

PART 6

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME

1. Background

Councillors are entitled to receive a range of allowances for their Council duties. The allowances to be paid are reviewed annually after taking account of recommendations made by an Independent Remuneration Panel appointed by the Council.

The Council has approved payment of the allowances set out in Schedule 1 below. For further details please refer to the Council's website www.uttlesford.gov.uk

1.1 Basic Allowance

This is the same amount for all members. It takes account of activities such as Council and committee meetings, all work undertaken as a ward member including dealing with constituents and attending parish council meetings, representing the Council on outside bodies to which the member has been appointed, relevant political activity and other incidental costs incurred such as postage, stationery and telephone calls.

1.2 Special Responsibility Allowance

This may be paid to certain councillors, in addition to the basic allowance, who have special responsibility in relation to the Council. Only one SRA is payable to a member at any one time, except for group leaders where they may claim a maximum of one other. Where a Councillor holds more than one of the positions attracting a Special Responsibility Allowance as specified in Schedule 1, he or she will only be entitled to receive one such allowance. The sum to be paid will be the highest eligible allowance.

1.3 Travelling and Subsistence

A councillor may claim the cost of getting to and from any activity defined as an approved duty in Schedule 3, as well as any relevant subsistence for being away from home or work for a certain period of time in connection with that duty. Appropriate receipts must be provided for the purchase of fuel before a claim can be approved. Refer to Schedule 2 for details of the travel and subsistence scheme in operation.

1.4 Carers Allowance

Carers allowance is payable where expenditure is exclusively incurred in arranging for care of children or dependant relatives. Appropriate receipts must be provided before a claim can be approved.

2. Remuneration Panel

Since April 2002 the Council has been required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to make annual recommendations as to the level of the Basic Allowance and the type and level of Special Responsibility Allowance. Since 31 December 2003 the role of the Panel has been extended to make recommendations on travelling and subsistence.

Before voting on the level of allowance, the Council must consider the recommendations of the Panel.

3. Submission of Claims

Members are asked to claim on a monthly basis (required for forwarding to Bedford Borough Council by the 3rd of the month) and to submit them to the Committee and Electoral Services Manager on behalf of the Chief Executive.

4. Option to Forgo

A councillor may elect to forgo any part of his or her entitlement to an allowance under the scheme by giving notice in writing to the Chief Executive.

5. Part-Year Entitlement

If the term of office or duties undertaken by a councillor begin or end part-way through a municipal year, or if amendment of the scheme during a municipal year changes the amount to which a councillor is entitled, then calculation of the allowance payable shall be on a pro-rata basis.

6. Suspension of a Member

Where a member is suspended by the Standards Committee or the First Tier Tribunal – Local Government Standards in England in whole or part, the member's allowance, or in the case of a partial suspension a proportion thereof, shall be suspended.

7. Absence of Committee Chairmen

In the case of the extended absence of a committee Chairman from Council duties (three months or more) then the relevant Vice-Chairman shall be remunerated on a pro-rata basis as if the Chairman until such time as the Chairman returns to his/her duties.

8. Local Government Pension Scheme

Please refer to Schedule 4 for further advice about the eligibility of members to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

9. Interpretation of Rules

The Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Performance and Audit Committee is authorised to deal with any matters arising out of the interpretation of these rules.

SCHEDULE 1

LEVEL OF ALLOWANCES 2010/11

1. Basic Allowance

The basic allowance is set at £5,020 per annum and is payable to all members regardless of whether they also receive a Special Responsibility Allowance.

This is linked to the Local Government Association's national median wage and is reviewed annually. The 2010/11 allowance is notionally 65 days at £77.23 per day. A 35 per cent public service discount is applied to the calculation. However, the value of the basic allowance actually paid has declined relative to the LGA's daily rate over a period of time. The basic allowance has been frozen for two successive years in recognition of the Council's difficult financial position.

Note: The basic allowance will be raised by a maximum of 1 per cent in line with any award made to local government staff effective from 1 April 2010, and all other allowances will be raised in proportion to that increase. The local government pay award is decided at national level. As at June 2010 no award has been made and there are no offers under discussion.

2. Special Responsibility and Other Allowances

Chairman of the Council	£4,016 + (civic expenses)
Vice-Chairman of the Council	£2,008
Leader of the Council	£7,530
Deputy Leader of the Council	£3,765
Members of the Executive	
Chairmen of committees	£3,765
Chairmen of Area Forums	£2,008
Chairman of Standards Committee	£3,765
Group Leaders	Either £1,055 pa or £114 x group membership (subject to a minimum group size of two members) whichever is the greater
Members of Development Control Committee	£386

Independent and town and parish representatives on the Standards Committee	£500
Carers Allowance	£10 ph

Chairman of the Council – 80 per cent of the basic allowance
 Vice Chairman of the Council – 40 per cent of the basic allowance
 Leader of the Council – 150 per cent of the basic allowance
 Deputy Leader of the Council – 75 per cent of the basic allowance
 Chairmen of committees – 75 per cent of the basic allowance
 Chairmen of Area Forums – 40 per cent of the basic allowance
 Chairman of the Standards Committee – 75 per cent of the basic allowance
 Group leaders – as listed in the table above
 Members of the Development Control Committee – five days at the current daily rate used to calculate the basic allowance (currently £77.23)
 Independent and town and parish members of the Standards Committee – benchmarked against the payment made to members of the Independent Remuneration Panel – currently £500: this payment is reviewed by the Council from time-to-time

SCHEDULE 2

TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTANCE RATES FROM 1 FEBRUARY 2004

1. Mileage Rates

The applicable rates will be set at Inland Revenue approved rates

	Rate per mile
Cars and vans (applicable to all engine sizes)	40p (up to 10,000 miles pa)
Each passenger making same business trip	5p
Motorcycles	24p
Pedal cycles	20p

2. Public Transport

Reimbursement of public transport fares (second class) supported by appropriate receipts.

3. Car Parking

Reasonable car parking charges will be reimbursed upon the provision of relevant receipts.

4. Subsistence

Reimbursement will be made of actual reasonable expenditure supported by receipts covering breakfast, lunch, tea and evening meal, where appropriate when on Council business in accordance with the definition of approved duty.

5. Overnight Stays

Where overnight accommodation is required in carrying out an approved duty, reimbursement of the actual costs of hotel accommodation and/or evening meals, subject to the amounts being reasonable and supported by receipts.

£21 for each completed 24 hours where an overnight stay is required to cover out-of-pocket expenses.

SCHEDULE 3

APPROVED DUTIES

Travelling and subsistence are payable for approved duties as follows and must be specified on the claim form.

1. Attendance at meetings of the Council, the executive, committees, Sub-Committees, Area Forums, Task Groups and Working Groups of which the councillor is a member, or has been invited to attend by the Chairman.
2. Attendance at site inspections and similar ad hoc visits and meetings authorised by the Council and any of its committees.
3. Attendance by Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen at briefings.
4. Meetings of an external organisation, or its associated committees where the member is appointed as a representative of the Council. (Where an outside body has its own allowance or expenses scheme, a member may not submit a claim for the same item to both the Council and the outside body.)
5. Authorised training courses and workshops.
6. Conferences, which the member has been appointed to attend.
7. Formal meetings with other local authorities and attendance at relevant parish council meetings (for example for parishes included within the members' own ward).
8. Meetings with Council officers on official business.
9. Attendance at opening ceremonies in respect of Council-provided facilities.

MEMBERS' PENSION RIGHTS

The Council decided on 14 December 2004 that all members should be entitled to membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). That remains the position and any member under the age of 75 may apply at any time to join the scheme.

At that time, the Independent Remuneration Panel noted that the LGPS had been amended so that the basic and special responsibility allowances paid to local authority members could be treated as pensionable. The IRP considered that as the scheme was now available to Members it did not seem equitable that they should be denied access. The IRP recommended accordingly and, as noted above, the Council accepted that recommendation.

There is insufficient expertise at Uttlesford to answer any detailed questions about the operation of the scheme and whether it would provide a benefit in individual cases but any member wishing to find out more is invited to ring the County Council's advice line on 01245 431912.

In addition, the following links are available to the relevant member introductory leaflet and full scheme guide on the Local Government Employers' website:

www.lge.gov.uk/lge/aio/1244826

www.lge.gov.uk/lge/aio/1244820