

## REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME

### INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

An Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) was appointed to conduct a comprehensive review of Cheshire Fire Authority's Scheme of Members' Allowances. Membership of the Panel consisted of a representative from each of the constituent authorities' IRPs.

The IRP met on two occasions in 2013 to conclude the review which had commenced in the Autumn of 2012. The allowances under consideration were as follows:

- 1) Governance and Constitution Chair's allowance;
- 2) Independent (non-elected) members;
- 3) Independent Persons
- 4) Business Continuity Leads (Group Spokespersons and Lead Members)
- 5) North West Fire and Rescue Partnership Board
- 6) NW Fire Control Ltd: Board of Directors

#### 2. EVIDENCE CONSIDERED

Panel members were provided with a number of documents to assist them in their deliberations:

1. Governance and Constitution Chair's Allowance

- a) Roles and Responsibilities
- b) Comparative Data – Audit Family Group 2013/14
- c) List of meetings and work programme for Aug 2012-Nov 2013

2. Independent (non elected) members

- a) Roles and Responsibilities
- b) Comparative Data – Audit Family Group 2013/14

3. Independent Persons

- a) Roles and Responsibilities
- b) Comparative Data – Audit Family Group 2013/14
- c) Research from the four Constituent Authorities and North West Fire Authorities with regard to their engagement and use

4. Business Continuity Leads (Group Spokespersons and Lead Members)

- a) Roles and Responsibilities
- b) Comparative Data – Audit Family Group 2013/14
- c) Feedback from Lead Members Questionnaires

5. North West Fire and Rescue Partnership Board

- a) Roles and Responsibilities and comparative data 2013/14
- b) Meetings held to date

6. North Fire Control Ltd: Board of Directors

- a) Roles and Responsibilities
- b) Further information on meetings

Member Representatives

Member and Independent (non-elected) representatives attended a meeting of the Panel to provide their comments/views on the allowances being reviewed and these views were taken into consideration when agreeing the recommendations.

**3 SCHEME OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES – DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS**

Governance and Constitution Committee – Chair

Following consideration of the comparative data the Panel noted that there was considerable disparity between the committee structures of the Authority's audit family group which made it difficult to compare roles. However it was felt that the increase in the allowance made in 2013 was adequate for the role and no changes were proposed.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the allowance for the Chair of the Governance and Constitution Committee remains at the current rate. (£1,515)**

Independent (non-elected) members

The Panel was unclear about the benefit of the role of independent members and noted that there were only a small number of authorities that had retained the role. Whilst the Fire Authority had decided that it did value the role it was difficult to quantify this. The Panel sought Members views on this and following the meeting with Members and Independent (non-elected) member representatives the Panel felt that there was more clarity on the role and that Independent members input was valued. No changes to the allowances were proposed. However it was suggested that a term of office for Independent (non-elected) members might be appropriate.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- [1] That the allowance for Independent (non-elected) members remains at the current rate (£1,167); and**
- [2] That consideration be given to the introduction of a Term of Office for Independent (non-elected) members.**

Independent Persons

The Panel had received information regarding the appointment of Independent Persons (IPs) in the Audit family group together with information on the engagement and use of IPs in constituent authorities and North West Fire and Rescue Authorities. The engagement with IPs within the fire authorities was extremely low. No change to the current allowance was proposed.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the remuneration agreed for the Independent Persons remains at the current rate. (£35 per meeting plus expenses)**

Business Continuity Leads (Group Spokespersons and Lead Members)

The Panel reviewed the comparative data and the written responses to the questionnaire about the role of Lead Members. However, it did not feel that the responses provided compelling evidence that the role amounted to a special responsibility that should attract an allowance. The Panel also wanted to better understand the role of Group Spokespersons. It believed that activities at the Fire Authority should not normally involve politics and was unclear about the level of political management activity.

The Panel sought Members views on these issues and following the meeting with Members and Independent (non-elected) member representatives the Panel felt that they had a better understanding of the roles of Group Spokespersons/Lead Members and their importance in the structure of the Fire Authority. The Panel proposed that no changes should be made to the current allowances.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the allowance for Group Spokespersons and Lead Members remains at the current rate (£1,010)**

North West Fire and Rescue Partnership Board

The Panel, having seen the level of business of the Board in the last twelve months and having considered the fact that only one other Authority pays an allowance felt that the role should not attract a fixed allowance, but rather be the subject of a payment per meeting attended.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the annual remuneration for this role be removed and that payments be made for attendance at meetings at a rate of £35 per meeting.**

Directors - NW Fire Control Limited

The Panel considered that any payment to Directors should be determined by the Company and that there should be no payment by the Authority. This appears to be consistent with the other appointees to the Board. This will be a matter to be considered by the Company in due course.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**No change – no allowance paid.**

Application of the Revised Scheme

**RECOMMENDATION: That, if approved, the revised allowances scheme apply from 1 April 2014.**