

**REPORT AUTHOR:** MONITORING OFFICER

**SUBJECT:** MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2022/23

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For further information on this Report contact: Nicky Upton  
Service Assurance Manager  
Tel No: 01234 845149

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Background Papers: None

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**PURPOSE:**

To review the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2022/23.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Members' Allowances Scheme be updated from 1 June 2022 in accordance with the proposals set out in this report and that the Scheme be adopted for the financial year 2022/23.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Fire Authority's Members' Allowances Scheme (the Scheme) was introduced on 1 January 2004 in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The Fire Authority (FRA) reviews the Scheme annually.
- 1.2 The Scheme was fully reviewed by Members at their meeting on 9 February 2007, when it was agreed that in future Member allowances would be based on a daily rate of mean weekly earnings advised by the Local Government Association (LGA) multiplied by an assessment of days required to perform each Member's tasks.

- 1.3 At its meeting on 11 December 2013, the FRA agreed that in the absence of LGA Member rates information, the Local Annual Government Pay Settlement would be applied to Members' allowances effective from April 2013 and each year since then the allowances have been updated in the same way.
- 1.4 At its meeting on 18 July 2019, the Fire Authority reviewed the Special Responsibility Allowances payable under the Scheme in the light of the Governance Review that had taken place and reduced the allowances payable to the Chair, Vice-Chair and Executive Members.

## 2. Current Scheme – Summary

- 2.1 The current Scheme is detailed in the Members' Handbook and included on the Authority's website.
- 2.2 The current daily rate is £171.92; last year's Local Government settlement has yet to be agreed, so the figures quoted in this report are current but do not include an increase for 2021/22 which may follow. In accordance with previous practice this rate will be adjusted in line with the Local Government Pay Settlement in April 2022.
- 2.3 The following assessment of days applies to each Member's tasks:

### 2.3.1 *Basic Allowance:*

In addition to the agendas, reports and attendance relating to scheduled meetings of the Fire Authority (FRA), Members are required to attend budget workshops, station visits, training and official functions.

All Members (12) 20 days

### 2.3.2 *Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs):*

The FRA may pay SRAs to FRA members who carry out responsibilities specified in the Regulations. The Scheme provides for the following members to receive a special responsibility allowance based on an assessment (shown below) of the number of days they will need to spend during the year carrying out their special responsibilities:

FRA Chair 80 days

FRA Vice Chair	30 days
FRA Executive Member	6 days
Chair of Audit and Standards Committee	6 days

In addition to the duties of a basic Member, the Chair, Vice Chair and Executive Members undertake additional responsibilities including: attending regional meetings, LGA meetings, audit meetings etc, together with ad-hoc Appointment Panels, Statement of Accounts signing etc, and taking decisions in between meetings of the FRA.

On 16 July 2020 the FRA agreed that each member of the Executive should take responsibility for a specific area of activity or portfolio. The current portfolios are as follows:

Prevention and Protection;  
Operational Response and Resilience;  
Workforce and Organisational Development;  
Assets and Collaboration;  
Data and Digital Transformation;

The Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee presides at meetings of the Audit and Standards Committee and acts as a substitute Member with regard to ad hoc Appointment Panels, etc, and consultation on decision making between meetings of the FRA.

On 4 September 2019, the Fire Authority considered whether a Member should be able to receive more than one SRA. Although there was no provision in the Regulations covering this question, it was general practice for local authorities to include a provision in their Schemes providing that members can receive no more than one SRA and the Fire Authority agreed to include this restriction in its Scheme.

### 3. Standards Provision

3.1 Since 1 July 2012, the Audit and Standards Committee has been responsible for ethical standards.

3.2 The FRA is required to appoint at least one independent person who must be consulted when the FRA investigates complaints made against its members. The FRA has agreed to collaborate with neighbouring authorities in the appointment of a joint panel of independent persons. Each independent person receives a nominal annual retainer of £300 and a flat payment of £75 for each

case the independent person handles. The cost of the retainers are shared with the other partner authorities, but the case fees are met by the relevant authority.

4. Updating the Scheme for 2022/23

- 4.1 As outlined in paragraph 1.3, it has been the FRAs policy in recent years to increase allowances in line with the Local Government Pay Settlement.
- 4.2 The 2022/23 the Members basic allowance will be paid from 1 June 2021 to 31 May 2022 with Special Responsibility Allowances being paid from the date of the June 2022 Annual General Meeting.
- 4.3 Members are also requested to agree that subsistence and carers' allowances remain unchanged, and that the mileage rate payable to Members continues to be the same rate that is payable to employees covered by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The payment of allowances to Members of the FRA is governed by The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and the FRA's Scheme of Allowances complies with those regulations.

6. Recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panels

- 6.1 When making or amending its Scheme of Members Allowances the FRA is required to have regard to any relevant recommendations made by to the constituent local authorities by their Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs). At the time of writing there have been no recent recommendations submitted to the constituent local authorities.

**JOHN ATKINSON  
MONITORING OFFICER**