

**ITEM 4. COUNCILLORS' EXPENSES AND FACILITIES POLICY 2015/16 -  
ADOPTION**

**FILE NO: S048524**

**SUMMARY**

In accordance with section 252 of the Local Government Act 1993, Council is required to adopt a Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy (the Policy) for the payment of expenses incurred by, and the provision of facilities to, the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and Councillors.

Council is required by the Office of Local Government to review and adopt its Policy on an annual basis, by 30 November.

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 for 2015/16 (attached) was considered by Council on 14 September 2015 and has been placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days. The draft Policy is consistent with the current Policy. Minor changes as detailed in the body of this report and incorporated in Attachment A, as agreed for public exhibition by Council on 14 September 2015, are proposed.

The draft Policy was placed on exhibition on Council's website and was also available for inspection at the One Stop Shop and Neighbourhood Service Centres. No submissions were received.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is resolved that Council adopt 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, Deputy Lord Mayor and Councillors.
2. On an annual basis, Council is required 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 existing Policy has been in place since November 2014.
4. Given the currency of the existing 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 was placed on public exhibition on 16 September 2015, with copies available for inspection at the One Stop Shop and Neighbourhood Service Centres and on the City's website. The exhibition period closed on 14 October 2015.
7. Advertisements indicating that the draft Policy was being exhibited were placed in The Sydney Morning Herald on 15 September 2015 and in a number of local newspapers during the period 15-24 September 2015, inclusive.
8. No submissions have been received.

**KEY IMPLICATIONS**

9. Expenditure under the existing Policy has been monitored since the introduction of expenditure caps in May 2007.
10. Minor changes to the current Policy as detailed below, and incorporated in Attachment A, are proposed. The draft Policy is otherwise consistent with the current Policy. 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.
  - (c) Part 2 - Responsibility and Accountability - minor editorial changes/deletion of unnecessary reference to related policy.
  - (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.
  - (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.
  - (f) Part 3 - Provision of Facilities - minor editorial changes.

- (g) Review Date – inclusion of reference to “Secretariat, Office of the CEO” (as policy owner).

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

11. 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**

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

**CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES**

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

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

14. The draft Policy has been placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days. No submissions have been received.

**LEANDER KLOHS**

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