
NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT COUNCIL
POLICY ON ELECTED MEMBERS’
ALLOWANCES AND RECOVERY OF EXPENSES
FOR THE
2025-2028 ELECTORAL TERM¹

POLICY PURPOSE

This policy sets out rules on the claiming of expenses by elected members and the resources that will be available to them during their term of office.

DOCUMENTATION OF POLICIES

In addition to this document, the following documents set out the policies, rules and procedures relating to the expenses and allowances payable to elected members:

- Council Policy Register
- Travelling Overseas Policy
- Approval to Attend Professional Development Events

POLICY STATEMENTS

AUTHENTICATION OF EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENTS AND ALLOWANCES

From time to time elected members incur expenses on the Council’s behalf, which need to be reimbursed. This reimbursement and the use of Council supplied resources apply only to elected members personally, and only while they are acting in their official capacity as elected members.

All expense reimbursements are for actual and reasonable expenses incurred by members undertaking Council business. All expenses incurred by elected members, which require reimbursement to be requested, are to be prudent, conservative and in line with the Auditor-General’s guidance on sensitive expenditure.

The process for reimbursement of claims is based on the following principles:

- Any expenses to be reimbursed must be on an actual and reasonable basis and in line with Council policy.
- Cost reimbursements will be made via the payroll system.

¹ This policy will apply from the date that elected members come into office after the 11 October 2025 local body elections.

In the case of one-off expenditure such as travel to conferences, the process and prior approvals required are detailed in this policy or another policy.

In the case of vehicle mileage, travel time and communications, all limits set in this document do not exceed the Remuneration Authority's Determination. This includes the provision of pro-rata allowances where an elected member serves a part year.

The Council's internal audit work programme includes sampling expense claims and allowances paid to elected members and staff. The Council publicly reports on the sensitive expenditure of elected members and the Chief Executive.

No allowances are paid without deduction of withholding tax.

All expenditure that falls under this policy is approved on the condition that it can be met within relevant budget provisions.

All claims must be lodged no later than one month after the close of the financial year in which the expense was incurred.

APPROVALS

The Chairperson of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee approves all Mayoral expenses prior to reimbursement. In the Chair's absence the Deputy Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee can approve Mayoral expenses.

The Mayor must approve all other elected member expenses prior to reimbursement. In the Mayor's absence the Deputy Mayor may approve elected member expenses with exception of their own expenses which will be approved by the Chairperson of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee .

All approvals are to be checked by the Manager Governance prior to being submitted for payment. In the Manager Governance's absence, the General Manager Te Tiriti Partnerships will check the approvals.

DEFINITIONS

"Actual" means as evidenced by receipts 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 Chairperson of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

"Council business" includes formal Council and Community Board 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. Council business does not include events where the primary focus is on social activity.

“Remuneration Authority” is an independent body established by the Remuneration Authority Act 1977, with responsibilities under the Local Government Act 2002 to determine remuneration and expense/allowance rules for local authority members.

“Sensitive Expenditure” is spending by an organisation that could be seen as giving some private benefit that is in addition to the business benefit to the entity of the spending.

ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES BY TYPE OF EXPENSE/ALLOWANCE

Expense/Allowance	Position	Description
Travel and attendance at conferences/seminars/training programmes	All elected members	<p>Payment of actual and reasonable registration, travel, accommodation, meal and related incidental expenses (including travel insurance) incurred in attendance at approved events, held both within New Zealand and overseas, subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • related expenditure being accommodated within existing budgets, and • the appropriate approvals as outlined in this policy and any other relevant policy. <p>Reimbursement for purchases from hotel mini-bars and charges for in-room video or movies are excluded.</p> <p>All travel and accommodation arrangements are to be made through the Governance Team or Mayor’s Office with the Council’s preferred travel agents, at the most cost effective available at the time of booking, unless all travel costs are being met privately or by an outside party.</p>
Domestic air travel	All elected members	Domestic air travel for Council business where travel by air is the most cost effective and practicable travel option.

Expense/Allowance	Position	Description
International air travel	All elected members	International air travel is by way of economy class, where all or part of the costs of the fares are to be met by the Council. The approval of the Council is required for exceptions, e.g. where Premium Economy or the equivalent air travel is desirable for health or other compelling reasons.
Airline club	Mayor	Given frequent travel requirements for the role, payment of an Air New Zealand Koru Club subscription.
Airpoints	All elected members	Air points may be accrued when travelling on Council business.
Private accommodation provided by friends/relatives	All elected Members	Payment of \$60 per night when staying in private accommodation, to cover accommodation, breakfast and dinner. It is intended that at least a portion of this allowance is paid to the accommodation provider.
Exceptional circumstances for Council related meetings	All elected members	Staff may arrange overnight accommodation when travel or business requirements do not allow for the elected member return on the same day, e.g. if it is unreasonable to travel to their home after a late meeting.
Car	Mayor	<p>A vehicle will be available for their private use. A deduction will be made from their salary as determined by the Remuneration Authority. The Mayor will not be able to claim for vehicle mileage.</p> <p>Where the Mayor elects not to have a Council provided vehicle, the mileage reimbursements set out elsewhere in this policy shall apply.</p>
Car parking	Mayor	Use of a permanently assigned carpark at the Civic Centre for use on Council business.

Expense/Allowance	Position	Description
Car parking	All elected members excluding the Mayor	Use of limited assigned carparks at Civic Centre for use on Council business provided the vehicle registration has been lodged with the Governance Team.
Parking expenses	All elected members	Reimbursement of casual car parking costs related to Council business held at any Council premises. Reimbursement requires a written claim accompanied by a receipt.
Taxis and Ride-Hailing services	All elected members	<p>Taxis and ride-hailing services (such as Uber) may be used for Council business, instead of private vehicles or public transport, for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) safety/security reasons, and b) when travelling outside New Plymouth if the service is the most appropriate form of transport. <p>The services may not be used if significant travel distances mean that the provider is not the most cost effective option. Rental cars booked through the Governance Team or Mayor's Office should be considered as an option in such circumstances.</p> <p>Taxi charge vouchers should be used for planned travel within New Zealand. Costs paid for directly by the individual for unanticipated travel within New Zealand or for international travel will be reimbursed on presentation of receipts.</p>
Rental Cars	All elected members	Rental cars may be utilised when attending meetings or conferences in other centres, where this is the most cost-effective travel option. These are to be booked through the Governance Team or Mayor's Office except in exceptional circumstances.

Expense/Allowance	Position	Description
Vehicle mileage	All elected members	<p>Vehicle mileage will be paid for travel on Council business at the maximum rate per kilometre as set out in the current Remuneration Authority Determination.</p> <p>Mileage will be paid to eligible members on receipt of a written mileage claim.</p>
Travel time	All elected members	Reimbursement at the rate set out in the current Remuneration Authority Determination.
Entertainment and hospitality	Mayor and Councillors	<p>Reimbursement of costs incurred while hosting official visitors to the Council, or while travelling on Council business. These costs can cover a range of items including, but not limited to, tea/coffee, and catering including alcohol with meals.</p> <p>Full receipts and details of the names of parties entertained and reasons for the entertainment are to be provided.</p>
General community related expenses	Mayor, Councillors, Community Board Chairs	From time to time costs may arise for items relating to community events, e.g. payment of koha, or purchasing a wreath for attendance should have the prior approval of the Manager Governance. The items should be appropriate to the occasion and expenditure must be moderate and conservative.
Childcare allowance	Mayor, Councillors, Community Board Chairs	<p>Reimbursement for childcare expenses incurred while the elected member is engaged on Council business.</p> <p>A maximum of \$7,500 can be reimbursed for each child under 14 years of age.</p> <p>Reimbursement is subject to the matters contained in the current Remuneration Authority Determination.</p>

Expense/Allowance	Position	Description
Communications equipment	Mayor, Councillors, Community Board Chairs	The Council will provide a laptop. Where the member declines the provision of Council hardware the Communications equipment allowance applicable to community board members will apply.
Communications equipment	Community Board Members	Provision of an annual allowance for any or all equipment personally provided, as follows: i) \$400 for the use of one personal computer, tablet, or laptop including any related docking station. ii) \$50 for the use of a multi-functional or other printer.
Landline and broadband connection	Mayor	Full reimbursement of home telephone line rental and associated toll calls. or As per the reimbursement for councillors, community board members/chairs.
Landline and broadband connection	Councillors, Community Board Chairs and Members	Monthly reimbursement (on production of invoice) of the connection/usage costs that can be identified as relating to Council business. or \$800 per annum for landline and broadband connection.

Expense/Allowance	Position	Description
Communications Equipment & expenses	Mayor	Provision of a Council provided mobile phone. Or Provision of \$200 per annum for the use of a personal phone, plus \$500 allowance towards Council generated calls, text and data through mobile phones.
Communications Equipment	Councillors and all Community Board Chairs and Members	\$200 per annum for the use of a personal mobile telephone.
Mobile phone expenses	Councillors, Deputy Mayor Community Board Chairs and Community Board members	\$500 allowance towards Council generated calls, text and data through mobile phones.
Stationery and consumables	Mayor, Councillors, Community Board Chairs and members	Supply of reasonable amounts of stationery for Council business.

Expense/Allowance	Position	Description
Home Security Provisions	Mayor, Councillors, Community Board Chairs and members	<p>Where a security threat and risk assessment has been authorised by the Chief Executive or their delegate; Reimbursement of expenses related to the installation and monitoring of a home security system at their primary residence. Reimbursement may include up to \$4,500 for installation costs and up to \$1,000 per annum for monitoring, call-outs, and repairs unless higher costs are approved by the Remuneration Authority.</p> <p>To support a claim, the elected member must provide an itemised invoice or receipt, along with a copy of the authorised security threat and risk assessment.</p> <p>If an elected member changes their primary residence, a new security threat and risk assessment must be approved before any further installation costs are considered. Costs must remain within the reimbursement limits per term of Council. If the home is not owned by the elected member, written approval of any works to the home must be obtained from the owner, as per the Residential Tenancies Act 1986.</p> <p>If an elected member is no longer in office for any reason, Council will not reimburse any further costs under this policy. The security system and equipment will remain at the residence and ongoing operating costs become the responsibility of the property owner/occupier.</p> <p>Notes the Policy does not inhibit Council supporting implementation of home security systems where there is an immediate risk to the health and safety of elected members, where issues of inequity exist, or where the Chief Executive otherwise considers such support necessary.</p>

Policy contact

The policy holder is the Governance Team within Te Tiriti Partnerships.

Review

This policy shall be reviewed at the beginning of each electoral term.

Update history

The policy was updated with the addition of Home Security Provisions, reflecting the Council decision on 30 April 2026.
