

# **Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority**

**Governance Committee**

**Item 6**

**23 September 2010**

**Review of Members' Allowances Scheme 2011/12**

**Report of the Clerk**

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## **1 Summary**

- 1.1 This report considers the process by which the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2010/11 should be approved, and in particular whether the Authority should convene its own independent remuneration panel to advise.

## **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the options in section 4 of the report and agree which should be adopted.

## **3 Statutory Requirements**

- 3.1 The Local Authorities (Members Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 require local authorities, including fire and rescue authorities, to make a scheme providing for the payment to members of basic and other allowances over the period of one year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April. The scheme must be made by the authority before it comes into force.
- 3.2 Before making a scheme, county and district councils are required to have regard to the recommendations of an independent remuneration panel. The position is slightly different for fire and rescue authorities, who are required to have regard to any recommendations of independent remuneration panels established by those authorities by whom its members are nominated.

## **4 Current Position**

- 4.1 The Authority has regard to any recommendations of panels established by Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council, and Southampton City Council, when making its members' allowances scheme, as the legislation requires. However, practice in recent years has been for the Authority to consider in addition a report from its own Panel, established on a year to year basis comprising (so far as practicable) a member of each of the independent remuneration panels of the County and City Councils.
- 4.2 The Authority approved its scheme for 2010/11 on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2009. The Authority accepted the recommendations of its own Panel that, having regard to the economic climate and budgetary constraints, basic and special responsibility allowance rates should be frozen at existing rates, with no increase for 2010/11. The Authority also accepted the Panel's recommendation that, as the last significant review of the Scheme was in 2005, and as there had been a number of changes in Authority membership in 2009, a full appraisal of the

Scheme be undertaken in 2010/11 with the implementation of agreed outcomes in 2011/12.

#### **4 Future Options**

- 4.1 The Authority is due to consider and approve its Members' Allowances Scheme for 2011/12 at its meeting in December 2010. The process leading to that meeting is presently under consideration.
- 4.2 One option is to continue recent practice, with the Authority's own Panel being convened to meet in November, to provide a report to the Authority at its December meeting. The main advantage of this is that there is additional independent scrutiny of the levels at which members are remunerated.
- 4.3 A second option is to depart from recent practice and decide not to convene the Panel, with the proposed allowances scheme going straight to the Authority for consideration and approval. Arguments in support of this option would be: (i) there is no statutory requirement on the Authority to establish its own independent remuneration panel, (ii) in the present economic climate it may be regarded as likely that allowance rates may simply remain frozen for a further year, in which case an independent panel may add little value, and (iii) the possibility of avoiding time and expense involved in convening a separate Panel.
- 4.4 The Committee is asked to consider these options and agree which should be adopted.

#### **5 Contribution to Corporate Aims and Objectives**

- 5.1 The consideration and adoption of a Members' Allowances Scheme in public session, on receipt of independent advice, makes a contribution to transparency in the application of public funds towards remuneration of Members.

#### **6 Risk Analysis**

- 6.1 Should the Committee wish to convene a Panel, this can be accommodated without compromising the timescale for adoption of the Scheme.

#### **7 Resource Implications**

- 7.1 The cost of convening a meeting of the Authority's own independent remuneration panel is assessed as approximately £ 500.

#### **8 Human Resources Implications**

- 8.1 None

#### **9 Physical and ICT Resources Implications**

- 9.1 None.

#### **10 Financial Implications**

- 10.1 See paragraph 7.1.

#### **11 People Impact Assessment**

- 11.1 The proposals are compatible with equalities requirements.

## **12 Conclusion**

12.1 The Committee is asked to consider the options in section 4 of the report and agree which should be adopted.

Section 100D – Local Government Act 1972 – background papers

The following documents 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 this report.

N.B. The list excludes:

Published Works

Documents that disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.

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None	
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