



AGENDA ITEM: 14

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

17 March 2014

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES

Report by Colin Everett, Clerk to the Authority

Purpose of Report

- 1 To inform Members that the Independent Remuneration Panel's Annual Report 2014/15 has been published. The report details changes to payments to Members that will come into effect on 1 April 2014.

Background

- 2 The remit of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) was extended through the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. Under the powers provided by the Measure, the IRP produced a new set of Regulations which came into effect on 1 April 2012. The Regulations apply to payments made to members and co-opted members of local authorities, national park authorities and Welsh fire and rescue authorities.

Information

- 3 Members of the IRP had first visited the 22 constituent authorities, 3 national park authorities and 3 fire and rescue authorities in 2009 and considered 2013 to be an appropriate time to revisit all authorities 'given that four years had elapsed since the original framework was set and that a number of subsequent decisions affecting the remuneration of members had been made'. The Panel met with a cross section of members and officers to discuss how the IRP's previous determinations were working in practice and what matters the Panel should be considering for its next Annual Report and for the future.

4 Following consultation, the IRP has concluded the following in terms of fire and rescue authorities:

- "The chair has a leadership and influencing role in the authority, a representational role similar in some respects to that of a civic head and a high level of accountability especially when controversial issues relating to the emergency service arise that can lead to high exposure in local media. The chair provides briefings to Ministers and to Assembly Members. Each FRA chair takes on a share of the duty of representing all 3 FRAs with bodies such as the WLGA. Chairs are involved in collaborative projects including the National Issues Committee, established since the last Panel visit in 2011. Chairs include regular visits to fire stations as part of their community engagement role.
- Deputy chairs are required to be equally conversant with current issues as the chair and frequently have a similarly heavy meeting schedule. Chairs and deputy chairs work very closely together and frequently attend the same meetings.
- The chair and the deputy chair may sit on appeals panels which require extra work and members may sit on disciplinary hearings.
- In addition to fire authority meetings, all FRAs have committees that include in different combinations; audit, performance management, scrutiny, human resources, resource management as well as task and finish /working groups.
- In the Panel's 2012 report all FRAs were allocated 4 Senior Responsibility Allowances that were payable to the chair, deputy chair and up to two committee chairs.
- Members are often unaware of the level of commitment needed to fulfil their role before they accept appointment to the FRA. As well as formal meetings of the authority and committees members are encouraged to take on a community engagement role including visiting fire stations.
- There is a very strong training ethos in FRAs. Members are expected to participate in training and development. Training sessions are often added on to authority meetings to make the training accessible. Induction programmes are available as well as specialist training for appeals and disciplinary hearings.
- Information obtained during the IRP's 2013 consultation indicated that the time commitment required from FRA members is actually in the region of 20 days per year."

5 The Panel also stipulated that:

- Members must not receive more than one FRA salary.
- An FRA Senior Salary is paid inclusive of the FRA Basic Salary.
- A local authority member in receipt of a Band 1 or Band 2 Senior Salary cannot receive a salary, from any FRA for which s/he has been nominated.

Financial Implications

6 In light of the IRP's Regulations, the Authority will need to increase the members' salary budget by £9,675 per annum.

	New Salary	Current Salary
Member	(25x) £ 1,700	(25x) £ 1,350
Chair	£10,400	£10,085
Deputy Chair and Chair of Audit	(2x) £ 5,400	(2x) £ 5,095
	£63,700	£54,025

Recommendations

7 Members are asked to note that the following will be implemented on 1 April 2014:

- (i) a Basic Salary rate of £1,700 per annum for a time commitment of 20 days per year will be payable to members other than the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority and the Chair of the Audit Committee;
- (ii) the Chair of the Authority will be paid a Welsh FRA Senior Salary aligned with the Band 3 salary (£10,400);
- (iii) the Deputy Chair of the Authority will be paid a Senior Salary aligned with the Band 4 salary (£5,400);
- (iv) the Chair of the Audit Committee will be paid a Senior Salary of £5,400;
- (v) travel, subsistence and care allowance rates remain the same as current rates.