

Members' Roles and Remuneration

Report of the Clerk

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1 Purpose of Report

This report outlines the changes in roles of various Members of the Fire Authority, and specifically those of the Chair, Vice-Chair and Integrated Risk Management Planning Working Group, in recent years. It advises of the outcome of the review of Members' allowances, conducted by the Independent Panel, and asks the Fire Authority to consider and decide upon the recommendations put forward by the Panel. The report also asks the Fire Authority to consider and decide whether a third person be invited to join the Independent Panel. Finally, the report asks the Fire Authority to agree the 2010/11 Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked:

- a) To note the changes in the roles of Members of the Fire Authority and specifically those of the Chair, Vice-Chair and Integrated Risk Management Planning Working Group;
- b) To consider the report of the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances (attached at Appendix A to this report) and decide whether to adopt the recommendations put forward by the Panel;
- c) To consider and decide whether Mr James Parker be invited to join the Independent Panel; and
- d) To agree the 2010/11 Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances (attached at Appendix B to this report).

3 The Changing Roles of Members

Over recent years there have been a number of developments, resulting in additional work for some Members of the Fire Authority, in particular the Chair, Vice-Chair and Integrated Risk Management Planning Working Group, and a significant increase in the amount of time, which those Members are expected to devote to their responsibilities. Details of these developments are given below.

Integrated Risk Management Planning

Following the introduction of Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) by the Government, the Fire Authority established a Members' Working Group to move the process forward. The Group (which has recently been given a wider remit and renamed the Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group) meets at least quarterly and its Members are required to attend a minimum of 5 consultation meetings per year. Most, in fact, attend far more. This extensive involvement of Members in IRMP has been cited as best practice by the Audit Commission in its recent assessment of the Fire Authority.

Regional Control Centre

A Regional Control Centre limited company has now been established, to which the Fire Authority is required to nominate a Board Director. In line with other Fire Authorities in the Region, it has decided that the Chair should take on this responsibility, which involves 6 days of his time each year to attend national events and local board meetings and additional time to peruse papers.

Leonardo Projects

A number of Members have participated in Leonardo projects, for which the Service has secured funding from the European Union. These involve 7-day visits to Brigades in various cities and their purpose is to share best practice and network with colleagues internationally.

Chair's Briefings

The Chair and Vice-Chair now attend meetings every 2 weeks with Brigade Managers to be briefed on developments within the Service locally, regionally and nationally. The Leader of the Main Opposition Group also attends these meetings.

Audit Commission Audits

During Comprehensive Performance Assessment and now Comprehensive Area Assessment the Chair and Vice-Chair have been required to participate in meetings with the Audit Commission to discuss the role of Members in governance of the Service and to receive feedback on the Commission's findings.

All of the above are in addition to the following work already carried out by Members:

Fire Authority, Committee and Working Group Meetings

West Midlands Regional Management Board

Although there is now only one meeting (the Annual General Meeting), which the Chair, Vice-Chair and Leader of the Main Opposition Group attend, there are 3 Programme Board meetings each year, in which the Chair participates. In addition, he also attends one Local Government Association Regional Management Board Chairs' meeting per year.

Fire Conference

As approved by the Fire Authority, the Chair and Vice-Chair attend the two-day national Fire Conference each year with the Chief Fire Officer. Senior Members and officers from Fire Services internationally also attend, as do Government politicians, to provide updates on the latest developments in the Fire Service. The Conference therefore provides an excellent learning and networking opportunity.

London Meetings

The Government and Local Government Association organise at least 8 meetings in London per year, which the Chair is expected to attend.

Operational Exercises

4 days are spent by the Chair each year, observing operational exercises organised by the Service.

Employee / Civic Events

The Chair and Vice-Chair are expected wherever possible, and other Members are invited, to attend a number of employee / civic events each year, such as the Achievers' Celebration, new recruits presentations, long service awards evening and launches of new initiatives.

4 Members' Remuneration

Background

On 1 May 2003 the "Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003" (SI 1021) came into force, which required Combined Fire Authorities to establish their own schemes of allowances, so replacing the existing practice whereby Members were paid allowances for their fire authority duties by their constituent authorities. At its Annual Meeting in July 2003 Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority agreed its first Scheme for Payment of Members' Allowances and since then, in accordance with the Regulations, it has agreed a Scheme each year.



In 2004, although not required to do so by legislation, the Fire Authority established an Independent Panel on Members' Allowances to review the allowances paid to its Members. This was at no cost to the Authority and ensured that any review of the Scheme was objective. Having conducted two previous reviews of Members' allowances, the Panel was due to conduct a further review in autumn 2008. This was, however, delayed until autumn 2009 to ensure that the impact, if any, of the move to a unitary authority in Shropshire could be considered.

Review Process

Mr Ciaran Martin, Chair of Shropshire Council's Independent Remuneration Panel, and Mr Alan Weaver, also a member of that Panel, conducted, at no cost to the Fire Authority, their third review of the Fire Authority's Scheme for Payment of Members' Allowances during June 2009. A copy of their report is attached at Appendix A to this report and details of the approach taken to the review are provided in Section 2 of that report.

Review Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations of the Panel are given at Section 4 of the appended report and can be summarised as follows:

- **Basic Allowance**

The Basic Allowance is generally appropriate and no major revision is needed or justified at this time. The Fire Authority has already implemented the increase of 1% awarded by the National Joint Council with effect from 1 April 2009. The Panel has, therefore, recommended that no further action is required.

- **Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)**

In the case of the most senior and demanding roles in the Fire Authority, particularly those of the Chair and Vice-Chair, there is still a significant gap with comparator roles in other authorities. The Panel has, therefore, recommended that the SRA for the Chair should be increased from £7,976 to £10,000 and, for the Vice-Chair, from £3,988 to £5,000, with effect from 1 April 2009.

In view of the significant additional effort expended by Members of the Integrated Risk Management Planning Working Group (now renamed the Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group) the Panel has recommended an SRA of £1,000 to each Member of the Group and an increase from £2,568 to £3,000 in the SRA paid to the Chair, to be implemented from 1 April 2009.

- **Independent Members**

The allowance of £273 per annum (reviewed annually based on National Joint Council annual pay reviews) payable to non-elected Independent Members of the Standards Committee should continue.

The payment of £53 for up to four hours and £106 for over four hours, when called for duty, subject to application by individuals and provided they have incurred financial loss, should also continue.

- **Travel and Subsistence**

Members are still experiencing difficulties with the cost of overnight accommodation and meals, particularly in the inner London area. They should not be expected to subsidise travel, accommodation or meals, which they are required to take when fulfilling their Fire Authority role.

Officers should investigate whether travel and subsistence allowances can be brought into line with those of Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils and then seek further input from the Independent Panel. In the meantime, the upper rate for accommodation, involving visits to London or national conferences, should be temporarily increased to £140. In all other cases the upper rate should remain at £120.

Officers should investigate the possibility of teaming up with Shropshire Council on sourcing cheaper accommodation with inclusive meals. Advance planning of travel should also be encouraged and facilitated to ensure that Members do not have to pay for accommodation themselves and then reclaim expenditure. This would also enable the Fire Authority to obtain better value when purchasing rail tickets.

- **Further Panel Review and National Joint Council (NJC) Changes**

The Fire Authority should seek further guidance from the Independent Panel, once the recommended research has been carried out.

A further formal review of allowances should be undertaken in autumn 2011 and subsequent reviews biannually, unless major changes in the role, structure or remit of the Fire Authority take place.

In the event of any NJC changes, which exceed those of the Independent panel recommendations, the NJC changes should be implemented.

- **Cost of Implementing the Recommendations**

The appendix to the Independent Panel's report shows the potential and actual additional costs of implementing its recommendations regarding Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs). The actual additional cost to the Fire Authority would be £6,378 for the financial year 2009/10.



It should be noted that the Authority's Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances (in line with most locally authority schemes) precludes a Member from receiving more than one SRA. This means, therefore, that, although the Chair is a Director on the Regional Control Centre Limited Company, he does not receive the £2,658 per year payable for that role, because he already receives an SRA for the role of Chair. Other Members, such as the Vice-Chair and Leader of the Main Opposition Group, who sit on the Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group, are in a similar position.

5 Proposed Addition to the Independent Panel

Mr Martin and Mr Weaver, who make up the Independent Panel, are happy to continue to support the Authority, if it so wishes. However, in order to ease the burden of work and strengthen the Panel, they would like to expand it to three people. They have suggested that Mr James Parker, who sits on the Panel for Shropshire Council, join them on the Fire Authority Panel. Mr Parker runs a consultancy business, has a good deal of experience with review panels, is a valued contributor to the Shropshire Council Panel and would be willing to serve. Members are asked, therefore, to consider and decide upon this proposal.

6 The 2010/11 Scheme

Under the Regulations referred to in section 4 of this report the Fire Authority is required each year to agree a scheme for the payment of allowances to its Members. Section 14 of the Fire Authority's Scheme states that the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances may be reviewed annually from 1 April each year based on the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services' annual pay reviews, and any percentage increase applied automatically from that date.

If the Fire Authority agrees the recommendations of the Independent Panel, the allowances payable per annum with effect from 1 April 2009 would be as follows:

- Basic allowance payable to all Members £2,658
- Special Responsibility Allowances:
 - Chair £10,000
 - Vice-Chair £5,000
 - Leader of the Main Opposition Group £2,658
 - Chair of the Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group £3,000
 - Regional Control Centre Director £2,658
 - Member of Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group £1,000



- Co-Optee Allowance for Independent Members of Standards Committee £273

plus £53 for up to 4 hours and £106 for over 4 hours spent considering locally allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct

If the above rates are agreed with effect from 1 April 2009, it is proposed that, in accordance with the Fire Authority's Scheme, they are increased in 2010/11 by the percentage rate (if any), which will in due course be agreed by the NJC with effect from 1 April 2010.

A copy of the proposed Scheme for 2010/11 is attached at Appendix B to this report. With the exception of dates and the figures given in sections 3 and 7 and Schedule 2 to the Scheme no amendments are proposed to the 2009/10 Scheme. Members are asked to consider and agree the proposed Scheme for 2010/11.

5 Legal Comment

Under the "Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003" (SI 1021) the Fire Authority is required to establish a scheme to provide for the payment of a basic annual allowance to each of its Members. That scheme may also provide for the payment of special responsibility allowances and of allowances to co-optees serving on committees.

6 Financial Comment

The current cost of Members' Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances is £62,466 per annum. The actual annual cost, if all of the Panel's recommendations relating to Special Responsibility Allowances were implemented, would be £68,844, an increase of £6,378, which would be met from the pay and prices contingency in the 2009/10 and later years' budgets.

7 Appendices

Appendix A

Report by the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances

Appendix B

Proposed Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances 2010/11

8 Background Papers

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

1 May 2003 Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority Meeting 16 July 2003

Report 15 Members' Allowances Scheme and Minutes



9 Equality Impact Assessment

Officers have considered the Service's Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments (Personnel 5 Part 2) and have decided that there are no discriminatory practices or differential impacts upon specific groups arising from this report. An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has not, therefore, been completed.

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balance Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	*
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	*
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Equality and Diversity		Retained	
Efficiency Savings		Risk and Insurance	
Environmental		Staff	
Financial	*	Strategic Planning	
Fire Control/Fire Link	*	West Midlands Regional Management Board	*
Information Communications Technology and Data			



A REPORT BY
THE INDEPENDENT PANEL ON MEMBERS
ALLOWANCES
SHROPSHIRE & WREKIN FIRE AUTHORITY
11 November 2009

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Panel was originally convened in 2004 at the request of the Authority, in accordance with legislative requirements, to review allowances paid to Fire Authority Members. The panel presented its first report in October 2004 and a second in October 2006. This review was prompted by the passage of time since the previous review and changes in local authority governance in Shropshire (Unitary Authority). Panel membership remains unchanged and comprises the following persons, both of whom serve on other review panels, including that advising Shropshire Council:

- Alan Weaver - TUC Regional Officer for the West Midlands
- Ciaran Martin - Director Staffing & Talent Management Alcoa Europe
(Chair)

SECTION 2 APPROACH

2.1 The Panel met on 10 June 2009 at the Fire Service Headquarters building in Shrewsbury. The approach to the review included the following elements:

- a. Review of information on members' responsibilities / participation in committees, working groups and external bodies
- b. Consideration of the likely change in Authority Membership following Unitary Council elections
- c. Study of operating methodology; committee structure, impact & work load, existing allowance structure, comparative information and other supporting documents
- d. Individual meetings with:
 - (1) Councillor Nigel Hartin, Leader Opposition Group
 - (2) Councillor Stuart West, Chairman
 - (3) Mr Phil Box (Former Councillor)

- (4) Mr Paul Raymond, Chief Fire Officer
- (5) Mr Keith Dixon, Treasurer
- (6) Additional input was provided in a mix of face to face and remote means by Sharon Taylor, Lynne Ince and Joanne Coadey.

SECTION 3 FINDINGS

3.1 In considering the information put before it, the Panel observed that the Authority continues to work well and to encourage engagement and commitment by the members. This was true of those whose roles had changed and even those no longer serving on the authority as a result of electoral changes. The Panel identified a clear desire amongst those interviewed to maintain the high reputation of the Authority and its members, especially their collaborative and pragmatic way of working.

3.2 The Panel noted with satisfaction that there did not seem to be any fundamentally flawed or serious issues in relation to allowances. Nevertheless, some issues were identified and also made known to the panel. These included a concern that the work of the IRMP continues to be crucial and very demanding but that this is not reflected in terms of allowances paid. This was consistent with evidence received by the Panel in its 2006 review. Additionally some concerns were expressed about demands placed on members involved in the RCC and the potential for conflict between representing the Authority and discharging duty to the RCC.

3.3 In reviewing comparative data, the Panel noted that the basic allowance seemed comparable with that of other like authorities. However, some significant differences were noted in the allowances paid to the Chair and Vice-Chair, when compared to comparable roles in other authorities. The need to reward fairly and in line with other authorities was a message that was noted by the Panel.

3.4 The Panel also noted that differences still exist between the Authority and Shropshire Council in terms of overnight accommodation, travel and meal allowances. This was found to be especially true in relation to travel to London / major cities. As stated in its previous report, the Panel also saw some potential for confusion amongst members required to operate under two different expense structures.

SECTION 4 - CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Basic Allowance

4.1.1 In reviewing the Basic Allowance, the Panel concluded that the allowance was generally appropriate and that no major revision was needed or justified at this time. Nevertheless, it was concluded that an adjustment, consistent with the recommended increase specified by the NJC should be applied. Given that, in accordance with previous Panel recommendations, the Authority has already implemented the NJC increase effective October, no further action is needed.

4.1.2 The approach of leaving the Basic Allowance at the current level will, in light of other recommendations, have the effect of changing the ratio of basic allowance to highest SRA from 3:1 to approximately 4:1. The Panel has concluded however, in light of evidence presented, that this change is still a fair reflection of responsibility levels and is sufficiently close to its 3:1 original ratio aim to be reasonable.

Recommendation

4.1.3 The Basic Allowance for members should be increased in line with NJC recommendations and that this increase should be paid retrospectively from April 2009. It is noted that this increase is already being implemented effective October and applied retrospectively from April 2009. This is fully in line with the view of the Panel and so, no further action is recommended on the Basic Allowance.

	Amount	Ratio to largest SRA	% Change on previous year	Additional Cost on previous year
Previous Allowance	£2,632	3:1	-	-
From April 2009	£2,658	3.76:1	1	Already in place

Table 1 - Changes to Basic Allowance (No further action required).

4.2 Special Responsibility Roles / Allowances

4.2.1 The current structure of SRAs appears to be working well and effectively in general. This continues to be reflected in the high standards displayed and the regard in which the Authority is held as well as the clear sense of teamwork and commitment that is very evident. Despite this solid leadership, displayed over a number of years, it is also clear that, in the case of the most senior roles on the Authority, there is still a significant gap with comparator roles in other authorities.

4.2.2 The Panel has therefore concluded that some adjustment in the level of certain SRAs is needed. Although the changes are significant, they are by no means excessive and are considered appropriate, if the authority is to recognise the responsibility levels and workload of Authority members engaged in demanding

work. This is especially true in the case of the Chair and Vice-Chair and it is these roles in particular where SRAs need to be adjusted.

4.2.3 On this occasion, the Panel also concluded that one new SRA is needed, if the appropriate recognition is to be achieved. Therefore, the Panel has concluded that IRMP members are indeed expending significant additional effort. The Panel also concluded that the location of the IRMP within the Authority did not reflect its contribution and that its status should be reviewed by the Authority. Consequently, it was concluded that an SRA for IRMP members was now appropriate and that some increase in the SRA for the Chair of the IRMP is also needed. The Panel notes and welcomes the changes made regarding the IRMP, including a new title (SRWPG) and place within the organisation structure. This would have been a recommendation of the Panel but, as the change is already in place, the recommendation was removed.

Recommendation

4.2.4 Special Responsibility Allowances should be implemented as shown in Table 2, with changes being backdated to April 2009.

4.2.5 Turning to the SRWPG, the Panel recommends that an SRA of £1,000 be established for SRWPG members. This would not apply to the Chair of the SRWPG who is already in receipt of an SRA. The application of this SRA should be made retrospectively to April 2009.

	Chair	Vice-Chair	Leader Opp. Group	Chair IRMP	Dir RCC	IRMP / SRWPG Members
Current	£7,976	£3,988	£2,658	£2,658	£2,658	N/A
From April 2009	£10,000	£5,000	£2,658	£3,000	£2,658	£1,000

Table 2 - Proposed changes to Special Responsibility Allowances.

4.3 Allowances for Independent Panel Members

4.3.1 Having reviewed the situation, it was concluded that the co-optee allowance for Independent Panel Members should continue. The Panel also reviewed further co-optee payment and concluded that some small change is justified.

Recommendation

4.3.2 The co-optee allowance for Independent Panel Members should remain at the recently approved level of £273. The additional allowance for time spent on duty should also remain at the recently approved levels. When called for duty, Independent Panel Members should, subject to application by individuals and provided that individuals have incurred financial loss, be recompensed as follows:

- * £53 for up to 4 hours
- * £106 for over 4 hours

4.4 Subsistence and Travel

4.4.1 Having reviewed the Subsistence and Travel arrangements and levels of compensation, the Panel has concluded that members are still experiencing difficulties with the cost of overnight accommodation and obtaining meals at a reasonable cost, particularly in the inner London area. The Panel has the view that Members should not be required to subsidise directly travel, accommodation or meals which they are obliged to undertake as part of their Authority role. Neither should Members find themselves in embarrassing circumstances where they are unable either to engage in meals which are part of an authorised duty or where they are forced to choose less than reasonable meal options due to lack of funds. However, this does not necessarily indicate a need to just raise the level of subsistence rates but the adoption of a more creative approach to procurement and the need to leverage the benefits of partnering and greater use of forward planning.

4.4.2 In light of the above, the conclusions and recommendations contained in this section of the report are largely a re-statement of the 2006 report. The Panel has the view that significant advantage could come from partnering with Shropshire Council Procurement Staff and utilising the arrangements that they have with London providers. This could have an important impact on being able to ensure that members can obtain reasonable meals and be accommodated adequately when travelling on Authority business.

4.4.3 Again, as raised previously, operating a subsistence and travel system that differs from those of contributing authorities is likely to cause confusion for members, potentially leading to mistakes or misunderstanding. Therefore, where possible and practical, some alignment with Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council practices seems sensible. However, an intelligent approach rather than a blanket adoption is indicated to avoid the introduction of further anomalies and confusion.

4.4.4 Turning to the subject of rail travel, it may be seen to be inequitable that Senior Officers use one class of travel whilst Authority Members have a different arrangement. (It is recognised that when travelling together, Members can travel First Class but coincident travel may not always be possible.) The need to work in reasonable comfort suggests that First Class train travel should be a common approach for both Officers and Members. Moreover, taking a simple principled stand requiring Authority Members to travel by Standard Class is no longer appropriate given the huge change in travel options which may mean that Standard Class is not the most cost-effective option for the Authority. Indeed, with some small effort and advance planning, the use of First Class travel will often save money, whilst also allowing Members to be more effective and undertake more work. Where First Class travel is undertaken at a discounted rate compared to Standard Class a record of the comparative rates and the saving incurred should be kept so to justify the use of First Class travel in case of later query.

Recommendation

4.4.5 The approach to and existing rates for reimbursement of travel and subsistence should, as far as possible, be brought in line with that of Shropshire Council & Telford & Wrekin Council. However, such an approach should be applied sensibly in order to avoid further confusion for Members and Staff and to ensure that any changes are appropriate. Authority Staff should investigate the possibilities presented by this approach, after which, further input from the Panel should be sought.

4.4.6 As far as subsistence allowances are concerned, these should be consistent with those operated by Shropshire Council, which is itself in the process of change. The upper rate should be temporarily increased to £140 excl. VAT, an amount identified as appropriate in the recently published report on MP's Allowances. However, where possible, some means of linking this amount to an established scale should be made but further work will be needed by the Panel to establish this. Therefore, as an interim measure, the higher level of £140 should be adopted, pending further input from the Panel and noting that this level may not be permanent in light of investigation.

4.4.7 The possibility of teaming with Shropshire Council on sourcing / reserving cheaper accommodation with inclusive meal options should be investigated. If viable and acceptable to both authorities, it should be adopted as standard practice. This approach should be used in parallel with the adoption of an increased upper rate as a backstop, rather a standard option, in order to achieve good value for money whilst ensuring adequate support for members. Additionally, the adoption of advance planning by members should also be encouraged and indeed may be facilitated by staff acting proactively to check member travel plans in advance, perhaps on a monthly basis. In case of doubt, further input should be sought from the Panel. This may also make the re-claiming of VAT easier for the Fire Authority. It will also alleviate the need for members to pay up front for accommodation and subsequently reclaim expenditure after the event.

4.4.8 There should be a common approach to the use of rail travel for Senior Officers and Members. The principled approach to use of Standard Class travel for members should be replaced by a more pragmatic approach that has the aim of providing a reasonable work environment for Members whilst travelling and, at the same time, providing good value for the Authority. Therefore, it is recommended that the Authority adopts an intelligent approach to the purchase of rail tickets including the adoption of forward planning and the purchase of advance tickets whilst staying within the standard fare rate. In order to facilitate this, detailed research, and perhaps some training, should be undertaken to familiarise Authority Staff with the wide range of rail travel options that are now available. Again, in case of doubt following the outcome of this research, further Panel input should be sought.

Visits to London or National Conferences	£140 excl. VAT
All other cases	£120 excl. VAT

Table 3 - Subsistence rates (Temporary)

4.5 Implementation Timing & Cost Implications

4.5.1 In preparing these recommendations, the Panel has looked at the evidence and information available. Its judgements are based on an objective assessment of the situation within the Authority and using comparisons to other authorities. Furthermore, the changes recommended here are generally modest and are unlikely to cause any financial difficulty to the Authority. However, the panel cannot operate in a vacuum and so it is also mindful of the current financial situation and the pressure that this may place on the Authority. It therefore falls to the Authority to ensure that it can indeed implement the recommended changes, that they are affordable and that they take due account of the wider prevailing economic and political climate. The changes and Details of the financial impact of the main recommendations are shown at Appendix A to this report.

Recommendation

4.5.2 The new rates and arrangements detailed here should be implemented as shown in the Appendix to the report, backdated to April 2009.

4.6 Further Panel Review & NJC Changes

4.6.1 In light of the recommendations contained in this report, some of which require further research and investigation, the Authority may need to seek additional Panel guidance on the research findings. Beyond that, a further formal review will also be necessary in 2011.

4.6.2 Additionally, as mentioned in item 4.4.6 and in light of difficulties with subsistence rates, that the Authority considers the adoption of different linkages, which may be more appropriate. However, whilst this investigation is ongoing and until the Panel reports back, linkage to NJC rates should continue.

Recommendation

4.6.3 The Authority should seek further guidance from the Panel, as appropriate, in light of the outcome of recommended research on linkages and on subsistence. (The Panel will provide further input as information becomes available.)

4.6.4 A further formal review by the Panel should be undertaken in autumn 2011.

4.6.5 Subsequent reviews should continue to be undertaken biannually except where major changes to the role, structure or remit of the Authority are proposed or have taken place. In such a case, a review should be undertaken when the new structure is known / under consideration but preferably before it is implemented.

4.6.6 In the event of any NJC changes being made which would exceed those of the Panel recommendations, the NJC changes should be implemented. Otherwise, the Authority should stay within the model detailed here and follow the Panel's recommended approach.

Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority IRP Allowances Recommendations - Nov 2009											
Role	Current (£)	New (£)	Change (£)	% Cx	# Roles	Potential Additional Cost	Actual Additional Cost	Potential Annual Cost	PotentialSRA Total	Actual SRA Total	Actual Total Cost
Basic Allowance	2,658.00	2,658.00			17	0.00	0.00	45,186.00			
Chair	7,976.00	10,000.00	2,024.00	25.38	1	2,024.00	2,024.00	10,000.00			
Vice-Chair	3,988.00	5,000.00	1,012.00	25.38	1	1,012.00	1,012.00	5,000.00			
Ldr. Opp. Group	2,658.00	2,658.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.00	0.00	2,658.00			
Chair IRMP / SRWPG	2,658.00	3,000.00	342.00	12.87	1	342.00	342.00	3,000.00			
Dir. RCC	2,658.00	2,658.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.00	0.00	2,658.00			
SRWPG Member	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	N/A	7	7,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00			
Total						10,378.00	6,378.00	71,502.00	26,316.00	23,658.00	68,844.00

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority Draft Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances 2010/11

The Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, in exercise of the powers conferred by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI No. 2003: 1021) ['the Regulations'] hereby makes the following scheme.

1. This scheme shall have effect from 1 April 2010.

2. In this scheme:

"Member" means a Member of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority

"the Authority" means the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority

"year" means the 12 months ending with 31 March

"pro rata" means in proportion to the number of days during the effective period of this scheme to the total number of days in the year

"independent person" means a person, other than a member of the Authority, appointed to serve on the Authority's Standards Committee (in accordance with Section 53 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Relevant Authorities (Standards Committee) Regulations 2001)

"NJC" means the National Joint Council.

3. **Basic Allowances**

3.1 Basic allowance payable to each Member shall be **£2,658** (plus the percentage increase agreed in the NJC for Local Government Services' annual pay review for 2010/11) per year, pro rata, payable by monthly instalments.

4. **Special Responsibility Allowances**

4.1 The Members holding the offices specified in **Schedule 2** shall receive the Special Responsibility Allowances shown there, pro rata.

4.2 No Member shall receive more than one special responsibility allowance from the Authority.

4.3 Special responsibility allowances will be payable, pro rata, by monthly instalments.

5. Travel and Subsistence Allowances

- 5.1 Payment of travel and subsistence allowances shall be made in respect of the approved duties undertaken by a Member, as set out in **Schedule 1** to this scheme, as amended from time to time by the Authority.
- 5.2 The amounts payable to each Member in respect of travel allowances and subsistence allowances shall be in accordance with the scales adopted by the Authority, from time to time, outlined in **Schedule 2**.

6. Dependants'/Carers' Allowance

- 6.1 In accordance with the Regulations, the scheme does not provide for this allowance.

7. Independent Persons

- 7.1 Basic allowance payable to each independent person shall be **£273** (plus the percentage increase agreed in the NJC for Local Government Services' annual pay review for 2010/11) per year, pro rata, payable by monthly instalments commencing 1 April 2010.
- 7.2 An additional allowance of **£53** for up to 4 hours and **£106** for over 4 hours shall be payable to independent persons, should they be required to consider locally any allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct.

8. Renunciation

- 8.1 A Member may, by notice given to the Treasurer to the Authority, elect to forego any part of his or her entitlement to an allowance under this scheme.
- 8.2 Any such notice shall specify the effective date of renunciation and, once given, the notice may not be revoked otherwise than with effect from 1 April in any year.

9. Time Limit for Claims

- 9.1 Members should submit completed claim forms for travel and subsistence for each calendar month, to the Corporate Services Manager at Brigade Headquarters by the 9th of the following month to ensure payment at the end of the month.
- 9.2 Claims must be submitted within three months of the end of the relevant month. The Treasurer may, having consulted the Chair of the Authority, accept a late claim for good cause and make the related payments.

10. Dual Claims

- 10.1 Where a Member of the Authority is also able to claim allowances as a Member of another authority, that Member may not receive any allowance from more than one authority in respect of the same duties, travel or subsistence.

11. Right to Withdraw Allowances or Require Repayment

- 11.1 Where a Member is suspended or partially suspended from his or her duties as a Member of the Authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or Regulations made under that Part, the Authority reserves the right to withhold that part of basic or special responsibility allowance or travelling and subsistence allowance payable to him or her in respect of the period of suspension or part suspension.
- 11.2 In the circumstances outlined in paragraph 11.1, or if a Member ceases to be a Member of the Authority, or is in any other way not entitled to receive an allowance for any particular period, the Authority reserves the right to require that such part of the allowance as relates to any such period be repaid to it.

12. Part-Year Entitlement

- 12.1 The provisions of this paragraph shall have effect to regulate the entitlements of a Member to basic and special responsibility where, in the course of a year:
- a) this scheme is amended; or
 - b) that person becomes or ceases to be a Member; or
 - (c) that Member accepts or relinquishes a special responsibility for which a special responsibility allowance is payable.
- 12.2 In relation to basic and special responsibility allowances:
- a) if an amendment to this scheme changes the amount to which a Member is entitled; or
 - b) where the term of office of a Member begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning or end of a year; or
 - c) where the special responsibilities of a Member do not subsist throughout the year; or

- d) where the scheme is amended as referred to in (a) above and the term of office and/or the special responsibilities of the Member do not subsist throughout any part of the periods within the year distinguished by the payment of different amounts for these allowances then the entitlement to the allowances shall be calculated by reference to the proportion the number of days in each such period bears to the number of days in that year.

13. Administration

- 13.1 The Treasurer to the Authority shall maintain, on behalf of the Authority, a record of all payments made under this scheme which shall specify in relation to each payment the name of the recipient and the amount and nature of the payment.
- 13.2 This record shall be available at all reasonable times for inspection by local government electors in Shropshire and Borough of Telford & Wrekin at no charge. Copies will be provided on request on payment of a reasonable fee decided by the Treasurer.

14. Review of Allowances

- 14.1 The basic and special responsibility allowances payable under this scheme may be reviewed annually from 1 April each year based on the NJC for Local Government Services annual pay reviews, and any percentage increase applied automatically from that date.
- 14.2 Likewise the travel and subsistence allowances payable under this scheme may be reviewed annually from 1 April each year based on the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services annual reviews and any increase applied automatically from that date.

15. Revision or Revocation of the Scheme

- 15.1 This scheme may only be amended or revoked by the Authority in accordance with the provisions of the relevant Regulations.

Approved Duties

For the purposes of paragraph 5 of the Authority's Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances, the following shall be regarded as approved duties:

- Meetings of the Authority
- Meetings of Committees, Panels and Working Groups of the Authority
- Any other meeting convened by the Authority (or by the Chair or Vice-Chair in cases of urgency) to which Members are invited
- Meetings between the Chair and/or the Vice-Chair of the Authority and the Chairs and/or Vice-Chairs of the Authority's Committees and officers of the Authority or the Brigade or other fire authorities or brigades to discuss Authority business
- Meetings between other Members of the Authority and officers of the Authority or the Brigade to discuss Authority business, at the specific direction of the Authority, or at the specific or general direction of the Chair
- Attendance at Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service events, at which Members' attendance is specifically requested
- Attendance at meetings and conferences of the Local Government Association (including plenary meetings and Policy Groups) by the appointed Members or their Substitutes
- Attendance Audit Commission inspections and meetings related to inspections
- Meetings organised by the Authority with Ministers and/or Government officials on Authority business
- Meetings organised by the Authority with Shropshire and Borough of Telford & Wrekin Members of Parliament
- Attendance at the Local Government Association Annual Fire Conference by the Chair or Vice-Chair or any other Member specifically authorised by the Authority
- Attendance at the annual Standards Board Conference by up to two Members (including Independent Members) of the Fire Authority's Standards Committee
- Attendance at any other meetings, groups, seminars, conferences, courses or visits on Authority matters, subject to the prior approval of the Authority (or the Chair or Vice-Chair in the case of urgency) for attendance at external or individual events

- Meetings of bodies (other than those specified above) to which the Authority has resolved to make appointments or nominations (for example the Board of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services Regional Control Centre and Crime Reduction Partnerships)
- Carrying out any other duty previously approved by the Authority, or any duty of a class so approved, for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the Authority's functions

Travel Allowances and Subsistence Allowances as at 1 April 2010

* Revised car allowances are likely to be introduced with effect from 1 April 2010.

Travelling Allowances

Car

Passenger allowance
Mileage allowance for engine size is as follows:

Per mile up to 8,500 miles

Not exceeding 999cc
Over 999cc but not exceeding 1199cc
Over 1199cc

Per mile over 8,500 miles

Not exceeding 999cc
Over 999cc but not exceeding 1199cc
Over 1199cc

As NJC rate
3.0p
42.9p
47.7p
60.1p
11.7p
12.2p
14.2p



Bicycle

Mileage allowance
Or the higher amounts shown above, if a car of the appropriate engine capacity would otherwise have been used.

32.5p



Train

Members are entitled to claim:

- The lowest reasonably available FIRST class fare, where there is a real need to work whilst travelling by rail or where otherwise appropriate, otherwise second class fare;
- Reservation and left luggage expenses; and
- Costs of getting to, and from, the station



Taxi

Members are entitled to claim:

- The fare and reasonable gratuity, where the need to travel is URGENT or where no public transport is reasonably available.
- The appropriate public transport fare (e.g. bus fare) in other cases.



Additional expenses can be claimed for the actual cost of parking.



Subsistence Allowances

Where no overnight stay is required:

Breakfast Allowance

Payable in respect of absence from home for at least 4 hours, before 11.00 am.

Lunch Allowance

Payable in respect of absence from home for at least 4 hours, including the whole of the period 12 noon to 2.00 pm.

Tea Allowance

Payable in respect of absence from home for at least 4 hours, including the whole of the period 3.00 pm to 6.00 pm.

Evening Meal Allowance

Payable in respect of absence from home for at least 4 hours, ending after 7.00 pm.

Up to NJC* rate £
5.57
7.70
3.04
9.54



Note: Tea and evening meal allowances will not be paid in respect of the same evening. All claims must be substantiated by receipts (*or are subject to taxation*).

Overnight Allowance

Claims can be made where overnight absences from the usual place of residence exceed 24 hours. The following allowances are for bed and breakfast:

- Visits to London or national conferences (excluding VAT)
- All other cases (excluding VAT)

£
140
120



Members' Allowances *

The **basic allowance** for all Members of the Fire Authority is £2,658 per annum payable by monthly instalments.

The **co-optee allowance** for Independent Members of the Standards Committee is £263 per annum payable by monthly instalments. An additional allowance of £51 for up to 4 hours and £102 for over 4 hours shall be payable to Independent Members, should they be required to consider locally any allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct.

The following **Special Responsibility Allowances** are also payable by monthly instalments:

	£ per annum
Chair of the Fire Authority	10,000
Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority	5,000
Leader of the Main Opposition Group	2,658
Chair of Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group	3,000
Director on the Board of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services	
Regional Control Centre	2,562
Member of Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group	1,000

* These figures will be increased by the percentage rate (if any), which will in due course be agreed by the NJC, with effect from 1 April 2010.

How and When to Claim

Claims for travelling and subsistence allowances should be submitted to the Corporate Services Manager and must relate to approved duties undertaken (see the attached schedule for details). Claims will be paid directly to Members' bank accounts on a monthly basis. Claims must be made on the Members' allowances claim forms (FB218), copies of which are available from the Corporate Services Manager.



Claim forms should be completed for each calendar month, in which expenses have been incurred, and forwarded to the Corporate Services Manager **no later than the seventh of the following month to ensure payment at the end of the month**. VAT receipts for petrol purchased prior to the dates of travel listed on the claim form should also be provided. Claims must be submitted within three months of the end of the relevant month. The Treasurer may, having consulted the Chair, accept a late claim for good cause and make the related payments.



The full address for completed claim forms is:

**Corporate Services Manager, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service,
Brigade Headquarters, St Michael's Street, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY1 2HJ**