

22 June 2017

Fran Wilde
Chair
Remuneration Authority
PO Box 10084
The Terrace
Wellington 6143

info@remauthority.govt.nz

Dear Fran

DRAFT Christchurch City Council comment on Consultation Document, Local Government Review – Part two – Proposed Immediate Changes (2017 Determination)

1. Introduction

Christchurch City Council (the Council) thanks the Remuneration Authority (the Authority) for the opportunity to provide comment on the Authority's Local Government Review, Part Two - Proposed Immediate Changes for the 2017 determination.

These comments focus on the key questions within the consultation document and commentary has been added in support of responses as related to the Council's current position or policies.

The Council acknowledges that the short time frame given by the Remuneration Authority to provide a Council view on part two of the consultation document has provided some challenges. However, all 54 Christchurch City Council elected members received the consultation document and have had the opportunity to provide feedback. The key themes of the responses provided and information relating to Christchurch City Council processes and policies have formed the basis of this comment on Part two of the consultation document.

The Council intends its comment on Part three of the consultation document will be submitted to the Authority by the 20 October 2017 deadline.

2. RMA Plan hearing fees

Do you agree that elected members who are sitting on plan hearings under the RMA should be remunerated in the same way as elected members who are sitting on resource consent hearings?

The Council supports this proposal.

Do you agree that elected members who chair such hearings should be remunerated for time spent writing up decisions?

The Council supports this proposal.

3. Leave of absence for elected members and acting mayor/chair payments

Do you agree that there should be provision for elected members to be granted up to six months leave of absence without pay?

The Council supports the proposal for members to be able to be granted a leave of absence for up to six months.

The Council expects that approval or otherwise of a request for a leave of absence without pay would, as indicated in the Authority's document, depend upon the reasons for the leave and the amount of time requested.

The wording in this section of the document refers to only to councillors and mayor/chair. The Council seeks clarification if this proposal would apply to all elected members, including community board members and chairpersons. The Council supports that it should.

The Council notes a query raised about whether parental leave may be a reason for a leave of absence and requests that the Authority give consideration to this and supports the provision of paid parental leave for elected members.

Do you agree that additional remuneration can be made to the deputy mayor or chair to act in the role under the circumstances outlined? If you disagree with any of the conditions, please state why? Are there any other conditions that should apply?

The Council supports additional remuneration being made available for the deputy mayor to act in place of the mayor if the mayor is granted a leave of absence as per the comment made in the section above.

4. Approach to expenses policies

Do you agree that the Remuneration Authority should supply a prototype expenses policy that will cover all councils and that councils should be able to adopt any or all of it to the upper limit of the metrics within the policy?

The Council is open to the Authority developing a prototype expense policy, however acknowledges that there are differences between councils that may require significant variation to aspects of it and that the policy would need to accommodate these.

Paragraph 28 of the consultation document references the Authority working with local government to develop the prototype policy, the Council suggests that all councils should have the opportunity and significant time to provide input before a prototype is finalised and available for adoption.

Do you agree that each council's auditor should review their policy and also the application of the policy?

The Council considers that the Remuneration Authority should review and authorise all expense and allowance policies.

The Council supports the concept that council auditors review the application and compliance of expense policies, acknowledging potential cost and process implications.

**5. Provision and allowances for information and communication technology and services
ICT hardware**

Do you agree that it should be common policy for councils to provide the ICT hardware proposed above for all elected members? Do you agree that exemptions to this policy would be limited to exceptional circumstances?

If you disagree with either of these proposals, please give reasons and outline your alternatives.

The Council does not fully support this proposal.

The Council has adopted a strategic direction towards sustainability which includes a paperless environment. The paperless environment has been fully implemented for elected members and all documentation relating to the business of meetings of the Council and Community Boards is provided electronically.

Paragraph 35 of the consultation document references *“that all councils should provide an appropriate council-owned technology suite for their elected members”* which the Christchurch City Council does. Each elected member is provided with a device, currently an iPad Pro with an attached keyboard, and the ability and software to access all required functions to carry out Council business including email, calendar, internet, document management and filing systems.

Full support is provided for equipment and software applications on devices, with ongoing review to ensure that it is fit for purpose. If required assistance and advice is provided to enable elected members to connect personal mobile devices to Council email and related services. All devices and systems comply with the Council’s security and privacy requirements.

The Council does not support the provision of any additional computing, printing equipment or related consumables to elected members than those currently supplied. Devices provided are considered fit for purpose and the paperless environment supports the sustainability of the system/strategic approach.

The Council notes that elected members can access printing or copying facilities at the Council’s Civic offices or via community based Governance Teams and support staff. As a commitment to the paperless environment this excludes printing or copying related to meeting documentation.

If an elected member chooses to also use personal equipment for Council business to support the Council provided device, for example a computer, laptop or printer they can at their own cost.

The Council does not support providing each of its elected members with a Council owned mobile phone. The varied range of phones, and particularly smart phones, available would make it difficult to provide a phone that meet the needs of all elected members. As mentioned above, support is available to enable elected members to connect personal mobile devices to Council email and related services, with the appropriate Council IT security requirements to be met.

The Council supports a continued approach for an available allowance towards the cost of a mobile phone, set by the Remuneration Authority and included in the Council’s policy.

The Council considers that the provision and support of all of the equipment listed in paragraph 38 for 54 elected members will have a significant cost impact for the Council which has not been budgeted for in the recently adopted annual plan. Procurement, training and support related to provision of additional equipment will require detailed planning and is not something that could be implemented in a short time frame.

The Council comments in this section apply to all elected members excluding the Mayor. The Council supports the continued provision to the Mayor of the following items:

- Computer and/or device
- Ancillary equipment in the Council office
- Mobile telephone
- Internet connection
- Payment of home telephone line
- Payment of monthly mobile phone costs.

6. Internet usage and phone plans

Do you agree that a proportion of the ongoing cost of the use of home internet and personal mobile phones should be reimbursed as outlined above?

The Council does not fully support this proposal.

The Council agrees with the proposal in that elected members should be responsible for their own home broadband and mobile phone plans to meet their wide needs.

The Council considers that the proposed reimbursement schemes as detailed below would require significant resource to support and a commitment from elected members to be able to provide this information on a regular basis:

- Reimbursement of up to 25 percent of a maximum dollar amount to cover internet usage costs, on product of receipts.
- Reimbursement of up to half the cost of personal mobile phone usage up to a maximum dollar amount on production of receipts.

The Council suggests that the Remuneration Authority identify appropriate allowances towards the cost of home internet and personal mobile phone usage that are included in the Council's policy and elected members are entitled to claim.

The Council supports the proposal in paragraph 47 that for mayors and chairs, councils should cover the total cost of the mobile phone plan, except that the user will be charged for private international calls that incur an individual charge. The Council also supports that councils should cover the cost of mayors and chairs internet usage. The Council's comment on these matters is also referred to within section 5 above.

7. Unusual circumstances

Do you agree with the "unusual circumstance" provision in para 49 48?

The Council supports for the need for an approach to unusual circumstances related to coverage issues.

8. Time travel allowance

Do you agree that the current policy on travel time allowance should be continued? If not, please state reasons for change.

The Council supports this proposal, acknowledging that for Christchurch City Council it applies to community board members only as they are not considered full time.

9. Mileage Claims

Do you agree with the proposed change to the current 5000km rule? If not, what should it be and why?

The Council supports that mileage is paid at the IRD formula for mileage rate reimbursement (currently 74 cents per km) and accepts the proposal to increase the threshold for the reasons provided however considers that this could be stated more simply than proposed.

The wording in this section of the document refers to only mayors/chairs and councillors, the Council seeks clarification if this proposal would apply to all elected members, including community board members and chairpersons. The Council supports that it should.

Do you agree with the proposal to retain the 30km rule in its current form? If not, what should this rule be?

The Council supports the proposal to retain the 30km rule, however would like to ensure the guidelines for application of this rule are as clear as possible. Interpretations of the information provided in the consultation document have been varied.

10. Conclusion

The Council, and its staff, are supportive of the outcomes the Authority is seeking to achieve and would welcome the opportunity to provide input or support to assist the Authority in these.

If you require clarification on any of the comments provided by the Council or additional information please contact Jo Daly, Council Secretary, phone 03 941 8581 or email jo.daly@ccc.govt.nz

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lianne Dalziel', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Lianne Dalziel
MAYOR OF CHRISTCHURCH