

## **Agenda item**

### **Police and Crime Panel**

Meeting to be held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018

### **MEMBERS EXPENSES AND ALLOWANCES**

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### **Executive Summary**

To review Members Allowances practice and determine if there should be any change to the current arrangements.

### **Recommendation**

That the Panel determine if there is to be any change to the current arrangements.

### **Background and Advice**

The LGA document: "Panel arrangements and the balanced appointment objective" dated May 2012 says:

#### **9 Allowances and Expenses**

9.1 Each Authority has the discretion to pay its representatives on the Panel Special Responsibility Allowances, and to reimburse reasonable expenses incurred. No allowance or expenses payments will be made by the Panel itself to elected members.

Any allowances or expenses which may be made to elected members arising out of Panel Membership shall be determined and borne by the appointing Authorities for each Panel Member individually.

9.2 The Host Authority, on behalf of the Panel will reimburse reasonable expenses to co-optees provided that this is agreed as part of the annual budget approved by the Panel."

## **Current position**

The matter was last considered at the Panel meetings on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and most recently, on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018. Expenses are referred to as being travel, subsistence, loss of earnings and conference / training costs”.

As the Panel membership has changed over the years the question of allowances and expenses regularly gets raised and this report sets out the position in this regard.

As members know in principle, Councillors are already compensated for loss of earnings by the Allowances system operated by each Constituent Council, so a claim cannot be made for “loss of earnings” as an expense item.

Currently the panel do not pay any `SRA's as each Constituent Council is left to set locally any allowances for its members who sit on the Panel.

The scrutiny role of the Panel as it has evolved now regularly sets out its forward plan for the year ahead and identifies areas it would wish to scrutinise in more detail. This may mean more meetings of the Panel and/or its sub-groups than originally envisaged. For this reason members may have/wish to draw this to the attention of their Constituent Councils when allowances for Panel members are reviewed.

Similarly in terms of SRAs for Chairs of Panels, it has been down to the relevant authority to consider paying an SRA if their Member has been appointed as Chair of the Panel.

There is no requirement to pay allowances to co-opted members and it is left to authorities to decide if they should be paid.

## **Current position**

Currently the Panel therefore leaves the payment of SRA's for panel membership and for the Chair/Vice Chair as a matter for the constituent Councils.

## **Consultations**

N/A

## **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

## **Legal Implications**

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 provides that the Secretary of State may provide financial and other resources to Members of the Police and Crime Panels in connection with the exercise of their functions.

Paragraph 1 above sets out the extract from Guidance that relates to the matter.

## **Financial Implications**

On 18<sup>th</sup> July a letter was sent to administering authorities (in the Lancashire Panel case – Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council in respect of the 2018/19 grant arrangements. This states that there will be £53,300 for administration costs for the Panel. In addition, £920 will be made available per member of the panel (including additional co-optees) to fund the same expenses as the other members of the panel.

As reported in July 2018, since the earlier considerations of this matter by the Police & Crime Panel, a survey was undertaken by Frontline Consulting Associates. The result of their survey completed in January 2018 highlighted a practice that some Panels are apparently funding the payment of at least some allowances from the Home Office Grant whereas other were not. Payment from the grant for elected Panel Members would be 'at odds' however with the Guidance produced by the LGA in May 2012.

## **Risk management**

The provision of effective scrutiny by the Police and Crime Panel is in accordance with the provisions of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The scrutiny role is increasing and the impact upon Panel Members should be reflected in the allowances made to Panel members.

## **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985** **List of Background Papers**

The LGA document: "Panel arrangements and the balanced appointment objective" dated May 2012