The Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), Mr Des van Rooyen has through sections 7 (1), 8 (5Xa) and 9 (5)(a) of the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Act, 1998 (Act 20 of 1998) determined the upper limits of salaries, allowances and benefits of different members of municipal councils as set out in the Schedule as published in Government Gazette No. 41335 of 15 December 2017.

The Remuneration Commission for Political Office Bearers indicates that councillors are the least paid and don’t have access to key tools of trade that will assist them in caring out their work. Amongst all the political office bearers, the councillors have the least benefits. Hence following consultations with a number of stakeholders that included the members of the Executive Council responsible for local government in each province; and after taking into consideration the matters listed in paragraphs (a) to (i) of section 7(1) of the Act, Minister determined the upper limits.

The local government sphere as it is at the coalface of service delivery and the closest to the people has a constitutional obligation to deliver a variety of services including basic essential services such the provision of potable water, sanitation, electricity and housing especially to the poor and deprived communities.
While this gazetted upper limits may be seen to cost a bit more initially, the long-term advantages greatly outweigh those costs as we will see overall improvement in service delivery at local government level. To this effect, councillors who are doing the work of facilitating the delivery of services have to be capacitated through salaries, allowances, tools of trade, training and other types of benefits.

With this upper-limits, councillors will be able to work better and smarter, and this will lead to greater productivity and higher quality outputs from municipalities. It is important to note that the proposed upper limits are standard in various disciplines in both the public and private sector.

The suggested proposals geared to improving the work conditions of councillors and thus ensuring better and improved service delivery. The successful implementation of this upper limits will also be to a large extent dependent on the availability of budgets and affordability by individual municipalities.

The following are upper-limits as gazetted:

**Cellphone allowance**: the upper limits for R3400 cellphone allowance previously applied to Executive Mayors, Dep Mayor & Speaker of a category 6 municipality. This benefit has been extended to all councillors as others, especially part-time councillors did not enjoy the benefits of office equipments e.g telephones, printers, computers or laptops etc, to enable them to perform their day to day responsibilities. The amount of R3400 is a maximum and a municipality is not obliged to pay the maximum allowance depending on what it can afford. In order to minimise costs, the municipalities are encouraged to procure cellphones for councillors.

**The sitting allowance of R1024** is only applicable to councillors who have been elected or designated to represent SALGA at its governmental structure and the costs are borne by SALGA not a municipality.

**Capacity building** – A municipality has to make a provision in its budget for the development and implementation of capacity building programme for a councillor during the term of office of that councillor. This capacity building programme may include specific training conducted by national departments, associated government agencies and SETAs, provincial departments, municipalities and organised local government but excludes tertiary education.

**Housing allowances** – A councillor may structure his or her salary to provide for housing allowance as part of the total remuneration package.

**Special risk cover** – A municipality must, in addition to the annual total remuneration packages take out risk insurance cover. This will cover the loss of or damage to a
councilor’s personal immovable or moveable property and assets, excluding property used by such councilor for business purposes, as well as life and disability cover, for any loss or damage caused by riot, civil unrest, strike or public disorder.

**Out of pocket expenses** – A councilor may, in addition to the total remuneration package, be reimbursed for reasonable and actual out of pocket expenses incurred during the execution of official or ceremonial duties, in accordance with the applicable municipal council policy.

**Medical Aid Scheme** – A councilor may participate in a medical aid scheme. The contributions by the municipal council and the councilor are included in the total remuneration package as a total cost to the municipality. If a councilor elects to participate in a medical aid scheme, the municipality shall pay from his or her monthly salary, councilor’s own contributions and council contributions charged against and paid from the budget of the municipality to the medical aid scheme to which the councilor is a member.

**Motor vehicle and travel allowance** –

A councilor listed in item 5 and 8 of this Notice may structure his or her basic salary to provide for motor vehicle allowance. If a councilor structures a vehicle allowance, the councilor must provide proof of ownership of a private vehicle to the municipality and have the vehicle available for official duties.

A councilor who uses a privately-owned vehicle for execution of official duties on behalf of the municipality, may be reimbursed for official kilometres traveled, in addition to the total remuneration package of a councilor as determined in terms of items 5 and 8 of the Notice, not exceeding the applicable tariffs as prescribed by the national department responsible for transport and in terms of the municipal council’s policy.

A councilor who utilises a privately-owned vehicle for official purposes must, for purpose of claiming kilometres traveled, keep a travel log book containing all the necessary information.

A councilor may, in exceptional circumstances and upon good cause shown, and with the approval of the Mayor or Speaker, utilise the municipal-owned vehicle for official purposes: – Provided that the municipal council must, in line with the approved municipal council policy, exercise prudent financial management to ensure that the provision of motor vehicle does not undermine their ed to prioritise service delivery and sustain viable municipalities.

If a councilor uses a municipal-owned motor vehicle for official purposes, such councilor will not be reimbursed for kilometres traveled.
We believe that with this changes, the municipalities are poised to deliver as expected and will help create a stable workforce and position municipalities as leaders in providing the required services.

**Media Enquiries:**

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