

At a meeting of representatives of the Independent Remuneration Panels of the nominating Local Authorities to the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority, held in Winchester on 21 January 2014:

Present:

Roger Farrall – Hampshire County Council IRP Chairman
Professor John Craven – Portsmouth City Council IRP Chairman

Representing the Clerk to the Authority:

Louise Read – Legal Services

Kevin Greenhough – Democratic and Member Services

Katy Sherwood – Democratic and Member Services

1. Apologies for Absence

It was noted that Southampton City Council did not currently have an appointed Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and therefore was unable to send a representative to the meeting.

2. Appointment of a Chairman

It was proposed and agreed that Mr Farrall chair the meeting.

3. HFRA Members' Allowances Scheme from April 2014

The IRP members received the report of the Clerk to the Authority, setting out the situation regarding Members' Allowances. They noted in particular that an additional allowance of £3,616 had been agreed at the Full Authority Meeting in September for the UKIP Minority Spokesperson, which was in line with the Labour Minority Spokesperson.

It was highlighted that for reference, the existing HFRA Members' Allowances Scheme, as well as those of Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton were made available, as were the terms of reference for each of the HFRA Committees.

The origins of the calculations for Basic and Special Responsibility allowances (SRAs) were considered. It was noted that several SRAs appeared to be calculated to represent a proportion of that of the Chairman, although the relativities had fallen slightly out of line as a result of past indexation adjustments. It was felt therefore that a more detailed review could be undertaken to re-establish the relativities between SRAs.

It was confirmed that HFRA Members had been informed that this meeting was taking place to consider the Members' Allowances Scheme and had been invited to submit comments. One Member had enquired about the possibility of any allowance from the Authority being

pensionable in the same way as allowances paid by their Council. Legal advice was provided that confirmed the relevant legislation did not give Fire Authorities the power to make allowances pensionable in this way.

It was agreed that an increase in basic and special responsibility allowances be recommended to the Authority in line with white-collar Fire Service staff. It was felt that freezing payments in the long term could lead to allowances falling out of sync and pressure for a substantial increase in the future.

Whilst it was acknowledged that a recommendation could be made for the next few years, it was agreed that a meeting take place annually so regular review could be made and any concerns addressed in good time.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Authority be recommended to approve the implementation of a Members' Allowances Scheme from April 2014, to include an adjustment in SRA and Basic allowances at the same percentage adjustment as that applying to the nationally agreed pay award to Local Government staff for 2014-15. That in considering the implementation of such a Scheme, the Authority be advised to take in to account the potential likelihood of pressure for a more substantial increase in Allowances in the longer-term, should Allowances not be adjusted incrementally.
2. That the Authority be recommended to consider initiating a review of the Members' Allowances scheme, to include an evaluation of SRA roles and benchmarking with comparable Authorities.