



Expenses Policy

Owner	John Harrison, Town Clerk
Reviewer	Emily Hastings, Corporate Services Manager
Previous versions	
Templates used/adapted	NALC Aug 24
Approver	Full Council
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Date of next review	2 years
Related policies/procedures	Financial Regulations Work vehicle policy – to be written
Policy covers	All HTC
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If you require any support in understanding or applying this policy, please contact the Corporate Services Manager. In addition, in line with the Equality Act 2010, we will make reasonable adjustments to remove or reduce disadvantages faced by disabled employees, Councillors, or applicants.

Purpose

1. This policy sets forth the guidelines for reimbursing legitimate expenses incurred by Council staff during official Council-related activities. It promotes transparency, accountability, and prudent use of public funds while ensuring compliance with tax regulations.
2. Members should refer to Wealden District Council Members' Allowances: Travelling Allowance and Subsistence Allowance.

Principles

3. All claims must include a completed claim form (Appendix A), valid receipts, and detailed documentation.
4. Expenses must be necessary and proportionate to the business of the Council.
5. Expenses must directly relate to Council business and adhere to the approved budget.

Eligible Expenses

6. In general, employees must not incur expenses other than in the categories listed below. However, if you have claims for expenditure other than for those categories listed below, employees should seek approval from their line manager before incurring the expense.
7. Ordinarily the Finance team should purchase all required and agreed Council items/services. Any other expenses made personally may be considered on a case-by-case basis with prior approval from the Council or clerk.

Eligible Expenses: excess travel

8. The Council will not refund your usual travel to and from your home to your usual work base(s). The Council will only refund if the travel is in excess of this usual journey.
9. Employees should always consider whether or not travel is necessary or if there are more appropriate means (for example Teams or Zoom).
10. Employees should always consider the most environmentally friendly option of travel e.g. walking, cycling or public transports.
11. Use of your own car: Any use of your own car on business is subject to you: holding a full UK driving licence; ensuring that your car is roadworthy and fully registered (MOT'd); and holding comprehensive motor insurance that provides for business use. The Council will request documentation annually. The Council accepts no liability for any accident, loss, damage or claim arising out of any journey that you make on business. The Council will not pay for the cost of any insurance policy on your own car.

12. Excess mileage allowance will be paid at HMRC-approved rates. Parking charges which are not part of your usual travel will be reimbursed with receipts, but fines or penalties will not. The Council will pay for any excess tolls, excess congestion charges and excess parking costs incurred, where applicable. If parking charges become applicable within Hailsham and Hellingly area and you are not able to park in a free HTC Council parking the parking charge would be considered part of your usual travel and will not be reimbursed.
13. Excess travel by public transport: You may claim standard rail fares only. Where possible, rail journeys should be booked by the Finance team and well in advance to benefit from any discounts for early booking.
14. Excess travel using a bicycle or Motorcycle will be paid at HMRC-approved rates: Any use of your own motorcycle on business is subject the same requirements as a car (see above).
15. Taxis: Any use of taxis for excess travel will require prior approval and only in limited circumstances e.g. where personal security and safety is an issue. You must obtain a receipt with details of the date, place of departure and destination of the journey.

Eligible expense: excess overnight accommodation

16. The Finance Team will arrange overnight accommodations for official Council business, ensuring cost-efficiency.

Eligible expense: meals and subsistence

17. If you are on Council business and are required to be away from your usual place of work where free meals and drinks are not provided e.g. training course, external meeting, Council organised activity, and you are working for **5 or more** consecutive hours you may claim up to £5 towards meals and drinks. If you are working for more than 10 hours, it increases to £10.
18. Expenses must occur within work time, for example if you start work at 8am and you finish at 1pm expenses should be incurred during that time.
19. If you are required to be away from home for an overnight stay on agreed Council business, you may claim up to: £8 for breakfast (if this is not included in the hotel room rate); £11 for lunch; £20 for dinner. Meal allowances for overnight stays are subject to maximum daily limits inclusive of drinks (excluding alcohol).
20. Employees must supply receipts and invoices for all meal/drink expenses.
21. For any other personal meals and subsistence, e.g. you are not away overnight from home on Council business or not working 5 or more consecutive hours, employees are required to provide/pay for themselves, unless agreed in advance.
22. Alcohol cannot be reclaimed under any circumstances.

Eligible expense: eye test and glasses

23. Staff DSE users and employees who have driving as an 'essential' within their job description will be encouraged to have a full sight test once every two years. The Council will pay for the cost of a full sight test, limited to one a year, up to £25. If a sight test shows that a corrective

appliance is needed to accommodate a vision defect at the viewing distance for the display equipment concerned or for driving, the Council will pay a £40 contribution towards the cost, limited to one per year. If a prescription is needed that is not related to DSE work or driving related HTC do not have to pay for glasses.

Non-reimbursable expenses

24. The Council will not reimburse: personal expenses unrelated to Council business, fines, penalties, or losses due to negligence, luxury or excessive expenditure without prior approval, alcohol, cash advances or withdrawals from an ATM machine.

Entertainment/gifts

25. The Council has strict rules about offering or receiving both entertainment and gifts. Any gifts, rewards or entertainment offered to employees must be reported immediately to the Clerk. As a general rule, small tokens of appreciation, for example flowers or a bottle of wine, may be retained by employees.

Claim process

26. All claims must be submitted within 30 days of incurring the expense using the official expenses claim form. See Appendix A.
27. Excess staff mileage is captured once a month by line managers on payroll spreadsheets.
28. Claims must be supported by original receipts or invoices.
29. Claims must be sent to Line Manager for approval.
30. Incomplete forms will be returned for correction. Ineligible expenses will be returned and will not be put forward to Finance. Expenses may be investigated.
31. Line Managers to pass signed claim forms with appropriate evidence to Finance making it clear which budget to pay from.
32. Approved claims will be reimbursed via bank transfer.

False claims

33. If the Council considers that any expenditure claimed was not legitimately incurred on behalf of the Council, it may request further details. The Council will thoroughly investigate and check any expenses claim as it sees fit. It may withhold payment where insufficient supporting documents have been provided. Where payment has been made to you prior to the discovery that the claim was not legitimate or correct, it may deduct the value of that claim from your salary.
34. Any abuse of the Council's expenses policy will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to: false expenses claims; claims for expenses that were not legitimately incurred; claims for personal gain; claims for hospitality and/or gifts without them having been declared; and receipt by you of hospitality and/or gifts from contacts that may be perceived to influence your judgment.

35. Abuse of the expenses policy, including fraudulent claims or undeclared gifts, will be treated as a serious offense. Disciplinary measures, up to dismissal may apply. The Council reserves the right to report violations to the police for investigation and criminal prosecution

Appendix A Expenses Claim form



Expenses Claim form

Description of item	Amount
Total	

Please pay ADD IN NAME directly:

Sort code ADD IN

Acc number ADD IN

Pass to your Line Manager to sign. Line Manager to pass to Finance.

Hailsham Town Council

Authorised Sig: _____ Date: _____

Nominal _____ Cost Centre _____

EAR Code _____

Date Paid _____ Bacs Cheq

REF _____