



AGENDA ITEM: 13

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

18th December 2006

CONSULTATION ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES REGULATIONS

**Report by Ian Miller,
Clerk to the Authority**

Decision sought

1. To consider a response to the consultation on the Local Authorities (Allowances for Members) (Wales) Regulations 2007.

Background

2. Following an earlier consultation in 2005, the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services issued draft regulations for further consultation on 26 October. The deadline for comments is 21 December. A copy of the consultation letter and draft regulations is available at:
new.wales.gov.uk/consultations/currentconsultation/locgovcurrcons/?lang=en

new.wales.gov.uk/consultations/currentconsultation/locgovcurrcons/?lang=cy



Background *(continued)*

3. The Minister has dropped the suggestion that there should be a restriction on payment of a second special responsibility allowance to a county councillor who serves on a Fire Authority and holds a position of responsibility with both bodies. This reflects the stance taken by the Fire Authority in responding to the consultation in 2005.
4. The Minister proposes to confer a power on Fire Authorities to pay a co-optees' allowance. This would be relevant, for example, to the independent members of the Standards Committee. The maximum level of the allowance would be the average for such allowances set by the 6 constituent councils.
5. The restriction on payment of a care allowance where a councillor receives a special responsibility allowance above a specified amount is to be removed. There are also some minor amendments to the Local Authorities (Allowances for Members of Fire Authorities) (Wales) Regulations 2004 to correct drafting errors.

Advice

6. The latest proposals are generally welcome and this should be acknowledged in our response. There are two areas for potential concern:
 - 6.1 no progress has been made on changes to primary legislation to allow for fire authority allowances to be pensionable. The Local Government Bill may present an opportunity to rectify this;



Advice *(continued)*

6.2 the maximum levels for many of the allowances for councils are to be set by an Independent Remuneration Panel. There is no objection to that. However at various points the draft regulations imply that different maximum levels could be set for different bodies. There does not seem to be a justification for this in respect of allowances such as care allowance, travel and subsistence allowance and co-optees' allowance.

Recommendation

- 7.** That the Authority consider the terms of its response to the draft regulations and submits comments on the lines outlined in paragraph 6.