

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY



REPORT REFERENCE NO.	DSFRA/08/24
MEETING	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	23 October 2008
SUBJECT OF REPORT	APPROVED DUTIES – PROPOSED MODIFICATION FOR THE DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY SCHEME OF MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCES
LEAD OFFICER	Clerk to the Authority
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>(a) <i>That the proposed modification to Section 6 of the Members’ Allowances Scheme relating to approved duties, as set out in Appendix A to this report, be approved;</i></p> <p>(b) <i>that, subject to (a) above, the report be noted.</i></p>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This report sets out proposals for a minor modification to the Scheme in relation to approved duties and to clarify the process in relation to travel and subsistence expense claims.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	As set out in paragraph 2.5 of this report.
APPENDICES	A. Proposed Revision to Section 6 of Approved Scheme of Allowances.
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its Annual Meeting on 28 May 2008 the Authority approved revisions to the level of basic and special responsibility allowances. In considering this matter, certain Members commented as to the appropriate level of delegation in relation to approved duties.
- 1.2 This report now proposes minor modifications to the relevant section of the approved scheme with a view to establishing an appropriate level of delegation and providing greater clarity in relation to the payment of travel and subsistence expenses.

2. SUGGESTED MODIFICATION TO SECTION 6 OF THE AUTHORITY'S APPROVED SCHEME OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES

- 2.1 Attached at Appendix A to this report is a suggested re-wording of Section 6 of the Authority's approved scheme in relation to travel and subsistence expenses. This re-wording is intended to clarify the position in relation to travel and subsistence claims. It also sets out, in Schedule 1, those duties approved for the purposes of travel and subsistence claims and any criteria attached to these. The attendances indicated are based upon decisions taken by this Authority (or the former Devon Fire and Rescue Authority) in previous years. Adopting this Schedule now would remove the need for the Authority to consider, on a recurring annual basis, approving attendance at regularly-attended events e.g. the annual Local Government Association Fire Conference.
- 2.2 The only matter not previously considered by the Authority is that of attendance at the Ypres Remembrance Ceremony. The Chair of the Authority is the Patron of the Service Ceremonial Unit. The Ypres Ceremony is a significant and prestigious event in the Ceremonial Unit's calendar and is an event also attended by the Chair's of many other fire and rescue authorities in England, the majority of which receive expenses for attendance. As such, it is recommended that travel and subsistence expenses should be payable for attendance by the Authority Chair at this annual event – subject to the Chair remaining the Patron of the Unit.
- 2.3 Where there is discretion as to which actual Member attends a conference, it is suggested that this be determined by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair to the Authority (or, in the case of the Assembly of Standards Committees, by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Authority's Standards Committee) and taking account of Member availability and attendance in previous years.
- 2.4 Similarly, there may be occasions where one-off events are arranged which are not identified in Schedule 1. In relation to these, it is proposed that attendance should be approved by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair, taking account of the subject matter and Member availability. This approval should also be subject to all costs associated with attendance being contained from within the overall approved budget for Member allowances.
- 2.5 For information, indicative costs associated with attendance at the events listed at Schedule 1 is set out in Table 1 overleaf. While provision was made for conference attendance when setting the overall budget for Member allowances in 2008/09 this did not provide, however, for:-
- attendance at both the LGA Annual Fire and Rescue Conference and Annual Fire and Rescue Conference by four instead of three delegates ;
 - attendance by three delegates instead of one at the Annual Assembly of Standards Committees;

- attendance by the Authority appointed representatives at the Urban and Rural Commission Annual Conferences;
- attendances by Members at meetings of the Health and Safety Executive Sickness Management Forum and the LGA Urban Commission Steering Group.

all of which were approved by the Authority during the current financial year. This may result in an overspend against the overall budget line for Member Allowances in the current financial year. This overspend can, however, be contained from within the overall underspend on the Authority's approved revenue budget as reported to the last meeting of the Resources Committee. For 2009/10 and subsequent years it will be necessary to make appropriate adjustments to the commitment budget for Member Allowances.

TABLE 1

NAME OF CONFERENCE/EVENT	ATTENDANCE BY	INDICATIVE COST
Local Government Association Annual Conference and General Assembly Meetings ¹	Representatives appointed by the Authority to the LGA General Assembly	£1,000 per delegate (all inclusive) x 4 for Annual Conference; travel plus overnight accommodation (c. £300 per delegate) for second annual meeting
Local Government Association Annual Fire Conference ²	Four Members (Authority Chair and Vice-Chair; two other Members, preferably from constituent authorities not represented)	£800 per delegate (all inclusive)
Annual Fire and Rescue Conference ²	Four Members (Authority Chair and Vice-Chair; two other Members, preferably from constituent authorities not represented)	£900 per delegate (all inclusive)
Annual Assembly of Standards Committees ²	Three Members to be determined by the Committee	£800 per delegate (all inclusive)

NOTES

¹ Attendance is authorised only where the Conference/Meeting Agenda contains item(s) relating to the functions of combined fire and rescue authorities. Clarification should be sought of the Clerk in this respect.

² Conference fees, accommodation and travel are all payable. Subsistence expenses up to the maximum of the rates indicated in this scheme will only be paid in those instances where the subsistence in question is not provided by the event organiser and on production of receipts. Bookings will normally be made by the Democratic Services section. Members making direct bookings are required to produce receipts when making claims, which will be paid in accordance with the rates and conditions as set out in this scheme. Actual attendance to be determined by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair to the Authority (unless where otherwise indicated).

NAME OF CONFERENCE/EVENT	ATTENDANCE BY	INDICATIVE COST
LGA Rural and Urban Commission Conferences ²	Authority representative appointed to the relevant Commission	£500 per delegate (all inclusive)
Ypres Armistice Remembrance Ceremony (with Service Ceremonial Unit) ³	Chair of the Authority	£500
Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Sickness Management Forum	Any Authority Member appointed directly by the Forum	£300
LGA Urban Commission Steering Group	Any Authority Member appointed directly to the Group ⁴	£300

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Appendix A to this report sets out a suggested re-wording of Section 6 of the approved Scheme, dealing with travel and subsistence expenses. This re-wording is intended both to clarify the position in relation to travel and subsistence payments and also to regularise the position on approved duties for attendance at annual conferences etc., delegating responsibility for approving conference attendance to what is felt to be the appropriate level. The revisions are, as such, commended for approval.

MIKE PEARSON
Clerk to the Authority

³ Travel and accommodation usually booked by the Ceremonial Unit and to be reimbursed at actual cost. Other travel and subsistence to be reimbursed in accordance with the rates as set out in this scheme on production of receipts.

⁴ In the case of a substitute Member being appointed by the LGA Urban Commission Steering Group, then travel and subsistence allowances will only be payable in those instances where these allowances are NOT directly payable by the LGA

PROPOSED MODIFICATION TO SECTION 6 OF APPROVED SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES

6. TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES

General

- 6.1 Those duties set out in Schedule 1 to this Scheme will attract payment of travelling and subsistence expenses including overnight accommodation as appropriate. Those duties listed in Schedule 2 will be eligible for travelling expenses only.

Travel

- 6.2 Where a Member undertakes official duties within the geographical areas listed below and travels in his/her own car, he/she may claim actual mileage at the rate of 40 pence per mile for the first 10,000 miles in any one financial year, reducing to 12.1pence per mile after 10,000 miles:-
the County areas of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Somerset, Wiltshire and the area of the former Avon County Council
- 6.3 Members may claim a supplement of 1 pence for each official passenger (i.e. Member of the Authority/Independent Member of the Authority's Standards Committee) carried within the insured capacity of the vehicle.
- 6.4 Members travelling on official duties in the geographical areas listed above may alternatively elect to travel using a mixture of public and private transport (i.e. taxis). Where such transport is used, receipts MUST be obtained. Members will be entitled to claim, on production of receipts, for expenditure actually incurred by using such transport EXCEPT where this expenditure exceeds that which would have been incurred had the member used his/her own transport. In this case, the claim will be adjusted to pay the lesser of the two amounts. Claims will be checked against the home-to-venue mileage calculated using the AA website route planner (www.theaa.com).
- 6.5 For travel on official duties outside the areas defined in paragraph 6.2 above rail travel (at Standard Class fare) or other public transport (at ordinary fare) should be used except where this would prove impracticable. In the first instance, Members should contact Democratic Services to obtain a travel warrant. In the event of a Member having to arrange his/her own journey, Standard Class rail fare will be refunded on production of a receipt. In the event of the Member considering that travel by rail or other public transport to be impracticable, the approval of the Clerk to the Authority must be obtained to use the Member's vehicle prior to the journey being undertaken.

- 6.6 Use of a motorbike by a Member undertaking an official duty within the area defined in paragraph 6.2 above will attract payment of expenses in accordance with the table below

	Up to 49cc	50 – 149cc	150 – 250cc	Over 250cc
Up to 10,000 miles	7.0	11.2	14.0	18.3
Over 10,000 miles	7.0	11.2	12.4	12.4

- 6.7 Wherever practicable, claims for travel by car or motorcycle should be accompanied by a VAT fuel receipt. This is to enable the Authority to reclaim the VAT on the fuel element of mileage claims.
- 6.8 Use of a pedal cycle by a Member attending an official duty will attract an allowance at the rate of 12 pence per mile.
- 6.9 All mileage claims will be checked against the route indicated on the AA website (www.theaa.com). Claims will be adjusted accordingly if more than 10% above the mileage shown on the website.
- 6.10 Any expenditure on tolls, parking fees (EXCLUDING parking fines) or ferries incurred when undertaking an official duty will be reimbursed on production of receipts.
- 6.11 Except as provided for in paragraph 6.4 above, costs associated with the hire of taxis will only be reimbursed in the event of use in an emergency OR due to public transport being unavailable. In such cases, receipts **MUST** be produced and the reasons for the taxi hire notified in writing when submitting the claim.
- 6.12 Any arrangements for travel abroad on official duties will be administered by the Clerk to the Authority.

Subsistence

- 6.13 Members may claim, for attendance at official duties as listed in Schedule 1 to this Scheme, subsistence up to the maximum amount shown below subject to the conditions as set out both in this paragraph and in paragraphs 6.14 and 6.15 below.

Breakfast (payable if leaving home prior to 7.30am)	£5.57
Lunch (payable if leaving home prior to 11.30am and returning after 2.30pm)	£7.70
Tea (payable if travelling/working AFTER 7.00pm)	£3.04
Dinner (payable if travelling/working AFTER 8.30pm)	£9.54
Out of pocket expenses	
- per night	£4.31
- per week	£17.26

- 6.14 All claims for subsistence **MUST** be accompanied by a receipt. Claims will be processed on the basis of **reimbursing actual expenditure only** up to the maximum amounts set out in paragraph 6.12 above. Subsistence claims will **NOT** be paid where the subsistence concerned is provided directly either by the Authority OR by the event organiser, even where the Member declines to accept the subsistence and makes their own provision.
- 6.15 Where an official duty requires an overnight absence, then arrangements for this must be made through the Democratic Services section.

SCHEDULE 1 TO THE DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY APPROVED SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

APPROVED DUTIES, CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS QUALIFYING FOR PAYMENT OF TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE EXPENSES (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS OF THE SCHEME), INCLUDING OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION AND CONFERENCE DELEGATE FEES WHERE APPROPRIATE. THE TERM "MEMBER" SHOULD ALSO BE INTERPRETED AS INCLUDING THE INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE AUTHORITY'S STANDARDS COMMITTEE WHERE RELEVANT

1. Meetings of the full Authority and any committees, sub-committees, fora, working parties and panels properly constituted by the Authority under its Standing Orders and to which Members have been appointed by the Authority.
2. Meetings of any joint committees constituted under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 and to which the Authority appoints Members (e.g. the South West Regional Management Board).
3. Meetings at any other bodies to which appointments are made directly by the Authority (e.g. Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Forum; LGA Rural and Urban Commissions; Director of South West Fire Control Service Ltd. [including attendance by Alternate Director as necessary]; Devon Strategic Partnership; Safer Devon Partnership; South West Employees; Racial Equality Councils).
4. Seminars, meetings or training events arranged by Officers of the Authority for the benefit of Members of the Authority.
5. Duties necessarily undertaken by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority, and Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority's Committees, in connection with those posts.
6. Attendance at the following Conferences/Events:-

NAME OF CONFERENCE/EVENT	ATTENDANCE BY
Local Government Association Annual Conference and General Assembly Meetings ^a	Representatives appointed by the Authority to the LGA General Assembly
Local Government Association Annual Fire Conference ^b	Four Members (Authority Chair and Vice-Chair; two other Members, preferably from constituent authorities not represented)
Annual Fire and Rescue Conference ^b	Four Members (Authority Chair and Vice-Chair; two other Members, preferably from constituent authorities not represented)
Annual Assembly of Standards Committees ^b	Three Members to be determined by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair to the Authority Standards Committee

NOTES

^a Attendance will only be authorised where the Conference/Meeting Agenda contains item(s) relating to the functions of combined fire and rescue authorities. Clarification should be sought of the Clerk in this respect.

^b Conference fees, accommodation and travel are all payable. Subsistence expenses up to the maximum of the rates indicated in this scheme will only be paid in those instances where the subsistence in question is not provided by the event organiser and on production of receipts. Bookings will normally be made by the Democratic Services section. Members making direct bookings are required to produce receipts when making claims, which will be paid in accordance with the rates and conditions as set out in this scheme. Actual attendance to be determined by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair to the Authority (unless where otherwise indicated).

NAME OF CONFERENCE/EVENT	ATTENDANCE BY
LGA Rural and Urban Commission Conferences ^b	Authority representative appointed to the relevant Commission
Ypres Armistice Remembrance Ceremony (with Service Ceremonial Unit) ^c	Chair of the Authority
Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Sickness Management Forum	Any Authority Member appointed directly by the Forum
LGA Urban Commission Steering Group	Any Authority Member appointed directly to the Group ^d

7. Attendance at any event not detailed at 6. above, subject to :-

- a. approval by the Clerk (following consultation with the Authority Chair); and
- b. any costs being contained from within the overall approved budget for Member Allowances

with actual attendance being determined on the basis of the subject matter of the event and Member availability.

NOTES (Cont...)

^c Travel and accommodation usually booked by the Ceremonial Unit and to be reimbursed at actual cost. Other travel and subsistence to be reimbursed in accordance with the rates as set out in this scheme on production of receipts.

^d In the case of a substitute Member being appointed by the LGA Urban Commission Steering Group, then travel and subsistence allowances will only be payable in those instances where these allowances are NOT directly payable by the LGA

SCHEDULE 2 TO THE DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY APPROVED SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

APPROVED DUTIES ETC. QUALIFYING FOR PAYMENT OF TRAVELLING EXPENSES ONLY (NB. THE TERM "MEMBER" SHOULD ALSO BE INTERPRETED AS INCLUDING THE INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE AUTHORITY'S STANDARDS COMMITTEE WHERE RELEVANT)

1. Official openings of Authority premises, launches of Authority Services and Passing-Out parades etc.