

Report 16.197
Date 17 May 2016
File CCAB-8-539

Committee Council
Author Francis Ryan, Manager Democratic Services

Policy on elected members' allowances and expenses

1. Purpose

For the Council to adopt a new policy on elected members' allowances and expenses.

2. Background

The Remuneration Authority (the Authority) has advised Greater Wellington Regional Council of the result of its review of the allowances payable to elected members. The Authority has made adjustments to mileage and travel time allowances. The Council's Policy on Elected Members' Allowances and Expenses will need to be amended to reflect these changes; it is also timely to undertake a review of the Policy as a whole

3. Proposed amendments to the current policy

Two changes are required to the current policy to align it with the Authority's decisions:

Mileage allowance.

The Authority has made a change to the threshold distance that applies each day before mileage becomes payable. Currently, a 30 kilometre threshold is applied for any travel on Council business. Under the new policy, the 30 kilometre threshold will only apply where the travel involves a visit to a Council office.

The effect of this change is that if a member travels on a return trip from their residence on Council business that *does not* include a visit to a Council office, then the 30 kilometre threshold will not apply to that travel. If the member attends Council business that includes a visit to a Council office, then the 30 kilometre threshold will apply to that travel.

The mileage rates remain unchanged: the first 5000 kilometres of eligible mileage per financial year continues to be reimbursed at \$0.74 per kilometre, with eligible mileage over 5000 kilometres reimbursed at \$0.37 per kilometre.

Detailed information about the setting of the mileage rates is contained in **Attachment 2**.

Travel time allowance

The Authority has increased the allowance for travel time. The rate was set at \$35.00 in 2013. This will increase to \$37.50. The allowance is paid for travel after the first one hour of travel on Council business.

Other changes

Subject to amending the policy to reflect the changes to the distance eligibility threshold for mileage and the travel time rate, officers consider that the current policy remains fit for purpose.

After consultation with the Council Chair, it is proposed that the current provision entitling the Council Chair to a Council-paid subscription of a local newspaper to their home address should be removed. The Council Chair has access to copies of the local newspapers when in the office and will likely already have their own personal subscription to the local newspaper prior to taking up the office of Chair.

A draft policy, taking into account the changes outlined above, is attached as **Attachment 1**.

4. Communication

The Council's decisions will be communicated to the Remuneration Authority to enable the new policy to be approved.

5. The decision-making process and significance

Officers recognise that the matters referenced in this report may have a high degree of importance to affected or interested parties.

The matter requiring decision in this report has been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act). Part 6 sets out the obligations of local authorities in relation to the making of decisions.

5.1 Significance of the decision

Part 6 requires Greater Wellington to consider the significance of the decision. The term 'significance' has a statutory definition set out in the Act.

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking the Council's significance policy and decision-making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance.

Officers do not consider that a formal record outlining consideration of the decision-making process is required in this instance.

6. Engagement

Engagement on this matter is unnecessary.

7. Recommendations

That the Council:

- 1. **Receives** the report.*
- 2. **Notes** the content of the report.*
- 3. **Adopts** the Policy on Elected Members' Allowances and Expenses 2016.*
- 4. **Notes** that the policy is subject to approval by the Remuneration Authority.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Francis Ryan
Manager, Democratic
Services

Luke Troy
General Manager, Strategy

Attachment 1: Draft Policy on Elected Members' Allowances and Expenses 2016

Attachment 2: Remuneration Authority: Local Authority Vehicle Mileage Allowance - 2016