

West Suffolk Council Pay Policy Statement 2024-2025

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 West Suffolk’s ambition is to contribute to building a more prosperous local community by modelling good employment practice, including ensuring fairness in the way that it pays and rewards its existing and future employees. The council wishes to be an attractive source of potential employment to job seekers across its community and is committed to using its resources to create meaningful and fairly remunerated employment opportunities for local people.
- 1.2 We recognise that, in the context of managing scarce public resources, remuneration at all levels needs to be adequate to secure and retain high quality employees dedicated to the service of the public, but at the same time needs to avoid being unnecessarily generous or otherwise excessive. Our approach to pay and remuneration therefore is based on ensuring that the overall remuneration aligns with:
- the responsibilities and accountabilities of particular posts
 - market norms for the local government and public sectors
 - pay levels in the local area, including neighbouring public sector employers.
- 1.3 It is important that local authorities are able to determine their own pay policies and structures in order to address local priorities and to compete in the local labour market. In particular, it is recognised that senior management roles in local government are complex and diverse functions in a highly

politicised environment where often national and local pressures conflict. Our ability to continue to attract and retain high calibre leaders, capable of delivering this complex agenda, particularly during times of financial challenge, remains crucial if we are able to retain their current high performance levels and ensure that West Suffolk Council services are protected during this continuing period of economic uncertainty.

- 1.4 The last full pay review for all staff was implemented in 2019, which sought to address equality risks due to wide pay bands, recruitment and retention issues and realign grades to take into account the national living wage.

2. Legislation

- 2.1 Section 38/1 of the Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to produce a Pay Policy Statement annually. This pay statement must be prepared and approved by full Council for the end of 31 March immediately preceding the financial year to which it relates. The data in this report, therefore, represents the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
- 2.2 The act, and supporting statutory guidance, provide details of matters that must be included in this statutory pay policy, but also emphasise that each local authority has the autonomy to take its own decisions on pay and pay policies. The Pay Policy Statement is approved formally by full Council annually. It must be published on the council's website and be complied with when setting the terms and conditions of chief officer employees.
- 2.3 In October 2014, the former Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), issued a transparency code for all public sector bodies. This code required us to publish specific data on our website from February 2015. We have published data on how we organise our structures, our senior salaries for those whose remuneration is at least £50,000, the pay multiple and any trade union facility time given. The code was issued to as part of a drive to increase local accountability, giving local people the opportunity to contribute to the local decision-making process and help shape their public services.
- 2.4 The National Minimum Wage applies for those aged 21 to 22 at £10.18 with effect from 1 April 2023, 18 to 20 at £7.49, under 18 and apprentice rate £5.28.
- 2.5 The National Living Wage, previously applied to those over 25, now applies to those aged 23 and over at £10.42, with effect from 1 April 2023. Note: from 1 April 2024, the National Living Wage qualifying age will lower and will apply to 21 and over.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This Pay Policy Statement includes:
 - the level and elements of pay for each chief officer
 - the pay of the lowest paid employees

- the relationship between the pay of chief officers and other officers
- other specific aspects of chief officer remuneration, fees and charges and other discretionary payments.

3.2 Remuneration in this context is defined widely to include not just pay, but also charges, fees, allowances, benefits in kind, increases in enhancements of pension entitlements and termination payments.

4. Principles

4.1 The following principles were agreed with Unison to guide the development of the single pay and reward policy:

- single terms and conditions across both workforces
- affordable: within the Mid Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
- attractive: to recruit and retain
- responsible: maintains reputation
- legal: satisfies equality requirement
- fair: minimises risk of challenge
- drives: new organisational values
- rewards excellent performance
- manages unacceptable performance
- capable of achieving collective agreement.

4.2 The remuneration of chief officers has been agreed outside of the collective agreement process and in regard to pay, based on Leadership Team pay correlating to the Chief Executive pay. These local arrangements are as agreed by the councils in 2012.

5. Senior pay

5.1 In this policy, the senior pay group covers posts in the top three tiers of the organisation. These include the Chief Executive, strategic directors and directors.

5.2 The council currently has the following number of posts at this level: one Chief Executive, two strategic directors, five directors.

5.3 The management structure of the council can be found on the council website and on the intranet.

5.4 Chief Executive

- The salary for this post, a local grade, was originally established when the Joint Chief Executive was appointed in April 2012 and reviewed in 2018, following an analysis of the degree of responsibility in the role, the downward movement in market rates, benchmarking with other comparators and the ability to recruit and retain an exceptional candidate. The current range is £143,816 to £156,760.
- The salary of the Chief Executive with effect from 1 April 2023 was

£156,760. There have been no additional bonuses, honoraria or ex-gratia payments made.

- Other conditions of service are as prescribed by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Local Authority Chief Executives National Conditions, apart from those determined locally, as detailed in this policy.

5.5 Directors and assistant directors

- The salary for these posts has been established as a local grade following an analysis of the degree of responsibility in correlation to the Chief Executive, using the Local Government Association (LGA) national recommended job evaluation scheme for senior posts and reviewed as part of the senior pay review in 2018.

The posts fall within the following ranges and incremental points:

Chief officer role	£	£	£
Strategic director	107,889	113,997	118,071
Director	88,829	93,838	97,198

An additional payment of £5,000 per year is payable to those undertaking the statutory Monitoring Officer and Section 151 roles. A payment of £1,000 per year is payable to those undertaking the Deputy Monitoring Officer role.

- There are no other additional elements of remuneration in respect of overtime, flexitime, bank holiday working, standby payments, emergency call rota, and so on, paid to these senior staff, as they are expected to undertake duties outside their contractual hours and working patterns without additional payment.
- Other terms and conditions are as prescribed by the NJC for Local Authority Services, apart from those terms agreed locally, as detailed in this policy.
- It is important to ensure that our Leadership Team salaries remain competitive and are set at a level that will continue to attract highly effective and experienced applicants for these roles in the challenging local government labour market. Marketing testing and data analysis on labour market rates for salaries will continue to be independently obtained from the LGA as required to ensure salaries are competitive and that we recruitment and retain the right calibre of officers.

5.6 Additional fees

- The fees payable to the Returning Officer are set by statute for national elections and are paid by central government. Fees are also payable to the council's Returning Officer for local elections. These fees are payable as required and can be made to any senior officer appointed to fulfil the statutory duties of this role. The Returning Officer is an officer of

the council who is appointed under the Representation of the People Act 1983. Whilst appointed by the council, the role of the Returning Officer is one which involves, and incurs, personal responsibility and accountability and is statutorily separate from their duties as an employee of the council. As Returning Officer, they are paid a separate allowance for each election for which they are responsible.

6. Pay structure

- 6.1 The pay structure for all contractual employees, as agreed in 2023, except those staff in the senior posts detailed above, is established using NJC for Local Authorities Services National Pay Spine from spinal column point 2 (£22,366 per annum) to spinal column point 54 (£67,126 per annum). The lowest paid contractual employee will be paid at spinal point 3 (£11.79 per hour), at a full time equivalent basic pay rate of £22,737 per annum.
- 6.2 Our pay bands range from Band 1 to Band 8 and to service manager. All posts, other than the senior posts, are evaluated using the NJC Job Evaluation Scheme, which is recognised by employers and trades unions nationally. This scheme allows for robust measurement against set criteria resulting in fair and objective evaluations and satisfies equal pay requirements.
- 6.3 The national apprentice rate for first year is £5.28 per hour (£10,186 per annum) and thereafter the National Minimum Wage applies, depending on age. All West Suffolk Council apprentices undertaking apprenticeships are paid £7.49 per hour (£14,450 per annum) for the first year and the National Minimum Wage depending on age thereafter.
- 6.4 All employees receive the national NJC cost of living award. The value of the scale points in these pay grades are up lifted by the pay awards notified from time to time by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.
- 6.5 Progression within the band for all staff is subject to performance, which is assessed annually, in accordance with the performance development review scheme, and progression payments are effective from 1 October each year.
- 6.6 There is no 'time served' progression.

7. Gender pay gap

- 7.1 As at 1 April 2018, public, private and voluntary sector organisations with 250 or more employees were required to report on their gender pay gaps. In 2016, the national gender pay gap for full time employees was 9.4 per cent, meaning that average pay for full time female employees was 9.4 per cent lower than for full time male employees. In 2018, the national gender pay gap fell to 8.6 per cent, but has since risen in 2019 to 8.9 per cent.
- 7.2 For the period April 2022 to March 2023, our mean gender pay gap was -2.34 per cent, (compared with -2.56 per cent for the period April 2021 to

March 2022), showing that the average hourly rate of females was 2.34 per cent more than the average hourly rate of males. The median gender pay gap for the same period was -1.91 per cent (compared with -4.72 per cent for the period April 2021 to March 2022).

8. Pay protection

8.1 Pay protection is applied to employees who are placed in a grade through restructuring or a re-evaluation of a post, where the maximum salary of that grade is lower than their current earnings, in accordance with the organisational change and redundancy policies current at the time. Pay is protected for one year. Employees' pay is frozen at this rate (with no cost of living or incremental increase) for up to one year, or until the maximum of the new grade has caught up or overtaken the current earnings due to annual pay increases.

Note: Pay protection excludes market supplement pay, essential user travel allowance and overtime allowances; it applies to basic pay only. These items are not protected.

9. Allowances and benefits in kind

9.1 Allowances and benefits typically follow nationally agreed rates. However, there are a number of locally agreed allowances, which are payable following the collective agreement. Some are subject to eligibility criteria, as follows:

- essential car user allowance at nationally prescribed lump sum and HMRC mileage rates and access to a lease car or a lease car scheme, both under strict eligibility criteria and where favourable to the council
- casual user mileage allowance at HMRC rates
- first aid (an allowance paid to staff to act as first aiders in the workplace)
- reimbursement of one professional subscription fee if beneficial to the performance of the role.

10. Payments or charges and contributions

10.1 The new Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) was implemented with effect from 1 April 2014.

10.2 The new LGPS is a career average revalued earnings (CARE) scheme rather than a final salary pension scheme.

11. Multipliers

11.1 The idea of publishing the ratio of the pay of an organisation's top earner to that of its median earner was recommended in order to support the principles of fair pay (the Hutton Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector 2011) and transparency.

11.2 The council's ratio in respect of the pay of the median earner compared to the

pay of the highest earner as of 1 April 2023 is 5.2:1 – that is, the Chief Executive (top earner) earns 5.2 times as much as the council’s median earner (£30,296 per annum), compared to April 2022 which was 5.3:1.

- 11.3 The council’s ratio of the highest paid employee (April 2023) to the lowest paid (£22,737 per annum) contractual employee remains 6.9:1, compared with 7.2:1 in April 2022.

The Hutton review recommended that the average pay ratio between the chief executive of most public sector organisations and the lowest paid member of staff is below 12:1.

By comparison, the average estimated top-to-bottom pay ratio in FTSE 100 companies (which disclosed data) was 262:1 in 2018 (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Research Report 2019 – most recent data available).

We, therefore, compare very favourably to these statistics, although Hutton warned against the difficulty of making direct comparisons between authorities.

- 11.4 The table below summarises the pay multiples.

Highest pay	£156,760
Median pay	£30,296
Lowest pay	£22,737
Highest to median ratio	5.2:1
Highest to lowest ratio	6.9:1

12. Discretionary payments

The policy for the award of any discretionary payments is the same for all staff, regardless of their pay level, up to a maximum of 104 weeks. The following arrangements apply.

- 12.1 Redundancy payments under regulation 5 of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006:

As at 1 April 2015, this provides an overall lump sum of 1.5 times the statutory redundancy payment multiplier based on actual weeks’ pay. This is payable to employees made redundant with two or more years’ local government service, regardless of their age.

12.2 Severance payments under regulation 6

Severance payments with a value above £100,000 will be approved by full Council, in accordance with guidance from the Secretary of State under Section 40 of the Localism Act 2011. Contractual and pension entitlements are not included in this figure as part of a severance payment requiring such approval.

No severance payments are routinely made, but employees aged 55 and over, who are retiring early in the interests of efficiency, receive immediate payment of their pension benefits, with no additional years' service or compensatory payments. This forms part of the rules of the LGPS and in accordance with the Pensions Discretions Policy. The capital cost of the early payment of pension benefits will be met by the council, but all such early retirements are subject to the costs being met by savings within a three-year period.

12.3 Additional membership for revision purposes under regulation 12 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2007:

None awarded.

12.4 Additional pension under regulation 13 of same legislation:

None awarded.

13. Decision making

13.1 Decisions on remuneration are made as follows:

- senior pay bands local level approved by full Council
- pay structure for all other posts approved by full Council
- performance progression, in accordance with the locally agreed scheme and as approved by officers under existing delegated powers.

14. Disclosure

14.1 This Pay Policy Statement will be published on the council's website. In addition, numbers and details of posts paid above £50,000 are disclosed on the council's website in the annual statement of accounts and as part of the requirements of the transparency code.

For more information please contact:

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Comparison data

Most recent available information	Ratio to median	Ratio to lowest paid employee
Ipswich	4.7:1	5.9:1
West Suffolk	5.2:1	6.9:1
East Suffolk	5.6:1	7.6:1
Suffolk County Council	6.0:1	9.2:1
East Cambridgeshire	Not disclosed	6.0:1
Babergh and Mid Suffolk	5.5:1	8.1:1 (not yet published for 2024/25)

Information derived from Statement of Accounts or Pay Policy Statement.