

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

19 NOVEMBER 2018

1. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

Report of the Clerk and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Authority note the contents of the Independent Review of Members' Allowances report, by Andrew Campbell, Local Government Association. Additionally, members consider the recommendations set out to determine a way forward. The full report is attached as Appendix 1.

2 SUMMARY OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Basic Allowance for Members be increased from £3,500 to £4,100 and backdated to June 2018. (See Appendix 1, Item 31)
- 2.2 The Chair's allowance of £24,500 should remain unchanged. (See Appendix 1, Item 34)
- 2.3 The allowance paid to the Vice-Chair remains unchanged at £12,250. (See Appendix 1, Item 36)
- 2.4 The allowances paid to the Chairs of the Governance and Transformation Committee, Scrutiny Committee, Audit and Risk Committee and Joint Consultative Panel should remain at £8,575. (See Appendix 1, Item 39.)
- 2.5 The level of allowances paid to Vice Chairs of the Governance and Transformation and Scrutiny Committee remain unchanged at £6,575. (See Appendix 1, Item 42.)
- 2.6 The increase to £6,575 for the Vice Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, with this payment backdated to June 2018. (See Appendix 1, Item 42.)

- 2.7 The allowance paid to the Vice Chair of the Joint Consultative Panel should remain at £3,975. (See Appendix 1, Item 42.)
- 2.8 The decrease in payment to the Chair of the Appeals, Standards and Appointments Committee from £8,575 to £6,575, backdated to June 2018. However, if the Committee meets four times or more in the year, the allowance should revert to £8,575. (See Appendix 1, Item 44.)
- 2.9 The decrease in payment to the Vice Chair of the Appeals, Standards and Appointments Committee from £3,975 to £3,000, backdated to June 2018. However, if the Committee meets four times or more in the year, the allowance should revert to £3,975. (See Appendix 1, Item 44.)
- 2.10 The removal of the payment of £4,900 to the members of the Scrutiny Committee with effect from 1 December 2018. (See Appendix 1, Item 47.)
- 2.11 Members continue to receive only one Special Responsibility Allowance. (See Appendix 1, Item 49.)
- 2.12 The independent member of the Audit and Risk Committee from £350 to £410 and backdated to June 2018. (See Appendix 1, Item 53.)
- 2.13 No change is made to the schedule of approved duties and to the fact that travel and subsistence payments should only be claimed when carrying out duties beyond the West Midlands. (See Appendix 1, Item 60.)
- 2.14 No increase is made to the travel and subsistence payments. (See Appendix 1, Item 61.)
- 2.15 The increase to the amount paid for dependants' carers allowances from £350 to £410 (10% of the Member Basic Allowance. (See Appendix 1, Item 82.)
- 2.16 An option was also identified for the Authority to continue with the existing allowance scheme and uplift by 1%. For

clarity, this is referenced in the report as an option and not specified as a recommendation. (See Appendix 1, Item 19.)

3. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted for the Authority to review the independent recommendations made to the Members Allowances for 2018/19.

4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 In accordance with Regulation 10 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (the Regulations), the Authority is required to make and approve a scheme of the payments of members' allowances each year.
- 4.2 There was no pay award to NJC and Local Government Services in 2010/11, 2011/12 and members' allowances were not therefore increased. The scheme does not allow for indexing beyond 1 April 2011 and an Independent Remuneration Panel would usually be convened to review the members' allowances scheme. In the years between 2012/13 and 2017/18 in view of the continuing difficult financial situation faced by the Authority, it was agreed to defer reconsideration of the scheme and to review the situation in 12 months' time.
- 4.3 There have been minimal increases in local government pay; however, in view of the continuing financial stringency and given the reformation of the Fire Authority as approved in Authority on 10 April 2017 and the revised governance structure as approved in Authority on 25 June 2018, an Independent Review has commenced to review the scheme of members' allowances. There has been a delay in the commencement of the review due to the sourcing of an appropriate independent body.
- 4.4 The members' allowances scheme was revised and approved in Authority on 25 June 2018. The scheme was revised to reflect the dissolved Executive Committee, the new Governance and Transformation Committee and the

amalgamation of the Appointments, Standards and Appeals Committee.

- 4.5 The review allowed Members to provide representations of their views on the Members' Allowances. These included that increases in the cost of the allowances scheme would be difficult at a time of increasing pressure on the Fire Service and the limited lifespan of the Fire Authority.
- 4.6 It has been acknowledged that the reduction in the number of members has saved approximately £80,000 in allowances; the reformed structure has increased participation or availability by members.
- 4.7 The representations were analysed alongside external data that was researched against existing West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority current members' allowances and roles and responsibilities.

5. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out. The matters contained in this report do not relate to a policy change.

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications associated with the implementation of the recommendations set out in this report.

7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

If the recommendations were introduced in full, (see Appendix 2) the figure for 2018/19 would be £162,260. The previous figure for the year was £163,375. This could increase by £2,975 if the Appointments, Standards and Appeals Committee meet in excess of four times in the year. The reduction in the Special Responsibility Allowance for Scrutiny Members is suggested to cease with effect from 1 December 2018, the £4,900 payment would be pro-rated as five months will have been paid.

8. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Fire Authority Meeting 10 April 2017,
Report – Route Map to a Mayoral WMCA Governance, a reformed
Fire Authority,
(Agenda Item No. 5)

Fire Authority Meeting 25 June 2018
Governance of the Authority 2018-2019,
(Agenda Item No. 9)
Appointment of Co-opted Members,
(Agenda Item No. 10)

Fire Authority Meeting 17 September 2018
Members Allowances Review Update
(Agenda Item No. 13)

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