



Shropshire and Wrekin
Fire and Rescue Authority

Section 11

General Information for Members

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

General Information for Members

1 Meetings of the Fire Authority and its Committees

Meetings of the full Fire Authority and its Committees are usually held at Headquarters, Shrewsbury. Fire Authority meetings and Committee meetings normally start at 2.00 pm. A schedule of meeting dates already agreed can be found in this handbook at Section 2 – Authority Membership and Schedule of Meetings.

Members' political group meeting rooms are booked for all meetings of the full Fire Authority by officers and details appear on the agenda for the meeting.

Meeting Papers

Meeting papers are circulated to Members via the postal service and papers, which are not confidential or exempt, can be accessed via the Service's Website:

www.shropshirefire.gov.uk

Hard copies of the meeting papers are available for the public to view at Headquarters and at each meeting. Meeting papers can be handed to the Executive Support Officer (ESO) for recycling after meetings.

Exempt Meeting Papers

Any papers which are deemed to be exempt under the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A (details of which can be found in Section 9 of this handbook) will be considered in the closed session of meetings. These papers will be printed on pink paper and will be marked as exempt.

Under Her Majesty's Government Security Framework, the Service has also adopted the following protective marking scheme. This means that exempt papers will also be marked with PROTECT – PERSONAL, PROTECT – LEGAL or PROTECT – COMMERCIAL depending on the information contained in them.

Any exempt papers, or any marked as PROTECT, should be handed back to the ESO for shredding.

2 Headquarters

The Service has a **No Smoking** policy and you are required to observe this in Headquarters.

In accordance with the Authority's **Health and Safety Policy Statement** notices about emergency evacuation and first aid are displayed for your information and personal safety.

Access to Headquarters

Headquarters operates an Access Control System, and all Fire Authority Members will be issued with a card which will be programmed to allow access to the building.

The main entrances to the building are via Reception at the front of the building and the staff entrance at the car park end of the building. This rear entrance is only accessible with a programmed card.

The public entrance will be opened and locked at the start and end of each day by Reception staff. Members will need to use other entrances / exits on the ground floor, if attending meetings outside normal office hours.

The Access Control System monitors who is in the building and provides a quick and accurate roll call of all those in the building in the event of a fire or fire drill. It is therefore essential that all Members swipe in and out of the building individually to ensure that an accurate roll call can be made at any given time.

Lost cards should be reported immediately to the ESO.

3 Refreshments

Coffee, tea, water and biscuits will be available at meetings.

4 Role Descriptions

Role Descriptions (which can be found in Section 13 of this Handbook) have been written for the following positions:

- Member of the Fire Authority
- Chair of the Fire Authority
- Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority
- Leaders of the Main Opposition Groups of the Fire Authority
- Chair and Vice-Chair of its Committees:
 - Strategy and Resources
 - Standards, Audit and Performance
- Chair of the Strategic Advisory Group
- Lead Members for:
 - Equality and Diversity
 - Risk Management and Audit
- Independent Person in relation to standards matters

The Role Descriptions set out the purpose of the role, the main responsibilities of that role, accountability and the allowance payable, if any, for undertaking the role.

5 Members' Allowances

Details of Members' allowances, which are paid by the Fire Authority, are set out in the Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances, later in this section.

Payments are made by electronic transfer into Members' bank or building society accounts through the Fire Authority's payroll system. A banker's mandate form should be completed for this purpose and is available from the ESO. Please advise the ESO of any change in your bank details.

Claims for travel and subsistence allowances should relate to approved duties (as set out in Schedule 1 of the Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances) and should be made using the electronic Mileage and Expense Claims form, which is available on MyView via the link below. All Fire Authority Members are issued with a MyView log-in for this purpose.

<https://myviewfire.shropshire.gov.uk/dashboardFire>

Forms should be completed for each calendar month, in which expenses have been incurred, and submitted no later than the seventh of the following month to ensure payment at the end of the month.

Any claim, which is not submitted within three months of the end of the relevant month, will be referred to the Head of Finance, who may, having consulted the Chair, accept a late claim for good cause and make the related payments.

Please provide VAT receipts for fuel purchased prior to the journeys listed in your claim form and for other items, such as meals, as this enables the VAT element to be reclaimed. If subsistence claims are not substantiated by receipts, they will be subject to taxation.

6 Code of Conduct

The Fire Authority has its own Code of Conduct (a copy of which can be found in Section 4 of this Handbook) and all Members are required to sign an undertaking to observe that Code (also to be found later in that Section).

Should a Member wish to make a complaint about another Member of the Fire Authority it is advisable to discuss this first with:

The Authority's Clerk and Monitoring Officer, Anthea Lowe
Telephone 01952 383219 Email anthea.lowe@telford.gov.uk

or the Deputy Monitoring Officer, Richard Phillips
Telephone 01952 383251 Email richard.phillips@telford.gov.uk

If a complaint is to be made, the appropriate forms are available from them and also from:

Executive Support Team Supervisor, Lynn Ince
Telephone 01743 260225 Email lynn.ince@shropshirefire.gov.uk

7 Register of Interests

As required by legislation, the Fire Authority maintains a Register of Members' Interests, which comprises Members' Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. A copy of the Disclosable Pecuniary Interests form can be found in Section 4 of the Handbook. All Members are required to complete this form for both themselves and their partner. Please note that the area covered by Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority includes the areas covered by both Telford & Wrekin Council and Shropshire Council.

Under the Code of Conduct you are required to notify the Fire Authority's Monitoring Officer in writing of any changes to your disclosable pecuniary interests within 28 days of becoming aware of those changes. Such changes may also be notified direct to the ESO at Service Headquarters.

Disclosable pecuniary interests will appear on the agenda at each meeting. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, you must declare that interest at this point.

If you are present at a meeting of the Authority or any of its committees and you have a disclosable pecuniary interest relating to any business that is or will be considered at the meeting, you must not:

- participate in any discussion of the business at the meeting, or if you become aware of your disclosable pecuniary interest during the meeting, participate further in any discussion of the business, or
- participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting.

These prohibitions apply to any form of participation, including speaking as a member of the public.

In certain circumstances you can request a dispensation from these prohibitions.

If you have any doubt about whether you have an interest, please contact the Monitoring Officer.

8 Gifts and Hospitality

The Fire Authority has agreed a Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality for Members, which provides detailed procedures to be followed by Members when offered gifts or hospitality.

A copy of the Protocol appears in Section 4. Please read this carefully to ensure that you are aware of what is expected of you.

If you are in any doubt as to what course of action you should take, when offered a gift or hospitality, please contact the Clerk to the Fire Authority or the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

9 Related Party Transactions

The Fire Authority must disclose related party transactions in its accounts each year, i.e. any transaction in which you have been involved (other than as a Member of the Fire Authority or of one of its constituent authorities) and which may affect the Fire Authority's reported financial position. Further information regarding related party transactions appears in Section 4.

10 Personal Information and Photograph

Upon joining the Fire Authority and periodically, the ESO will ask you to provide contact information. Please advise the ESO of any changes to your personal contact details.

Contact information is published in the Members' Handbook and, unless you indicate otherwise, may be provided for members of the public upon request. With your permission, photographs of the Fire Authority and its Members will also be used for publicity purposes from time to time.

11 Member Support

For information or administrative support please contact the following at Headquarters, Shrewsbury:

Lynn Ince, Executive Support Team Supervisor

Telephone: 01743 260225 Email: lynn.ince@shropshirefire.gov.uk

For matters relating to the Code of Conduct please contact one of the following at Telford & Wrekin Council:

Anthea Lowe, Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority

Telephone: 01952 383219 Email: anthea.lowe@telford.gov.uk

Richard Phillips, Deputy Monitoring Officer to the Authority

Telephone: 01952 383251 Email: richard.phillips@telford.gov.uk

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority

Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances 2024/25

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 2024.

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 appointed in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and subsequent regulations

"NJC" means the National Joint Council

3. Basic Allowances

3.1 The basic allowance payable to each Member shall be in accordance with the scales adopted by the Authority, from time to time, outlined in **Schedule 2** per year, pro rata, payable by monthly instalments.

3.2 In order to qualify for the basic allowance Members are expected to undertake the following duties:

- Attend meetings of the full Fire Authority;
- Sit on at least one committee or Panel of the Authority;
- Read papers and prepare for Authority-related meetings; and
- Attend at least one training event per year.

4. Special Responsibility Allowances

4.1 The Members holding the offices specified in **Schedule 2** shall receive the Special Responsibility Allowances shown there per year.

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. Dependents' / Carers' Allowance

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

7. Independent Persons

- 7.1 Travel and subsistence allowances shall be payable to independent persons in accordance with the scales adopted by the Authority, from time to time, outlined in **Schedule 2**.

8. Renunciation

- 8.1 A Member may, by notice given to the Head of Finance 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 Head of Human Resources and Administration at Brigade Headquarters by the 7th 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 Head of Finance 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 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 Head of Finance 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 Head of Finance.

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 or other local review 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 at external audit 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 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 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

Where a request from a Member to attend an event does not fall within one of the above approved duties, the Chair, in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer, may agree the attendance. In all such cases the Member concerned shall provide details in advance of the event to the Chair to enable him to reach his decision. The Member shall also provide a written report following the event to enable all Members of the Fire Authority to benefit from his / her attendance at the event.

Allowances with effect from 1 April 2023**Travel Allowances****Car**

Per mile up to, and including 10,000 miles **45p**

Per mile over 10,000 miles **25p**

Passenger allowance per passenger per mile **5p**

Motorcycle **24p**

Bicycle

Mileage allowance **20p**

The same rates will be used for Electric vehicles.

The above allowances are linked to the Government's 'approved mileage allowance payments'.

Train

Members are entitled to claim:

- The lowest available fare for the journey, which does not involve an unreasonable routing or number of changes. First class fare may be claimed for a particular journey, if it has been authorised in advance by the Chair in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer.
- Reservation and left luggage expenses; and
- Costs of getting to, and from, the station

Rail tickets can be obtained from the Executive Support Officer (Members) on 01743 260225.

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 or where sharing with others results in a saving on the total public transport cost for the group.
- The appropriate public transport fare (e.g. bus fare) in other cases.

Members are also entitled to claim the actual cost of parking.

Subsistence Allowances

Breakfast	Payable when required to leave home before 7.00 am	£6.55
Lunch	Payable when absent from home for at least 4 hours, including the whole of the period 12 noon to 2.00 pm	£9.06
Evening	Payable in respect of absence from home for at least 2 ^{1/2} hours	£11.22
Meal	up to, and including, 7.30 pm	

Payments made for alcoholic drinks will not be refunded.

All receipts must be attached to claims.

Overnight Allowance

Claims can be made where overnight absence from home exceeds 24 hours. The following allowances are for bed and breakfast:

Visits to London or national conferences (excluding VAT)	£140
All other cases (excluding VAT)	£120

Members' Allowances

The **basic allowance** for all Members and the **Special Responsibility Allowances** are payable by monthly instalments:

Allowance	Current allowances	Proposed allowances with 2.5% increase (backdated to 1.4.2024)
Basic Allowance	£3,627	£3,718
Chair of Fire Authority	£13,228	£13,559
Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority	£7,695	£7,887
Leader of Opposition Group with 4 or more Members	£3,627	£3,718
Leader of Opposition Group with 3 Members	£1,814	£1,859
Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee	£2,204	£2,259
Chair of Standards, Audit and Performance Committee	£2,204	£2,259

How and When to Claim

Claims for travelling and subsistence allowances should relate to approved duties (see Schedule 1) and should be made using the electronic Mileage and Expense Claims form, which is available on MyView via the link below. All Fire Authority Members are issued with a MyView log-in for this purpose.

<https://fsmyview.telford.gov.uk/dashboard/dashboard-ui/index.html#/landing>

Forms should be completed for each calendar month, in which expenses have been incurred, and submitted **no later than the seventh of the following month to ensure payment at the end of the month**, direct into each Member's bank account.

Any claim, which is not submitted within three months of the end of the relevant month, will be referred to the Head of Finance, who may, having consulted the Chair, accept a late claim for good cause and make the related payments.

VAT receipts for petrol purchased prior to the dates of travel listed on the claim form should also be provided to enable VAT to be reclaimed.

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

Indemnity for Members and Officers

In this Indemnity:

‘Fire Authority’

means Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

‘officer’

includes any person employed by the Fire Authority or any person appointed to, or engaged as, an officer of the Fire Authority

‘Member’

Means a Member of the Fire Authority or of any of its committees, or a person who is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or sub-committee pursuant to section 101(5) of the Local Government Act 2000

1. The Fire Authority will, subject to the exceptions and terms set out in this indemnity, indemnify each of its Members and officers against any expenses, liability, loss, damage, claim or proceedings whatsoever arising from, or in connection with, any action of, or failure to act by, the Member or officer in question, which:
 - (a) is authorised by the Fire Authority, or
 - (b) Forms part of, or arises from, any powers conferred, or duties placed, upon that Member or officer, as a consequence of any function being exercised by that Member or officer (whether or not when exercising that function he or she does so in his or her capacity as a Member or officer of the Fire Authority)
 - (i) at the request of or with the approval of the Fire Authority, or
 - (ii) for the purposes of the Fire Authority.
2. Notwithstanding any limitation on the powers of the Fire Authority, this indemnity is effective, to the extent that the Member or officer in question reasonably believed at the time when he or she acted that:
 - (a) the action or failure to act in question was within the powers of the Fire Authority, and
 - (b) the action or failure to act was within his or her powers, or
 - (c) where the action or failure comprised the issuing or authorisation of any document containing an untrue statement as to the Fire Authority’s powers, or any statement that certain steps had been taken or requirements fulfilled, the contents of that statement were true when it was issued or authorised.

3. The indemnity granted by paragraph 1(b) only applies where the appointment to an outside body has been formally approved by the full Fire Authority or one of its committees or Chief Fire Officer.
4. This indemnity will not extend to loss or damage in relation to any action by, or failure to act by, any Member or officer which:
 - (a) subject to paragraph 5 below, constitutes a criminal offence
 - (b) is the result of fraud, dishonesty or other deliberate wrongdoing or recklessness on the part of the Member or officer.
5. This indemnity does extend to:
 - (a) subject to paragraph 8 below, the defence of any criminal proceedings brought against the Member or officer, and
 - (b) any civil liability action arising as a consequence of any action or failure to act which constitutes a criminal offence
6. No indemnity may be provided to the Member or officer in relation to the making of any claim of alleged defamation of that Member or officer but may be provided in relation to the defence by that Member or officer of any allegation of defamation made against him or her.
7. The indemnity will not cover any loss or expense in respect of which the Member or officer can obtain reimbursement from any other source, including any policy of insurance whether taken out by the Fire Authority, the Member or officer or by any other person or body.
8. Where an indemnity is granted to any Member or officer in relation to the defence of any criminal proceedings, if the Member or officer is convicted of a criminal offence and that conviction is not overturned on appeal that Member or officer shall reimburse the Fire Authority or the insurer for the sums expended by the Fire Authority or insurer in relation to those proceedings. Any such sum shall be recoverable by the Fire Authority or insurer as a civil debt.
9. The Fire Authority may in its absolute discretion withdraw the indemnities if:
 - (a) the Member or officer does not notify the Head of HR and Administration immediately upon being notified of a claim or of any circumstances likely to form the basis of any claim against the Fire Authority or likely to result in any financial loss to the Fire Authority and shall follow the advice (if any) of the Head of HR and Administration and the Fire Authority's Solicitor.
 - (b) the Member or officer makes any admission to, or negotiates or attempts to negotiate or agrees any settlement with, a third party of any claim falling within the scope of this resolution without the prior consent of the Chief Fire Officer.

10. In pursuance of this indemnity, the Fire Authority will not make any claim against the Member or officer in relation to any costs or expenses for which they are hereby indemnified (except in the circumstances specified in Clause 8 above).
11. This indemnity and undertaking shall be without prejudice to the right of the Fire Authority to take disciplinary action against an officer in respect of any act or failure to act.
12. The indemnity will only extend to cover actual loss and reasonable necessary fees, costs and expenses incurred and evidenced by the Member or officer to the satisfaction of the Head of HR and Administration and Fire Authority's Solicitor.