

MEETING: TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SUBJECT: MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Authority uses the Independent Remuneration Panel appointed by the lead authority, Sunderland city Council, to make recommendations on its members' allowance scheme. The Panel operates in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and its terms of reference are attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The Regulations are supported by detailed guidance issued by the form Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Inland Revenue, to which the Panel has had regard. The Panel has also had regard to the levels of allowances awarded by other authorities in the region.
- 1.3 The Panel last reviewed the Scheme in 2013, at which time it recommended no changes were made to the terms of the current scheme and that the allowances and associate terms and conditions continue to apply for the financial year 2014/2015.
- 1.4 Written representation was received from a member of the Authority, and verbal representations made to the Panel by the Chair of the Authority regarding the current scheme.

2. CONSIDERATION OF CURRENT SCHEME

- 2.1 The Panel noted that there had been no changes in the governance/committee arrangements within the authority since the last review.
- 2.2 The Panel considered the representations received. These included the view that allowances should be linked to the cost of living/retail price index and adjusted accordingly each financial year to reduce valuable time spent in reviewing the scheme. The Chair of the Authority outlined the operation of the Authority. He referred to the volume of work done, the role of the committees of the Authority, and to the work done by Members to build relationships with

individual fire stations, and support the Authority's preventative work in communities, and explained that this is an evolving role.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Panel recommends that no changes are made to the terms of the current scheme and that the allowances and associated terms and conditions continue to apply for the financial year 2015/2016. The Panel would, however, wish to undertake an in depth review of the role of fire Authority Members in making its recommendations for the financial year 2016/2017.

A schedule of the members' allowances is set out at Appendix 2

John Anderson CBE, Chair
Karen Straughair
John Cuthbert

March 2015

Appendix 1

The Work of the Panel

The regulations provide for independent remuneration panels to have the following functions:

- To make recommendations to the authority as to the amount of basic allowance that should be payable to its elected members.
- To make recommendations to the authority 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.
- To make recommendations to the authority about the duties for which a travelling and subsistence allowance can be paid and as to the amount of this allowance.
- To make recommendations as to the amount of co-optees' allowances.
- To make recommendations as to where the authority's allowances scheme should include an allowance in respect of the expenses of arranging for the care of children and dependants and if it does make such a recommendation, the amount of this allowance and the means by which it is determined.
- To make recommendations on whether any allowance should be backdated to the beginning of a financial year in the event of the scheme being amended.
- To make recommendations as to whether annual adjustments of allowance levels may be referred to an index, and, if so, for how long such a measure should run.
- To make recommendations as to which members of an authority are to be entitled to pensions in accordance with a scheme made under section 7 of the Superannuation Act 1972.
- As to treating basic allowance and special responsibility allowance as amounts in respect of which such pensions are payable.

Appendix 2

Summary of Members' Allowances	Proposed £
Basic Allowance	1848
Special Responsibility Allowances:	
Chairman	12798
Vice Chairman (to include Chairing the Policy and Performance Committee)	6399
Chairman – Human Resources Committee	6399
Leader of Majority Party in Opposition	3200
Co-Optees Allowances:	
Governance Committee	
Chair of Governance Committee	3296
Independent Members	1648

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 Lead of the Parties who are so represented.

Carers Allowances:

Actual expenditure up to a maximum of £7.15 per hour

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)

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:

Reductions 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.

