

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
18 July 2019
Item No. 7

REPORT AUTHOR: SECRETARY/MONITORING OFFICER
SUBJECT: MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2019/20

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Background Papers: None

Implications

LEGAL		FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES		EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
COPRPORATE RISK	Known	OTHER (please specify)	
	New		

Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report

PURPOSE:

To review the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2019/20.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Members' Allowances Scheme be updated from 1 June 2019 in accordance with the proposals set out in this report and that the Scheme be adopted for the financial year 2019/20.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Fire Authority's Members' Allowances Scheme (the Scheme) was introduced on 1 January 2004. 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 15 December 2016, the Fire Authority reviewed and amended the Special Responsibility Allowances.
- 1.5 A report on Members' Allowances for 2019/20 was presented at its meeting on 13 December 2018. It was decided to defer any decision until the outcome of the Governance Review was known.

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 following assessment of days applies to each Member's tasks:
 - 2.2.1 *All Members 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

2.2.2 *Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs):*

In addition to the duties of a basic Member, Members in receipt of SRAs are required to Chair Policy and Challenge Group meetings and attend Regional meetings, LGA meetings, Audit meetings etc, together with ad-hoc Appointment Panels etc, and consult on decision making between meetings of the FRA.

Following discussion at the Members Development Day on 2 July 2019 in connection with the Governance Review, it was proposed that the Policy and Challenge Groups are suspended, two additional FRA meetings are added and the Executive Committee continues in its current format as decided at the Annual Meeting held on 6 June 2019. The requirement of SRAs may only apply to the FRA Chair, FRA Vice Chair and those appointed to the Executive Committee.

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

FRA Chair	100 days
FRA Vice Chair	50 days
FRA Executive Member	11 days
Chair of Audit and Standards Committee	6 days

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.

3.3 In September 2016 the FRA appointed two independent persons jointly with Bedford Borough Council. Each Independent Person receives a nominal annual retainer of £300 and a flat payment of £50 for each case the independent person handles. The cost of the retainers are shared with Bedford, but the case fees are met by the relevant authority.

4. Updating the Scheme for 2019/20

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 2019/20 Members Allowance will be paid from 1 June 2019 to 31 May 2020 with Special Responsibility Allowances being paid from the date of the June 2019 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.

4.4 During discussion at the Members Development Day on 2 July 2019 in connection with the Governance Review, it was suggested that an amendment be made to the Scheme to reduce the number of days for the FRA Chair from 100 to 80 and the FRA Vice Chair from 50 to 30. It has also been suggested that the Member who attends meetings of the Collaboration Group should receive an SRA to acknowledge the additional work involved.

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.

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SECRETARY/MONITORING OFFICER