

PART 6

Members' Allowance Scheme

Introduction

Local authorities can pay their Members an allowance and expenses in respect of the duties they undertake in their role as Councillor. When setting or reviewing the allowances the council is required to commission a report from a panel consisting of people who are not councillors and who are independent of the council. The panel is called an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and it produces a report containing recommendations as to the level and nature of allowances and expenses. The allowances are reviewed by the IRP on an annual basis to ensure that keep pace with the cost of living and any changes in the roles Councillors undertake.

Cheltenham Borough Council, in exercise of the powers conferred by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003 and having considered a report of its IRP dated November 2007, hereby makes the following scheme:

This scheme may be cited as the Cheltenham Borough Council Members' Allowances Scheme, and shall have effect for the year commencing on 01 April 2008. It was last amended by Council in March 2012.

In this scheme;

"Cabinet Member"	Means an elected Member who is a member of the Cabinet of Cheltenham Borough Council.
"the Council"	Means Cheltenham Borough Council.
"Councillor"	Means an elected Member of the Cheltenham Borough Council.
"Group Leader"	Means an elected Member appointed as such pursuant to the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.
"Leader of the Council"	Means the elected Member appointed by the Council as its Leader.
"Member"	Means a person elected or co-opted into membership of Cheltenham Borough Council
"Municipal Year"	Means the period between one annual general meeting of the Council and the next.

1. Allowances Paid to Councillors (Effective from 1 April 2011)

Each Councillor shall be paid a Basic Allowance of £5,066 per annum.

In addition to the payment of the Basic Allowance, Members undertaking special responsibilities shall be eligible for a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) as follows:

	Allowance	Annual
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	Description	Allowance
	Basic Allowances:	
	Constituency Member	£5,066.00
	Special Responsibility Allowances:	
	Leader of the Council	£16,428.00
	Cabinet Member	£12,930.00
	Chair of Planning Committee	£3,025.00
	Vice-Chair of Planning Committee	£1,512.00
	Chair of Licensing Committee	£1,361.00
	Chair of Overview & Scrutiny (from 14 May 2012)	£2,722.00
	Vice-Chair of Overview & Scrutiny (from 14 May 2012)	£1,361.00
	Chair of Standards Committee (from 1 July 2012)	£302
	Chair of Audit Committee	£454.00
	Group Leader	£605.00
	Mayor ¹ (Chair of Council)	£454.00

N.B. Only one SRA may be claimed by any one Member in respect of any period. Where a Member undertakes more than one special responsibility they are eligible for payment of the highest applicable SRA only.

2. Payment

The annual allowance payable to each Member shall be made in twelve equal instalments (as far as possible) paid on the 25th day of each month or thereabouts subject to compliance with the part year payment provisions set out below.

3. Renunciation

A Member may by notice in writing given to the Chief Executive elect to forego any part of his/her entitlement to allowances payable under this scheme.

4. Part-year Entitlements

If the term of office or duties undertaken by a Member begin or end part way through a Municipal Year, or amendment of the scheme during a Municipal Year changes the amount to which a Member is entitled, then calculation of the allowance payable shall be on a pro-rata basis having regard to the proportion that the term of office, period of duty or relevant periods of the scheme bear to the Municipal Year in which they occur.

¹ N.B The Mayor and Deputy Mayor also receive a payment in respect of expenses incurred in post as follows; Mayor £6,549, Deputy Mayor £1,310.

5. Suspension and Repayment of allowances

If a Member is suspended from acting as a Member of Cheltenham Borough Council, the Standards Committee may suspend in whole or part the allowances payable to that Member.

Where payment of any allowance has already been made in respect of any period during which a Member is:

- (a) suspended or partially suspended from acting as a Member;
- (b) ceases to be a member of the Council; or
- (c) is in any way not entitled to receive the allowance in respect of that period

the Council shall require the Member to repay the allowance.

6. Travel and Subsistence Payments

Payments covering travel costs shall be made to Councillors in respect of approved duties where those duties necessitate travel beyond the Cheltenham Borough Council boundaries. Duties which are approved comprise meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Panels, Committees and Sub-Committees, site inspections by Members of the Planning Committee and training courses for Councillors facilitated by the Council. Other duties may be approved pursuant to the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

- Car rates; - for all engine sizes the rate payable should be the same as the Inland Revenue car mileage rate for all miles travelled on approved duties to destinations outside the boundaries of the Administrative Borough of Cheltenham (5 miles radius from the Town Centre).

For the avoidance of doubt for the purpose of calculating rates;

- All journeys are deemed to start from home and total miles can be claimed from home to the destination and the return journey. Auto-route planners should be used to support mileage claims.
- Motorcycle Rates; - 24 pence a mile subject to the same conditions as for cars;
- Bicycle Rates: 20 pence a mile for approved duties outside of the Borough of Cheltenham;
- Public Transport – members are encouraged to make use of public transport where available. Actual expenditure incurred supported by receipts/tickets for approved duties outside of the Borough of Cheltenham (save that first class travel on trains is not permitted and members are encouraged to order their tickets in advance to get the best deals via the internet or by request to the relevant officer);
- All of the above is subject to compliance with the council's required audit procedures.

Subsistence payments are not available under this scheme.

7. Dependant Carers Allowance

A Councillor may claim and receive a DCA where he/she has incurred expenditure on engaging a carer for a dependant in order to attend designated meetings and/or carry out approved duties subject to the following;

For an allowance to be payable the person being cared for must live with the Councillor as part of the Councillor's family, is unable to be left unsupervised and is either;

- a child under 16 years of age, or
- an elderly person, or
- a person with a physical or mental disability, or
- a person with a learning disability

A carer (i.e. the person being paid to act as carer while the Councillor is carrying out Cheltenham Borough Council duties) shall be defined as someone who does not normally live with the Councillor as part of the Councillor's family and is not part of the Councillor's extended family.

Subject to the above, DCA shall be payable for the actual cost of providing care, with no maximum amount, subject to compliance with audit procedures put in place by the Council.

8. Voluntary Repayment of Allowance due to Absence

In the event that a Councillor attends less than two-thirds of the total number of scheduled meetings of Council or of Cabinet or of Committees of which he/she is a member, the Councillor concerned shall be invited to pay back an appropriate percentage of his/her basic allowance up to a maximum of 25% of the basic allowance.

In the event that a Member is absent from Council business for more than one continuous month (other than on grounds of ill-health) the member concerned should be invited to pay back a sum equivalent to the amount of basic and special responsibility allowances paid for any single period of absence which exceeds one month.

9. Review of Allowances

Once in every four years the IRP will undertake a full review of the scheme which will consider all aspects of provision.

In the intervening years the Democratic Services Manager will consult with the Chair of IRP in September each year, to review the need for the panel to meet.

- If there are no significant issues to review, then the recommendation to Council should be that all allowances should be increased by the %

increase in the median gross weekly earnings for the South West published in the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings in November each year.

- If there are significant issues then the panel be reconvened in September or October, to review the allowances and make any recommendations they feel appropriate.