

Adopted:	15 November 2022
Next review date:	Within three months of the triennial elections
Document number:	A3230437
Sponsor/Group:	Legal, Risk and Governance Manager

## EXPENSES POLICY 2022-2025

### Purpose and Scope

1. This policy sets out rules for elected members wishing to claim expenses and the resources that will be available to them during the 2022-2025 Triennium of Council.

### Revocations

2. The Taupō District Council Expenses and Remuneration Policy 2019 is revoked when this policy comes into force on 15 November 2022.

### Definitions

Actual	Means there must be an 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 and/or Chief Executive.
Council business	Includes: formal Council meetings, committee meetings, workshops, seminars, statutory hearings, training courses, site visits, meetings with staff, meetings with community groups, and meetings with members of the public. It does not include events where the primary focus is on social activity.
Elected Member	Includes: Mayor and Councillors.

### Policy

3. Any expenses to be reimbursed must be on an actual and reasonable basis and in line with Council policy.
4. Costs for expenses must have a justifiable business purpose, be moderate and conservative having regard to the circumstances, and are appropriate in all respects.
5. Reimbursements and the use of Council-supplied resources only apply to elected members personally, and only while they are acting in their official capacity as elected members.
6. All expenditure that falls under this policy is approved on the condition that it can be met within relevant budget provisions.
7. In the absence of a specific rule for a given situation, elected members are expected to exercise good judgement by ensuring all expenditure is reasonable and moderate taking into account the context and situation in which the expenditure is incurred.

### Consistency with Remuneration Authority determinations

8. Limits on allowances and reimbursements for vehicle mileage, travel time and communications that are set in this policy are consistent with the determinations of the Remuneration Authority.

### Authentication of expenses and reimbursements

9. Full original receipts are required for reimbursement claims.
10. Cost reimbursements are made via Finance.

### Audit of expense claims and allowances

11. Council has an internal audit work programme which includes sampling and testing expense claims and allowances paid to elected members and staff. In addition, payments to elected members may be audited as part of Council's Annual Report auditing undertaken by Audit New Zealand.

#### ***Publication of expense information***

12. Council provides transparency and accountability to ratepayers by publishing all expenses for elected members on Council's website.

#### ***Accommodation in exceptional circumstances for Council related meetings***

13. Council staff may arrange overnight accommodation for elected members when travel or business requirements make it unreasonable for an elected member to return on the same day, [for example, if it would be unreasonable for an elected member to travel to their home after a late meeting].

#### ***Related documents***

14. In using this policy, Council will act in accordance with the:
  - Code of Conduct
  - Sensitive Expenditure Policy

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Allowances and reimbursements</b>
<i>Mayoral Vehicle</i>	Council will provide the Mayor with a vehicle that will also be available for his/her private use. The Mayor may not claim for vehicle mileage.	Council will deduct a vehicle allowance from the Mayor's salary at a rate determined by the Remuneration Authority.
<i>Vehicle Mileage</i>	<p>Vehicle mileage will be paid for travel on Council business [required to attend i.e. not voluntary attendance].</p> <p>Mileage is to be entered into timesheets and approved by a member of the Legal, Risk and Governance Team.</p>	<p>Mileage will be paid up to the maximum rate per kilometre as set out in the current Remuneration Authority Determination.</p> <p>Reimbursement will be paid if the elected member is not provided with a vehicle by Council, travel is in a private vehicle and travel is by the most direct route.</p> <p>Elected members who decide to travel significant distances by road instead of by air will receive costs reimbursed at either the level of the cheapest available flight, or the per kilometre reimbursement, whichever is lesser. Reimbursement for travel time will not be applicable in this situation.</p>

**Expenses***Travel Time***Policy**

A member is eligible for the travel time allowance when they are travelling:

- a) On local authority business
- b) By the quickest form of transport that is reasonable in the circumstances
- c) By the most direct route that is reasonable in the circumstances

This policy has a minimum threshold of one hour of time travelled and a maximum of 8 hours in a 24-hour period.

If a member of a local authority resides outside the local authority area and travels to the local authority area on local authority business, the member is only eligible for a travel time allowance in respect of eligible travel time—

- (a) after the member crosses the boundary of the local authority area; and
- (b) after the first hour of eligible travel within the local authority area.

Travel time will be paid on a pro-rata basis for travel over the minimum threshold of one hour. For travel up to half an hour, the rate paid will be half the rate set by the Remuneration Authority with payment of the full rate thereafter.

Travel time will not be paid for international travel or when members opt to travel significant distances by road rather than by air.

Travel time is to be entered into timesheets and approved by a member of the Legal, Risk and Governance Team.

Exception:

The above does not apply to the payment of a travel-time allowance by Council to a member who permanently or temporarily resides outside the Taupō District if—

- a. the member's primary place of residence was outside the Taupō District at the time of the local election, or an exceptional circumstance beyond the member's control requires them to move outside the Taupō District; and
- b. the Remuneration Authority determines, on an application from the member and having considered the recommendation of the mayor, that the above does not apply.

**Allowances and reimbursements**

Travel time will be paid up to the maximum rate as set out in the current Remuneration Authority Determination.

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Allowances and reimbursements</b>
<p><i>Mayor and Councillors</i></p> <p><i>Travel and conferences, courses and seminars</i></p>	<p>The prior/or retrospective approval of Council is required for travel within both New Zealand and overseas on Council business, including attendance at conferences/courses/training events/ seminars.</p> <p>The conference, course, seminar or training event must contribute to the elected member's ability to carry out Council business.</p> <p>Where the Mayor or the Mayor's authorised representative is accompanied by his/her partner on international travel, Council will meet the cost of their travel, accommodation and incidental costs. Council may only authorise such expenditure where the partner's involvement directly contributes to a clear Council business purpose.</p> <p>All elected members are entitled to payment of actual and reasonable registration, travel, accommodation, meal and related incidental expenses [including travel insurance and casual car parking expenses] incurred in attendance at these events, held both within New Zealand and overseas, subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Related expenditure being accommodated within existing budgets, and the appropriate approvals as outlined in this policy.</li> </ul> <p>All travel and accommodation arrangements for elected members are to be made through the PA to Mayor/CEO, 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>Excluded expenses, which may not be reimbursed, are for purchases from hotel mini-bars and charges for in-room video or cable movies.</p>	<p>Reimbursement of costs incurred [on presentation of actual receipts] while travelling on Council business or while hosting official visitors to the Council, including, but not limited to: tea/coffee and catering including alcohol with meals.</p>
<p><i>Taxis</i></p>	<p>All elected members may use taxis for Council business, instead of private vehicles or public transport, for the following reasons: a) safety/security reasons, and b) when traveling outside the District if a taxi is the most appropriate form of transport.</p> <p>Taxis may not be used if significant travel distances means that use of a taxi is not the most cost effective option. Elected members are advised to consider using a pool vehicle or a rental car as an alternative.</p>	<p>Council will reimburse taxi fares on presentation of actual receipts where these have been paid for directly by the elected member for travel within in New Zealand or for international travel.</p>

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Allowances and reimbursements</b>
<i>Private accommodation provided by friends/relatives</i>	Council will pay an allowance when an elected member uses private accommodation provided by friends and/or relatives while travelling on Council business.	Payment of an allowance when staying in private accommodation, to cover accommodation, breakfast and dinner is set at \$50 per day.
<i>General community related expenses</i>	From time to time Councillors 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. The items should be appropriate to the occasion and expenditure should be moderate and conservative.	Council will reimburse expenditure providing the item[s] have been approved prior to purchase by a member of the Executive Team and they are not able to be purchased through Council's electronic purchasing order system.
<i>Communication equipment</i>	<p>Council will provide the Mayor and Councillors a mobile phone, laptop or tablet, with full technical support.</p> <p>Council will provide the connection to Council-issued mobile phones;</p> <p>or</p> <p>pay an annual allowance for Council use of private items including connections to a standard that is compatible with Council communication needs [no technical support].</p> <p>Note: The Mayor, Councillors must use a Council laptop or tablet.</p>	<p>Council will provide EITHER</p> <p>a) a mobile phone, and laptop or tablet, and full technical support for Council business.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>an annual allowance for private equipment and connections provided by the Mayor, or Councillor, as determined by the Remuneration Authority.</p>
<i>Stationery and consumables</i>	Council will supply elected members with reasonable amounts of paper and printer consumables for Council business.	Council will provide reasonable amounts of paper and printer consumables.

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Allowances and reimbursements</b>
<i>Resource Consent Hearing Fees</i>	<p><u>Hearing fees for resource consent hearings not initiated by Council.</u></p> <p>Preparation time may now be claimed for and can include time for reading, attending onsite meetings, or attending pre-hearing briefings/meetings but payment cannot exceed the time of the actual hearing.</p> <p>For any period of hearing time that is less than one hour, the fee is apportioned accordingly.</p> <p>Resource consent hearing fees are not payable to the Mayor.</p> <p>A resource consent hearing fee for a pre-hearing meeting held under section 99 of the RMA is payable to only one member.</p> <p>Fees will be paid on receipt of a completed and signed claim form and approved by a member of the Legal, Risk and Governance Team</p>	<p>Hearing fees will be paid up to the maximum rate as set out in the current Remuneration Authority Determination.</p>
<i>District Licensing Committee Fees</i>	<p><u>Hearing fees for elected members undertaking District Licensing Committee hearings.</u></p> <p>Preparation time may now be claimed for and can include time for reading, attending onsite meetings, or attending pre-hearing briefings/meetings but payment cannot exceed the time of the actual hearing.</p> <p>For any period of hearing time that is less than one hour, the fee is apportioned accordingly.</p> <p>District Licensing Committee hearing fees are not payable to the Mayor.</p> <p>Fees will be paid on receipt of a completed and signed claim form and approved by a member of the Legal, Risk and Governance Team.</p>	<p>Hearing fees are set by the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act [not subject to Remuneration Authority].</p>

**Expenses****Policy****Allowances and reimbursements***Childcare allowance*

Council may pay a childcare allowance to an eligible member as a contribution towards expenses incurred by the member for childcare provided while the member is engaged on Council business.

A member is eligible to be paid a childcare allowance for childcare provided for a child only if—

- a. the 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. the child is under 14 years of age; and
- c. the childcare is provided by a person who
  - i. is not a parent of the child or a spouse, civil union partner, or de facto partner of the member; and
  - ii. does not ordinarily reside with the member; and
- d. the member provides evidence satisfactory to the local authority of the amount paid for childcare.

Council must not pay childcare allowances to a member that total more than \$6,000 per child during the determination term.