

**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**Item No 6**

**MEETING: 15 MARCH 2021**

---

**SUBJECT: MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME FOR THE  
FINANCIAL YEAR 2021/2022**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY AND  
STRATEGIC FINANCE MANAGER**

---

## **1 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Authority is required to adopt a Members' Allowances Scheme for each financial year. The practice of the Authority has been to use the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) appointed by Sunderland City Council, to make recommendations regarding its Scheme.
- 1.2 The Panel's report is attached. In view of the circumstances with the Covid-19 pandemic, the Panel has not undertaken a detailed review on this occasion. It has proposed that this be deferred and in the meantime, has recommended that the scheme for 2021/2022 remain the same.
- 1.3 In setting its Scheme for the forthcoming year, the Authority should have regard to any recommendations of IRPs made to the constituent authorities. None of the schemes of the constituent authorities contain a special responsibility allowance for Members who sit on the Fire Authority. The current basic allowances paid by the authorities are Gateshead £11,279, Newcastle £9,200, North Tyneside £10,358, South Tyneside £7,667, Sunderland £8369. This is in accordance with the recommendations of the relevant IRPs, although in respect of Sunderland, the Panel recommended an indexation increase to the basic allowance for 2021/2022, which the Council declined to implement.

## **2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The total cost of Allowances paid by the Authority to members of all of its various Committees, based on the existing scheme, will be £80,637. Of this sum £72,397 is paid to elected members and £8,240 to the three independent persons co-opted onto the Governance Committee.

- 2.2 The budget for 2021/2022 of £85,457 in addition includes provision for all expenses reasonably incurred by its members whilst attending meetings and carrying out the Authority's business. The Authority reports all of these costs as required in its Statement of Accounts and separately on its website.

### **3 RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 Members are requested to consider whether to apply the terms of the current Scheme for the financial year 2021/2022.

## **Independent Remuneration Panel**

### **Review of Members' Allowances Scheme for Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Authority for the financial year 2021/2022**

#### **Introduction**

1. The Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) uses the Independent Remuneration Panel appointed by Sunderland City Council, to make recommendations to the Authority about the allowances to be paid to elected members in the following financial year.

#### **Review of Allowances**

2. The Panel had originally anticipated undertaking its review in the early part of the 2020/2021 financial year, however as a result of the pandemic, the review was not commenced until much later in the year. The Panel took account of those written representations that had been submitted to it and also met with the Chair of the Authority. It also had regard to benchmarking information regarding the allowances paid at other fire and rescue authorities.
3. Three written representations were received, one suggesting the allowances remain unchanged, one that they be reduced and one highlighting that the level of allowances was modest compared to other comparable fire and rescue authorities. It was suggested that regard be had to the average of metropolitan fire and rescue authorities in particular, and consideration be given to applying an inflationary uplift. The Panel had regard to these views, but was mindful that they had been submitted prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. While the role of the Panel is to assess roles and responsibilities and the demands upon members, the Panel noted, when it met with the Chair of the Authority in December 2020, that there was concern regarding any potential increase at this time, when so many residents within the Authority's area were impacted adversely by the pandemic. In addition, the Panel had wished to undertake a more detailed review of the roles, responsibilities and demands on the time of members, however circumstances during the course of much of the 2020/2021 year had not made this possible. The Panel therefore considers there is merit in deferring the more detailed review until later in the 2021/2022 financial year, and recommends that in the meantime, the allowances scheme remains unchanged. The recommended level of allowances is set out in the Appendix to this report.

#### **Recommendation**

4. No changes be made at this time to the Scheme of Allowances for 2021/2022.

John Anderson CBE  
Karen Straughair  
Stuart Green

February 2021

## APPENDIX – SUMMARY OF MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCES FOR 2021/22

<u>Summary of Members’ Allowances</u>	£
<b>Basic Allowance</b>	2,500
<b>Special Responsibility Allowances:</b>	
Chairman	12,798
Vice Chairman (to include Chairing the Policy and Performance Committee)	10,000
Chairman – Human Resources Committee	6,399
Leader of Majority Party in Opposition	3,200
<b>Co-optees’ Allowances:</b>	
Governance Committee	
Chair of Governance Committee	3,296
Independent Member	1,648

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 Her 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.