

A GUIDE TO THE MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME AND OTHER ASSISTANCE

This document has been produced to provide Councillors with a clear guide to the Members' Allowances Scheme and other provisions and facilities to ensure that there is clarity and avoidance of doubt and to prevent inconsistency in application.

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1. THE MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

The Members' Allowances Scheme is drawn up in accordance with the Local Authority's (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. A Scheme must be agreed before the beginning of each financial year. For a scheme to be changed it must be subject to review and recommendation from a Panel made up of non-elected independent persons.

The current Members' Allowances Scheme was agreed on 25 February 2009 and is in accord with a review undertaken by an independent remuneration panel that reported in October 2007.

These allowances are index linked to the officer APT&C pay scales until 2011.

All sums quoted are gross and are subject to tax and National Insurance, as appropriate.

a. **Basic Allowance - £7,103**

The basic allowance is payable to all Councillors. Councillors receive this allowance, pro-rata each month, and it is paid into a nominated account via the BACS system.

b. **Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA)**

These payments are made to individual Councillors in recognition of the responsibilities of a particular post to which they have been appointed. There are 5 levels of SRA, detailed below. This allowance is paid in addition to the Basic Allowance and is paid pro-rata, each month, in the same way as the Basic Allowance.

No Councillor may claim more than one SRA.

Scale I	Leader of the Council	£17,758
Scale II	Executive Members + Chair of Scrutiny Overview Committee + Chair of Licensing + Chair of Planning and Development	£9,767
Scale III	Chairs of Scrutiny Topic Groups + Chair of Audit Committee	£7,990
Scale IV	Chairs of Area Committees	£6,215
Scale V	SBC "Lead" Member (Chair/Vice-Chair) Highways Joint Member Panel	£4,438

c. Carer's Allowance

This allowance may be claimed against the cost of child or dependent adult care that a Member may incur whilst they on official duties e.g. attending a Council or Committee meeting, or an outside body upon which they have been appointed by Council.

The following rates may be claimed –

Childcare	Maximum of £6 per hour
Dependant care	Maximum of £10 per hour

A maximum of 20 hours per month may be claimed. Claims must be supported by a valid receipt. The carer employed must be registered for that purpose and payments to relatives are excluded. Claims for Carers Allowance must be submitted within two months of the date to which they relate using the appropriate claim form.

d. Travel Claims

An allowance may be claimed for travel on Council business and is paid on the same basis as for Council employees. Claims for travel allowance must be submitted within two months of the date to which they relate using the appropriate claim form.

i. Travel by Public Transport

Travel will be by second class transport. However, the Chief Executive or other Strategic Director may authorise first class travel where appropriate. For example, where second class is fully booked or where Members and officers are travelling together using the journey to discuss sensitive matters. Travel by first class should be authorised in advance.

Taxis should only be used where no other practical, more economic form of transport is available. If a taxi journey is necessary a receipt should be obtained and submitted with the claim. Reimbursement to taxi fares will be subject to authorisation of a Strategic Director or relevant Head of Service. Hire cars (with or without driver) are only provided where a member is representing the Council and no other suitable transport is available or appropriate. In such circumstances authorisation is to be obtained from a Strategic Director or relevant Head of Service.

For train journeys, as far as practicable, Members should apply to Members' Services at least 2 days in advance and a travel warrant will be provided. In these circumstances there is no outlay for the Member concerned. If a Member purchases her/his own ticket, the ticket or a receipt should be submitted with the claim for reimbursement.

ii. **Travel by Car**

The current mileage rate is as follows –

Up to 999cc -	42.9p per mile
1000cc + -	46.9p per mile

See also 'Hotel Accommodation / Overnight Expenses' below

e. **Subsistence**

Allowances for subsistence are the same as those for Council employees. Reimbursement for breakfast, lunch and/or dinner may be claimed when a Member is on Council business and is prevented from taking a meal at their normal dining place. Receipts must be submitted with the claim. Claims for subsistence must be submitted within two months of the date to which they relate using the appropriate claim form.

The following subsistence rates are payable.

	Maximum
Breakfast	£6.10
Lunch	£8.30
Dinner	£11.10

Reimbursement of claims for amounts greater than those detailed above must be authorised for payment by a Strategic Director or relevant Head of Service. The cost of alcoholic drinks will not be reimbursed.

See also 'Refreshments at Meetings' and 'Hotel Accommodation' below sections below.

f. **Pensions**

Pensions for eligible members were introduced in May 2003 under the Local Government Act 2000. If you wish to join the Pension Scheme, contact the Constitutional Services Manager who will arrange for you to receive up to date information and the relevant documentation for completion.

g. Renunciation

A Councillor may, by notice in writing to the Chief Executive, elect to forego any part of their entitlement to an allowance under this scheme.

2. TELEPHONES

The Council does not provide Members with landlines, handsets, fax machines, mobile telephones or blackberries. Telephone costs are provided for in the level of Members' Allowances. Members' may use telephones and fax machines in Daneshill House for official Council business. Authorisation from a Strategic Director or relevant Head of Service will be required for international calls or faxes.

3. PCS, LAPTOPS ETC.

The cost of purchasing computer hardware, software, consumables, broadband connection and all other telecommunications related costs is covered by the Basic Allowance paid to all Members.

The Council's E.Government and Business Systems Unit provides Members with support in identifying appropriate network solutions, hardware and software; installation of hardware and software; fault diagnosis and resolution; and training. Kit may also be purchased through the E.Government and Business Systems Unit with the recipient then being invoiced for the cost (inc. VAT) or the sum deducted directly from her/his Allowance.

Councillors may use PCs in the Civic Suite for official Council business.

4. CAR PARK SEASON TICKETS

Car park season tickets, for use when visiting the Town Centre on official Council business, are issued to Members on request. On receipt of a season ticket Members are asked sign a form acknowledging the limitations on use. Personal use of season tickets is not permitted and may jeopardise the tax free status of this facility.

5. HOTEL ACCOMMODATION / OVERNIGHT EXPENSES

Provision for hotel accommodation/overnight expenses when on official Council business is in line with that allowed for Council employees.

When required to stay overnight somewhere on Council business, accommodation should be booked in advance through the Members' Services Office. Accommodation must be selected that is appropriate and normally no more than a four star level.

Where meals are provided in the cost of the accommodation, claims will not be entertained for alternative meals, e.g. if breakfast is provided in the accommodation cost, an additional claim for breakfast would not be paid. Otherwise the subsistence allowance, as detailed in the Members' Allowances Scheme, see section 1 above, may be claimed.

The costs of any personal items or services purchased e.g. newspapers, snacks from the mini-bar, will not be reimbursed, nor will the purchase of alcoholic drinks.

Travel costs to and from the venue are covered by the Members' Allowances Scheme, see section 1 above. Reimbursement will not be paid for any travel costs incurred whilst staying away from home unless the trip is made as part of official business undertaken.

6. REFRESHMENTS AT MEETINGS

Refreshments are provided in the Ingelheim Lounge before meetings starting between 17.00 – 18.30 hours.

Food and refreshments are not provided at any meeting which is political in nature e.g. Party meetings, Group meetings or inner caucus meetings in Members' offices.

Members are asked to inform the Constitutional Services Unit (either Committee or Members' Services) as soon as possible if they are not going to attend a particular meeting. This is to cut down on waste and save over-ordering refreshments.

Refreshments may also be provided for all Member Seminars and Modern Member activities. Unless you have specifically informed officers that you will be attending a particular event, refreshments will not be ordered for you. The names of those Members who have confirmed their attendance and ordered refreshments will be on display in the Ingelheim Lounge where the refreshments are served.

Where a Member partakes of refreshment provided, a subsistence allowance under the Members' Allowances Scheme will not be paid.

7. CONFERENCES AND COURSES

Requests for Members to attend any outside conference or course is forwarded to the Leader for approval. Members are required to complete a request form and provide details of the course or conference (organiser, subject matter, venue, and cost) and their personal objectives in attending the event. If approved, attendance is to be booked and arranged by the Members' Services Section so that any related expenditure may be accounted for centrally.

The relevant sections concerning travel, subsistence and hotel accommodation / overnight expenses, set out elsewhere in this guide, will apply as appropriate.

8. HOSPITALITY

The Members' Code of Conduct requires Councillors to declare any gifts or hospitality with an estimated value of £25 or more. Such declarations should be made in writing to the Council's Monitoring Officer (Paul Froggatt).

9. MEMBERS' POST

The Members post is sorted into individual pigeon holes in room 103 in the Civic Suite. This room is secure and access is via your ID/Security badge. On visiting Daneshill House Members are requested to pick up their post from that room. Whilst officers will arrange to post out agendas and other post that appears urgent at least once a week, if you have received any bulky publications, or there is a build up of general post in your pigeon hole you will be contacted to arrange collection.

10. MEMBERS' LIBRARY

The Members' Library is situated in the Civic Suite and is for use by Councillors only. There is a PC, telephone, in/out message board and tea and coffee facilities for your use.

There is a small reference library and copies of recent agendas and other free publications are available. Due to budget pressures, other than the Municipal Journal and Local Government Chronicle, no other periodicals or newspapers are purchased, however, there is an index list of website addresses where many newspapers and magazines can be accessed.

This facility is not to be used for meetings.

11. MEMBERS' MEETING ROOM

Next to the Library there is a small meeting room for Member use. If you wish to book the room for a meeting please contact the Members' Services Office.

Occasionally, if the room is not being used by Councillors, and no other rooms are available, this facility may be used by officers.

12. MAYORAL ACTIVITIES

a. Mayor's Budget

The allowance paid to the Mayor is currently not included within the formal published Mayor's Allowances Scheme. The total budget approved for 2009/1010 and covers the Mayor's Allowance and Hospitality Budget.

The Mayor's Allowance is £6,500 per annum, paid monthly on a pro-rata basis and is subject to tax and National Insurance, where appropriate. This allowance covers all incidental expenses incurred on Mayoral engagements, such as raffle tickets and collections.

It is accepted that a Mayor and Consort may, from time to time, need to purchase appropriate attire to undertake their mayoral duties. The Mayor may claim up to £1,000 over their term of office. Reimbursement for individual expenditure will be paid on production of a relevant receipt(s).

The Members' Services Office (Mayor's Secretary) holds a budget of up to £10,000 per Mayoral term of office for use for hospitality and arranging events.

b. Deputy Mayor's Budget

A sum of £X,XXX is included in the 2009/2010 budget to pay an allowance to the Deputy Mayor to cover all her/his expenses in undertaking the work of that Office. This allowance is paid pro-rata each month and is subject to tax and National Insurance, as appropriate.

c. The Mayoral Car

The chauffeur driven mayoral car is for use on mayoral engagements only. If the car is not being used by the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and/or the Mayor Designate may use the car for attendance at an engagement.

Where there are multiple civic engagements on any one day and not all dignitaries can be transported/accommodated in the mayoral car, they are generally required to self drive (mileage claims may be submitted - see relevant section on the Members Allowances Scheme). However, in exceptional circumstances a taxi may be provided

Useful telephone Nos.

Jackie Cansick – Constitutional Services Manager – 242216

James Hazlewood – Principal Constitutional Services Officer – 242215

Maureen Nicholson – Members' Services and Events Officer – 242278

Paul Froggatt – Monitoring Officer - 242212

IT Action Desk - 242433