



# **Members' Allowances Scheme**

**(Revised: February 2020)**



## **The West Suffolk Council Remuneration Scheme**

- 1.1. All Councils are required to form a scheme of allowances that:
  - Determines how much individual Councillors receive for being a Councillor (the basic allowance).
  - Determines how much those Councillors who have additional responsibilities should receive (special responsibilities allowances).
  - Determines the circumstances under which Councillors may claim expenses for costs they have incurred because they are a Councillor.
- 1.2. The Council must set the scheme in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The Scheme has been produced on the recommendation of an Independent Remuneration Panel, a group of individuals who are entirely separate from the Council who have considered how much Councillors should receive. The Council is required to annually publish the level of allowances and expenses claimed by Councillors.
- 1.3. This scheme was approved by West Suffolk Council on 25 February 2020.

### **2. Basic Allowance**

- 2.1. Each Councillor shall receive a payment of £6,291.71 per year for undertaking their work as a Councillor. This payment is intended to include all expenses and costs they incur that fall outside the scope of the expenses scheme (see below), including costs of stationery, phone calls and internet costs, unless they are supplied to Councillors by the Council itself.
- 2.2. The sum of £6,291.71 shall be uplifted each year by the same rate as the Annual Pay Award provided to the majority of Council staff. Should this be 3% or higher, then the Remuneration Panel should consider the level of increase and make recommendations to the Council accordingly.

### **3. Special Responsibility Allowances**

- 3.1. Councillors shall receive a payment in line with Schedule 1 for any special responsibilities posts that they are appointed to by the Council.
- 3.2. A councillor may hold more than one special responsibility post, but may only be paid one special responsibility allowance.

#### **4. Payment and Foregoing of Allowances**

- 4.1. Allowances shall be paid in 12 monthly instalments on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of each month unless that day is a weekend or bank holiday, in which case it shall be paid the previous Friday.
- 4.2. A Councillor shall be paid any allowances from their date of appointment, so that:
  - 4.2.1. In an ordinary election year, basic allowances are payable from 4 days after the date of election.
  - 4.2.2. In the event of a by-election, basic allowances are payable from the date of the by-election.
  - 4.2.3. In the event appointment to a special responsibility post, from the date the appointment was made.
- 4.3. Where a Councillor's entitlement to an allowance begins or ends part of the way through the year, their entitlement shall be the same proportion as the number of days during the term of office to the number of days in that year.
- 4.4. A Councillor may write to the Monitoring Officer to notify of their intention to forego any allowance, or part of any allowance, payable to them under this scheme.
- 4.5. In the event that the Council agrees that a Councillor may be granted a leave of absence of more than 6 months, then the Councillor will not be entitled to receive a basic allowance after they have been absent for more than 6 months. Their allowance payment will be resumed after they have attended a Council meeting.
- 4.6. Where a Councillor has been overpaid, they shall be invoiced for the value of the overpayment and required to repay the allowance. Where they have been underpaid, this shall be paid to them by the Council as part of any subsequent payment.
- 4.7. PAYE arrangements apply to Councillors' allowances, in that they are subject to national insurance and income tax, and deductions shall be made by the Council accordingly. Councillors cannot join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

#### **5. Travel, Subsistence and Dependents / Caring Allowances**

- 5.1. Members are allowed to claim travel, subsistence and dependents / caring allowances when carrying out official duties as listed within Schedule 2.

- 5.2. Members must submit claims within 2 months using any approved forms / IT systems. For claims to be processed within the month submitted, they must be submitted in accordance with stated deadlines provided to members.
- 5.3. Councillors living inside the District should claim expenses from their home, or the starting point of their journey. Where a Councillor lives outside the District, the nearest border should be agreed with them by the Monitoring Officer or Chief Executive, which would then become their notional base for travel purposes from which claims from their "home" may be made.
- 5.4. Councillors should, when possible, seek to use alternatives such as walking, cycling, public transport or car sharing instead of personal car journeys to support the Council in reducing the environmental impact of its activities.

### **Transport Allowances**

- 5.5. Where Councillors are undertaking official duties, claims for transport allowances will be paid at the following rates:

Travelling by Car: First 10,000 miles claimed Claims above 10,000 miles	45p per mile 25p per mile
Where also carrying Councillors / Council employees also required to attend the event	Additional 5p per mile
Travelling by Motorbike	24p per mile
Travelling by Bicycle	20p per mile
Public Transport	Standard Fare incurred; Councillors are expected to use any discount / concessionary fare entitlements
Taxis	Actual Fare, as evidenced by receipt; this should normally be pre-approved by the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer and only in exceptional circumstances.
Car Parking and Toll Fares	Actual Fare incurred, as evidenced by ticket / receipt / statement

- 5.6. Any other forms of transport or arrangements that do not fall within the scope above should be notified to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer to agree. Wherever possible, where public transport or alternative transport is being used, then the Councillor or Council (on their behalf) should seek to pre-purchase tickets to ensure best value.

- 5.7. Should HMRC adjust the standard rates for car, motorbike or bicycle travel, then the Council may adjust the rates in 5.4 accordingly, or the council could reconvene the West Suffolk Independent Remuneration to review the rate changes.
- 5.8. Councillors must ensure that they have complied with the relevant tax and MOT requirements for their vehicle and have appropriate insurance in place that covers their councillor activities for their vehicle. Claims may not be paid if these requirements have not been complied with.
- 5.9. Councillors are entitled to use the Council's pool cars when undertaking Council business. The pool cars include use of a fuel card and therefore mileage expenses cannot be claimed when the journey has been undertaken by pool car.

### ***Subsistence Allowances***

- 5.10. Any overnight accommodation should be booked and paid by the Council on behalf of the Councillor in advance.
- 5.11. An evening meal allowance will be paid for meals after 7pm where an overnight stay is required outside of the District, for the actual cost of the meal, up to a maximum of £20. In exceptional circumstances for conferences in London, this should be agreed with the Monitoring Officer or Chief Executive.
- 5.12. Any other exceptional circumstances, such as a meal on a train, may be agreed by the Monitoring Officer or Chief Executive.

### ***Dependents / Caring Allowances***

- 5.13. Councillors who have caring responsibilities are allowed to claim for the costs they actually incurred, up to a maximum of £8 per hour for childcare, and £20 per hour for professional support care for dependents, from the time they leave home to the time that they return home on duties within schedule 2.
- 5.14. These payments will not be made to an immediate family member and may only be reimbursed on production of receipts or invoices for costs incurred. They should be claimed in respect of those who live with the Councillor, or are dependent on the Councillor for support, and cannot be left unsupervised during the Councillor's absence.
- 5.15. Costs in respect of childcare may only be claimed outside of normal child care provision times – for example, claims may not be made when the child is in school or using entitlement to free childcare hours.

## **6. Councillors with Additional Needs**

- 6.1. If any Councillors have particular needs arising due to a protected characteristic under the equalities act – for example, they have a disability that prevents them using some forms of transport, then the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer may agree to the payment of any additional claims or support arrangements that fall outside the scope of the scheme, to support their needs.

**Schedule 1****Rates of Allowances  
(As at 1 April 2021)**

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Value in relation to basic</b>
	Basic Allowance	£6,291.71	1
1	Leader of the Council	£15,729.27	2.5
2	Deputy Leader of the Council	£9,437.56	1.5
3	Cabinet Members Chair of Council	£7,864.63	1.25
4	Chair of Development Control Chair of Overview and Scrutiny	£5,662.54	0.9
5	Chair of Performance and Audit Scrutiny Chair of Licensing Vice-Chair of Council Vice-Chair of Development Control	£4,152.53	0.66
6	Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny	£2,516.68	0.4
7	Vice-Chair of Performance and Audit Scrutiny Vice-Chair of Licensing	£2,202.09	0.35

**Rates of Allowances: Minority Group Leaders**

7	Group size of 21-32	£2,201.79	0.35
	Group size of 11-20	£1,467.86	2/3 of tier 7
	Group size of 3-10	£733.93	1/3 of tier 7

**Approved duties for the purpose of payment of transport, subsistence and carers / dependents allowances**

Councillors may claim transport, subsistence and carers / dependents allowances when undertaking the following duties:

1. Attendance at a meeting of the authority or of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or of any other body to which the authority makes appointments or nominations, or of any committee or sub-committee of such a body
2. Attendance at any other meeting, the holding of which is authorised by the authority, or a committee or sub-committee of the authority, or a joint committee of the authority and at least one other local authority provided that where the authority is divided into two or more political groups it is a meeting to which members of at least two such groups have been invited; or if the authority is not so divided, it is a meeting to which at least two members of the authority have been invited;
3. The attendance at a meeting of any association of authorities of which the authority is a member
4. The attendance at a meeting of the executive or a meeting of any of its committees, where the authority is operating executive arrangements
5. The performance of any duty in pursuance of any standing order made under section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972 requiring a member or members to be present while tender documents are opened
6. the performance of any duty in connection with the discharge of any function of the authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises
7. Meetings arranged by, or on behalf of, or approved by any of the Chief Executive, Directors Assistant Directors or Service Managers to which Councillors have been invited

In addition, Councillors are entitled to claim travelling expenses when acting as a local ward Councillor. Councillors should use their judgement (or seek advice from the Monitoring Officer) to determine whether the meeting or event they are travelling to is genuinely in their local ward work and therefore eligible to be claimed. The following is not exclusive, but acts as guidance on the type of matters that Councillors can, and cannot claim for:

<b>Items Councillors can claim for:</b>	<b>Items Councillors cannot claim for:</b>
Attending meetings of a local Parish / Town Council, or resident / community association	Attending meetings when they are a part of the group who have convened the meeting



<b>Items Councillors can claim for:</b>	<b>Items Councillors cannot claim for:</b>
Attending meetings of community groups when requested to do so by the group	Attending meetings / making visits which have no relation to Council business
Representing the community as a local ward member at events such as parish forums and meetings / events that are making decisions about the community	Attending meetings / making visits which are primarily to deal with personal or political business
Visiting residents or local businesses to respond to enquiries	
Attending meetings where proposals relating to the local ward are being presented	
Attending meetings relevant to expenditure on the Council's locality ward budget scheme	

It is expected that ordinarily claims should be within the local member's ward, except where the Councillor is acting at a community representative. Councillors may also claim where another Councillor has asked them to act as the local ward member on their behalf.