

Members' Allowance Scheme 2023/24

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1. Members may know that the allowances to which they are entitled for carrying out their council responsibilities are based on recommendations from a statutory Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). Each Local Authority is required to convene one periodically and the IRP for East Herts Council has just begun its review of allowances for members from 1st April 2023. The IRP was delayed this year because of the District Council elections and to allow new Members to settle into their roles. Under the regulations for IRPs, there are several types of allowance. They include: Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowance, Travelling and Subsistence Allowance, Dependants' Carers' Allowance and Childcare Allowance. To help the panel to prepare its report and recommendations it would like to hear from members about these allowance through your answers to the questions below. The panel would be pleased to receive your completed questionnaire by the close of business on Tuesday 12 September 2023. The results of this questionnaire will be anonymised for submission to the IRP. The Panel would find it extremely valuable to hear the views of all Members, particularly those who were newly elected in May 2023. Thank you.

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	7
1	06/09/2023 16:19 PM ID: 225805441	Recommend an 'expenses' budget for special 3rd party responsibilities such as Bishops Stortford Chamber of Commerce, where events regularly cost £20+ each per month		
2	07/09/2023 09:34 AM ID: 225846802	I started answering the questions below, but it's quite difficult to really do so, as I only know about my circumstances and my role. I currently work four days per week while the kids are at school, and fit my executive duties around my other available time. So, from an income point of view, it's a bit of a different situation from if, say, I had so much councillor responsibility that I had made the decision to reduce or give up additional employment to concentrate solely on the role. I know some executive positions are very time-consuming, for example, Executive member for growth. I also, because I've not needed to look into it, don't know how the dependents/childcare allowances work, and whether they cover from leaving home to getting back (e.g. the travel time requiring childcare), or just the meeting time itself - but hopefully the former. I feel that the answers really do depend on the amount of time each of the roles and the chair positions require (on average), which I imagine is quite hard to necessarily easily work out! So I don't really feel right taking a random stab at whether the other roles are sufficient, as I think it's hard to fully appreciate the time each takes.		
3	11/09/2023 12:50 PM ID: 226073446	I'm not sure on what basis the allowance is given. If it is meant to compensate for time lost from earning a living it is nowhere near enough based on the amount of time I'm spending on it. I can only afford to do it because I'm retired and have a pension. It feels pretty much like a full time job. If I did supply teaching for 2 to 3 days a month I would earn more than the allowance. To attract a more diverse range of candidates into being councillors I think a higher allowance should be paid as many would not be able to afford to do this I feel. I don't know enough about additional responsibilities to judge those as I don't know how much extra time they take.		
4	11/09/2023 12:50 PM ID: 226073468	I'm not sure on what basis the allowance is given. If it is meant to compensate for time lost from earning a living it is nowhere near enough based on the amount of time I'm spending on it. I can only afford to do it because I'm retired and have a pension. It feels pretty much like a full time job. If I did supply teaching for 2 to 3 days a month I would earn more than the allowance. To attract a more diverse range of candidates into being councillors I think a higher allowance should be paid as many would not be able to afford to do this I feel. I don't know enough about additional responsibilities to judge those as I don't know how much extra time they take.		

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6	11/09/2023 17:57 PM ID: 226107578	I have already been a councillor for four years and from my point of view, the allowance is welcome but I am not dependent on it so I feel that it is about adequate.	
7	12/09/2023 16:04 PM ID: 226183785	I did not know Councillors received an allowance until after the election. I wonder if it were more widely known, whether more people would be prepared to stand? Members of DMC committee spend a lot of time on council work. I wonder if that should be recognised. I think the Leader, deputy, some exec roles and DMC chair all should have more allowance as I know some people have changed jobs or reduced their hours of work. Some of the other chair allowances could be reduced.	
		answered	7
		skipped	28

2. Basic Allowance Thinking about the average number of hours each week that you spend on your duties as a Councillor, do you regard the current basic allowance of £5,428.79 payable to all councillors, as: (in answering this question, please do not take into account any additional duties you may have and for which you are entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA). There is a separate question about this.)

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Too Little		37.14% 13
2	Enough		62.86% 22
3	Too Much		0.00% 0
		answered	35
		skipped	0



3. Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) Member who hold any of the posts shown below are entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) in addition to the Basic Allowance. Please use the boxes next to each post to say whether you think the allowance is Too Little, Enough or Too Much. (Please answer these questions if you receive an SRA and, to the best of your knowledge of what the posts involve, if you do not.)

Answer Choices	Too Little	Enough	Too Much	Response Total
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Leader of the Council - £19,767	20.00% 5	64.00% 16	16.00% 4	25
Deputy Leader - £12,225.96	16.00% 4	60.00% 15	24.00% 6	25
Leader of Minority Political Group - 0.1% of basic allowance x number of members (2 positions)	20.00% 5	76.00% 19	4.00% 1	25
Executive Member (7 positions) - £9,780.96	21.43% 6	67.86% 19	10.71% 3	28
Committee Chairman - Development Management - £7,336	15.38% 4	69.23% 18	15.38% 4	26
Committee Chairman – Licencing - £6,051	16.00% 4	68.00% 17	16.00% 4	25
Committee Chairman – Human Resources - £4,842	12.00% 3	72.00% 18	16.00% 4	25
Committee Chairman - Overview & Scrutiny - £6,464.04	12.00% 3	76.00% 19	12.00% 3	25
Committee Chairman – Audit & Governance - £6,646.04	8.00% 2	80.00% 20	12.00% 3	25
Committee Chairman - Standards - £2,421	16.00% 4	76.00% 19	8.00% 2	25
Vice Chairman – Development Management - £2,200	16.00% 4	72.00% 18	12.00% 3	25
			answered	30
			skipped	5

4. Dependents Allowances Do you consider that the current allowance for Dependent Carers Allowance (maximum of £25.00 per hour) is:

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Too Little		27.27%	9
2	Enough		72.73%	24
3	Too Much		0.00%	0
			answered	33
			skipped	2

5. Childcare Allowances Do you consider that the current allowance for Childcare (maximum of £12.50 per hour) is:

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Too Little	52.94%	18
2	Enough	47.06%	16
3	Too Much	0.00%	0
		answered	34
		skipped	1

6. In carrying out your duties as a Councillor, do you incur any significant costs which you believe are not covered by your present allowance or claimable expenses? If so, please specify what they are

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	18
1	06/09/2023 12:35 PM ID: 225785621	NO	
2	06/09/2023 13:09 PM ID: 225788498	Buying Land Title documents	
3	06/09/2023 13:13 PM ID: 225788836	Travelling expenses when attending to ward business	
4	06/09/2023 13:24 PM ID: 225789684	Claiming Expenses is a nightmare. Systems are inadequate for Councillors purposes.	
5	06/09/2023 13:29 PM ID: 225790139	no	
6	06/09/2023 15:06 PM ID: 225798821	No	
7	06/09/2023 16:19 PM ID: 225805441	To engage effectively with the Bishops Stortford Chamber of Commerce requires heavier paid involvement, and as most events have some cost associated (e.g. 'breakfast briefing' - £24), I'd recommend that a £500 budget for EXPENSED costs are allowed, so the council representative is actively encouraged to attend sessions	
8	06/09/2023 18:32 PM ID: 225815310	The allowance for electric vehicles is so low that I don't claim. It should be bought into line with fossil fuel powered vehicles.	
9	09/09/2023 16:59 PM ID: 226008793	No I think my costs are covered.	
10	10/09/2023 21:39 PM ID: 226038542	no	

6. In carrying out your duties as a Councillor, do you incur any significant costs which you believe are not covered by your present allowance or claimable expenses? If so, please specify what they are

11	11/09/2023 08:30 AM ID: 226048399	No	
12	11/09/2023 12:04 PM ID: 226068821	Yes, I end up paying for childcare for my daughter which I don't claim back. There have been a number of times where I have had to put my daughter in childcare so I can make up hours in my main job that I have lost due to Council meetings which have taken place in the day. I don't believe I can claim these hours.	
13	11/09/2023 13:25 PM ID: 226076943	No, only opportunity costs for alternative occupation.	
14	11/09/2023 14:15 PM ID: 226081877	No	
15	11/09/2023 17:09 PM ID: 226103340	Yes travelling to meet residents and looking at faults, meetings with officers. Repeat visits to sites to see if work carried out to the required level. Numerous emails to be responded to. Attitude of the public is changing and more hostile to members especially on social media,	
16	11/09/2023 17:57 PM ID: 226107578	No	
17	12/09/2023 08:17 AM ID: 226136384	As Councillors it is a privilege to serve the residents on behalf of EHDC and money in a cost of living crises is not important.	
18	12/09/2023 16:04 PM ID: 226183785	No	
		answered	18
		skipped	17