



INDEPENDENT REVIEW

**DEVON AND SOMERSET FIRE AND
RESCUE AUTHORITY MEMBERS'
ALLOWANCES SCHEME**

December 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority (“the authority”) commissioned an independent review of their allowances scheme following the last review in 2019.

The financial pressures on fire authorities have continued through the period since the last review and look set to continue further. Members will wish to take this into account in considering the recommendations in this report. It is not the role of the independent advisor to make judgements related to these budgetary pressures.

It is important to emphasise that allowances are not intended as salaries but are intended to recognise the time commitment of members whilst continuing with the principle of ‘public service’ whereby the work of members continues to be voluntary - that some hours are not remunerated. This must be balanced against the need to ensure that financial loss is not suffered by members and ensure that people are encouraged and able to come forward to serve the community.

The recommendations are outlined below, these have been arrived at following the review of evidence including from members themselves and benchmarking information.

Recommendations:

- (i) The basic allowance be set at:**
 - **£3,346 from 1st April 2024, and**
 - **Provisionally set at £3,505 from 1st April 2025, subject to officers increase not being more than 4.75% (should that increase be higher then that should be used as the uprating for the basic allowance and the SRAs appropriately. If there is a pay freeze this provisional increase should also be revisited).**
- (ii) Members should only be able to claim one Special Responsibility Allowance (at the highest rate applicable).**
- (iii) The multiplier for the Chair’s Allowance be set at 4.9x basic allowance giving an allowance of £16,395 from 1st April 2024 and £17,175 from 1st April 2025.**
- (iv) The Vice Chair’s allowance be set at 2.48x basic allowance giving an allowance of £8,298 from 1st April 2024 and £8,692 from 1st April 2025.**
- (v) The Committee Chair’s Allowance be set at 1.45x basic allowance giving an allowance of £4,52 from 1st April 2024 and £5,082 from 1st April 2025.**
- (vi) The allowance for the Non-Executive Directors placed on the board of Red One Ltd should be set at 2.2x basic allowance at £7,361 from 1st April 2024 and £7,771 from 1st April 2025.**

- (vii) The allowance for the Local Pensions Board should be set at 0.15x basic allowance giving an allowance of £501 from 1st April 2024 and £525 from 1st April 2025.**
- (viii) The allowance for Independent Members of the Audit & Governance Committee should be set at 0.5x basic allowance giving an allowance of £1,673 from 1st April 2024 and £1,753 from 1st April 2025.**
- (ix) From 1st April 2026 uprating of allowances should continue to be linked to any annual increase agreed by the NJC for Local Government Services (Green Book). In the event of a flat-rate increase arising from the Green Book pay award in any future year, the automatic uprating applied should be the percentage increase on the overall Green Book staffing budget resulting from the pay award.**
- (x) Travel rates should be linked to the rates published by HMRC and uprated as appropriate.**
- (xi) Subsistence should be linked to the employee scheme and uprated as appropriate.**
- (xii) Overnight accommodation should be approved via Democratic Services based on the introduction of the following guidelines:**

Members would be eligible for overnight accommodation when:

- o A Member is attending a residential event as the Devon and Somerset FRS's appointed representative.*
- o Attendance at a non-residential meeting by a member as the Devon and Somerset FRS's appointed representative would require them to leave home before 7.00am or arrive back home after 11pm.*

When booking accommodation, either via Democratic Services or directly, there is an expectation that reasonable effort be made to book as far in advance as possible to secure the best rate available.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) is a body corporate and as such is required to have a scheme of allowances. These allowances are set under *The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003*.
- 1.2. In setting the level of allowances the Authority must have regard to the recommendations made by any Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in relation to any local authority that nominates members to the Authority. Fire and rescue authorities are not required to set up their own Independent Remuneration Panel but may conclude that some external, independent advice is appropriate. This Authority decided to appoint an advisor to undertake a review. The advisor and author of this report, Bryony Houlden, is Chief Executive of South West Councils. The author is also currently Chair of the Torbay Council Panel and a Member of the Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council and Somerset Council Panels. She also undertook the previous reviews for this Authority in 2012, 2015 and 2019. SW Councils supports the work of IRPs and produces comparator information on allowances across the South West for the use of panels and advisors.
- 1.3. The authority merged in April 2007 and the first review of allowances following the merger took place in 2008. Members did not take an increase in allowances between that period and the 2012 review. The 2012, 2015 and 2019 reviews recommended new levels in the allowances scheme and that increases between reviews be linked to the NJC for Local Government Services, a recommendation which was accepted. As a result, the basic allowance has risen to its current level of £3,194 for 2023-24.
- 1.4. The Authority has now requested a further review of the allowances scheme recognising that the regulations specify that adjustments of allowances must not rely on an index for longer than four years.
- 1.5. In developing the recommendations, I was helped by input from members through a questionnaire and series of interviews. The recommendations are based on the evidence I have gathered, I am not required to take account of the budget impact, but it is clear that financial pressures are continuing. It will be for members to consider these in deciding whether to agree the recommendations in full or in part.
- 1.6. In preparing this report I was very grateful for the helpful support and advice from Sam Sharman and her colleagues from the officer team who provided factual advice and information.

2. Background

- 2.1. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service is the largest non-metropolitan fire and rescue service in England, covering almost 4,000 square miles. The service protects 820,000 households, 74,000 businesses and a further 1.1m visitors a year. The service has 332 emergency response vehicles and 1,915 staff.
- 2.2. The Fire Authority leads Devon and Somerset FRS, setting the strategic direction, setting and overseeing the budget and ensuring the delivery of the overall objectives. The Authority is comprised of 25 elected members drawn from the four constituent local authorities – Devon County Council, Somerset Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council.
- 2.3. The structure supporting the authority's work is:
 - Full authority meetings take place 4 times a year although in 2023/24 there were two extraordinary meetings.
 - A supporting committee structure comprising:
 - the Appraisals & Disciplinary Committee (meeting as and when required)
 - the Audit & Governance Committee (meeting 5 times a year)
 - the People Committee (meeting 4 times a year)
 - the Resources Committee (meeting 4 times per year)
 - the Community Safety Committee (meeting 4 times a year)
 - Hearing Panel (Audit and Governance) (meeting as a minimum once a year and then as and when required)
- 2.4. In addition, there is a monthly Members' Forum to update the Authority on important issues outside of the formal process. This is held virtually.
- 2.5. Finally, there is member representation on the Local Pensions Board which meets quarterly.

3. Purpose

- 3.1. The purpose of this review is to provide recommendations (together with the rationale for those recommendations) covering the following issues:
 - The level of the Basic Allowance for 2024/25;
 - The level and number of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) for 2024/25;
 - An appropriate mechanism for annual uprating of the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances from 2024 onwards; and

- The level of travel and subsistence reimbursement from April 2024 together with an appropriate mechanism for uprating.

4. Methodology

- 4.1. In producing the report, I have considered:
- i. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003 and the Guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government
 - ii. The LGA Scheme of Members' Allowances
 - iii. The current Allowances scheme and the previous independent report
 - iv. Evidence obtained directly from questionnaire which 6 members completed (this was disappointingly low although it is the same level as the response in 2019 and higher than in 2015, there was also an initial technical glitch). A number of members were interviewed, and all members were given the opportunity to contact me as the independent advisor.
 - v. The allowances schemes for the constituent authorities: Devon County Council, Somerset Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council.
 - vi. Benchmark data on combined fire and rescue authority allowances schemes across England.

5. Basic Allowance

- 5.1. The current basic allowance from 1 April 2023 is £3,194. This was increased from the 2022 rate based on the percentage increase on the overall Green Book staffing budget resulting from the pay award of 5.8%.
- 5.2. As set out in the guidance, (referred to at 4.1 (i) above) the basic allowance is intended to: *“recognise the time commitment of all councillors, including such inevitable call on their time as meetings with officers and constituents and attendance at political group meetings. It is also intended to cover incidental costs such as the use of their homes”*. The basic allowance paid *“must be the same for each councillor”* and it cannot be based on measures such as attendance at meetings.
- 5.3. The allowances provide some recognition of the commitment of elected members but are not intended as a salary. The expectation is that members will still be ‘volunteering’, giving ‘public service’ and therefore not all hours will be recompensed. There is no set amount recommended for the “public service” element – in the previous report setting the current level of allowances a 30% figure was used. However, it is important that a value is placed on members commitment of time

and taking on the serious responsibilities of being part of the Authority. It is also important that the allowances scheme does not act as a barrier to ensuring a diverse range of members reflecting the community it serves.

- 5.4. In previous reviews, members were invited to record detailed information about contact time. This information produced was very variable with only 6 returns and was also a time-consuming exercise for members, so a separate monitor of time was not requested in this review. This review asked members to complete a more general questionnaire which did ask about average hours worked as well as a range of other questions. The response in terms of hours worked was again very variable. In response to the question on average hours worked in a week, the responses ranged from 1 to 20 hours and comments included the fact they were difficult to estimate as the workload was very variable.
- 5.5. The responses in the questionnaire and the interviews provided evidence that there was a fairly even split between members who thought the allowance was too low with others of the view it was at the right level.
- 5.6. It might be deduced that the low response rate to the questionnaire and the lack of requests to meet me as the independent reviewer means that members are generally happy with the level of the allowance. I am of the view that whilst there might be some merit to this view there are other factors likely to be in play including that members are very busy and might think responding to the questionnaire makes no real difference. I hope in future reviews it might be possible to increase the return rate.
- 5.7. In the previous reviews, several options were considered in reaching a conclusion about the methodology for setting the basic allowance. These included using the current daily rate as advised by the Local Government Association, which is now £348, or a calculation as used by Devon County Council using median salaries. The variability of hours recorded as work make these measures less useful, in my view, than benchmarking which I have concluded that the most helpful information for the purposes of this review.
- 5.8. Benchmarking can be done in two ways. First, benchmark the information from constituent authorities. The basic allowance in the four constituent authorities range from £9,428 to £15,500. The guidance does not specifically suggest that this is an appropriate benchmark group given the different nature of the activities and business but it is a useful background figure and as all the members of the authority will be in receipt of one of these allowances it sets further context.
- 5.9. I believe the other more relevant benchmark data is from other combined fire and rescue authorities. The data obtained is the most up to date available on websites but two date back to 2021/22 and the majority date back to 2022/23. This reveals a range of basic allowances from £1,158 - £6,569 with the average basic allowance being £3,079.

5.10. If different benchmark groups are taken from within the whole fire and rescue authority data set, there are other permutations. First, a geographic benchmarking group from the “South West”: Dorset & Wiltshire and Avon. Second, a benchmark group of authorities with broadly similar sized budgets and population: Dorset & Wiltshire, Hampshire, Kent and Lancashire. These groups have been used in previous years as the appropriate comparators.

Table 1:

Combined Fire Authorities Average and Range	SW Authorities (Avon, Dorset/Wiltshire excludes Devon & Somerset) Average and Range)	“similar sized” FRSA (Dorset/Wiltshire, Hants, Kent, Lancashire) Average and Range
£3,082	£3,585	£3,857
£1,158-6,569	£2,970-£4,200	£1,569-£6,569

- 5.11. These comparisons shows that the current basic allowance for the authority is reasonably aligned with the totality of combined fire and rescue authorities. It is lower than the average for the South West group but it should be noted there are only two in the group with a wide range.
- 5.12. The average of the “similar size group” is higher but again there is a wide variation of levels of basic allowance: from £1,569 in Kent to £6,569 in Hampshire. It is worth noting that the highest level paid in Hampshire may reflect the fact the authority is made up of only 11 Members. The other three authorities in this benchmark group have 25 Members (Kent and Lancashire) and 18 in Dorset and Wiltshire.
- 5.13. Following the last review allowances have been rising in line with officer pay settlements, I am recommending below that this continues but for the coming year the pay settlement has not been decided. So, to give certainty for the members allowances budget the recommendation is that the allowance for 2024/25 be set without the pay settlement data but taking account of information gathered as set out above. I have also taken account of the CPI rates for September 2023 (6.3%) and October 2023 (3.2%) – the mid point being 4.75%.
- 5.14. It is important, in my view, that allowances are not allowed to substantially slip behind in comparison with other fire authorities and as noted above it is also important that they attract a diverse range of members reflecting the diversity of the community served. Whilst Devon and Somerset Fire Authority is above the overall average the allowances are below the average of the South West and ‘similar sized’ benchmarking group averages.
- 5.15. However, given the lack of evidence of member dissatisfaction with the current level of allowance I have not proposed a very substantial increase to bring the allowances in line with the averages of other benchmark groups instead I am suggesting increases of 4.75% both in

2024-25 and 2025-26 with the caveat that should officer salaries increase more than this the level in 2025-26 then that should be used as the uplift or if there is a pay freeze this should be revisited. The increases over two years allow the Basic Allowance to move closer in line with the averages of the SW and Similar sized authorities benchmark groups (whilst recognising these are likely to have changed over the 2 year period).

5.16. **I am therefore recommending the basic allowance be set at:**

- **£3,346 from 1st April 2024 and**
- **£3,505 from 1 April 2025 provisionally set, (subject to officers increase not being more that 4.75%or there being a pay freeze).**

In monetary terms the 4.75% equates to increases of £152 and £159 respectively.

5.17. Whatever the level of the basic allowance, its payment clearly brings with it the expectation that Members will continue to put in the commitment, attending meetings, contribute to the debate and take a lead role in constructive challenge to the service.

6. Special Responsibility Allowances

6.1. Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) are payable to those members who have significant additional responsibilities. The regulations stipulate the grounds upon which an SRA can be paid but do not prohibit payment of more than one SRA to any one member. However, it is widely adopted practice to limit the number of SRAs payable to any individual member to one. One of the reasons may be the view that members only have so many hours in a day so if they are taking on one demanding role in addition to that of the basic councillor responsibilities then there is limited scope to effectively undertake other roles.

6.2. **I am recommending a continuation of the policy of allowing only one SRA per Member (at the highest rate applicable).**

6.3. The current scheme pays the following SRAs:

Table 2:

Chair of the Authority	£15,971
Vice Chair	£7,928
Chair of Committee	£4,700
Non-Executive Directors Red One Ltd	£7,228
Local Pensions Board	£479

- 6.4. In reaching conclusions on the way forward consideration has been given to benchmarking information. Using the information about the totality of combined fire and rescue authorities and the same benchmark groups of similar sized fire and rescue authorities and the SW fire and rescue authorities provides the following data:

Table 3:

	Combined Fire Authorities Average and Range	SW Authorities (Avon, Dorset/Wiltshire) Average and Range	“similar sized” FRSA (Dorset/Wilts, Hants, Kent, Lancs) Average and Range
Chair:	£13,528 [£23,231-8,952]	£ 11,048 [£12,496-9,600]	£15,314 [£20,574-9,600]
Vice Chair:	£6,839 [£16,593-2,923]	£3,862 [£4,800-2,923]	£6,322 [£8,973-3,285]
Committee Chair:	£2,817 [£7,500-561/£0]	£5,204 [£7,500-£2,907]	£3,795 [£7,500-£1,624]

- 6.5. The benchmarking data shows there is considerable variation across the fire authorities. This is not just variation in amounts paid but what allowances are paid – for example Kent does not pay an allowance for committee chairs but pays political group allowances as do some other. Some pay different allowances for different committees, for example Dorset Pays £7,500 for finance and audit but other committee chairs get £1,600. Comparators are therefore just a guide.
- 6.6. SRAs are often set by reference to the basic allowance with a multiplier assessed for each post which attracts a SRA. This approach has been previously adopted for a number of Allowances. **I am recommending the continued use of multipliers as a clear and transparent way of setting allowances.**
- (i) Authority Chair**
- 6.7. The authority chair’s allowance was confirmed at a multiplier of 5x in previous reviews, on that basis it is now set at £15,971.
- 6.8. In previous reviews the chairs allowance was identified as being below the average of the similar sized fire authorities. On the current benchmarking assessment, the chair’s allowance is above all the benchmarking averages (but as noted not all the data is for the same time period). This has probably been helped by the multiplier approach which not all other authorities use.

- 6.9. All the survey responses and interviews suggested that the allowance was currently 'about right' evidence also suggests the role of the authority chair will continue to have a high level of commitment and responsibility given the current challenges, and opportunities, facing the authority. It is also important that the chair's allowance (along with others) does not start to slip behind.
- 6.10. Taking these considerations into account **I recommend that the multiplier for the authority chair be set at 4.9x basic allowance** but that this multiplier be kept under review to ensure it does not drop too far against benchmarking. **This gives an authority chair's allowance of £16,395 from 1 April 2024 and £17,175 from 1 April 2025** (assuming the basic allowance is increased as per the recommendation above). This would be the fourth highest of the combined authorities benchmarked.

In monetary terms this delivers increases of £424 and £780 respectively.

(ii) Authority Vice Chair

- 6.11. The multiplier applied to the role of Authority Vice Chair's has varied over different reviews following evidence presented at the time of those reviews. The last review proposed a reduction to 2.48x basic allowance. All but one respondent to the survey saw the level of this allowance as about right, the one disagreeing felt it was too high.
- 6.12. In looking at benchmarking evidence, this authority's Vice Chair allowance at £7,928 remains, higher than the average of all the benchmark groups with only three combined fire authorities paying more than Devon and Somerset Fire Authority.
- 6.13. **I previously recommend that the multiplier for the Authority Vice Chair be set at 2.48x basic allowance. My recommendation is that this is the appropriate multiplier which gives an SRA for the Authority Vice-Chair of £8,298 from 1 April 2024 and £8,692 from 1 April 2025** (assuming the increase in basic allowance is accepted). This would still be the fourth highest of the combined authorities benchmarked.

In monetary terms this delivers increases of £370 and £394 respectively.

(iii) Committee Chairs

- 6.14. The allowance for committee chairs has also varied over reviews and the last review suggested there should be a reduction and the review should particularly consider this allowance. The survey results showed all but one member thought the level of the current allowance was about right, one thought it was too low.

- 6.15. There are currently four committees with allowances payable to the Chair of the committee:
- Audit and Governance Committee
 - People Committee
 - Resources Committee
 - Community Safety Committee
- 6.16. There is an additional committee: the Appraisals and Disciplinary Committee which meets as and when required and is chaired by the authority chair. There is also a Hearings Panel linked to audit and governance. For avoidance of doubt, **I am not recommending any SRA should be attached to the work of either of these.**
- 6.17. The benchmarking exercise shows that the authority's allowance level for committee chairs is higher at £4,700 than two of the benchmarking groups. The three benchmark groups have the following averages: £2,817; £5,204 and £3,795. The SW Benchmark group and the 'similar size' group have their average skewed by Dorset and Wiltshire FRS's figure of £7,500 for the Chair of Finance and Audit, they pay other chairs £1,600 which if used would bring the average down to £2,254 (South West Group) and £1,828 (similar size) substantially.
- 6.18. Dorset and Wiltshire are not the only authority to pay differential rates for committee, but no evidence was presented to suggest that there should be a differential rate for different committees at Dorset and Somerset. I am therefore proposing the same rate for all chairs.
- 6.19. The committee chairs allowance is the third highest in the benchmarking behind Cambridgeshire and Dorset and Wiltshire and second highest if Dorset and Wiltshire's 'other chairs' figure is used.
- 6.20. There is no question that committee chairs work hard and take on considerable responsibility. However, the committee chairs allowance is still relatively high in comparison with other SRAs.
- 6.21. **I recommend that the committee chair SRA should be set at a multiplier of 1.45x basic allowance i.e., £4,852 from 1 April 2024 and £5,082 from 1 April 2025** (assuming the basic allowance is increased in line with the recommendation above).

In monetary terms this delivers increases of £152 and £230 respectively with the allowance still being third (or second) highest in the benchmarking group.

(iv) Non-Executive Director (NED) roles on Red One Ltd

- 6.22. The role of NED on Red One Ltd is currently £7,228.
- 6.23. Guidance recognises that non-executive directors may be remunerated although it is sometimes the case that these positions are not remunerated. Under the Local Authorities (Companies) Order 1995 Part 2, Regulation 5 the authority members appointed as non-

executive director of Red One Ltd are “regulated directors” for the purposes of the regulations (with Red One similarly being a “regulated company”). 5(1)(a) limits the amount of remuneration payable to a regulated director, with 5(3)(a) defining that limit as: “*greatest amount which would for the time being be payable...in respect of a comparable duty performed on behalf of the authority, less any amount payable by that authority in respect of the relevant duty*” (paragraph 5).

- 6.24. Red One has recently been subject to a governance review but the outcome of this is not yet known, if this makes any changes there may need to be a further review of the allowance. For the purpose of this review **I am recommending the use of a multiplier for this allowance too and that it should be set at 2.2x basic which would mean an allowance of £7,361 from 1 April 2024 and £7,711 from 1 April 2025.**

In monetary terms this delivers increases of £133 and £350 respectively.

(v) Local Pensions Board

- 6.25. In the last review an allowance was recommended for the Local Pensions Board representative. The LPB was established by the Authority in 2015 in accordance with the requirements of the Firefighters’ Pension Scheme (Amendment)(Governance) Regulations. The role of the Board is to assist the Authority (as Scheme Manager) in ensuring the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Scheme. The allowance was set at 0.15x basic allowance: £479.

- 6.26. **I am recommending that there should continue to be an allowance for the member of the Local Pensions Board and this should be set at 0.15x basic allowance: £501 from 1 April 2024 and £525 from 1 April 2025** (assuming the increase in basic allowance is accepted).

In monetary terms this delivers increases of £22 and 24 respectively.

(vi) Independent Members of the Audit & Governance Committee

- 6.27. The review has considered this role for the first time. There is no legislative direction on the Authority to appoint independent members to its Audit & Governance Committee. The CIPFA Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police 2022 - for the audit committees of all relevant authorities (including combined fire and rescue authorities) to have, as part of their membership, at least two co-opted independent members to provide appropriate technical expertise. The Authority does, however, has the power, under Section 102(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 (the Act), to appoint co-opted members to any of its committees. Co-opted members may not exercise a vote. This means that attendance at meetings need not be physical. This in turn means that any associated recruitment process

may be national, rather than restricted to the immediate locality. The remuneration was set by the Authority at its meeting on 26 September 2022 as 0.5 of the basic allowance.

- 6.28. **I am recommending that Independent Members of the Audit and Governance Committee should continue to have an allowance set at 0.5x basic allowance: £1,673 from 1 April 2024 and £1,753 from 1 April 2025** (assuming the increase in basic allowance is accepted).

In monetary terms this delivers increases of £75 and £80 respectively.

7. Uprating mechanism

- 7.1. As part of my recommendations, I am recommending specific increases to the basic allowance for two years and the SRAs increasing in line with their multiplication factor. However, I have caveated that the second year (2025-26) should be revisited if the increase in officer pay (NJC Green Book) would increase the basic allowance above the recommendation.
- 7.2. **I am recommending that following the two-year period, from 1 April 2026 the annual uplift should be based on any agreed annual increase for officer pay agreed by the NJC for Local Government Services (Green Book).**
- 7.3. In the last two years (2021-22 and 2022-23) the Green Book agreement has been a flat rate. **I am recommending that, in the event of a flat-rate increase arising from the Green Book pay award, in any future year, the automatic uprating applied should be the percentage increase on the overall Green Book staffing budget resulting from the pay award.**

8. Travel and Subsistence

- 8.1. **I am recommending that there should be a continuation of the link to HMRC rates and reimbursement for employees:**

(i) Reimbursement of approved mileage be linked to the rates published by HMRC. Currently:

- 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles pa.
- 25p per mile for mileage over 10,001 miles pa.
- Passenger rate is 5p per passenger per mile (max 4 passengers).
- Bicycle allowance: 20p per mile.

Any increases or decreases to these rates by HMRC should automatically be reflected in the payment to Members in the future.

(ii) Subsistence allowances should be the same as for employees, with any changes in rates reflecting changes to the employee scheme. Currently set at:

- Breakfast: £7
- Lunch: £10
- Tea: £4
- Evening meal (if returning home after 8pm) £12
- Evening meal if staying overnight £22

8.2. In relation to the cost of overnight accommodation this may exceptionally be reimbursed subject to agreement through Democratic Services, but **I am recommending the introduction of the following guideline to ensure transparency and consistency:**

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

Members would be eligible for overnight accommodation when:

- A member attends a residential event as the Devon and Somerset FRS's appointed representative.
- Attendance at a non-residential meeting by a member as the Devon and Somerset FRS's appointed representative would require them to leave home before 7.00am or arrive back home after 11pm.

When booking accommodation, either via Democratic Services or directly, there is an expectation that reasonable effort be made to book as far in advance as possible to secure the best rate available.

**Bryony Houlden
December 2023**