

**9 February 2011**

**Members' Scheme of Allowances: travel mileage rates**

**Report of the Chief Officer**

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## **1 Summary**

- 1.1 At its last meeting the Authority asked the Chief Officer to review existing car mileage allowances with the aim of achieving consistency in those paid to members and officers.
- 1.2 Although it is a matter for the Authority to determine, the fact that a review of allowances payable in the national scheme of conditions for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services is due to commence it may be prudent to defer making any changes prior to the conclusion of that review.

## **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Authority considers pursuing consistency in the mileage rates paid to members and staff.

## **3 Introduction and background**

- 3.1 At its last meeting (8 December 2010) the Authority resolved that the allowances paid to members (including those for travel) be frozen at existing rates for the next two years. The Chief Officer was also asked to investigate the existing mileage rates paid for motor vehicles with a view to achieving consistency on the rates paid across the Service and the Authority.

## **4 Comparison of rates**

- 4.1 For comparison purposes the various mileage rates paid by Hampshire County Council (HCC), Southampton City Council (SCC), Portsmouth City Council (PCC) and Hampshire Police Authority (HPA) were sought. These are set out in Appendix A alongside those paid by the Authority and Service.
- 4.2 The rates paid are generally similar – particularly those for HCC and the Service (reflecting the past and present close working ties between the organisations and a common approach the application of national terms and conditions of employment).
- 4.3 In the case of nationally agreed conditions for staff, the allowances are reviewed

on an annual basis. But locally determined allowances are reviewed at the discretion of the employing authority. As the Authority has resolved to freeze the rates paid to members, it is difficult to anticipate what changes there may be to the relevant comparative allowances over the next two years.

## **5 Mileage allowances paid to Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service staff**

- 5.1 All our staff are subject to national terms and conditions of employment, these are commonly referred to as: 'Green Book' conditions for all non-uniformed and/or support staff; 'Grey Book' conditions for all operational uniformed staff; and 'Gold Book' conditions covering Assistant Chief Officer and Chief Officer roles.
- 5.2 In order to change national terms and conditions of employment there is a requirement for the national employers (through the Local Government Employers (LGE)) to initiate formal negotiations with the relevant nationally recognised representative bodies. This is commissioned through the national negotiation and consultation forum of the National Joint Council (NJC). Whilst an individual fire and rescue authority may request a particular matter of concern to be considered, there is no requirement on the national employers side representatives to do so. Normally there needs to be a clear mandate from the fire and rescue sector as a whole for there to be any realistic chance that a matter will be pursued. Nevertheless, I have written to the National Employers Secretary strongly urging the need for a review of travel allowances given the tight financial constraints facing all fire and rescue authorities. The Employers' Side Secretary has indicated that there is a desire to pursue a review of all allowances and this is to be put to the full meeting of the NJC next month.
- 5.3 There can, of course, be locally agreed variations to national terms and conditions of employment. In respect of pay and allowances these have to be reached by negotiation with the respective representative bodies. For the Service, these would include the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), The Retained Firefighters Union (RFU), Unison, GMB, the Fire Officers Association (FOA) and the Association of Principal Fire Officers (APFO).

## **6 Supporting our corporate aims and objectives**

- 6.1 The Authority does not currently have a corporate objective that would justify making changes to travel allowances a priority action, however, we are seeking to rationalise and reduce all discretionary allowances as part of the Service's savings programme. But these already fall outside the National Joint Council conditions of service.

## **7 Risk analysis**

- 7.1 To make local changes to national terms and conditions of employment, a significant amount of management and employee time and effort would be involved. There would be no guarantee of achieving the desired outcome and there is always a risk of creating employee relations tensions and possible industrial action.

## **8 People impact assessment**

- 8.1 A People Impact Assessment will be completed on any intervention required as a result of decisions made by the Authority on this issue. At this stage the proposals in this report are considered compatible with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

## **9 Environmental and sustainability impact assessment**

An environmental impact assessment would be undertaken if and when any firm proposals are made to change mileage rates.

## **10 Resource implications**

Other than the officers' time taken to make this report, there are no significant resource implications at this stage.

## **11 Consultation**

No consultation has not been undertaken at this stage.

## **12 Conclusion**

It is important that the scheme of allowances paid to both members and staff is transparent from the public's perspective. The decision made by the Authority to freeze members' allowances for two years is sympathetic to the current financial climate. The variation in mileage rates between different public sector bodies are largely the result of local variations of national terms and conditions. It is a matter for the Authority to determine whether or not to pursue changes in mileage rates now; or whether it would be prudent to defer taking any further action until September 2012 by which time more timely information would be available.

## **13 Background papers**

There are no documents that disclose the facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of the report. This excludes: (1) published works; and (2) documents that disclose exempt or confidential information defined in the Act.

# HFRA 09 02 2011 Members' Scheme of Allowances: travel mileage rates

# Appendix A

Current travel rates as at 26.01.2011

		(pence per mile)														
		Lump Sum Annually (£)			Monthly Payment (£)			1 > 8500 (5000 HCC)			8500+			Petrol Element (+ vat)		
								1 - 5000 (HCC)								
		1-100 excess only (PCC)			1-100 (SCC) (>100 = total claim must not exceed Std Rail fare value)											
		cc/grade	451-999	1000-1199	1200+	451-999	1000-1199	1200+	451-999	1000-1199	1200+	451-999	1000-1199	1200+	451-999	1000-1199
Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service	Essential User	846	963	1239	70.5	80.25	103.25	36.9	40.9	50.5	13.7	14.4	16.4			
	Casual User							46.9	52.2	65	13.7	14.4	16.4			
	Lease Cars							9.4	10.4	11.3	9.4	10.4	11.3			
Hampshire Constabulary	Essential User	795	906	1170				33.6	37.1	46.4	11.7	12.2	14.2	7.433	8.207	8.953
Portsmouth City Council (PCC)	Casual User							40	40	40						
Southampton City Council	Essential User	795	906	1170				33.6	37.1	46.4	11.7	12.2	14.2			
	Casual User							56.5	56.5	56.5						
	Lease Cars															
Hampshire County Council (HCC)	Essential User							<b>A-C</b> 59.3	<b>D-F</b> 53.5	<b>G+</b> 40						

**Note:**

Southampton City Council  
Portsmouth City Council

For journeys exceeding 100 miles (excluding London), mileage will be paid only up to the rate of the standard class rail fare.  
If the journey is over 100 miles return they will only reimburse the first 100 miles but provide car hire as an alternative.