NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

This scheme will be known as the New Forest District Council Members' Allowances Scheme, and shall have effect from **1 April 2025 (including 2025/26 uplift)**

A list of definitions is given in Appendix 1. The basis for the calculation of the opposition group allowances is set out in Appendix 2. Appendix 3 deals with 'Approved Duties' for the payment of travel, subsistence and dependant carer's allowances.

1. Basic Allowance

1.1 Each Councillor shall receive a basic allowance of **£8,140** per annum. Where the term of office of a Councillor begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning of the year to which the scheme relates, their entitlement to this allowance shall be calculated on a pro-rata basis.

2. Special Responsibility Allowance

2.1 The following annual Special Responsibility Allowances shall be paid:

Leader of the Council	**£25,235**	317% of BA
Deputy Leader of the Council	**£15,142**	60% of Leader's Allowance
Portfolio Holders	**£12,618**	50% of Leader's Allowance
Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Panels	**£6,309**	25% of Leader's Allowance
Chairman of Planning Committee	**£8,833**	35% of Leader's Allowance
Chairman of General Purposes & Licensing Committee	**£2,523**	10% of Leader's Allowance
Chairman of Audit Committee	**£2,523**	10% of Leader's Allowance
Chairman of HR Committee	**£2,523**	10% of Leader's Allowance
Major Opposition Group Leader	**£9,463***	37.5% of Leader's Allowance
Deputy Leader of Major Opposition Group	**£1,893***	20% of Major Opposition Group Leader's Allowance
Minority Group Leader	**£1,893***	20% of Major Opposition Group Leader's Allowance
Chairman of the Council	**£10,094**	40% of Leader's Allowance
Vice Chairman of the Council	**£2,523**	10% of Leader's Allowance
Independent Persons (Under Localism Act 2011)	**£364**	

* in accordance with standing provision on group size in Appendix 2

2.2 Where a member serves in a role with 'Special Responsibility' as listed in the table at 2.1 above for only part of a year, his or her entitlement to the allowance shall be calculated on a pro-rata daily basis.

3. Limitation on Payment of Special Responsibility Allowances

3.1 A Councillor may receive only one special responsibility allowance at any one time.

4. Dependant Carer's Allowance

4.1 A dependant carer's allowance shall be paid to those Councillors who incur expenditure for the care of dependant relatives or children whilst the Councillor is undertaking approved duties, subject to the allowances being payable as follows –

(a) care for dependent children under 16, living at home with the Councillor - £12.60 per hour (indexed to the current living wage outside of London) as defined by the Living Wage Foundation) with a cap on the number of hours members may claim being aggregated to 52 hours per month;

(b) the cost of more specialist care should be reimbursed at the actual cost incurred by the councillor upon production of receipts. In respect of specialist care provision medical evidence that this type of care provision is required should also be provided and approved by an appropriate officer of the Council.

(c) Councillors claiming the allowance declaring that the minder or carer is not an immediate member of the family and is over 16 years of age.

(See Appendix 3 for list of approved duties)

5. Co-optees' Allowance

5.1 £18.11 per hour. (NOMIS hourly rate for New Forest by Place of Residence 2024). To be paid per meeting and inclusive of reasonable preparation time.

6. Parental Leave

6.1 All Councillors shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full for a period up to six months in the case of absence from their Councillor duties due to leave relate to maternity, paternity, adoption shared parental leave or sickness absence.

6.2 Councillors entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance shall continue to receive their allowance in full for a period of six months, in the case of absence from their Councillor duties due to leave related to maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave or sickness absence.

6.3 Where for reasons connected with sickness, maternity leave, adoption leave, I ta leave or shared parental leave a Councillor is unable to attend a meeting of the Council for a period of six months, a dispensation by Council can be sought in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

6.4 If a replacement to cover the period of absence under these provisions is appointed by Council or the Leader (or in the case of a party group position the party group) the replacement shall be entitled to claim a Special Responsibility Allowance pro rata for the period over which the cover is provided.

6.5 If a Councillor stands down, or an election is held during the period when a Councillor is absent due to any of the above and the Councillor is not re-elected or decides not to stand down for re-election, their Basic Allowance and any Special Responsibility Allowance will cease from the date they leave office.

7. Travel Allowances

7.1 If part of a Councillor's journey on Council business includes some of their normal work commute, Councillors should not include their home to work mileage in their mileage claim. For example, if a member lives in Fawley and works in Winchester, and on their way home from Winchester attends a meeting in Lyndhurst, the councillor should claim only the extra mileage to attend at Lyndhurst.

7.2 Travel allowances will be paid for approved duties, as set out in Appendix 3 to this scheme. Mileage rates will be the Inland Revenue's approved annual mileage allowance payments (AMAP) which are currently:

Motor Vehicles	45p/mile
Electric Vehicles	45p/mile
Motor Cycles	24p/mile
Bicycles	20p/mile

7.3 Where members travel together on approved duties, the member using his/her motor vehicle will be entitled to an additional allowance of 5p/mile per member passenger.

7.4 Where public transport is used, the most cost-effective method of travel, making use of "special offer" rates where possible, must be used. The cost of standard rate only will generally be reimbursed. Exceptional payments may be authorised by the Chief Executive.

7.5 Taxis may be used only in special circumstances and should have the prior approval of the Chief Executive, the Executive Head of Governance and Regulation or the Service Manager - Democratic Services and Member Support.

8. Subsistence Allowances

8.1 Reasonable subsistence allowances will be paid for the "Approved Duties"

8.2 set out in Appendix 3 to this Scheme, on condition that:

(a) refreshments are not provided as part of the meeting/function attended.

(b) meal allowances will be paid only where a member is undertaking an approved duty which involves his/her absence from home or his/her normal place of work for a period exceeding four hours; and

(c) all claims are accompanied by receipts. The requirement for receipts may be waived at the discretion of the Chief Executive, the Executive Head of Governance and Regulation or the Service Manager – Democratic Services and Member Support in the case of claims submitted electronically.

9. Overnight Accommodation

9.1 There is no set allowance for overnight accommodation. However, Councillors should endeavour to stay in accommodation which provides good value for money but, if the reason for requiring overnight accommodation is to attend a training event, conference, or similar event, Councillors may stay overnight at the venue being used for that event. Receipts must be provided with all claims for reimbursement of accommodation costs. If a Councillor stays overnight with a friend or family member, an amount of £25 per night will be reimbursed.

10. Automatic Uprating of Allowances

10.1 The annual adjustment index for the Basic, Special Responsibility, Co-opted and Dependants' Carers' allowances, shall be the local government employees' national pay award annual percentage increase backdated to 1 April each year subject to the following: -

(i) backdating will not apply to Councillors who resign or who otherwise cease to be members of the Council after 1 April in any year, or who are not re-elected to the Council in the years of the ordinary election of Councillors; and

(ii) where different percentage increases apply to pay bands, the index shall be the award applicable to Spinal Column Point (SCP) 28, which most closely equates to the Scheme's notional hourly rate

10.2 The mileage rates shall be adjusted annually, with effect from 1 April each year, by any adjustments to the Inland Revenue's AMAP rates.

10.3 The subsistence rates shall be adjusted annually, with effect from 1 April each year, by any adjustments to the New Forest District Council's employees' subsistence scheme.

11. Backdating of Allowances

11.1 Where an amendment is made which affects an allowance payable under this scheme, the entitlement to such allowance may, with the agreement of the Council, apply with effect from the beginning of the year in which the amendment is made.

12. Payments

12.1 Payment of the annual basic, special responsibility and co-optee's allowances shall be made in 12 equal monthly instalments paid in arrears on the 20th day of each month or thereabouts, subject to compliance with the part-year payment provisions set out above.Payment of travel and subsistence claims received by the first day of the month shall be made on the 20th day of the month or thereabouts.

13. Time Limit for Submission of Claims

13.1 Any claims submitted for the payment of:

(a) dependant carer's allowance; or

(b) travelling and subsistence allowance;

must be made within two months from the date on which the entitlement to the allowance arises.

14. Suspension/Repayment of Allowances

14.1 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 basic, special responsibility, or co-optee's allowance payable in respect of the period for which he/she is suspended or partially suspended in respect of the responsibilities or duties from which he/she is suspended or partially suspended will be withheld.

14.2 Where the allowances referred to in paragraph 13.1 have already been paid to the member and where the member concerned is:

(a) suspended or partially suspended from his responsibilities or duties as a member of the authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under that Part; or
(b) ceases to be a member of the authority; or
(c) is in any other way not entitled to receive the allowance in respect of that period.

such part of the allowance as relates to any such period shall be repaid to the Council.

15. Members of other authorities

15.1 Where a member is also a member of another authority, he/she may not receive allowances from more than one authority in respect of the same duties.

16. Renunciation

16.1 A member may by notice in writing given to the Chief Executive, elect to forego all or any part of his or her entitlement to allowances payable under this scheme.

APPENDIX 1

DEFINITIONS

In this scheme -

"Councillor" means an elected member of the New Forest District Council;

“Co-optee” means a member of a panel, committee or sub-committee of the Authority who is entitled to vote;

"Immediate member of the family" means a member of the Councillor’s own household living at the same address as the Councillor and the dependant requiring care;

"Leader of the Council" means the Councillor elected by the Council to fill that office;

"Leader of Major Opposition Group” means the Councillor notified to the Chief Executive by the opposition group having the largest number of members on the Council, as the Councillor elected as that Group’s Leader;

“Deputy Leader of Major Opposition Group” means the Councillor notified to the Chief Executive by the Opposition Group having the largest number of members on the Council, as the Councillor elected as that Group’s Deputy Leader;

"Minority Group Leader” means the Councillor notified to the Chief Executive by a group having a lesser number of members than the Major Opposition Group as the Councillor elected as that Group’s Leader;

“Member” in relation to co-optee’s, travel or subsistence allowances means an elected member of the New Forest District Council or a person who is a member of a committee or sub-committee of the authority;

"Portfolio Holder" means a Councillor appointed by the Leader of the Council to be responsible for a particular portfolio as a member of the Executive;

APPENDIX 2

CALCULATION OF OPPOSITION GROUP ALLOWANCES

1.

Allowance	**Calculation**
Leader of Main Opposition Group*	£9,463 - on condition that the size of the Main Opposition Group consists of at least 20% of the Council membership, which equates to 10 seats. If it falls below the 20%, then the SRA is reduced by 25%, which equates to £7,097
Leader of Minority Opposition Group*	£1,893
Deputy Leader of Main Opposition Group*	£1,893 - Subject to the Group reaching the qualification criteria of 20% of Council Membership (10 seats).

***Opposition Groups of Equal Size**

If the situation arises where two or more Opposition Groups are of equal size, then the sum of the SRAs that would be payable to Opposition Group Leaders of differing group sizes (Leader of Main Opposition Group plus Leader of Minority Opposition Group) should be divided equally between each Opposition Group Leader. For instance, where both Opposition Groups have

- 10 members each - the SRA payable to each Group Leader would be £5,678 (£9,463 + £1,893= £11,356 divided by 2)
- 9 or fewer members each - the SRA payable to each Group Leader would be £4,495 (£7,097 + £1,893 = £8,990 divided by 2)

APPENDIX 3

1. APPROVED DUTIES FOR THE PAYMENT OF TRAVEL, SUBSISTENCE AND DEPENDANT CARER'S ALLOWANCES

As a general principle, members may claim only for travel allowances when representing the District Council on official business. If in doubt, a member should seek the relevant officer's advice before the journey is undertaken. Any decision by the Chief Executive, an Executive Head or a Service Manager will be final. Travel allowances will be paid for:-

(a) Attendance at a meeting of the Authority or of any Committee, Sub-Committee or Panel of the Authority, or of any other body to which the Authority makes appointments or nominations, or of any Committee or Sub- Committee of such a body;

(b) The attendance at any other meeting, the holding of which is authorised by the Authority, or a Committee or Sub-Committee of the Authorities, or a joint committee of the Authority and one or more Local Authority within the meaning of Section 270(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, or a Sub-Committee of such a Joint Committee provided that:

(i) where the Authority is divided into two or more political groups, it is a meeting to which members of at least two such groups have been invited; or

(ii) if the Authority is not so divided, it is a meeting to which at least two members of the Authority have been invited;

(c) The attendance at a meeting of any Association of Authorities of which the Authority is a member;

(d) The attendance at a meeting of the Executive or a meeting of any of its Committees;

(e) The attendance at the opening of tender documents, where the attendance of a member has been specifically requested by the Chief Executive, an Executive Head or a Service Manager;

(f) The performance of any duty in connection with the discharge of any function of the Authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the Authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises;

(g) Portfolio Holders', Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Committee Chairmen's visits to Council venues, partner organisations or appropriate sites on issues directly related to their portfolios or the work of the Panel/Committee;

(h) Journeys by Overview and Scrutiny Panel or Committee members working on projects assigned to them by the Panel or Committee;

(i) Journeys to planning or similar enquiries, or court proceedings, where the member is appearing to give evidence for the Council;

(j) Journeys made by the political group leaders in their roles as group leaders;

(k) Journeys to approved training sessions, conferences and courses ("approved" for this purpose will mean a session arranged by the Council or in respect of which the Council is bearing the cost);

(l) In appropriate circumstances, journeys made for the purpose of resolving constituents' problems;

(m) Attendance at meetings of parish or town councils in the member's role as a District Councillor (except where the member is also attending as a parish/town councillor);

(n) Journeys to political group meetings called by the leader of the political group and designated by him/her as being necessary for the conduct of Council business;

(o) Journeys undertaken by members of the Planning Committee and local members to view sites that are the subject of planning or tree work applications, when the member considers a visit essential;

(p) Journeys by Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and opposition group spokespersons to attend pre-meeting briefings;

(q) Civic duties in the role of Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Council.

provided in all cases that the journeys are necessary for the carrying out of a duty which has been assigned to a member, either generally or specifically