



AGENDA ITEM: 15

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

16 June 2014

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES

Report by Colin Everett, Clerk and Ken Finch, Treasurer

Purpose of Report

- 1 To inform Members about further amendments to be made to the Authority's Remuneration Schedule following the publication of the Independent Remuneration Panel's Annual Report 2014/15.

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 The only amendment to the reimbursement of travel, subsistence and care costs is that the IRP has removed the particular rate of £120 for overnight stays in Cardiff and it is now £95 for anywhere outside of London. This brings payable rates in line with Welsh Government rates.
- 4 Other determinations from the IRP to be considered by the Authority are to do with payments to co-opted members. Current arrangements for remunerating co-opted members are:

"Payments for co-opted members are capped at the equivalent of payment for 4 full days per year each. A day is defined as any meeting over 4 hours. Payments are for meeting time only and include time spent on preparation and travelling."

- 5 The fees payable are £256 per day (£128 per half day) to the Chair of the Standards Committee and £198 per day (£99 per half day) to the other co-opted members of the Standards Committee.
- 6 The IRP's determinations in its latest annual report are as follows:
 - i. Authorities can decide on the maximum number of days for which co-opted members may be paid in any one year.
 - ii. Determination 33 - Authorities must pay fees to co-opted members.
 - iii. Determination 34 - Reasonable time for pre meeting preparation is eligible to be included in claims made by co-opted members the extent of which can be determined by the appropriate officer in advance of the meeting.
 - iv. Determination 35 - Travelling time to and from the place of the meeting can be included in the claims for payments made by co-opted members (up to the maximum of the daily rate).
 - v. Determination 36 - The appropriate officer within the authority can determine in advance whether a meeting is programmed for a full day and the fee will be paid on the basis of this determination even if the meeting finishes before four hours has elapsed.
 - vi. Determination 37 - Meetings eligible for the payment of fee include other committees and working groups (including task and finish groups), pre-meetings with officers, training and attendance at conferences or any other formal meeting to which co-opted members are requested to attend.

Advice

- 7 Members may wish to note that to date co-opted members have not claimed any payments apart from travel costs and that in recent years Standards Committee meetings have only lasted approximately an hour and a half.
- 8 As the IRP has determined that the fees must be paid to co-opted members, it is advisable that Members consider
- if Determination 34 is to be accepted, that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer is authorised to decide how much preparation time for meetings is considered reasonable to be claimed
 - if Determination 35 is to be accepted
 - in respect of Determination 36, the Clerk and Monitoring Officer is authorised to decide in advance of a meeting whether co-opted members can claim a full day or a half day fee
 - noting Determination 37 and that it is included in the Schedule.

Financial Implications

- 9 Currently, independent members are able to claim for up to a maximum of four days per year, should this continue the financial implications will be as follows:

Chair @ £256 x 4 days	£1,024 per annum
3 members @ £198 x 4 days	£2,376 per annum

Recommendations

- 10 Members are asked to:
- (i) note the removal of the £120 rate to stay at a hotel in Cardiff and that it is now £95 anywhere outside of London;
 - (ii) note that the FRA must now pay a fee to co-opted members for attendance at meetings;
 - (iii) approve that the maximum number of days for which co-opted members may be paid in any one year remains at four full days per year;
 - (iv) delegate authority to the Clerk and Monitoring Officer to resolve the minor issues set out in paragraph 8 above.