



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

25 June 2024

Members Allowances 2024/25

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Treasurer

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise Members on the outcome of the Service review of the Members Allowances Scheme for the forthcoming year, 2024/25.

Background

2. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) to make an annual scheme of Members' Allowances, containing detailed information regarding the Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowance, Dependent Carers' Allowance, Co-optees' Allowance and Travel and Subsistence. The current full scheme can be found in Appendix A to this report.
3. Under the regulations Councils are required to establish and maintain an independent remuneration panel to provide advice on their scheme and the amounts to be paid. In the case of Combined Fire Authorities, they are required to have regard to the allowances paid in their constituent authorities when coming to a view of the level of allowances.
4. Durham County Council (DCC) have not amended their scheme since 2014-2015 and have not increased the level of the basic allowances, since 2009. Darlington Borough Council (DBC) reviewed their scheme in 2019 and introduced indexation of allowances from 2021.

5. DCC have made the decision to undertake a fundamental review of their Members Allowance Scheme in 2024 to inform the scheme for 2025/26 and it is proposed that the CFA undertake a similar review in line with this timescale as it will also consider forthcoming boundary changes.
6. The Terms of Reference of the review will consider the criteria on which recommendations will be made at the beginning of each financial year when the scheme will be published.
7. In considering allowances Members also need to be mindful of the Authority's budget position, particularly in view of inflationary pressures and unfunded pay increases. Any increase in the allowances for the current financial year would place further pressure on the Authority's budget.

Conclusion

8. Taking account of the constituent authorities position on allowances and the Authority's budget position it is not proposed to amend the scheme for 2024/25. The allowances set out in the Scheme attached at Appendix A will therefore remain unchanged pending a fundamental review which will take place later in the year.

Recommendations

9. Members are requested to:
 - i. **Approve** the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2024/25.
 - ii. **Approve** the proposal to undertake a fundamental review of the Members' Allowances Scheme in 2024.