

Post Exhibition - Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy

File No: S051923

Summary

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 (the Act), Councillors are entitled to be provided with the necessary resources and facilities and for expenses to be reimbursed in order for them to perform the role and undertake the duties of a Councillor.

To facilitate this, Council is required to adopt a policy, known as the Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy (the Policy), for the payment of expenses incurred by, and the provision of facilities to, the Lord Mayor and Councillors.

In accordance with the Act, the Policy must be reviewed and adopted within the first 12 months of the commencement of each term of a council.

The adopted Policy must be consistent with the relevant provisions of the Act (sections 252 and 253) and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021. These provisions are further informed by the "Guidelines for the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities for Mayors and Councillors in NSW" (the Guidelines) issued by the Office of Local Government (OLG) in 2009.

Following the commencement of the new term of Council in December 2021, a review of the Policy was undertaken. Council endorsed the draft Policy for public exhibition on 22 August 2022. The draft Policy did not propose the introduction of any new expense categories or facilities. The draft Policy does propose an increase to the scope of some expenditure categories to better meet the needs of Councillors and an increase in the cap related to Councillor meeting expenditure. Other changes were largely administrative, procedural and to promote alignment with the provisions of the Code of Conduct.

The draft Policy was exhibited for 44 days from 24 August to 6 October 2022. No submissions were received. During this period, further feedback was received from Councillors and this report proposes some further refinements to the draft policy.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council adopt the revised Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy as shown at Attachment A to the subject report; and
- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make amendments to the Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy in order to correct any minor drafting errors and finalise design, artwork and accessible formats for publication.

Attachments

Attachment A. Revised Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy

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 within the first 12 months of each council term.
2. Council is required to review its Policy and publicly exhibit the proposed Policy, even if the Policy remains the same as the existing Policy.
3. The current version of the Policy has been in place since 2017. Following a review of the Policy in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993 (the Act), the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 and the Office of Local Government (OLG) Guidelines, some modifications and variations were recommended and incorporated into the initial draft endorsed for exhibition by Council on 22 August 22.
4. The draft Policy was exhibited for 44 days from 24 August to 6 October 2022. No submissions were received. During this period, further feedback was received from Councillors.
5. The revised draft Policy (as shown at Attachment A) includes the following refinements to the current draft Policy that was placed on exhibition:

Amendment	Provision	Provision	Proposed Change
	Chapter 3 - Payment of Expenses	16. Postage and Communication Tools (\$1,500) Database Management/Software as a Service	Section renamed "16. Civic Communication Tools (\$1,500)". Subclause "Database Management/Software as a Service" renamed to "Electronic Civic Communications". Entitlement updated to provided Councillors with access to the City provisioned email marketing platform (currently Campaign Monitor) in order to manage their civic communications electronically and resolve technological, privacy and operational issues with exhibited proposal.

Amendment	Provision	Provision	Proposed Change
			Existing Postage and Christmas / Festive Season Cards provisions remain unchanged.
	Chapter 3 - Payment of Expenses	19. Table Purchasing for Charity and Fundraising Events	Guidelines for decision making aligned with revised "Support for Charities Policy", currently under consideration by Council.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

6. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This [choose an item] is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 1 - Responsible Governance and Stewardship – The Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy has been designed to ensure Councillors have the appropriate tools and resources to meet the civic duties of their office and to ensure there is a transparent and well governed approach towards Councillor expenditure.

Financial Implications

7. The 2022/23 budget already adopted by Council includes funding for the ongoing provision of services and facilities to Councillors, with new provisions made for the inclusion of superannuation contributions for Councillors. The limits applied to specific items of expenditure will be monitored to enable control of expenditure to avoid exceeding budget limits.
8. The draft Policy proposes to increase the cap for Council Related Meeting Costs from \$3,000 to \$6,000 as well as the provision's scope.

Relevant Legislation

9. Local Government Act 1993.
10. Local Government (General) Regulation 2021.

Public Consultation

11. The draft Policy was exhibited for 44 days from 24 August to 6 October 2022. No submissions were received.

MONICA BARONE

Chief Executive Officer

Jeremy Kelshaw, Executive Manager, Chief Executive Office