

Desborough Town Council Expenses and Travel Policy

Policy Aim

The purpose of the policy is to keep the cost of expenses as low as possible whilst reimbursing staff or paying necessary and validly incurred expenditure.

It is the Council's policy that its employees and elected members should not be expected to subsidise the Council, and that the Council should promptly reimburse travel and subsistence costs incurred while on Council business, provided the expenditure has been authorised, receipted and certified in accordance with this policy.

Authorised Duties

Expenses claims will be considered for the following activities:-

- Travelling and associated expenses on journeys on Council business;
- Travel to and from approved training sessions held by NALC, NCALC, SLCC, other approved organisations, and for any training paid for by the Council.

Method Of Travel

Travel should be in the most cost-effective manner taking into account journey time and the nature of the journey as well as monetary cost. When making a decision about travel, the length of time taken to travel should be considered. Our environment will be considered when making decisions. Public transport will be preferred where practical and cost effective. No employees will be defined as essential car users.

Train: All rail travel shall be by the cheapest standard class fare available. It is strongly recommended that claimants book rail fares in advance whenever possible and make full use of any discounted rates. For attendance at meetings where dates are set well in advance, the use of advance tickets is expected.

Bus: All bus travel shall be by the cheapest standard fare available, and be subject to a calculation time taken to travel against the cost savings of tickets.

Car: Reimbursed at current National Joint Council rates. Reasonable parking will be paid. A log must be submitted showing where business journeys commenced and ceased, and the number of miles travelled (deducting any personal element of the journey). Where an employee uses their own vehicle they should ensure that the vehicle is in good working order, fully insured (business use), taxed and has a valid MOT certificate. For the avoidance of doubt, travel between the Council's offices and home will not be paid unless the employee has been called out on an emergency or out of hours.

Taxi: Taxis shall only be used when essential [e.g. urgency, awkward hours, transport of baggage, health reasons]

Subsistence

A claimant may claim for the costs of meals and beverages reasonably purchased when travelling on Council business. This is intended to reimburse claimants for additional expense as a result of having to travel on Council business. Subsistence will only be paid for business which involves leaving home before 07:00 or returning home after 19:00, or involving a total home to home duration of 8 hours or more. Authorised expenditure on meals and light refreshments, including reasonable (non-alcoholic) drinks with meals, will be reimbursed up to the limits in Annexe 1. Any claim exceeding the maximum allowable costs will be reduced accordingly. Personal incidental expenses cannot be claimed.

Overnight Accommodation

The cost of overnight accommodation will be reimbursed when it can be clearly demonstrated that it is impossible or impracticable to attend the approved duty without staying over the previous night: for example where a journey would have to start from home before 06:00. Any hotel accommodation requirements must be agreed with the Council in advance and should not exceed £75 per night (£90 per night for London) e.g. Premier Inn or Travelodge.

Non-Reimbursable Expenses

The following categories of expense will **not** be reimbursed:

- Those claims not supported by fully documented receipts [NB credit card slips do not count as documented receipts], unless exceptional approval has been given by the Council
- Personal entertainment of any kind.
- Mini bar / bar bills
- Alcohol
- Entertaining other Councillors or individuals.
- Claims for unidentified small items of expenditure.
- Any claims in excess of the maximum limits set by this Policy

Professional Subscriptions

If agreed in advance, employees may claim back the cost of the annual subscription for professional bodies whose activities are directly relevant to the employee's duties. The Council has approved the full payment by the Council of the Town Clerk's membership of SLCC, and for the avoidance of doubt, membership fees for ALCC will **not** be funded by the Council.

Eye Tests

The Council recognises its obligations under the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Regulations 1992 (as amended). The Council will fund the cost of one annual eye test conducted by a suitably qualified optician for any employees that use display screen (computer monitor) equipment for a significant part of their working day on Council business.

Routine Small Purchases

Purchases of small items of office equipment and consumables (such as paper), or necessities, by the Town Clerk in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation will be reimbursed on production of an approved completed claim form (with receipts).

Miscellaneous Expenses

There may be other incidental expenses incurred by employees that are not covered by these rules such as stationery, which would then prompt a discussion with the Town Clerk. All cases of doubt should be referred promptly to the Town Clerk, or by the Town Clerk to the Chair, prior to incurring the expense.

Receipts

A supporting original receipt for expenses claimed must be attached to the claim form in all cases where these are normally obtainable. Un-receipted expenditure will not be reimbursed except for mileage claims, and at the discretion of Council.

It is important that all Councillors and staff keep full records of expenses claimed and the reasons the expenses were incurred so that they can provide appropriate evidence, if requested, to the Inland Revenue.

Submission and Payment of Claims

All claims must reach the Town Clerk within two months of being incurred. The Town Clerk will scrutinise all claims submitted for approval at the next Council meeting. Claims made by the Town Clerk will be submitted to the Chair for scrutiny and approval.

It is important that claimants keep full records of expenses claimed and the reasons the expenses were incurred so that they can provide appropriate evidence, if requested, to HMRC. In respect of car travel, claimants should keep a log showing where journeys commenced and ceased and the number of miles travelled.

The completed and signed form, with receipts attached, should be given to the Town Clerk for processing. The Town Clerk will scrutinise all claims submitted. Claims made by the Town Clerk will be scrutinised by the Chair. If satisfied that the claims are allowable, they will be approved and paid.

Expense claims are normally paid in the following monthly payment run, unless circumstances require payment sooner.

Abuse Of This Policy

Any abuse in the application of this policy by employees will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's disciplinary policy and may possibly result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal. Any abuse in the application of this policy by Councillors will be treated as a breach of the Code of Conduct and dealt with accordingly.

Deliberate falsification of a claim or the evidence needed to make a claim by employees will constitute misconduct. "Falsification" includes the failure to pass on any discount obtained in the course of incurring an expense.

Annexe 1

Subsistence Short Day Rate (up to 8 hrs)

£0.00 food provided

£7.00 food not provided

Subsistence Full Day Rate (more than 8 hrs)

£5.00 food provided

£12.50 food not provided

Mileage rates are paid in accordance with the Green Book:

| Car engine size | 451 - 999cc | 1000 - 1199cc | 1200 - 1450cc |
|--|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| Per mile first 8,500 | 46.9p | 52.2p | 65.0p |
| Per mile after 8,500 | 13.7p | 14.4p | 16.4p |
| Petrol Element | 9.406p | 10.366p | 11.288p |
| Amount of VAT per mile in petrol element | 1.567p | 1.727p | 1.881p |