

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL (IRP)

Introduction

We have been appointed by the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority (NFRA) to review the existing level of members' allowances and annual uplift arrangements and to report on our findings.

Executive Summary

The current members allowance scheme was established in 2006 as part of the transition from a single authority style meeting to a wider governance structure involving the establishment of various sub-committees.

That scheme established the categories of members' allowances and set their initial levels. Since then inflators have been applied on an annual basis linked to increases set by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services. The current level of those allowances (based on 2016/17) is set out in the table below.

Role	Recommended allowance (pa)
Chair	20883.72
Vice Chair	14621.40
Major Committee Chair	2334.84
Opposition Spokesperson/(Minority Groups Spokesperson (Groups of 4 or more)	2334.84
Member Basic Allowance (MBA)	3502.00

Similarly, expenses for travel and subsistence, child and other dependent care allowances, follow the rules that were also established in the 2006 scheme. Members of the Fire Authority are not entitled to any payment in respect of pensions.

It is noted that payment of allowances under the existing scheme is approved by NFRA every year at its budget meeting in February.

Remit of the Independent Review Panel (IRP)

The purpose of the IRP is to review the level of allowances paid under the current scheme, the uplift arrangements and to report on our findings. The members of the IRP are set out in Appendix A

On formation of the IRP, it was hoped that the Review would be completed relatively quickly. Unfortunately, due to initial diary constraints and then delays in obtaining comparable information from other authorities, this review has taken longer than envisaged.

Considerations and deliberations of the IRP

As part and parcel of its deliberations the panel have fully considered the contents of the original 2006 scheme and have interviewed the Chair of the Authority, Lead Opposition Spokesperson and have also spoken to the Chief Fire Officer.

The interview with the Chair of the Authority was extremely useful for the panel and demonstrated how onerous a post it is. Following on from his interview with the panel the Chair of the Authority very helpfully produced a list of his current duties and activities. This is annexed as Appendix B.

We have also noted the comments made by the Lead Opposition Spokesperson about the level of his engagement during his interview which we also found extremely useful.

Attendance by members at the various meetings is generally good but there is certainly a feeling that non-attendance should be noted and, if permissible, allowances reduced. As a consequence we have considered the introduction of allowances based on attendances but following further consideration and reflection have rejected it.

The IRP considered the arrangements for members' allowances in some other authorities and the effect of these has been taken into account for the present proposals. These comparisons are shown in Appendix C. While this comparison table is useful in some ways, it is unhelpful in others, as it does not take any account of, or reflect, the actual level of activity undertaken in each authority.

This comparison with other Fire Authorities has presented the Review Panel with a number of points for consideration:-

- The Basic Member Allowance at Nottinghamshire is near the average although there is clearly a factor of variation between authorities.
- The chair and vice chair are currently receiving allowances which are more than that of the nearest comparators.
- The data available does not allow exact comparisons to be made of other categories such as opposition spokesperson committee chairmen etc.
- We have not considered all of the elements such as mileage and other allowances in minute detail but a brief look suggests comparability. In any case we opt for the continued application of the scheme already in place which was based on the Nottinghamshire County Council scheme and which we consider should continue to be followed.

Conclusion

The IRP have reached the following conclusions:-

- It would not be appropriate to recommend any alteration to the parameters of the existing scheme as our view is that the scheme currently in place is fit for purpose.
- Having regard to allowances paid elsewhere and the level of allowances paid under the existing scheme the level of allowances is set at the correct level.
- Inflatos should continue to be applied to the scheme in accordance with existing arrangements.

Recommendations

- That payments to members continue on the same basis as the existing scheme.
- Inflatons continue to be applied on an annual basis linked to increases set by the National Joint Council for Local Government Service.

Appendix A

The members of the Independent Review Panel 2015/6/7

- 1 Richard Henshell** OBE, FREng, BSc, PhD, FIMechE, MBCS, CITP Chairman of Independent Review Panel

Was a lecturer at Nottingham University leaving in 1976 to found PAFEC Ltd based on University Research work which grew at one point to employing 350 staff and was eventually sold in 1998 to German interests. PAFEC Ltd sold software which was approved for supply to all the emergency services (Fire, Police, Ambulance) in the UK. On the sale of PAFEC Ltd, he founded Strelley Systems Ltd which provides business space to small companies in Nottingham, Mansfield and Worksop. He has been on several local and national committees including university management, appointments of staff in the public sector, research funding, assistance for start-up businesses and assistance towards export.

- 2 John Carter** member of Independent Review

Former County Councillor and Chair of Finance Committee.

- 3 Jill Cunnison** FCIPD member of Independent Review

Jill is a Senior HR Consultant at Capital One, with more recent roles focusing on Reward and HR Operations. Jill has spoken at several leading Reward Industry conferences on HR matters, including being a judge for Employee Benefits Awards.

Appendix B

The duties of the Chair of the Fire Authority

Role and Responsibilities - brief job outline

Local, Regional and National Strategic Roles

- Chair Full Authority Meetings
- Chair Policy and Strategy Meetings
- Chair Equalities Board
- Chair Local Fire Service Advisory Pension Board
- Attend and substitute at other Committee Meetings
- Member East Midlands Councils
- Member Safer Nottingham Board
- Attend LGA Fire Conferences (chair session)
- Attend Combine Fire Authority Conference (as speaker)
- Meet with Nottinghamshire MPs (at constituency offices and Westminster)
- Occasional meetings with neighbouring CFOs and Chairs
- Member LGA Management Committee.
- LGA appointed member Fire Waste Management Committee
- Ministerial appointed member National Fire Service Advisory Pension Board
- LGA Member of Fire Service Peer National Review Team
- Invitee to independent think tank event looking into the future of the service and Home Office event on closer Police/Fire collaboration
- Attendee at other national events including CFOs National Conference

Public Roles

- Consultation meetings with public and other stake-holders regarding changes to service delivery
- Meetings with local media

Management Roles

- Attend joint meetings with CFO, Chief Constable and PCC (Interoperability Board)
- Chair panel for appointment of senior manager
- Set (on behalf of Authority) CFO aims and objectives and undertake annual appraisal (PDR)
- Act as counsel/sounding board to CFO (Regular communication)

Staffing

- Meet with workforce representative bodies
- Hold meetings with fire crews at all stations across Nottinghamshire
- Attend briefing events with non-uniform staff across all departments
- Present long service awards to staff
- Attend passing out parades for newly qualified firefighters

Civic Roles

- Attend Fire Fighters national memorial services

- Attend joint emergency service ceremonies and events

Appendix C

Comparison with other fire authorities

Role	Notts F&R Present proposal	Notts F&R 2006	Notts F&R Inflation corrected to 2015	Cheshire FA 2016	Humberside FA	Derbys 2014/5	Leics FRA 2015	Devon & Somerset	Essex 2013	Average (excl Notts)
Chair	20883.72 + BMA	19500 + BMA	20883.72 + BMA	13416.80 + BMA	11137 +BMA	14772 + BMA	9138 + BMA	12903 +BMA	15400 + BMA	12670 + BMA
Vice Chair	14621.40 + BMA	13650 + BMA	14621.40 + BMA	6709.43 + BMA	8356 + BMA	9388.92	3071 +BMA	6451 + BMA	6160 + BMA	6685 +BMA
Major Committee Chair	2334.84 + BMA	2180 + BMA	2334.84 + BMA	2683.77/1548.33 + BMA	561 + BMA	*4875/4130.21/1693.08 +BMA	1759 +BMA	3871 + BMA	*+ BMA	3039 +BMA
Opposition Spokesperson	2334.84 + BMA	2180 + BMA	2334.84 + BMA	*+ BMA	*+ BMA	*+ BMA	*+ BMA	*+ BMA	770 +BMA	*+ BMA
Minority Groups spokesperson	2334.84 + BMA	2180 + BMA	2334.84 + BMA	516.11 + BMA	BMA	BMA	1759 + BMA	*+ BMA		1137 + BMA
Basic member allowance (BMA)	3502	3270	3502	4078.30	4457	2952	3034	2580.60	4400	3484

Notes * Different groupings show that exact comparisons cannot be made and averages could be calculated in many was making the entries for Opposition Spokesperson and Minority Groups Spokesperson somewhat meaningless.

BMA = Basic Member's Allowance.