

Part 14 - Members Allowance Scheme

1. General

The West Berkshire District Council, in exercise of the powers conferred by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003 hereby makes the following Scheme.

This Scheme may be cited as the West Berkshire District Council Members' Allowances Scheme, and shall have effect for the part year commencing on 8 May 2001 and subsequent years.

In this Scheme, 'Councillor' means a Member of West Berkshire District Council who is a Councillor; 'year' means the 12 months ending with 31 March.

The Scheme is reviewed by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) on 3 August 2007 and Council on 10 September 2007, and IRP on 12 August 2009 and Council on the 24 September 2009.

The Scheme was reviewed as a whole and amended in February 2011 and was implemented on 5 May 2011. Additional amendments to the scheme were discussed at an IRP meeting in July 2011 and these amendments were agreed at Full Council on the 22 September 2011.

The Scheme was reviewed as a whole and amended in February 2015 and was implemented on 19 May 2015. Additional amendments to the scheme were discussed at an IRP meeting in November 2017 and these amendments were agreed at Full Council on the 1 March 2018.

The Scheme was reviewed again, in its entirety, on the 23 and 24 September 2020 and was agreed at the Full Council meeting on the 3 December 2020.

The Scheme was last amended following a meeting of the IRP on 23 June 2021 and Council on the 9 September 2021.

Further to a Motion approved at the 12 September 2019 Council meeting, the Personnel Committee at its meeting on 24 April 2020 adopted a

Parental Leave for Members Policy. Section 9 deals with allowances for a Member taking Qualifying Parental Leave and should be read in conjunction with this Scheme.

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2. Basic Allowance

Subject to Part Year Entitlements for each year, a Basic Allowance shall be paid to each Councillor as agreed at Council and set out in section 14 of the Scheme. The Basic Allowance will cover:

- Costs associated with home telephone landline and calls
- All costs associated with Broadband
- Mobile phone contracts and calls (personal)
- IT consumables (such as paper and cartridges for personal printer)

- The cost of replacing damaged or lost West Berkshire Council ICT equipment in accordance with the Members ICT Policy. This includes:
 - Tablet device
 - Bluetooth Mouse
 - Bluetooth Keyboard
 - Docking Station
 - Stylus
 - Keyboard, Video Mouse (KVM) switch (where relevant)
 - Projector connection
 - Carry case
 - Batteries and cables
- The costs associated with returning West Berkshire Council ICT equipment and other sundries to the Council, when ceasing to be a Councillor
- Headed paper (following initial supply after Election)
- Business cards
- Online or paper subscriptions or memberships
- Registration with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and similar
- Incidental Expenses not otherwise specified in the scheme (see Travelling and Subsistence Allowances).

In accordance with the Members' Scheme of Allowances, the Basic Allowance is paid over 11 months from June - April, with no payment made in May.

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3. Special Responsibility Allowances

For each year a Special Responsibility Allowance shall be paid to those Councillors who hold the special responsibilities in relation to the Authority that are specified in Schedule 1 to this Scheme.

Subject to [Part Year Entitlements](#) the amount of each such allowance shall be the amount specified against that special responsibility in that Schedule.

No Councillor shall be entitled to more than one special responsibility allowance paid by the Council. The Council works towards a maximum number of special responsibility allowances payable at any one time not exceeding 50% of Council Members (22 Members).

In accordance with the Members' Scheme of Allowances, the Special Responsibility Allowance is paid over 11 months from June - April with no payment made in May.

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4. Dependants' Carer's Allowance

Subject to the provisions of this scheme, a Dependants' Carer's Allowance (DCA) shall be payable to a Councillor based on two rates. Rate one for general care is linked to the Real Living Wage as recommended by the Living Wage Foundation (currently £9.90 per hour) with no monthly maximum claim. Rate two is for specialist care based at cost upon production of receipts and requiring medical evidence that this type of care is required, with no monthly maximum claim when undertaking Approved Duties. In the interest of clarity, childcare costs are eligible for this Allowance.

The definition of a dependant used in Section 57A (3) of the Employment Rights Act 1996 applies, namely:

- a spouse;
- a child;
- a parent;
- a person who lives in the same household but is not an employee, tenant lodger or boarder.

The carer employed must not be a member of the claimant's immediate family i.e. a spouse or partner; other children of the Councillor or the Councillor's spouse; any member of the Councillor's family who lives at the same address as the Councillor.

DCA shall only be payable in respect of such expenses as are necessarily incurred in relation to the following (as specified in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2001:

- the 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;
- the 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 one or more local Authority within the meaning of Section 270(1) of the 1972 Local Government Act, or a sub-committee of such a joint committee provided that :
 - (a) 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
 - (b) if the Authority is not so divided, it is a meeting to which at least two Members of the Authority have been invited;
- the attendance at a meeting of any association of authorities of which the Authority is a Member;
- the attendance at a meeting of the Executive or a meeting of any of its committees, where the Authority is operating Executive arrangements;
- the performance of any duty in pursuance of any standing order made under Section 135 of the 1972 Act requiring a Member or Members to be present while tender documents are opened;

- 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, and
- the performance of any duty in connection with arrangements made by the Authority for the attendance of pupils at school approved for the purposes of Section 342 (Special Schools) of the Education Act 1996.

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5. Approved Duties

Members are entitled to claim mileage, fares, authorised payments and subsistence for attendance at any meeting categorised as an '**Approved duty**'. Approved duties include:

- (a) All meetings of Council, the Executive, Committees, SubCommittees, Panels, Task Groups, Outside Bodies*, formal Site Visits and Member Development and Induction Sessions and other training provided by the Council;
- (b) Where a Member attends a meeting in their role as a Council Champion for a particular service or project;
- (c) Meetings with Officers (in any of the Council's buildings) regarding the business of a meeting (see 2(a));
- (d) Where the Chairman or Vice-Chairman is asked to attend an event or function in their civic role. When the Chairman or Vice-Chairman is not available, a Past Chairman may be invited to attend.

*Travel and subsistence expenses for attendance associated with appointments to Outside Bodies should be claimed through the organisation if payments are available.

A list of those duties for which Members are **not** entitled to claim allowances for are included in the Procedure for Completing Members' Claim Forms.

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6. Travelling Allowance

The most common Travelling Allowance payable is mileage allowance, which can be claimed for the following journeys:

- travelling to and from meetings that are categorised as 'Approved Duties (see section 5 above)'; that is, all meetings of Council, the Executive, Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels, Task Groups, Outside Bodies, Site Visits and Member Development sessions;
- travelling to and from any of the Council buildings to meet with Officers regarding the business of a meeting;
- Mileage is not payable for attendance at political group meetings, meetings with constituents, informal site visits or events of a social nature.

- Travel allowance rates shall be in line with Inland Revenue approved rates and should only rise in accordance with any increase in the Inland Revenue rates.

The Council follows the Inland Revenue travel allowance rates, currently:

- 45 pence per mile for cars.
- 24 pence per mile for motor-cycles.
- 20 pence per mile for bicycles.

When claiming a Travel Allowance for attending an approved duty within the district that claim must be made with the starting point being a Members' usual place of residence or work within the District, or if the usual place of residence or work is outside the District boundary then the total return journey for which that claim can be made is capped at **36 miles**. Where mileage is claimed the 'depart from' and 'return to' sections of the form MUST be completed.

The use of public transport is encouraged, in line with the Council's Green Travel Plan. The rate of travel by public transport shall not exceed the amount of the ordinary fare or any available cheap fare.

In the interests of transparency and the requirements of internal audit for Officers to carry out the necessary checks of Members travelling claims reimbursements for travelling expenses should only be provided with evidence of expenditure. Where receipts or evidence of expenditure (in the case of car parking payments made by phone) are not provided, the expenditure will be treated as an 'incidental expense' under the Basic Allowance.

Valid Insurance, MOT (if required), Tax and driving licence are required when claiming a Travel Allowance for attending an approved duty.

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7. Subsistence Allowance

The Subsistence Allowance is paid to recompense Members for actual expenditure on meals necessarily incurred when carrying out 'Approved Duties' (see Rule 5 above).

Claims for Subsistence Allowance for meetings that take place at any of the Council Offices are liable to tax but those that take place 'off-site' are not, and any claims made should reflect this.

Claims for Subsistence Allowance must fall within the relevant time periods, as set out below, and therefore start and finish times of journeys must be included with each claim. The following rates are currently payable:

- Breakfast Allowance (more than four hours away from normal place of residence or, where the Authority permits, a lesser period, before 11.00am) - £5.00;
- Lunch Allowance (more than four hours away from normal place of residence or, where the Authority permits, a lesser period, between 12 noon and 2.00pm) - £7.00;

- Tea Allowance (more than four hours away from normal place of residence or, where the Authority permits, a lesser period, including the period 3.00pm to 6.00pm) - £3.00;
- Evening Meal Allowance (more than four hours away from normal place of residence or, where the Authority permits, a lesser period, ending after 7.00pm) - £12.00.

In the interests of transparency and the requirements of internal audit for Officers to carry out the necessary checks of Members subsistence claims, reimbursements for subsistence expenses should only be provided with evidence of expenditure. Where receipts or evidence of expenditure are not provided, the expenditure will be treated as an 'incidental expense' under the Basic Allowance.

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8. Renunciation of Allowances

A Councillor may, by notice in writing given to the Service Director: Strategy and Governance, elect to forego any part of their entitlement to any allowance under this scheme.

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9. Part-year Entitlements

The provisions of this Rule shall have the effect of regulating the entitlement of a Councillor to Basic, Special Responsibility and Dependants' Carers' (DCA) Allowances where, in the course of a year, this scheme is amended or the Councillor becomes, or ceases to be a Councillor, or accepts or relinquishes a special responsibility in respect of which a Special Responsibility Allowance is payable.

In the event of any Councillor relinquishing either their duties as a Councillor or their Special Responsibility Allowance at any time during the year, the relevant payments will be paid up to the day in which they relinquish their duties or their Special Responsibility Allowance.

Where the term of office of a Councillor begins other than at the beginning of a year, the entitlement of that Councillor to Basic Allowance shall start from the date that they took up the office of Councillor.

Where a Councillor has during part of, but not throughout, a year such special responsibilities as entitle them to a Special Responsibility Allowance, that Councillor's entitlement shall be from the date that they take up such responsibilities.

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10. Submission of Claims

Members **may** submit claims for expenses relating to travel, subsistence and Dependants' Carer's Allowance that are incurred by their attendance at meetings and other approved duties. Claims must be made, in writing, and may be made in arrears up to three calendar months, if claimed by 5th of the fourth month. e.g. all expenses for 1st October to 31 October 2018 must be claimed by close of business on 5th December.

In addition, Members are able to submit claims within the same month as attendance has occurred, providing the meeting has taken place and the above submission dates are adhered to.

When claiming for reimbursement for travel by public transport and subsistence, claims shall be accompanied by tickets or receipts for the expenditure incurred.

Failure to do so will result in any claim being void unless the Service Director: Strategy and Governance has approved payment of a claim from a Member submitted after that period due to illness.

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11. Delay of Submission Caused by Illness

Nothing in Rule 10 above shall prevent the Service Director: Strategy and Governance from approving payment of a claim submitted after that period where the reason for delay is attributable to illness.

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12. Payments

Payment shall be made:

- in respect of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances subject to (b) below, in instalments of one-eleventh of the amount specified in this scheme on or before the last working day of each month, between June and April each year;
- in respect of, on or before the last working day of each month in respect of claims received by the 5th day of that month.

Payments for the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowance shall be paid direct to Councillors over eleven months (June-April). No payment of Basic or Special Responsibility Allowance shall be made in May of each year. Claims for mileage, Subsistence Allowance and DCA can be made in any month.

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13. Indexation

That the level of indexation for the Basic Allowance, each of the Special Responsibility Allowances, the Co-Optees' / Independent Persons Allowance and the Dependent

Carers' Allowance be automatically linked for a period of up to four years to that used for West Berkshire Council Officers. The political groups should not renounce any indexation of allowances on a group basis and any renunciation will be at the discretion of individual Councillors in accordance with the procedure for renunciation as outlined in rule 8 above.

The mileage allowances are indexed to HMRC rates.

1.1 That in accordance with the 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations (21.1e) the level of indexation will be revisited at a set period.

For more detailed information on allowances, including completing claim forms, contact Vicki Yull, Principal Democratic Services Officer, or go to the Members' allowances webpage: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/councillorallowances>

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Special Responsibility Allowances

The following are specified as the special responsibilities in respect of which responsibility allowances are payable, and the amounts of those allowances.

Position	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
Basic Allowance	£8,289	£8,768	£8,768
Chairman of Council (1)	£6,217	£6,576	£6,576
Vice-Chairman of Council (1)	£1,243	£1,315	£1,315
Leader of Council (1)	£20,723	£21,920	£21,920
Deputy Leader (1)	£12,434	£13,152	£13,152
Executive Members (8)	£10,361	£10,960	£10,960
Chairman of Planning Committee (2)	£5,181	£5,480	£5,480

Position	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (1)	£5,181	£5,480	N/A
Chairman of any Scrutiny Committee (3)	N/A	N/A	£5,480
Chairman of Licensing Committee (1)	£3,108	£3,288	£3,288
Chairman of Governance Committee (1)	£3,108	£3,288	£3,288
Chairman of Personnel Committee (1)	£3,108	£3,288	£3,288
Chairman of Health Scrutiny Committee (1)	£3,288	£3,288	N/A
Leader of the Opposition (1)	£8,289	£8,768	£8,768
Opposition Spokespersons (up to 4 but in proportion to the number of allowances paid to the Administration)	£2,487	£2,630	£2,630
Leader(s) of Minority Group(s) if have more than 2 Group Members	£2,072	£2,192	£2,192
Co-opted Members / Independent Person(s)*	£1,132	£1,132	£1,132

** The remuneration of the Independent Person(s) does not fall within the Members' Allowance Scheme but in the interest of transparency has been published here (see*

report titled Revised Standards Arrangements - Localism Act 2011 discussed at Full Council on the 10 May 2012)

At Full Council on 1 March 2018 it was agreed that the Opposition Spokespersons' Special Responsibility Allowances should be paid in proportion to those paid to the Administration.

At Full Council on 9 September 2021 it was agreed that a new Special Responsibility Allowance would be created for the post of Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee. This was set at the same tier as Chairman of the Licensing Committee and backdated to May 2021 when the Health Scrutiny Committee had been created.

At the Annual Meeting of Council on 15 May 2025, it was agreed that the Special Responsibility Allowance for Chairman of Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee, Chairman of Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee and Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee be set at the same tier as the Chairmen of Planning Committees.

On 3 December 2020 it was agreed that the level of indexation for the Basic Allowance, each of the Special Responsibility Allowances, the Co-Optees' / Independent Persons Allowance and the Dependent Carers' Allowance continue (as from May 2021) to be automatically linked to that used for West Berkshire Council Officers unless Members choose to forgo index linked increases in a particular year. The mileage rates are index linked to HMRC rates.

In December 2020 it was agreed that the Special Responsibility Allowances would be calculated based on the ratios set out below:

Position	Calculation
Leader of Council (1)	250% of the Basic Allowance
Chairman of Council (1)	30% of the Leader's Allowance
Vice-Chairman of Council (1)	20% of the Chairman's Allowance
Deputy Leader (1)	60% of the Leader's Allowance
Executive Members (8)	50% of the Leader's Allowance

Position	Calculation
Chairman of Planning Committee (2)	25% of the Leader's Allowance
Chairman of any Scrutiny Committee(3)	25% of the Leader's Allowance
Chairman of Licensing Committee (1)	15% of the Leader's Allowance
Chairman of Governance Committee (1)	15% of the Leader's Allowance
Chairman of Personnel Committee (1)	15% of the Leader's Allowance
Leader of the Opposition (1)	40% of the Leader's Allowance
Opposition Spokespersons (up to 4 but in proportion to the number of allowances paid to the Administration)	30% of the Leader of the Opposition's Allowance
Leader(s) of Minority Group(s) if have 2 or more Group Members	10% of the Leader's Allowance