



Standards Committee
6 December 2011

**Report from the Director of
Customer and Community
Engagement**

For Information

Wards Affected: ALL

Review of Members' Expenses - April 2010 to April 2011

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The London Borough of Brent Members' Allowance scheme makes provision for the payment of travel expenses to members. Appendix 1 outlines expenses claimed over the period from April 2010 to April 2011.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note this report.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Part 8 of the Council's Constitution contains the Members' Allowance Scheme which explains that travel expenses may be claimed if they meet the following criteria:
- a) Any claims must be submitted in writing to the Mayor's Office Manager within two months of the date on which the duty in respect of which the entitlement to the allowance arises;
 - b) A travel allowance may be claimed by a councillor, independent member or voting co-opted member in respect of the cost of travel to or from a meeting or conference or other similar event (together referred to as a meeting for the purposes of the Scheme) provided that:-
 - i) The meeting is of a type specified in the regulations (Schedule 2 of the Scheme, attached at *Appendix 2* – extract from the Local Authorities (Members allowances) (England) Regulations 2003);
 - ii) The allowance will be for reimbursement only of the reasonable costs of standard class travel;
 - iii) Expenses can only be claimed for travel undertaken outside of the borough;
 - iv) Approval of an expenses claim must be sought from the Mayor's Office Manager prior to the date of the meeting for which travel costs will be incurred;

- v) No allowances can be claimed for travel to any meeting of the Council or a meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council, other than a Joint Committee;
 - c) Claims for car mileage allowance (fuel costs) or travel by bicycle must be made from time to time in accordance with the scheme that is in place for officers.
- 3.2 The Mayor's Office is responsible for administering the Members' Allowance Scheme and oversees the receipt, processing and payment of all appropriate expense claims submitted by members.
- 3.3 All claims submitted since May 2006 are detailed on the Brent Council website and are also publicly available for inspection at the Mayor's Office.
- 3.4 Since the last time members of the Standards Committee examined members' expenses, on the 3 November 2010, the following actions have been carried out as result of concerns raised by the committee:
- A letter was sent to all group offices on behalf of the Standards Committee asking all members to consider taking the cheapest form of transport when making a journey or to consider car sharing when possible.
 - In order to increase transparency members have been instructed of the need to make separate claims for each meeting/event attended. Since November 2010 there have been no occasions where members have claimed for more than one event on one claim form.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The total amount spent on claims made between April 2010 and April 2011 was £273.17

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Local government (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, as amended, requires the council to have the records available for public inspection by appointment. During the period from 1 April 2010 to 1 April 2011 nobody came to inspect the records personally.

- 5.3 London Councils last year reconstituted its Independent Remuneration Panel and commissioned a new report from its members. Prior to its reconstitution, the most recent report by the Independent Panel on the remuneration of councillors in London was published in 2006. The new report was published in May 2010 and was available for members and officers to refer to during consideration of the members' allowance scheme which was agreed at the meeting of the full Council on 13 September 2010.

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 There are no diversity implications arising from this report.

Background Papers

Brent Council Constitution, Part 8;
The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003;
The reports of the Independent Remuneration Panel to London Councils December 2006 and May 2010.

Contact Officer:

Any person wishing to inspect these documents should contact Rhiannon Leary, Mayor's Office & Member Development Manager, Room 202, Brent Town Hall, Forty Lane, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 9HD. Tel. 020 8937 1158.

TONI MCCONVILLE
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Appendix 1 – summary of members’ expenses claimed from April 2010 to April 2011

Councillor Name (Claimant)	Nature of expense	Date expense incurred	Date claim submitted	Mode of travel	Value of claim	Claim Approved/rejected
Cllr Ashraf	Travel expenses incurred for travel to an Capital Ambitions event on shared services for members	07/02/11	09/03/11	Train and Bus	£6.40	Approved
Cllr Ashraf	GLA welcome reception for new councillors	01/07/10	08/07/10	Tube	£6.30	Approved
Cllr S Choudhary	Travel expenses incurred for travel to Local Government Conference Pension summit	08-10/09/10	3/10/10	Train & coach	£55.00	Approved
Cllr Crane	Travel expenses incurred for travel to Local Government Conference Pension summit	08-10/09/10	4/10/10	Car	£158.49	Approved
Cllr Lorber	Transportation meeting with Brent officers and Chiltern Railways	22/07/10	22/07/10	Tube	£10	Approved
Cllr Van Colle	Travel expenses incurred for travel to meetings of London Councils, Traffic Flow conference Westminster and West London Waste Authority	Various	12/04/10	Car	£36.98	Approved

Appendix 2 – Schedule 2 of the members’ allowance scheme, Part 8 of the Brent Constitution

SCHEDULE 2

Extract from The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003

Travelling and subsistence allowance

8. (1) A scheme may provide for the payment to members of an authority of an allowance in respect of travelling and subsistence ("travelling and subsistence allowance"), including an allowance in respect of travel by bicycle or by any other non-motorised form of transport, undertaken in connection with or relating to such duties as are specified in the scheme and are within one or more of the following categories -
- (a) the attendance at a meeting of the authority or of any committee or sub-committee 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 authority, 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, where the authority is operating executive arrangements;
 - (e) the performance of any duty in pursuance of any standing order made under section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972 requiring a member or members to be present while tender documents are opened;
 - (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 authorize the inspection of premises;
 - (g) the performance of any duty in connection with arrangements made by the authority for the attendance of pupils at any school approved for the purposes of section 342 (approval of non-maintained special schools) of the Education Act 1996, and
 - (h) the carrying out of any other duty approved by the authority, or any duty of a class so approved, for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the authority or of any of its committees or sub-committees.