



West Suffolk Council Members' Allowances Scheme

(Revised: February 2024)

1. The West Suffolk Council remuneration scheme

1.1 All councils are required to form a scheme of allowances that:

- determines how much individual members receive for being a councillor (the basic allowance)
- determines how much those members who have additional responsibilities should receive (special responsibility allowances)
- determines the circumstances under which members may claim expenses for costs they have incurred because they are a member.

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 members should receive.

1.3 This scheme was approved by West Suffolk Council on 19 December 2023 and as required by the regulations, will be subject to annual review.

2. Basic allowance

2.1 Each member shall receive a payment of £6,606.30 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, printing, phone calls, mobile phone, and home energy and internet costs. In addition to the basic allowance, members are offered a laptop and sundries (keyboard, mouse, and so on).

2.2 The sum of £6,606.30 shall be uplifted each year by the same rate as the Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) index as at 1 April in each year commencing on 1 April 2025. Should this be greater than three percent, the Remuneration Panel shall consider the level of increase and make recommendations to the Council accordingly.

3. Special responsibility allowances

3.1 Members shall receive a payment in line with Schedule 1 for any special responsibilities posts that they are appointed to by the Council. Special responsibility allowances are paid in addition to the basic allowance.

3.2 A member may hold more than one special responsibility post but may only be paid one special responsibility allowance that attracts the highest rate.

4. Payment and foregoing of allowances

4.1 Allowances shall be paid in 12 monthly instalments on the 23rd 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 member 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 four 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 member'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 member 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 member may be granted a leave of absence of more than six months, then the member will not be entitled to receive a basic allowance after they have been absent for more than six months. Their allowance payment will be resumed after they have attended a Council meeting.
- 4.6 Where a member 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 members' allowances, in that they are subject to National Insurance and Income Tax, and deductions shall be made by the council accordingly. Members cannot join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

5. Travel, subsistence and carers and dependents allowances

- 5.1 Members are allowed to claim travel, subsistence and carers or dependents allowances when carrying out official duties as listed within Schedule 2.
- 5.2 Members must submit claims within two months using any approved electronic ICT systems or forms. For claims to be processed within the month submitted, they must be submitted in accordance with stated deadlines provided to members.

5.3 Travel allowances

- 5.3.1 When claiming mileage, receipts for fuel or electricity purchases are expected to be retained by the member for inspection upon request but are not required to be submitted with the claim.
- 5.3.2 Members living inside the district should claim expenses from their home, or the starting point of their journey, whichever is the closest. Where a member 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.

5.3.3 Members 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.

5.3.4 Where members are undertaking official duties, claims for travel allowances will be paid at the following rates:

Travelling by car or van	First 10,000 miles 45 pence per mile. Each mile over 10,000 25 pence per mile.
If providing transport to another member or council employee to attend the same event	An additional 5 pence per mile
Travelling by motorcycle	24 pence per mile.
Travelling by bicycle	20 pence per mile.
Public transport	Standard fare incurred; members are expected to use any discount or concessionary fare entitlements. Evidenced by receipt.
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. No gratuity reimbursed.
Car parking and toll fares	Actual fee or fare incurred, as evidenced by ticket, receipt or statement.

5.3.5 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 member or council (on their behalf) should seek to pre-purchase tickets to ensure best value.

5.3.6 Should HMRC adjust the standard rates for car, motorcycle or bicycle travel, then the council may adjust the rates in section 5.3.4 accordingly, or the council could reconvene the Independent Remuneration Panel to review the rate changes.

5.3.7 Members 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 member activities for their vehicle. Claims may not be paid if these requirements have not been complied with.

5.3.8 Members are entitled to use the council's pool cars and electric bicycles 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.

5.4 Subsistence allowances

- 5.4.1 Any overnight accommodation should be booked and paid for by the council on behalf of the member in advance.
- 5.4.2 Where a member leaves the district and attends an event in their capacity as a councillor listed under Schedule 2 for five hours or more, claims may be made for subsistence up to a maximum of £20. This is to be evidenced by receipt.
- 5.4.3 Any other exceptional circumstances, may be agreed by the Monitoring Officer or Chief Executive.

5.5 Carers and dependents allowances

- 5.5.1 While undertaking council duties as set out within Schedule 2, members who have caring responsibilities are allowed to claim for the costs they incur. Up to a maximum of £10 per hour may be claimed for childcare, and £28 per hour for support care for dependents. Costs incurred where care is required to be pre-booked may be claimed.
- 5.5.2 These payments will be reimbursed on production of receipts (which may include a personal receipt with the carer's details and signed by the councillor) or invoices for costs incurred. They should be claimed in respect of those who live with the member, or are dependent on the member for support, and cannot be left unsupervised during the member's absence.
- 5.5.3 Costs in respect of childcare may only be claimed outside of normal childcare provision times – for example, claims may not be made when the child is in school or using entitlement to free childcare hours.

6. Members with additional needs

- 6.1 If any members 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 February 2024

Tier	Value in relation to basic	Responsibility	Value Special responsibility allowances are paid in addition to the basic allowance
	1	Basic allowance	£6,606.30
1	2.5	Leader of the Council	£16,515.74
2	1.5	Deputy Leader of the Council	£9,909.44
3	1.25	Cabinet Members Chair of Council	£8,257.87
4	0.9	Chair of Development Control Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Chair of Performance and Audit Scrutiny	£5,945.67
5	0.66	Chair of Licensing Vice-Chair of Council Vice-Chair of Development Control	£4,360.16
6	0.4	Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Vice-Chair of Performance and Audit Scrutiny	£2,642.52
7	0.35	Vice-Chair of Licensing	£2,312.20

Rates of allowances: group leaders

Tier	Value in relation to basic	Responsibility	Value
7	0.35	Group size of 21-32	£2,312.20
	2/3 of 0.35 (tier 7)	Group size of 11-20	£1,541.47
	1/3 of 0.35 (tier 7)	Group size of 3-10	£770.73

Schedule 2

Approved duties for the purpose of payment of travel, subsistence and carers or dependents allowances

Members may claim travel, subsistence and carers or dependents allowances (Carers or dependents allowance may be claimed in accordance with section 5.5 above if care is required while a member is attending meetings or engagements held in person or by virtual means) 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. The carrying out of any other duty approved by the authority, or any duty of a class so approved, for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the authority or any of its committees or sub-committees. Specifically:
 - a. Meetings arranged by, or on behalf of, or approved by the Chief Executive, strategic directors, directors or service managers to which members have been invited.
 - b. Appointed to represent the council other than as members of outside bodies (see 1. above), either by virtue of specific resolution or in the capacity of Leader or Deputy Leader or as Chair or Vice-Chair of a committee.
 - c. Meetings and engagements undertaken by the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader or Cabinet members through the course of their duties and as part of their specific roles and responsibilities.

- d. Representing the council at official and courtesy visits of a civic nature within the United Kingdom at the request of the Chief Executive or an officer authorised by the Chief Executive.
- e. Attending training and development courses, seminars, workshops and conferences.
- f. Representing the council at public inquiries.

In addition, members are entitled to claim travelling expenses when acting as a local ward member. Members 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 members **can claim for**:

- Attending meetings of a local town or parish council, or, resident or community association.
- Attending meetings of community groups when requested to do so by the group.
- Representing the community as a local ward member at events such as parish forums and meetings or events that are making decisions about the community.
- 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.
- Meetings arranged by the member with specific officers to discuss ward matters or to resolve ICT problems.

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

Attendance at the following events **cannot be claimed for**:

- Attending meetings when they are a part of the town or parish council, or community group who have convened the meeting.
- Attending meetings or making visits which have no relation to council business.
- Attending meetings or making visits which are primarily to deal with personal or political business. This includes attendance at political group meetings where council officers are present for a proportion of the time.
- Unless specifically representing the Council (see 7d. above), attending civic events (such as the annual civic reception, Remembrance service etc).