

3. PROPOSED SCHEME FOR 2024/25

- 3.1 The view and recommendation of the Chief Fire Officer as Chief Executive and Clerk to the Authority is therefore to apply the agreed 4% grey book pay award to the 2023/24 approved allowances.

3.2 The details of the Authority's proposed Scheme for 2024/25, which the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority) is recommending to members is set out in the attached Appendix to this report.

3.3 The Members Allowance Scheme must be approved annually but to ensure that the proposed indexation is kept current and relevant it is considered best practice and recommended to carry out an Independent Panel review every fourth year or sooner should there be any significant changes to the current structure of the Fire Authority.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 There are no risk management implications in respect of this report.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The 4% increase can be accommodated within the 2024/25 base budget for members allowances.

6. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- a) Accept the proposed scheme for the financial year 2024/25 as set out in the report.

APPENDIX – SUMMARY OF MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCES FOR 2024/25

<u>Summary of Members’ Allowances (2024/25)</u>	£
Basic Allowance (2024/25)	2,730
Special Responsibility Allowances (2024/25):	
Chair	13,976
Vice Chair	6,988
Chair – Policy and Performance Committee	6,988
Chair – Human Resources Committee	6,988
Leader of Majority Party in Opposition	3,494
Co-optees’ Allowances:	
Governance Committee	
Chair of Governance Committee	3,598
Independent Member	1,799

Where there is no single majority party in opposition and there is equal representation of any opposition parties on the Joint Authority, the allowance payable to the Leader of the Majority Party in Opposition shall be shared equally between the Leaders of the Parties who are so represented.

Carer’s Allowances:

Actual expenditure up to a maximum of the equivalent of the current National Living Wage or National Minimum Wage hourly rate, as appropriate, dependent upon the age of the worker. The rate applicable shall be subject to automatic increases in line with uprating of the Adult National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage.

Travel Allowances:

Motor Cycle Allowance	24p per mile
Bicycle Allowance	20p per mile

Car Allowance:

45p per mile for first 10,000 miles and 25p thereafter
Passenger Supplement 5p per mile for the Passenger
(not exceeding 4)

The rates for travel and car allowances are to be His Majesty's Revenues and Customs Rates. Allowances to be updated as and when HMRC publishes revised allowances.

Accommodation and Subsistence Allowances:

Overnight Accommodation - the allowance will not be claimable as an allowance as such, rather reasonable costs of an overnight stay (including breakfast) will be met for business class accommodation (3 star or 4 star) within and outside of London. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, officers will book the accommodation direct selecting the most economic option available and utilising the established procurement arrangements in place. Where exceptional circumstances exist, these will be approved in advance by the Finance Officer and reasonable costs will be reimbursed subject to submission of receipts.

The above approach is proposed for dealing with overnight stays (including breakfast). The subsistence rates for other meals, where necessary, are still considered appropriate and would be in addition.

In the case of absence from the usual place of residence for a continuous period which exceeds 4 hours but does not involve an overnight absence, subsistence is payable as per the table set out below:

Breakfast Allowance	£6.15
Lunch Allowance	£8.46
Tea Allowance	£3.33
Evening Meal Allowance	£10.48

Reduction of Subsistence Allowance for Meals Provided Free of Charge:

Reduction for Breakfast provided	£6.15
Lunch provided	£8.46
Tea provided	£3.33
Dinner provided	£10.48

A contribution in excess of the above amounts can be made in exceptional extenuating circumstances. Such circumstances must be approved in advance by the Finance Officer.