

Policy on Elected Members' Allowances and Expenses

For the period beginning on 1 July 2023 and ending on 30 June 2024

Introduction

In addition to determining the remuneration of elected members, the Remuneration Authority is required to approve the Council's policy on allowances and expenses payable to elected members.

In developing this policy, key factors have been fairness to elected members and ratepayers, and administrative efficiency.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Sensitive Expenditure Policy.

Policy on allowances and expenses

Parking

Elected members who incur parking charges when on Council business at other locations are entitled to reimbursement of the actual cost.

Use of public transport

Elected members who travel by public transport in relation to Council business are entitled to reimbursement of the actual cost. Evidence of the cost incurred shall be provided.

Vehicle kilometre allowance

Subject to the interpretation and exceptions listed below, elected members are entitled to a per kilometre allowance in accordance with the Inland Revenue guidelines when using a private vehicle for Council business. This is reviewed annually.

Where an elected member travels in a petrol or diesel vehicle, the rate payable is 95 cents per kilometre for the first 14,000 kilometres of Council travel in a financial year, and 34 cents thereafter.

Where an elected member travels in a petrol hybrid vehicle, the rate payable is 95 cents per kilometre for the first 14,000 kilometres of Council travel in a financial year, and 20 cents thereafter.

Where an elected member travels in an electric vehicle, the rate payable is 95 cents per kilometre for the first 14,000 kilometres of Council travel in a financial year, and 11 cents thereafter.

Childcare allowance

Elected members are eligible for a childcare allowance, being a contribution towards expenses incurred by the member for childcare provided while the member is engaged on Council business.

A member is eligible to be paid a childcare allowance in respect of childcare provided for a child only if:

- The member is a parent or guardian of the child, or is a person who usually has responsibility for the day-to-day care of the child (other than on a temporary basis); and
- The child is aged under 14 years of age; and
- The childcare is provided by a person who:
 - is not a parent of the child or a spouse, civil union partner, or de facto partner of the member; and
 - Does not ordinarily reside with the member; and
- The member provides evidence satisfactory to the Council of the amount paid for childcare.

Total childcare allowances paid to an elected member will not exceed \$6,000 per annum, per child.

Communications allowance

It is expected that elected members will have their own home computer with internet connection, a home telephone, and a mobile phone, and that these items are available for use for their Council-related business.

Elected members having such items available for Council business are eligible to receive an annual communications allowance of:

- \$400 for the use of a personal computer, tablet, or laptop, including any related docking station;
- \$50 for the use of a printer;
- \$200 for the use of a mobile phone;
- Up to \$200 for the use of information or computer technology (ICT) consumables.
- \$800 for using own internet service for the determination term;
- \$500 for council-related toll and mobile phone charges for the determination term (or reimbursement of the actual costs of telephone calls made on local authority business on production of the relevant telephone records and receipts).

The Council will normally provide a mobile phone for the Mayor and cover all expenses associated with the use of that phone on Council business. The phone remains the property of the Council, and the communication allowance payable to the Mayor will be reduced to reflect the provision of the phone.

If the member is not a member for the whole of the determination term, the communications allowance will be pro rated for the number of days that the member held office in the determination term.

Conferences, courses, seminars

Elected members who have been authorised to attend a conference, course, seminar etc. will have attendance fees, travel, accommodation, and meals paid for.

Approval for Councillor attendance at these events must be approved by the Mayor; approval for attendance by the Mayor is by the Council or Deputy Mayor.

Payment

Claims for kilometres travelled or reimbursement of other expenses should be made on the forms provided, must be made no later than three months after the date concerned, and as appropriate should include all relevant receipts.

Communications allowances will be paid annually, at the end of each financial year to which they relate. They should be claimed on the form provided. Members may claim for part-years where they are elected within a financial year or are not successfully re-elected.

Childcare allowances will be paid on submission of a childcare allowance claim from the member, on the form provided. The claim must set out the actual costs incurred and paid by the member and must include a receipted invoice or other appropriate record of payment for the childcare services provided.

Payment will be made by direct credit at the next Council payment run.

Taxation

Taxation on allowances shall be deducted at the prevailing taxation rates set by the Department of Inland Revenue.

Interpretation

With respect to childcare allowances, kilometre allowances and to reimbursement of public transport and parking costs, the term 'Council business' includes attendance at the following:

- official meetings of the Council and any committee and sub-committee of Council
- Council workshops
- meetings and workshops of advisory groups established by Council
- meetings and workshops of external bodies to which the elected member has been appointed by Council
- statutory hearings
- an external event or meeting where there has been:
 - a resolution of Council or a committee
 - an authorisation by the Mayor, or
 - with respect to the member of a committee, an authorisation by the Chairperson of that committee
- visits to, and tours of, facilities or sites or works for which the Council is responsible, or has involvement, or which will be the subject of business to come before the Council or any committee
- seminars and training courses where the elected member's attendance has been authorised.

Kilometres may include travel to and from the member's residence, if the member:

- is not provided with a Council vehicle
- is travelling on a private vehicle, on Council business (defined above), and by the most direct route that is reasonable.

Exceptions

- 'Council business' does not include events where the primary focus is on social activity.
- If the Council is providing transport, and an elected member chooses for personal reasons to travel separately, they will not be entitled to a vehicle allowance.
- Where an elected member chooses for personal reasons to travel by private vehicle to an approved conference or seminar outside of the Wellington region, they will be entitled to no more than the cheapest equivalent air fares available for the day(s) of travel, where such fares are less than the kilometre allowance.