

APPENDIX 2

EXTRACT: from Governance and Constitution Committee minutes on 15th July 2015

5 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced this report which sought Members' approval for the timing of the next review of the Fire Authority's Members' Allowance Scheme and to established Members' views in relation to the approach to the next review.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services provided some background by advising Members that since 2003 the Fire Authority had been required to have a Members' Allowance Scheme following Regulations made by the Government. He explained that following the interim Scheme made in 2003 subsequent Schemes have been recommended by its Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) which more recently had been formed by 'recruiting' a member from each of the independent remuneration panels of the four constituent authorities.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services drew Members' attention to the table within the report which provided a view of the timing of the last review which was carried out by the Independent Remuneration Panel in 2013 and 2014. He suggested that, although the Regulations state that a recommendation from an independent panel should be sought every four years or earlier if changes are made in the Interim period, in his view the last review wasn't finalised and reported until February 2014 and was applied in full for 2014-15. He explained it therefore seemed premature to carry out a further review at this time.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services also referred Members to Appendix 1 of the report which provided a brief summary of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2013 and confirmed that a fire authority was not required to engage an Independent Remuneration Panel. He suggested that, given the level of work associated with operating an Independent remuneration panel, he felt it seemed sensible to consider whether to engage an Independent Remuneration Panel when the next review was required. Officers believed that there may be other options that were likely to be more efficient whilst still delivering a similar outcome. He asked Members to indicate whether they were comfortable with a review taking place without engaging an Independent Remuneration Panel.

Members agreed that the timing of the review could be delayed until 2016, however they felt an Independent Remuneration Panel provided Members with assurance that the review was open and transparent. A member recalled that the last review by the Independent Remuneration Panel was very comprehensive and suggested that such a comprehensive approach would not be required at the next review but felt that an independent element should be retained.

Members agreed that they were satisfied with the officers' suggestion to consider alternatives to the engagement of an independent remuneration panel but with the assurance that an independent element to the review remain.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] a delay of the review of the Members' Allowance Scheme to 2016 (which would take effect 2017-18) be agreed; and**
- [2] alternatives to the engagement of an independent remuneration panel to carry out the next review be pursued by officers, ensuring an independent element is retained in any review.**