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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

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.

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.

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 common expense categories.

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:

- 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).

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

- 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:

- 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

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.

Any costs incurred by Council, as a result of indemnity being granted (under a Council policy of insurance) to a Subject Councillor in inappropriate conduct complaints, may be recovered from the Subject Councillor, as part of any order sought by Council in accordance with s150AH (b) (vii) of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

14. Related Documents

Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy
Councillor Acceptable Requests Guidelines and Staff Interaction Policy
Representation of the City at Official Functions Policy
Councillor Administrative Support Guidelines Administrative Directive
Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland
Councillor Expenses Advance Authorisation Procedure

15. Roles and Responsibilities

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.

16. Key Stakeholders

The following will be consulted during the review process:

Mayor and Councillors
Chief Executive Officer
Executive Leadership Team
Manager, Executive Services

17. Monitoring and Evaluation

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.

Reports of Councillor Expenses and Reimbursements will be 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.
Councillors	Mayor and Councillors
Domestic Travel	Travel undertaken in an official capacity outside of the boundaries of the City of Ipswich
Inappropriate Conduct	Conduct as defined under s150K of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> (Qld)
Political Appointment	A person who has worked closely with a candidate on their campaign for election or who has a close affiliation through membership to the same political party which would be considered to align the person to the Councillor rather than to Council.
Subject Councillor	A Councillor who is subject to any allegations of inappropriate conduct

19. Policy Owner

The Executive Services Branch (Office of the CEO) is the policy owner and Manager, Executive Services is responsible for authoring and reviewing this policy.

Version control

Version	Description	Endorsed / Approved by	Date
6.0	Adopted	Council Ordinary Meeting	22/07/2021
7.0	Adopted	Council Ordinary Meeting	20/06/2024
7.1	Administrative Change	Manager, Executive Services	24/06/2024

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.

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