

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

24 JUNE 2013

1. **HONORARIA**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

THAT Members note the information relating to the breakdown of honoraria payments made by the Service during the years 2011/12 and 2012/13 contained within this report.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the breakdown of payments relating to honoraria paid to employees during the financial years 2011/12 and 2012/13.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At the Authority meeting on 15 April 2013, the Clerk and Monitoring Officer presented a report regarding the Honoraria Process. It was subsequently agreed that the Chair of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority would be informed, for information, of all authorisations for payment of honoraria. The Service was also asked to provide an additional breakdown on the honoraria payments for the financial years 2011/12 and 2012/13.

3.2 **Honoraria**

The Service defines honoraria as specific conditions for one-off payments, which provide incentives for specific circumstances, such as the following:

- for achieving one-off projects clearly outside the range of the job;
- for successfully carrying out a task which was exceptionally difficult, or when taking on some, but not all of the elements within a higher post.

These temporary arrangements must have an end date and should be regularly reviewed in one to one meetings.

3.3 The cost of honoraria payments reported for 2011/2012 was: £15,000.

This figure relates to payments made for the period 1st September 2011 to 31st March 2012. Prior to this period, honoraria payments were not recorded separately from other allowance and expenses payments. This change in reporting was introduced as part of the review of allowances and expenses to assist the Service to monitor its expenditure more effectively.

There were 12 honoraria payments reported in 2011/12. The main reasons for these payments were

- undertaking temporary/additional duties;
- additional responsibilities or specific project work relating to the review of the Service or sections of the Service;
- employees being required to undertake elements of higher graded roles following a reduction in the number of temporary workers and the Service's decision not to recruit within the midst of the financial uncertainty.

3.4 The cost of honoraria payments reported in 2012/2013 was: £84 k. Within 2012/13 there were approximately 60 honoraria payments made. These can be categorised in three main areas.

- Project work: work of a specific nature to meet the needs of the Service. This type of honoraria accounted for a third of all payments. Examples included support to the Management and Administration reviews. However, the majority of project payments were made to ICT personnel and related to the development and improvements to the ICT system as a result of the shared Fire Control project with Staffordshire FRS. It is important to note that funding has been provided by the Government to support the Fire Control Collaboration project and of this funding £172 k has been allocated for the payment of salaries.
- Undertaking temporary/additional duties or responsibilities: This category amounted to approximately a third of people in receipt of honoraria payments. This would include undertaking activities from vacant posts that have not been filled. During 2012/13 financial year there were 81 leavers. Whilst approximately 45 of these leavers were as a result of redundancy or voluntary redundancy processes there were 31 vacancies that were not filled within this financial year.

There were also 57 other vacancies from the previous financial year which remained vacant. It has therefore been necessary for some work of a higher level, but not the full role, to be undertaken by other employees for which an honorarium was paid.

- The final group of honoraria payments were to employees undertaking work outside their current role. Examples of this included such activities as Work Place Assessment, Integrated Risk Management and Data Management. In these cases, employees undertook additional work of a higher level whilst a review of the Service needs was undertaken. This work related to new activities not activities already contained within another role. Additionally, two employees received payments for the support they provided to the Chief Fire Officer in his role of President of the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA). Funding for these payments, which amounted to approximately £6k, has been provided from CFOA.

- 3.5 It is expected that 23 of the ongoing honoraria payments will continue into 2013/14. Of these, 13 payments will continue to be paid to support ICT projects. Support will continue to be funded by CFOA to assist the Chief Fire Officer with his CFOA duties.
- 3.6 The total cost of honoraria payments in April 2013 was £5k. There are timelines in place for the review of each honorarium payment and a large proportion of these payments will be reviewed and may cease by 30 September 2013.
- 3.7 The Service continually reviews honoraria and other allowances and may from time to time undertake a Director led review.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out as the matters in this report do not relate to a policy change.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

It is lawful to pay honoraria. Good corporate governance requires that there is appropriate transparency and fairness in the payment of honoraria.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

In 2011/2012 the payments of honoraria were £15k for the period 1st September 2011 to 31st March 2012. In 2012/2013 the payments of honoraria were £84k for the full 12 month period.

The Break down of these costs is categorised below:

	Nos	2011/12 £	Nos	2012/13 £
Project Work	1	2,000	19	22,000
Temp Additional Responsibilities	4	6,500	22	38,000
Outside of Role Map	7	6,500	20	24,000
Totals	12	15,000	61	84,000

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications for this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on 15th April 2013

The contact for this report is Director Human Resources, David Johnson, 0121 380 6914.

VIJ RANDENIYA
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER