MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	**AUTHORITY**		
DATE:	**14 JUNE 2016**	**REPORT NO:**	**CFO/050/16**
PRESENTING OFFICER	**MONITORING OFFICER**		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	**JANET HENSHAW**	**REPORT AUTHOR:**	**KELLY KELLAWAY – DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER, EXT 4113**
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	**STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GROUP**		
TITLE OF REPORT:	**SCHEME OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2016/17**		

APPENDICES:	**APPENDIX A:**	**DRAFT MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**
	APPENDIX B:	**MEMBERS ALLOWANCE PAY RATES**
	APPENDIX C:	**REVISED MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE PAY RATES 2016/17 IN LINE WITH PROPOSED STRUCTURE (AS PER SEPARATE REPORT ON THIS AGENDA)**

Purpose of Report

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

Recommendation

2. That Members;

   a. Confirm 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).

   c. Note that any inflationary increase to the Authority's Scheme of Members' Allowances is normally aligned to the previous year's Firefighters' pay. However at the Authority's AGM on 11th June 2015, Members confirmed

their intention to reject any pay increase in line with the Firefighters Pay Award for 2015/16, which would have applied to the 2016/17 Allowance.

d. Confirm their intention to either accept or reject any pay increases in line with Firefighters Pay Award for 2016/17, which would apply to 2017/18 allowances.

e. Consider and confirm if they are content for the combined roles of Co-opted Member (previously appointed to the Performance and Scrutiny Committee as a non-voting Member)

   i. to be appointed to the Audit and Scrutiny Sub-Committee (if the proposed revised structure is agreed by the Authority),
   ii. to continue to consider any complaints against Members, alleged to have breached the Members' Code of Conduct as "Independent Person";
   iii. To be paid for conducting such roles following submission and verification of invoices, at a daily attendance rate of £50 (as and when required) as is the current case.

Introduction and Background

3. The Authority's draft Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2016/17 is attached at Appendix A. The Scheme adopted by the Authority on 22nd November 2004, was approved to take effect on 1st April 2005 and was subsequently confirmed at the Annual Meetings in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

4. In 2009 the Authority agreed an amendment to the Scheme of Allowances to include the addition of a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) of 50% of the basic allowance, for Members appointed as Deputy Group Leaders, should their group wish to appoint a Member to that position, on the proviso that such allowance would not be payable where an SRA is also payable for performing the role of Vice Chair of the Authority.

5. The Authority also agreed that Members entitled to SRA's for the role of "Chair" or additional responsibilities such as Lead Member, would only be entitled to receive one SRA payment.

6. As the SRA payment for a Deputy Group Leader had not been paid since 2011/12; and as the proportion of Opposition Members appointed to the Authority do not form any single political group, it was agreed by the Authority at the AGM on 11th June 2015, that the SRA payment for Deputy Group Leader, be removed from the Scheme of Members Allowances for 2015/16.

7. In addition; and due to the political balance of the Authority, it was also agreed at the AGM 11th June 2015 that the SRA payment for Opposition Spokesperson, only be paid to one Opposition Member. The political balance of the Authority remains unchanged for 2016/17

8. Members will recall that that the Localism Act 2011 requires that an Independent Person (IP) be appointed to consider any complaints made against Elected Members. The Authority considered entering into a shared arrangement with another Authority however it was not possible for practical reasons to achieve this outcome.

9. At the Annual Meeting 2013 the Authority considered and approved a job description for the role of Independent Person, as although no complaints have been received over the past few years, the importance of having someone available to undertake this role if required was recognised.

10. Furthermore, Members will recall that the National Framework for England requires Fire and Rescue Authorities to involve their communities in planning and to have effective scrutiny arrangements in place with independence in the process. In 2012 the LGA Peer Challenge report recommended that more independent scrutiny would give increased public assurance. A number of options were considered to provide this type of independent scrutiny, including sharing arrangements with other FRA's. However, most other FRA's had their own arrangements in place and therefore, the Authority approved at its Annual Meeting 2013, the role and responsibilities for an appointed Co-opted Member to sit on the Performance and Scrutiny Committee, without voting rights, to provide an impartial and independent view to this Committee.

11. Since October 2013, Mr Anthony Boyle has been undertaking the roles of Independent Person and Co-opted Member under the title of "Independent Person".

12. The Authority is requested to consider whether the combined undertaking of these roles by the appointed individual has had any significant effect upon the Authority, which may justify terminating the arrangement; and if there is no just cause, confirm the continuation of the combined arrangements for 2016/17.

13. Given the proposed changes to the Authority Structure for 2016/17 (to be considered as a separate report on this agenda), should this proposed structure be approved, it is proposed that Mr Boyle be Co-opted onto the Audit and Scrutiny Sub-Committee in the same capacity as he is currently Co-opted to the Performance and Scrutiny Committee.

14. The Scheme provides for payment of a basic allowance to all Councillors calculated at £8,070 from 1st April 2010 (in line with Firefighters pay award of the previous July). There was a pay freeze for Firefighters from 2010 until 2012; and 1% increases to Firefighters pay in 2012, 2013 and 2014. However, the Authority resolved not to take these 1% increases to their allowances at the Annual Meetings on 11th June 2013, 26th June 2014 and 11th June 2015.

15. Furthermore, Firefighters were awarded a 1% pay increase in July 2015, however at its AGM on 11th June 2015, the Authority confirmed their intention to reject the expected pay award in relation to their Scheme of Allowances, which would have been applied to their allowances for 2016/17.

16. Members will consider the Structure of the Authority in relation to a separate report on the Agenda. It is proposed however, that the Structure for 2016/17 be amended with the deletion of the Performance and Scrutiny Committee. This will reduce the number of SRA payments for Committee Chair's, at a rate of £6,035 per year.

Equality and Diversity Implications

17. All Members are entitled to the same Basic Allowance; and SRA's are paid to Members for performing approved special responsibilities by reference to proportions of basic allowance.

Staff Implications

18. There are no staff implications arising directly from this report. This report relates to Members Allowances only.

Legal Implications

19. 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

20. The Authority resolved to achieve a 10% saving over a four year period off the Members Allowance Budget, which was set at £240k, as part of the budget setting at the Budget Authority meeting on 26th February 2014.

21. The Members Allowance Budget for 2016/17 is set at £216k.

22. The proposed deletion of the Performance and Scrutiny Committee; and subsequent reduction in SRA payments for Chair of Committees, will meet the 10% saving target for 2016/17.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

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

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

IP	Independent Person
FRA'S	Fire & Rescue Authorities
LGA	Local Government Association
SRA	Special Responsibility Allowance