

**ITEM 3. DRAFT COUNCILLORS' EXPENSES POLICY 2015/16 - PUBLIC EXHIBITION**

**FILE NO: S048524**

**SUMMARY**

Council is required by the Office of Local Government (OLG) to review its Councillors' Expenses Policy on an annual basis. Council must submit its Policy to the Chief Executive of the Office of Local Government within 28 days of adoption and by no later than 30 November each year.

The purpose of the Policy is to ensure that there is accountability and transparency in the reimbursement of expenses incurred by Councillors. The Policy also ensures the facilities provided to assist Councillors to carry out their civic duties are reasonable and meet the expectations of the local community.

The draft Policy (attached) is consistent with the previous Policy. Minor modifications and editorial changes as detailed in the body of this report, and incorporated in Attachment A, are proposed. All additions and editorial amendments proposed to the existing Policy are in ***bold italics***. All deletions are in ~~strike through~~.

Following consideration by Council, the draft Policy will be placed on public exhibition on the City's website and will also be available for inspection at the One Stop Shop and Neighbourhood Service Centres. The exhibition period will close on Friday, 16 October 2015. Should any submissions be received, they will be reported to Councillors at the meeting of the Corporate, Finance, Properties and Tenders Committee on Monday, 16 November 2015 (to enable the Policy to be lodged with the Office of Local Government by 30 November).

In October 2009, the Office of Local Government (then Department of Local Government) issued *Guidelines for the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities for Mayors and Councillors for Local Councils in New South Wales*. The Policy was developed in accordance with, and remains consistent with, these Guidelines.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is resolved that Council approve for public exhibition the draft Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy 2015/16, shown at Attachment A to the subject report.

**ATTACHMENTS**

**Attachment A:** Draft Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy 2015/16

**BACKGROUND**

1. Council is required to adopt a Policy for the payment of expenses incurred by, and the provision of facilities to, the Lord Mayor and Councillors.
2. Council is required on an annual basis to review the Policy, exhibit the proposed Policy and submit it to the Office of Local Government within 28 days of adoption and by no later than 30 November each year, even if the Policy remains the same as the existing Policy.
3. The current version of the Policy has been in place since November 2014.
4. Given the currency of the Policy, only minor modifications and/or editorial changes are proposed.
5. Council must give public notice of its Policy and allow at least 28 days for public submissions. Council must consider any submissions received and make any appropriate changes to the Policy.
6. The draft Policy will be placed on the City's website following the Council meeting of 14 September 2015. The exhibition period will close on Friday, 16 October 2015 and, should any submissions be received, they will be reported to Councillors at the meeting of the Corporate, Finance, Properties and Tenders Committee on Monday 16 November 2015 when the draft Policy is reconsidered.

**KEY IMPLICATIONS**

7. Expenditure under the Policy has been monitored since the introduction of expenditure caps in May 2007.
8. Proposed amendments to the current Policy are incorporated in Attachment A.
9. The proposed changes are:
  - (a) Title - reinstatement of previous title - "Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy" - on the basis that the expanded title better reflects the scope of the Policy.
  - (b) Part 1 - Introduction - updating of statistical references/minor editorial changes (p. 1).
  - (c) Part 2 - Responsibility and Accountability - minor editorial changes/deletion of unnecessary reference to related policy (p. 3).
  - (d) Clauses 6.1, 7.1, 8.4, 9.3, 11.1, 17.10, 22.5 and 24.3 - incorporation of minor editorial changes to those sections of the Policy which reference capped expenditure limits – to make it clear that the capped amounts specified in the Policy apply to each Councillor on an annual basis (pp. 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14).
  - (e) Clauses 12.1-12.5, 22.1-22.4 and 31.6 - for the purpose of additional clarity, reformatting/incorporation of minor editorial changes (pp.8, 13).
  - (f) Part 3 - Provision of Facilities - minor editorial changes.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

10. The Budget already adopted by Council includes provision for the ongoing provision of services and facilities to Councillors on a similar basis to last year. The limits applied to specific items of expenditure will be monitored to enable control of expenditure to avoid exceeding Budget limits.

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

11. The Local Government Act 1993, particularly sections 252 and 253.

**CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES**

12. Council is required by the Office of Local Government to review its Councillors' Expenses Policy on an annual basis. Council must submit its Policy to the Office of Local Government within 28 days of adoption and by no later than 30 November each year.

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

13. The draft Policy will be placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days. Any submissions received during the exhibition period will be summarised and reported to Councillors.

**LEANDER KLOHS**

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