

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING		
DATE:	26TH JUNE 2014	REPORT NO:	CFO/68/14
PRESENTING OFFICER	CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	JANET HENSHAW	REPORT AUTHOR:	HELEN PEEK DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER EXT 4112
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	HELEN JONES PAYROLL MANAGER		
TITLE OF REPORT:	SCHEME OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2014/15		

APPENDICES:	<p>1: DRAFT MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES – AGREED JUNE 2009, WITH SUBSEQUENT REVISIONS (AS INCLUDED IN DRAFT CONSTITUTION ON THIS AGENDA)</p> <p>2: MEMBERS ALLOWANCE PAY RATE 2013/14</p> <p>3: REVISED MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES PAY RATE 2014/15 IN LINE WITH PROPOSED STRUCTURE (AS PER SEPARATE REPORT ON THIS AGENDA)</p>
--------------------	--

Purpose of Report

1. To request the Authority to review the current Scheme of Members' Allowances, and make recommendations for any changes it wishes to make to the Scheme.

Recommendation

2. That the Authority:
 - a. Continues with its current Members' Allowances Scheme or;
 - b. Identifies any variations to the Scheme it may wish to be implemented, 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 Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority's Scheme of Members Allowances is normally aligned to the previous years Firefighters' pay, which was awarded an increase of 1% in July 2013, and is subject to a 1% pay offer for 2014/15. Members should

therefore decide if:

- i. The Authority wish to apply or reject the 1% increase in line with Firefighters pay award July 2013, and;
 - ii. confirm their intention to accept or reject any pending pay increase in line with Firefighters pay award for 2014/15 (subject to National agreement) . This would apply to 2015/16 allowances.
- d. Consider and confirm if they are content for the combined roles of Co-opted Member (appointed to Performance and Scrutiny Committee as a none voting Member), and Independent Person (to consider any complaints against Members, alleged to have breached the Members Code of Conduct), to continue to be undertaken by Mr Anthony Boyle as 'Independent Person', and payment for conducting such roles be paid following submission and verification of invoices, at a daily attendance rate of £50 (as and when required).
- e. In line with the Authority's decision to reduce its Members Allowances Budget by 10% over four years, reduce the Special Responsibility Allowances for a Political Leader and Opposition Spokesperson by 50% as follows:
- i. A Political Leader (excluding Chairperson) reduction from £8,070.00 to £4,035.00; and
 - ii. Opposition Spokesperson from £4,035.00 to £2,017.50

Introduction and Background

3. The Authority's current Scheme for Members' Allowances, including the revised SRA's for Group Leader and Opposition Spokes Person for 2014/15, is attached as Appendix 1. The Scheme, adopted by the Authority on 22nd November 2004, was approved to take effect on 1st April 2005 and subsequently confirmed at the Annual Meeting in 2005, 2006, 2007, 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, with the provision 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 a 'Chair' or additional responsibilities such as a Lead Member would only be entitled to each type of SRA once. Therefore if a Member holds the position of Chair of more than one Committee, they will only receive the SRA for one role as opposed to two. This rule also applies to those appointed with additional responsibilities such as a Sponsor.

6. Members will recall that the Localism Act 2011 requires that an Independent Person (IP) be appointed to consider any complaints in respect of elected Members. The Authority considered entering into a shared arrangement with another Authority in the area, however it was not possible for practical reasons to achieve this outcome.
7. 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, they recognised the importance of having someone available to undertake this role if required.
8. 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 view 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 to appoint a Co-opted Member to sit on the Performance and Scrutiny Committee, without voting rights, who could give an impartial and independent view to this committee.
9. Following their appointment, it was with regret that one of the successful candidates was unable to take up the position and decision was made to offer Anthony Boyle the roles of both Independent Person and Co-opted Member under the title of 'Independent Person'.
10. The Authority is requested to consider if it believes that 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 2014/15.
11. 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 from 2010 until 2012 and a 1% increase to Firefighter pay in 2012, however the Authority resolved not to take the 1% increase in allowances at the Annual General Meeting 11th June 2013.
12. Firefighters were awarded a 1% pay increase in July 2013 which would normally be applied to uplift the 2014/15 allowances. In addition the the employers side of the NJC has currently made a pay offer of 1% pay for 2014/15 which would normally increase allowances for 2015/16 accordingly. . The Authority are requested to consider acceptance or rejection of the individual pay awards in relation to their Scheme of Allowances which is currently aligned to Fire fighters pay.

13. The Authority will consider the Structure of the Authority as a separate report on the Agenda. It is proposed that the structure remain the same as that of 2013/14 , therefore the only proposed change are in relation to SRA payment for Political Leaders to £4,035 and SRA payment for Opposition Spokesperson to £2,017.50 which is reflected in the proposed Members Allowance Pay Rates (Appendix 3) .

Equality and Diversity Implications

14. 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 allowances.

Staff Implications

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

Legal Implications

16. 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

17. The Authority resolved to achieve a 10% saving over a 4 year period, of the Members Allowance Budget which was set at £240K, as part of the budget setting at the Budget Authority meeting on 26th February 2014. The Current Members Allowance Budget is currently set at approximately £230K
18. The proposed reduction in Lead member and Opposition Spokesperson rates will meet the 10% saving target for 2014/15.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

19. None arising directly from this report.

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

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/067/13 SCHEME OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES

CFO/015/13 TASK & FINISH GROUPFOR AUTHORITY STRUCTURE REVIEW

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CLG Communities & Local Government

SRA Special Responsibility Allowance