Guide to Members' Allowances and Expenses

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Introduction

1 Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, Surrey County Council is required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel, consisting of three members of the Surrey public appointed by the council, who review the Scheme of Allowances and make recommendations.

2 This guide sets out the arrangements made by Surrey County Council for the payment of allowances and expenses for elected councillors and non-elected members serving on committees of the council.

Basic Allowance

3 A Basic Allowance of £14,880 per annum will be paid to each member of the council. The allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of all councillors, including calls on their time such as meetings with officers and constituents, attendance at political group meetings, and incidental costs such as the use of their homes.

4 The Basic Allowance is paid by equal monthly amounts via Payroll, there is no need for members to claim it.

5 The Basic Allowance is adjusted annually on 1 April in line with the Consumer Price Index from the previous September. This provision shall be reviewed by the Independent Remuneration Panel by no later than July 2028.

Special Responsibility Allowances

6 Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) are paid in addition to the Basic Allowance to those members of the council and independent representatives who hold roles which have significant additional responsibilities. The following SRAs are currently available:

ROLE	2025-26 ALLOWANCE £
Basic Allowance	14,880
Leader	51,420
Deputy Leader	33,330
Chair of the Council	21,550
Vice-Chair of the Council	7,800
Cabinet Member	26,920
Deputy Cabinet Member	11,960
Select Committee Chair	11,990
Select Committee Task Group Leads	1,810
Planning and Regulatory Committee Chair	14,380
Audit and Governance Chair	11,990
Surrey Pension Fund Committee Chair	11,990
Opposition Leaders	14,380 (total amount, divided between two

	posts proportionally)
Members of Adoption and Fostering Panels	140 per session attended plus travel expenses

7 If a member qualifies for a SRA for more than one post, only the allowance which is highest in value may be claimed. SRAs are paid by equal monthly amounts via Payroll - there is no need for members to make claims separately.

8 SRAs are adjusted annually on 1 April in line with the Consumer Price Index from the previous September. This provision shall be reviewed by the Independent Remuneration Panel by February 2027.

Co-optees' allowances

9 Co-opted members are additional to the required membership of a committee, but provision is made in the terms of reference of the committee for their appointment as they are persons with a particular interest or expertise in a committee's areas of work.

10 No co-optees' allowances are payable under the current Scheme, but co-opted members appointed to a committee or task group may claim travel expenses.

Approved Duties

11 Approved duties are those activities for which Members are entitled to claim travel and subsistence expenses. The list of approved duties is as follows:

(a) A meeting of the council, the Cabinet (or a Cabinet Member meeting), any committee, or any formally constituted task groups or panels appointed by the council, the Cabinet or any committees;

(b) Any other meeting (including, for example, a site visit or tour, or induction or training) convened by the council, the Cabinet or a committee, or convened by the Chair of the council, the Cabinet or committee acting on their behalf, provided that it is a meeting to which members of at least two political groups have been invited;

(c) Attendance by a Committee Chair, or Cabinet Member, at a meeting of any Task Group of the Cabinet or committee of which they are not a member;

(d) Attendance by a non-member of the Cabinet, a committee or task group in the following circumstances:
  (i) An item on the agenda in which they have a local interest and on which, with the Chair's consent, they would wish to speak;
  (ii) An Original Motion in their name which stands referred to the Cabinet or a committee under Standing Orders;
  (iii) An item on the agenda of which they have given notice under Standing Orders; or
  (iv) A question of which they have given notice under Standing Orders. And where advance notice has been given to the Democratic Services.

(e) Attendance by an individual or named group of members especially appointed by the Cabinet or a committee or task group to examine a particular problem or site or to meet

representatives of other organisations or individuals as part of an agreed programme of activity;

(f) Attendance by members at local briefing meetings at the invitation of an officer of the council, provided that members of at least two political groups have been invited;

(g) Attendance by members at public consultation meetings on significant matters of policy or service change, provided that members of at least two political groups have been invited;

(h) Attendance by members at joint briefings on the business to be transacted at committee meetings, organised by officers under the Member/Officer Protocol, provided that members of at least two political groups have been invited;

(i) Attendance at Woodhatch Place or elsewhere by -

(i) The Chair or Vice-Chair of the council;
(ii) The chairmen and vice-chairmen of committees;
(iii) Cabinet members.

For the purpose of agenda planning and 'call-over' prior to a meeting; conferring with officers; visiting county establishments; inspecting sites; or being engaged in a similar manner directly in connection with the discharge of any of the functions -

(i) Of their respective offices; or
(ii) Of their respective committees.

(j) Meetings held in connection with Local Ombudsman investigations; provided that they are meetings to which members of at least two political groups have been invited;

(k) A meeting of the Local Government Association, or of any committee, or other member group of the association to which a member of the council has been duly appointed;

(l) Attendance as a duly appointed Surrey County Council representative or nominee at meetings of outside bodies with important working relationships with the council or a particular service (a list of outside bodies is maintained by Democratic Services);

(m) Visits by members to council establishments including children's homes, other social services' residential establishments and special schools in accordance with a pre-determined rota;

(n) Meetings between leaders of the political groups;

(o) Meetings of parish and town councils and residents' associations;

(p) Attendance at official events at the specific invitation of the Chair or Vice Chair of the Council;

(q) Attendance at formally arranged meetings with officers or representatives of external organisations to discuss a significant issue relating to a council service or affecting the Member's Electoral Division.

(r) Attendance at a meeting with a constituent from the member's own division in direct response to a request about council services.

(s) Members are entitled to claim travel expenses and subsistence allowances for attendance at meetings of the Cabinet and council committees to which they have not been appointed (as a permanent or substitute member) when the reason for the attendance is:

(i) an item on the agenda in which they have a local interest and on which, with the Chair's consent, they would wish to speak

(ii) an Original Motion in their name which stands referred to the Cabinet or a committee under Standing Orders

(iii) an item on the agenda of which they have given notice under Standing Orders, or

(iv) a question of which they have given notice under Standing Orders and where advance notice has been given to Democratic Services.

(t) Members may also claim travel and subsistence for attendance at meetings of the Cabinet and committees to which they have not been duly appointed subject to the payment of allowances being limited to two such meetings per member per month.

(u) Members appointed as substitutes are entitled to claim expenses for any meetings they attend in that capacity.

Travel Expenses

12 Members and co-opted members may claim travel expenses for journeys undertaken in relation to any of the appropriate approved duties listed in paragraph 11 above. Mileage allowances are paid in cases where a private vehicle is used, and details of the rates and procedure for calculating distances are set out below. Where other forms of transport are used, reimbursement is related to the actual cost incurred, subject to any conditions set out below. Members are encouraged to consider the use of public transport or car-sharing for their journeys where appropriate.

Cars and motorcycles

13 The car and motorcycle rates are currently linked to the HM Revenue and Customs limits for tax allowance purposes, which means that the allowances paid for eligible journeys are tax-free. The current mileage rates are as follows:

Cars
55p per mile for the first 10,000 miles
25p per mile for mileage over 10,000

Fully Electric Cars
55p per mile (no mileage limit)

Motorcycles
24p per mile (no mileage limit)

14 An additional claim of 5p per mile may be made for each car passenger (not exceeding four) for whom travel expenses would otherwise be payable. Where a claim is made for the carriage of passengers, the names of those passengers should be included within the claim description.

15 For VAT purposes, fuel receipts sufficient to cover the value of the fuel used on all journeys within the claim must be submitted, and must pre-date the first journey on that claim. It is not necessary to submit a receipt every month if the value of fuel on a previous receipt has not been exceeded.

16 Members should also ensure that their insurance covers them for business use.

Note on motor insurance Failure to buy the correct type of motor insurance can mean you will be unable to make business trips, but more importantly in the event of an accident your insurers are quite entitled not to pay out on a claim. It could also harm your future renewals if they consider that you have given wrong information. The most basic cover (social domestic and pleasure with commuting) may not cover you for any form of business activities or travelling during the day. Instead, you will need at least class one business use (this may be referred to in your policy documents as "in connection with your employers' business" or similar). If business use of a vehicle is very occasional (once or twice a year), you are advised to speak with your insurer to determine if occasional business use can be included, rather than taking out class one cover. Class one business use will cover your vehicle in connection with your approved duties, such as driving to different sites. In all cases you are advised to double check with any potential or current insurer the precise terms of cover your policy holds. This includes if you are a named driver and/or the policy is in the name of your partner/spouse. Remember, at first glance the lowest price for your insurance may not be the best for you.

Calculating mileage

17 As elected representatives, members are accepted as having their primary workplace at home on the grounds that they use their own homes to carry out representative duties (such as seeing constituents) on behalf of the council. Claims can be made for travel between home and a council office or other location on council business. This aligns with HMRC guidance on travel and commuting (Ordinary commuting and private travel, Local Government Councillors and civic dignitaries in England)

18 Members will be aware that their expense claims are subject to public scrutiny and are advised to routinely take the shortest reasonable route between locations. However, where there is a good reason to vary that route, members may claim the actual mileage travelled (established using the vehicle's milometer). Any reasonable claims made on this basis will be honoured, and members should make a note within their claim to explain any significant variation from the expected mileage between locations. Please bear in mind that all claims are subject to periodic audit and may be disclosed in answer to Freedom of Information Act requests. Distances can be established by using the vehicle's milometer or sat nav, or an online route planner such as Google Maps or the AA.

Apportioning claims

19 On occasions, members who are also members of a borough or district council or another organisation will combine business travel for the council with business travel relating to their

other responsibilities (for example travelling to a borough/district council office for a meeting on the way home from a meeting at Woodhatch Place). In those cases, members should apportion their claim so that each organisation pays a fair share of the total expenses and ensure that the total amount claimed does not exceed the distance travelled. In the example above, Surrey County Council could pay the normal cost of a return journey from home to Woodhatch Place, with the borough or district paying expenses for any additional mileage as a result of the detour.

20 Any queries should be directed to Elliot Sinclair, Support Services Manager in Democratic Services prior to a claim being submitted.

Travel by public transport

21 Claims for reimbursement should normally be restricted to the cheapest available fares for the chosen mode of transport. Claims for first class travel may only be made if no alternative ordinary fares were available at the time of booking or where exceptional circumstances apply. Where possible, bookings should be made in advance in order to take advantage of the lowest cost fares.

Taxi and minicab fares

22 A taxi or minicab should only be used in cases of urgency or where no public transport is available. The actual fare and a reasonable gratuity may be claimed and a receipt should be provided. The use of 'chauffeur-driven' cars should be avoided where a more standard taxi or minicab service is available.

In circumstances where there is no practicable alternative to the use of a taxi or minicab, and this is known in advance, approval should be sought from Elliot Sinclair, Support Services Manager.

Hired motor vehicles (other than a taxi or minicab)

23 The use of hired cars or other motor vehicles may be appropriate in exceptional circumstances, and whenever possible prior agreement should be sought from Elliot Sinclair, Support Services Manager. Reimbursement will normally be limited to the rate allowed for the use of a member's own car, although the Support Services Manager (Elliot Sinclair) has the discretion to approve payments up to the actual cost of hire.

24 The council has accounts with Enterprise Car Club and Zipcar, car clubs which provide a flexible pool car service. This allows cars to be booked for business use for as little as 30 minutes or for longer trips. Registration is required, and members interested in finding out more about the service should contact Democratic Services.

25 For group activities where a minibus is more cost effective than individual transport, the SCC transport group can arrange carriage. Members are not permitted book and claim their own.

Cycle allowance

26 The current cycling allowance is 20p per mile.

27 Members using a cycle to travel on council business must have insurance that covers them for personal liability and indemnifies the council against third party claims. Two schemes are available to assist members wishing to buy a cycle: an interest-free loan scheme and a one-year tax-free hire scheme with the option to purchase the cycle at an advantageous price at the end of the period. Further details of both schemes are available on www.surreycc.gov.uk/jobs/life-at-surrey/staff-benefits.

Out of county travel

28 The usual rules in relation to the reimbursement of mileage or other transport costs will apply for travel to a location outside the county boundary (subject to the provisions relating to travel abroad set out below).

29 Where a member commences a journey from outside the county boundary and travels to a location within the county or to another location outside the county (and the start location is not as the result of carrying out an approved duty), expenses can be claimed for the actual cost of the journey or for the cost from the members' usual place of residence, whichever is lower.

30 If a member changes their place of residence to a location outside the county boundary, either on a permanent or temporary basis, advice should be sought from the Support Services Manager (Elliot Sinclair) before any claims are made.

Travel abroad

31 Where travel abroad is necessary, for example for meetings or site visits, the officers involved will make the necessary travel arrangements. In any circumstances where individual members need to travel abroad and officers are not directly involved in setting up the visit, they should obtain approval from the Leader of the council and contact the Support Services Manager (Elliot Sinclair) who will make the necessary arrangements. Bookings for travel abroad will normally be made using the cheapest appropriate available fare. The environmental and cost impacts of any travel abroad should be carefully considered.

Domestic air travel

32 The environmental impact should be considered when choosing this option over an alternative. Claims for reimbursement should normally be restricted to the cheapest available fares and bookings should be made as early as possible to take advantage of the lowest cost fares.

Subsistence Allowances

33 Actual subsistence costs incurred can be claimed for **approved duties** up to the values specified below and receipts must be provided:

Day subsistence

(a) Breakfast allowance (more than 4 hours away from normal place of residence before 11am (for example 7am to 11am) £5.30.

(b) Lunch allowance (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence including a lunchtime between 12pm and 2pm (for example 10am to 2pm or 12pm to 4pm) £7.25.

(c) Tea allowance (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence including the period 3pm to 6pm (for example 2pm to 6 pm) £2.90.

(d) Evening meal allowance (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence ending after 7pm (for example 4pm to 8pm or 5pm to 9pm) £9.00.

Overnight subsistence

(e) For absence overnight (deemed to cover a continuous period of 24 hours) from the usual place of residence, £85.80, or where the absence overnight is in London or for attending an approved conference, £97.85.

(f) Overnight subsistence may only be claimed by members to reimburse them for the cost of hotel accommodation and meals.

(g) If overnight subsistence is claimed, members may not claim an allowance for meals which are provided as part of the booking.

(h) In most cases where a member attends a conference, the booking arrangements will be made by Democratic Services and the invoices will be paid directly by them on the member's behalf. It will therefore not usually be necessary to claim overnight subsistence.

34 When submitting subsistence claims on MySurrey, input them using the out of pocket expense category and then make it clear in the additional information area that it is for subsistence, and include the actual times of absences. Members are entitled to claim any allowances appropriate for the period of their absence but may only claim the actual expenditure incurred up to the maximum specified value. Receipts must be provided.

Hybrid Working Allowance

35. From February 2023, the Council provides Councillors with a (taxed) £300 one-off payment upon election for bespoke IT solutions. The payment covers the whole term of office and is not repeated should a member be re-elected. Whilst Members are not required to submit receipts each time they spend a portion of the allowance, they must retain receipts for audit purposes.

Out Of Pocket Expenses

36 Most of the stationery and IT consumables members require are supplied by the council, and incidental costs are covered within the basic allowance, but there may be occasions when members personally incur expenses for the provision of equipment or services they need to support them in their role. This expenditure can be claimed back, but prior agreement should be obtained from Democratic Services.

(a) Members are authorised to purchase one item, up to the value of £20, in one financial year without prior authorisation from the Democratic Services Support Services Manager. An example item could be a protective case for their IT equipment.

(b) Members are not permitted to claim for printer paper. Paper can be provided at all SCC main buildings (located in printer areas or available through receptions).

(c) Members are able to claim for black printer ink cartridges, not colour. Colour printing is available in all SCC main buildings and libraries.

(d) SCC can provide a business card design for Members, which can then be taken to a supplier to print and subsequently claimed back as an out-of-pocket expense. However, the content of the card is not able to include non-SCC information i.e personal social media handles.

Expenses For Childcare and Care of Dependants

Childcare

39 Members can claim expenses incurred in providing childcare arrangements for children for whom they have parental responsibility to enable them to attend an approved duty (see paragraph 11), subject to the following requirements:

(a) that payment is made to someone other than a close relative

(b) that payments for the care of children under eight are restricted to registered childminders and other statutory approved childcare providers, **unless the childcare takes place in the members' own home**

(c) that payments are restricted to the care of children who normally reside with the member, up to their fourteenth birthday

(d) that no payments are made for the care of children of compulsory school age during school hours, except where the child is absent from school due to illness.

40 Members may claim actual costs incurred**.** Receipts should be submitted whenever possible, but it is recognised that this may not be practicable if the childcare isn't by registered childminders and other statutory approved childcare providers.

41 Members may also claim any additional costs incurred by them in relation to caring for children and dependent persons where they can demonstrate that the cost was wholly and necessarily incurred in order to participate in approved duties.

Care of dependants

42 Members can claim expenses incurred in providing care for dependent adults or children who are frail and/or disabled, while attending approved duties. This applies to requirements beyond routine planned care, where special arrangements are needed for members to carry out their role. Members may claim actual costs incurred.

43 Members may also claim any additional costs incurred by them in relation to caring for children and dependent persons where they can demonstrate that the cost was wholly and necessarily incurred in order to participate in approved duties.

General Conditions

44 The following conditions apply to both types of expenditure:

(a) Reimbursement is for actual expenditure incurred up to the maximum hourly rate for each hour of absence from home;

(b) Members should self-certify their claims to confirm that they have incurred expenditure in accordance with this scheme;

(c) Neither the Member nor the person being cared for should receive an allowance for care from any other source. Members must claim expenses in good faith, ensuring they are not receiving payment for the support through any other means.

(d) Claims must relate to attendance at approved duties as set out in paragraph 11.

Payment Of Allowances To The Governors Of Certain Education Establishments

45 Surrey County Council, as Local Education Authority, has approved the payment of travel and subsistence allowances to:

(a) The Governors of maintained special schools; and

(b) The council's representatives on the governing bodies of further education establishments and independent schools and colleges.

46 The council has also approved the payment of expenses for council representatives serving on the governing bodies of higher education establishments.

The rates which may be claimed, and the conditions governing payment, are the same as those which apply to members of the council. It should be noted that:

(a) The legislation does not permit the payment of Attendance Allowance or Financial Loss Allowance to the governors of education establishments;

(b) The council has not approved the payment of allowances to the governors of council schools and sixth form colleges or of voluntary schools.

47 Members who serve as governors of any of the education establishments listed in paragraph 45 above should submit claims in the usual way (see below).

Making Claims

48 Claim should be submitted on a monthly basis through MySurrey, although if there are only a small number of claims in a particular month the claim can be deferred. However, **all claims should be submitted no later than two months from the date on which the expense was incurred.**

49 Members are recommended to keep a copy of their payslips, P60's and receipts for tax purposes. Instructions on how to access payslips and P60's can be found here: Quick Cards & Videos (sharepoint.com)

50 Any queries about completion of claims, including verification of an approved duty, should be directed to Elliot Sinclair, Support Services Manager. It is advisable to do this before submitting an expense claim on MySurrey as **any error in one part of the claim will lead to the entire claim being rejected, requiring resubmission.**

51 Members themselves are solely responsible for the accurate completion of the claims in accordance with the statutory provisions and regulations.

NOTE: The Basic Allowance and any Special Responsibility Allowances are paid automatically by equal monthly instalments and do not need to be claimed.

Method of payment and viewing your payslip using MySurrey

53 Payment will be made by BACS (Bankers Automated Clearing Service), crediting bank accounts on the last Thursday of each month, with the exception of December (advance notice will be provided about the payment date for that month).

54 Every member is set up with an MySurrey account, enabling you to view your payslips online at any time. Instructions on how to access them can be found here: Quick Cards & Videos (sharepoint.com)

55 Surrey County Council is required by the regulations to keep records of each member's claims, and those records are available for inspection by any local government elector for the council. A summary of the expenses and allowances received by all members is published annually by Democratic Services.

Deductions for tax and National Insurance

55 Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances, subsistence payments for meals taken at County Hall and Childcare/Dependants' Carers' Expenses may, where appropriate, be subject to deductions for Income Tax and National Insurance.

56 HM Revenue & Customs accept that a member's workplace is their home. Therefore, travel between home and Woodhatch Place is not taxed. (Home as a workplace - HMRC internal manual)

Foregoing allowances

57 A member may, by notice in writing to the Member Services Manager, choose to forego all or any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance.

Part-year entitlement

58 If the scheme of allowances is amended in a way which affects payment of basic or Special Responsibility Allowances, members will be entitled to payment at the revised rate from the date on which the change was approved (unless otherwise stated). If a member becomes or ceases to be eligible for an allowance during the course of a year, an appropriate adjustment will be made.

Suspension of payments

59 In the event of a member being suspended or partially suspended from their responsibilities or duties, all or part of the allowances payable may be withheld for the period of that suspension. If a member is suspended from a role for which a Special Responsibility Allowance is payable, the allowance will be transferred to another member appointed to act in that capacity.

Further Information

60 Any general queries relating to the operation of the allowances scheme, or MySurrey training, should be directed to Elliot Sinclair in Democratic Services.

Summary Of What Is Required When Submitting Claims

(a) Claim should be submitted on a monthly basis through MySurrey, although if there are only a small number of claims in a particular month the claim can be deferred. However, all claims should be submitted no later than two months from the date on which the expense was incurred.

(b) Attach all receipts for expenses being claimed (these can be scanned/photographed for electronic claims). Claims without the required receipts attached will be rejected at the MySurrey approval stage.

(c) Fuel receipts sufficient to cover the value of the fuel used on all journeys within the claim must be submitted, and must pre-date the first journey on that claim. It is not necessary to submit a receipt every month if the value of fuel on a previous receipt has not been exceeded. There is not requirement to provide receipts for electric vehicles.

(d) Use the 'Out of Pocket' category on MySurrey for Subsistence Allowance claims and state that it is Subsistence, and the actual times of absence, in the additional information area.

(e) Any queries about completion of claims, should be directed to Elliot Sinclair, Support Services Manager. It is advisable to do this before submitting an expense claim on MySurrey as any error in one part of the claim will lead to the entire claim being rejected, requiring resubmission.

NOTE: Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances are paid automatically and do not need to be claimed.