



HIWFRA Full Authority

Purpose: Approval

Date: **15 FEBRUARY 2022**

Title: **MEMBERS ALLOWANCES**

Report of Monitoring Officer

SUMMARY

1. This report summarises discussions and proposals of the Member Allowances Working Group with regard to the agreement of a new Scheme from April 2022.

BACKGROUND

2. The Local Authority (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require local authorities, including fire and rescue authorities, to make a scheme providing for the payment to members of basic allowance and any other specified allowances the Authority intends to make in respect of each year commencing 1 April. The scheme must be made by the Authority before it comes into force. Under the provisions of the Members' Allowances Regulations, it is possible for the Fire and Rescue Authority to make a scheme for an annual adjustment of allowances to be ascertained by reference to an index specified by the Authority, for a maximum of four years.
3. Before making a scheme, county and district councils are required to have regard to the recommendations of an independent remuneration panel. The position is slightly different for fire and rescue authorities, who are required to have regard to any recommendation of independent remuneration panels established by those authorities by whom its members are nominated. In this case, those authorities are Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council.
4. At the February 2021 Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority (Shadow Authority) meeting, the Member Allowance Scheme for the Fire & Rescue Authority was approved for 2021/22 and it was agreed that a Member Working Group be established to review the Scheme and make recommendations on a new scheme ahead of its implementation in

April 2022.

5. HIWFRA is not itself required to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel, however in accordance with the Regulations, in reaching a decision it should have regard to the recommendations made by any independent remuneration panels in relation to any Authority by which any of its members are nominated (i.e. the IRPs of the Constituent Authorities). Since the report to the Full Authority in February 2021, the Independent Remuneration Panel at Hampshire County Council has reviewed the County Council's Member Allowances Scheme in September 2021, and the report and outcomes can be found here: [Agenda for Independent Remuneration Panel on Wednesday, 29th September, 2021, 2.00 pm | About the Council | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#). The IRP at Portsmouth City Council also met on 5 March 2021, and it was agreed that no changes would be made to the existing scheme: [Item 7 - Members Allowances Remuneration Panel Recommendations.pdf \(portsmouth.gov.uk\)](#)
6. At the 2021 HIWFRA AGM, the Members' Allowances Working Group was established comprising Councillors Fairhurst, Chadd and Harrison. The Working Group met on 9 December 2021.

Member Allowances Working Group

7. At the meeting on the 9 December, Members reviewed the existing Scheme in light of the changing responsibilities of the Fire and Rescue Authority, specifically the new combination to include the Isle of Wight. It was felt that Members' roles and workloads had not been significantly impacted and that there was no compelling reason to propose an adjustment of either basic or special responsibility allowances.
8. With regard to Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) payable to Members appointed to specific roles, it was highlighted that these were originally based on a formula to connect them directly with the basic allowance. It was agreed to recommend that this formula continue to be applied to SRAs in the new Scheme.
9. The option of identifying an index by which allowances would be adjusted each year of a multi-year scheme was considered. It was noted that previously the local government pay award had been adopted for this purpose. Members recognised the financial constraints in place, but agreed that not increasing allowances at a sustainable level would result in greater pressure for increases in future years. With regards to the duration of the Scheme, it was noted that this had previously been set at four years. A longer duration would be possible, however in accordance with the regulations the index would require review after four years. It was therefore agreed to recommend that a Scheme be set for four years, to be increased in line with any local government pay award in each respective year,

including any pay increase in 2022/23. It was clarified that the pay award percentage applied should be equal to that for the majority of local government officers, excluding any increased award for those on the lowest pay bands.

10. A Members' Allowances Scheme may allow for other expenses such as travel and subsistence costs to be re-claimed in certain circumstances. It was noted that all Members of the Fire Authority were appointed by their respective constituent local authority to the position and therefore when engaged on Fire Authority business were considered to be undertaking an approved duty with regards to the constituent local authority Members' Allowances Scheme. The Working Group acknowledged the administrative benefits of the longstanding arrangement of Fire Authority Members reclaiming travel expenses from their local authority on this basis and agreed to recommend that this approach should continue unchanged.
11. It was noted that the Authority's Independent Persons are in receipt of an annual allowance, which is also set by the Authority, but in accordance with different legislation and therefore does not form part of the Members' Allowances Scheme. It was recommended that for completeness the value of the Independent Persons' allowance be noted.
12. For reference, the allowances being recommended to the Full Authority for the 2022/23 – 2025/26 Members' Allowances Scheme

Basic Allowance: £6243

Special Responsibility Allowances

Role	SRA Formula	SRA monetary value (based on £6243 Basic Allowance)
Chairman of the Authority	2 x Basic	£12,486
Vice-Chairman of the Authority	0.5 x Basic	£3122
Standards and Governance Committee Chairman	0.25 x Basic	£1561
Standards and Governance Committee Vice-Chairman	0.125 x Basic	£781
Principal Opposition Spokesperson	0.5 x Basic	£3122
Other* Opposition Spokesperson	0.125 x Basic	£781

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

13. There are no financial or resource implications from the content of this report.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

14. There are no specific equality or other impacts arising from the proposals contained in this paper.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

15. The Full Authority is required under the The Local Authority (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to have an adopted Member Allowances Scheme in place for April 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS

16. That the Authority note the outcomes of the review of the Members' Allowances Scheme carried out by the Working Group and agree to implement a new Members' Allowances Scheme for the years 2022/23 – 2025/26 as attached at Appendix 1.
17. That the Monitoring Officer be given delegated authority to incorporate the new scheme at Appendix 1 into the HIWFRA Constitution.
18. That any local government pay award made in this period be applied as an index for the adjustment of Member allowances. In doing so retaining the ratio between basic allowance and SRA as set out above. For clarity, the applicable pay award shall be that received by the majority of staff and exclude any additional pay award given to officers on low pay grades.
19. That any further expenses in relation to being a Member of the Fire Authority (e.g travel or subsistence) continue to be reclaimed from respective appointing Members' local authorities in accordance with their Members' Allowances Schemes.
20. That the Authority note that the appointed Independent Persons receive an annual allowance of £100 which is awarded under separate legislation and therefore not formally part of the Members' Allowances Scheme.

Appendix 1: Proposed Members Allowance Scheme for 2022-2026

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