

## **LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY**

Meeting to be held on 17 September 2018

### **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME INDICES AND ELECTRONIC MILEAGE CLAIMS**

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#### **Executive Summary**

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 permit a Members' Allowance Scheme to make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances by reference to an index which must be reviewed every 4 years. Members are asked to consider whether to continue to use the existing indices.

In addition, the Member Training and Development Working Group has been considering whether the Authority should adopt a process for the electronic submission of mileage claims. The Chairman of the Member Training and Development Working Group, Councillor Smith is asking Members to consider whether to adopt this practice.

#### **Recommendations**

- i) The Authority is asked to consider and approve the indices used and to continue with the existing indices for a further four-year period.
- ii) The Authority is asked to consider and advise whether to adopt the electronic submission of mileage claims.

#### **Information**

##### Members' Allowance Scheme

The Authority has had a Members' Allowance Scheme in place since 2003 in line with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The Scheme has been amended in line with the Regulations in June 2006, April 2008, April 2012 and June 2016 with the indices last reviewed in September 2014 and in June 2016.

Annual adjustment changes are made in line with the Authority's approved indices as follows:-

- Basic, Special Responsibility and Co-optees' Allowances are index linked on an annual basis in line with the annual Local Government National Pay Award for green book staff at point 49;
- Subsistence Allowances are reviewed annually (with effect from 1 April in every year) in line with the Consumer Price Index (all items) published in November of the preceding year;
- Travel Allowances mirror the County Council's rates which are revised annually with effect from 1 April in every year in accordance with the maximum allowance for Income Tax purposes, as determined by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

To ensure the Authority complies with the regulations to have regard to the recommendations made by the independent remuneration panels of its home authorities s19 (2), the current indices used by home authorities are as follows: -

<b>Allowances</b>	<b>Lancashire County Council</b>	<b>Blackpool Council</b>	<b>Blackburn with Darwen Council</b>
Basic, Special responsibility and carers / dependents allowance	Annual uprating on 1 April which equates to the average annual % increase in employees pay under the National Joint Council (NJC) for local government services pay structure.	Annual uprating of the Scheme in line with the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Service pay award.	Annual uprating of the Scheme in line with the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Service pay award.
Overnight accommodation, travel abroad and subsistence allowances	Increased annually from 1 April in line with the Consumer Price Index (all items) published in November of the preceding year.		
Motor car, motor cycle, and bicycle travelling allowances	Revised annually with effect from 1 April in every year in accordance with the maximum allowance for Income tax purposes as determined by HM Revenue and Customs.		

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 permit a Members' Allowance Scheme to make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances by reference to an index which must be reviewed every 4 years. Members are therefore asked to consider whether the indices used remain appropriate, reasonable and transparent.

Electronic submission of mileage claims

In addition, the Member Training and Development Working Group has been considering whether the Authority should adopt a process for the electronic submission of mileage claims. The Chairman of the Member Training and Development Working Group, Councillor Smith is asking Members to consider whether to adopt this practice from an agreed date and after Members have received appropriate training.

Not all Members claim travel expenses however, more than half of the current membership do make claims.

Under the current system Members send paper claim forms to Lancashire County Council (LCC) colleagues to check individual claims. LCC in turn provides an overview of the claims each month to LFRS finance colleagues to arrange for payment via payroll run by Greater Manchester FRS. LFRS Democratic Services Officers ensure the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 are applied in relation to the annual updating of the Members Allowances Scheme and the annual publication of Members' pay, in addition to confirming to LCC colleagues Member attendance at meetings and dealing with queries received from all sources.

Members are already set up on LFRS internal systems for pay purposes. Online access can be easily given to enable claims online and the whole process can be managed internally by LFRS Democratic Services. Once a claim has been submitted, the system would automatically send it for checking and processing for payment.

If Members were to agree, full training would be given by Finance and Democratic Services Officers. The process would be more efficient enabling Members' payments to be processed quicker. Members would be able to access their records on line at any time (including viewing payslips, P60s etc which would also enable LFRS to move away from manually printing and posting payslips). It would be necessary however, for the Authority to adopt this as a single system from an agreed date, after which paper copies would no longer be accepted.

### **Financial Implications**

The existing arrangements for Members' Allowances have been included in the revenue budget.

### **Business Risk**

None identified

### **Environmental Impact**

None identified

### **Equality & Diversity Implications**

The Authority's Members' Allowance Scheme does not provide for the payment of Members of an allowance in respect of such expenses of arranging for the care of their children or dependants. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 exclude the Authority from including a provision for dependants carers' allowance in its Scheme. Members are, however, entitled to claim this allowance from their constituent authority.

### **HR Implications**

None identified

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**  
**List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact
Report to CFA	28 April 2008	Clerk to the Authority
Report to CFA	16 April 2012	Director of Corporate Services
	8 September 2014	Clerk to the Authority
	20 June 2016	Clerk to the Authority
Reason for inclusion in Part 2, if appropriate:		