

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY



REPORT REFERENCE NO.	DSFRA/14/5
MEETING	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY (BUDGET MEETING)
DATE OF MEETING	24 FEBRUARY 2014
SUBJECT OF REPORT	CONFIRMATION OF SCHEME OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2014-15
LEAD OFFICER	Clerk to the Authority
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p><i>that, as required by the relevant Regulations, the Authority:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>(i) considers whether any changes should be made to the existing scheme; and</i> <i>(ii) authorises the Clerk to publicise the rates so confirmed in one or more local newspapers circulating in the area served by the Authority.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>Regulations require the Authority to have in place its own Scheme for the payment of a basic allowance to each of its Members. The Authority may also provide for the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances and reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenditure. The Regulations also require the details of any such Schemes to be confirmed and published by the Authority for each financial year in question.</p> <p>The Authority approved its current Scheme of Allowances in February 2012 following consideration of an in-depth report prepared by an independent consultant. The Scheme provides for automatic uprating where applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of Basic and Special Responsibility allowances by reference to pay awards agreed by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (the “Green Book”). There was no automatic uprating for the 2012-13 financial year. In line with the automatic uprating mechanism, however, the allowance rates initially approved by the Authority at its budget meeting in February 2013 were, subsequently, increased for the 2013-14 financial year by 1%, with effect from 1 April 2013, to reflect the Local Government pay award. The current rates payable in 2013-14 are shown in paragraph 2.1 of this report;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of rates payable for reimbursement of travel by private car by reference to figures produced by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs; and • of rates payable for reimbursement of subsistence expenditure by reference to rates currently payable to Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service employees. <p>In light of the above and to comply with the relevant Regulations, the Authority is invited to consider whether any changes should be made to the current Scheme of Allowances.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	The payment of allowances as set out in this report, including the uprating of those allowances as indicated (based on an assumed 1% pay award for Green Book employees) would increase total allowances costs by £1,200 (from £125,000 to £126,200), for which provision has been made in the draft revenue budget for 2014/15.
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)	The proposals in this report are considered compatible with equality and human rights legislation.
APPENDICES	Nil.
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	The Local Authority (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 Report DSFRA/12/05 ("Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority Approved Scheme of Members' Allowances), together with report of Independent Consultant, as submitted to budget meeting of the Authority on 17 February 2012.

1. **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Local Authority (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 require the Authority to make a Scheme of Members Allowances that:
- MUST provide for payment of a basic allowance to every Member of the Authority (to recognise the time commitment of all Members and cover incidental costs such as postage, telephone calls etc in connection with Authority duties); and
 - MAY provide:
 - for payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance for those Members undertaking additional roles (e.g. Authority and Committee Chairs); AND
 - payment of travel and subsistence expenses in relation to Authority duties.
- 1.2 The Regulations also require the Authority to confirm its Scheme of Allowances for each financial year in question and for this information to be published in one or more local newspapers circulating in the area served by the Authority.

2. **AUTHORITY APPROVED SCHEME**

- 2.1 At its budget meeting on 17 February 2012 the Authority considered a review of its Allowances Scheme as conducted by an independent consultant and determined – in accordance with the review recommendations - rates payable for basic and special responsibility allowances in the 2012-13 financial year together with an automatic annual uprating mechanism to apply (Minute DSFRA/72 refers). The Regulations constrain application of any automatic uprating mechanism to a maximum period of four years after which a further, major review should be undertaken.
- 2.2 For the last (2013-14) financial year, application of this annual automatic uprating – which was by reference to any pay award made by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services – resulted in allowances being increased by 1% from April 2013, giving the current rates shown in the table below.

Rates Payable for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances

Type of Allowance	Amount per annum £
Basic	2,525
Special Responsibility	
• Chairman of Authority (5 x basic)	12,625
• Vice Chairman of Authority (2.5 x basic)	6,313
• Committee Chairs (1.5 x basic)	3,788
• Members of the Commercial Services Committee (1.5 x basic) ¹	3,788

¹ funded directly from commercial income and subject to no Member – other than the Authority Chairman – being in receipt of more than one Special Responsibility Allowance.

- 2.3 The Allowances Scheme also provides for the reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses as shown below:

Rates Payable for Reimbursement of Travel Expenses

	<i>Rate per mile</i>	
	<i>First 10,000 miles</i>	<i>Above 10,000 miles</i>
Cars	45p	25p
Motorcycles	24p	24p

- 5p per passenger per mile (up to 4 passengers);
- 20p per mile bicycle allowance

Annual uprating mechanism: rates published by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

Rates Payable for Reimbursement of Subsistence Expenses

Breakfast	£6.90
Lunch	£9.54
Tea	£3.76
Dinner	£11.82

Annual uprating mechanism: rates payable to Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service employees.

- 2.4 There was no increase in the travel or subsistence rates for 2013-14 so they remain unchanged.
- 2.5 The Authority will be subject to a Peer Review later in 2014. It is proposed that an examination of the governance arrangements currently in place for the Authority, including committee structure, will feature as part of that review. The outcome of this review will be used by the Authority to inform consideration of a partial review of the allowances scheme before 2016, as agreed by the Authority in February 2012.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Authority Scheme was last subject to a major review in 2012 and the existing automatic uprating mechanism can only remain in place for a maximum period of four years after which a further, major review should be undertaken. The Authority will be subject to a Peer Review later in 2014 which will include an examination of governance arrangements currently in place for the Authority. The outcome of the peer review will be used by the Authority to determine whether a partial review of the allowances scheme is conducted before the next major review which is due in 2016.
- 3.2 The Authority is invited to consider this report and, in accordance with the relevant Regulations, to:
- confirm whether any changes should be made to the existing scheme; and
 - authorise the Clerk to publish the rates so confirmed in one or more local newspapers circulating in the area served by the Authority.

MIKE PEARSON
Clerk to the Authority