

MEETING: 14 MARCH 2022

**SUBJECT: MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME FOR THE FINANCIAL
YEAR 2022/2023**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY AND
FINANCE DIRECTOR**

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. The Panel has recommended that the allowances scheme remains unchanged for 2022/2023 and that a detailed review be undertaken prior to adoption of the scheme for 2023/2024.
- 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 £10,643, South Tyneside £7,667, Sunderland £8,369. From the information available on the websites of the authorities concerned, it appears that these amounts are in accordance with the recommendations of the relevant Independent Remuneration Panels, other than in respect of Newcastle and Sunderland, where the Panel recommended an increase, but this was rejected.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 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 2022/2023 of £85,617 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 2022/2023.

Independent Remuneration Panel

Review of Members' Allowances Scheme for Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Authority for the financial year 2022/2023

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. On this occasion, only one written representation was received from a member of the Fire Authority. The Panel also met with the Chair of the Authority via Teams and in addition, was provided with benchmarking information regarding the allowances paid at other fire and rescue authorities.
3. The written representation received related to the position of Vice Chairs of Standing Committees of the Fire Authority. Whilst the Panel did not consider it appropriate to recommend any changes to the allowances for committee roles on this occasion, it was mindful that prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, it had hoped to be in a position to undertake a more detailed review of Fire Authority roles and responsibilities. As part of a future detailed review, the Panel would welcome the opportunity to interview one or more vice-chairs, as well as the holders of other roles within the Authority. Having had the benefit of meeting with the Chair of the Authority, the Panel considered this to be a reasonable approach at this time. The Panel noted the Chair's concern regarding proposing any changes to the Scheme when residents were facing challenging times, and considered that if it held a detailed review, ideally before the end of this year, that would enable it to ensure that it had an up to date understanding of the demands associated with the various positions within the Authority, which could be taken into account when making recommendations for the 2023/2024 Scheme.

Recommendation

4. The Panel recommends that no changes be made at this time to the Scheme of Allowances for 2022/2023, the main provisions of which are summarised in the Appendix.

John Anderson CBE
Karen Straughair
Stuart Green

February 2022

APPENDIX – SUMMARY OF MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCES FOR 2022/23

<u>Summary of Members’ Allowances</u>	£
Basic Allowance	2,500
Special Responsibility Allowances:	
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
Co-optees’ Allowances:	
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.

