

Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy

Policy Details

Directorate:	Organisational Services
Branch:	Corporate Governance
Responsible Manager:	Corporate Governance Manager
Date adopted:	23 November 2022 (Minute No 110/2022)
Date for review:	4 years from the date of adoption or date of last review
Legislative basis:	<i>Local Government Act 2009</i> <i>Local Government Regulation 2012</i> <i>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994</i>
Related Documents - forms and procedures	Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland Insurance and Indemnity for Councillors Policy Acceptable Request Guidelines

1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- meet the requirements of section 250 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* which requires that Council adopt an expenses reimbursement policy;
- provide for payment of reasonable expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by Councillors for discharging their duties and responsibilities as elected representatives of the Council; and
- outline the facilities and resources that Council will provide to Councillors for that purpose.

The policy has been developed having regard to the Local Government Principles.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors, Councillor Advisors and to all employees of Council responsible for the administration of this policy.

Except as otherwise provided, some expenses are not eligible for reimbursement under this policy, including:

- expenses incurred on behalf of a Councillor's spouse, partner, or family members;
- expenses incurred on election material, that is intended to be published or distributed during caretaker period;
- alcoholic beverages;

- travel to internal meetings;
- membership of political parties, entry fees to political party events, or any other expenses of a Political Nature where the primary activity is not related to Council business;
- where a Councillor stands to personally gain a financial benefit; and
- meals, beverages, or other food from a Council facility.

3 Policy Statement

Councillors are elected representatives of the community who set the strategic direction for the Council. Council is committed to ensuring that its elected representatives are not financially disadvantaged in the conduct of their role. This policy underpins that commitment by demonstrating that reasonable expenses incurred by Councillors whilst carrying out their duties and responsibilities will be reimbursed, and outlining the facilities and resources that Council will provide to enable Councillors to discharge their duties and responsibilities.

The payment or reimbursement of expenses and the provision of facilities and resources for Councillors will be:

- open and transparent;
- financially responsible and accountable;
- based on ensuring economy and efficiency;
- subject to budget provisions; and
- in accordance with all statutory requirements.

Council will each year, as part of its budget process, establish a budget for the payment of reasonable expenses and the provision of facilities and resources to Councillors. Any unspent funds in a single financial year will not be carried over to the next financial year. It is acknowledged that each item will have an annual allocation in the budget, however the allocation is not required to be spent for the specified use and the entire budget (as provided by this policy) can be used for approved expenditure under this policy.

The Annexure to this policy sets out the expenses that Council will reimburse and the facilities and resources which Council will provide to Councillors.

This policy does not provide for salaries or any other form of remuneration to Councillors, as that is determined by the Local Government Remuneration Commission.

4 Reporting

As required by section 186 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, Council's Annual Report will include details of the expenses incurred by each Councillor during the financial year, as set out in this policy.

Regular reports on Councillor expenses will be provided to all Councillors, including quarterly acquittal reports outlining expenditure incurred under this policy for the Mayor and each divisional Councillor which will be presented to the City Governance Committee.

5 Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Councillors	All elected representatives including the Mayor.
Council business	<p>Council business includes, but is not limited to attending the following within the Local Government Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ceremonial openings of buildings or facilities; - Sporting events, fetes and carnivals; - Annual or presentation dinners; - Meetings with stakeholders including individuals, community groups, enterprise, Councillors and staff; - Gathering of information by a Councillor necessary to inform him or her of an issue of interest to Council or which properly falls within the responsibility of Council; - Meetings of the Council or its Committees that the Councillor is entitled or asked to attend; and - Conferences, deputations, inspections and meetings at which the Councillor's attendance is permitted by the Local Government and is not otherwise reimbursed.
Election material	<p>As defined by section 90D of the <i>Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)</i>, is anything able to, or intended to-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) influence an elector about voting at an election; or (b) affect the result of an election.
Local Government Principles	<p>As set out in section 4 of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i>, the Local Government Principles are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - transparent and effective processes, and decision making in the public interest; - sustainable development and management of assets and infrastructure, and delivery of effective services; - democratic representation, social inclusion, and meaningful community engagement; - good governance of, and by, local government; and - ethical and legal behaviour of Councillors and local government employees.
Political Nature	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - any reference to a political party or political affiliations; - requesting residents' support for a Councillor in any election (present or future) based on their political affiliations; or - expressing views of a political party or a candidate of that party.
Portfolio	Representing the residents of Logan or regarding matters of the Logan local government area.

Document Control

File:	888737-1	Document Id:	13315199
Amendment History			
Version Number	Description of Change	Author / Branch	Date
1.0	Creation	Corporate Governance	4 December 2019
2.0	Amended related documents list	Corporate Governance	10 March 2020
3.0	Amendment (including re-branding)	Corporate Governance	23 November 2022

Annexure - Councillor Expenses and Facilities

1 Councillor Expenses

1.1 Divisional Expense Budget

Councillors may request payment or reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by them while undertaking their official duties and responsibilities for Council business.

In deciding on a claim for payment or reimbursement of expenses, Council must act in the public interest and consider whether the expense meets the community's expectations. Council is required to be accountable and transparent in considering a request for reimbursement of expenses.

The following table is intended to provide examples of what is considered to be reasonable expenses and any applicable limits that will apply to such expenses.

Reasonable Expenses	Reasonable Limits
One airline lounge membership.	Restricted to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
Attendance of spouse or partner at an event on behalf of the Council.	Restricted to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
Donations for community events e.g. raffle prizes, trophies.	No alcohol or cash.
Hosting community events e.g. morning teas.	
Mobile Office set of materials e.g. table, chair, tablecloth, tear drop banners, umbrella, gazebo.	These materials will be designed and branded in line with corporate brand guidelines and may include, approved photo, division number and contact details.
Networking events and business meetings related to Council business.	
Parking costs associated with attendance at meetings or events related to Council business.	
*Postage and distribution e.g. letters, flyers.	An outgoing mail register must be maintained by the Councillor or their Advisor.
*Printing e.g. letters, flyers.	

Promotional materials e.g. water bottles, pens, bags, note pads.	Materials will be designed and branded in line with corporate brand guidelines and may include approved photo, division number and contact details.
Reference materials e.g. news subscription.	
Refreshments for community members e.g. mobile office, meetings.	
Tickets for community events e.g. fundraising dinners.	
*Uniforms.	Excludes any repairs or cleaning expenses.
Wreaths for commemorative services e.g. ANZAC Day.	Where two Councillors are attending the same commemorative service, they are strongly encouraged to share the cost of a single wreath.

* Some expenses related to these items will be met by the organisation, in accordance with other provisions of this policy.

1.2 Conferences and Seminars

Council has adopted a 'Conference and Seminar Attendance Policy' which applies to Councillors.

Peak Body Conferences

- Following each quadrennial election, Council elects Councillor representatives for each of the peak industry bodies such as the Australian Local Government Association, Local Government Association of Queensland, and Australian Local Government Women's Association annual conferences.
- Those Councillor representatives are supported to attend the annual conferences of those bodies through payment of registration fees, travel, and accommodation costs.
- If any other Councillor wishes to attend the annual conference, that will need to be determined by resolution of Council.

Other Conferences and Seminars

Where Councillors wish to attend other seminars or conferences relevant to Council business, they can seek reimbursement of those costs, the payment of which will be determined in line with Council policy.

1.3 Professional Memberships

It is considered that there are certain professional memberships which provide value and therefore the membership fees will be reimbursed. This includes membership of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

1.4 Training and Development

Councillors are encouraged to undertake relevant training and professional development, which is represented by formalised study and courses.

Training and development expenses are categorised as:

- Core – Council, in consultation with Councillors will organise a program of professional development activities that are learning opportunities desirable for Councillors in discharging their duties and responsibilities. Councillors can participate in these courses at their discretion.
- Elective – Where there is additional training, including tertiary education, which the Chief Executive Officer agrees will provide a direct benefit to the community and the organisation. In this case the training will be reported as an expense of the Councillor undertaking that qualification.

It is considered reasonable that Councillors may wish to undertake a company directors course e.g. as currently provided by the Australian Institute of Company Directors. In recognition of the benefit that will provide, the costs of that course will be reimbursed if it is completed within the first 2½ years following a quadrennial election. That cost will be reported as an expense of the Councillor undertaking that qualification.

Any other costs of training or professional development directed at personal pursuits, campaigning or for personal development that is not directly related to their Portfolio at Council, or Council business, are not eligible for reimbursement.

1.5 Travel

Council has adopted a 'Corporate Travel and Accommodation Policy' which applies to Councillors.

Any international travel for Councillors must be approved by resolution of Council.

It is considered reasonable that there may be a requirement for Councillors to incur intrastate and interstate travel expenses (including tolls, parking, flights, accommodations, meals) when attending to Council business.

All travel arrangements (including flights and accommodation) will be made by Council. The usual practice is that a Councillor must travel economy class and by the most direct route. However, where a single flight time exceeds five (5) hours, Councillors may request to travel in Premium Economy Class. Accommodation will be booked to a standard of 4 stars or equivalent.

Council will not reimburse costs associated with travel including:

- Tourism activities/tours;
- Social events;
- In-flight and in-house movies or pay per view;

- Internet for personal use;
- Mini bar purchases;
- Entertainment;
- Personal items or services;
- Excess luggage costs;
- Payment associated with the cost of return of lost personal items or personal items which have been left behind; or
- Laundry or dry-cleaning services (excluding during international travel).

2 Facilities and Other Support

2.1 Office Accommodation

The Mayor will be provided with a separate office in the City Administration Centre at 150 Wembley Road, Logan Central.

All other Councillors will be provided with an office located in a designated Councillor office area in the City Administration Centre at 150 Wembley Road, Logan Central.

Councillors and Councillor Advisors will be granted 24-hour access to the Council Administration Building to reflect the 24/7 nature of the roles. To facilitate these arrangements:

- (a) Councillors share responsibility with Council for their own and Councillor Advisors' health and safety, including working alone and fatigue management;
- (b) Councillors should exercise their discretion in permitting third parties to accompany them into the Council Administration Building after hours; and
- (c) Councillors are responsible for persons who accompany them to the Council Administration Building after hours, including the confidentiality of material in the workplace and any physical damage to Council property.

Meetings with Council employees are to be coordinated by the administrative support staff or councillor advisors, and held in the dedicated Councillor meeting room, the Woodridge room, the Logan room, Councillor offices, or other available room deemed appropriate by the relevant Branch Manager.

All other access to Branch work locations is to be arranged by the relevant branch manager.

2.2 Car parking

Councillors will be provided with one (1) undercover car parking space at the Council Administration Building located at 150 Wembley Road, Logan Central.

Councillors will be provided with a carpark access card which will give the Councillor 24-hour access to the car park designated for use. Councillors must not allow any other person to use the carpark access card which has been provided to them. The car park must only be used for Council business.

2.3 Technology Support

Councillors will each be provided with the following corporate devices:

- 1 x mobile telephone (In the event that a Councillor elects not to have a corporate mobile telephone, they can be reimbursed a maximum monthly amount (\$50 per month as of May 2022) for use of their personal mobile device);
- 1 x laptop computer;
- 1 x docking station;
- 2 x monitors;
- 1 x wireless keyboard;
- 1 x wireless mouse;
- 1 x headset; and
- 1 x tablet device.

Councillors will have access to a standard suite of software products, as approved by the Information Technology Manager from time to time.

Council and the Executive Leadership Team have adopted a suite of policies and management directives to support information technology. They include:

- Policy – Information Technology Management
- Management Directive – Information Security
- Management Directive – Management of Information Technology Asset Portfolio.

Any decisions made by the Chief Executive Officer and the Information Technology Services Manager in relation to Council's information technology portfolio will be made in accordance with those documents and will be applied to Councillors.

The following standards will apply to Councillors in respect of their use of Councillor's computing technology:

- The technology supplied by Council to Councillors is predominantly for Council business use and must be operated in a responsible and ethical manner, and in accordance with any Work Health and Safety regulations relating to home or teleworking. Councillors must sign the Acceptable Use Standard and the Councillor's Equipment Form.
- Where a Councillor requires support with maintenance, troubleshooting problems or upgrades to technology supplied by Council, these will only be carried out by Council's IT staff.
- Devices will have the following software installed:
 - Operating system;
 - Council supplied applications;
 - An internet browser;
 - Security profile (for mobile devices and tablets);
 - Anti-malware software (if required);
 - Firewall (if required); and
 - Printing software.

Councillors must not install any other software. Applications may be downloaded onto mobile devices from an approved online application store (e.g. Apple's App Store, Google's Google Play or Microsoft store).

- All equipment is to be returned to Council when the term of the Councillor ends or if required for replacement or upgrading.
- Councillors must not use their personal email address, or any form of personal social media for Council business. Social media must be used in accordance with Council's Social Media Policy.
- An email account is supplied for Council business use and should not be used to subscribe to receive any personal notification messages or used to subscribe to any service.

2.4 Uniforms

Councillors are eligible to access items from the corporate uniform scheme, however these costs will be recorded as an expense of the individual Councillor. Any costs of alterations and dry-cleaning (excluding during international travel) are not eligible for reimbursement.

Councillors will be provided with all necessary personal protective equipment if, and when required. Councillors are expected to comply with all work, health, and safety requirements.

2.5 Stationery

Councillors will be provided with a generic stationery item bundle for use for Council business. The generic stationery bundle will not contain the Council logo and will not contain the Councillor's image or name.

Councillors can also request corporate stationery which may include an image, name, title, division number and contact details. These items may include:

- letterhead;
- with compliments slips; and
- business cards.

Personalised electronic media is also available to Councillors including:

- personalised electronic letterhead for use for legitimate Council business, using a standard design format;
- personalised email footers and signature blocks, using a standard design format;
- 1 x Council email address, using a standard design format; and
- digital Council Christmas card for Council business, using a standard design format.

2.6 Advertising and sponsorship

All advertising and sponsorship must be for Council business and must be undertaken in accordance with guidance provided to Councillors by the Marketing Manager.

Where a Council event, program or service is to acknowledge Councillor involvement or support, the standard wording used for the acknowledgment will be:

Proudly supported by the City of Logan

2.7 Printing, postage, and distribution

Council will be responsible for the printing, postage and distribution costs associated with:

- Key business papers including agendas, budget papers etc;
- Letters to residents about Council activities or programs (including any attachments), where the content is approved by the relevant branch manager and there is sufficient branch funding to meet those costs;
- Our Logan Magazine; and
- Twice yearly divisional newsletters.

Any other expenses than those listed above must be met by the Councillor from their divisional budget.

Councillors will have access to a printer and photocopier on Level 5. This printer is for smaller print jobs and any print jobs in excess of 200 sheets should be referred to the Print Room.

2.8 Insurance

Council has adopted an 'Insurance and Indemnity for Councillors Policy' which applies to Councillors.

Council insures for a number of risks which result from the performance of Councillors of their responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 2009* including:

- Public liability;
- Professional indemnity;
- Councillor's and officer's liability;
- Statutory liability;
- Domestic and international travel insurance; and
- Personal accident.

2.9 Asset ownership, maintenance, and return

All facilities, equipment and resources provided to Councillors to undertake their duties as a Councillor remain the property of Council and must be accounted for during Council's audits. Councillors are expected to look after all facilities, equipment and resources provided to them responsibly and be mindful that these are publicly funded.

All information stored on facilities, equipment and resources provided to Councillors, remains the property of Council at all times.

Council will cover all ongoing maintenance costs associated with Council facilities, equipment, and resources to ensure that it is operating for optimal professional use, subject to proper usage and standards of care.

3 Transportation Allowance

Councillors will be provided with a transportation allowance which is to be used towards vehicle costs and usage directly related to legitimate Council business. The vehicle allowance is set at a percentage (ninety (90) per cent) of the vehicle allowance set for the Chief Executive Officer and/or Managers taking into consideration the considerable business kilometre use by Councillors and the fact that Councillors are not entitled to be reimbursed expenses for private use of their vehicle.

The transportation allowance:

- is provided to facilitate the costs of procuring, maintaining, and running a vehicle (including but not limited to fuel, registration, insurance, repairs, depreciation, finance costs etc); and
- is adjusted for particular Councillors to reflect additional duties and responsibilities required by the role or the distance of particular divisions from the City Administration Centre.

The Mayor and Councillors will have access to Council's preferred salary packaging provider. Should the Mayor or a Councillor wish to consider salary packaging, they must seek their own independent financial advice regarding this allowance and any taxation implications. The costs of seeking any such financial advice will not be paid for by Council.

It is acknowledged that the transportation allowance can be used toward the cost of public transport, taxis, ride-share, and other transport mechanisms to facilitate travel costs associated with legitimate Council business.