

Policy:	Elected Members' Expenses
Department:	Corporate Services
Approved by:	Council
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 This purpose of this policy is to set out Elected Members' entitlements to allowances and expenses.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy covers:

- Travel and related expenses
- Professional Development
- Communications allowance
- Childcare allowance

- 2.2 To clarify, council does not:

- subscribe or reimburse the costs of airline clubs or loyalty schemes;
- reimburse or pay any allowances to councillors in respect to any hospitality or entertainment activity;
- pay for the additional travel expenses, including travel and food of any persons accompanying elected members on their travels;
- pay or reimburse the costs of excess luggage, seat upgrades, or seat reservations;
- reimburse meals provided free of charge by a third person;
- pay for alcoholic beverages or items taken from a minibar; or
- reimburse for the use of a printer or for ICT consumables

3. Principles

- 3.1 The payment of any or all allowances in this policy is at the discretion of the Stratford District Council. The policy is based on the principles that all expenditure is actual and reasonable, related to Council business, and represents the best use of ratepayer funds.
- 3.2 Approval for expenditure by Councillors (all elected members excluding the Mayor) must be given by the Mayor and Chief Executive. Approval for expenditure by the Mayor must be given by two directors, and signed-off quarterly by the chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

4. Background

- 4.1 Expenditure claims must be submitted for reimbursement within one month of incurring the expenditure.
- 4.2 The allowance amounts referred to in this policy are updated annually following the release of the annual Local Government Members Determination.

5. Travel

- 5.1 The costs of elected members traveling on official council business are met by council on a fair and reasonable basis. The expenditure should be subject to standards of probity and financial prudence that are expected of a public entity and able to withstand public scrutiny.
- 5.2 The method of travel chosen should always be the most practical and cost-efficient option available. All Council travel must consider the impact of climate change, including whether there are any mitigations possible to reduce the impact such as the use of remote or online methods. Council will not pay mileage for travel by private motor vehicle within or outside the Taranaki Region where travel by other means has been made available.
- 5.3 All travel-related bookings, including accommodation, airline tickets and council vehicles are to be arranged via the Chief Executive's office.
- 5.4 Public transport fares, taxis and parking fees incurred when on council business will be reimbursed; traffic and parking related fines however will generally not be.
- 5.5 If practical, travel for any person accompanying elected members on council related travel, additional accommodation nights in excess of what is required for council business or alternative route choices to combine council related and private travel can be arranged at the time of booking on the condition that council be reimbursed by the member for any additional costs incurred.

5.6 Travel within the Taranaki Region

- Elected members are expected to use council vehicles, their private car or public transport when on council business within the Taranaki Region.
- If elected members use their private car, mileage allowance will be reimbursed according to the rules set out in section 11(3) of the current Remuneration Authority determination.
- Mileage expenses for elected members conducting District Licensing Committee business are subject to the rules for District Licensing Committee members set up by central government.

5.7 Travel outside the Taranaki Region

- Elected members are expected to use council vehicles or air travel when on council business outside the Taranaki Region.
- Where Council vehicles are not available, private vehicles may be used to travel outside the Taranaki region subject to the approval of the Chief Executive first being obtained. Under these circumstances, mileage allowance will be reimbursed according to the rules set out in section 11(3) of the current Remuneration Authority determination.

5.8 Travel-time allowance

When travel exceeds one hour on a single day, elected members (excluding the Mayor) are entitled to claim the current amount as set out in section 12(3) of the current Remuneration Authority determination, per hour of travel time, after the first hour of eligible travel time.

This entitlement only applies if the elected member is travelling to attend local authority business by the quickest form of transport and the most direct route that is reasonable in the circumstances.

If an elected member lives outside of the district and is travelling to the district on local authority business, a claim for travel-time will only be reimbursed if the member's primary place of residence was outside the district at the time of the local election and the Remuneration Authority has authorised the application as set out in section 12(4A)(b) of the current Remuneration Authority determination.

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

5.9 Accommodation

When elected members are required to stay away from home while on Council business, and opt to stay in private accommodation rather than public accommodation, then an accommodation allowance of \$50 per night may be claimed by the elected member. This allowance is intended to be paid to the accommodation provider to cover at least a portion of the costs they may incur.

5.10 Associated expenses

When elected members are required to incur business related expenses such as taxis, meals and accommodation, these will be reimbursed on the basis of actual and moderate expenditure and require presentation of actual receipts. Non-alcoholic drinks are considered part of a meal, alcoholic drinks however are considered a personal choice and will not be reimbursed.

5.11 Mayor's vehicle

In accordance with section 9 of the Remuneration Authority determination, the mayor may be provided with a vehicle that is available for restricted private use, partial private use, or full private use.

If a vehicle is provided for full private use, a deduction must be made from the mayor's annual remuneration as follows:

Purchase price (incl GST) x 41% x 20%

If a vehicle is provided to the mayor for restricted private use only, no deduction from the mayor's remuneration is required.

6. Professional Development

6.1 Council sets its professional development budget for elected members each year. Participation in conferences, courses, or training programmes by Councillors must have prior approval by the Mayor, before any related expenditure may be incurred. Any expenditure incurred by the Mayor must be approved in line with 3.2 of this Policy.

6.2 The Chief Executive's office, upon request, can make all necessary arrangements, including booking any professional development courses.

7. Communications Allowances

7.1 The council provides all elected members with a portable tablet computer (iPad) and the relevant associated software exclusively for council use.

7.2 In addition, members receive the applicable communication allowances set in Section 13 of the current Remuneration Authority determination, and as per the below:

- For the use of a mobile phone (Section 13(3)(c))
- For the use of a members own internet services (Section 13(4))
- For the use of a members own mobile phone services (Section 13(5)(a).

7.3 The District Mayor may choose to either receive the applicable communication allowances associated with the use of a mobile phone, or be provided with a council owned mobile phone for official use.

8. Childcare Allowances

- 8.1 An eligible elected member is entitled to a childcare allowance of up to \$6,000 per child, per annum to contribute towards expenses incurred by the member for childcare provided while the member is engaged on council business.
- 8.2 To be eligible, the member must be a parent or guardian of the child, or is a person who usually has responsibility for the day-to-day care of the child, the child is under 14 years of age, and the childcare is not provided by a parent or spouse of the member, or someone who lives with the member.
- 8.3 Documentation must be provided showing the amount paid for the childcare, and the time and days of childcare claimed.
- 8.4 The childcare claim must specify the hours being claimed and the council business engaged in during the time period/s claimed.