

Independent Remuneration Panel

Review of Members' Allowances Scheme for Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Authority for the financial year 2016/17

Introduction

1. The Authority uses the Independent Remuneration Panel appointed by the Lead Authority, 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. As part of its review, the Panel considered a briefing paper prepared by officers of the Fire Authority, which it found very helpful in outlining the role of the Authority and setting the context within which the Authority operates and the challenges it faces. The Panel also received information regarding the number of meetings of the Authority and its Committees and with regard to the level of allowances paid at other Fire Authorities.
3. Two members submitted written representations in respect of the Scheme. One submitted that there should be no changes. The other representation set out in some detail the work and time expected of members of the Authority, whether or not they hold a post in respect of which a Special Responsibility Allowance is payable. The Panel noted and recognised the important role of members of the Authority in supporting and promoting its activities and the improvements that had been achieved, for example in respect of the development of "community fire stations", the "Safety Works" scheme, the support of diversity and equality issues and the improvement in the cost of provision of the Fire Service. The Panel recognised the valuable role and responsibilities of members of the Authority, however it considered that the current level of allowances appropriately reflected this. It did not therefore recommend that any change be made in respect of the following financial year.

Recommendations

4. The recommended Scheme of Allowances is shown in the appendix to this report.

John Anderson CBE
John Cuthbert
Karen Straughair

December 2015

Summary of Members' Allowances

Proposed
£

Basic Allowance

1,848

Special Responsibility Allowances:

Chairman

12,798

Vice Chairman (to include Chairing the Policy and Performance Committee)

6,399

Chairman – Human Resources Committee

6,399

Leader of Majority Party in Opposition

3,200

Co-optees' Allowances:

Governance Committee

Chair of Governance Committee

3,296

Independent Members

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 £ 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)

The rates for travel and car allowances are 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.

