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Sponsor/Group:	General Manager – Partnerships, Communication and Maaori

Elected Member Support and Allowances Policy

Ko te Puutaketanga

Purpose

- The purpose of this policy is to:
 - set out clear and transparent levels of expenses and allowances paid to, or on behalf of, Elected Members of Hamilton City Council (Council).
 - outline the level of support provided to Elected Members to enable them to carry out their roles.
 - set out expectations for Elected Members on items of possible private benefit, including corporate hospitality and entertainment.

Ko te Whaanuitanga

Scope

- This policy applies to:
 - Council Elected Members;
 - All Council owned facilities; and
 - All Elected Members' benefits and allowances, including complementary tickets received because of Council financial support.
- This policy does not apply to Staff employed by Council.

Ko ngaa Whakamaaramatanga

Definitions

Term	Definition in this Policy
Authority	The Remuneration Authority
Local Government Members' Determination	The annual determination gazetted by the Authority, determining the level and parameters of permitted remuneration and allowances payable to members of a local authority. A determination applies from 1 July to 30 June.
The Office of the Auditor General (OAG)	The Controller and Auditor-General is an Officer of Parliament . This means they are independent of the Government and can't be directed by whichever political party is holding power. The Auditor-General has two business units – the OAG and Audit New Zealand (auditnz.parliament.nz). Together, the work of both units gives and the public an independent view of how public organisations, including central and local government organisations, are

Ko ngaa Tikanga Whakahaere Kaupapahere Principles of Policy

4. The guiding principles for this policy are:
 - a) Elected Members should be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses they incur in carrying out Council business in their official capacity as an Elected Member. This must comply within the parameters set by the Remuneration Authority and any relevant legislation. This also applies to payment of allowances and use of Council resources.
 - b) Reasonable resources should be made available to Elected Members to enable them to efficiently carry out their responsibilities.
 - c) Reimbursement of expenses, payment of allowances and use of the Council resources apply only to Elected Members while they are carrying out Council business in their official capacity as an Elected Member.
 - d) Transparency and accountability guide the reimbursement of Elected Members' allowances and expenses.
 - e) In addition, the following principles for this Policy have been adopted from the [Office of the Auditor-General's Controlling Sensitive Expenditure: Guide for Public Entities](#):
 - Expenditure on corporate hospitality and entertainment is sensitive because of the range of purposes it can serve, the opportunities for private benefit, and the wide range of opinions as to what is appropriate.
 - Given this, this Policy promotes transparency and accountability to ensure the prudent use of public money so that Council's corporate hospitality and entertainment is able to withstand public scrutiny.
 - It is recognised that Elected Members play an important role in building relationships, advancing commercial objectives and representing the Council.
 - As decisions are likely to be scrutinised, expenditure and use of facilities therefore needs to pass the test of what is reasonable by community standards.

Ko ngaa Tikanga

Policy

Equipment

5. At the commencement of each three-year term, all Elected Members will be provided with Council approved standard DS (Digital Services) equipment (a mobile phone, laptop, and iPad).
6. Elected Members who are provided with Council approved standard DS equipment will be connected to Council's DS network and provided with DS support services.
7. All Council equipment must be returned at the end of each three-year term.
8. Any equipment provided must be used in accordance with the Council's Digital Services information management and acceptable use expectations¹.

¹ Hamilton City Councils' Information Management Policy and Acceptable Use Management Policy

9. Elected Members have the opportunity of having a remuneration deduction to cover personal use of Council mobile devices². The amount of the deduction is determined by the Chief Executive or his/her delegate, in line with central government practice and Authority advice.

Stationery and Services

11. The Council will provide a reasonable supply of stationery to Elected Members for their use on Council business.
12. Elected Members should use the following internal Council services to an appropriate and reasonable level as determined by the Chief Executive or their delegate:
- a) Postage and courier service;
 - b) Photocopying;
 - c) DS Information technology advice/assistance for Council-owned equipment; and
 - d) Meeting rooms.

Communications Expenses and Allowances

13. International calling, text, and data can be purchased at the Elected Member's expense.

Childcare Allowance

14. The Council will on application, pay a childcare allowance, in accordance with the relevant sections of the [Local Government Elected Members Determination/Remuneration Authority Determination](#), to an eligible member as a contribution towards expenses incurred by the member for childcare provided while the member is engaged on Council business.

Home Security Allowance

15. The Council will on application, pay a home security allowance, in accordance with the relevant sections of the [Remuneration Authority Determination](#), to an eligible Elected Member as a contribution towards expenses incurred by the Elected Member for security provided while the Elected Member is engaged on local authority business

Training / conference costs

16. Any training or conferences paid for by the Council must:
- a) be relevant to Council business or governance, as determined by the Chief Executive (if required);
 - b) be booked through Council staff with the Council's preferred agents and at the most economic cost available (where possible) at the time of the booking, unless all costs are being met privately or by a third party; and
 - c) not fall after 30 June in the year of a triennial Election.
17. If Elected Members, including the Mayor, wish to attend professional development training or conferences of their own choice, they must make a written request to the Governance Lead for funding from the Elected Members' professional development discretionary budget. Each member is entitled up to a maximum of \$3,000 per financial year, up until 30 June of the final year of a three-year term. This includes the cost of travel, accommodation and meals (excluding alcohol), noting that the cost of accommodation and meals should not exceed a midrange, reasonable and justifiable level.

² Elected Members should note that technical support for personal devices may not be available from Staff

18. A professional development or conference costs claim request must be submitted to the Governance Lead or their delegate in writing and via the appropriate form. Once approved, the Governance team will organise the necessary registrations, bookings and payments.
19. On receipt of supporting tax invoices, Elected Members are entitled to the reimbursement of travel fares (including Taxi, Uber, Mevo and Ola) when traveling on Council business outside of the Hamilton City boundary, instead of private vehicle or public transport, for the following reasons:
 - a) Council business is occurring outside normal business operating hours; or
 - b) For the safety/security of an Elected Member
20. Elected Members are eligible for reimbursement of actual and reasonable costs incurred by Elected Members who use public transport (long distance coach, local bus, train or ferry), micromobility vehicles (such as e-bikes and e-scooters) and bicycles for travel on local authority business and upon the production of receipts or evidence satisfactory to the Governance Lead.
21. Where the Council has formally appointed Elected Members to external organisations or approved Elected Members' attendance at training or a conference (by resolution) within the 3-year term, the Council will pay or reimburse Elected Members for appropriate and reasonable costs incurred for representing Council outside of the City boundary within the relevant budget provision. For clarity, such expenditure does not fall within an Elected Member's discretionary allocation of \$3,000.
22. The Chief Executive may on a case-by-case basis approve the payment of a contribution to a host in lieu of accommodation for actual and reasonable costs. This reimbursement is paid to cover actual and reasonable costs incurred when staying in private accommodation (i.e. friends or relatives) when travelling on Council business. The maximum amount payable will be \$50 per night.

Vehicle Mileage Allowance and Travel-Time Allowance

23. Elected Members are entitled to a mileage allowance when using their own vehicle for Council business within the parameters, and at the rates, set out in the Local Government [Remuneration Authority Determination](#) and this Policy.
24. A mileage allowance is payable for any distance travelled in relation to eligible travel as determined by the relevant [Remuneration Authority Determination](#), including:
 - a) if it occurs at a time when the member is not provided with a motor vehicle by the local authority; and
 - b) if the Member is travelling in a private vehicle on local authority business by the most direct route that is reasonable in the circumstances.
25. The maximum payable per annum is set out as per the [Remuneration Authority Determination](#). A mileage or travel time costs claim request must be submitted to the Governance Lead or their delegate in writing and via the appropriate form.
26. Elected Members must maintain an accurate record of travel undertaken in their private vehicle related to any claimed mileage allowance (e.g. logbook) and provide a copy to the Governance Lead on request to support any mileage claim.
27. However, if an Elected Member of a local authority travels from a place where the Elected

Member permanently or temporarily resides that is outside the local authority area, to the local authority area on local authority business, the Elected Member is only eligible for a vehicle-kilometre allowance for eligible travel after the member crosses the boundary of the local authority area as per the relevant [Remuneration Authority Determination](#).

28. Elected Members may access and use the Council's electric vehicle charging stations where Council has the functionality to record and charge back electricity costs to an individual. Elected Members will be required to reimburse Council for these costs.

Mayoral Vehicle

29. If Council approves the provision of a vehicle for the Mayor, the policy must be included in the Council's Elected Members' expenses, and this Policy.
30. The Mayor is provided with a vehicle, and salary deductions are made in accordance with the Authority's determination and rules. The vehicle is serviced and maintained in accordance with manufacturers recommendations and the Council's fleet management practices.

Gifts

31. A person in a position of trust, such as an Elected Member, should not make a profit through their office. The Crimes Act 1961 and the Secret Commissions Act 1910 deal with corruption and the obtaining of gifts as an inducement or reward for acts in relation to the Council's affairs. Gifts can include discounts, commissions, bonus or deductions.
32. Acceptance of gifts, services or hospitality may be considered as a bribe or perceived as undue influence. Elected Members must notify the Governance Lead (or delegate) if any gifts are accepted for inclusion in the Gifts Register maintained by the Council.
33. Where a gift to the value of \$150 or more is offered to an Elected Member, it will also be included in the Register of Members Interests maintained by the Council Governance team.
34. The cumulative value of recurring gifts received each financial year from the same donor must be disclosed by an Elected Member.
35. An Elected Member is not required to disclose tickets to events for which that member is required to attend as the Council's representative (as recorded in the Council's Governance Structure).

Corporate Hospitality and Entertainment

36. Elected Members must follow the following expectations when extending hospitality or participating in Council hosted events.
37. Usage of the Council facilities (including tickets) or expenditure for hospitality and entertainment must be a justifiable business purpose which can be understood along the following lines:
- a) building relationships;
 - b) networking opportunities;
 - c) representing the organisation;
 - d) reciprocity of hospitality where this has a clear business purpose and is within normal bounds – acceptance of hospitality is expected to be consistent with the principles and guidance for provision of hospitality;
 - e) recognising significant business achievement;
 - f) advancing commercial objectives; and/or

- g) building revenue.
38. Decisions about expenditure and facility use for corporate hospitality and entertainment must be transparent, impartial and made by the appropriate delegated authority.
39. Staff arranging the hospitality for Elected Members must be guided by the principle of moderate and conservative expenditure when determining the level of expenditure for official entertainment and hospitality.
40. Access to Council facilities (including the offering of free or complimentary tickets to events and access to reception facilities such as those at FMG Stadium Waikato) is not to be viewed as 'as of right' by Elected Members and/or staff.
41. Access to Council facilities (including the offering of free or complimentary tickets to events and access to reception facilities such as those at FMG Stadium Waikato) is only available before 30 June in the final year of a three-year term
42. Elected Members must use the Corporate Hospitality Register and Elected Members Support and Allowances Standard Operating Process (both are managed by the Chief Executive's Office, with support from Governance) when extending hospitality or participating in Council hosted events.
43. Elected Members should also refer to the [Council's Code of Conduct](#) in relation to gifts and hospitality received by, and in their capacity as, Elected Members, and to the Office of [Sensitive Expenditure](#) and [Guidelines](#) for public entities for further guidance.

Items of Possible Private Benefit

44. The Authority has issued clear guidelines on the following items of possible private benefit. The following matters that are for private benefit will not be paid for or reimbursed unless otherwise stated:

a) Medical Insurance

Elected Members are permitted to opt-in to optional discounted staff Medical Health Insurance through an independent third-party provider, at no cost to the Council.

The Elected Member will continue to receive their full remuneration as shown in the determination and the deduction from salary, if they decide to opt in the scheme, will subsequently be made by Payroll. If the Elected Member opts in, they understand that Council's Chief Executive may in the future change providers or elect to end the scheme as a staff benefit.

b) Staff Discounts

The Authority has authorised the Council to extend its flu vaccination benefit to Elected Members. Elected Members are otherwise not permitted to access any other discounts offered to Council staff for their own personal purchases.

c) Life, Accident and Income Replacement Insurance

Council will not take out any insurance policy on behalf of Elected Members where the payment of a claim is made to the elected representative or his or her estate.

d) Airpoints

Airpoints earned by an Elected Members on travel and accommodation paid for by the Council should be used by that member towards his/her future travel or accommodation that is required for Council business.

e) Car parking

All Elected Members are provided a car park for use while on Council business at the Garden Place carpark adjacent to the Council offices on Anglesea Street. The location and size of the carpark is dependent on availability and any changes are at the discretion of the Chief Executive.

f) Assistance services

Elected Members can access up to three face-to-face counselling sessions per issue, for each year of a three-year term. If more than three sessions are required, the provider will contact the CEO's office to request that permission be granted for a further session(s).

Elected Members with a personal or professional issue that's affecting their role are eligible to access support and assistance 24/7 from a confidential service provided by a counsellor or psychologist. To arrange an appointment call Instep EAP on 080 284 678 or visit www.instep.nz to book online or view some online resources. Booking online through the Instep website will require an Elected Member to use the Members login using the following username and password:

Username – **hcc**

Password – **wellness**

Hearing Fees

45. An Elected Member who acts as a chairperson or a member who is sitting as part of a Council hearing is entitled to be paid a fee per hour of hearing time related to the hearing as per the relevant [Remuneration Authority Determination](#).³

46. Hearing fees as an additional payment to remuneration are not available to a Mayor or Acting Mayor. For Acting/Mayors, fees may only be considered in exceptional circumstances if:

- a) there is a shortage of experienced hearing commissioners on the Council; and
- b) there is significant hearing of a lengthy duration, which would create undue time pressure on the Acting/Mayor; and
- c) fees are approved by the Remuneration Authority prior to payment.

Ko te Aroturukitanga me te Whakatinanatanga Implementation

Monitoring and

47. The expenses and allowances payable, and supplies, consumables or services administered, under this Policy are provided:

- a) at no cost to Elected Members, but only while they are holding office (e.g. not on a leave of absence or absent without leave); and

³ It is for each Elected Member to assess and determine his/her own tax payable, if any, in relation to payments and allowances received under this Policy.

- b) for Council-business use only. They cannot be used for electioneering purposes, personal use or communications, or any other specific use as notified by the Chief Executive from time to time.
- 48. All claims for reimbursement of expenses must be submitted on the Elected Member expense claim form to the Governance Lead. Claims must be signed by the Elected Member, and all expenses claimed must be supported by a tax invoice.
- 49. The Governance Lead will approve all expenses claims that are in accordance with this Policy. Any claims that are unusual and items outside of this policy must be approved by the Chief Executive.
- 50. A summary of Elected Members' expense claims and reimbursements paid under this Policy may be published on the Council's website.

Ko ngaa Tohutoro **References**

The most current Local Government Elected Members Determination

Local Government Act 2002, Section 54 and Schedule 7, Section 6.

Hamilton City Council *Code of Conduct for Elected Members* (May 2022)

Hamilton City Council Gifts Register

Hamilton City Council Corporate Hospitality Register

Hamilton City Council Elected Members Support and Allowances Standard Operating Procedure

Officer of the Auditor General, *Controlling Sensitive Expenditure Guidelines* (October 2020)