

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**7<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2007**

**1. PAYMENT OF ALLOWANCES TO INDEPENDENT MEMBERS**

Joint report of the Clerk and the Monitoring Officer.

RECOMMENDED that the Authority asks the Independent Remuneration Panel to consider the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance and Dependent Carer's Allowance to the Independent Chair and Members of the Standards Committee as part of its forthcoming review.

**2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report provides information requested by the Committee with regard to the payment of allowances to Independent Members of the Standards Committee by other Fire Authorities.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Committee at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2007 (Minute No. 4/07) asked for the practice of peer authorities in relation to the payment of allowances to Independent Members of Standards Committees to be investigated and for a further report in due course.
- 3.2 Information on this matter has been requested from the four other Fire Authorities in the West Midlands region and is set out overleaf in Appendix 1 for Members' information. Appendix 2 sets out the position in the five comparator Metropolitan Fire Authorities.
- 3.3 The West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority Members' Allowances Scheme provides for Independent Members to be paid Subsistence and Travelling Allowances only. Elected Members receive a basic allowance of £3,000 per annum. Appendix 2 sets out the Special Responsibility Allowances paid to elected Members. These allowances are generally calculated on a percentage of the Chair's

Special Responsibility Allowance. The current Scheme is due for review by an Independent Remuneration Panel and any new Scheme will be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2008. The consideration of payment of allowances to co-optees is a matter for the Independent Remuneration Panel [see para 5.2 below].

#### **4. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

- 4.1 In preparing this report, an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out, as the matters contained in this report will not lead to a policy change.
- 4.2 Independent Members are entitled to claim Travel and Subsistence Allowance, but are not currently entitled to claim Dependent Carers' Allowance, which puts Independent Members who are also carers at a disadvantage. The Independent Remuneration Panel could be asked to consider this anomaly when the Scheme is reviewed.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The WMFRA Members Allowances Scheme was last reviewed in December, 2006 and was made under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
- 5.2 Prior to the above Regulations coming into force, the Standards Board for England had made representations for the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance to Independent Members of Standards Committees. The 2003 Regulations made provision for local authorities to pay persons other than elected Members an allowance in addition to Travel and Subsistence Allowances. These 'co-optees allowances' would apply to Independent Members. Each authority is, however, obliged to consider the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) as to whether it should provide for the payment of co-optees allowances and travel and subsistence payments. The Fire Authority's IRP has not to date been asked to consider the question of a co-optees allowance.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no direct resource implications arising from this report but there would be additional costs to the Authority if co-optees allowances were to be introduced, which would need to be taken into account in the budget setting process.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Standards Board for England web site.

**NEERAJ SHARMA**  
**MONITORING OFFICER**

**SUSAN PHELPS**  
**CLERK**

## Appendix 1

### ALLOWANCES PAID TO INDEPENDENT MEMBERS IN OTHER FIRE AUTHORITIES

Authority	Chair of Standards Committee	Independent Members
WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AUTHORITIES		
Hereford and Worcester	No allowances currently payable. The position is under review.	
Shropshire	No separate allowance payable	£257 pa + travel and subsistence
Staffordshire	£1030 pa SRA in addition to £565 co-optees allowance	£565 pa + travel and subsistence
Warwickshire County	£3860 pa	£1065 pa + travel and subsistence
	County Council deals with fire service matters. Allowances quoted relate to the County Council Standards Committee	
NATIONAL COMPARATOR AUTHORITIES		
Greater Manchester	£286.46 in addition to basic co-optees allowance	£286.46 + travel and subsistence
Merseyside	No additional allowance paid	£550 + travel and subsistence
Strathclyde	tba	tba
West Yorkshire	£529	£265 + travel and subsistence

#### Key

SRA = Special Responsibility Allowance

**Appendix 2**

**West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority**  
**Members Allowances Scheme - Special Responsibility Allowances**

<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Amount pa (£)</b>
Chair of the Authority	15,000.00
Vice–Chair of the Authority	7,500.00
Leader of the Principal Opposition Group	6,000.00
Executive Committee Member	3,750.00
<b>Lead Member for Equality and Diversity</b>	4,500.00
Deputy Lead Member for Equality and Diversity	1,500.00
Lead Member for Performance Management	4,500.00
<b>Deputy Lead Member for Performance Management</b>	1,500.00
Chair of the Appeals Committee	4,500.00
Vice–Chair of the Appeals Committee	750.00
Principal Member Joint Consultative Panel *	1,920.00
Deputy Principal Member Joint Consultative Panel *	640.00
Regional Management Board Member	4,500.00