

	Expenses and Allowances Policy
	WESTGATE ON SEA TOWN COUNCIL ADOPTED 01.02.2022 REVIEW DUE 02.2023

1. Introduction

WESTGATE ON SEA TOWN COUNCIL is implementing this policy to provide clear guidance about arrangements for the reimbursement of expenses incurred and seeking approval for claiming of allowances by Town Councillors and Council employees in performance of their role and responsibilities.

2. Law and Regulations

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 sets out the framework for Councils (Part 5 relates to Parish Councils) to allow where appropriate reimbursement of expenses incurred by Councillors in performance of their duties. The Council employees have a condition with their individual contracts of employment which states that expenses incurred during performance of their duties can be reimbursed if they are receipted and approved beforehand.

3. Expenses

Expenses are reimbursements of costs incurred by a Town Councillor or Council employee in carrying out the duties of the office.

- An expense will only be paid for "approved duties" as outlined in Section 26(1) of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and which the Council has decided will include the following:
 - Attendance at a training course or conference, subject to prior approval of HR Committee
 - For carrying out any other duty approved by the Council, or any duty in connection with the discharge of the functions of the Council or any of its Committees/Steering Groups/Working Groups
 - For attendance at a meeting of any association of authorities of which the Council is a member.
- Councillors and employees should seek to use the most cost-effective form of travel and this may include use of:
 - Their own vehicle
 - Or public transport where the rate payable shall not exceed the amount of the ordinary standard class fare or any available cheap fare;
 - Travel by taxi will only be paid in exceptional circumstances.
- Where attending the same training/conference event, Councillors and employees will endeavour to make best use of Council resources and decide to travel together, wherever practicable.
- The Council will set the travel reimbursement rate in line with the HMRC (Approved Mileage Allowance Payments) or in the case of employees in line with agreed terms and conditions of employment.
- Parking and toll charges may be claimed provided these were necessarily incurred.

- The start and finish point for a Councillors journey shall be from their own home, whereas for employees this will be from the Town Council office.
- Travel within Thanet is at the personal expenses of Members.

4. Approval

- Councillors expenses can be authorised by the Town Clerk and the Chairperson of the Finance and General Purposes Committee (or Deputy in their absence).
- Council employee expenses can be authorised by the Town Clerk. Any expenses incurred by the Town Clerk to be authorised by the Chairperson of the Council and the Chairperson of the Finance and General Purposes Committee (or Deputy in their absence).

5. Subsistence

- Approval is required prior to incurring expenditure and payment will be processed on receipt of an expenses claim and associated expenditure receipts.
- Claims for subsistence (meals) and for overnight stays are considered for expenses incurred for attendance at training events or conferences, where no alternative arrangements are available.
- Claims should be for actual expenditure incurred, but in the case of employees are subject to NJC rates.

6. Eye Tests & Flu Vaccinations

- The Council recognises its obligations under the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Regulations 1992 (as amended). The Council will fund the cost of one eye test every two years conducted by a suitably qualified optician for employees that use display screen equipment as part of their job specification and regular duties.
- The Council will offer all employees the option of having the flu vaccination in the autumn and undertakes to meet the cost for this to ensure the staff are given some protection from the virus.

7. Chairperson Allowance

- Section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 sets out that a Council may pay the Chairperson an annual allowance, currently this is determined by the Town Council each year at the budget setting meeting.

8. Claim Procedure and potential Abuse of the Policy

- All claims should be dated, signed with accompanying receipts using the Council's Expenses Claim Form.
- Payments will generally be made monthly via BACS.
- Any abuse in the application of this policy by employees will be dealt with and could possibly result in disciplinary action taken.
- Any abuse in the application of this policy by Town Councillors will be treated as a breach of the Code of Conduct and dealt with accordingly.

Review of the policy will take place on an annual basis.