

1 June 2023

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-24

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Request for information 2023-118

I refer to your request for information dated 10 May 2023, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 10 May 2023. You have requested the following:

“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?”

We appreciate the effort and time that is involved in responding to these questions. We know that a number of councils had childcare and parental leave policies in place before the 2023 template was distributed. We are keen to know whether the template developed by LGNZ is useful in developing consistent policy across local authorities in these fields.”

Greater Wellington’s response

The Council has a *Policy on Elected Members’ Allowances and Expenses*, effective 30 May 2023, that incorporates a childcare allowance element. Local Government New Zealand’s draft clauses were reflected in the 2019 version of this policy and are continued in the current version, which is attached for your information.

The Council does not have a standalone policy on parental leave for elected members. The Council’s Standing Orders provide for the Council to consider an application from an elected member for leave of absence. Where an application for leave of absence is for the purposes of

parental leave, officers will include information on Local Government New Zealand's parental leave guidance in the advice to inform the Council's decision making.

If you have any concerns with the decision(s) referred to in this letter, you have the right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 27(3) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request will be published shortly on Greater Wellington's website with your personal information removed.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Luke Troy

Kaiwhakahaere Matua, Rautaki | Group Manager, Strategy

Encl: *Policy on Elected Members' Allowances and Expenses*, effective 30 May 2023

Policy on Elected Members' Allowances and Expenses

Adopted by the Council (18 May 2023) and approved by the Remuneration
Authority (30 May 2023)

PROACTIVE RELEASE

A policy to provide for the allowances and expenses of elected members of the Wellington Regional Council.

Policy owner	The Council
Date policy comes into effect	Date approved by the Remuneration Authority.
Related policies, legislation, and documents	The Council's <i>Code of Conduct for Councillors</i> The Council's <i>Sensitive Expenditure (Elected Members) Policy</i> The Remuneration Authority's Annual Local Government Members Determination Greater Wellington's <i>Vehicle Policy</i> (as specified).
Policy review date	By 31 March 2026.
Policy history	This policy was established in 2007 and was revised at the start of each subsequent council triennium.

Date of the Council's adoption: 18 May 2023

Date of the Remuneration Authority's approval: 30 May 2023

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Introduction

- 1 In addition to determining the remuneration of elected members, the Remuneration Authority is required to determine the allowances framework for elected members.
- 2 The payment of any or all allowances and expenses is at the discretion of each local authority. The Wellington Regional Council provides for elected members' allowances and expenses through this policy, which is adopted by the Council. As this policy includes provisions requiring the Remuneration Authority's approval, the policy is not effective until that approval is provided.
- 3 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's *Sensitive Expenditure (Elected Members) Policy*, its *Code of Conduct for Councillors*, and any applicable Greater Wellington policies (as specified).

Definitions

- 4 The following definitions are used throughout this policy:
 - a "Authority" refers to the Remuneration Authority
 - b "Chair" refers to the Council Chair
 - c "Council" refers to the governing body of the Wellington Regional Council
 - d "Council business" includes:
 - i Official meetings and workshops of the Council, its committees, its subcommittees, its advisory bodies, and external bodies to which the elected member is appointed by the Council
 - ii Statutory hearings and related meetings
 - iii Meetings of Council-owned companies
 - iv An external event or meeting where the elected member attends in an official Council capacity, including a meeting with community groups and members of the public
 - v Visits to, and tours of, facilities, sites or works for which the Council is responsible for, or has involvement in, or which will be the subject of business to come before the Council or any committee or subcommittee
 - vi Seminars, conferences and training courses
 - vii Constituency meetings
 - viii Discussions with committee, subcommittee and advisory group chairs and/or deputy chairs or with Greater Wellington officers
 - ix Consultation with mayors, territorial authority committee chairs, or other elected members
 - x Official briefings.

and excludes events where the primary focus is on social activity or attendance is not in an official Council capacity (including electioneering).

- e “Determination” refers to the Remuneration Authority’s current Annual Local Government Members Determination
- f “Elected member” or “Councillor” refers to a member of the Council elected under the Local Electoral Act 2001, and includes the Chair
- g “Event” includes a conference, course, seminar, event, function or meeting that an elected member is attending on Council business
- h “Greater Wellington” refers to the organisation, the Chief Executive appointed by the Council, and staff members appointed under the authority of the Chief Executive.

Parking

- 5 Elected members will be provided with parking spaces near Greater Wellington’s Cuba Street offices for their use when on Council business.
- 6 Elected members who incur parking charges when on Council business at other locations are entitled to reimbursement of the actual cost. Evidence of the cost incurred should be provided when the elected member claims reimbursement.

Use of public transport

- 7 Elected members who travel by public transport for Council business are entitled to reimbursement of the actual cost. Evidence of the cost incurred should be provided when the elected member claims reimbursement.

Chair’s vehicle

- 8 The Chair will be eligible to be provided with a vehicle (which shall be a Petrol Hybrid Electric Vehicle or an Electric Vehicle) for the Chair’s business and private use as part of the remuneration provided in the Determination and adopted by the Council.
- 9 If the Chair elects to have this vehicle available for private use, a deduction (as set out in the Determination) will be made from their remuneration.
- 10 The Chair’s vehicle is eligible for replacement at the commencement of each council triennium. The Chair’s previous vehicle will be disposed of by Greater Wellington in accordance with its standard vehicle disposal process.
- 11 The Chair is liable for any parking fines or traffic offences incurred whilst using their vehicle. The Chair’s use of their vehicle is also subject to any applicable requirements of Greater Wellington’s *Vehicle Policy*.

Electric vehicle charging

- 12 Where an elected member, excluding the Chair when using the vehicle provided under the clause 8, is using their own Petrol Hybrid Electric Vehicle or Electric Vehicle for Council business, they may not charge that vehicle using Greater Wellington’s electricity supply unless:

- a That electricity supply is generally available to the public for the purpose of electric vehicle charging; and
- b The elected member pays any applicable cost payable by the public for the use of that electricity supply.

Mileage allowance

- 13 Elected members, excluding the Chair when using the Chair's vehicle provided under clause 8, are entitled to a mileage allowance when using their own vehicle for Council business.
- 14 Eligibility for the mileage allowance commences from the elected member's primary place of residence until the conclusion of their travel on Council business.
- 15 The mileage allowance payable is at the maximum rate per kilometre set in the Determination.
- 16 Mileage may include travel to and from the elected member's primary place of residence, if the travel is:
 - a In the elected member's own vehicle; and
 - b On Council business; and
 - c By the most direct route reasonable in the circumstances.
- 17 Where an elected member chooses, for personal reasons, to travel by private motor vehicle to an event outside of the Wellington Region, they will be entitled to a mileage payment that is no more than the cheapest equivalent air fares available for the day(s) of travel (where such fares are less than the applicable mileage allowance).

Travel time allowance

- 18 Elected members are entitled to a travel time allowance for travel undertaken for Council business. The travel time allowance payable will be the maximum set in the Determination.

Travel from additional place of residence

- 19 Where:
 - a An elected member has an additional place of residence (e.g. a holiday home) and
 - b They are travelling from that additional place of residence; and
 - c That travel involves a distance and/or duration greater than they would travel if they were travelling from their primary place of residence,

then they will only be eligible to claim for the mileage and travel time that would have been incurred from their primary place of residence. The primary place of residence will usually be determined by the elected member's address as recorded on the Electoral Roll.

ICT allowance

- 20 It is expected that elected members have their own communications and computer (ICT) equipment to use for Council business.
- 21 Elected members having such items available to use for Council business are eligible to receive an ICT allowance. The ICT allowance payable will be the maximum set in the Determination. The total ICT allowance payable will be divided into an annual allowance for each eligible equipment item, namely:
- a Personal computer, tablet, or laptop, including any related docking station (and excludes a Greater Wellington-provided iPad)
 - b Multi-functional or another printer
 - c Mobile phone
 - d Mobile phone service
 - e Internet service
 - f ICT consumables, including stationery.
- 22 An elected member may be loaned a standard specification Greater Wellington mobile tablet device and associated keyboard to use for Council business. The use of this loaned equipment by an elected member:
- a Must be for Council business
 - b Recognises that the loaned equipment remains Greater Wellington's property at all times and must be returned when requested.
- 23 The Chair is eligible to receive a Greater Wellington mobile phone. Where this mobile phone is provided:
- a Greater Wellington will cover all expenses associated with the use of that mobile phone for Council business
 - b The mobile phone remains the property of Greater Wellington
 - c The ICT allowance payable to the Chair will be reduced to reflect the provision of the mobile phone.

Childcare allowance

- 24 An elected member who is responsible for one or more children under 14 years of age may claim a childcare allowance for each eligible child up to the annual maximum limit set in the Determination.
- 25 The childcare allowance is only payable if the:
- a 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
 - b Child is aged under 14 years of age; and

- c Childcare is provided by a person who:
 - i Is not a family member of the elected member¹; and
 - ii Does not ordinarily reside with the elected member; and
 - d Elected member provides satisfactory evidence to Greater Wellington of the amount paid for childcare.
- 26 Payment of the childcare allowance is made following the elected member's submission of a childcare allowance claim. This claim must set out the actual costs incurred and paid by the elected member, and must include a receipted invoice or other appropriate record of payment for the childcare services provided.

Events

- 27 Elected members authorised to attend an event will have their attendance fees, travel, accommodation, and meals paid for by Greater Wellington. Unless otherwise agreed by the Chief Executive, all travel and accommodation will be booked by Greater Wellington.
- 28 Councillor professional development and training will be arranged by Democratic Services.
- 29 Elected member and the Chair's attendance at a one-off event in New Zealand, or participation in an overseas event, will be subject to the approval processes stated in the Council's *Sensitive Expenditure (Elected Members) Policy*.

Clothing

- 30 Elected members may be supplied with jackets and coats bearing Greater Wellington's branding. These jackets and coats remain Greater Wellington's property at all times.

Councillors' Lounge

- 31 Elected members are entitled to use the Councillors' Lounge in Greater Wellington's Cuba Street offices for Council business.

Travel insurance

- 32 Travel insurance will be provided to elected members for overseas travel on Council business (being travel approved by Council resolution, consistent with the Council's *Sensitive Expenditure (Elected Members) Policy*).

¹ "Family member of the elected member" means:

- a A spouse, civil union partner, or de facto partner
- b A relative, that is, another person connected with the member within two degrees of relationship, whether by blood relationship or by adoption.

Personal accident insurance

- 33 Greater Wellington's personal accident insurance includes cover for the death or bodily injury of an elected member.
- 34 Any payment received as a result of a claim made under this cover for an elected member is payable to Greater Wellington, and will be utilised for Greater Wellington's business 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.

Flu vaccination

- 35 Elected members are entitled to an annual flu vaccination:
 - a Through Greater Wellington's annual onsite vaccination clinics; or
 - b By the elected member's submission of a claim for reimbursement. This claim must set out the actual costs incurred and paid by the elected member, and must include a receipted invoice or other appropriate record of payment for the flu vaccination.

Personal and work-related support

- 36 Elected members are entitled to access Greater Wellington's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), which is a confidential counselling and advice service that can provide short-term support for personal or work-related issues that are impacting an elected member.

Payment

- 37 Where applicable, allowances and expense claims will be paid fortnightly.
- 38 Elected members' claims for allowances and expenses should be made fortnightly, on the forms provided, no later than three months after the date the allowance or expense was incurred, and should include all relevant receipts.
- 39 Payment will be made by direct credit.