

Policy on Elected Members' Allowances and Expenses 2013 – Greater Wellington Regional Council

**(As adopted by Council on 21
August 2013 for 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 three years, in election year, the Authority asks each local authority to provide the proposed rules for allowances and the recovery of expenses incurred by elected members. The Authority then makes a determination, prescribing the rules that apply. Where new issues arise, a council may seek an amendment during the three-year period.

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 estimates of 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. Commencement

The provisions of this policy take effect from the date that elected members assume office following the 2013 triennial elections.

3. Policy on allowances and expenses

3.1 Parking

Elected members will be provided with parking spaces at the Council's Wellington office for their use when on council business.

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

3.2 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 should be provided.

3.3 Chair's vehicle

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

3.4 Mileage allowance

Subject to the interpretation and exceptions listed below, elected members, excluding the Chair, are entitled to a mileage allowance when using their own

vehicle for Council business. Eligibility for mileage allowance commences after the first 30 kilometres travelled per day. Mileage will be paid at the maximum rate per kilometre as set out in the current Remuneration Authority determination.

Interpretation

With respect to mileage allowances and reimbursement of public transport costs, the term “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 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 the member’s 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 Greater Wellington Regional Council is providing transport, and an elected member chooses – for personal reasons – to travel separately, they will not be entitled to a mileage 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.

3.5 Communications allowance

It is expected that elected members have their own communications and computer equipment and that these items are available for elected members to use for their Council related business.

Elected members having such items available for Council business are eligible to receive a communications allowance. The rate payable will be the maximum rate determined by the Authority. The rate will be divided into the following annual allowances for each eligible item made available by the member for Council business purposes:

- Home computer: \$150
- Laptop computer or mobile tablet device: \$150
- Printer: \$40
- Telephone/Mobile phone: \$60
- Mobile calls: \$400
- Internet connection: \$250

In the situation where an elected member does not have a laptop computer or mobile tablet device available for Council business, the elected member may be issued with a standard specification Greater Wellington Regional Council laptop computer or mobile tablet device for use on Council business. The provision of such equipment would result in the maximum allowance payable to the member being reduced by \$150. The use of loaned equipment by an elected member is subject to the following conditions:

- The loaned equipment is provided for Council business purposes

- The loaned equipment remains Greater Wellington Regional Council's property at all times and must be returned when requested
- The use of the loaned equipment must be in accordance with Greater Wellington Regional Council's *Information Technology Security and Use Policy*
- Any consumables associated with the use of the loaned equipment are the responsibility of the elected member.

Greater Wellington Regional 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 communication allowance payable to the Chair will be reduced as outlined above to reflect the provision of the phone.

3.6 Travel time allowance

Elected members, excluding the Chair, are entitled to a travel time allowance in relation to travel undertaken in relation to Council business. The rate payable will be the maximum rate determined by the Authority, and is subject to the following condition:

- The first one hour of travel time each day is not eligible for the allowance.

3.7 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 Chief Executive, all travel and accommodation will be booked through Democratic Services.

Core training will be organised by Democratic Services. Approval for elected member attendance at one-off events in New Zealand will be approved by the Council Chair; in the case of attendance by the Chair the approval will be by the Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer.

Overseas conference attendance is to be approved by Council, consistent with the Council's Sensitive Expenditure Policy (Elected Members).

3.8 Newspaper subscription

The Chair shall be entitled to a subscription providing for home delivery of the local daily newspaper to their nominated home address.

3.9 Clothing

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

3.10 Stationery

Stationery is available on request for use on Council business.

3.11 Councillors' Lounge

Elected members are entitled to use the Councillors' Lounge in the Council's Wellington office for Council business purposes. The lounge has two computer suites and telephones.

3.12 Travel insurance

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

3.13 Personal accident insurance

Greater Wellington Regional 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.

3.14 Payment

Where applicable, allowances will be paid fortnightly.

Claims for expenses should be made fortnightly on the forms provided, no later than three months after the date the mileage or expense was incurred, and should include all relevant receipts.

Payment will be made by direct credit.