

Policy on Elected Members' Allowances and Expenses – Greater Wellington Regional Council

**(As adopted by Council onfor
Remuneration Authority approval)**

1. Introduction

In addition to determining the remuneration of elected members, the Remuneration Authority (the Authority) is required to determine the allowances and expenses of all elected members.

Every year the Authority asks each local authority to provide the proposed rules for the recovery of expenses incurred by elected members. The Authority then makes a determination, prescribing the rules that apply.

In developing this policy, key factors have been fairness to elected members and ratepayers, and administrative efficiency. Therefore, where possible, standard allowances are based on fair and reasonable reimbursement for costs incurred, rather than requiring a claim to be made.

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

2. Proposed policy on allowances and expenses

2.1 Parking

Elected members will be provided with parking spaces at the Regional Council Centre for their use when on council business.

Two dedicated parking spaces for the Chair and Deputy Chair will be provided in the basement of the Regional Council Centre. Five dedicated spaces will be provided in the James Smiths Council Car Park, with additional spaces reserved for elected members on meeting days.

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

2.2 Chair's vehicle

The Chair of the Council will be provided with a vehicle. If a Chair elects to have the vehicle available for private use, a deduction will be made from their salary as determined by the Authority.

2.3 Mileage Allowance

Subject to the interpretation and exceptions listed below, elected members are entitled to a mileage allowance when using their own vehicle for Council business. The rate payable will be the maximum rate determined by the Authority, and will reflect both cost recovery and an element of remuneration of travelling time.

Elected members who travel by public transport in relation to Council business are entitled for reimbursement of the actual cost.

Interpretation

With respect to mileage allowances, the term “Council business” includes attendance at the following:

- Official meetings of the Council and any committee and subcommittee of which the elected member forms part
- Council workshops
- Statutory hearings
- Meetings of council-owned companies
- An external event or meeting where there has been:
 - a resolution of Council or a Committee or
 - an authorisation by the Council Chair, 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
- Constituency meetings
- Discussions with Committee Chairpersons or Council officers
- Consultation with Mayors, territorial authority committee Chairpersons, or elected members
- Official briefings.

Mileage may include travel to and from the member’s residence, if the travel is:

- (a) in his or her own vehicle; and
- (b) on Council business as outlined above; and
- (c) by the most direct route reasonable in the circumstances.

“Council business” does not include events where the primary focus is on social activity.

Exceptions

- 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 motor vehicle to a 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 mileage allowance at ordinary rates.

2.4 Conferences, courses, seminars etc.

Elected members who have been authorised to attend a conference, course, seminar etc. will have attendance fees, travel, accommodation, and meals paid for. Unless otherwise agreed by the Divisional Manager, Corporate & Strategy, all travel and accommodation will be booked through the Council Secretariat.

Attendance will generally be authorised by resolution in a public session of a Council or Committee meeting, but may also be authorised by the Council Chair in association with the Chief Executive, or with respect to the member of a committee, by the Chairperson of that committee in association with the principal reporting officer for the committee.

The Council will only meet the cost of the Chair's spouse or partner for attendance at the annual LGNZ Conference.

2.5 Clothing

Councillors may be supplied with jackets and coats bearing the Council's branding. These remain Council property at all times.

2.6 Telephone rental

Elected members are entitled to an allowance of \$23.00 per month, being half the standard cost of a residential phone connection and a "smart pack" of services comprising call minder, call waiting, and caller identification. An elected member must have a landline connection and the "smart pack" of services to receive the allowance.

2.7 Mobile phones

The Council will provide a mobile phone for the Chair, and cover all expenses associated with the use of that phone on Council business. The phone remains the property of the Council, and the Chair will not receive the mobile phone allowance paid to other members.

All other elected members who can be contacted on a mobile telephone are entitled to an allowance of \$20 per month. This allowance is based on half the cost of the monthly rental, plus a contribution towards the cost of calls relating to Council business. It is assumed that a key benefit of a mobile phone is for in-coming calls where the cost is met by the caller, and that elected members will make most outgoing calls from land lines.

All elected members will provide their own mobile phone at their expense.

2.8 Computers

Subject to the conditions below, elected members are entitled to an allowance of \$86.66 per month to assist them to purchase and/or maintain a personal computer for Council business. An elected member must have a suitable computer, broadband connection, and printer to receive the allowance.

The allowance is based on the following:

$$\text{Allowance} = (\$3000/36/2) + \$20 + \$25 = \$86.66$$

\$3000 is taken as the cost of a personal computer loaded with Microsoft *Word* and anti-virus protection, together with a printer. This figure is divided by 36, the number of months in a triennium and also the expected life of a personal computer, and then by 2, assuming Council use as half of the use of the computer.

\$20 is approximately half the monthly cost of a mid-level broadband internet connection plan.

\$25 is approximately half the cost of a printer cartridge.

Printer paper can be supplied on request from the Council.

2.9 Stationery

Stationery is available on request for use on council business.

2.10 Councillors' office

Elected members are entitled to use the Councillors' office on level 5 of the Regional Council Centre. The office is equipped with desks, phones, and a computer.

2.11 Typing facilities

Typing facilities are available to Councillors for Council business.

2.12 Travel Insurance

Travel insurance will be provided for overseas travel on Council business.

2.13 Personal Accident Insurance

The Council's personal accident insurance includes cover for the death or bodily injury of an elected member. Any payment received as a result of a claim made under this cover in respect of an elected member is payable to the Council, and will be utilised for Council purposes only, e.g. as a contribution to the costs of running an extraordinary election. No payment will be made to the elected member who is the subject of the claim.

2.14 Payment

Where applicable, allowances will be paid fortnightly.

Claims for expenses should be made fortnightly on the forms provided, must be made no later than three months after the date concerned, and should include all relevant receipts. Payment of claims made after that date requires the approval of the Council Chair.

Payment will be made by direct credit.

2.15 Taxation

Taxation on allowances shall be deducted at the prevailing taxation rates set by the Department of Inland Revenue. Council Officers will furnish details of taxable payments made, and deductions for every tax year.