

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE: AUTHORITY (ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING)

DATE: 9TH JUNE 2022 **REPORT NO:** CFO/027/22

PRESENTING OFFICER: MONITORING OFFICER

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: RIA GROVES **REPORT AUTHOR:** SHAUNA HEALEY

OFFICERS CONSULTED: STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM
CHAIR OF THE AUTHORITY

TITLE OF REPORT: MEMBERS ALLOWANCE PAYMENTS 2021/22

APPENDICES: APPENDIX 1: BREAKDOWN OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCE PAYMENTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2021/22

Purpose of Report

1. To advise the Authority of the payments made to Members in the form of allowances during the financial year 2021/22.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members note the information contained within the report and at Appendix 1.

Introduction and Background

3. Regulation 15 of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, requires that the total sums paid to each Member for Basic, Special Responsibility, Travel, Subsistence and Co-optees Allowance be published. Appendix A (attached) shows the total amount of allowances paid to each Member during the financial year 2021/22, including on costs. It also provides a breakdown of those total allowance payments into allowance type.
4. Appendix A includes clarification notes where individual Members have left or joined the Authority, or changed roles during the course of the last Financial Year.
5. For clarity, the Authority appointed an Independent Person who, with effect from 1st October 2013, who has carried out the duties of a Co-opted Member in relation to Independent Scrutiny. Invoices are submitted by the Independent Person for any works conducted in relation to their role, which are then checked by the Democratic Services Manager prior to approval being given for payment. Appendix A also includes payments for duties conducted by the Independent Person in performing these roles, which were paid at a daily rate of £50 during 2021-22.

6. In addition to the total amount of allowances paid to each individual Member (including all on costs - tax and national insurance deductions etc.), Appendix A also details the amount of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) payments, made to Members appointed to special roles within the Authority. The payments reported are for the Financial Year 2021/22, which spans two Municipal Years – 2020/21 and 2021/22; and some Members may have left or joined the Authority, or changed roles, at various stages throughout the period reported.
7. Members appointed to specialist roles only receive an SRA payment for one role (usually the role with the largest responsibility), regardless of the number of specialist roles they are appointed to, in line with the Members Scheme of Allowances.
8. Also included within Appendix A are reimbursements for mileage, overnight accommodation, travel and subsistence allowances, which have been claimed by individual Members through the Authority's Scheme of Allowances. It is important to note that these are reimbursements for time and expenses incurred by Members; and are not payments in relation to travel and event bookings made directly by the Authority.
9. A separate column has been included within Appendix A to show any additional costs per Member, which have been incurred directly by the Authority. This includes travel and accommodation booked and paid directly by the Authority.
10. It is important to note that the additional payments made through the Scheme of Members Allowances; and costs incurred directly by the Authority, are normally higher for those Members in receipt of Special Responsibility Allowances, particularly the Chair of the Authority, compared to those of other Members, due to the amount of events they attend on behalf of the Authority; and associated travelling costs.
11. It is important to note that there has been a significant reduction in the amount of additional payments made through the Scheme of Allowances, as a direct result of the Covid-19 Pandemic, with some meetings and events taking place remotely, resulting in reduced travel, accommodation, subsistence and conference costs.

Equality and Diversity Implications

12. There are no direct equality or diversity implications arising out of this report.

Staff Implications

13. Members allowance claims are checked against attendance at events and are approved by the Democratic Services Manager for payment.

Legal Implications

14. Members have an approved Members Allowance Scheme and are therefore entitled to payment of allowances and reimbursement of expenses as set out within that scheme.
15. The publishing of payments to Members ensures the Authority remains compliant with its legal duties.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

16. The rates of allowances are determined by the Authority and are reviewed periodically.
17. The total cost of Members Payments for the last municipal period and such costs were contained within the budget.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

18. Members of the Authority are required to use the most efficient method of transport when travelling on Authority business.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

19. Members of the Authority are provided with basic allowances to cover the costs of time, travel, subsistence and responsibility. This provides Members with the opportunity and ability to attend events to represent the Authority, which contributes to effective decision making for the benefit of the community.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

MFRS Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service