

8 May 2023

Kia ora,

### Local Government Parental Leave Policy

Thank you for your request made under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act), received on 16 April 2023. You requested the following information in relation to the [policy template](#) on child-care allowances and parental leave created by Local Government New Zealand:

- Does your Council have a childcare allowance policy that is informed by the draft clauses recommended by Local Government New Zealand? If so, could you provide us with the relevant policy document?
- Does your Council have a standalone policy on parental leave, and does it include the draft clauses recommended by Local Government New Zealand? If so, could you provide us with the relevant policy document?

Wellington City Council has granted your request for information.

Below is the document that falls in scope of your request and my decision to release the document.

Item	Document name/description	Decision
Appendix 1	Elected Member Allowances and Entitlements Policy	Released. Redacted section 7(2)(a) of the LGOIMA act 1987

### Childcare Allowance Policy

Appendix 1 provides a current, full copy of the Council's Elected Member Allowances and Entitlements Policy. Childcare allowance, captured within sections 50 to 53, aligns with the draft clauses recommended by Local Government NZ.

### Parental Leave Policy

As it currently stands, if an elected member wanted to take parental leave, they would request a leave of absence as per the Wellington City Council's [standing orders](#):

**18.1 Granting leave of absence** *The local authority may grant leave of absence to a member from a meeting or other meetings of the local authority or its committees upon application by the*

*member. The member must apply to the mayor or the chief executive for the leave of absence at least five working days prior to the first ordinary meeting of the Council they will miss. The first ordinary meeting of the Council following the application will grant or decline the leave of absence request.*

Any leave of absence would align with the Remuneration Authority's [guidance](#).

If the Remuneration Authority were to provide information regarding Parental Leave in a determination, we would look at reviewing the Council's Elected Member Allowances and Entitlements Policy (Appendix 1) sooner than the next scheduled review, which will be in 2025.

**Right of review**

If you are not satisfied with the Council's response, you may request the Office of the Ombudsman to investigate the Council's decision. Further information is available on the Ombudsman website, [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Please note, we may proactively release our response to your request with your personal information removed.

Thank you again for your request, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards

Ollie Marchant  
**Official Information**

# Elected Member Allowances and Entitlements Policy

## Introduction

1. This policy sets out rules on the claiming of expenses by elected members and the allowances that will be available to them during their term of office, and only while acting in their official capacity as elected members.
2. The payment for any or all allowances is at the discretion of the Wellington City Council.

## Principles

3. The Remuneration Authority has assessed that the workload for a Wellington City Councillor is approximately equivalent to a full-time job.
4. Any expenses to be reimbursed must be on an actual and reasonable basis and in line with Council policy.
5. All expense claims are approved by the Manager of Governance and Democracy Services, and full original receipts are required.
6. Reimbursements will be made via the payroll system.
7. All expenditure that falls under this policy is approved on the condition that it can be met within relevant budget provisions.

## Interpretation

8. **Actual** means as evidenced by the original receipt attached to the claim form.
9. **Reasonable** means that it is within the amount specified by this policy or as deemed reasonable by the Chief Executive or their delegate.
10. **Council business** includes: formal council and community board meetings, committee meetings, workshops, seminars, LGNZ Conference, statutory hearings, training courses, site visits, meetings with staff, meetings with community groups, meetings with members of the public. It does not include events where the primary focus is on social activity, events where attendance is in a non-representative capacity, travel not related to council business or personal travel interspersed with Council business.
11. **Elected member** means those individuals declared to be elected to the Council, including as a member of a Community Board, Councillor, or Mayor.
12. **Remuneration Authority** is an independent body established by the Remuneration Authority Act 1977, with responsibilities under the Local Government Act 2002 to determine remuneration and expense/allowance rules for local authority members.
13. **Wellington City Council support staff** means Governance and Democracy Services, the Mayor's Office, or International Relations.

## Travel

14. All approvals for travel must consider the impact on Climate Change, including whether there are any mitigations possible to reduce the impact such as the use of remote conferencing technology or a reduction in the number of Elected Member participants.

## Vehicles

15. Except for the Mayor, elected members are not provided with the use of a vehicle.

16. No mileage allowances are payable, except for approved travel related to seminars, conferences, and training courses outside of Wellington City. Elected members are required to claim the costs of using their private vehicles on council business as part of their individual taxation arrangements.
17. Costs of travelling by public transport to and from approved external meetings, functions, conferences or seminars are reimbursed on production of receipts.
18. Taxi chits can be provided when required and upon approval for council business within Wellington City.
19. Car parks at council offices can be provided to Councillors to enable them to carry out their governance and representation responsibilities.
20. Car licence plates must be registered with Democracy Services and security staff.
21. Rental cars can be provided if travel to a conference out of Wellington City has been approved, and the cost of a rental car is cheaper than paying air/bus/train fare or the following mileage allowance.
22. If elected members choose to use their private vehicles for approved travel relating to seminars, conferences, and training courses outside of Wellington City, the following mileage allowance applies:
  - a) Petrol or diesel vehicles  
The allowance for a petrol or diesel vehicle is 83 cents per kilometre for the first 14,000 kilometres, and 31 cents per kilometre after.
  - b) Hybrid petrol vehicles  
The allowance for a hybrid petrol vehicle is 83 cents per kilometre for the first 14,000 kilometres, and 18 cents per kilometre after.
  - c) Electric vehicles  
The allowance for an electric vehicle is 83 cents per kilometre for the first 14,000 kilometres, and 10 cents per kilometre after.

#### *Air Travel*

23. All travel must be booked by Governance and Democracy Services, except Mayoral travel which is to be booked by the Mayor's Office, or other international travel which is to be booked by International Relations.
24. International air travel must be approved in advance by the Council.
25. Air travel will be booked for approved conferences/seminars, where travel by air is the most cost-effective travel option.
26. For flights up to eight hours, economy class will be booked.
27. For flights longer than eight hours, business class will be booked.
28. All travel complies in all respects with the Council's Travel and Accommodation Policy.
29. Allowances for subscriptions to airline clubs (such as the Koru Club) are not paid or reimbursed.

#### *Accommodation*

30. All accommodation must be booked by Wellington City Council support staff and will be at designated hotels where possible.
31. Actual and reasonable meal costs, excluding alcohol, incurred while travelling may be reimbursed.
32. There is no reimbursement of meals provided by others.
33. There is no allowance or reimbursement for incidental costs while travelling.

34. Elected members travelling on Council business who choose to stay privately (with friends, relatives etc) are paid an allowance of \$60 per night, which includes the cost of accommodation, breakfast and dinner.

## Entertainment and Hospitality

35. No allowances will be paid nor expenses reimbursed in respect of hospitality or entertainment.

## Communications and Technology

36. Councillors, including the mayor, will be provided with a cellphone and laptop for council business.
37. The Mayor can be provided with a landline phone.
38. If Councillors do not wish to use the provided devices, they are entitled to receive the following annual allowances:
  - a. Use of a personal computer, laptop or tablet (including docking station): \$400
  - b. Use of a personal printer: \$50
  - c. \$200 for the use of ICT consumables (eg. paper, ink cartridges)
  - d. Use of a mobile phone: \$200
  - e. Use of a personal internet connection: \$800
39. If using a personal phone, councillors can also receive up to \$500 annually for council-related toll and mobile phone charges.
40. In line with Council carbon-zero goals under Te Atakura - First to Zero, elected members will be provided agenda documents through an appropriate electronic platform.
41. Council resources and equipment is not to be used for electioneering purposes.
42. Councillors, including the mayor, may use the following internal Council services to an appropriate and reasonable level for council business as determined by the Manager Governance and Democracy Services:
  - Photocopying and printing
  - Information technology advice/assistance for Council-owned equipment.
43. A home-based technology allowance of \$45 per month will be paid to the chairs of the Tawa and Mākara/Ōhāriu community boards to reimburse the incumbents of those positions a portion of the communication costs (i.e. business related telephone calls, internet connection etc) incurred by them in carrying out their duties.

## Professional Development, Clubs and Associations

44. No allowances will be paid in respect of the members' attendance time at professional development courses, conferences and seminars.
45. Course registration fees are paid subject to the approval of the Deputy Mayor.
46. No allowances will be paid nor expenses reimbursed in respect of subscriptions to clubs or associations.

## Resource Consent Hearing Fees

47. A member who acts as the chairperson of a resource consent hearing is entitled to be paid a fee of \$116 per hour of hearing time and preparation time.
48. A member who is not the chairperson of a resource consent hearing is entitled to be paid a fee of \$93 per hour of the hearing time and preparation time.

49. For any period of hearing time and preparation time that is less than 1 hour, the fee must be apportioned accordingly.

## Childcare Allowance

50. Elected members can claim up to \$6,000 per year for each child if the childcare meets the criteria.
51. Elected members are eligible for the allowance if:
  - a. they are engaged on local authority business at the time of the childcare
  - b. they are the parent or guardian of the child, or usually has day-to-day responsibility for care of the child, and
  - c. the child is under 14 years of age.
52. The childcare must be provided by someone who:
  - a) is not a spouse, civil union partner, or de facto partner of the member
  - b) is not a parent of the child
  - c) does not ordinarily reside with the member or child.
53. Elected members must provide satisfactory evidence to the local authority of the amount paid for childcare.

## Taxation of Allowance

54. Allowances (as distinct from reimbursements of business expenses) will not be paid without deduction of withholding tax.

## Health and Well-being

55. Elected members are entitled to the flu vaccination employee benefit. Elected members can book this service annually when it is made available to staff.
56. An elected member experiencing discomfort, pain, or injury in the workplace, may arrange an ergonomic assessment through their support staff.
57. Elected members are entitled to the Employment Assistance Programme for access to confidential, short-term, solutions-focussed counselling.

## Breach of Allowance and Expense Rules

58. If an elected member breaches this policy, the elected member must reimburse the council for any costs the council may have wrongfully incurred.
59. An alleged breach of allowance and expense rules may be considered under the Code of Conduct.

## Policy Review

60. This policy will be reviewed at the beginning of each triennium, following the release of the Remuneration Authority's Local Government Members Determination.
61. The Council may direct a review of this policy at any time.