

# Pay Policy Statement 2026-2027

## Contents

1.	Introduction .....	1
2.	Legislation.....	2
3.	Scope.....	2
4.	Senior pay .....	2
5.	Pay structure .....	4
6.	Gender pay gap.....	4
7.	Pay protection.....	5
8.	Allowances and benefits in kind .....	5
9.	Payments, charges and contributions .....	5
10.	Multipliers .....	5
11.	Discretionary payments .....	6
12.	Decision making .....	6
13.	Disclosure .....	7

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 West Suffolk’s continued 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 It is important that local authorities can determine their own pay policies and structures to address local priorities and to compete in the local labour market. It is recognised that senior management roles, in local government, continue to be complex across diverse functions in a highly politicised environment where, often, national and local pressures conflict.
- 1.3 It is also recognised that, and in the context of the lead into local government reorganisation, 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. This is necessary if we are to maintain current high performance levels and ensure West Suffolk services are protected during this continuing period of uncertainty.
- 1.4 The last full pay review, for all staff and implemented in 2019, sought to address equality risks due to wide pay bands and 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 an annual pay policy, prepared and approved by Council, for the end of the 31 March immediately preceding the financial year to which it relates. The data in this report, therefore, represents the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.
- 2.2 The act provides details of matters that must be included in this statutory pay policy but also emphasises that each local authority has the autonomy to take its own decisions on pay and pay policies.
- 2.3 The National Minimum Wage applies for those aged 18 to 20 at £10, under 18 and apprentice rate £7.55, with effect from 1 April 2025 (£10.85 and £8 with effect from 1 April 2026).
- 2.4 The National Living Wage applies for those aged 21 and over at £12.21 with effect from 1 April 2025 (£12.71 with effect from 1 April 2026).

## **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.

## **4. Senior pay**

- 4.1 Senior pay group covers the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer, directors (three), heads of service (level 2) (seven) and heads of service (level 1) (five).
- 4.2 The remuneration of chief officers is agreed outside of the collective agreement process and is currently based on correlation to the Chief Executive pay. The Chief Executive pay is currently subject to independent review and benchmarking by GovEast to ensure that the pay is appropriate, comparable and competitive for a chief executive delivering services for a council, both locally, regionally and nationally. The last independent pay review was 2018.
- 4.3 **Chief Executive**
- The salary of the Chief Executive with effect from 1 April 2025 was £165,821 per annum. The pay range is £151,463 to £165,821 per annum. There have been no additional bonuses, honoraria or ex-gratia payments made.

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

#### 4.4 Senior pay

- 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. The posts fall within the following ranges and incremental points:

<b>Post</b>	<b>Scale point 1</b>	<b>Scale point 2</b>	<b>Scale point 3</b>
Chief Executive	151,463	160,077	165,821
Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer	114,125	120,586	124,896
Director	98,450	104,049	107,783
Heads of service (level 2)	79,518	83,240	86,227
Heads of service (level 1)	72,702	75,236	77,936

- 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.
- The council's Monitoring Officer is paid an additional allowance of £2,000 per annum for undertaking the statutory officer role for the council.
- The Section 151 Officer, Chief Operating Officer grade, undertakes the statutory officer role for which there is no additional allowance for this role.
- Other terms and conditions are as prescribed by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Services, apart from those terms agreed locally, as detailed in this policy.
- It is important to ensure that our senior officer salaries remain competitive and market testing and data analysis on labour market rates for salaries will continue to be independently obtained from the Local Government Association (LGA) and GovEast, as required, to ensure salaries are competitive and that we recruit and retain the right calibre of officers.

#### 4.5 Additional fees

The council is required to appoint a Returning Officer under Section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983. 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.

## **5. Pay structure**

- 5.1 The pay structure for all contractual employees, as agreed in 2025, except those staff in the senior posts detailed above, is established using NJC for Local Authorities Services National Pay Spine from spinal column point 3 (£24,796 per annum) to spinal column point 54 (£71,006 per annum). Currently, the lowest paid contractual employee is paid at spinal point 5 (£13.26 per hour), at a full time equivalent basic pay rate of £25,583 per annum.
- 5.2 Our pay bands range from Band 1 to Band 8 and to service manager. Senior pay bands are detailed at 4.4. All posts, other than the senior posts, are evaluated using the NJC Job Evaluation Scheme, which is recognised by employers and trade unions nationally. This scheme allows for robust measurement against set criteria, resulting in fair and objective evaluations, and satisfies equal pay requirements.
- 5.3 The national apprentice rate for first year is £7.55 per hour (£14,566 per annum) and thereafter the national minimum wage applies, depending on age. All West Suffolk Council apprentices undertaking apprenticeships are paid at a starting salary of £10 per hour (£19,292 per annum) for the first year and the national wage, depending on age, thereafter.
- 5.4 All employees receive the national NJC cost of living award.
- 5.5 Progression within the grade for all staff is subject to performance, which is assessed annually, in accordance with the performance review scheme, and progression payments are effective from 1 October each year.
- 5.6 There is no 'time served' progression.

## **6. Gender pay gap**

- 6.1 As of 1 April 2018, public, private and voluntary sector organisations with 250 or more employees were required to report on their gender pay gaps. In April 2025, the national gender pay gap was reported at 6.9 per cent, down from 7.1 per cent in April 2024.
- 6.2 For the period April 2024 to March 2025, our mean gender pay gap was -1.46 per cent (compared with -2.25 per cent for the period April 2023 to March 2024), showing that the average hourly rate of females was 1.46 per cent more than the average hourly rate of males. The median gender pay gap was -1.59 per cent (compared with 0 per cent for the period April 2023 to March 2024).

## **7. Pay protection**

7.1 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. Basic 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.

## **8. Allowances and benefits in kind**

8.1 Allowances and benefits typically follow nationally agreed rates. However, there is 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.

## **9. Payments, charges and contributions**

9.1 The new Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) was implemented with effect from 1 April 2014. The LGPS is a career average revalued earnings (CARE) scheme rather than a final salary pension scheme.

## **10. Multipliers**

- 10.1 The idea of publishing the ratio of the pay of an organisation's top earner to that of its median earner was recommended to support the principles of fair pay (the Hutton Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector 2011) and transparency. The review recommended that average pay ratios between chief executive and the lowest paid member of staff is below 12 to 1.
- 10.2 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 2025, is 4.9 to 1 – that is, the Chief Executive (top earner) earns 4.9 times as much as the council's median earner (£33,343 per annum), which is a decrease when compared to April 2024 which was 5.1 to 1.

- 10.3 The council's ratio of the highest paid employee (April 2025) to the current lowest paid (£25,583 per annum) contractual employee is 6.4 to 1, compared with 6.5 to 1 in April 2024.

## **11. 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:

- 11.1 'Redundancy payments under regulation 5 of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006' – as of 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.

### **11.2 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 Local Government Pension Scheme (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.

- 11.3 Additional membership for revision purposes under regulation 12 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2007. None awarded.

- 11.4 Additional pension under regulation 13 of same legislation. None awarded.

## **12. Decision making**

- 12.1 Decisions on remuneration are reported as follows:

- senior pay, reviewed by independent bodies, is reported through the annual Pay Policy Statement
- performance progression, in accordance with the locally agreed scheme, and as approved by officers under existing delegated powers.

## **13. Disclosure**

- 13.1 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.