

# CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

**MEETING OF:** GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE  
**DATE:** 29<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2020  
**REPORT OF:** DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND COMMISSIONING  
**AUTHOR:** ANDREW LEADBETTER

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**SUBJECT:** REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

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## Purpose of Report

1. To agree the process and indicative timeline for the upcoming review of the Fire Authority's Members' Allowances Scheme.

## Recommended: That Members

- [1] consider the process and indicative timeline contained in the report and agree the way forward for the review.

## Background

2. The current form of Members' Allowances Scheme was agreed on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2017. There has been little change since then, e.g. the list of Member Champions has been expanded.
3. When the Scheme was last reviewed it did not involve the engagement of an Independent Remuneration Panel. A single member of the Panel for Cheshire East assisted in the review and provided the independent view that Members felt was required.
4. Members agreed at the last meeting of this Committee to follow the same process for the upcoming review.

## Information

5. This report sets out a broad plan for the review, with some indicative timings. Members are asked to consider this plan and specify any steps/issues that need to be added/considered.
6. The following activities will be carried out in order to complete the review.

## Personnel

7. A member of one of the Independent Remuneration Panels of the constituent authorities will be engaged (referred to as Independent Reviewer).  
[End February 2020]

## Information Gathering

8. The Members' Allowances Schemes of the constituent authorities will be checked and all relevant information summarised.  
[End February 2020]
9. The Members' Allowances Schemes of a range of fire and rescue authorities will be checked and all relevant information summarised.  
[End March 2020]
10. All Members (and independent members) will be asked what their expectations are for the review, e.g. are there specific matters that they believe need to be covered and do they wish to speak directly to the Independent Reviewer.  
[End February 2020 – request]  
[End March 2020 – responses]

## Meetings

11. Officers to present information to Independent Reviewer.  
[End May 2020]
12. Independent Reviewer to meet with Members (and independent members), if necessary, or required.  
[End July 2020]
13. Officers and Independent Reviewer agree draft of new Members' Allowances Scheme.  
[End August 2020]
14. Report to Governance and Constitution Committee.  
[11<sup>th</sup> November 2020]
15. Report to Fire Authority.  
[9<sup>th</sup> December 2020]

## Financial Implications

16. The current Members' Allowances Scheme contains an index that was due to be applied to the basic and special responsibility allowances each year. The index states that the same percentage increase should be applied as is agreed by the NJC for the pay award to local government employees (and from the same date).

17. The index has not been applied every year since the current Members' Allowances Scheme was agreed. The table below shows the basic allowance during the current Scheme.

Year	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Basic Allowance	£4,119.08	£4,119.08	£4,160.27	£4,243.48*

\* An indicative increase of 2% has been applied.

18. The cost of the Members' Allowances Scheme (excluding expenses) for the last three years is shown in the table below.

Year	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Total Allowances	£121,650.90	£127,304.21	£134,222.70*

\* This is estimated.

## Legal Implications

19. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 govern the way that the Fire Authority is required to operate its Scheme. The paragraphs below summarise the legal position.
20. The Regulations only apply in part, to fire authorities (Regulation 3). They
- Shall make a scheme for payment of basic allowances (Regulation 4)
  - May include special responsibility allowances that accord with categories in the Regulations (Regulation 5)
  - May provide for payment of dependents' carers' allowance to allow attendance and performance of some duties (Regulation 7)
  - May provide for payment of travelling and subsistence for certain 'duties' (Regulation 8)
  - Must make the scheme before the year it applies to (Regulation 10)
  - May make provision for an annual adjustment to be made by reference to an index – which can only be relied upon for four years without seeking further input from an independent remuneration panel (Regulation 10)
  - Must provide that members of more than one authority cannot receive two allowances for the same duties (Regulation 10)
  - Shall include a time limit on some claims, e.g. travel and subsistence (Regulation 14)
21. Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs) are only required by district, county and London borough councils (not by a fire authority) (Regulation 18). Fire authorities must have regard to IRPs recommendations of the councils that appoint to it (Regulation 19).

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

22. There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

## **Environmental Implications**

23. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE**