



SHEPTON MALLET TOWN COUNCIL

TRAVEL, SUBSISTENCE AND ACCOMMODATION EXPENSES CLAIM POLICY

Policy Reference Number: 1915

AUTHOR: Town Clerk

RESPONSIBILITY: Policy and Resources Committee

TYPE: Two – Medium

DATE ADOPTED:

REVIEW DATE: Every three years

1.0 Purpose

1.1 This purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance about arrangements for the reimbursement of expenses incurred, and seeking approval for claiming allowance, by councillors and employees of Shepton Mallet Town Council in the performance of their role and responsibilities.

1.2 The Town Council is committed to an effective anti-fraud and corruption policy to protect its integrity, its assets and to ensure probity. The ethos of the organisation is one of honesty and integrity, belief in the principles and practices of Best Value and opposition to fraud and corruption.

2.0 Equality and Diversity

2.1 The council is committed to ensuring that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the way services are provided and the way staff are treated reflects their individual needs and does not lawfully discriminate against individual or groups.

3.0 Review

3.1 This policy is adopted by the Policy and Resources Committee and will be reviewed every 3 years, or when a review is triggered by a change in circumstances or legislation.

4.0 Background Legislation

4.1 The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 sets out the framework for Council to allow for reimbursement of expenses incurred by councillors in performance of their duties.

4.2 Section 15 (5) of the Local Government Act allows a town council to pay the chairman an allowance to meet the expenses of his/her office. This applies only to the Chairman of the council and not the Vice Chairman or other councillors. Legislation for a council to pay the basic parish allowance does not affect the allowance paid to the Chairman under Section 15.

4.3 The term councillor will be deemed to define someone serving as a councillor of Shepton Mallet Town Council. The term employee will be deemed to define a member of staff who has a contract of employment with Shepton Mallet Town Council.

5.0 TRAVEL EXPENSES

5.1 Travelling allowance will be paid in accordance of the scale of allowance as set out in this policy for any councillor or employee of the council. Travel allowances will be paid under the following circumstances:

a. When it has been agreed that a councillor or employee should attend a meeting outside of the town on behalf of the council (approved duties)

b. When it has been agreed that a councillor or employee can attend a seminar, training event, conference or activity outside of the town

c. When the Chairman of the council is invited to attend an event outside of the town and where he/she will represent the town council.

5.2 Agreement is deemed when either a decision is given by council or a committee, or where the Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Human Resources Committee has agreed that the Town Clerk may attend, and that the Town Clerk has deemed that a member of staff can attend.

- 5.3 Where possible people will be encouraging to lift-share and use public transport.
- 5.4 Claims will not normally be given to claims for travel within the boundary of the town council.
- 5.5 All claims for travel allowance must be made on the approved form and must be authorised as follows:

- By the Chairman of the Council for Councillors
- By the Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Human Resources Committee for the Town Clerk
- By the Chairman of the Town Council and Town Clerk for all other employees

6.0 AMOUNT TO CLAIM

- 6.1 Travel expenses are paid at 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles in any one year. 25p per mile, thereafter.
- 6.2 This is in line with current approved HMRC Mileage Allowance Payments
- 6.3 An additional 5p per mile is payable for a passenger required to attend the same meeting, event or training course.
- 6.4 Reimbursement is made against a valid bus or train ticket for standard class air fare, standard bus fare or agreed air fare.
- 6.5 Taxi fares will only be reimbursed in urgent or exceptional circumstances

7.0 INSURANCE

- 7.1 Anyone claiming travel expenses from the use of their own vehicle must demonstrate that they have the appropriate insurance for the purpose of using their vehicle for work related matters. If they are to make a claim they must produce a valid copy of the certificate of motor insurance.

8.0 SUBSISTENCE EXPENSES

- 8.1 Subsistence allowances are only permitted when councillors or employees are required to be out of the area in the course of their duties or for a training event to cover the actual costs incurred for such things as a meal and refreshments.
- 8.2 Where a meal is provided at a meeting or training event no allowance will be payable. However, if there is a need to be away for a longer period (to include a distance of more than 2 hours) an allowance will be payable for meals not covered by the meeting or training event.
- 8.3 In all cases a receipt for the meal or refreshment must be provided, along with a reason for taking that meal.
- 8.4 Amount to Claim:
- Breakfast £6.50 (to be claimed where the duty commences before 7am and finishes after 11am)
 - Lunch £10.00 (to be claimed where the duty is taking place between 10am and 2pm)
 - Tea £5.50 (to be claimed where the duty is taking place after 6pm)

- Dinner £10.50 (to be claimed where the duty is taking place after 8pm and tea has not been claimed)

8.5 The council will **not** make any payment towards any alcohol.

9.0 CAR PARKING/TOLLS CHARGES

9.1 Where councillors or employees are required to pay a car parking fee (or toll) for attending a meeting or event, where no facilities are provided, such fees will be refunded on production of a valid receipt of car parking ticket for the authorised period.

10.0 CHAIRMAN'S ALLOWANCE

10.1 The Chairman's allowance is not intended to duplicate other provisions such as the payment of normal expenses such as travel and subsistence which is dealt with under a separate item of this policy. Where travel and subsistence can be paid on the same basis as they are paid to other councillors then the chairman's allowance is not the appropriate legislation.

10.2 Essentially the allowance is intended to meet the additional costs of the office of Chairman. Broadly speaking they fall into two areas: representing the council at outside events and civic hospitality. The Chairman's allowance is for the purpose of meeting the cost of attending functions, events, associated donations to charities and other costs which are not normal travel and subsistence. There is no strict definition of what is or is not an expense which will be met by the Chairman's allowance, essentially it is anything which is incurred as a direct consequence of the role of Chairman acting as a representative of the council

10.3 Shepton Mallet has agreed that it approves a sum of money to be paid directly to the Chairman (in 2 instalments per annum) for him/her to disburse as necessary. This is not claimed by the Chairman, but is paid directly to the Chairman on approval by the Town Clerk. In 2019/2020 the allowance is £750 per annum.

11.0 ACCOMMODATION

11.1 Where it is necessary for a councillor or employee to stay in a hotel (or similar charging accommodation) the following will apply:

- a. Where the cost is included in the cost of the event and will be invoiced to the council, having agreed in advance of the booking of the event
- b. Where attendance at a meeting or event requires an overnight stay which is not included in the cost of the event, arrangements will normally be made by the council. Under such circumstances where a price has been agreed but an account facility is not available the council will repay the agreed cost to the councillor or employee on the production of a receipt.
- c. Where a councillor or employee is required to stay in a hotel or other overnight accommodation irrespective of whether the accommodation has been provided for by the organisation to which the person is attending or not, the councillor or employee shall be entitled to a basic allowance to cover the cost of some basic out of pocket expenses.
- d. £5 per night to be paid and claimed on the relevant form.

12.0 PROCEDURE

12.1 All councillors and employees must ensure that claim forms are complete, signed and submitted for authorising at the end of the month to which the claim relates

12.2 The relevant accompanying paperwork must be attached to the form

12.3 The persons authorising the form must ensure each claim is appropriate and correct before certifying for payment.

12.4 This will include checking:

- Expenses claimed have been incurred
- Mileage claims are an accurate representation of distance travelled and the reason for each journey is completely correct
- The claimant's identity
- Claim forms are signed and dated by the claimant

12.5 On no account should the form be returned to the claimant after certification. This is to avoid any attempt at a fraudulent claim. Appropriate arrangements must be made to ensure that the form is handled by the RFO for payment.

12.6 Anyone who believes there has been an incident of fraud or corruption must submit the allegation to the Town Clerk in writing if the allegation is about the council or a councillor. The submission must be in writing to the Chairman of the Council if the allegation is about the Town Clerk.

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