

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL23 APRIL 2025Report by Director of Business Operations and PartnershipsSCHEME FOR MEMBERS' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES 2025/26**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To ask that Council notes that the Scheme for Members' Remuneration and Expenses has been updated for 2025/26 in accordance with The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Amendment Regulations 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That Council notes that the Scheme for Members' Remuneration and Expenses has been updated for 2025/26 in terms of councillor remuneration.

BACKGROUND

3. The Scottish Government determines the standards of conduct and pay of Elected Members (Councillors) in Scotland.

4. In April 2023, the Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee (SLARC) was reconvened to undertake an independent review of Councillor Remuneration, having last reported in 2011.

5. SLARC reported to the Scottish Government in February 2024. SLARC recommended that the remuneration of Councillors be set at 80% of the median remuneration for all employees in the public sector in Scotland as published in the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE).

6. The Scottish Government accepted the majority of the recommendations made and advised that they would bring forward Regulations implementing them.

7. The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Amendment Regulations 2025 were laid before the Scottish Parliament on 23 January 2025 and will be in force from 1 April 2025. These new Regulations impact the remuneration for all Elected Members in Scotland.

8. In accordance with the legislation, the Council has in place a Scheme for Members' Remuneration and Expenses, attached at Appendix 1 to this report, which has been updated in light of the new Regulations.

REPORT

9. Based on the amendments to the regulations, East Renfrewshire are required to introduce a number of changes.

10. Councils are placed in a specific banding which is determined by the size of the council area. The previous four bandings have been replaced by three, which has resulted in smaller differences in Senior Councillor remuneration across all local authorities. All Band A councils, which includes East Renfrewshire, now move to Band B and should be funded to enable the appointment of up to a maximum of 10 Senior Councillors (excluding the Leader of the Council and the Civic Head of the Council (Provost)), an increase of one from the previous legislation. The council currently has seven Senior Councillors.

11. The Scheme for Members' Remuneration and Expenses provides details of the levels of remuneration payable to all councillors, and the remuneration payable to the Leader of the Council and the Civic Head of the Council (Provost), these amounts being prescribed in legislation. The remuneration for Senior Councillors cannot exceed a set limit which is formula driven and is set out in the legislation. Further, the remuneration cannot exceed 75% of the Leader of the Council's remuneration.

12. In addition, the Scheme provides details of those other categories in respect of which Elected Members are entitled to claim expenses, such as the performance of approved duties, travelling expenses, and subsistence allowances. The amounts claimed in these circumstances have a legislative basis and have remained unchanged for some time. It has also been updated to reflect the current position in relation to the provision of smartphones and laptops to Elected Members.

13. The new Regulations see an increase in the basic Councillor remuneration from £21,345 to £25,982; the remuneration paid to the Leader of the Council increases from £35,580, to £50,063; and the remuneration paid to the Civic Head of the Council (Provost) and those designated as Senior Councillors increases from £26,686 to £37,458.

14. However, it should be noted that the Scottish Government has written to the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance (Chief Financial Officer) to confirm that the figure for the Civic Head of the Council (Provost) and Senior Councillors is incorrectly stated in the Regulations and that revised Regulations will be issued to correct this figure to £37,548.

15. All increases as a result of the new Regulations take effect from 1 April 2025.

16. The Scheme for Members' Remuneration and Expenses, attached at Appendix 1, has been updated to reflect the increases in Councillor remuneration as set out in paragraphs 10 and 11 above.

RECOMMENDATION

17. That Council notes that the Scheme for Members' Remuneration and Expenses has been updated for 2025/26 in terms of Councillor remuneration.

LOUISE PRINGLE
DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Background Papers

[The Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee \(SLARC\) Recommendations for Councillors' Remuneration and Expenses published February 2024.](#)

[The Local Governance \(Scotland\) Act 2004 \(Remuneration\) Amendment Regulations 2025.](#)

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**SCHEME FOR MEMBERS'
REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES
2025/26**

SCHEME FOR MEMBERS' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES 2025/26

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GUIDANCE NOTES

1. Members are responsible for completing their own expenses claim forms and for signing the declaration on each form that the expenses have been necessarily incurred for the performance of eligible approved duties. **Members should, as far as possible, also ensure that cost implications are considered in decisions regarding expenses to be incurred and should where possible adopt the most cost effective mode of transport.**
2. All travel, subsistence and telephone call claim forms must be submitted to the Members Services Section who will be responsible for checking that they have been properly completed. Members Services will sign the form in the box provided as evidence that the check has been carried out.
3. Travel and subsistence claims must include the following:
 - Date for which expense is claimed
 - Time of departure /arrival.
 - Detailed description of approved duty (including category).
 - Expense items / Journey details (including journey start and finish details).
 - Receipts for expenditure incurred.
4. Claims for travelling and subsistence in respect of conferences must be claimed on the conferences claim form which should then be submitted to Members Services.
5. Advances for conferences etc. can only be made up to seven days before departure and must be signed by the Member and an authorised signatory in Members Services.
6. When an advance has been made in respect of a conference a final claim form should be submitted as soon as possible thereafter. Advances will be recovered from the earlier occurring of next remuneration payment due or any subsequent payment in anticipation of which the advance was given.
7. Sample claim forms are appended to this Scheme for information. Actual forms are available from Members Services.
8. **Expense Claims Timetable/...**

Expenses to be submitted to Members' Services by	Payment Date (Friday)
04.04.25	18.04.25
02.05.25	16.05.25
06.06.25	20.06.25
04.07.25	18.07.25
01.08.25	15.08.25
05.09.25	19.09.25
03.10.25	17.10.25
07.11.25	21.11.25
05.12.25	19.12.25
02.01.26	16.01.26
06.02.26	20.02.26
06.03.26	20.03.26

Expenses forms should be submitted to Members Services by the dates shown above in order for any expenses being claimed to be included in payments made on the corresponding Payment Date Friday. Claims must be fully completed, signed and dated. Incomplete/inaccurate forms will be returned to Elected Members which may result in a delay in expenses being reimbursed. It is important that expenses claim forms are returned timeously so that expenses can be recorded in the correct period.

PAYMENT OF MEMBERS' REMUNERATION

Basic Remuneration

Each Member of the Council will receive a basic remuneration of £25,982.00 per annum. Payment will be made on the third Friday of each month by a monthly payment of £2,165.16 subject to normal Income Tax, National Insurance and Pension Contribution deductions.

Senior Councillors

In terms of the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Amendment Regulations 2025, the Council will pay Senior Councillor remuneration to Members with special responsibilities. These will be paid under the same arrangements as basic payments.

Role	ANNUAL REMUNERATION (£)	MONTHLY PAYMENT (£)
Leader of the Council	50,063	4,171.91
Provost	37,548	3,129.00
Deputy Provost	37,548	3,129.00
Convener for Education, Equalities, Culture and Leisure	37,548	3,129.00
Convener for Environment and Housing	37,548	3,129.00
Chair of Audit and Scrutiny Committee	37,548	3,129.00
Chair of Planning Applications Committee/LRB	37,548	3,129.00
Vice Chair of Planning Applications Committee/LRB	37,548	3,129.00
Chair of Licensing Committee	37,548	3,129.00

Payment of Remuneration

Payment of remuneration will be made automatically monthly into each Member's bank account on the third Friday of each month.

If a Member leaves office as a Councillor or ceases to be entitled to Senior Councillor remuneration, the payment due will be calculated on a daily basis from date of appointment to the date of demitting office. In such circumstances any overpayment will require to be repaid by the Member.

Prior to election, remuneration will be calculated on a daily basis up to the appointed date.

APPROVED DUTIES

Travel and subsistence expenses may be claimed for approved duties. The list below provides details of all duties in respect of which claims can be submitted. When completing a claim form Members should include the category of the approved duty as listed below (A, B, C etc.) as well as providing full details of the approved duty.

Attending or Undertaking:-

- A. Meetings of Council, Cabinet and Committees.
- B. Conference meetings or seminars etc. as approved representative of Council.
- C. Meetings organised to inform members of any development or to assist members with personal development wherever held.
- D. Political group meetings of the Council held within the East Renfrewshire area.
- E. Meetings with officers of the Council.
- F. Members' surgeries.
- G. Community Councils and Parent Councils.
- H. Duties as officer of political group.
- I. Duties as Convener, or Committee Chair/Vice-Chair.
- J. Functions required as Leader or Deputy Leader of Administration.
- K. Attendance at meetings of partner bodies as approved representative of Council.
- L. Attendance at meeting of partner bodies to which the Councillor has been appointed by virtue of their position as councillor.
- M. Duties undertaken as a ward representative.

TRAVELLING EXPENSES

Where it is reasonable to do so, Members should use public transport in the conduct of their duties. However where public transport is not reasonably available, alternative forms of transport (e.g. private vehicle) can be used. **In cases where alternative transport is used which is more expensive than the cost of travelling by public transport, the cost of travelling by public transport can be reclaimed although as no receipts or tickets can be provided this will be subject to tax. In the event that travelling by alternative transport is cheaper than the cost of travelling by public transport, the lower rate can be reclaimed.**

Public Transport – Reimbursement of Costs

Members may travel standard class by public transport, the cost of which will be reimbursed on production of a ticket except in the case of travel by air, where not more than the cost of the economy fare or any available cheap fare for travel by regular air service will be reimbursed, on production of a ticket. In cases of urgency where no such air service is available then the actual fare paid by the Member will be reimbursed on production of a ticket.

The production of tickets is required for all modes of public transport in order that appropriate supporting documentation can be produced to HMRC which may be demanded under current legislation. In the event Members are unable to produce tickets or receipts for any journey made on public transport, any amounts claimed will be subject to tax.

ZoneCard

Members who do not claim car mileage allowance, may at the Council's cost apply for a ZoneCard, details of which may be obtained from Members Services. The ZoneCard will cover journeys from their house or place of work to the Council's Headquarters by public transport and will as far as possible cover journeys within their wards.

Any Member in receipt of a ZoneCard from the Council will have details of this benefit submitted to HMRC at the end of each tax year. Tax may be levied on this benefit by HMRC.

Rail Cards

Members will be able to claim the cost of rail cards purchased by them to allow them to obtain reduced fares when on Council business. Details of the card and the business details should be sent to Members Services to allow discounts to be obtained when tickets are booked.

Any member in receipt of a rail card reclaimed from the Council will have the details of this benefit submitted to HMRC at the end of the tax year. Tax may be levied on this benefit by HMRC.

Mileage Allowances

For the purposes of calculating claims, **a councillor's normal place of residence is regarded as their normal place of work**, so expenses associated with travel from home to the Council HQ, and other locations to conduct council business, may be claimed back. Where a councillor travels on council business from their place of employment or business (which is not Council related) they may be reimbursed for the cost of the journey. However, if the cost of making this journey would have been lower had it started from the councillor's home, then that lower cost is the maximum amount that will be reimbursed.

For example if the distance from a councillor's home to council offices is 5 miles and from a councillor's business to council offices is 10 miles, a maximum of 5 miles may be claimed and reimbursed.

In the event a Member attends a meeting which requires them to **travel from and return to** their place of employment or business, and their place of employment or business is further away than their home, the actual mileage travelled can be claimed. If a councillor does not return to work after the meeting only the mileage from home to the council office can be claimed.

For example if the distance from a councillor's home to council offices is 5 miles and from a councillor's business to council offices is 10 miles, and the councillor leaves from their business to attend a meeting and returns there after the meeting, they are able to claim the total mileage (20 miles – 2 x 10 miles). If the councillor does not return to their work after the meeting but instead goes home then the lower mileage can be claimed (10 miles – 2 x 5 miles).

Under the Regulations, the following mileage rates apply.

car	-	45 pence per mile
passenger (approved duty)	-	5 pence per mile
motorcycle	-	24 pence per mile
bicycle	-	20 pence per mile.

When claiming mileage expenses the claim should be based on the shortest route between the start and end points of the journey regardless of the actual route taken.

Other Travelling Expenditure

The rates specified for car mileage may be increased by the amount of any expenditure incurred by tolls, ferries or parking fees.

No reimbursement will be made for the above costs unless receipts are produced.

The Council will not be responsible for any parking fines incurred.

Travel by Taxi or Private Hire Car

Taxis or private hire cars should only be used in exceptional circumstances when no other public transport is reasonably available.

Taxi or private hire car journeys should be booked through Members Services who will make the booking on behalf of the Member. When making a taxi booking request, Members will need to complete a Taxi Request Form. This form requires the member to provide details of the journey, its purpose and to confirm that there was no other reasonable travel option available,

When taxis or private hire cars are pre-booked they will be paid on account and there will be no need for the Member making the journey to include the journey details and costs on any expenses claims form. However the details will be included in the annual summary of Members' Expenses.

In the event that a taxi or private hire car journey is required which cannot be booked through Members Services, the journey cannot be made on account and the cost of the journey will need to be paid for by the Member making the journey. In claiming for the cost of the journey, the Member concerned will be required to confirm that the reason for the journey was either due to urgency or that public transport was not reasonably available. If these conditions are not met, the Member concerned will be required to repay the excess over the public transport cost.

The rate for travel by taxi or private hire car shall not exceed:-

In the case of urgency or where no public transport is reasonably available the amount of actual receipted fare.

In any other case the amount of fare for travel by appropriate public transport.

Travel by Other Hired Motor Vehicle

The rate for travel by a hired motor vehicle other than a taxi or private hire car shall not exceed the lower of:-

The car mileage rate as stated above being the rate which would have been applicable had the vehicle belonged to the Member who hired it.

The cost of hiring a vehicle of less than 1200cc

In order to reclaim reimbursement the Member must provide an appropriate VAT receipt.

Travel by Council Car

Members should be aware that the Council is required to record and publish as part of the annual members' expenses exercise costs relating to the use of chauffer driven cars. This will include costs incurred on such journeys by Provost, Deputy Provost and other Councillors being conveyed in the Council car.

SUBSISTENCE

Entitlement

Any Member is entitled to payment of subsistence claims where expenses are ***necessarily incurred*** and for which appropriate receipts are produced in carrying out approved duties which require continuous time involvements shown below.

Rates

These payments may not exceed maximum rates prescribed by Scottish Ministers.

MAXIMUM ALLOWANCE	AMOUNT	HOURS AWAY FROM HOME	PERIOD THAT MUST BE INCLUDED
	£		
Breakfast	8.00	3	No overnight subsistence.
Lunch	12.00	4	12 Noon to 2p.m.
Dinner	25.00	4	
Overnight stay with friends or family	25.00	24	Continuous absence which includes overnight stay.
Overnight Stay	110.00	24	Continuous absence which includes overnight stay.
Overnight stay London	131.00	24	Continuous absence which includes overnight stay.

Exclusions

- (i) In the case of breakfast, lunch and dinner no reimbursement can be claimed when a meal has been provided free of charge.
- (ii) In the case of an overnight stay the sum reimbursed shall be reduced in respect of any meal or accommodation provided free of charge.
- (iii) Where the Council books a conference which includes accommodation and subsistence no additional sums may be claimed by Members.

Smartphones and laptops

Members can be supplied with a smartphone and laptop by the Council. **The use of these devices is controlled by the Council's [Acceptable Use Policy and Framework](#).** This policy permits personal use of a Council supplied mobile device within usage plan limits, however, it does not permit the use of Council supplied devices for non-Council business activities.

Should members intend to use their smartphone or laptop overseas they should contact IT (0141 577 3131) with travel details no later than 10 days before travel to allow the appropriate considerations and technical arrangements to be made.

Please note that the authorisation to use these devices to access Council information and systems will depend on the intended destination; which might also include geographical risk factors. It should also be noted that technical factors at any destination could affect connectivity and performance and would be out with the Council's control or ability to support.

Members should also note that there may be additional costs associated with this depending on their travel destination. Should Members fail to notify IT of overseas travel and use devices without making appropriate arrangements, this may result in significant additional costs and cause unnecessary detection alerts through the Council's Security Scanning services resulting in additional workload for ICT staff and security partners.

Bills for mobile devices are sent to Members Services. In the event that a bill exceeds the monthly usage plan limit Members will be asked to confirm whether excess costs are personal or Council related. If personal, Members will be required to pay the excess by way of deduction from their next payment.

Members will be asked to sign an undertaking confirming that they will comply with the terms of the above and the Council's Acceptable Use Policy and Framework.

Conferences

Attendance at conferences requires to be approved in advance by the Director of Business Operations and Partnerships or the Democratic Services Manager in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

Conferences have to be accounted for separately and accordingly there is a special conferences claim form.

In respect of conferences within the UK Members will be reimbursed according to normal rates for travelling and subsistence which will be subject to provision of appropriate receipts.

When the Council books overnight accommodation this should be at or below the Members' overnight allowance rate.

When the Council books a conference which includes accommodation and subsistence no additional sums may be claimed by Members.

Travel Abroad

In respect of travel outwith the UK, travelling expenses for the most appropriate form of transport and subsistence will be reimbursed provided details and receipts are produced.

Income Tax and National Insurance

Normal Income Tax and National Insurance rules are applied to remuneration, travel claims and telephone rental allowance.

Tax Relief

Members may wish to claim tax relief in respect of expenses which are not reimbursed by the Council e.g. expenses in connection with constituency work. Details of these expenses should be submitted normally at the end of the Tax Year, direct to HMRC. A form and guidance notes for this purpose will be available from the Payroll Section. If Members do not wish to make a claim in respect of such expenses no action need be taken.

