

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY (ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING)		
DATE:	8 JUNE 2023	REPORT NO:	CFO/029/23
PRESENTING OFFICER	RIA GROVES, MONITORING OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	RIA GROVES	REPORT AUTHOR:	SHAUNA HEALEY
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	SCHEME OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCE 2023/24		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A: SCHEME OF ALLOWANCE
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Purpose of Report

1. To request that the Authority reviews the current Scheme of Members' Allowances and makes recommendations on any changes it wishes to make.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members;
 - a) approve continuation with its current Members' Allowance Scheme, or:
 - b) identify any variations to the Scheme they may wish to implement, in line with the structure of the Authority (which is being considered as a separate report on this agenda) and the approved budget;
 - c) note that any inflationary increase to the Authority's Scheme of Members' Allowances is normally aligned to the previous year's Firefighters' pay and subsistence allowances by the previous year's March CPI;
 - d) approve a pay increase to the Scheme of Members allowances in line with the Firefighters Pay Award for 2022/23 which would apply to the 2023/24 allowances;
 - e) approve the current roles of Co-opted Member and the Independent Person to be combined; and
 - i. to be appointed to both the Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committee, as a non-voting member (subject to approval of the structure);
 - ii. to continue to consider any complaints against Members alleged to have breached the Members' Code of Conduct and Relevant

Officers under the Relevant Officers Disciplinary Procedure on the Independent Panel as the “Independent Person”; and

- iii. to be paid for conducting such roles following submission and verification of invoices at a daily attendance rate of £60 (as and when required) as is the current case.
- f) approve the appointment of a second Independent Person to be advertised locally and interviewed.

Introduction and Background

- 3. The Authority’s draft Scheme of Members’ Allowances for 2023/24 is attached at Appendix A.
- 4. The Authority have previously agreed that Members entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance (‘SRA’), would only be entitled to receive one SRA payment, even if Members had more than one additional responsibility which would attract a SRA.
- 5. In addition, it was also agreed at the AGM on the 11th June 2015, that the SRA payment for Opposition Spokesperson only be paid to one Opposition Member at any given time.
- 6. A slight amendment is proposed to the Scheme of Allowances for 2023/24 in relation to the removal of the two-tier Committee Chair SRAs with two different allowances previously payable, dependant on the size of the Committee. It is proposed that the two-tier Committee Chair SRA be removed and one single rate SRA for a Chair of a Committee of the Authority be applied.
- 7. Mr Anthony Boyle has been undertaking the roles of Independent Person and Co-opted Member under the title of “Independent Person” as per the Localism Act 2011 which requires that an Independent Person be appointed to consider any complaints made against Elected Members. Further to a review undertaken by the Monitoring Officer, it is proposed that a second Independent Person is appointed to the Authority to consider any complaints in respect of elected Members and Statutory Officers. While the Authority has continued with one Independent Person for a period of time, an appointment of an additional Independent Person would provide further resilience and greater independence for the Authority. Furthermore, discussions have been undertaken within the Merseyside region to access a pool of Independent Persons from different local authorities in the event of any complaints, as and when needed, providing additional resource.
- 8. It is recommended to Members that the Monitoring Officer now write to those Local Authorities to confirm which Independent Persons would be a part of that pool. The costs to the proposal to appoint a second Independent Person and seek agreement to access Independent Persons from a pool of resources can be met within existing budgets.

9. The full breakdown of the proposed Scheme of Allowances is contained in Appendix A of this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

10. All Members are entitled to the same basic allowance and SRAs are paid to Members for performing approved special responsibilities by reference to proportions of basic allowance.

Staff Implications

11. This report relates to Members' allowances and as such, there are no staff implications to consider.

Legal Implications

12. The Local Government Act 1972 and the Members Allowances (England) Regulations 2003, provide that a Scheme of Allowances is required and reviewed every year.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

13. The costs for the scheme of Members Allowances can be met within existing budgets.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

14. There are no risk management, health and safety or environmental implications arising directly from this report.

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.*

15. Payment of allowances at reasonable rates will ensure that Members are able to effectively perform their functions in leading and settling the mission, policies and objectives for the Authority to achieve.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

MFRS Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service

