



**Watford Borough Council
Members Allowances Scheme**
(Scheme from 1st April 2022)

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Introduction

The Borough Council is required by law to adopt and publish a scheme of allowances following consideration of recommendations made by an independent panel.

Watford Borough Council's Independent Remuneration Panel has been in existence since 2000; originally meeting on an annual basis, which later moved to a quadrennial review from 2013. In 2021 it carried out the latest quadrennial review. The scheme, as set out below, is for the year until 31 March 2026 and reflects the amounts agreed at Council plus any subsequent increases as set out in the scheme. (see Appendix 1.)

The scheme has been updated following the agreement of the local government pay settlement for 2022/23 and subsequent pay settlements.

1. Basic Allowance

This allowance is paid to all councillors (except the directly elected Mayor).

The basic allowance is intended to compensate councillors for the time and effort spent attending committee meetings, carrying out ward representation work, costs incurred on telephone calls, postage, stationery, travel within the Borough, caring for dependents and for occasions where they may be required to use annual leave/flexi to take time off from their regular employment.

On 30 January 2018, in accordance with the recommendation from the Independent Members Remuneration Panel, Council agreed that with effect from April 2019 the Basic Allowance should be linked to local government pay settlements and increased accordingly. At Council on 24 January 2022 it was agreed that this should continue, as recommended by the Panel.

1.1. Payment dates

- 1.1.1. For a councillor elected to office following a Local Government election, payments will be dated from the fourth day after the date of the election or the date of making the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, whichever is later.

- 1.1.2. For a councillor elected to office at any other time, payment will be from the date of making the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
- 1.1.3. Payments of allowances and expenses are made to councillors on 15th of each month. If the 15th falls on a non-working day payment will be made on the nearest working day prior to the 15th. Payment will be made in instalments of one-twelfth of the annual amount due.
- 1.1.4. If a councillor holds office for less than a full calendar month a pro rata payment will be made.

1.2. Renunciation

- 1.2.1. A councillor may, by giving notice in writing to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer, elect to forego the whole or part of an entitlement to a Basic allowance under this Scheme

Where such a declaration is made, it remains in force until a further notice in writing is given to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer to withdraw it.

1.3. Overpayment

- 1.3.1. If a councillor leaves office before the end of their term and an overpayment has been made, the councillor will receive a letter from the Monitoring Officer requiring them to pay the money back to the council.

1.4. Withholding of Allowance

- 1.4.1. In accordance with The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003: "That where a member is suspended or partially suspended from his responsibilities or duties as a member for an authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under that Part, the part of the basic allowance payable to him in respect of the period for which he is suspended or partially suspended may be withheld by the authority".

2. Special Responsibility Allowance

Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) is paid to councillors with significant additional responsibilities. Where an individual holds more than one of the positions listed they will only receive the highest

allowance (apart from Group Leader allowance which is paid in addition.)

On 30 January 2018, in accordance with the recommendation from the Independent Members Remuneration Panel, Council agreed that with effect from April 2019 SRAs should be linked to local government pay settlements and increased accordingly. At Council on 24 January 2022, it was agreed that this should continue, as recommended by the Panel.

2.1. Offices and roles

Portfolio Holder
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny
Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny
Chair of Finance Scrutiny
Chair of Development Management Committee
Chair of Licensing Committee
Cabinet Member Without Portfolio
Chair of Audit Committee
Chair of Council Functions Committee (pro rata)
Chair of Chief Officer Pay Panel (pro rata)
Group leaders

2.2. Dates from when the SRA will take effect:

- 2.2.1. Portfolio Holder and Cabinet member without portfolio – from the date the Monitoring Officer is formally notified by the Elected Mayor of the names of Portfolio Holders.
- 2.2.2. Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny, Finance Scrutiny and Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny – from when they are appointed Chair/Vice Chair at Annual Council.
- 2.2.3. Chair of Development Management Committee or Licensing Committee – from when they are appointed Chair at Annual Council.
- 2.2.4. Chair of Audit Committee – from when they are appointed at Annual Council.
- 2.2.5. Chair of the Chief Officer Pay Panel – for the month in which the Panel meets and any subsequent months as necessary.

2.2.6. Chair of Council Functions Committee – for the month in which the committee meets and any subsequent months as necessary.

2.2.7. Group Leaders – from notification of the Group at Annual Council.

2.3. Renunciation of Special Responsibility Allowances

A councillor may, by giving notice in writing to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer elect to forego the whole or part of an entitlement to a Special Responsibility Allowance under this Scheme.

Where such a declaration is made, it remains in force until a further notice is given in writing to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer to withdraw it.

2.4. Payment arrangements

2.4.1. Payments of SRAs will be made with basic allowance.

2.4.2. Payments of SRAs are made in 12 instalments, unless it is a pro-rata payment.

2.5. Overpayment

2.5.1. If an overpayment is made of the SRA, it will be recovered either through a deduction from the basic allowance payment until the overpayment is recovered in full or in the event that deduction from the basic allowance not being sufficient to recover the overpayment the councillor will receive a letter from the Monitoring Officer requiring them to pay the money back to the council.

2.6. Withholding of Allowance

2.6.1. In accordance with The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003: "That where a member is suspended or partially suspended from his responsibilities or duties as a member of an authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under that Part, the part of the special responsibility allowance payable to him in respect of the responsibility or duties period from which he is suspended or partially suspended may be withheld by the authority".

3. Elected Mayor's Salary

- 3.1 The Elected Mayor's salary (as at April 2022) is £73,607, with an annual travel allowance of £700. This has been amended following subsequent local government pay awards. (See Appendix 1)
- 3.2 On 30 January 2018, in accordance with the recommendation from the Independent Members Remuneration Panel, Council agreed that with effect from April 2019 the Elected Mayor's salary should be linked to local government pay settlements and increased accordingly. At Council on 24 January 2022 it was agreed that this should continue, as recommended by the Panel.
- 3.3 There is a contribution for pension payments added to the salary, equivalent to the employer's pension contributions made in the local government pension scheme.

4. Travel and Subsistence

4.1. Basis for Payment

Travel and subsistence is payable for meetings, training and conferences which a councillor is attending as part of their responsibilities or because they have been nominated/appointed by the council. Travel allowance is only payable where the event takes place outside the Borough of Watford. Subsistence allowance is only payable where meals are not provided. In accordance with the recommendation from the Independent Members Remuneration Panel, Council agreed that the rates remain the same as those officers can claim.

4.2. Allowances which may be claimed

4.2.1. Travel

Car mileage, motorcycle and bicycle allowances rates are shown in appendix 1.

- 4.2.2. The Elected Mayor will receive an annual travel allowance of £700. For the avoidance of doubt no mileage may be claimed from home to the Town Hall and back. Mileage may be claimed within the Borough due to recognition of the number of engagements the Mayor attends. Records will be maintained of the Elected Mayor's travel during the

year in order to ensure the level of allowance is correct and to answer any Freedom of Information Act requests. The Elected Mayor may claim subsistence separately under the conditions set out below.

- 4.2.3. Second class rail fare may be claimed plus charges for seat reservations on production of receipts. If payment is made directly by the council on behalf of the councillor no separate allowance is payable.
- 4.2.4. Other public transport services can be claimed on production of receipts.
- 4.2.5. Taxis should only be used when no other option is available and with accompanying receipts.
- 4.2.6. Air travel will be considered if it is cheaper or the time saving considerable. It should be booked through the Democratic Services Manager.
- 4.2.7. **Subsistence**

Councillors can claim daytime or overnight subsistence where it has not already been paid for by the council or is not provided by the event/meeting organisers. Councillors may claim up to the maximum amounts listed in Appendix 1 on production of receipts for the time periods set out below. For the avoidance of doubt, should the submitted receipt total less than the maximum payment allowed under the scheme, the councillor will only receive reimbursement to the value of the receipt.

- 4.2.8. Breakfast allowance – payable where the Member is absent from home for more than 4 hours before 11am.
- 4.2.9. Lunch allowance – payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours including the lunchtime period between 12 noon and 2pm.
- 4.2.10. Tea allowance – payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours including the period 3-6pm.
- 4.2.11. Evening meal allowance – payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours ending after 7pm.

4.2.12. Overnight accommodation if necessary and not already paid for by the council.

4.2.13. Meals on trains – where main meals (i.e., breakfast, lunch or dinner) are taken on trains during a period for which there is an entitlement to a day subsistence allowance, the reasonable cost of the meal may be reimbursed in full.

4.3. Submission of claims

4.3.1. Claims for travel and subsistence must be made within **1 month** of the duty being undertaken, if possible by the end of the financial year if the claim period crosses the end of March.

4.3.2. Payment outside that period can only be made if there are exceptional circumstances which prevented the claim being submitted within the required time limit.

4.3.3. Claims must be made through iTrent which is accessible through the Members Portal and should be supported by receipts (where appropriate). **If a valid receipt is not provided payment of the claim will not be met.**

4.3.4. Travel and subsistence claims will be paid through payroll.

4.3.5. A public record is available for all claims and the totals claimed by each Member are published annually on the council's website.

4.4. Overpayment

4.4.1. If an overpayment occurs this will be deducted from the next expenses claim the councillor makes or from the councillor's allowance.

5. Co-optees

5.1. Roles

A Co-optee will be paid an annual allowance (set out in Appendix 1) for serving in the following roles:

5.1.1. Independent Member

5.1.2. Independent Member of the Independent Members Remuneration Panel. The Chair of the Independent Members Remuneration Panel receives a higher annual payment in recognition of additional responsibility to produce the final report on behalf of the Panel.

5.2. Payment date

5.2.1. Independent member co-optees will be paid at the end of the financial year.

5.2.2. Co-optees on the Independent Members Remuneration Panel will be paid on production of the final report. It will cover a four-year period, as a retainer between quadrennial reviews.

5.2.3. The allowance will be paid in 1 instalment.

5.3. Renunciation

A Co-Optee may, by giving notice in writing to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer, elect to forego the whole or part of an entitlement to a Co-Optee's Allowance under this Scheme.

Where such a declaration is made, it remains in force until a further notice in writing is given to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer to withdraw it.

5.4. Withholding of allowance

5.4.1. In accordance with The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003: "That where a member is suspended or partially suspended from his responsibilities or duties as a member of an authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under that Part, any co-optees' allowance payable to him in respect of the responsibilities or duties from which he is suspended or partially suspended may be withheld by the authority".

6. Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council

6.1. The allowance for the Chairman and Vice Chairman is paid directly to the councillor and is intended to be used to purchase clothes (if

necessary), stock for the Chairman's Parlour, the purchase of raffle tickets and tickets to events etc. when attending official engagements.

- 6.2. The allowance is paid annually following the election of Chairman and Vice Chairman at Annual Council.

7. Communications Allowance

- 7.1. All councillors will receive a communications allowance, paid in 12 monthly instalments, towards their line rental and broadband costs.
- 7.2. As with other allowances they may elect to forego the allowance by notifying the Monitoring Officer or Chief Executive in writing. Where such a declaration is made, it remains in force until a further notice in writing is given to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer to withdraw it.

8. Dependants' Carers' Allowance

An allowance can be paid to elected members who incur expenditure for the care of children or dependants whilst undertaking approved duties. Payments are based on the National Minimum Wage.

The sums claimed must not exceed the actual sum paid up to maximum hourly amounts set out below.

The carer must be at least 16 years old. The carer cannot be related to the member who is making the claim. The Monitoring Officer can exercise discretion if there are exceptional circumstances.

All claims must be submitted in writing to the Democratic Services Manager and accompanied with receipts.

Childcare

Dependants' Carers' Allowance up to a maximum hourly rate according to the National Minimum Wage (as at April 2023) dependent upon the age of the carer;

- 16-17- £5.28 per hour
- 18 – 20 - £7.49 per hour
- 21-22 - £10.18 per hour
- 23 and over - £10.42 per hour

Adult Care

Dependants' Carers' Allowance up to a maximum hourly rate of £15 per hour.

Appendix 1

Members Allowance Rates from 1 April 2024
(Following local government pay award for 2024/25
Based on 3.2% increase for Basic allowance, Mayor's remuneration and
Special Responsibility Allowances)

1. Basic Allowance

£8,711 per annum (band 1)

2. Special Responsibility Allowances

Role	Band	Basic	SRA	Total
Portfolio Holder	2.5	£8,711	£12,495	£21,206
Chairs of Scrutiny Chairs of Development Management & Licensing Chair of Audit Committee	2a	£8,711	£9,162	£17,873
Cabinet Member without portfolio Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Chair of Functions (pro rata) Chair of Chief Officer Pay Panel (pro rata)	2	£8,711	£3,332	£12,043
Group leaders				£116 p.a. per group member

3. Co-optees' Allowances

£200 per annum

£300 per annum for Chair of Independent Members Remuneration
Panel

4. Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council

£4,500 Chairman of the Council

£1,500 Vice Chairman of the Council

5. Elected Mayor

The Elected Mayor's salary is £79,450, plus an annual travel allowance
of £700. There is a contribution for pension payments added to the

salary, equivalent to the employer's pension contributions made in the local government pension scheme.

6. Travel allowances

With receipts where applicable

Rail	2nd class fare plus charges for seat reservations	Actual Cost
Public services	Normal fare	Actual Cost
Taxis	To be used when no other option is available	Actual Cost
	Per mile	
Motor cycle		TBC
Motor vehicle (First 10,500 miles)		TBC
Cycle		20p

7. Subsistence rates

Members may claim **up to** the amount specified below for the time period away from home, if no meals or refreshments are provided at the meeting or event which the Member is attending or already included in any accommodation charges paid for by the council. All claims **must** be supported with receipts.

	Up to
Breakfast Allowance Payable where the Member is absent from home for more than 4 hours before 11am	£7.21
Lunch Allowance Payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours, including the lunchtime period between 12 noon and 2pm	£9.95
Tea Allowance Payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours including the period 3pm - 6pm	£3.94
Evening Meal Payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours ending after 7pm	£12.33
Overnight Accommodation To cover overnight accommodation	£105.05

Meals on Trains	
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Where main meals (i.e. breakfast, lunch or dinner) are taken on trains during a period for which there is an entitlement to a day subsistence allowance, the reasonable cost of the meal may be reimbursed in full.	
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8. Communications allowances

£12 per month

The scheme has been updated following a review by the Independent Members Remuneration Panel as a result of the agreement of the local government national pay negotiations for 2024. The Panel's recommendations were agreed by Council at its meeting on 28 January 2025.