



Elected Members' Expenses and Resources Policy

Policy type: Governance

Policy owner	Corporate Services Group Manager		
Adopted by	Council		
Description of policy	The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines on the claiming of expenses by elected members as well as defining the resources available to elected members during their term in office.		
Keywords	Elected members, expenses, resources, allowances		
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1. Objective

To establish guidelines on the claiming of expenses by elected members and what resources will be available to elected members during their term of office.

It should be read in conjunction with the 'Local Government Members (2025/26) Determination 2025. This can be accessed using the following link:

<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2025/0140/latest/LMS1450225.htm>

2. Principles

- 2.1. Elected members should be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses they incur in carrying out their official duties.
- 2.2. Reasonable resources should be made available to elected members to enable them to carry out their responsibilities more efficiently.
- 2.3. Reimbursement of expenses and use of resources apply only to elected members personally and only while they are acting in their official capacity as elected members on Council business.
- 2.4. Elected members' expense expenditure must have a justifiable business purpose, be moderate and conservative having regard to the circumstances, be made transparently and is appropriate in all respects.

3. Definitions

Absence without leave is a period of time when an elected member is not fulfilling their responsibilities as an elected member and is doing so without formal approval from the Mayor.

Actual	means as evidenced by the original receipt attached to the claim form.
Childcare allowance	means the childcare allowance included in the current Local Government Members Determination which provides for the payment of childcare allowances by a local authority.
Council business	means formal Council, committee meetings, workshops, seminars, statutory hearings, training courses, conferences, site visits, meetings with staff, meetings with community groups, meetings with members of the public and social activities where Council has given approval for an elected member to attend as a Council representative
Expenses	means personal money spent by elected members whilst going about their official duties as elected members on Council business and includes Kilometre claims.
Expense rules	means the type of expenses that are able to be claimed because they have been approved by the Remuneration Authority.
Family member of the member relationship	in respect of the childcare allowance, means a spouse, civil union partner, de facto partner, or a relative whether by a blood or adoption.
Leave of absence	is a period of time, approved by the Mayor, for which an elected member is on leave from the duties of being an elected member.
Elected member	means, for the purposes of this policy, a person who is declared to be elected to that local authority or board under the Local Electoral Act 2001 or who, as the result of further election or appointment under that Act or the Local Government Act 2002, is an office holder in relation to the local authority or board (e.g. a chairperson).
Personal communications	means any communication that does not represent the official view of Council.
Reasonable	means that it is within the amount specified by the policy or as deemed reasonable by the Mayor and/or Chief Executive.
Receipt	means an itemised tax invoice, i.e. an EFTPOS receipt is not an acceptable form of support for expense claims.
Remuneration Authority	is an independent body established under the Local Government Act 2002, part of whose responsibilities are to determine remuneration and expense rules for local authority elected members.
Resources	are goods and services normally used by Council to support its business, that are provided to elected members for their personal use to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities as elected members.
Threshold distance	means the current definition determined by the Remuneration Authority.

Vehicle kilometre allowance

means the current definition and rate determined by the Remuneration Authority.

4. Background

The Local Government Act 2002 has given the Remuneration Authority the responsibility for setting remuneration, approving expense rules and setting the kilometre allowance for elected members.

5. Policy Statement

5.1. What expenses may be claimed?

The sections below outline the expenses that may be claimed by the elected members while on Council business approved by Council.

5.2 Accommodation and meals

- 5.2.1. When it is necessary to stay away from home overnight on Council business, the actual and reasonable costs of accommodation, meals and parking (if not provided free by the accommodation provider) are paid for by Council upon submission of the appropriate form.
- 5.2.2 Accommodation, meals and incidental expenditure must have a clear business purpose and should be cost-effective, taking into account:
 - the geographic location of the accommodation relative to where the elected member(s)' business is;
 - the standard of accommodation;
 - safety and security considerations;
 - that additional kilometre or taxi/uber expenses are not usually required.
- 5.2.3 All accommodation will be booked through Council's travel booking system which provides for preferred accommodation venues and charge-back facilities. Alternative accommodation may be used where:
 - There are no rooms available at a reasonable cost at the preferred location(s).
 - The elected member is attending conference/training at a particular location that cannot be booked through Council's travel booking system
 - An alternative, lower priced option is preferred by the elected member(s).
 - The accommodation need results from travel delays or an emergency.
- 5.2.4 When meals do not form part of a "package", they may be claimed on presentation of an actual and itemised receipt (not a credit card or EFTPOS statement).
- 5.2.5 The following maximum limits for meals.
 - Breakfast and/or lunch – up to \$50.00 (excluding GST) per elected member per meal. Any cost over this limit is the responsibility of the elected member.
 - Dinner – up to \$70.00 (exclusive GST) per elected member per meal. Any costs over this limit are the responsibility of the elected member.

- 5.2.6 When meals are provided as part of a “package”, additional meal expenses cannot be claimed.

5.3 Childcare allowance

- 5.3.1 An elected member is eligible to be paid a childcare allowance in respect of childcare provided for a child only if:
- the elected 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 family member of the elected member; and does not ordinarily live with the elected member; and
 - the elected member provides evidence satisfactory to the local authority of the amount paid for childcare.
- 5.3.2 The Council will not pay childcare allowances to an elected member that totals more than \$7,500 per child during the determination term.

5.4 Travel

- 5.4.1 Travel expenditure should be economical and efficient, having regard to purpose, distance, time, urgency, and personal health, security and safety considerations. Any travel must have a clear business purpose.
- 5.4.2 To the extent practical, air travel should be booked well ahead of the actual travel, so that expenditure is the most cost-effective possible. The lowest practically priced airfare is to be used for all journeys (domestic and other) unless there is at least five hours or more of uninterrupted flight duration, a heavy work schedule on arrival, or personal health, known health conditions, safety, or security reasons, where premium economy may be used.
- 5.4.3 International air travel paid for by Council must be authorised by resolution of Council.
- 5.4.4 Council-funded membership of any airline club is restricted to the position of the Mayor.
- 5.4.5 Private travel before, during or at the end of travel paid for by Council is the responsibility of the elected member and at no additional cost to Council. The cost of any stopover paid for by Council must have a clear business purpose and be pre-approved by the Mayor (or Risk and Assurance Committee Chairperson in the case of the Mayor) and Chief Executive.
- 5.4.6 An elected member’s ability to claim any daily or overnight accommodation expenses ends at the conclusion of the conference/forum or when the elected member leaves the conference/forum.

5.5 Use of private vehicle

- 5.5.1 Vehicle-kilometre allowance
- Where an elected member needs to use their own vehicle on Council business, vehicle kilometre allowances can be claimed on the following basis:
- The claim is made within 60 days of travel using the appropriate form;

- (a) for a petrol vehicle,—
 - (i) \$1.20 per kilometre for the first 14,000 kilometres of eligible travel in the determination term; and
 - (ii) 37 cents per kilometre after the first 14,000 kilometres of eligible travel in the determination term:
- (b) for a diesel vehicle,—
 - (i) \$1.30 per kilometre for the first 14,000 kilometres of eligible travel in the determination term; and
 - (ii) 38 cents per kilometre after the first 14,000 kilometres of eligible travel in the determination term:
- (c) for a petrol hybrid vehicle,—
 - (i) 90 cents per kilometre for the first 14,000 kilometres of eligible travel in the determination term; and
 - (ii) 24 cents per kilometre after the first 14,000 kilometres of eligible travel in the determination term:
- (d) for an electric vehicle,—
 - (i) \$1.22 per kilometre for the first 14,000 kilometres of eligible travel in the determination term; and
 - (ii) 23 cents per kilometre after the first 14,000 kilometres of eligible travel in the determination term.

Where a member of a local authority travels from a place where the member permanently or temporarily resides that is outside the local authority area to the local authority area on local authority business, the member is only eligible for a vehicle-kilometre allowance for eligible travel after the member crosses the boundary of the local authority area.

- 5.5.2 Council will not pay for travel by private motor vehicle where travel by other means is more practical and cost-effective.

5.6 Travel-time allowance

- 5.6.1 A member's travel time is eligible for the allowance if it is time spent travelling within New Zealand-
 - (a) on local authority business; and
 - (b) by the quickest form of transport that is reasonable in the circumstances; and
 - (c) by the most direct route that is reasonable in the circumstances.
- 5.6.2 The travel-time allowance is \$41.30 for each hour (pro-rated in the case of a part of an hour) of eligible travel time after the first hour of eligible travel time travelled in a day.
- 5.6.3 However, if a member of a local authority permanently or temporarily resides outside the local authority area and travels to the local authority area on local

authority business, the member is only eligible for a travel-time allowance for eligible travel time-

- (a) after the member crosses the boundary of the local authority area; and
- (b) after the first hour of eligible travel time within the local authority area.

5.6.4 Subclause (3) does not apply to the payment of a travel-time allowance by a local authority to a member who permanently or temporarily resides outside the local authority area if-

- (a) the member's primary place of residence was outside the local authority area at the time of the local election, or an exceptional circumstance beyond the member's control requires them to move outside the local authority area; and
- (b) the Remuneration Authority determines, on an application from the member and having considered the recommendation of the mayor or regional council chairperson, that subclause (4) does not apply.

5.6.5 The maximum total amount of travel-time allowance that a member may be paid for eligible travel in a 24-hour period is 8 hours.

5.7 Use of taxis/uber

5.7.1 Taxis/uber may only be used for Council business at a destination outside of the district when it is the most appropriate form of transport.

5.7.2 Costs must be paid for by the elected member and will be reimbursed on presentation of actual receipts.

6. When expenses may not be claimed

6.1 For the purpose of clarity, elected members may claim expenses approved by the Remuneration Authority, while carrying out their official roles and duties on Council business, except those that:

- are incurred before they are sworn in as elected members of Council, or after they officially leave office; and/or
- are incurred while not acting in their official capacity or on Council business; and/or
- are incurred on a trip outside of the sub-region without specific approval from the Mayor or a standing committee prior to the travel; and/or
- are incurred while on leave of absence; and/or
- are incurred while absent without leave; and/or
- are incurred while holding office illegally; and/or
- are related to activities that are incidental to and not the main reason for a trip / event.

6.2 The following expenses are considered to be the responsibility of individual elected members and may NOT be claimed:

- Medical insurance
- Staff discounts

- Life insurance
- Accident insurance
- Income replacement insurance
- Travel and meals/entertainment incurred by elected member's spouse/partner
- Alcoholic drinks
- Mini-bar drinks/snack, books/magazines, video, pay-per-view or other entertainment
- Late check-out fees, in absence of extenuating circumstances
- Tips
- Any fines (parking or traffic offences).

7. When expenses are to be paid

- 7.1 Expenses claimed are paid on the 10th and 20th of each month.
- 7.2 Travel-kilometre claims are paid monthly, to coincide with a payment of the elected member's salary, provided an elected members' expenses claim form with receipts attached is received in sufficient time to be included in the normal process.
- 7.3 All claims must be made within 60 days of expenditure occurring with the aim to keep expenditure within the year in which it occurs and is budgeted for.
- 7.4 Expenses claims, receipt of personal gifts and Mayoral credit card expenses are to be published on Council's website.

8. Use of resources

- 8.1 The equipment requirements for elected members are deemed to be:
 - a phone (mobile and/or landline); and
 - a PC, laptop or tablet (provided by Council for Mayor, Councillors and Community Board Chairs); and
 - a compatible scanner and printer.
- 8.2 Elected members are to provide their own phone, scanner and printer.
- 8.3 The Mayor and Deputy Mayor is to be provided with the use of information technology /communications equipment compatible with Council's systems for the term of their office.
- 8.4 A communications allowance of \$1,100.00 in accordance with the Remuneration Authority's Determination is payable to Councillors and Community Board Chairs on an annual basis. This allowance is towards expenses of all or any of the following:
 - use of a multi-functional or other printer, \$50
 - for the use of a mobile telephone, \$200
 - for the use of ICT consumables, \$100
 - use of member's own internet service for the purpose of the member's work on local authority business, \$500
 - use of the member's own mobile telephone service for the purpose of the member's work on local authority business, \$250
- 8.5 A communications allowance of \$1,500.00 is payable to Community Board members on an annual basis. This allowance is towards expenses of all or any of the following:

- for the use of a personal computer, tables or laptop, including related docking station, \$400
- use of a multi-functional or other printer, \$50
- for the use of a mobile telephone, \$200
- for the use of ICT consumables, \$100
- use of member's own internet service for the purpose of the member's work on local authority business, \$500
- use of the member's own mobile telephone service for the purpose of the member's work on local authority business, \$250

8.6 The Remuneration Authority's rules on the Mayoral car are to apply.

9. Authorisation for conferences - New Zealand and overseas

- 9.1 Attendance by elected members at conferences in New Zealand, at Council's cost, is to be approved by the Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor.
- 9.2 Attendance by elected members at conferences overseas, at Council's cost, is to be approved by a resolution of Council.
- 9.3 Following attendance at a conference, elected members may provide a synopsis of the conference to the Council and have all expenses approved by the appropriate authority.

10. Car parking

Free car parking is provided for elected members to use while on Council business at Council premises

11. Receipt of gifts

- 11.1 Elected members shall not accept any gift, service, or benefit under circumstances where the elected member knows, or ought to know, that it could affect their present or future decision-making responsibilities.
- 11.2 Offers of gifts or benefits from contractors to elected members should be declined unless an exceptional circumstance as deemed by the Mayor to protect Council from risk including reputational.
- 11.3 Gifts over the value of \$100.00 which have been presented to an elected member in the course of their duties and which are retained by an elected member personally must be recorded in an elected members' gift register.

12. Exceptions

There may be exceptional circumstances, or disputes, regarding elected members expenses and resources which need to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Such cases will be dealt with by the Mayor and/or Chief Executive, and any exceptions be reported back to Council.

13. Relevant delegations

- 13.1 The Chief Executive has delegated authority to implement this policy and to sub delegate their authority.

13.2 All claims made under this policy are to be made using the appropriate form and authorised by the Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor for the Manager of Governance Support to administer.

13.3 All claims made under this policy by the Mayor are to be made using the appropriate form and authorised by the Risk and Assurance Committee Chairperson and one other elected member for the Manager of Governance Support to administer.

14. References and relevant legislation

- The most current Local Government Elected Members Determination.
- Local Government Act 2002, Schedule 7, Section 6.
- Controlling Sensitive Expenditure – Guidelines for Public Entities (Controller and Auditor General).
- Council's Sensitive Expenditure Policy

15. Allowances inclusive of GST

The allowances set out in this determination are inclusive of GST.

16. Implementation and review

This policy will be effective from December 2025.

This policy will be reviewed every year when a new Local Government Elected Members Determination is available.