

MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME

The Local Government Act 2000 requires Councils to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel which will broadly have the function of providing the authority with advice on its scheme of allowances and the amounts to be paid. Local authorities must have regards to this advice.

Basic Allowance

Every Member is to be paid a basic allowance monthly in arrears. For 2011/12 the basic allowance is £4,360 per annum.

The allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of Members including such inevitable calls on their time as meetings with officers; attendance at group meetings; Parish and Town Councils and other outside bodies. Paid at a flat rate, the basic allowance is also intended to cover such costs such as telephone calls, computer consumables, stationery, postage, travel costs covered by journeys not eligible for payment and other incidental expenses of the job.

Special Responsibility Allowances

Special responsibility allowances, effective from the day after the Annual Meeting, as detailed below:

Leader of the majority party.....	£14,421	
Leader of the opposition.....	£4,174	
Deputy Leader of the majority party	£4,021	
Deputy Leader of the opposition	£1,549	
Cabinet member with portfolio.....	£6,184	
Cabinet member (deputy)	£2,010	
Chairman	£7,813	
Vice-Chairman	£2,998	
	Chairman	Vice-Chair
Audit and Governance.....	£2,010	Nil
Licensing and Enforcement	£3,098	£836
Development Management/Planning Inspections	*£6,184	*£3,098
Housing Review Board	£2,010	Nil
Overview & Scrutiny Committee.....	£4,021	Nil

* Where the Chairman/Vice Chairman of Development Management does not also occupy that position on the Planning Site Inspection Committee separate allowances of £4,131/£2,065 is paid to the Chairman/Vice Chairman of Development Management Committee and £4,131/£836 is paid to the Chairman/ Vice Chairman of the Planning Inspection Committee.

Travelling Allowances

Duties qualifying for the payment of travelling allowances for Members of the Council

At the Policy Committee meeting on 27 June 2001, the rules for Members claiming travelling expenses were summarised as being under three main headings. Below is a summary of the types of allowable claims under each heading:

1. Attending meetings which are called by the Council

- Attendance at Committees and Sub Committees – these are deemed to include Working Parties, Steering Groups, Consultative Committees, Best Value Reviews, etc.

- ❑ Meetings between Member(s) and Officers – formally arranged by the appropriate Head of Service or Corporate Manager.
- ❑ in connection with the purpose or discharge of the Council functions.

2. Carrying out duties on behalf of the Council

- ❑ Site visits and public meetings – attendance at site visits and formal meetings with the public or developers with other Members and Officers of the Council to which the Member has been invited by the appropriate Head of Service or Corporate Manager.
- ❑ Opening ceremonies, presentation of certificates, awards or other similar ceremonies for the purposes of carrying out the presentations etc, presentation of certificates and awards.
- ❑ Attendance at Planning or Other Local Inquiry – where a Member has been specifically requested in writing by the Chief Executive or other Chief Officer to give evidence (or prepare) on behalf of the Council.
- ❑ Official tours, civic days, etc – attendance at official tours, civic or similar occasions subject to prior approval of appropriate Committee or appropriate Head of Service or Corporate Manager.
- ❑ Chairmen and Vice Chairmen – attendance by the Chairmen or Vice Chairmen of the Council (and the local Ward Member) at civic ceremonies or functions, etc.
- ❑ Opening of tenders – attendance at the opening of tenders when specifically requested to attend by the appropriate Member of the Senior Management Team.

3. Attending meetings of other bodies at which Members are representing the Council

- ❑ Joint meetings between the Council, other local authorities and other bodies subject to such meetings being approved in advance by Committee or the appropriate Head of Service or Corporate Manager.
- ❑ Conferences, seminars, etc – attendance at seminars, courses, “teach-ins”, or similar occasions subject to the approval of the appropriate Committee or appropriate Head of Service or Corporate Manager in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.
- ❑ Outside bodies – attendance at formal meetings of outside bodies as an elected representative of the Council, the subject of which has received Council Approval as being further to the interests on the functions of the Council or local government generally.
- ❑ Other – in those circumstances where a is satisfied that had time permitted the Council would have authorised the attendance of a Member at a meeting or a function, the purpose of which is related to a function or duty of the Council, provided such approval is given in advance of duty being undertaken.

For all other meetings and duties, for example, meetings with constituents, attending Parish Council Meetings as elected Members of wards, no travelling expenses may be claimed.

Travelling Rates

The rates of travel by a Member’s motor vehicle in 2011/12 are based on the HMRC approved mileage rates as agreed by Council on 28 July 2010. The rate of reimbursement for approved mileage is:

- ❑ 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles pa.
- ❑ 25p per mile for mileage over 10,001 miles pa.
- ❑ Passenger rate is 5p per passenger per mile (max 4 passengers per journey).
- ❑ Bicycle allowance: 20p per mile.

The rate of travel by taxi-cab shall not exceed:-

- (i) in cases of urgency or where no public transport is reasonably available, the amount of the actual fare and any reasonable gratuity paid; and
- (ii) in any other case, the amount of the fare for travel by appropriate public transport.

The rate of travel by a hired motor vehicle other than a taxi-cab shall not exceed the rate which would have been applicable had the vehicle belonged to the Member, provided that the rate may be increased at the Head of Finance's discretion to an amount not exceeding the actual cost of hiring.

Where travel by air is the only effective means of travel or produces sufficient savings in time and/or other allowances, the rate shall not exceed the cheapest fare available.

Subsistence Allowances and Rates 2011/12 (with effect from 1 April 2011)

Subsistence allowances may be claimed to meet the costs of meals, refreshments, accommodation etc, in connection with approved duties, and the rates shall not exceed:

- In the case of an absence, not involving an absence overnight, from the usual place of residence:
 - of more than 4 hours, £6.53 for breakfast (£8.00 in London)
 - of more than 4 hours, £9.02 for lunch (£11.41 in London)
 - of more than 4 hours, ending after 7pm, £11.16 for an evening meal (£14.83 in London); provided that, for meetings such as Council or Committee meetings, meals or refreshments may be provided by the Council, including on occasions where the absence from the residence may not exceed 4 hours.

Where such meals are provided or paid for separately by the Council, the appropriate subsistence allowance shall not be paid to a Member, unless the Member has unforeseen commitments that prohibit the taking of the meal.

- In the case of an absence overnight from the usual place of residence, £95.00, or, for such an absence overnight in London or an annual conference of the Local Government Association or such other association of bodies as the Secretary of State may designate, £125.00. The cost for overnight accommodation above these limits will not be reimbursed but the Councillor is entitled to pay the difference.
- The actual reasonable costs of meals taken on trains may be reimbursed.
- All claims should be backed up with receipts.

Child Care and Dependent Carer's Allowance

A child care and dependant carer's allowance scheme was introduced on 1 April 2003. The child care and dependant carer's allowance increased in line with the minimum wage to £5.80 (£5.93 with effect from 1 October 2010) with a maximum amount of 5 hours able to be claimed in any one day. This may be claimed when a carer for a dependant has been engaged to enable a Member of the Council to carry out an approved duty. A carer will be any responsible person who does not normally live with the Member as part of that Member's family.

Full details of the child care and dependant carer's allowance scheme are contained within the "Scheme of Members' Allowances" document.

Part-Year Entitlements

- (a) The principles outlined in this paragraph shall regulate the entitlements of a Member to basic and special responsibility allowances, where in the course of a year, this scheme

is amended or a Member becomes, or ceases to be, a Member, or accepts or relinquishes a special responsibility in respect of which a special responsibility allowance is payable.

- (b) The basic and special responsibility allowances are paid monthly therefore the portion of allowance(s) due to a Member in respect of changes identified in (a) above shall be made on the basis of a monthly pro-rata calculation.
- (c) This will be achieved by ascertaining the allowance affected for the relevant month, dividing it by the number of days in the month to achieve a daily amount and multiplying it by the number of relevant days.

Claims and Payments

- (a) Members are encouraged to submit a claim every month with any such claims being accompanied by receipts.
- (b) Payments shall be made on a monthly basis along with payments for the basic and any special responsibility allowances. Such payments will be made direct to the bank or building society account of the Member's choice.
- (c) Any Member not wishing to claim these allowances should inform the Head of Finance – Economy in writing.

Social Security and Housing Benefits Act 1982

For the purposes of this Act, any Member who claims Members' allowances is technically employed by the Council and can claim sick pay from the Council. There are several conditions, and the claimant must not be over the age of 65 (60 for females). To comply with this scheme, a Member must notify illness on the first day, but in any event not later than the fourth day and on the eighth day produce a Doctor's note. Sick payments will be made by the Council for a period of 28 weeks, thereafter by the Department of Work and Pensions.