

**Date:** 27 May 2008

**Report:** REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2008/2009

### **Purpose of report**

1. To present members with the outcome of the independent review of the current Scheme of Members' Allowances (a copy of the report is attached as an **Appendix 1** to this report) and seek approval to the recommended amendments to the rates of Allowances as listed in **Appendix 2** to this report.

### **Strategic Planning Framework**

2. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework.

### **Background**

3. The current Scheme of Members' Allowances (which forms Section G of the Members' Handbook) was adopted by the Authority in March 2003 in the light of draft revised regulations. The main change that resulted from those regulations was the abolition of the option to pay members a 'per meeting' attendance allowance and the requirement to adopt a scheme that included a basic annual allowance for each member.

4. At that time an independent review was undertaken by the Local Government Management Board (LGMB) for Yorkshire and Humberside, and the basis of the current Scheme was adopted, with a provision that increases in the Basic and other Allowances (excluding travelling and subsistence) should be linked to staff salaries.

6. The Finance and Resources Committee, which is empowered to advise the Authority on matters relating to the Scheme, decided last year that a further independent review of the scheme should take place. After discussions between the Chief Executive and the Chairman of the Finance and Resources Committee it was decided that Local Government for Yorkshire and the Humber (LGYH), the successor body to the LGMB, be invited to carry out that independent review.

7. LGYH has undertaken the review and a range of background information was provided to enable the review to take place. This included information supplied by members in response to a 'survey' form provided by LGYH on time spent on Authority business and reports on the establishment and review of the Member Champion initiative.

8. Whilst the intention was for the review to be a 'light touch' one, LGYH was asked to

look at two new elements: the workload of Member Champions and members' use of IT.

### **Current position**

9. The Regulations require an authority to 'make' a Scheme before the beginning of each year, hence the Authority, at its last meeting, adopting the current Scheme. The Regulations, however, also allow the scheme to be amended at any time.

10. The report from LGYH contains a number of recommendations which members are asked to consider and these are summarised in paragraph 13 below. The basis on which these recommendations have been reached are explained in the report.

11. When the draft report from LGYH was received, some comments were made by senior officers. Some of those were detailed comments on matters of accuracy which LGYH has addressed, but others were more general comments on:

- (a) the level of response from members on which the report was based;
- (b) with regard to the provision and use of IT equipment, the reference in the report to 'many Members will receive equipment or allowances from their own Member Authorities'.

12. With regard to the two detailed comments recorded above:

- (a) the response was perhaps lower than one might have wished and the 'survey' could possibly have been better planned (with, for example, members being asked to keep a 'diary' over a period of time which might have provided more accurate information);
- (b) local authority appointed members do normally have equipment or an allowance from their appointing authority in respect of IT equipment. Such equipment and/or allowances are not available for Secretary of State appointed members. At present the Authority does not require members to have access to IT equipment - any use is on a voluntary basis. However, the Finance and Resources Committee recently considered the Authority's Information and Communications Technology Strategy and its IT Policy and Procedures and has asked officers to give further consideration to how these may affect all members.

### **Conclusion**

13. In summary, the recommendations for LGYH are as follows:
- Basic Allowance to be revised from £2780 pa to £2874.52 pa
  - Basic Allowance continue to be 'index-linked to the staff annual pay award
  - No change be made in the rates of linkage between Basic Allowance and the Special Responsibility Allowances paid to appropriate members
  - Co-optee's Allowance to be revised from £149 pa to £198.01 pa
  - No SRA be available to Member Champions
  - No additional allowance be available to members for the provision and/or use of IT equipment.

14. The adoption by members of the last of the above recommendations will not preclude further consideration of members' IT issues by the Finance and Resources Committee.

15. The Head of Finance and Resources has advised that the budgetary impact of these proposed revised rates will be 'unproblematic' and, of course, if any member does not wish to accept all or part of an allowance they can elect not to do so.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

16. That:

(a) the report be noted;

(b) the recommendations from LGYH set out in the report attached as Appendix 1 to this report be adopted (with rates of allowances rounded to the nearest £), subject to it being noted that the Finance and Resources Committee will be giving further consideration to members' IT issues;

(c) the revised rates of Basic, Special Responsibility and Co-optee's Allowances paid to members of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority for 2008/09 be applied with effect from 1 April 2008, and

(d) subject to members agreeing (b) and (c) above, the Scheme of Members' Allowances for the Authority be amended accordingly and be re-published.

**Richard Parkin**  
**Secretariat Officer**

Background document:

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003

12 May 2008

**INDEPENDENT  
REVIEW OF MEMBERS'  
ALLOWANCES  
YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL  
PARK AUTHORITY  
May 2008**

## **REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES** **YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Local Government Yorkshire and Humber, has been asked, as an independent organisation, to undertake a review of the allowances paid to Members of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

### **2. BACKGROUND OF ALLOWANCES**

- 2.1 The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) has adopted a scheme for the payment of allowances for Members as required by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
- 2.2 In adopting the scheme Members have the right to request an independent review.
- 2.3 Para 19(2) of the Regulations states before a National Park Authority "makes or amends a scheme that Authority shall have regard to the recommendations made by any independent remuneration panels in relation to any authority ... by which any of its members are nominated."

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1 In undertaking this review the following information has been considered.
- Allowances adopted by constituent authorities
  - Allowances determined by the other English and Welsh National Parks Authorities
  - The current YDNPA members' allowances scheme
  - Information on time spent by members of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority on authority business
  - The number of formal meetings held each year of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and its Committees.

### **4.0 THE CURRENT MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME**

This independent review has looked at the allowances available and payable to members. The current scheme consists of the following elements.

- 4.1 **Basic Allowance (BA)** - payable to every member automatically each month unless the member elects not to receive it.

- 4.2 **Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)** - payable to members who have specified special responsibilities under the scheme. Payments are calculated as a multiple of the basic allowance. This allowance is payable on a monthly basis unless the member elects not to receive it.
- 4.3 **Travel Allowance (TA)** – claimable for any approved duty or for any duty covered by a SRA. This allowance is paid monthly, following the submission of claims by individual members.
- 4.4 **Subsistence Allowance (SA)** - claimable for any approved duty or SRA duty exceeding 4 hours, which spans the specified agreed meal times. Receipts should support claims over a pre-determined amount.
- 4.5 **Co-optee’s Allowance (CA)** - payable on a monthly basis to all co-opted members unless the member elects not to receive it.

## **5.0 THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW.**

- 5.1 The basic allowance is set at £2,780 per year for 07/08, which is above average when compared with the other national parks, it exceeds 8 of the national parks and is lower than 2. By comparison with constituent authorities with the exception of one, which pay an attendance allowance, the Park pays a lower rate.

Broads	£700
Dartmoor	£1,500
Exmoor	£1,872
Lake District	£3,000
New Forest	£1,674
Northumberland	£1,461
North York Moors	£2,064
Peak District	£1,635
Pembrokeshire Coast	£2,200
Snowdonia	£3,148
Yorkshire Dale	<u>£2,780</u>
<b>Average</b>	<b>£2,003.09</b>

NYCC	£8,526
Cumbria County Council	£7,815
South Lakeland	£3,735
Craven	£3,800
Richmonshire	<u>£2,840</u>
<b>Average</b>	<b>£5,343.20</b>

As the above figures show, the basic allowance payments vary considerably and we have no actual comparison of how many hours Members spend in comparison with other Members in other National Park Authorities, however these are likely to be similar in each of the National Parks.

All 22 Members of the Authority and the 3 Independent Members of the Authority's Standards Committee were asked to submit an estimate of the average hours spent per month on National Park Authority work. A total of 9 Members and 2 Independent Members responded to the request and the results showed that the times were consistently variable. I therefore took the average amounts as shown below:

Reading reports etc prior to the meeting	12.55 hours
Time spent attending meetings	11.90 hours
Time spent on travel	7.22 hours

**Total** **31.67 hours per month**

For outside body duties, of the 9 members who responded only 8 members recorded any response under this heading. The average time spent was **3.25** hours per month.

As the basic allowance carries an element within it for telephone calls, postal costs and the increasing expectation that Members use personal IT equipment I would recommend that an allowance be made of **5 hours** per month which is the average number of hours Members state they use IT equipment.

This allowance is set to recognise and recompense the amount of time and commitment Members give to the National Park Authority duties.

Taking all this in to account we would propose that the basic allowance be calculated as follows. The number of average monthly hours annualised (i.e.  $31.67 + 3.25 + 5.0 = 39.92$ ) and multiplied by the NJC basic hourly rate of £6.0006 (SCP4)

$39.92 \text{ hours per month} \times 12 \text{ months per year} = 479.04 \times £6.0006 \text{ per hour}$

This would give a basic allowance of **£2874.52 per annum**

**It is therefore recommended that the basic allowance for 2008/09 be set at £2874.52 per annum**

**This allowance should increase yearly by the amount agreed by NJC Local Government Pay award. This should be paid as soon as the yearly pay award is made and backdated payments made.**

- 5.2 Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) are paid to members who have special responsibilities for the discharge of the duties of the

National Park Authority. It is paid for duties, which are deemed to be extra, and above what a normal member would be expected to undertake.

The Authority has decided that the responsibilities covered by an SRA should include Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the National Park Authority and Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Committee, and that the EG Working Group nominee should also be eligible for the payment of SRA due to the level of commitment expected at both a local and national level that is linked to this position.

In determining how this allowance should be paid I have considered the responsibilities and duties covered by the SRA and the amount of extra time spent on the discharge of these duties.

For reasons of clarity in the calculation of this allowance it should be set at multiples of the basic allowance and any increases made should be done so in line with the basic allowance. This method is widely used within other Local Authorities and National Parks.

**It is recommended that the multiples of the BA agreed previously should remain the same. This allowance should increase yearly by the amount agreed by NJC Local Government Pay award. This should be paid as soon as the yearly award is made and backdated payments made.**

- 5.3 Co-optees' allowances (CA) are paid to all co-opted members in recognition of the time devoted to attendance at meetings, dealing with correspondence and the attendance of other associated conferences and workshops. This is set at £149 for 2007/08 and is below average when compared with the some of the other National Parks.

From the responses detailed on the questionnaires received we have considered the amount of time spent on National Park duties, these amounts varied considerably so we have again on the balance of fairness taken the average number of hours.

Taking all this in to account we would propose that the basic allowance be calculated as follows. The number of average monthly hours annualised and multiplied by the NJC basic hourly rate of £6.0006 (SCP4).

Total average time spent on National Park duties per month is 2.75 hours

2.75 hours per month x 12 months per year = 33 x £6.0006 per hour  
= £198.01

**It is recommended that this allowance be set at £198.01**

**This allowance should increase yearly by the amount agreed by NJC Local Government Pay award. This should be paid as soon as the yearly award is made and backdated payments made.**

5.4 Linkage between BA and SRA -

All members of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority will be eligible for the BA unless they elect not to do so. SRA is available for the members who are appointed to any of the five positions with special responsibilities as detailed above.

5.5 The availability and linkage to BA of any additional allowance in respect of responsibilities and duties undertaken by member champions -

Member Champions within Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority cover seven agreed areas. A Member Champion's role is to encourage communication and positive action for their particular area. They provide member input and support on key developments within their specialist area whilst positively challenging on National Park improvements. The amount of time committed to the Authority by Member Champions is variable, of the 4 members who made representation concerning their time commitment to MC duties only 1 stated a considerable amount of time.

**On this basis it is recommended that no provision be made for the payment of any SRA to Member Champions.**

5.6 Members use of IT equipment

Although not strictly part of the scheme governed by the statutory regulations, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority have asked that the review makes recommendations on the allowance paid to Members for the use of IT equipment.

**It is felt that no provision should be made separately for the use of IT equipment due to the BA having an element within it for this.**

5.7 Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority have asked as part of the review as to whether adjustments to the level of allowances available should be determined by an index and if so which one.

**Consistent with the basis of our recommendations on allowances we recommend that the Yorkshire Dales Park Authority's Scheme of Members' Allowances should contain an indexation formula to increase allowances in further financial years. This index should be no greater than the provision made by the NJC Local Government pay award. All increases should be paid as soon as the index is agreed and back payments should be made. This indexation formula should be followed until the scheme of allowances is independently reviewed subject to a maximum of no more than 4 years.**

**YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY****SUMMARY OF BASIC, CO-OPTEE'S AND SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES***[ Allowances revised and effective from 1 April 2008 ]*

<b>CATEGORY OF ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>Current rate payable £</b>	<b>Proposed rate payable £</b>
<b>Basic Allowance [BA]</b> (available to all Members)	<b>2,780 pa</b>	<b>2,875 pa</b>
<b>Co-optee's Allowance [CA]</b>	<b>149 pa</b>	<b>198 pa</b>
<b>Special Responsibility Allowance [SRA]</b>		
◆ Chairman of the Authority (BA x 2)	<b>5,560 pa</b>	<b>5,750 pa</b>
◆ Deputy Chairman of the Authority (BA x 0.5)	<b>1,390 pa</b>	<b>1,438 pa</b>
◆ Chairman of the Planning Committee (BA x 0.75)	<b>2,085 pa</b>	<b>2,156 pa</b>
◆ Deputy Chairman of the Planning Committee (BA x 0.4)	<b>1,112 pa</b>	<b>1,150 pa</b>
◆ IEG Working Group Nominee (BA x 0.4)	<b>1,112 pa</b>	<b>1,150 pa</b>