

Remuneration Authority
Draft policy: Childcare Allowance for Elected Members of Local Government
Auckland Council Feedback
[date]

Auckland Council supports the Remuneration Authority in addressing this issue which has been raised by members of other councils through submissions to the Authority. The costs of childcare can be a barrier to people with families considering becoming candidates for local government elections. The council commends the authority for recognising such barriers and for acknowledging the need to address them.

The council's view is that the proposed conditions to be placed in the authority's determination are reasonable. It is concerned though that the description of the purpose of the allowance is too wide. The proposed wording is:

A local authority may pay a childcare allowance, in accordance with subclauses (2) and (3), to an eligible member as a contribution towards expenses incurred by the member for childcare provided while the member is engaged on local authority business.

The phrase "childcare provided while the member is engaged on local authority business" could include childcare that is incidental at the time the member is engaged on local authority. For example, a member may arrange childcare on a regular basis, irrespective of undertaking council duties, and on a particular occasion attends to council business papers while the children are at childcare. There could be uncertainty about whether this is claimable. The council understands that the purpose of the allowance is as a contribution towards the cost of childcare where this is an expense of undertaking council business and suggests that the wording should capture this sense of necessary expense in order to undertake council business.