

Elected Members' Allowances and Reimbursement Policy

Amended: 31 October 2022

Background

From time to time elected members incur expenses on Council's behalf which need to be reimbursed.

In addition to this document, the Council Policy Register sets out the policies, rules and procedures relating to the expenses and allowances payable to elected members.

Objective

This policy sets out rules on the claiming of expenses by elected members and the resources that will be available to them during their term of office.

Policies

1. Reimbursement and the use of Council-supplied resources apply only to elected members personally, and only while they are acting in their official capacity as elected members.
2. Costs for expenses must have a justifiable business purpose and be moderate and conservative in all respects.
3. Transparency is achieved through the monthly publication on the Council's website of all expenses for elected members over the past month.
4. Expense claims are approved by the Team Leader Governance Support and actual receipts are required.
5. Cost reimbursements will be made via the payroll system.
6. All expenditure that falls under this policy is approved on the condition that it can be met within relevant budget provisions.
7. This Policy does not extend to expenses incurred as a result of the election or electoral work (such as attendance at ratepayer meetings or visits to constituents) unless it is official Council business.
8. Where this policy is silent or not specific in relation to claims for expenses or allowances the Chief Executive Officer shall be guided by the Auditor-General's 2007 good practice guide on "Controlling Sensitive Expenditure: Guidelines for Public Entities".
9. The allowances and expenses listed in Appendix B apply to those costs incurred for purposes of Council business only.

Appendix A - Interpretation

COUNCIL BUSINESS includes attendance at the following:

- Official meetings of the Council and any committee and subcommittee 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
- 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 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 for or has involvement in, 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 other elected members or Council officers
- Official briefings.

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

Appendix B – Allowances and Expenses

1. All Elected Members

a. Air travel	<p>All elected members are entitled to utilise domestic air travel for Council-related travel where travel by air is the most cost effective option.</p> <p>All elected member international air travel is by way of economy class. The approval of the Council is required for exceptions, e.g. where Premium Economy or the equivalent air travel is desirable for health or other compelling reasons.</p>
b. Car parking	<p>Car parking will be reimbursed upon the production of <u>actual</u> receipts.</p>
c. Communications equipment	<p>Provision of communications equipment is a Council business decision. Council may choose to provide either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) communications equipment: <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">b) an annual allowance for any or all equipment provided by the elected member, as per amounts set by the Remuneration Authority. Where a member is not a member for the whole period of the determination, the amount of the allowance is pro-rated.

d. Entertainment and hospitality	<p>Costs related to hosting official visitors to the Council must be arranged by Council staff in advance, subject to approval by the Chief Executive Officer.</p> <p>Costs incurred while travelling on council business require the pre-approval of the General Manager Corporate Services.</p>
e. Exceptional circumstances	<p>Staff will arrange reasonable overnight accommodation when travel or business requirements do not allow for return on the same day.</p>
f. General community related expenses	<p>From time to time, councillors and board chairs may have unforeseen costs arise for items relating to community events, such as payment of koha, or the purchase of a wreath for attendance at a commemorative event. Reimbursement of such expenditure should be approved by the General Manager Corporate Services.</p>
g. Rental cars	<p>Rental cars may be utilised when attending meetings or conferences in other centres where this is the most cost-effective travel option and are arranged by staff in advance.</p> <p>Fuel costs will be reimbursed on production of <u>actual</u> receipts.</p>
h. Stationery	<p>Council will supply reasonable amounts of stationery for Council business.</p>
i. Taxis and shuttles	<p>Taxi and shuttle services must be pre-booked by staff. Costs are reimbursed on production of <u>actual</u> receipts.</p> <p>Taxis may not be used if significant travel distances mean that use of a taxi is not the most cost effective option. Shuttles or rental cars booked by Governance Support staff should be considered as an option in such circumstances.</p>
j. Travel and event attendance	<p>All elected members are entitled to payment of actual and reasonable registration, travel, accommodation, meal and related incidental expenses (including travel insurance) incurred in attendance at these events, held both within New Zealand and overseas, subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) related expenditure being accommodated within existing budgets, and b) the appropriate approvals as outlined in this policy: <p>and excluding reimbursement for purchases from hotel mini-bars and charges for in-room video or cable movies.</p> <p>All travel and accommodation arrangements for elected members are to be directed to Governance Support staff for processing, at the most economic cost available (when possible) at the time of booking, unless all travel costs are being met privately or by an outside party.</p> <p>The conference, course, seminar or training event must directly contribute to the member's ability to carry out their role. Voluntary conferences, courses, seminars, or training that contribute to the member's personal development will not be covered by Council.</p> <p>Each elected member may attend one conference or professional development event per representative body to which they are elected or appointed per financial year.</p> <p>Attendance at these events when held in New Zealand must be approved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the case of councillors, the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer

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- In the case of community board members, the relevant board chair and the Chief Executive Officer

Attendance by any elected member at these events when held overseas must be approved by the Council.

Applications to attend an additional event in a financial year are approved at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer in consideration of available budget.

The consequential travel expenses and a report written by the elected members on what they have learned and the value to the organisation will be provided at the next relevant public community board, committee, or Council meeting to provide transparency and confidence to the public that ratepayer funds are being used effectively.

When a Community Board member is to be the Council's representative at a conference or event, the approval of the Council is required.

Travel for RMA hearings and DLC training is managed by staff and determined by business need, as there is a separate budget for these activities.

2. The Mayor

a. Airline club	Given frequent travel requirements for the role, the Mayor is entitled to reimbursement of an Air New Zealand Koru Club subscription, on the provision of annual receipt.
b. Car	The Mayor may be provided with a vehicle that will also be available for his/her private use. A deduction will be made from his/her salary as determined by the Remuneration Authority. The Mayor will not be able to claim for vehicle mileage. Alternatively, the Mayor may provide his/her own vehicle, in which case the Mayor may claim vehicle mileage for travel on Council Business. Mileage will only be paid upon receipt of a completed Claim for Meeting and Travel Expenses form detailing the nature of the travel.
c. Entertainment and hospitality	The Mayor may hold a purchasing card to pay directly for any entertainment or hospitality expenses which must be used in accordance with Council's Credit Card Expenditure Policy.
d. Telephone costs	The Council will 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. If the Mayor's home residence does not have reliable mobile service, landline services will also be provided through Council's corporate account to provide best value for the ratepayer.
e. Travel and conferences, courses and seminars	The prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer is required for travel within New Zealand for Council business. The prior approval of the Council is required for all international travel. Where the Mayor or the Mayor's authorised representative is accompanied by his/her partner on international travel, Council will meet the cost of their travel, accommodation, and incidental costs if the partner's involvement <u>directly</u> contributes to a clear business purpose.
