

Report by Cathy Jones, Policy and Planning Coordinator

RECOMMENDATION

That the amended Councillors Expenses and Facilities Policy be adopted following public exhibition.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

Council, at its meeting on 6 September 2011, resolved (Minute No. 142/11):

“That the amended Councillors Expenses and Facilities Policy be placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days.”

This report has been prepared in response to the public exhibition of the draft policy.

REPORT

The draft policy was placed on exhibition for 28 days until 20 October 2011 at Strathfield Library, Strathfield Council's Customer Service and on Council's website.

There were no submissions received to the public exhibition.

While the policy was on exhibition, the Division of Local Government released *Findings from review of Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policies* (Circular 11-27), which reviewed policies from a number of Councils for compliance with the legislation and Division guidelines.

In response, a review of the draft Council policy was undertaken. It was found that Council's draft policy is largely in compliance with the Division's recommendations. One area, however, that needed clarification was approval processes. Council's draft policy sets out approval processes for individual items but was not clear on the general process. Therefore, clauses have been included in the draft policy relating to approval processes. The following changes have been made to the draft policy.

Changed wording

2.6 Requests for facilities or reimbursement of expenses

Only requests that conform to the provisions of this policy will be considered.

Requests for reimbursement of expenses shall be made by completing the Reimbursement of Expenses form attached to this policy.

Requests for facilities shall be made by completing the Request for Expenditure form attached to this policy.

Completed requests shall be submitted to the General Manager's Office.

Council will respond to requests as soon as practicable.

Inclusion of dual signatories for approvals

2.7 *Approval of Expenses Claims*

Except where approval process is otherwise specified in the policy, all other claims will be determined by the General Manager and either Director Corporate Services, Group Manager Corporate Services or Manager Finance.

Inclusion of dual signatories for approvals

3.6.2 *Training Courses*

The Mayor and General Manager should jointly give approval. If the matter concerns the Mayor, approval should be given jointly by the General Manager and Deputy Mayor.

Inclusion of Payment in Advance Form

A form for claims for payment in advance has been added to the policy. This process is set out in clause 3.3 of the draft policy and the form is consistent with the clause. There is no change proposed.

As the changes to the draft policy are minor, have no affect on financial limits or concern establishment of new or reduced benefits and are administrative in nature, it is recommended to adopt the amended policy.

REFERRAL FROM OTHER DEPARTMENT

No referral was required.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding has been provided in the current budget for this purpose as set out below:

Program	Approved Budget	Expenditure to Date
Corporate Services	\$2,530,600	\$ 1,063,139

ATTACHMENTS

1. Amended Councillors Expenses and Facilities Policy

Report approved by:

Neale Redman
Director Corporate Services