

Grey District Council Elected members allowances and recovery of expenses Policy

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Last reviewed	05 December 2022	Next review due	Remuneration Authority Determination changes or July 2025 (whichever comes first)
Approved by	Council	Minute reference	SCM 22/12/093
Policy owner	Chief Executive	Date adopted	05 December 2022

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1. Introduction

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.

2. Definitions

Actual	means as evidenced by the original receipt attached to the claim form.
Reasonable	means that it is within the amount specified by this policy or as deemed reasonable by the Mayor/Regional Chairperson and/or Chief Executive.
Council business	includes: formal council and community board meetings, committee meetings, workshops, seminars, 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.
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.

3. Documentation of Policies

- Council Policy Register *Updated regularly*
- Sensitive expenditure policy

4. Authentication of expense reimbursements and allowances

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

Costs for expenses must have a justifiable business purpose, be moderate and conservative having regard to the circumstances, and be appropriate in all respects. Transparency is achieved through the monthly publication on the Council's website of all expenses for elected members over the past month.

The process for reimbursement of claims includes the following principles:

- any expenses to be reimbursed must be on an actual and reasonable basis and in line with Council policy
- expense claims are approved by the Chief Executive or his/her delegate, and full original receipts are required
- cost reimbursements will be made via the Accounts Payable System.

In the case of one-off expenditure such as travel to conferences, the process and prior approvals required are detailed in this policy.

In the case of vehicle mileage, travel time and communications, all limits set in this document do not exceed the Remuneration Authority's Determination.

The Council's internal audit work programme includes sampling expense claims and allowances paid to elected members and staff.

All expenditure that falls under this policy is approved on the condition that it can be met within relevant budget provisions.

5. Allowances and expenses by group members

Those that apply to the **Mayor** only:

Expense/Allowance	Description
Travel and conferences, courses and seminars	<p>The prior approval of the Chief Executive is required for travel within New Zealand for: council business; attendance at conferences/courses/training events/ seminars; other purposes associated with the position of mayor.</p> <p>The prior approval of the Council is required for all international travel, where costs or partial costs are paid for by council funds.</p> <p>The Mayor is entitled to payment of actual and reasonable registration, travel, accommodation, meal (excluding alcohol) 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 the Mayor are to be made by the Executive Assistant's team with the Council's preferred travel agents, 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>Where the Mayor or the Mayor's authorised representative is accompanied by his/her partner on international travel, the Council will not meet the cost of their travel, accommodation and incidental costs.</p>
Taxis	<p>Taxis may be used for council business, instead of private vehicles or public transport, for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) safety/security reasons, and b) when travelling outside Greymouth if a taxi is the most appropriate form of transport. c) Taxis may not be used if significant travel distances mean that use of a taxi is not the most cost-effective option. Rental cars booked by Corporate Services staff should be considered as an option in such circumstances. Taxi charge vouchers should be used for planned travel within New Zealand. Costs paid for directly by the individual for unanticipated travel within in New Zealand or for international travel will be reimbursed on presentation of actual receipts.

Those that apply to the **Mayor** and **Councillors**:

Domestic air travel	All elected members are entitled to utilise domestic air travel for council related travel, generally where travel by air is the most cost-effective travel option.
International air travel	All elected member international air travel is by way of economy class, where all or part of the costs of the fares are to be met by the Council. 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.

Air points	No air points accumulated while on council business can be utilised for personal use.
Private accommodation provided by friends/relatives	Payment of \$50 per night when staying in private accommodation, to cover accommodation, breakfast and dinner. It is intended that at least a portion of this allowance is paid to the accommodation provider.
Parking expenses	Reimbursement of casual carparking costs related to council business. This will be on receipt of a signed claim accompanied by a receipt.
Rental Cars	Rental cars may be utilised when attending meetings or conferences in other centres, where this is the most cost-effective travel option.
Vehicle mileage	<p>Vehicle mileage will be paid for all travel on council business that exceeds, in any one day, the relevant threshold distance.</p> <p>Mileage will be paid in accordance with the current Remuneration Authority Determination.</p> <p>Mileage will be paid to members on receipt of a completed and signed mileage claim and approved by the Mayor in the case of elected members and the Chief Executive in relation to a claim made by the Mayor.</p>
Mobile phone expenses	An allowance towards council generated calls, text and data through mobile phones set at \$500.
Landline and broadband connection	An allowance towards council generated usage through internet services set at \$800.
IT/Communications equipment	Provision of an annual allowance for any or all equipment provided by the elected member, is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) \$50 for a printer ii) \$200 for a telephone (mobile or handset).
Stationery and consumables	Provision of an annual allowance for the provision of paper and printer consumables by the elected member for council business amounting to \$200.
Entertainment and hospitality	Reimbursement of reasonable costs incurred while hosting official visitors to the council, or while travelling on council business. These costs can cover a range of items including, but not limited to, tea/coffee, and catering including alcohol with meals when hosting official visitors.
General community related expenses	From time to time councillors and board chairs may have unforeseen costs arise for items relating to community events, e.g. payment of koha, or purchasing a wreath for attendance at a commemorative event. Reimbursement of such expenditure should be previously approved by the Chief Executive Officer. The items should be appropriate to the occasion and expenditure should be moderate and conservative.
Exceptional circumstances for council related meetings	Council staff may arrange overnight accommodation when travel or business requirements do not allow for the return on the same day, e.g. if it is unreasonable for an elected member to travel to their home after a late meeting.
Childcare Allowance	<p>An allowance towards childcare costs up to \$6,000.</p> <p>Elected members are eligible for this allowance if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are engaged on local authority business at the time of the childcare. • They are the parent or guardian of the child, or usually have day to day responsibility for care of the child, and • The child is under 14 years of age.

	<p>Elected members must meet the following criteria: The childcare must be provided by someone who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is not a spouse, civil union partner or de facto partner of the member. • Is not a parent of the child. • Does not ordinarily reside with the member or child. <p>Elected members must provide satisfactory evidence to the Chief Executive of the amount claimed for childcare.</p>
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Those that apply to **Councillors** only:

<p>Travel and attendance at conferences/ seminars/training programmes</p>	<p>The prior approval of the Chief Executive and Mayor (or deputy Mayor) is required for travel within New Zealand for: council business; attendance at conferences/courses/training events/ seminars; other purposes associated with the position of councillor.</p> <p>The conference, course, seminar or training event must contribute to the Councillor’s ability to carry out council business.</p> <p>Attendance at these events when held overseas must be approved by the Council.</p> <p>Elected members are entitled to payment of actual and reasonable registration, travel, accommodation, meal (excluding alcohol) and related incidental expenses (including travel insurance) incurred in attendance at these events, held both within New Zealand and overseas, subject to: a) related expenditure being accommodated within existing budgets, and b) the appropriate approvals as outlined in this policy</p> <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 made by Corporate Services staff-with the Council’s preferred travel agents, 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>Travel Time Allowance</p>	<p>The current rate is \$40.00 per hour for eligible travel that meets the criteria.</p> <p>Eligibility The allowance is available each day for any business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On behalf of the Council <p>The allowance is not available for overseas travel.</p> <p>Criteria A claim can be made if the journey is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between one hour and nine hours long within a 24 hour period, and • Is taken by the quickest form of transport reasonable in the circumstances. <p>The first hour of the journey is not covered by the allowance.</p> <p>An elected member of a local authority who resides outside the local authority boundary and travels to the local authority area on local authority business is eligible for a travel time allowance in respect of eligible travel time only after the member crosses the boundary of the local authority area after the first hour of eligible travel within the local authority area.</p>

6. References and Relevant Legislation

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