

SECTION 9 – MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCE SCHEME

Introduction

- 9.1 Combined Fire Authorities are required to introduce a scheme of Member remuneration under the provisions contained in the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (and amendments thereto). These regulations allow each Fire Authority to decide its scheme and the amounts to be paid under each allowance.
- 9.2 Authorities are encouraged to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to consider and advise the Authority on its scheme although there is no statutory obligation to do so.
- 9.3 The amounts payable under the Regulations are for individual authorities to decide taking into account local circumstances, ways of working and the make up of individual decision making arrangements.
- 9.4 Schemes must include a Basic Allowance payable to all Members of the Authority and payment of Special Responsibility Allowances. Travel and subsistence are discretionary.

THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Membership

- 9.5 The Authority has established an Independent Remuneration Panel to consider and advise on the make up of the Authority’s scheme.
- 9.6 The Panel has been in existence since 2003 and draws its membership from similar Panel’s organised by the four constituent authorities whose Members make up the Fire Authority. There are four members on the Panel.

Responsibilities

- 9.7 To determine the payment of allowances in the following categories:-
 - a) Basic Allowance;
 - b) Special Responsibility Allowance;
 - c) Travelling and Subsistence Allowances;
 - d) Non-elected Independent members Allowances; and
 - e) Dependant Carers Allowance (this allowance is not covered by the Regulations for Fire Authorities).

and any other categories identified by the Panel and/or Members of the Authority.

- 9.8 To determine the amount of such allowances on an annual basis.
- 9.9 To determine that, in the event that the Members’ Allowances Scheme is amended, so as to affect an allowance payable for the year in which the amendment is made, whether allowances should be backdated.

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- 9.10 To determine whether adjustments to the level of Members’ Allowances should be related to an index and, if so, which index should apply.
- 9.11 To determine, as appropriate, any changes to the overall operation of the scheme in terms of processing and procedure including income tax/national insurance thresholds.

Protocol

- 9.12 The panel shall meet as and when necessary but in terms of considering the allowances scheme for the following year, the first meeting shall be held in the Autumn followed by a programme of meetings leading up to submission of a report to the Fire Authority in February.
- 9.13. For each of these meetings, the Governance and Corporate Planning Manager will provide as much information as necessary to enable the panel to reach its conclusions, eliciting as much information as possible from Members themselves and from other authorities.
- 9.14. At a meeting within the programme, to be determined by the panel, three Members of the Authority, one from each political group and chosen by the Chair, will attend to hear the recommendations of the panel and to provide comment on the proposals before they are presented to the Authority at its February meeting.
- 9.15. The panel will consider these comments and decide whether to revise its recommendations. It will also provide evidence as to the rationale behind reaching its conclusions.
- 9.16. The panel shall make its final recommendations to the Authority who will have the final decision as to the make up of the scheme for the following year.
- 9.17. Once the Authority has decided upon its scheme at the February meeting, panel members will be informed immediately of the Authority’s decision explaining the reasons why any of its recommendations may need to be considered with reference to any proposed changes.
- 9.18. If the Chair of the panel is dissatisfied with any of the changes he/she will consult the Chair of the Authority on the panel’s behalf.

BASIC AND SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

- 9.19 Each Member is paid a basic allowance which is the same for each Member. The allowance recognises the time commitment of all Members including attending meetings and working within their locality.
- 9.20. The special responsibility allowance is payable to those Members who have significant responsibilities and covers the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority and its committees.

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TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE

9.21. The Authority has made provision in its scheme for reimbursing Members for the cost of travel and subsistence in performing their duties. The allowances can only be claimed in respect of meetings and duties as prescribed in the Scheme.

9.22. The current Scheme of Members’ Allowances is attached as **Appendix 1**.

REVIEW OF THE SCHEME

9.23. The Independent Remuneration Panel will carry out a comprehensive review of the scheme at least every four years.

FURTHER DETAILS

9.24. Further information on the Scheme can be obtained from the Governance and Corporate Planning Manager, Fire Service HQ, Winsford, Cheshire. The Authority’s ‘Guide to Members’ Allowances’ and the current Scheme of Members’ Allowances are available on the Authority’s website. Hard copies of these documents can also be obtained from the Democratic Services office.

Note: The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) have not been engaged in the most recent review of Members’ allowances. Members agreed, at a meeting of the Governance and Constitution Committee on 5th October 2016, to engage with a member of Cheshire East’s IRP to assist with reviews for 2017/18 onwards.

Members' Allowance Scheme 2019-20

Note: At its meeting on 12th December 2018 the Fire Authority decided not to have the National Joint Council (NJC) index annual increase applied to the Members' Allowance Scheme for the period 2019-20.

Basic Allowance

- 1 Each Member of the Fire Authority shall receive a sum of **£4,160.27** (2019/20) per annum in the form of a Basic Allowance from 1st April 2019. Payment of this Allowance shall be monthly in arrears.

Special Responsibility Allowance

- 2 The following roles shall attract the amounts specified as Special Responsibility Allowances:

| Office | 2019/20 Entitlement £ |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Chair of the CFA | 13,686.48 |
| Deputy Chair of the CFA | 6,844.29 |
| Chair of Performance and Overview Committee | 2,737.72 |
| Chair of Governance and Constitution Committee | 1,579.45 |
| Chair of Estates and Property Committee | 1,579.45 |
| Business Continuity Leads (Group Spokespersons and Lead Members – Constituent Authorities) | 1,052.97 |
| Member Champions (includes Chair of Member Training & Development Group; and Risk Management Board Members) | 526.48 |

- 3 Only one SRA shall be paid to an individual Member. Where a Member holds two or more positions which attract an SRA only the highest amount will be paid. This excludes regional appointments.

Regional Appointments

- 4 Members appointed to the North West Fire Forum will receive a payment of **£35** per meeting attended.

Independent (non-elected) members

- 5 Independent (non-elected) members will receive an annual allowance of **£1,218.73**.

Independent Persons

- 6 Independent Persons will receive a payment of **£35** per meeting attended and re-imbusement of expenses incurred (travel/subsistence).

Travel, Subsistence and Other Allowances

(a) Travel

- 7 Members may claim travel expenses for mileage to and from meetings/ events associated with the Fire Authority at the prevailing HMRC rate (currently 45p per mile).

(b) Subsistence

- 8 As a general rule lunch and other refreshments for meetings held at Fire Service HQ and other Service establishments are provided free of charge and, therefore, no claim for any allowance or reimbursement can be made. This may also include meals/refreshments provided at conferences/ seminars/meetings free of charge at other non Service venues.

- 9 For meetings where refreshments are not provided and Members are required to pay for meals, the actual expenditure will be reimbursed up to a maximum rate. At present these rates are as follows:-

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| Breakfast | £7 |
| Lunch | £9 |
| Dinner | £15 |
| Dinner (London) | £20 |

If it is unavoidable and Members need to book their own accommodation the following rates are the maximum that will be paid:

| | |
|----------------|------|
| Hotel | £100 |
| Hotel (London) | £120 |

(c) Dependants' Carers' Allowance

- 10 A Dependants' Carers' allowance is payable to Members where actual costs are incurred for the care of dependent relatives whilst discharging their approved duties for the Fire Authority.

The Dependants' Carers' Allowance will be paid up to a maximum of £3000 per annum and in reimbursement of incurred expenditure upon submission of receipts.

Annual Increase

- 11 The Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances in this scheme shall be increased by the same percentage increase as the NJC pay award for Local Government employees (Green Book).

The increases shall apply from the same date as the pay increases take effect and will be backdated, if necessary.

This index shall apply for four years (up to 31st March 2021) unless the Scheme is amended.

Note: At its meeting on 12th December 2018 the Fire Authority decided not to have the National Joint Council (NJC) index annual increase applied to the Members' Allowance Scheme for the period 2019-20.

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY: LIST OF APPROVED DUTIES

- Attendance at meetings of the Fire Authority, Committees, Sub-Committees, Special Committees, Panels, Boards, Forums and Working/Task Groups
- Authorised briefings for Committees/Sub-Committees including all meetings which are called by officers e.g. Members Planning Days and pre-meeting briefings
- All approved conferences and seminars
- Regional Bodies - North West Fire Forum, NW Fire Control Ltd Board of Directors and associated working groups
- National Bodies – LGA Fire Commission and associated working groups
- Member Learning and Development Events (including induction and attendance at cluster exercises)

In addition to the above, the Chair or his nominee, attend other functions on behalf of the Fire Authority and in these circumstances these are regarded as approved duties for the purpose of the Members' Allowance Scheme.