

FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE SUPPLEMENTARY REPORTS

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** Item includes confidential papers

FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE NO. 1

11 JUNE 2024

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORTS

9. **COUNCILLOR EXPENSES REIMBURSEMENT POLICY**

This is a report concerning a review of the Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy and current superannuation rates for Councillors.

RECOMMENDATION

- A. That the revised Policy titled 'Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy' as detailed in Attachment 1 be adopted, for commencement on 1 July 2024.
- B. That in accordance with s226 (3)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2009*, the rate of superannuation for Councillors be linked to the rate of superannuation payable to council employees, for commencement on 1 July 2024.

Doc ID No: A10217668

This matter has been determined to be of a significant nature and approval has been given to refer this report to the Finance and Governance Committee as a supplementary item.

ITEM: 9

SUBJECT: COUNCILLOR EXPENSES REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

AUTHOR: MANAGER, EXECUTIVE SERVICES

DATE: 28 MAY 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a report concerning a review of the Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy and current superannuation rates for Councillors.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- A. That the revised Policy titled 'Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy' as detailed in Attachment 1 be adopted, for commencement on 1 July 2024.
- B. That in accordance with s226 (3)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2009*, the rate of superannuation for Councillors be linked to the rate of superannuation payable to council employees, for commencement on 1 July 2024.

RELATED PARTIES

Mayor and Councillors

IFUTURE THEME

A Trusted and Leading Organisation

PURPOSE OF REPORT/BACKGROUND

Councillor Expenses

The current Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy has been in place since 2019 with some minor amendments made in 2021. This policy is required in accordance with s250 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* (the Regulation). Section 250 (2) of the Regulation also states that the policy may be amended at any time.

A review of the policy content and provisions has been undertaken and several proposed changes have been identified. The primary focus of the changes is to amend how amounts for Councillor expenses are budgeted for and administered internally. A range of other amendments have been made to simplify provisions and improve clarity.

Substantive changes are limited to:

- i. Annual Expense Budgets – Permitting increased flexibility, accountability and reduced administrative burden for Councillors to expend or be reimbursed for legitimate business expenses in a way that better reflects the needs of representing and consulting with their community and the diversity of the four divisions.
- ii. Vehicle Allowance – The current amounts were set in 2019 and were considered reasonable at the time. The amounts have not changed since, however the cost of operating a motor vehicle has increased with purchase price, interest rates, fuel and insurance all going up. It is proposed that the amounts should be increased to align closer to industry rates and be reviewed biennially.
- iii. Legal and Insurance Cover – The proposed addition is not a material change as the listed insurance cover is already made available to councillors. As this policy is the document listing what support, facilities and equipment that is made available to elected representatives, it was deemed appropriate to include this detail for confirmation of Council and community transparency.

Councillor Superannuation

On 4 July 2000 Ipswich City Council Councillors made a unanimous resolution to be subject to PAYG tax withholding. Pursuant to this resolution and following the subsequent implementation of the Councillor Remuneration Policy at the time, Council commenced making superannuation contributions on behalf of each Councillor at a rate of 12% of their base salary. Under the legislative provision in place at the time, there was a limit on total contributions for Councillors of 12% of a Councillor's salary and, that amounts could also not exceed (or be less than) what was available to employees at the time (also 12%).

The arrangement is still in place and remains consistent with s226 of the *Local Government Act 2009* (the Act) with Councillors paid 12% superannuation. In recent years however and resulting from increases for employees as part of the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA), employees are now entitled to 12.5% superannuation.

The original decisions of council to implement super limited the amount to 12% mainly due to the specific legislative structure at the time, however it was clear in reviewing the briefings and reports at the time that the intent was to mirror the amount made available to a permanent council employee (currently 12.5% per the EBA).

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

This report and its recommendations are consistent with the following legislative provisions:
Local Government Act 2009
Local Government Regulation 2012

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The proposed changes remain consistent with associated policies. A new procedure will be implemented following adoption and enactment of this policy at the start of the new financial year to manage the process for expenses.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The changes to the way in which Councillor expenses are managed will lead to improved efficiency and reduced administrative burden. The proposed changes will result in no reduction in transparency with transactional expense details still being available on the Transparency and Integrity Hub and summary reporting in the Annual Report in line with legislative requirements.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Allocations for the minor increases in superannuation and transportation allowance have been included in the draft 2024-2025 budget.

COMMUNITY AND OTHER CONSULTATION

Councillors and the Chief Executive Officer have been consulted on the general provisions of the changes being proposed within this report.

CONCLUSION

Councillors should not be financially disadvantaged in undertaking their role in representing the community. The changes proposed within this report and the attached amended policy aim to keep expenses in line with community expectations while ensuring that current provisions are not eroded by inflation over time.

The proposal to amend the amount of superannuation payable to councillors includes future increases determined as part of an EBA agreement being also passed on to councillors in line with s226(3)(a) of the Act.



These changes are considered modest in nature and remain in line with the overall intent of the policy position.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACTS	
OTHER DECISION	
(a) What is the Act/Decision being made?	That the Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy be amended and Superannuation for Councillors is amended to the same rate as available to Council employees

(b) What human rights are affected?	No human rights are affected by this decision.
(c) How are the human rights limited?	Not applicable
(d) Is there a good reason for limiting the relevant rights? Is the limitation fair and reasonable?	Not applicable
(e) Conclusion	The decision is consistent with human rights.

ATTACHMENTS AND CONFIDENTIAL BACKGROUND PAPERS

1.	Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy - Track Changes ↓ 
2.	Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy - Clean Copy ↓ 

Wade Wilson


MANAGER, EXECUTIVE SERVICES

I concur with the recommendations contained in this report.






Sonia Cooper

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

“Together, we proudly enhance the quality of life for our community”



Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy

 Collaboration Communication Integrity Efficiency Leadership

Version Control and Objective ID	Version No: <u>67</u>	Objective ID: A7449418
Adopted at Council Ordinary Meeting on	<u>22 July 2021</u>	
Date of Review	1 April 202 <u>8</u> <u>4</u>	

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IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL | Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy

1. Statement

It is Council's responsibility to ensure that Councillors are not financially disadvantaged when carrying out their duties and responsibilities set out in s12 of the *Local Government Act 2009*. Council is also required to provide appropriate administrative support to allow the Councillors to fulfil the role and responsibilities of their position and to adequately represent the community.

The objectives of this policy are:

- a) to provide set guidelines for expenditure and the reimbursement of legitimate business expenses incurred or to be incurred by a Councillor while carrying out their civic duties as elected representatives of their local communities;
- b) to provide set guidelines for the provision of administrative support to assist Councillors fulfil their professional role for the community at an appropriate standard.

2. Purpose and Principles

Councillors are elected representatives of the community who take on the role to set the strategic direction of the City. It is Council's responsibility to ensure that Councillors are not financially disadvantaged when carrying out their duties and responsibilities requirements of their role and are fairly and reasonably compensated set out in s12 of the *Local Government Act 2009*. Council is also required to provide appropriate administrative support to allow the Councillors to fulfil the role and responsibilities of their position and to adequately represent the community.

To meet the requirements of section 250 of the Local Government Regulation 2012, Council is required to adopt an expenses reimbursement policy. The objectives of this policy are:

- a) to provide set guidelines for expenditure and reimbursement of legitimate business expenses incurred or to be incurred by a Councillor while carrying out their civic duties as elected representatives of their local communities;
- b) to provide set guidelines for the provision of administrative support to assist Councillors fulfil their professional role for the community at an appropriate standard.

The payment and/or reimbursement of expenses and provision of facilities for Councillors:

- a) is to be open and transparent, prudent, responsible, acceptable to the community and in accordance with statutory requirements;
- b) based on ensuring economy and efficiency; and
- c) subject to budget provisions.

Council's annual report must contain the particulars enacted by this policy and details of any expenses ~~reimbursed~~ under this policy.

3. Strategic Plan Links

This policy aligns with the following iFuture 2021-2026 Corporate Plan theme:

- A Trusted and Leading Organisation

4. Regulatory Authority

Local Government Act 2009

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Public Sector Ethics Act 1994

Local Government Regulation 2012

[Councillor Expenses Advance Authorisation Procedure](#)

5. Human Rights Commitment

Ipswich City Council (Council) has considered the human rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)* (the Act) when adopting and/or amending this policy. When applying this policy, Council will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and give proper consideration to a human right relevant to the decision in accordance with the Act.

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6. Scope

This policy sets out specific guidelines for [expenditure and the](#) reimbursement of legitimate expenses incurred or to be incurred by a Councillor while carrying out Council business. It also deals with the provision of administrative support to enable Councillors to perform their duties with relative ease to discharge their duties and responsibilities as a Councillor.

This policy does not provide for salaries or any other form of remuneration to Councillors.

7. Policy Exclusions

- i. Spouses, partners and family members of Councillors are not entitled to reimbursement of expenses or to have access to facilities allocated to Councillors (This is not intended to exclude spousal attendance at events where it would be customary for the partner of the Mayor to attend or the Councillor deputising for the Mayor).
- ii. Council will not reimburse or provide funds, services or facilities solely or mainly for the purposes of advertising by, or the self-promotion of Councillors.
- iii. Councillors are not entitled to be reimbursed or provided with funds for the purchase of alcoholic beverages without the prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer.
- iv. No reimbursement is to be provided for expenses incurred during travel to internal meetings, informal policy discussions, party or political meetings between Councillors.

8. Legislative Responsibilities

The Local Government Regulation 2012, s252 states that “a local government cannot resolve under section 275 that a meeting at which a proposed expenses reimbursement policy is discussed (including its adoption or amendment) be closed”.

To ensure public accountability and transparency, Ipswich City Council will give public notice of any proposal to change the adopted Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy.

9. [Expenses and](#) Reimbursements

[Council will as part of its annual budget process, establish a separate budget for the payment or reimbursement of reasonable \[business\]\(#\) expenses to Councillors.](#)

~~9. _____~~

9.1 [Annual Expense Budget](#)

[The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for determining \[annual expense allocations\]\(#\) for each \[Councillor\]\(#\) in line with budgeted amounts and the appropriateness of payment of any requests for reimbursement.](#)

[Annual-Expenditure -may be authorised in advance or reimbursed as ~~expenditure~~the expense is incurred.](#)

In making a determination as to the validity of a claim for reimbursement, Council must consider public perceptions to ensure that the process meets the community's expectations concerning accountability and transparency. [Requests for reimbursement of expenses will only be considered where it can be proven, by the provision of appropriate documentation, that the expense is a genuine council-related business expense incurred whilst undertaking](#)

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official duties. Payment will be on the grounds that the incurring of this expense could not be avoided. Councillors incurring expenses should not gain personal funds as a result of their role servicing the community. The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for determining the appropriateness of payment of any request for reimbursement.

9.1.1.1 Council Business Expenses Categories

Requests for reimbursement of expenses will only be considered where it can be proven, by the provision of appropriate documentation, that the expense is a genuine council-related business expense incurred whilst undertaking official duties. Payment will be on the grounds that the incurring of this expense could not be avoided. Councillors may request payment or reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred, or to be incurred, for a permitted category at their discretion subject to transaction limits determined from time to time and a quarterly reconciliation process.

Where the Chief Executive Officer determines that an amount is excluded, does not meet the requirements of this policy, other policy of Council or is determined to not be a legitimate business expense, the Councillor must reimburse Council in a reasonable timeframe for all amounts not permitted.

Annexure A outlines the relevant categories and any limits applicable.

9.1.2 Expense Allocation Exemptions

Expenses associated with the following facilities and programs will be met from existing budgets and not included in the annual expense amounts. All amounts must still be recorded and allocated to individual Councillors in line with legislative and Council policy requirements.

- i. LGAQ delegates
- ii. Telecommunication expenses
- iii. Professional Memberships where directly related to duties of the Councillor
- iv. Mandatory training requirements
- v. Induction or other activities
- vi. Insurance deductible
- vii. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); and,
- viii. Other business equipment or facilities deemed essential that are specifically provided for in Section 10 of this policy.

9.2 Professional Development

Councillors are encouraged to undertake relevant professional development and Council will organise and pay for all associated business costs (including registration, travel, accommodation, meals, etc) where the activity level is reasonable and the activity is associated with the Councillor's portfolio responsibilities or organised by a government agency or an industry body eg. LGAQ, ALGWA.

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~~Any funds expended at the event on personal pursuits will be payable by the Councillor from private funds. Refer to 9.3 Travel Expenses below for a list of examples of what is considered a personal expenditure.~~

9.3 Entertainment and Hospitality

Reasonable and appropriate expenditure on entertainment and hospitality is defined in the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy. Councillors are to make themselves familiar with all the requirements of the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy.

9.3.4 Travel Expenses

~~Requests by Councillors to attend conferences, seminars or training are to be made in writing to the Chief Executive Officer outlining the details of the event and the benefits to the City of Ipswich.~~ All requests for travel are to be made in sufficient time to gain the required approval as outlined below as well as allowing Council to take advantage of travel discounts and deals.

~~Council's "Representation of the City at Official Functions Policy" outlines Councillors specific obligations concerning approval and reporting requirements following their regarding attendance at conferences/seminars/delegations.~~

Travel aApproval required:

- i. Local and Interstate Travel – Chief Executive Officer approval
- ii. International Travel – A resolution of Council
- ~~ii. ———~~

Economy class air travel is the standard and Councillors are required to travel by the most direct route. Where flight time exceeds five (5) hours, the Mayor is eligible for Business Class travel with all other Councillors eligible for Premium Economy class in this circumstance.

Any costs incurred which are deemed to be of a personal nature are required to be paid for by the Councillor from private funds. Below is a list of examples of what is considered to be a personal expenditure. This list of examples is not exhaustive:

- i. Tourism related costs
- ii. Social events
- iii. In-flight and in-house movies
- iv. Mini bar purchases
- v. Airline club fees
- vi. Alcohol not consumed as part of a meal
- vii. Payment of costs associated with the return of personal items which have been left behind

9.3.4.1 Meals while undertaking domestic or international travel

Councillors will be reimbursed for the actual cost of meals, associated with official business, when:

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- i. the Councillor incurs the cost personally;
- ii. the meal was not provided within the registration costs of the approved activity/event/travel;
- iii. the Councillor can produce original documents sufficient to verify the actual meal cost;
- iv. the expenses are reasonable;
- v. Reimbursement will be limited to a maximum of the Australian Taxation Office guidelines for meal allowance except for in exceptional circumstances (E.g. entertaining in an unusually expensive location outside the city) where approved by the Chief Executive Officer and the Mayor.

9.34.2 Accommodation while undertaking domestic or international travel

Where practical, Council will book accommodation offered as part of a conference package. In all other circumstances, Councillors are entitled to stay in accommodation to a standard of 4 stars or equivalent when undertaking professional development or other Council business where it is not reasonable for the Councillor to return home for the night in accordance with the following conditions:

- i. Council will book and pay for all accommodation under this policy;
- ii. where a Councillor chooses to stay with friends or family, no accommodation expenses will be paid.

Councillors may be reimbursed for reasonable incidentals in accordance with this policy (up to a maximum of the Australian Taxation Office guidelines).

10. Provision of Administrative Support and Resources

Council is responsible for the provision of appropriate administrative support and resources to ensure that a Councillor is able to undertake their civic duties with relative ease and at a standard appropriate to fulfil their professional role for the community. The provision of facilities and resources is for the sole use of Councillors in undertaking their duties and should be used responsibly and appropriately.

10.1 Transportation Allowance

A transport allowance will be provided to Councillors for the costs of transport while undertaking the duties of a Councillor.

Option A – Vehicle Allowance

A vehicle allowance of \$~~19,500~~**22,000** p.a. (by advance weekly payment) will be automatically provided to cover the costs of procuring, maintaining and running (including but not limited to fuel, registration, insurance, repairs, depreciation, finance costs etc.) a vehicle.

For the Mayor, a vehicle allowance of \$~~22,500~~**25,000** p.a. (by advance weekly payment) will be provided in recognition of the additional civic duties and responsibilities that this role is required to undertake.

~~Councillors will have access to Council's preferred salary packaging provider.~~

OR

Option B – Alternative Arrangement

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~~A maximum allowance of \$19,500p.a. (\$22,500p.a. for the Mayor) will be available to cover the cost of other transport options including taxis, ride share, public transport and active transport equipment.~~

~~The allowance will be automatically provided by advance weekly payment at 50% of the maximum normal allowance rate (\$9,750p.a. or \$11,275 for the Mayor) where a Councillor is not choosing to operate a private motor vehicle.~~

~~Transportation allowance amounts will be reviewed biennially except where actual costs incurred exceed the full advance amount. Where proof of expense incurred is provided above the full advance payment amount, further reimbursements of expenses incurred can be claimed up to the maximum allowance amount.~~

~~Councillors will have access to Council's preferred salary packaging provider.~~

~~Councillors are required to provide written advice to the CEO of the option chosen upon commencement of this policy or their term as a councillor, and should seek their own independent financial advice regarding this allowance and any potential taxation implications.~~

~~10.2 Councillor Identification on Vehicle~~

~~Two (2) magnetic vehicle door decals, displaying the Councillor's name and the Ipswich City Council logo will be provided to each Councillor.~~

~~10.32 Corporate Wear~~Personalised Stationery, Uniforms, Personal Protective Equipment and Name Badges~~other equipment~~

~~Councillors will be provided with business cards, name badges, vehicle magnets, a pull-up banner and suitable personalised letterhead, certificates and other templates.~~

Ipswich City Council has a non-compulsory uniform policy and Councillors will be considered eligible to participate in this corporate scheme under the same conditions that apply to general employees. No provision will be made for Council meeting the cost of any alterations to the garments if required. ~~These costs will be met from the Councillor's private funds.~~

Councillors will be provided with all necessary safety equipment and are expected to observe the appropriate Workplace, Health and Safety requirements as outlined in the relevant Council's Workplace, Health and Safety Policy.

~~Councillors will be provided with a name badge displaying their name and the Ipswich City Council logo.~~

~~10.43 Communication Business and Communication Technology Resources~~

~~The following equipment and services will be made available to Councillors for the purpose of conducting Council business. The model provided will be in accordance with the standard device made available for Council Managers. At the end of the term, devices are to be returned to Council in fair condition. Limited personal usage is accepted in line with the provisions available to Council Officers. Any use deemed inappropriate will be required to be reimbursed.~~

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- i. One (1) mobile telephone ~~will be provided at the beginning of the Council term for the purposes of conducting council business. The model provided will be in accordance with the standard device made available for Council Managers. At the end of the term, the mobile device is to be returned to Council in fair condition. Limited personal usage is accepted in line with the provisions available to Council Officers. Any use deemed inappropriate will be required to be reimbursed.~~
- ii. One (1) laptop ~~computer will be provided at the beginning of the Council terms for the purposes of conducting council business. The model provided will be in accordance with the standard device made available to Council Officers. At the end of the term, the laptop computer is to be returned to Council in fair condition.~~
- iii. One (1) iPad ~~will be provided at the beginning of the Council terms for the purposes of conducting council business. The model provided will be in accordance with the standard device made available to Council Officers. At the end of the term, the iPad is to be returned to Council in fair condition.~~
- iv. A docking station, monitor and A4 printer (home office) ~~will be provided to assist Councillors work from home. All items are to be returned to Council at the end of term. Items must be in a fair condition.~~
- v. ~~A m~~Mobile internet connection as required for allocated devices~~for iPad and laptop will be provided.~~
- v. ~~Access to standard network software and accounts (inc. email address) in line with what is available for C~~council managers
- vi.

10.54 Office Facilities

- i. A separate office for the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor will be provided in the Council Administration Building.
- ii. Shared office facilities, located within the Council Administration Building, will be provided for the other Councillors. Dedicated multipurpose office and meeting space will be provided at suitable Council Customer Service Centres and library facilities.
- iii. Access to dedicated Councillor meeting rooms will be provided within the Council Administration Building. In addition, access to dedicated multipurpose office and meeting space will be available at Council's Customer Service Centres and library facilities.

10.65 Administrative Support

Council is responsible for the provision of access to appropriate administrative support and resources to ensure that Councillors are able to undertake their civic duties and meet the responsibilities of their roles.

Administrative support will be provided in accordance with the Councillor Administrative Support Guidelines as set by the Chief Executive Officer. Requests made by Councillors for administrative support will be sought in accordance with the provisions of the guidelines.

All support staff will be employees of Ipswich City Council and will be employed under guidelines set for employment by Council's People and Culture Branch based on substantial previous experience to ensure that the best level of service is provided to Councillors.

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Recommendations received from Councillors which may be construed as a political appointment will not be considered.

Administrative support and resources are provided to Councillors for the sole purpose of the conduct of legitimate Council ~~business, and~~ business and should be used responsibly and appropriately.

10.65.1 Office of the Mayor

The Mayor will be provided with the following support staff:

- i. Chief of Staff*
- ii. Senior Policy and Communications Officer
- iii. Personal Assistant to the Mayor
- iv. Policy and Communications Officer
- v. Diary and Correspondence Coordinator

*Contract position, aligned with term of the Mayor

10.65.2 Councillor Support

Councillors will be provided with the following support staff:

- i. Senior Policy and Communications Officer
- ii. Four(4) Council Liaison Officers
- iii. Four(4) Executive Support and Research Officers

~~10.7 Personalised Stationery Items, Electronic Media and Other Items~~

~~The following items will be made available to Councillors:~~

- ~~i. Personalised Electronic Letterhead for Council business using a standard design format;~~
- ~~ii. Council email address~~
- ~~iii. Councillor Facebook account~~
- ~~iv. Business cards (English language only)~~
- ~~v. Digital newspaper subscriptions relevant to the Ipswich Region~~
- ~~vi. Digital Council Christmas Card for Council business use using a standard design format.~~

10.86 Advertising and Sponsorship

All advertising undertaken which solely or mainly contains the Councillor's image and name is deemed to be for electioneering purposes and the costs involved will not be paid by Council under any circumstances.

Where any Ipswich City Council events, programs or services be required to carry an acknowledgement of Councillor involvement, the standard wording will be:

Proudly supported by the Mayor and Councillors of Ipswich City Council

11. Assets Ownership

11.1 Facilities/Equipment

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

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All facilities/equipment must be returned to Council either;

- a) Prior to the completion of the Councillor's term in accordance with Section 160 of the *Local Government Act 2009* at a date and time agreed with by the Chief Executive Officer or;
- b) No later than close of business the day following the end of a Councillor's term in accordance with Section 160 of the *Local Government Act 2009* or;
- c) Immediately if a Councillor is suspended under Section 182A of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

~~11.2 Official Gifts Expenditure on Entertainment and Hospitality Received by a Councillor~~
~~Reasonable and appropriate expenditure on entertainment and hospitality is defined in the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy. Councillors are to make themselves familiar with all the requirements of the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy.~~

~~As part of a Councillor's civic duties, there will be occasions where official gifts will be presented or exchanged. All such gifts are the property of Council, not the individual, and are to be handed to the Chief Executive Officer as soon as possible after the receipt of the item. Low value personal items can be retained following declaration and approval by both the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer.~~

- ~~c) The specific requirements, and supporting documents which need to be completed, are contained in Council's Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy. Councillors are to make themselves familiar with all the requirements of the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy.~~

12. Asset Maintenance Costs

Council will cover all ongoing maintenance costs associated with Council owned equipment to ensure it is operating for optimal professional use (subject to proper usage and standards of care).

13. Legal and Insurance Cover

Council will take out and hold an appropriate level of insurance cover for Councillors undertaking their responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 2009* including:

- a. Public Liability
- b. Professional Indemnity
- c. Statutory Liability
- d. Work cover
- e. Travel Insurance
- f. Personal Accident

Council will pay the excess (deductible) on all insurance claims, made in accordance with any policy of insurance and Councillors must notify the CEO when any claim is made under an insurance policy.

In relation to Inappropriate Conduct complaints, Council may recover from the Subject Councillor any excess (deductible) which has been paid by Council, where:

- i. A claim was made by the Subject Councillor, under any of Council's policies of insurance for legal representation, in relation to an Inappropriate Conduct complaint; and

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL | Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy

- ii. A finding is made at any Council meeting, by Council, that the Subject Councillor has committed Inappropriate Conduct.

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14. Related Documents

Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy

Councillor ~~Staff Interaction Policy~~ [Acceptable Requests Guidelines and Staff Interaction Policy](#)

Representation of the City at Official Functions Policy

~~Councillor Handbook~~

Councillor Administrative Support Guidelines [Administrative Directive](#)

Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland

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This policy applies to all Councillors and any Council employee who either performs a support role for the Councillors or processes any of the requirements of this policy.

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The effectiveness of this policy will be reflected in the Councillors of the City of Ipswich ability to fulfil their professional role as elected representatives to the high standards of good governance and transparency expected by the community, without being financially disadvantaged as a result.

~~Quarterly~~ Reports of Councillor Expenses and Reimbursements will be ~~presented to the Audit and Risk Committee and~~ published in the Annual Report at the end of the financial year. [All Councillor related expenses, allowances and reimbursements are published on the Transparency and Integrity Hub.](#)

18. Definitions

Elected Representatives	Mayor and Councillors
Councillor business expense	A genuine council-related business expense incurred whilst undertaking official duties.
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<u>6.0</u>	<u>Adopted</u>	<u>Ordinary Council</u>	<u>26/07/2021</u>
<u>6.1</u>	<u>Draft Revision</u>		

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL | Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy

Annexure A - Business Expense Categories

Examples of common business expense categories and the relevant policy requirements relating to that activity and expenditure is summarised below.

<u>Activity / description of expense</u>	<u>Applicable Policy</u>
<u>Travel and Accommodation</u>	<u>Expenses Policy Section 9.4</u>
<u>Advertising, Promotion and Sponsorship e.g. advertising dates, times and locations of Cr community engagement activities.</u>	<u>Expenses Policy Section 10.6</u> <u>Includes expenses relating to event collateral and displays</u>
<u>Representing Council at business meetings or networking events</u>	<u>Representation of the City at Official Functions Policy (invitation and attendance requirements)</u> <u>Expenses Policy Section 9</u>
<u>Spouse or Partner attendance at events</u>	<u>Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy, Section 19</u>
<u>Tickets for community events including fundraisers, invitations, event registrations</u>	<u>Representation of the City at Official Functions Policy, Section 7</u> <u>If in relation to a Council sponsored event, Event Sponsorship Policy Section 6.9</u> <u>Expenses Policy Section 9</u>
<u>Donations for community events e.g., raffle prizes, trophies</u>	<u>Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy, Section 14</u> <u>Expenses Policy, Section 9</u>
<u>Hosting of community events e.g., mobile office or other consultation activity</u>	<u>Expenses Policy, Section 9.</u>
<u>Refreshments for meetings e.g., external community meeting or Mobile office</u>	<u>Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy, 11.2.1</u> <u>Expenses Policy, Section 9</u>
<u>Parking, taxi, tolls and other transport related costs</u>	<u>Expenses Policy, Section 9.</u>
<u>Reference materials, books, newspaper subscriptions etc.</u>	<u>Expenses Policy, Section 9</u>
<u>Promotional material, event collateral, displays, invitations etc</u>	<u>Expenses Policy, Section 9</u>
<u>Professional development and memberships</u>	<u>Expenses Policy, Section 9.2 and 9.4 (if the development opportunity involves travel or accommodation)</u>
<u>Wreaths, flowers, greeting cards, certificates etc.</u>	<u>Presentations and Floral Tributes Procedure</u> <u>Expenses Policy, Section 9</u>
<u>Office supplies, certificate frames, corporate merchandise (e.g. pens) etc</u>	<u>Expenses Policy, Section 9</u>



Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy



Collaboration



Communication



Integrity



Efficiency



Leadership

Version Control and Objective ID	Version No: 7	Objective ID: A7449418
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Date of Review	1 April 2028	

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IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL | Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy

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IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL | Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy

1. Statement

It is Council's responsibility to ensure that Councillors are not financially disadvantaged when carrying out their duties and responsibilities set out in s12 of the *Local Government Act 2009*. Council is also required to provide appropriate administrative support to allow the Councillors to fulfil the role and responsibilities of their position and to adequately represent the community.

2. Purpose and Principles

To meet the requirements of section 250 of the Local Government Regulation 2012, Council is required to adopt an expenses reimbursement policy. The objectives of this policy are:

- a) to provide set guidelines for expenditure and reimbursement of legitimate business expenses incurred or to be incurred by a Councillor while carrying out their civic duties as elected representatives of their local communities;
- b) to provide set guidelines for the provision of administrative support to assist Councillors fulfil their professional role for the community at an appropriate standard.

The payment and/or reimbursement of expenses and provision of facilities for Councillors:

- a) is to be open and transparent, prudent, responsible, acceptable to the community and in accordance with statutory requirements;
- b) based on ensuring economy and efficiency; and
- c) subject to budget provisions.

Council's annual report must contain the particulars enacted by this policy and details of any expenses under this policy.

3. Strategic Plan Links

This policy aligns with the following iFuture 2021-2026 Corporate Plan theme:

- A Trusted and Leading Organisation

4. Regulatory Authority

Local Government Act 2009

Public Sector Ethics Act 1994

Local Government Regulation 2012

Councillor Expenses Advance Authorisation Procedure

5. Human Rights Commitment

Ipswich City Council (Council) has considered the human rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)* (the Act) when adopting and/or amending this policy. When applying this policy, Council will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and give proper consideration to a human right relevant to the decision in accordance with the Act.

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL | Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy

6. Scope

This policy sets out specific guidelines for expenditure and reimbursement of legitimate expenses incurred or to be incurred by a Councillor while carrying out Council business. It also deals with the provision of administrative support to enable Councillors to perform their duties with relative ease to discharge their duties and responsibilities as a Councillor.

This policy does not provide for salaries or any other form of remuneration to Councillors.

7. Policy Exclusions

- i. Spouses, partners and family members of Councillors are not entitled to reimbursement of expenses or to have access to facilities allocated to Councillors (This is not intended to exclude spousal attendance at events where it would be customary for the partner of the Mayor to attend or the Councillor deputising for the Mayor).
- ii. Council will not reimburse or provide funds, services or facilities solely or mainly for the purposes of advertising by, or the self-promotion of Councillors.
- iii. Councillors are not entitled to be reimbursed or provided with funds for the purchase of alcoholic beverages without the prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer.
- iv. No reimbursement is to be provided for expenses incurred during travel to internal meetings, informal policy discussions, party or political meetings between Councillors.

8. Legislative Responsibilities

The Local Government Regulation 2012, s252 states that “a local government cannot resolve under section 275 that a meeting at which a proposed expenses reimbursement policy is discussed (including its adoption or amendment) be closed”.

To ensure public accountability and transparency, Ipswich City Council will give public notice of any proposal to change the adopted Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy.

9. Expenses and Reimbursements

Council will as part of its annual budget process, establish a separate budget for the payment or reimbursement of reasonable business expenses to Councillors.

9.1 Annual Expense Budget

The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for determining annual expense allocations for each Councillor in line with budgeted amounts and the appropriateness of payment of any requests for reimbursement.

Expenditure may be authorised in advance or reimbursed as the expense is incurred.

In making a determination as to the validity of a claim for reimbursement, Council must consider public perceptions to ensure that the process meets the community's expectations concerning accountability and transparency. Requests for reimbursement of expenses will only be considered where it can be proven, by the provision of appropriate documentation, that the expense is a genuine council-related business expense incurred whilst undertaking official duties. Payment will be on the grounds that the incurring of this expense could not be avoided.

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL | Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy

9.1.1 Business Expenses Categories

Councillors may request payment or reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred, or to be incurred, for a permitted category at their discretion subject to transaction limits determined from time to time and a quarterly reconciliation process.

Where the Chief Executive Officer determines that an amount is excluded, does not meet the requirements of this policy, other policy of Council or is determined to not be a legitimate business expense, the Councillor must reimburse Council in a reasonable timeframe for all amounts not permitted.

Annexure A outlines the relevant categories and any limits applicable.

9.1.2 Expense Allocation Exemptions

Expenses associated with the following facilities and programs will be met from existing budgets and not included in the annual expense amounts. All amounts must still be recorded and allocated to individual Councillors in line with legislative and Council policy requirements.

- i. LGAQ delegates
- ii. Telecommunication expenses
- iii. Professional Memberships where directly related to duties of the Councillor
- iv. Mandatory training requirements
- v. Induction or other activities
- vi. Insurance deductible
- vii. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); and,
- viii. Other business equipment or facilities deemed essential that are specifically provided for in Section 10 of this policy.

9.2 Professional Development

Councillors are encouraged to undertake relevant professional development and Council will organise and pay for all associated business costs (including registration, travel, accommodation, meals, etc) where the activity level is reasonable and associated with the Councillor's responsibilities or organised by a government agency or an industry body eg. LGAQ, ALGWA.

9.3 Entertainment and Hospitality

Reasonable and appropriate expenditure on entertainment and hospitality is defined in the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy. Councillors are to make themselves familiar with all the requirements of the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy.

9.4 Travel Expenses

All requests for travel are to be made in sufficient time to gain the required approval as outlined below as well as allowing Council to take advantage of travel discounts and deals.

Travel approval required:

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- i. Local and Interstate Travel – Chief Executive Officer approval
- ii. International Travel – A resolution of Council

Economy class air travel is the standard and Councillors are required to travel by the most direct route. Where flight time exceeds five (5) hours, the Mayor is eligible for Business Class travel with all other Councillors eligible for Premium Economy class in this circumstance.

Any costs incurred which are deemed to be of a personal nature are required to be paid for by the Councillor from private funds. Below is a list of examples of what is considered to be a personal expenditure. This list of examples is not exhaustive:

- i. Tourism related costs
- ii. Social events
- iii. In-flight and in-house movies
- iv. Mini bar purchases
- v. Airline club fees
- vi. Alcohol not consumed as part of a meal
- vii. Payment of costs associated with the return of personal items which have been left behind

9.4.1 Meals while undertaking domestic or international travel

Councillors will be reimbursed for the actual cost of meals, associated with official business, when:

- i. the Councillor incurs the cost personally;
- ii. the meal was not provided within the registration costs of the approved activity/event/travel;
- iii. the Councillor can produce original documents sufficient to verify the actual meal cost;
- iv. the expenses are reasonable;
- v. Reimbursement will be limited to a maximum of the Australian Taxation Office guidelines for meal allowance except for in exceptional circumstances (E.g. entertaining in an unusually expensive location outside the city) where approved by the Chief Executive Officer and the Mayor.

9.4.2 Accommodation while undertaking domestic or international travel

Where practical, Council will book accommodation offered as part of a conference package. In all other circumstances, Councillors are entitled to stay in accommodation to a standard of 4 stars or equivalent when undertaking professional development or other Council business where it is not reasonable for the Councillor to return home for the night in accordance with the following conditions:

- i. Council will book and pay for all accommodation under this policy;
- ii. where a Councillor chooses to stay with friends or family, no accommodation expenses will be paid.

Councillors may be reimbursed for reasonable incidentals in accordance with this policy (up to a maximum of the Australian Taxation Office guidelines).

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL | Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy

10. Provision of Administrative Support and Resources

Council is responsible for the provision of appropriate administrative support and resources to ensure that a Councillor is able to undertake their civic duties with relative ease and at a standard appropriate to fulfil their professional role for the community. The provision of facilities and resources is for the sole use of Councillors in undertaking their duties and should be used responsibly and appropriately.

10.1 Transportation Allowance

A transport allowance will be provided to Councillors for the costs of transport while undertaking the duties of a Councillor.

A vehicle allowance of \$22,000 p.a. (by advance weekly payment) will be automatically provided to cover the costs of procuring, maintaining and running (including but not limited to fuel, registration, insurance, repairs, depreciation, finance costs etc.) a vehicle.

For the Mayor, a vehicle allowance of \$25,000 p.a. (by advance weekly payment) will be provided in recognition of the additional civic duties and responsibilities that this role is required to undertake.

The allowance will be provided at 50% of the normal allowance rate where a Councillor is not choosing to operate a private motor vehicle.

Transportation allowance amounts will be reviewed biennially. Councillors will have access to Council's preferred salary packaging provider and should seek their own independent financial advice regarding this allowance and any potential taxation implications.

10.2 Personalised Stationery, Uniforms, PPE and other equipment

Councillors will be provided with business cards, name badges, vehicle magnets, a pull-up banner and suitable personalised letterhead, certificates and other templates.

Ipswich City Council has a non-compulsory uniform policy and Councillors will be considered eligible to participate in this corporate scheme under the same conditions that apply to general employees. No provision will be made for Council meeting the cost of any alterations to the garments if required.

Councillors will be provided with all necessary safety equipment and are expected to observe the appropriate Workplace, Health and Safety requirements as outlined in the relevant Council Policy.

10.3 Business and Communication Resources

The following equipment and services will be made available to Councillors for the purpose of conducting Council business. The model provided will be in accordance with the standard device made available for Council Managers. At the end of the term, devices are to be returned to Council in fair condition. Limited personal usage is accepted in line with the provisions available to Council Officers. Any use deemed inappropriate will be required to be reimbursed.

- i. One (1) mobile telephone

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL | Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy

- ii. One (1) laptop
- iii. One (1) iPad
- iv. A docking station, monitor and A4 printer (home office)
- v. Mobile internet connection as required for allocated devices
- vi. Access to standard network software and accounts (inc. email address) in line with what is available for Council managers

10.4 Office Facilities

- i. A separate office for the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor will be provided in the Council Administration Building.
- ii. Shared office facilities, located within the Council Administration Building, will be provided for the other Councillors. Dedicated multipurpose office and meeting space will be provided at suitable Council Customer Service Centres and library facilities.
- iii. Access to dedicated Councillor meeting rooms will be provided within the Council Administration Building. In addition, access to dedicated multipurpose office and meeting space will be available at Council's Customer Service Centres and library facilities.

10.5 Administrative Support

Council is responsible for the provision of access to appropriate administrative support and resources to ensure that Councillors are able to undertake their civic duties and meet the responsibilities of their roles.

Administrative support will be provided in accordance with the Councillor Administrative Support Guidelines as set by the Chief Executive Officer. Requests made by Councillors for administrative support will be sought in accordance with the provisions of the guidelines.

All support staff will be employees of Ipswich City Council and will be employed under guidelines set for employment by Council's People and Culture Branch based on substantial previous experience to ensure that the best level of service is provided to Councillors. Recommendations received from Councillors which may be construed as a political appointment will not be considered.

Administrative support and resources are provided to Councillors for the sole purpose of the conduct of legitimate Council business and should be used responsibly and appropriately.

10.5.1 Office of the Mayor

The Mayor will be provided with the following support staff:

- i. Chief of Staff*
- ii. Senior Policy and Communications Officer
- iii. Personal Assistant to the Mayor
- iv. Policy and Communications Officer
- v. Diary and Correspondence Coordinator

*Contract position, aligned with term of the Mayor

10.5.2 Councillor Support

Councillors will be provided with the following support staff:

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL | Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Administrative Support Policy

- i. Senior Policy and Communications Officer
- ii. Four(4) Council Liaison Officers
- iii. Four(4) Executive Support and Research Officers

10.6 Advertising and Sponsorship

All advertising undertaken which solely or mainly contains the Councillor's image and name is deemed to be for electioneering purposes and the costs involved will not be paid by Council under any circumstances.

Where any Ipswich City Council events, programs or services be required to carry an acknowledgement of Councillor involvement, the standard wording will be:

Proudly supported by the Mayor and Councillors of Ipswich City Council

11. Assets Ownership

11.1 Facilities/Equipment

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

All facilities/equipment must be returned to Council either;

- a) Prior to the completion of the Councillor's term in accordance with Section 160 of the *Local Government Act 2009* at a date and time agreed with by the Chief Executive Officer or;
- b) No later than close of business the day following the end of a Councillor's term in accordance with Section 160 of the *Local Government Act 2009* or;
- c) Immediately if a Councillor is suspended under Section 182A of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

12. Asset Maintenance Costs

Council will cover all ongoing maintenance costs associated with Council owned equipment to ensure it is operating for optimal professional use (subject to proper usage and standards of care).

13. Legal and Insurance Cover

Council will take out and hold an appropriate level of insurance cover for Councillors undertaking their responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 2009* including:

- a. Public Liability
- b. Professional Indemnity
- c. Statutory Liability
- d. Work cover
- e. Travel Insurance
- f. Personal Accident

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Council will pay the excess (deductible) on all insurance claims, made in accordance with any policy of insurance and Councillors must notify the CEO when any claim is made under an insurance policy.

In relation to Inappropriate Conduct complaints, Council may recover from the Subject Councillor any excess (deductible) which has been paid by Council, where:

- i. A claim was made by the Subject Councillor, under any of Council's policies of insurance for legal representation, in relation to an Inappropriate Conduct complaint; and
- ii. A finding is made at any Council meeting, by Council, that the Subject Councillor has committed Inappropriate Conduct.

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