

SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

2009/2010

1. Introduction

1.1 This scheme was prepared in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

1.2 The scheme was reviewed by an Independent Remuneration Panel in November 2008 and its recommendations were approved by the Council at its meeting on 18 February 2009. The allowances set out below take effect from 1 April 2009.

The Panel reviews the Scheme of Members' Allowances on an annual basis.

1.3 Terms

- 'Councillor' - means elected member of Mendip District Council.
- 'year' - means the financial year ending 31 March.
- 'co-optee' - means a member of a council committee or sub-committee who is not an elected member (eg independent and parish members of the Standards Committee).
- 'the Regulations' - means the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

1.4 The scheme covers the following allowances:

- a) Basic Allowance to be paid to all members.
- b) Special Responsibility Allowances to be paid to the holders of certain offices.
- c) Travel and Subsistence Allowances.
- d) Dependants' Carers' Allowance.
- e) Co-optee's Allowance to be paid to non-elected members of the Council's committees or sub-committees.

1.5 The Council may withhold payment or require repayment of any part of an allowance already made in respect of any period during which a Councillor:

- is suspended or partially suspended as a member of the Council.
- ceases to be a member of the Council.
- is in any other way not entitled to receive the allowance.

1.6 Where a Councillor is also a member of another authority, that Councillor may not receive allowances from more than one authority in respect of the same duties.

1.7 A Councillor or co-optee may, by writing to the Chief Executive, elect to forgo their entitlement or any part of their entitlement to allowances.

2. Basic Allowance

2.1 All Councillors are entitled to receive a Basic Allowance of £3,605 per year. It is intended to recognise the time commitment made by all Councillors, and the incidental costs incurred by them, such as the use of their homes, telephone and postage costs and purchase of stationery and computer sundries. It also includes a notional amount of £100 for broadband connection.

3. Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA)

3.1 SRAs are paid over and above the Basic Allowance. They recognise the additional responsibilities which some Councillors take on in addition to their local role. They are payable to the following:

Role	Rate/annum £
Leader of the Council	10,000
Portfolio Holders	4,000
Deputy Leader of the Council	4,000
Chairman of the Planning Board	4,000
Chairman of the Licensing Board	4,000
Chairman of the Council	4,000
Chairman of the Scrutiny Board	4,000
Chairman of a Community Partnership	2,000
Vice-Chairman of the Council	2,000
Vice-Chairman of the Planning Board	2,000
Chairman of the Audit Committee	2,000
Leader of Political Groups in Opposition with 5 or more members	150 /Group Member

Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) (cont'd)

- 3.2 Members who hold two or more positions of Special Responsibility are entitled to claim 50% of the second and subsequent SRAs.
- 3.3 Where the period of entitlement to an SRA is less than the whole year, the entitlement to the payment is proportional to the number of days served in the relevant office.

4. Dependants' Carers Allowance

- 4.1 Councillors may claim allowances towards the cost of providing care for children or dependants where such care is necessary to allow him or her to attend meetings or carry out Council duties (as listed in Paragraph 7(1) of the Regulations).
- 4.2 The costs actually incurred will be reimbursed, subject to a maximum hourly rate equivalent to the current minimum wage. However, in the case of specialist care being required by a Registered Carer, then delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive and the Corporate Finance Advisor to agree the amount that should be reimbursed. Receipts are required.

5. Travel and Subsistence Allowance

- 5.1 Councillors may claim travel and subsistence expenses incurred in respect of attending meetings or carrying out Council duties (as listed in Paragraph 8(1) of the Regulations).

5.2 Travel

Travel expenses will be paid as follows:

Type of Expense	Rate
Travel by car irrespective of cc	40p/mile (this figure is currently in line with Inland Revenue limits)
Travel by railway or other public transport and car parking	Reimbursed at actual cost. Receipts are required.

5.3 Subsistence

Subsistence expenses will be paid up to the following maximum limits:

Type of Subsistence	Rate
Breakfast – payable when a member is further than 3 miles from home before 7 am	£5.76
Lunch – payable where a member is further than 3 miles from home for more than 4 hours including the period between 12 noon and 2.00 pm	£7.89
Tea – payable when a member is further than 3 miles from home for more than 4 hours including the period 3.00 pm to 6.00 pm	£3.10
Evening Meal – payable when a member is further than 3 miles from home for more than 4 hours ending after 7.00 pm	£9.71
Overnight stay outside London	£92.72
Overnight stay in London	£105.64
Other Overnight stays – payable when a member attends an annual conference of a nationally recognised local government organisation	£105.64

5.4 Approved Duties

Travel and Subsistence allowances may be paid when a Councillor is performing an approved duty as specified in Paragraph 8(1) of the Regulations. In summary, these are:

- Attending a meeting of the Cabinet or any Cabinet committee, or of a Committee, Board, or Sub-Committee of the Council (including joint committees)
- Attending a meeting of some other body to which the Council makes appointments or nominations, or a committee or sub-committee of such a body
- Attending a meeting which has been authorised by the Council or any Council body (including a joint committee), provided members of at least two political groups are invited
- A meeting of any local authority association of which the Council is a Member
- When attending the opening of tender documents
- When inspecting premises on behalf of the Council

In addition of this list of duties, the Chief Executive has delegated power to approve specific duties eligible for travel and subsistence allowances.

6. Co-optee's Allowance

- 6.1 Any co-opted member who is appointed Chairman of the Standards Committee will be entitled to an allowance of £2,700 per year.
- 6.2 An allowance of £800 per year will be paid to the other co-opted members of the Standards Committee and the Audit Committee.
- 6.3 Co-optees will be entitled to claim travel and subsistence allowances on the same basis as councillors.

7. Pensions

- In accordance with the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel:
- all councillors are entitled to join the Local Government Pension Scheme; and
 - all Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances may be treated as amounts in respect of which pensions would be payable under that Scheme.

8. Payment of Allowances

Basic, Special Responsibility and Co-optees' Allowances will be paid on a pro rata basis each month. Payments will be made directly into the recipient bank account on the 28th day of the month or nearest weekday prior to that date should it fall at a weekend.

Travel, Subsistence and Dependents' Carers' Allowances will also be paid monthly. The relevant claims must be returned to Committee Services by the 7th of each month for inclusion in the following payroll.