

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

DATE: 17 March 2006

AGENDA ITEM NO: **15**

SUBJECT: MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES

Report of the Clerk and Chief Financial Officer

1. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

1.1. To report on the Members Allowances Scheme proposed for 2006/07.

2. INFORMATION

2.1. Under the 2003 Local Authority Members Allowances Regulations a revised scheme is required to be approved, each year, before the start of the financial year. The basis of the current members allowances scheme was approved by members at their annual meeting in June 2003 after having received a report from an independent assessment panel, under the Chairmanship of Dr Declan Hall of Birmingham University.

2.2. The attached scheme is based on the original 2003 scheme, as subsequently amended to create the current scheme, and incorporates the following amendments for 2006/07:

Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances

2.2.1. Clause 11(1) of the existing scheme requires that all allowances (basic and responsibility) be increased from 1 April by the amount of any percentage increases which have been approved for staff in the previous year. The nationally agreed percentage increase granted to Executive staff on 1 April 2005 was 2.95% thus all the basic and special responsibility allowances, including those for all independent representatives, have been increased accordingly (rounded to evenly divide by 12 months) and are set out in the attached scheme.

Travelling and Subsistence Expenses

2.2.2. There have been no changes yet announced for staff travelling and subsistence rates although they are expected shortly. It is therefore recommended that the scheme be approved subject to Schedule 3 being automatically amended when the new rates for Executive staff are announced. All such changes will be sent to Members and will operate from 1 April 2006.

Child Care and Dependent Carers Allowances

2.2.3. These are not included in the attached scheme as they are stated to be the District Council's responsibilities under the national regulations.

Approved Duties

2.2.4. There is a minor modification to the wording under paragraph (v) of Schedule 2 to remove the requirement for the Chair to have to authorise attendances at conferences, seminars and study courses being approved duties for the payment of expenses. This will now be undertaken by the Clerk. There are no changes to the definition of approved duties as set out in that Schedule.

Wording Changes

2.2.5. Apart from the rate changes referred to above there has been only one other wording change to the attached scheme. This is in Schedule 3 under travelling expenses where the following sentence has been added:

'Standard class travel should be booked in advance for all rail travel on behalf of all members, unless in the view of the Clerk there are special circumstances that require First Class travel, for example to enable confidential conferences to be held on the train or to avoid disadvantaging members when travelling with other organisations'.

3. FINANCIAL AND EC PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1. Assuming no change to the Committee Structure the increase will cost about £6,000 per annum. This excludes any cost associated with changes to rates of Travelling Allowances or other expenses.

4. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

4.1. None specifically arising from this report.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1. None specifically arising from this report.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1. That the attached Members Allowances Scheme be approved from 1 April 2006.
- 6.2. That the scheme be amended from 1 April 2006 for any revised travelling and expenses rates subsequently issued by the Executive for their staff.

West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority