

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING: 24TH JULY, 2006

SUBJECT: MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

REPORT OF THE CLERK, DEPUTY CLERK AND THE FINANCE OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report considers proposals for a review of the current Allowances Scheme and for the membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel which will make recommendations to the Authority on the allowances to be paid to Members.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2003 new Regulations and Guidance was issued and a thorough review was undertaken and a new scheme of allowances was approved.
- 2.2 The transitional provisions provided for in the 2003 Regulations provide that Authorities can continue to rely on any panel which was constituted under the provisions of the previous 2001 regulations provided that the composition of the panel conformed to the new requirements of the 2003 Regulations (regulation 20).

Regulation 20 provides that an independent remuneration panel shall consist of at least three members none of whom:-

- (a) is also a member of an authority in respect of which it makes recommendations or is a member of a committee or sub-committee of such an authority; or
 - (b) is disqualified from being or becoming a member of an authority.
- 2.3 It will be recalled that in 2003 the Authority used the same panel as Sunderland City Council as this was deemed on expedient use of time and resources.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 In view of the time lapse since the last review, the Chairman of the Review Panel has enquired as to whether the Panel should review the present scheme. In this regard it should be noted that in 2003 the Panel did not make a recommendation on the index-linking of allowances and therefore the present allowances have not been revised to take account of inflation.

- 3.2 As described above, the Regulations provide for the continued operation of an Independent Remuneration Panel and give guidance on the membership and the appointment process. The panel comprises:

John Anderson (former Chairman of the Local Strategic Partnership)
Ian Todd (ex Principal, Sunderland College)
Karen Straughair (Chief Operating Officer of the North East Strategic Health Authority and the substantive Chief Executive of Sunderland TCPT)

- 3.3 As the current panel is experienced in the process it is proposed to invite them to undertake this proposed review at the time as they review Sunderland City Council's scheme. It is proposed to revise the membership of the Panel for reviews to be undertaken in the future.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Members are asked to:

- 4.1.1 Agree that a review of the current Members' Allowances Scheme be undertaken.
- 4.1.2 Agree that the existing members of the Independent Remuneration Panel be invited to serve again for this review.
- 4.1.3 Agree that the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and the Finance Officer be given delegated powers to take all necessary action to facilitate the review.
- 4.1.4 Agree that in future, reviews be undertaken every three years.
- 4.2 In view of the passage of time since the Council approved the current scheme (November 2003) and in particular the lack of provision on index-linking allowances it is considered a review of the scheme is appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003
New Council Constitutions – Guidance on consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances.