

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	<b>HRMDC/18/26</b>
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT &amp; DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>3 JULY 2018</b>
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>REVIEW OF EXPENSES POLICY – ACCOMODATION &amp; SUBSISTENCE</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>Director of Service Improvement</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<p><b>(a) <i>That, subject to the Service consulting with the recognised Trade Unions, the Committee approves:</i></b></p> <p><b>(i) <i>The changes to the rate of overnight accommodation (outside of London) as set out within paragraph 2.2 of this report; and</i></b></p> <p><b>(ii) <i>The changes to the rates of subsistence as set out within paragraph 3.3 of this report;</i></b></p> <p><b>(b) <i>That the impact on the rates of subsistence and overnight accommodation included within the Scheme of Allowances for the Devon &amp; Somerset Fire &amp; Rescue Authority be noted.</i></b></p>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>The Service is currently reviewing the Expenses Policy and the HRMD committee at the meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2018 agreed to changes in how the Service provides vehicles including Essential User car mileage rates. which will be incorporated into the Expenses Policy.</p> <p>The elements which are under review in the Expenses policy include both subsistence and overnight accommodation rates and the proposed changes to the existing rates are set out within this report for consideration by the Committee. It should also be noted that any changes to these rates will also apply to Authority Members.</p> <p>Reimbursement of subsistence will be linked to rates payable to Devon &amp; Somerset Fire &amp; Rescue Service employees and amended accordingly.</p>
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	The annual spend on accommodation and subsistence will be monitored to ensure that these changes do not have any significant impact on our expenses. Our current level of spend is £96,500 on overnight accommodation and £23,500 on subsistence.
<b>EQUALITY RISK &amp; BENEFITS ASSESSMENT</b>	The ERBA will be reviewed alongside the Service policy.
<b>APPENDICES</b>	Nil.
<b>LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	Nil.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Service is currently reviewing its Expenses Policy. There are a number of strands to this which need to be reviewed, including:

- Travel;
- Overnight accommodation; and
- Subsistence;

1.2 There is an opportunity to review the levels set for each of these areas and the relevant information is set out in this report below for consideration.

2. **TRAVEL AND OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION**

2.1 The Service currently has a contracted provider for booking travel and accommodation which provides a 'one stop shop' which reduces the administration time in booking our travel arrangements. There is also an additional benefit in being able to track staff travel movements in the event of a critical incident. For example, with the Manchester terrorist attack in May 2017, the Service was able to confirm that it had no personnel within the immediate vicinity. The current travel contract expires during November 2018, and there will be a collaborative process with Devon & Cornwall Police in order to procure a new provider. In the meanwhile, the Service has two overnight maximum accommodation rates as follows:

- London - £140 per night,
- Elsewhere in the UK - £110 per night

2.2 If, for any reason, accommodation cannot be arranged at these rates, then our contracted travel supplier can be authorised to exceed the maximum rates. This has never happened outside of London and our travel supplier advises that, compared with other public organisations, the rate in place is at a generous level. It is therefore proposed to reduce this rate to a maximum of £100 per night.

2.3 For bookings in London, the rate cap is £140 but it is not proposed to amend this at this time.

3. **SUBSISTENCE**

3.1 In terms of subsistence rates, these have been set historically by the National Joint Council but this practice has long ceased. The subsistence rates within our policy were set in September 2010 and have not been reviewed since. The current rates are as follows:

	<b>DSFRS Rate</b>
Breakfast	£6.90
Lunch	£9.54
Tea	£3.76
Evening meal	£11.82

- 3.2 Although these rates have been in place since 2010 they still appear to be reasonable but with the exception of the evening meal rate of £11.82 which is often insufficient to purchase an evening meal, especially in London. In order to provide a sufficient amount to cover the evening meal when employees stay overnight, it is proposed that the Evening Meal allowance is increased to £20. It should also be noted that when staying away, the breakfast is usually incorporated into an overnight rate and is therefore not claimed separately. It would apply where someone has left home prior to 07:00.
- 3.3 It is therefore proposed that the subsistence rates are rounded for simplicity and that the evening meal rate is adjusted:

	<b>DSFRS Rate</b>
Breakfast	£7
Lunch	£10
Tea	£4
Evening meal	£20

#### 4. **SUMMARY**

- 4.1 In terms of any implications from a Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) perspective the Service can confirm that these reasonable reimbursement rates can be applied provided receipts are obtained and the amounts are within the policy limit.
- 4.2 Since these matters of subsistence and accommodation have been raised by staff and Trade Unions, it is recommended that, subject to Members agreeing to these proposed changes, that the Service will further consult with the recognised Trade Unions and also staff prior to introducing these changes.
- 4.3 The Scheme of Allowances for Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority Members states: "Reimbursement of subsistence will be linked to rates payable to Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service employees and amended accordingly". So, if the amendments to the overnight accommodation and subsistence rates set out within this report are approved, the rates included within the Scheme of Allowances for the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority will also be amended accordingly.

**PETE BOND**  
**Director of Service Improvement**