

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	10 FEBRUARY 2026
SUBJECT	2026/27 SCHEME OF ALLOWANCE REVIEW
LEAD OFFICER	GRAHAM BRITTEN, MONITORING OFFICER
LEAD MEMBER	N/A
EXEMPT INFORMATION	PART I
ACTION	NOTE AND RECOMMEND

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To recommend an update to the 2026/27 Member Scheme of Allowance to the Fire Authority for approval.
- 1.2 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 regulations 10 and 19 (2) require the Authority to make a Scheme of Allowances before the beginning of the financial year; and, before it makes it, to have regard to the recommendations made by Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs) of its constituent councils.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Management Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the report; and
- 2.2 **RECOMMEND** that the Fire Authority;
- 2.3 **NOTE** 3.20% (£7.77 per month to Member Basic Allowance) uplifted rate of allowances in accordance with annual local government Green Book was applied to Scheme of Allowances effective from 1 April 2025 (Appendix A) and backdated to 1 April 2025;
- 2.4 **APPROVE** that the Scheme of Allowances continues to be indexed to the annual local government Green Book increase for allowances (should any increase be agreed by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services in 2026/27);

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- 2.5 **NOTE** that recommendations made by each of the six unitary authority Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs) have been reviewed in line with The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 regulations 10 and 19 (2). (Background papers of each Unitary Authority IRP is located in paragraph 12).

3. **REPORT**

- 3.1. On an annual basis the Authority is required to adopt a Scheme of Members' Allowance prior to the start of the financial year. The Authority's Scheme of Allowance is indexed to National Joint Council (NJC) for local government services pay agreement for staff employed under 'Green Book' terms and conditions.
- 3.2. Each year, the NJC negotiates a pay agreement and on 23 July 2025, a 3.20% agreement was reached on rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2025 for 2025/26. Attached as appendix B is the National Joint Council for local government services letter. It states:

'All locally determined pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer, should be increased by 3.20 per cent, in accordance with Green Book Part 2 Para 5.41.'

- 3.3. This report is seeking Members to note the NJC 3.20% uplifted rate of allowances negotiated on 23 July 2025 were applied to the Scheme of Allowances effective from 1 April 2025 (Appendix A). The percentage 3.20% amounts to an additional £7.77 per calendar month or £93.22 annually to Members basic allowance.

- 3.4. Paragraph MA 14 of the Scheme of Allowances states the following:

'MA14. The Basic, Special Responsibility and Co-optees' Allowances shall be adjusted annually in line with percentage allowance increase agreed by the NJC for Local Government Services. Adjustment of the allowance shall take effect from the beginning of the financial year for the year the index is applied to staff.'

Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs)

- 3.5. There are six Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs) in the Royal County of Berkshire, which make Scheme of Allowance recommendations to Bracknell Forest Council, Reading Borough Council, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough Borough Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council. Each Unitary Authority IRP recommendations have been reviewed for the purpose of this report. Links have been provided in paragraph 12 from each IRP recommendation in Berkshire.

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- 3.6. Bracknell-Forest, Reading, Slough, Wokingham and West Berkshire Councils Scheme of Allowance are indexed to the annual percentage salary increase for local government staff. Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council's Scheme of Allowance are updated annually in line with the average pay increase given to Royal Borough employees (and rounded to the nearest pound as appropriate).

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Resilience: We will ensure we are resilient and work with our partners to promote and build resilience in the communities we serve.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The current budget for Members' Allowances (Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances) is estimated to be in the region of £105,000. Costs will be incurred in publishing a notice that the Authority has made a Scheme of Members' Allowances in a Berkshire newspaper. The cost is estimated to be in the region of £400.
- 5.2. An Independent Review of the Scheme of Allowances is held every four years. The last independent review was held in September 2023 by South East Employers and its recommendations were approved by the Fire Authority on 8 November 2023 (minute reference 31). The next Independent Review of the Scheme of Allowances will be held in 2027/28.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report is in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 Regulations 10 and 19 (2) which require the authority to make a scheme of allowances before the beginning of the financial year; and, before it makes it, to have regard to the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panels of its constituent councils.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Authority's Scheme of Members' Allowances does not include any element for meeting costs incurred by a Member who has to arrange care in order to carry out their function as a Member of the Fire Authority. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, exclude the Authority from including such a provision in its Scheme. All RBFA Members have been appointed by one of the six Unitary Authorities in Berkshire and are entitled to claim "dependent carers' allowances" from their appointing authority.

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8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 No risk implications have been identified.

9. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 No sustainability implications have been identified.

10. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

10.1 Not applicable

11. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

11.1 The Chief Finance Officer and Senior Leadership Team were consulted during the preparation of this report. The Monitoring Officer is the report sponsor.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 [Bracknell Forest Council members Allowances Scheme](#)

12.2 [Reading Borough Council - Constitution of the Council October 2025](#)

12.3 [Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council - Independent Remuneration Panel December 2024](#)

12.4 [Slough Borough Council Members' Allowances Scheme - August 2025](#)

12.5 [West Berkshire Council – Report of Independent Remuneration Panel June 2024](#)

12.6 [Wokingham Borough Council meeting – Thursday 21 January 2021 – Review of Members' Allowances by the IRP](#)

12.7 [12a - RBFA MA REVIEW 2023 \(2\).docx \(002\) gbr.docx](#)

13. APPENDICES

13.1 Appendix A – 2026 RBFA Scheme of Allowances.

13.2 Appendix B – July 2025 - National Joint Council for local government services letter.

14. CONTACT DETAILS

14.1 Michaela Smith, Democratic Support Officer, smithmj@rbfrs.co.uk