

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
DATE : 13 NOVEMBER 2019
REPORT OF : DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND COMMISSIONING
AUTHOR: ANDREW LEADBETTER

SUBJECT: MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

Purpose of Report

1. To enable Members to: agree the revised Members' Allowances Scheme for 2020-21 and make a recommendation to the Fire Authority about the Scheme; and to agree the 2020 review methodology.

Recommended: That Members

- [1] Agree the revised Members' Allowances Scheme for 1st April 2020-31st March 2021 and recommend approval to the Fire Authority; and
- [2] Agree the review methodology mentioned in paragraph 9 of the report.

Background

The Law

2. The provisions governing Members' allowances are contained in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 [the Regulations]. The Regulations do not apply to the Fire Authority in full.
3. Part 2 of the Regulations prescribes the allowances that may be paid and rules relating to such allowances. Part 3 of the Regulations sets out the requirements for members' allowances schemes, e.g. the potential to apply an index for annual adjustments to schemes (which can be relied upon for no longer than a period of four years). Part 4 of the Regulations is concerned with the role of the independent remuneration panel [IRP]. Local authorities (e.g. district, county and London boroughs) must have regard to recommendations of an IRP before they make or amend their scheme. A fire authority has a different obligation: it must have regard to the recommendations made by the IRPs of local authorities that appoint its Members (i.e. the constituent authorities). By virtue of this distinction it is clear that the Fire Authority is not required to have its own IRP.
4. The Members' Allowance Scheme must be approved each year by the Fire Authority.

The 2017 Review

5. The Members' Allowance Scheme was reviewed with the assistance of a member of Cheshire East's Independent Remuneration Panel in 2017. The Members' Allowance Scheme has been based on the outcome of that review for 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Information

6. The Members' Allowance Scheme is attached to this report as Appendix 1. The introduction to the Scheme has been changed to reflect the fact that the Authority does not operate an IRP and to describe the alternative arrangements for reviewing the scheme.
7. There have been no notifications from the constituent authorities of recommendations from their IRPs that the Authority would need to have had regard to in making its scheme. The members' allowance schemes of the constituent authorities have also been checked and they do not contain any elements that have an impact upon the Authority's scheme.

2020 Review

8. Given that the index that can be applied to a scheme can only be relied upon for four years, it is necessary to arrange for a review of the scheme during 2020.
9. It is proposed that the same methodology is used for the review of the scheme, i.e. we secure the assistance of a member of one of the IRPs of the constituent authorities. They can provide an independent view and challenge.

Financial Implications

10. The figures in the Members' Allowance Scheme for 2020-21 are identical to those that were approved by the Fire Authority in 2018 as the index was not applied last year.
11. An annual increase could be funded from the Authority's existing budget for Members' allowances.

Legal Implications

12. The Fire Authority is required to have a scheme to cover its Members' allowances. The scheme must be approved each year. It is not bound to have an independent remuneration panel. However, it is required to have regard to any recommendations made by the panels of the constituent authorities.

Equality and Diversity Implications

13. There are no equality and diversity implications.

Environmental Implications

14. There are no environmental implications.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE.