

# SECTION 14 WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2023

## 1. ENQUIRIES

- 1.1 Enquires about allowances may be addressed to the Governance Services Manager (democracy@welhat.gov.uk).

## 2. BASIC ALLOWANCE

- 2.1. Basic allowance is payable at a flat rate to all elected Members of the Council.
- 2.2. If a councillor is elected to or leaves the Council during the year, basic allowance will be paid pro-rata for the proportion of the year during which the councillor has been a serving Member of the Council.
- 2.3. The basic salary for 2023/24 is £6,112.90

## 3. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE (SRA)

- 3.1. The Council has authorised the following payments in addition to Members' basic allowance:

	<b>Per Annum £</b>
Leader of the Council	13,772.56
Deputy Leader	11,477.97
Cabinet Member	11,003.22
Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees	4,279.03
Chairman of Development Management Committee	6,112.90
Chairman of Cabinet Panel	4,279.03
Chairman of Audit Committee	4,279.03
Chairman of Licensing Committee	4,279.03
Leader of First Opposition Group	8,630.85
Chairman of Standards Committee	4,279.03
Mayor	£7,335.48
Deputy Mayor	£3,667.74

- 3.2. The Mayor's allowance will be paid in two equal instalments, in June and December each year. The Deputy Mayor's allowance will be paid in a single payment in June each year

3.3. Where a councillor holds more than one office of special responsibility he or she will receive only one SRA and this will be the higher or highest of the allowances due.

3.4. If a councillor is appointed to or relinquishes a post of special responsibility during the year, special responsibility allowance will be paid pro-rata for the proportion of the year during which the office is held.

#### **4. Employment Protection**

4.1 Councillors do not have the same employment protection rights that are afforded to officers of the Council because councillors are not employees but are elected officials holding public office.

#### **5. SIX MONTH RULE**

5.1 Any Member who takes any form of leave retains their legal duty under the Local Government Act 1972 to attend a meeting of the Council within a six month period unless the Council Meeting agrees to an extended leave of absence prior to the expiration of that six-month period.

#### **6. CARE ALLOWANCE**

6.1 This allowance may be claimed against the cost of child (up to age of 14 years) or dependent adult care that a Member may incur whilst they are on official duties defined as attendance at evening meetings of the Council, Committees (to include Cabinet, Committees, Panels and Boards) and Outside Bodies where the Member is the Council's appointed representative.

6.2 The following rates may be claimed:- Childcare - Maximum of £8.21 per hour  
Dependent Care – Maximum of £12.40 per hour

6.3 A maximum of 20 hours per month may be claimed. Claims must be supported by a valid receipt. Payments to other members of the household will be excluded. Claims should be made to the Governance Services Manager monthly on the official claim form provided.

#### **7. TRAVELLING EXPENSES**

7.1. Travelling expenses are payable to councillors and co-opted Members for the following approved duties:

- (a) Attendance by any Member at meetings of the Council, the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- (b) Attendance at meetings of the Council's committees and panels by Members of the Committee or appointed substitutes.
- (c) Attendance at meetings of any working party or sub-group arranged by the Council, Cabinet or committees, to which the Member is appointed.
- (d) Attendance by the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council or by the leader of the Opposition at any of the above meetings.
- (e) Attendance by Members of the Cabinet at any meeting.

- (f) Attendance by the Chairman of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee at meetings relating to the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- (g) Public meetings authorised by the Council if Members are requested to attend.
- (h) Attendance by Members at officer meetings, for example best value meetings.
- (i) Any joint meetings between this authority and other authorities or public bodies.
- (j) Councillors' surgeries.
- (k) Any other meeting or event, such as local public meetings, where Members are required to attend.
- (l) Any conference, site visit or official visit provided attendance has the Council's prior approval.
- (m) Site visits by the Chairman and Opposition Lead Member of the Development Management Committee and Chairmen of Licensing Sub-Committees to sites of planning or licensing applications due to be heard by the Committee or Sub-Committee.
- (n) Individual site visits by members of the Development Management Committee to sites of applications due to be heard by the Committee, up to a maximum of 15 miles per meeting, the site location(s) to be stated on the claim form.
- (o) Official group meetings.
- (p) Members' training sessions
- (q) Civic functions carried out by the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition.
- (r) Meetings of national, regional and local outside organisations to which a Member has been appointed as this Council's representative, as set out in Appendix A to the scheme of Councillors' Allowances.
- (s) Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and Opposition Lead Members may also claim travel expenses for up to two briefing meetings prior to Cabinet and Committees and up to two meetings per week with Chief Officers.
- (t) The Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition may claim travel expenses for all reasonable journeys on legitimate Council business, including briefings with the Chief Executive and other Chief and Senior Officers.
- (u) Non office holding Members of the Council may claim travel allowances for attending up to two meetings per week with Officers on Council business within the Borough.
- (v) Members of the Council may claim travel expenses for one-off, occasional duties, for example, where the Chairman of a Committee is required to attend a subsequent appeal or court hearing, subject to the prior approval of the Governance Services Manager. A form to seek

approval may be obtained from the committee section.

7.2. The current allowances payable are as follows Member's own private motor vehicle

45 pence per mile

Member's own solo motor cycle

Up to 125cc	20.44 pence per mile
Over 125cc	31.99 pence per

mile Travel by bicycle 15p per mile

Travel by public transport

The actual cost of bus or second class rail fair for journeys within the Borough.

7.3. Travelling expenses will normally be payable:-  
(a) From a Member's home address if within or just outside the Borough or;  
(b) From a Member's work place if within the Borough or;  
(c) From an alternative starting point (e.g. the Borough boundary) if less than (a)

7.4. In cases of urgency where no public transport is reasonably available, the actual fare for a taxicab is payable. A receipt should be obtained.

7.5. For journeys outside the Borough, car allowance or standard rail fare or low cost air fare will be paid, whichever is the lower. Reimbursement of low cost air fares for journeys outside the Borough, will be subject to the prior approval of the Governance Services Manager and will be on condition that the total cost of the air fare and travel to the airport is lower than the cost of mileage allowance or standard rail fare.

7.6. In the case of attendance at two meetings in one day at the same venue, with the second meeting immediately following the first, travel expenses should only be claimed for one meeting.

## **8. SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE**

8.1. Subsistence Allowance is payable for absence from home of more than four hours because of attendance at conferences and meetings outside the Borough.

8.2. The Council will reimburse the actual reasonable cost of accommodation or of meals or refreshments taken.

8.3. In the event of overnight absences at conferences etc, bookings should be made at medium range hotels and arrangements made for the Council to be invoiced directly for the actual, reasonable cost of accommodation and meals taken.

## **9. CLAIMS AND PAYMENTS**

- 9.1. Basic allowance and special responsibility allowance will be paid monthly in arrears. Bank accounts will normally be credited by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month.
- 9.2. Claims for travel and subsistence allowances should be made monthly on the official claim form. (see Appendix C) Travel expenses claim forms submitted by the 24<sup>th</sup> of the month will be processed for payment at the next payment date. Any forms received after the 24<sup>th</sup> will be held over for processing the following month. Any receipts for subsistence allowances must be enclosed with the claim form. An original VAT petrol receipt dated during the period of the claim must be provided. Members are asked to ensure that claims are made within two months of the date of the journey to which they relate.
- 9.3. Claims may also be made by email. Details of the procedure to be followed are attached at appendix D.
- 9.4. Payment will be direct to Members' own bank or building society account, unless written instructions have been given otherwise. Details of the bank account number should be given to the Governance Services Manager, using the questionnaire provided at Appendix B.
- 9.5. Governance Services should be informed immediately if any of this information changes, using the copy of the questionnaire provided at Appendix B.

## **10. TAXATION**

- 10.1. Basic allowance and special responsibility allowance are subject to income tax and national insurance contributions which are deducted at source.
- 10.2. Subsistence allowance and travelling expenses are taxable, but the tax is not deducted at source and any expenses payments should be included in income tax returns.
- 10.3. Any Member over state retirement age and therefore not liable to pay national insurance contributions may apply for a certificate of age exemption from the Inland Revenue. An application form is available from the Committee Section.

## **11. STATE BENEFITS**

- 11.1. Entitlement to allowances should be declared in any application for job seekers allowance, housing and council tax benefit and other means tested benefits.

## **12. PUBLICATION**

- 12.1. The Council keeps a record of allowances paid to Councillors, which is open to inspection by any local government elector.
- 12.2. Councils are required to make arrangements for the publication of any Members' allowance scheme and, at the end of each financial year, for the publication of the total amount of each allowance paid to each Member.

### **13. RENUNCIATION**

- 13.1. A Member may forgo all or any part of any of the allowances to which he or she is entitled. Notice of such renunciation should be given to the Governance Services Manager in writing.

### **14. WITHDRAWAL OF ALLOWANCES**

- 12.1 Where a Member is suspended from their duties, their allowance entitlement will be withdrawn and any allowance overpaid should be repaid.