

Report 12.451
Date 18 September 2012
File E/05/02/03

Committee Council
Author Fran Wilde, Chair

Policy on elected members' allowances and expenses

1. Purpose

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

2. 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.

2.1 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.

3. Background

On 6 September 2012 the Local Government Elected Members (2012/13) (Certain Local Authorities) Determination 2012 was gazetted. The determination includes amended provisions relating to mileage and travel time; this necessitates the Council adopting a new policy on elected members allowances and expenses to align with the provisions of the determination.

4. **Proposed changes to the current policy**

The determination includes two provisions which differ from the provisions contained in the Council's current Policy on Elected Members' Allowances and Expenses. The current policy is consistent with the determination previously issued by the Remuneration Authority.

Vehicle mileage allowance

The determination provides for a change to the threshold distance that applies each day before mileage becomes payable. While the threshold distance was previously a uniform 30 kilometres, clause 9 of the determination includes the following:

threshold distance means the shorter of the following distances:

- (a) the distance equivalent to a round trip between the member's residence and the nearest office of the local authority by the most direct route that is reasonable in the circumstances; and
- (b) 30 kilometres, if the distance equivalent to a round trip between the member's residence and the nearest office of the local authority is greater than 30 kilometres by the most direct route that is reasonable in the circumstances.

The effect of this provision is that if the distance a member travels from their residence to the nearest office of the local authority and return by the most direct route is less than 30 kilometres, the actual distance travelled can be applied as the threshold distance for that member.

Travel time allowance

The determination provides for a change to the threshold travel time that must be incurred before the travel time allowance becomes payable. While the threshold travel time was previously two hours, clause 10 of the determination reduces the threshold to one hour:

An allowance may be paid to a member under subclause (1) for each day within the period of this determination that—

- (a) the member is travelling—
 - (i) on the local authority's business; and
 - (ii) by the quickest form of transport reasonable in the circumstances; and
- (b) the travel time of the member exceeds 1 hour.

It is proposed that the Council adopt a new policy to reflect the provisions of the determination. A draft policy is attached as **Attachment 1**.

5. **Communication**

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

6. 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 2012.*
- 4. **Notes** that the policy is subject to approval by the Remuneration Authority.*

Report prepared by:

Fran Wilde
Chair

Attachment 1: Draft of the Policy on Elected Members' Allowances and Expenses 2012