

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	DSFRA/15/6
MEETING	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY (BUDGET MEETING)
DATE OF MEETING	20 FEBRUARY 2015
SUBJECT OF REPORT	CONFIRMATION OF SCHEME OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2015-16
LEAD OFFICER	Clerk to the Authority
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>(a) that, as required by the relevant Regulations, the Authority:</p> <p>(i) considers the content of this report with a view to confirming the Scheme of Allowances (as set out in paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4) to operate for the 2015-16 financial year ;</p> <p>(ii) authorises the Clerk to publicise details of the Scheme so confirmed in one or more local newspapers circulating in the area served by the Authority;</p> <p>(b) that the Authority authorises the Clerk to arrange for an independent, major review of the Authority's allowances scheme, the review to report in sufficient time to inform the 2016-17 budget setting process.</p>
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>This report details allowances currently payable and invites the Authority to confirm the Scheme to operate for the 2015-16 financial year.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Provision has been made within the draft Revenue Budget 2015-16 for the payment of allowances at the rates as indicated in this report.
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)	The content this report is 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 two financial years, 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% with effect from April 2013, (2013-14 financial year) and 2.20% with effect from 1 January 2015 (2014-15 financial year). It should be noted that the most recent (2.20%) increase is linked to a two-year settlement, until 31 March 2016. Consequently, there will be no automatic uprating for the forthcoming (2015-16) financial year.
- 2.3 Applying the automatic upratings for the last two financial years, the rates currently payable for Basic and Special Allowances are shown in the table overleaf.

Rates Payable for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances

Type of Allowance	Amount per annum £
Basic	2,581
Special Responsibility	
• Chairman of Authority (5 x basic)	12,903
• Vice Chairman of Authority (2.5 x basic)	6,451
• Committee Chairs (1.5 x basic)	3,871
• Members of the Commercial Services Committee (1.5 x basic) ¹	3,871

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.

- 2.4 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.

- 2.5 There was no increase in the travel or subsistence rates either for 2013-14 or 2014-15 so they remain unchanged.

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 next scheduled major review should be undertaken in sufficient time to inform the 2016 budget setting process and the Authority is asked to authorise the Clerk to make the necessary arrangements for this to happen.

- 3.2 In the meantime, the Authority is invited to consider this report and, in accordance with the relevant Regulations, to:

- (a). confirm the Scheme to operate for the 2015-16 financial year; and
- (b). 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