Watford Borough Council
Members Allowances Scheme

(Scheme from 1st April 2026)

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Index

1.	**Basic Allowance**
1.1	Payment Dates
1.2	Renunciation
1.3	Overpayment
1.4	Withholding of Allowance
1.5	Membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme
2.	**Special Responsibility Allowance**
2.1	Offices and roles
2.2	Dates from which SRAs take effect
2.3	Renunciation of SRAs
2.4	Payment arrangements
2.5	Overpayment
2.6	Withholding of allowances
3.	**Elected Mayor's salary**
4.	**Travel & Subsistence**
4.1	Basis for payment
4.2	Allowances which may be claimed
4.3	Submission of claims
4.4	Overpayment
5.	**Co-optees**
5.1	Roles
5.2	Payment dates
5.3	Renunciation
5.4	Withholding of allowance
6.	**Chairman & Vice Chairman**
7.	**Communications Allowance**
8.	**Dependent Carer's Allowance**
Appendix 1	**Schedule of rates**

Introduction

The Borough Council is required by law to adopt and publish a scheme of allowances following consideration of recommendations made by an independent panel.

Watford Borough Council's Independent Members Remuneration Panel has been in existence since 2000; originally meeting on an annual basis, which later moved to a quadrennial review from 2013. In 2025 it carried out the latest quadrennial review. The scheme, as set out below, is for the period until 31 March 2028 and reflects the amounts agreed at Council plus any subsequent increases as set out in the scheme. (see Appendix 1.)

The scheme will continue to be updated following the agreement of the local government pay settlements.

The scheme has been updated following the agreement of the local government pay settlement for 2026/27, effective from 1 April 2026.

1. **Basic Allowance**

   This allowance is paid to all councillors (except the directly elected Mayor).

   The basic allowance is intended to compensate councillors for the time and effort spent attending committee meetings, carrying out ward representation work, costs incurred on telephone calls, postage, stationery, travel within the Borough, caring for dependents and for occasions where they may be required to use annual leave/flexi to take time off from their regular employment.

   On 30 January 2018, in accordance with the recommendation from the Independent Members Remuneration Panel, Council agreed that with effect from April 2019 the Basic Allowance should be linked to local government pay settlements and increased accordingly. At Council on 27 January 2026, it was agreed that this should continue, as recommended by the Panel.

1.1. Payment dates

1.1.1. For a councillor elected to office following a Local Government election, payments will be dated from the fourth day after the date of

the election or the date of making the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, whichever is later.

1.1.2. For a councillor elected to office at any other time, payment will be from the date of making the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

1.1.3. Payments of allowances and expenses are made to councillors on 15th of each month. If the 15th falls on a non-working day payment will be made on the nearest working day prior to the 15th. Payment will be made in instalments of one-twelfth of the annual amount due.

1.1.4. If a councillor holds office for less than a full calendar month a pro rata payment will be made.

1.2. Renunciation

1.2.1. A councillor may, by giving notice in writing to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer, elect to forego the whole or part of an entitlement to a Basic allowance under this Scheme.

Where such a declaration is made, it remains in force until a further notice in writing is given to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer to withdraw it.

1.3. Overpayment

1.3.1. If a councillor leaves office before the end of their term and an overpayment has been made, the councillor will receive a letter from the Monitoring Officer requiring them to pay the money back to the council.

1.4. Withholding of Allowance

1.4.1. In accordance with The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003: "That where a member is suspended or partially suspended from his responsibilities or duties as a member for an authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under that Part, the part of the basic allowance payable to him in respect of the period for which he is suspended or partially suspended may be withheld by the authority".

1.5. Membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme

1.5.1 With effect from 11 May 2026, elected members, under the age of 75, can opt- in to the Local Government Pension Scheme. Benefits accrue in the 2014 Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) scheme.

1.5.2 The following allowances are eligible:

- Members' Basic Allowance
- Special Responsibility Allowance
- Mayor's remuneration

1.5.3 Those members wishing to join the LGPS will need to complete the opt-in form and return it to the council.

2. Special Responsibility Allowance

Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) is paid to councillors with significant additional responsibilities. Where an individual holds more than one of the positions listed they will only receive the highest allowance (apart from Group Leader allowance which is paid in addition).

On 30 January 2018, in accordance with the recommendation from the Independent Members Remuneration Panel, Council agreed that with effect from April 2019 SRAs should be linked to local government pay settlements and increased accordingly. At Council on 27 January 2026, it was agreed that this should continue, as recommended by the Panel.

2.1. Offices and roles

Portfolio Holder
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny
Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny
Chair of Finance Scrutiny
Chair of Development Management Committee
Chair of Licensing Committee
Cabinet Member Without Portfolio
Chair of Audit Committee
Chair of Council Functions Committee (pro rata)
Chair of Chief Officer Pay Panel (pro rata)
Group leaders

2.2. Dates from when the SRA will take effect:

2.2.1. Portfolio Holder and Cabinet member without portfolio – from the date the Monitoring Officer is formally notified by the Elected Mayor of the names of Portfolio Holders.

2.2.2. Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny, Finance Scrutiny and Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny – from when they are appointed Chair/Vice Chair at Annual Council.

2.2.3. Chair of Development Management Committee or Licensing Committee – from when they are appointed Chair at Annual Council.

2.2.4. Chair of Audit Committee – from when they are appointed at Annual Council.

2.2.5. Chair of the Chief Officer Pay Panel – for the month in which the Panel meets and any subsequent months as necessary.

2.2.6. Chair of Council Functions Committee – for the month in which the committee meets and any subsequent months as necessary.

2.2.7. Group Leaders – from notification of the Group at Annual Council.

2.3. Renunciation of Special Responsibility Allowances

A councillor may, by giving notice in writing to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer elect to forego the whole or part of an entitlement to a Special Responsibility Allowance under this Scheme.

Where such a declaration is made, it remains in force until a further notice is given in writing to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer to withdraw it.

2.4. Payment arrangements

2.4.1. Payments of SRAs will be made with the basic allowance.

2.4.2. Payments of SRAs are made in 12 instalments, unless it is a pro-rata payment.

2.5. Overpayment

2.5.1. If an overpayment is made of the SRA, it will be recovered either through a deduction from the basic allowance payment until the overpayment is recovered in full or in the event that deduction from the basic allowance not being sufficient to recover the overpayment the councillor will receive a letter from the Monitoring Officer requiring them to pay the money back to the council.

2.6. Withholding of Allowance

2.6.1. In accordance with The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003: "That 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 special responsibility allowance payable to him in respect of the responsibility or duties period from which he is suspended or partially suspended may be withheld by the authority".

3. Elected Mayor's Salary

3.1 The Elected Mayor's salary as at April 2026 is £84,698, with an annual travel allowance of £700.

3.2 On 30 January 2018, in accordance with the recommendation from the Independent Members Remuneration Panel, Council agreed that with effect from April 2019 the Elected Mayor's salary should be linked to local government pay settlements and increased accordingly. At Council on 27 January 2026 it was agreed that this should continue, as recommended by the Panel.

3.3 The annual travel allowance has been maintained at £700. The payment is made monthly. Receipts should be retained as proof. It has been agreed that the travel allowance should be reflective of expenditure. If the cost of travel to approved events exceeds this in a financial year, the Mayor may be reimbursed.

3.4 There is a contribution for pension payments added to the salary, equivalent to the employer's pension contributions made in the local government pension scheme. This may change as the Government is currently consulting on allowing members to join the Local Government Pension Scheme from May 2026.

4. Travel and Subsistence

4.1. Basis for Payment

Travel and subsistence are payable for meetings, training and conferences which a councillor is attending as part of their responsibilities or because they have been nominated/appointed by the council. Travel allowance is only payable where the event takes place outside the Borough of Watford. Subsistence allowance is only payable where meals are not provided. In accordance with the recommendation from the Independent Members Remuneration Panel, Council agreed that the rates remain the same as those officers can claim, with the addition of the exception below.

4.2. Allowances which may be claimed

4.2.1. **Travel**

Car mileage, motorcycle and bicycle allowances rates are shown in appendix 1.

4.2.2. The Elected Mayor will receive an annual travel allowance of £700. For the avoidance of doubt no mileage may be claimed from home to the Town Hall and back. Mileage may be claimed within the Borough due to recognition of the number of engagements the Mayor attends. Records will be maintained of the Elected Mayor's travel during the year in order to ensure the level of allowance is correct and to answer any Freedom of Information Act requests. The Elected Mayor may claim subsistence separately under the conditions set out below.

4.2.3. When travelling to approved activities outside of the borough, members are encouraged to car share. This is a way of reducing costs to the council and has environmental benefits. Members may claim an allowance of 3.2p per passenger per mile when they are carrying another councillor to the same approved activity.

4.2.4. Second class rail fare may be claimed plus charges for seat reservations on production of receipts. If payment is made directly by the council on behalf of the councillor no separate allowance is payable.

4.2.5. Other public transport services can be claimed on production of receipts.

4.2.6. Taxis should only be used when no other option is available and with accompanying receipts.

4.2.7. Air travel will be considered if it is cheaper or the time saving considerable. It should be booked through the Democratic Services Lead.

4.2.8. **Subsistence**

Councillors can claim daytime or overnight subsistence where it has not already been paid for by the council or is not provided by the event/meeting organisers. Councillors may claim up to the maximum amounts listed in Appendix 1 on production of receipts for the time periods set out below. For the avoidance of doubt, should the submitted receipt total less than the maximum payment allowed under the scheme, the councillor will only receive reimbursement to the value of the receipt.

4.2.9. Breakfast allowance – payable where the Member is absent from home for more than 4 hours before 11am.

4.2.10. Lunch allowance – payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours including the lunchtime period between 12 noon and 2pm.

4.2.11. Tea allowance – payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours including the period 3-6pm.

4.2.12. Evening meal allowance – payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours ending after 7pm.

4.2.13. Overnight accommodation if necessary and not already paid for by the council.

4.2.14. Meals on trains – where main meals (i.e., breakfast, lunch or dinner) are taken on trains during a period for which there is an entitlement to

a day subsistence allowance, the reasonable cost of the meal may be reimbursed in full.

4.3. Submission of claims

4.3.1. Claims for travel and subsistence must be made within **1 month** of the duty being undertaken, if possible by the end of the financial year if the claim period crosses the end of March.

4.3.2. Payment outside that period can only be made if there are exceptional circumstances which prevented the claim being submitted within the required time limit.

4.3.3. Claims must be made through iTrent which is accessible through the Watford Portal and should be supported by receipts (where appropriate) which should be forwarded to the Democratic Services Lead. **If a valid receipt is not provided payment of the claim will not be met.**

4.3.4. Travel and subsistence claims will be paid through payroll.

4.3.5. A public record is available for all claims and the totals claimed by each Member are published annually on the council's website.

4.4. Overpayment

4.4.1. If an overpayment occurs this will be deducted from the next expenses claim the councillor makes or from the councillor's allowance.

5. Co-optees

5.1. Roles

A Co-optee will be paid an annual allowance (set out in Appendix 1) for serving in the following roles:

5.1.1. Independent Member

5.1.2. Independent Member of the Independent Members Remuneration Panel. The Chair of the Independent Members Remuneration Panel receives a higher annual payment in recognition of additional responsibility to produce the final report on behalf of the Panel.

5.1.3. Independent Member of Audit Committee

5.1.4. The Independent Member of Audit Committee receives an annual payment. The payment was agreed at Council on 30 January 2024.

5.2. Payment date

5.2.1. Independent member co-optees will be paid at the end of the financial year.

5.2.2. Co-optees on the Independent Members Remuneration Panel will be paid on production of the final report. It will cover the period of the relevant report, as a retainer between reviews.

5.2.3. The allowance will be paid in 1 instalment.

5.2.4. The Independent Member of the Audit Committee will be paid monthly.

5.3. Renunciation

A Co-Optee may, by giving notice in writing to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer, elect to forego the whole or part of an entitlement to a Co-Optee's Allowance under this Scheme.

Where such a declaration is made, it remains in force until a further notice in writing is given to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer to withdraw it.

5.4. Withholding of allowance

5.4.1. In accordance with The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003: "That 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, any co-optees' allowance payable to him in respect of the responsibilities or duties from which he is suspended or partially suspended may be withheld by the authority".

6. Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council

6.1. The allowance for the Chairman and Vice Chairman is paid directly to the councillor and is intended to be used to purchase clothes (if necessary), stock for the Chairman's Parlour, the purchase of raffle tickets and tickets to events etc. when attending official engagements.

6.2. The allowance is paid annually following the election of Chairman and Vice Chairman at Annual Council.

6.3. At Council on 27 January 2026, in accordance with the recommendation from the Independent Members Remuneration Panel, it was agreed that the Chairman's and Vice Chairman's allowance should be linked to local government pay settlements and increased accordingly.

7. Communications Allowance

7.1. At Council on 27 January 2026, in accordance with the recommendation from the Independent Members Remuneration Panel, it was agreed that from 1 April 2026 the Communications Allowance would only be paid to councillors who were unable to complete their case work or communicate with residents without it. The allowance will be paid at the discretion of the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the councillor concerned, who will have set out any extenuating circumstances.

8. Dependants' Carers' Allowance

An allowance can be paid to elected members who incur expenditure for the care of children or dependants whilst undertaking approved duties. Payments are based on the National Minimum Wage.

The sums claimed must not exceed the actual sum paid up to maximum hourly amounts set out below.

The carer must be at least 16 years old. The carer cannot be related to the member who is making the claim. The Monitoring Officer can exercise discretion if there are exceptional circumstances.

All claims must be submitted in writing to the Democratic Services Lead and accompanied with receipts.

Childcare

Dependants' Carers' Allowance up to a maximum hourly rate according to the London Living Wage (as at April 2026) dependent upon the age of the carer;

- £14.80 per hour

Adult Care

Dependants' Carers' Allowance up to a maximum hourly rate of £25.48 per hour, increasing in line with those in place at Hertfordshire County Council. Issues such as complex needs may be exceeded with agreement in advance by the Monitoring Officer.

Appendix 1

Members Allowance Rates from 1st April 2026

1. **Basic Allowance**
   £9,287 per annum (band 1)

2. **Special Responsibility Allowances**

Role	Band	Basic	SRA	Total
Portfolio Holder	2.5	£9,287	£13,321	£22,608
Chairs of Scrutiny Chairs of Development Management & Licensing Chair of Audit Committee	2a	£9,287	£9,767	£19,054
Cabinet Member without portfolio Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Chair of Functions (pro rata) Chair of Chief Officer Pay Panel (pro rata)	2	£9,287	£3,552	£12,839
Group leaders				£124 p.a. per group member

3. **Co-optees' Allowances**
   £250 per annum
   £350 per annum for Chair of Independent Members Remuneration Panel
   £1,500 per annum for Independent member of Audit Committee

4. **Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council**
   £4,648 Chairman of the Council

   £1,549 Vice Chairman of the Council

5. **Elected Mayor**
   The Elected Mayor's salary is £84,698, plus an annual travel allowance of £700. Additional travel grant can be paid if the cost of travel to approved events exceeds this amount. There is a contribution for

pension payments added to the salary, equivalent to the employer's pension contributions made in the local government pension scheme.

6. **Travel allowances**
   With receipts where applicable

Rail	2nd class fare plus charges for seat reservations	Actual Cost
Public services	Normal fare	Actual Cost
Taxis	To be used when no other option is available	Actual Cost

	Per mile
Motor cycle	52.2p
Motor vehicle (First 10,000 miles)	52.2p
Cycle	20p
Payable when carrying another councillor to the same approved activity outside the Borough	3.2p per passenger per mile

7. **Subsistence rates**
   Members may claim **up to** the amount specified below for the time period away from home, if no meals or refreshments are provided at the meeting or event which the Member is attending or already included in any accommodation charges paid for by the council. All claims **must** be supported with receipts.

	Up to
Breakfast Allowance Payable where the Member is absent from home for more than 4 hours before 11am	£7.21
Lunch Allowance Payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours, including the lunchtime period between 12 noon and 2pm	£9.95
Tea Allowance Payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours including the period 3pm - 6pm	£3.94
Evening Meal Payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours ending after 7pm	£12.33

Overnight Accommodation To cover overnight accommodation	£105.05
Meals on Trains Where main meals (i.e. breakfast, lunch or dinner) are taken on trains during a period for which there is an entitlement to a day subsistence allowance, the reasonable cost of the meal may be reimbursed in full.	

8. Communications allowances

£12 per month for those councillors unable to complete their casework or contact residents without it, following agreement by the Monitoring Officer.