

# Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities for Mayor and Councillors Policy

Effective from: 1 November 2010  
 Contact officer: Manager Community Relations  
 Next review date: April 2011  
 File Reference: LG211/361/02 #22839798  
 Resolution/s reference: G10.1101.004

## OBJECTIVE

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure compliance with community expectations and statutory requirements relating to the payment or reimbursement of legitimate expenses and provision of facilities for Councillors while carrying out their duties and responsibilities as elected representatives of the Gold Coast City Council; and
- Ensure that all Councillors have the facilities and other support necessary to perform their civic duties

Key Focus Area	Corporate governance, organisational capability and customer contact
Key Focus Area Outcome	Delivering effective corporate governance
Performance Measures	Number of complaints received relating to the payment of expenses or the provision of facilities for Councillors.
Risk	Non-compliance with State and Commonwealth legislation leading to potential prosecution of Council, executive officer liability and negative city image

## POLICY STATEMENT

The payment and/or reimbursement of expenses and provision of facilities for Councillors must only be for the actual cost of legitimate business use and only in accordance with the Local Government Act 2009 (LGA) and the *Guidelines for Councils: Reimbursement of Expenses and Provision of Facilities for Mayors and Councillors* (Guidelines) issued by the chief executive of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation.

Council is committed to ensuring that Councillors are provided with the facilities required to enable them to perform their duties.

Councillors should not be financially disadvantaged when carrying out the requirements of the role of Councillor and should be fairly and reasonably compensated in accordance with statutory requirements and community expectations.

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

- is to be open and transparent, prudent, responsible, acceptable to the community and in accordance with statutory requirements;

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- based on ensuring economy and efficiency; and
- subject to budget provisions.

Council's annual report must contain a copy of the policy and a copy of any resolution made during the year authorising payment of expenses or provision of facilities to Councillors.

Spouses, partners and family members of Councillors are not entitled to reimbursement of expenses or to have access to facilities allocated to Councillors.

For details about entitlements in regard to the payment or reimbursement of Councillor expenses and the provision of facilities for Councillors, refer to *Attachment A: Guidelines for Councillor Expenses and Facilities*.

Failure to comply with this policy or misappropriation of expenses or facilities may be a breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct and/or an offence under the Criminal Code Act 1899.

## SCOPE

This policy provides for:

- payment of expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by the Councillors in the course of discharging their duties and responsibilities as Councillors; and
- the provision of facilities to the Councillors for that purpose.

This policy does not provide for salaries or other form of Councillor remuneration (see Councillor Remuneration Policy).

## DEFINITIONS

**Advertising** is "promoting to the public an idea, goods or services by using a medium commonly used for promoting ideas, goods or services and for which a fee is paid." Examples of mediums commonly used for promoting ideas, goods or services—magazine, newspaper, radio, television, website, promotional material/giveaways (e.g. calendars, fridge magnets, notepads), bulk letters or mail outs.

**Authorising person** is the person with *delegated authority* to approve expenditure or reimbursement for Councillor expenses and facilities.

**Council business** means official business conducted on behalf of, and/or approved by, Council, where a Councillor is required to undertake certain tasks to satisfy legislative requirements or achieve business continuity for the Council. Council business should result in a benefit being achieved either for Council, the local government area or the community.

Council business includes functions that are a statutory requirement of the Councillor's role or are officially recorded in minutes or other public records. These might also include

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attending an event or function to perform official duties or as an official Council representative, such as:

- ceremonial openings of buildings or facilities;
- fetes and carnivals;
- annual or presentation dinners;
- public meetings;
- private meetings arranged through official Council channels (i.e. documented in official records or diary) for the purpose of conducting bona fide discussions of business of Council; and
- any other meeting, event or function described in section 107 of the Local Government Act 2009 under *Insurance of Councillors* for example, attendance:
  - meetings of the local government or its committees that the Councillor is entitled or asked to attend; and
  - meetings for a resident of the local government area; and
  - conferences, deputations, inspections and meetings at which the Councillor's attendance is permitted by the local government; and
  - official functions organised for the local government
- Gathering of information by a Councillor necessary to inform him or her of an incident of interest to Council or which properly falls within the responsibility of Council.

**Councillors** include Councillors, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

**Civic duties** means Council business.

**Discretionary training** is any training that is not determined by Council as "mandatory".

**Expenses** refers to expenses described in the *Guidelines*.

**Facilities** refer to the facilities deemed necessary to assist Councillors in their role as shown in the *Guidelines*.

**Mandatory training** is any training that Council resolves that all Councillors must attend.

**Meal allowance** is the daily amount allowed for meals while travelling on Council business.

**Official capacity** refers to activities undertaken while on Council business.

**Public record** is any record created, received or kept in an official capacity.

**Representing Council** means a Councillor representing Council when Council resolves that the Councillor is to attend an event or function as a representative of Council.

**Travel advance** is a cash payment paid in advance for anticipated expenses associated with travelling on Council business. A travel advance may include expenses for meals, accommodation and incidentals. All expenses must be reconciled at the return of the travel.

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## RELATED POLICIES / LEGISLATION

Local Government Act 2009 Section 45  
 Local Government (Operations) Regulations 2010  
 Councillor Remuneration Policy  
 Guidelines for Councils: Reimbursement of Expenses and Provision of Facilities for Mayors and Councillors  
 Procurement Policy and Purchasing Guidelines  
 Local Government (Finance, Plans & Reporting) Regulation 2010  
 Income Tax Assessment Act 1997  
 Taxation Rulings issued by the Australian Taxation Office  
 Event Ticket Allocation & Attendance Policy

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Disclosure of publicly funded overseas travel details in Annual Report.  
 Council reports on domestic and international travel activities.  
 Resolutions made during the year authorising the payment or provision of remuneration, including expenses paid or facilities provided, to Councillors or members of committees of the local government. Particulars of the total remuneration paid or provided, including expenses paid or facilities provided, to each Councillor during the year and the total superannuation contributions paid for each Councillor during the year.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

Attachment A – Guidelines  
 Attachment B – Councillor Travel and Accommodation Procedures  
 Attachment C – Terms and Conditions for Use of a Motor Vehicle  
 Appendix (i) – Incidental Expenses Acquittal

## RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance with the provisions of this policy, and any attached guidelines/templates, is mandatory.

Sponsor	Director, City Governance
Business Owner	Manager, Community Relations
Policy Implementation	Manager, Community Relations

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## Attachment A Guidelines



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### PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to provide information about the payment or reimbursement of expenses and the provision of facilities for Councillors of the Gold Coast City Council, including the Mayor.

Councillor remuneration is not covered by this document. Councillor remuneration is in accordance with the determination of the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal, as reflected in the Councillor Remuneration Policy.

The payment or reimbursement of expenses and the provision of facilities for Councillors is subject to Council approval where necessary (e.g. for travel), budget provisions and the authorisation of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or the officer delegated that authority by the CEO.

Wherever practicable, Council officers will provide the specified facilities and manage the payment of expenses on behalf of Councillors. Any claims by Councillors for reimbursement of expenses are to be authorised by the CEO or delegated officer.

### 1. EXPENSES

The following expenses refer to actual expenses deemed necessary for Council business. Councillors are only entitled to the expenses contained in the categories listed below.

#### 1. 1. Council business

Where Councillors are attending to Council business (refer to definitions) such as meetings, functions or other activities in an official capacity, Council will pay for the approved expenses associated with that activity.

Council may approve regional, national and international travel for Councillors where Council considers it appropriate to promote or represent the Gold Coast for a local government purpose.

##### 1.1.1 Representing Council at events

Councillors may be required to attend a range of events and functions as part of their role in attending to Council business. Councillors may, for example, be required to attend significant sporting and other community events in an official capacity.

Where Council resolves that a Councillor is required to attend an event or conference as a delegate of Council, Council will pay for expenses associated with attending that event.

Council will provide tickets to events for Councillors for the purpose of addressing Council's advocacy strategy and to provide support for community social and economic development activities.

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### 1.2. Professional development

The payment of expenses for professional development requires Council approval. There are two categories of professional development for Councillors – Mandatory Training and Discretionary Training

#### 1.2.1 Mandatory training

Councillors must attend training where Council resolves that all Councillors or a class of Councillors (e.g. newly elected Councillors) are to attend training courses or workshops for skill development related to a Councillor's role. Council will meet all costs.

Examples of mandatory training may include training for Councillor induction, the code of conduct, meeting procedures and for legislative obligations.

#### 1.2.2 Discretionary training

Where a Councillor wishes to attend a conference, workshop or training to improve skills relevant to their role as a Councillor (other than mandatory training), Council approval is required to pay the expenses of the event.

#### 1.2.3 Budget allocation

Council will determine the upper limit of funding of all forms of professional development, mandatory training, discretionary training and representation of Council and attendance at other forms of conferences, workshops and the like in its annual budget as determined from time to time.

### 1.3 Travel costs

Councillors may incur travel costs for a number of reasons including attendance at Council meetings, travelling to conferences, training or workshops.

All Councillor travel arrangements must be in accordance with *Attachment B: Councillor Travel and Accommodation Procedures*.

In general, the most cost effective form of travel must be used. Councillors may request to travel using their own private vehicle for business purposes and claim a mileage allowance based on log book details to substantiate their claim (refer to Section 2.5).

### 1.4 Accommodation

When attending conferences, Councillors must take advantage of any costs savings available from any package provided by conference organisers as assessed by the CEO.

Refer to Attachment B: Councillor Travel and Accommodation Procedures for further details.

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### 1.5 Meals

Subject to approval, Councillors may claim for the reimbursement of each actual cost per meal when travelling for business related purposes.

Alternatively, Councillors may be paid a daily meal allowance and incidental expenses based on the Australian Tax Office standards for reasonable travel expenses.

Where Councillors claim for reimbursement, they may be provided with a cash advance for meals when travelling for business related purposes. Any advance must be reconciled with actual costs, supported by receipts.

Refer to Attachment B: Councillor Travel and Accommodation Procedures for further details.

### 1.6 Incidental expenses

From 1 July 2009, incidental expenses may be paid to the Mayor and Councillors in advance for reasonable expenses incurred or to be incurred in performing their role as a Councillor.

Alternatively, Councillors can choose to seek reimbursement for each incidental expense as the expenses are incurred.

Incidental expenses may include items such as:

#### *Motor vehicle incidentals*

- Parking fees (other than whilst on official Council approved travel e.g. parking at an airport whilst travelling to a conference)
- Tolls
- Cleaning materials

#### *Community representation*

- Sustenance (e.g. cost of, or contribution to, a meal whilst attending a community organisation function in an official capacity)
- Hospitality provided to a member(s) of the community or other organisation as a consequence of representing Council or the community or acting in an official capacity eg providing lunch or coffee during a meeting with a constituent or providing refreshment for an organisation for a community function or community activity arranged by the Councillor or through the Councillors office. This section shall not apply to those functions approved by a resolution of Council and catered for using Council's formal procurement process.
- Raffles and donations incurred whilst attending a community function eg the "obligatory raffle/donation" whilst attending a charity event whilst representing Council or another official capacity.

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- Hire or purchase of appropriate clothing to attend a significant community function in an official capacity eg hiring a dinner suit to attend charity event at which the Councillor will make an official speech in an official capacity.
- Dry cleaning/laundrying of clothing as a consequence of an involvement in an official act, eg removal of grease from a uniform or safety clothing resulting from a site inspection.
- Condolences provided to appropriate members of the community
- Presentations made in an official capacity eg presenting a book, on behalf of Council, to a student who achieved substantial recognition for community participation as part of the Councillor's formal speech at a school's end of year assembly.
- Annual operational costs relating to the Mayoral website
- Annual operational costs relating to individual Councillor websites.

### *Reference/information gathering*

- Books and other material (other than newspapers and magazines provided under office expenses below or those normally provided through Council Corporate Library) necessary to inform the Councillor on a matter relevant to Council.
- Membership of organisations for which membership will provide access to information and material not readily or easily available to the public.

In recognition of the time and resources, and the associated costs thereof, associated with processing and paying petty cash for minor sums, Council determines that it will accept an acquittal of the advance as at 30 June each year. Councillors are to repay any amount that remains unspent at that date. This will substantially improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the reimbursement process for minor items.

Council provides an allocation to Councillors for incidental expenses on the strict understanding that it will not reimburse Councillors any further monies which are not otherwise provided for under this policy. For example, a Councillor may not claim hospitality expenses from another source. (*Please refer to Appendix (i) for wording of Statutory Declaration and acquittal process*). Hospitality expenses related to official receptions and other functions organised by Council officers are to be met from relevant approved budgets.

The provisions for incidental expenses are as follows:

Mayor	\$23,000
Deputy Mayor	\$8,000
Councillor	\$5,000

The amounts for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor recognise the enhanced civic and ceremonial aspects of their positions.

### **1.7 Cab Charge and public transport**

Councillors may claim for cab charge facilities or reimbursement for public transport tickets (rail, bus, ferry) to attend official Council functions only.

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An approved function includes any function approved pursuant to sections 1.2.1 and 1.3 above. Refer to Attachment B: Councillor Travel and Accommodation Procedures for further details.

### 1.8 Advertising expenditure

Advertising must only be used where the purpose is provision of information or education in the public interest. It must not be used to:

- promote the particular achievements or plans of particular Councillors.
- to influence the voters in an election of a local government.

Councillors may incur expenditure for advertising only if:

- the advertising is for providing information or education to the public; and
- the information or education is provided in the public interest.

Examples of appropriate advertising include:

- To advise the public of a new or continuing (or changes to an existing) service, activity or facility provided by the Council;
- To increase the use of a service, activity or facility provided on a commercial basis with a view to profit;
- To change the behaviour of people in the Council's area for the benefit of all or some of the community;
- To advise the public of the time, place and content of scheduled meetings;
- To advise the public of the decisions made;
- To request comment on proposed policies or activities of Council or other matters of interest to Council or the community;
- To advertise matters required by legislation to be advertised; or
- Advertising designed to influence the opinion of the community or another entity (including another sphere of government) to further Council's objectives.

During the period of three (3) months preceding an election of the local government other than a by-election, Councillors must not:

- place advertisements relating to future plans unless, and only to the extent that, those plans have been formally adopted by Council or approved by Council or the Chief Executive Officer for public consultation prior to Council consideration of such plans; or
- advertise the activities of Council otherwise than in the manner and form it is customary for the Council to advertise its activities.

At any time, Councillors must not:

- place advertisements which seek to influence support for particular candidates, groups of candidates or potential candidates in a local government election; or
  - bear the cost of advertisements featuring one or more Councillors (other than the official person) or containing quotations attributed to individual Councillors.
- Note: This does not preclude Councillors appearing in unpaid publicity or other publicity where the cost is not borne by Council.

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All expenditure on advertising must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer, Directors or Branch Managers in consultation with, and advice from, Marketing or Communication Strategists from the Corporate Communication Branch.

The approving officer must ensure that:

- The expenditure is in accordance with this policy;
- The cost of the advertisement is appropriate for the number of people it is intended to inform;
- The funds are available in the relevant budget item and meet the usual requirements for expenditure approvals.

A by-election of Gold Coast City Council does not, in itself, result in the application of additional restrictions on advertising.

Political advertising which promotes Councillors as individuals is not permitted. Communication of Council and community information is acceptable, and includes the following:

- Councillors' printing and distributing various miscellaneous items (i.e. fridge magnets and notepads) provided that the minimum requirement of 10 Council/community telephone numbers appearing on each item is met: or
- Councillors' issuing bulk letters or mail outs or advertising in newspapers and local newsletters, which does not include promotion of Councillors as individuals, and are for the following purposes:
  - The availability of the Councillor to meet with constituents to discuss Council business and/or constituents' concerns;
  - Advice regarding the holding of community meetings to discuss Council business;
  - Specific advice relating to a particular issue, schedule of works or program of works.

## 2. FACILITIES

Facilities provided for Councillors must be deemed necessary and required to assist Councillors in their official capacity. In accordance with statutory provisions, Council may only provide Councillors with the facilities listed below.

Council determines the reasonable standard for facilities for Councillors. If a Councillor chooses a higher standard of facility than that prescribed by Council, any difference in cost must be met by the Councillor personally.

All facilities provided to Councillors remain the property of Council and must be accounted for during annual equipment audits. The facilities must be returned to Council when the Councillor's term expires, unless Council agrees to dispose of the facility in some other manner.

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### 2.1 Administrative tools and office amenities

#### 2.1.1 Office space and access to meeting rooms

Council provides office accommodation and access to meeting rooms for Councillors.

The standard of Councillor office accommodation is as approved by Council. In general, rooms provided for Councillor contact with Divisional constituents will be located at Council owned or controlled premises such as libraries, community centres or branch offices.

Furniture and fittings for Councillor offices will comprise:

- Desk and return
- Chairs/couch
- Filing cabinets
- Credenza
- Hutch
- Coffee table
- Map table
- Bookcase
- Artwork (from GCCC Art Gallery)

Allocation for office furniture (\$)*	
Councillor	4,665
Deputy Mayor	5,433
Mayor	7,322

\*Adjusted by the annual increase in the Brisbane CPI at 30 March each year.

#### 2.1.2 Support staff

Council provides secretarial support for each Councillor.

Councillors are provided with a full time Personal Assistant under Council's usual terms and conditions of employment. Relief staff will be provided, where practical, if the Personal Assistant is taking annual leave for more than 2 days. For periods of less than two (2) days, the provision of assistance shall be subject to budgetary and operational constraints.

Supplementary assistance may be provided to a Councillor by a relief Personal Assistant when that Personal Assistant is not otherwise engaged in a relieving position. Any such supplementary assistance will be equitably shared and dependant on priorities and workload at the time.

The Mayor is entitled to two full time Personal Assistants, an Administrative Support Officer, a Research Officer and an Office Manager/Policy Officer.

Supplementary assistance may be provided to the Mayor by a relief Personal Assistant when that Personal Assistant is not otherwise engaged in a relieving position. Any such

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GA10.1013.005/G10.1101.004  
G10.0913.021  
CEO 24.6.10  
CEO 21.05.09  
G09.0209.019  
G08.0818.005  
CEO 31.07.08  
CEO 30.04.08  
G08.0331.017

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supplementary assistance will be equitably shared dependant on priorities and workload at the time.

### **2.1.3 Computer for business use**

Councillors are provided with a desktop or a laptop computer for Council business use at the Councillor's office.

Where a Councillor is provided with a desktop computer at the Councillor's office, Council will approve a desktop computer for the Councillor's home office, if required.

Where a Councillor is provided with a laptop computer, Council will approve a docking station for the Councillor's home office, if required.

The standard of computer shall be similar to that available to Council managers.

### **2.1.4 Digital Cameras**

Council will provide digital cameras and associated software the value of \$500 for use by the Mayor and Councillors for Council business purposes (eg. Divisional inspections).

### **2.1.5 Land Line (Councillor offices)**

Councillors are provided with a Council landline telephone and internet access for business use.

### **2.1.6 Fax and/or scanner**

Councillors are provided with a facsimile and scanner for business use at the Councillor's office.

### **2.1.7 Printer, photocopier, paper shredder**

Councillors are entitled to a printer, photocopier and paper shredder for business use at the Councillor's office.

### **2.1.8 Stationery**

Councillors are provided stationery for official purposes only, including, but not limited to:

- Pens and pen sets
- Paper
- Note paper
- Letterhead
- Business cards
- Envelopes
- 'With Compliments' slips

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Council stationery is not to be converted or modified in any way and may only be used for carrying out the functions of the role of Councillor.

Stationery does not include any form of advertising by Council.

### **2.1.9 Publications**

Councillors are provided with copies of relevant legislation, books and journals considered necessary for undertaking their duties.

### **2.1.10 Other administrative necessities**

Subject to Council approval, Councillors may be provided with any other administrative necessities to meet the business of Council.

### **2.1.11 Advertising**

Council will not reimburse or provide funds, services or facilities for the purposes of advertising for Councillors. Refer to section 1.8 for allowable advertising.

### **2.1.12 Community consultation**

Councillors may use facilities provided to correspond with community representatives for the purpose of clarifying issues that are relevant to their division or the city in general. Where a Councillor chooses to undertake further community consultation on a particular matter, in addition to that approved by Council, the Councillor is responsible for those costs.

## **2.2 Home office**

Councillors may be provided with home office equipment comprising a computer, facsimile machine, copier, printer and internet access, for business use only.

For home office telecommunication needs, including internet, refer to Section 2.6.

## **2.3 Maintenance costs of any Council owned equipment**

Council will cover all ongoing maintenance costs associated with Council owned equipment to ensure it is operating for optimal professional use.

## **2.4 Name badge and uniforms**

Councillors will be provided with any safety equipment such as overalls, safety helmets or glasses, as required, in their role.

Councillors will be provided with uniforms and a name badge, if required.

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### 2.5 Vehicles, fuel and parking

Councillors may either:

- be provided with a Council owned vehicle for official business, with access to private use of that vehicle, subject to reimbursement to Council for expenses (see below) associated with the private use of the vehicle; or
- use their own private vehicle for business purposes and claim a mileage allowance for the business use of the vehicle.

#### 2.5.1 Use of a Council vehicle

Should a Councillor choose to be provided with a Council owned vehicle:

- The expense for private use shall be calculated such that the contribution by the Councillor will meet the average Fringe Benefits Tax ("FBT") to be paid by Council in relation to vehicles supplied to Councillors and used for private use. In essence, this will be approximately half of the gross taxable FBT value of the vehicles.
- The vehicle shall be one that must achieve a GVG greenhouse rating of 5 or better and achieve a maximum fuel consumption of 10.8 litres per 100 kilometres or better, and such vehicles must have a recommended retail price that does not exceed the maximum retail price of vehicles specified in the State Government's SES level 4 list (for Councillors) and the SES CEO list (for the Mayor) current at the time of purchase. Submissions for vehicles by Councillors will be approved by the Chief Executive Officer against the above selection criteria.
- Refer to Attachment C (Terms and Conditions of Use of a Motor Vehicle).

#### 2.5.2 Use of Councillor's own vehicle

Should a Councillor choose to use their own vehicle, the amount reimbursed will be the actual amount (or equivalent mileage) expended by the Councillor, validated by log book records. The amount to be reimbursed will be based on the mileage allowances recommended by the Australian Tax Office.

#### 2.5.3 Parking

Council will provide parking facilities for Councillors at Councillor office locations.

### 2.6 Telecommunication needs

Councillors will be provided with a mobile telephone or a hand held PDA palm pilot device (e.g. Blackberry).

Where Council provides a mobile telephone or hand held device, Council will pay for all costs.

Council will pay for the cost of home internet access for business purposes.

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If a Councillor does not accept a Council supplied mobile telephone or hand held device and uses a personally owned mobile device, Council will reimburse up to 50% of the costs incurred.

Where Council does not provide a mobile telephone or hand held device, Council will provide:

- a home landline at the Councillor's residence including connection cost, monthly rental and call costs up to 50% of the total calls made. Any STD or international calls made from the home telephone can only be reimbursed if a receipt and certification is provided by the Councillor that the call was related to business; and

### 2.7 Legal costs and insurance cover

Council may decide, pursuant to section 107 of the Local Government Act 2009, to cover costs incurred through any inquiry, investigation, hearing or legal proceedings into the conduct of a Councillor, or arising out of, or in connection with the Councillor's performance of his/her civic functions.

Councillors will be covered under Council insurance policies while discharging civic duties. Specifically, insurance cover will be provided for public liability, professional indemnity, Councillor's liability, personal accident and/or workers' compensation, international and domestic travel insurance.

### 2.8 Mayoral website

Council will provide a Mayoral website to allow alternative options for the Mayor to communicate Council's policies and decisions to residents with ongoing annual operational costs to be funded from the Mayor's incidental expense allowance.

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## *Attachment B Councillor Travel and Accommodation Procedures*

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### 3.1. General conditions - Councillor accommodation and travel

All Councillor air travel and accommodation requires prior approval by Council and authorisation by the Director City Governance (the authorising person).

All air travel and/or accommodation requirements will be coordinated through the Travel Coordinator, Facilities Management Branch, Organisational Services subject to authorisation.

Council is committed to ensuring that travel and related services and products are procured as cost effectively and efficiently as possible using the Council's preferred travel suppliers.

Travel related expenses that do not comply with policy provisions will not be reimbursed. Requests for ineligible expense claims risk delays in processing, or partial or total forfeiture of reimbursement.

Travel and accommodation arrangements will not be booked until the Travel Coordinator receives a completed Travel Request form with all required approvals and travel details.

All requests for travel (including associated registrations) should be made in sufficient time to take advantage of discounts and gain access to the widest range of accommodation and flights. Failure to do so will limit flight and accommodation options.

### 3.2. Responsibilities

Councillors are required to:

- process all travel related requests in a timely manner through Council's Travel Coordinator so that available discounts are taken;
- make bookings in a timely manner so that available discounts are taken;
- submit all claims for reimbursement in a timely manner following completion of the journey;
- complete all necessary registration and travel request forms.

Authorising person must:

- ensure the application complies with policy provisions;
- approve travel requests in a timely manner;
- ensure acquittal of expenditure;
- implement systems of risk management to ensure that expenditure on travel is efficient, economic and appropriate.

Travel Coordinator is responsible for:

- identifying 'best deals' and negotiating special rates with Council's preferred travel providers;
- providing advice to Councillors in relation to travel services, policies and procedures;

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## *Attachment B Councillor Travel and Accommodation Procedures*

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- coordinating all travel requests to ensure bookings are made in a timely manner and that all requests are processed in accordance with Council's policy;
- maintaining information on issues as accommodation, airfares, car hire and other related costs for the purpose of reporting to Council, as required;
- providing reports to Council every six months on travel activities.

### 3.3. Preferred travel provider

Council has a preferred travel provider that processes all travel requests, negotiates discount air and accommodation rates and provides assistance to Councillors on all travel related matters. All transport and related travel should be booked through this provider, however, where an alternative provides an overall saving to Council, this alternative may be used with the approval of the Travel Coordinator. Councillors must not negotiate travel rates directly with travel suppliers. All such requests must be processed through the Travel Coordinator.

### 3.4. Approval

All Councillor travel requires the approval of Council. All travel requests from a Councillor must be submitted to Council and should identify the relevance of such event to the Council and, as far as practicable, indicate the cost of attendance. Upon approval, the Councillor's secretary should ensure any necessary registration forms and the Travel Request Form are completed. A copy of the Council resolution must be attached to the Travel Request Form and forwarded, as soon as practical, to the Director City Governance to authorise the travel booking.

Where time does not permit the presentation of a report to Council:

- the Chief Executive Officer may approve any requests for travel by the Mayor subject to a report being submitted to the next available Corporate Governance and Administration Committee Meeting; and
- the Mayor may approve any Councillor's travel subject to a report being submitted to the next available Corporate Governance and Administration Committee Meeting.

Where Councillors are appointed by the Council as Council's representative on State or Federal committees or Government associations, all travel and accommodation associated with the Councillor's fulfilment of that role is deemed as approved without the need for a further report to Council. This is to be documented on the Travel Request Form.

### 3.5. Processing travel requests

A complete Travel Request Form, accompanied by all of the following must be received before a booking is processed:

- Council's approval (including supporting committee agenda item together with full Council resolution), and
- Conference documentation and registration details, if applicable

# Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities for Mayor and Councillors Policy

## *Attachment B Councillor Travel and Accommodation Procedures*

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Verbal or email notification of intention to travel will not be acted on and is not considered valid notice.

Except in genuine emergencies, the Travel Coordinator shall process all travel and accommodation arrangements, including associated registrations.

Unless specifically requested to the contrary, the Travel Coordinator will arrange bookings that best fit the preferred options and are most advantageous to Council. All itineraries will be confirmed with the Councillor before bookings are confirmed. No alterations will be accepted after confirmation of bookings, except under extenuating circumstances, as approved by the authorising person.

Requests for travel and/or accommodation must be lodged with the Travel Coordinator within sufficient time to take advantage of 'early bird' and advance booking discounts. Confirmation of travel or accommodation cannot be guaranteed for late requests. As a guide, international travel requests should be received no closer than six (6) to eight (8) weeks to the date of departure, and domestic travel requests should be made no closer than three (3) weeks to the date of departure.

### **3.6. Air travel**

The most cost effective form of air travel will be used.

Council's contracted travel services provider is required to offer the 'best fare' available at the time of booking, therefore, flights requested may not always be offered when asked to confirm the booking.

Electronic ticketing (ETicket) will be used for airline tickets, where available.

### **3.7. Class of travel**

With the exception of the Mayor, the standard of air travel for Councillors travelling on Council business is as follows:

- For domestic air travel of duration three (3) hours or less, the class of travel shall be economy;
- For domestic air travel of duration greater than three (3) hours, the class of travel shall be business; and
- For all international air travel, the class of travel shall be business.

Where available, Councillors may be required to travel Super Economy class instead of business class. Councillors may upgrade to a higher class of travel if there is no additional cost to Council.

# Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities for Mayor and Councillors Policy

## *Attachment B Councillor Travel and Accommodation Procedures*

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### 3.8. Flexible tickets

Where flexibility is required for return times or connecting flights, a suitably flexible ticket may be purchased with the approval of the authorising person.

### 3.9. Accommodation

Accommodation arrangements for Councillors must comply with the provisions of Attachment A of the policy. Conference accommodation packages are to be used where it is economically feasible to do so.

Council may approve alternative accommodation arrangements taking into account the total costs, location, value for money, convenience and traveller safety.

In determining accommodation locations and standards for all Councillors, every effort will be made to minimise the total cost associated with attendance at the event. Travel time to the event, taxi costs, convenience and hotel services will be considered when booking accommodation. When practical and available, accommodation will be arranged within close proximity of the event venue.

Accommodation and associated expenses will not be paid for local events such as seminars, conferences etc. held at the Gold Coast, Brisbane City and adjoining local government areas where it is reasonable to expect the Councillor to travel to and from the event on the same day. However, the authorising person may approve such costs giving consideration to the home location, driving times and participation requirements of the Councillor.

Wherever practical to do so, Council will book and pre-pay all accommodation before departure. Council will not pre-pay any charges against the room except for accommodation and taxes, where applicable.

All expenses incurred at the accommodation venue **other** than accommodation must be settled at the time of departure. It is the **Councillor's** responsibility to seek reimbursement of legitimate expenses upon return. Reimbursement will not be approved without original receipts.

Accommodation meeting the general standards applicable for domestic travel will apply to international travel arrangements. Where a sister city relationship exists or international contacts with government or business agencies exist, the government or business agency may be contacted to assist with accommodation bookings to ensure suitability of location and standard.

Pre-payment of all accommodation is preferred, however, it is acknowledged that some countries do not permit this. In such cases, an increase to the daily travel advance may be made to meet accommodation costs. Any increase to cover *accommodation costs will be determined by the Travel Coordinator and approved by the Chief Executive Officer.*

# Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities for Mayor and Councillors Policy

## *Attachment B Councillor Travel and Accommodation Procedures*

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### **3.10. Corporate Club (frequent flyer membership)**

Corporate Club Memberships are available to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. It is the responsibility of the Club Member to ensure membership is used appropriately with the activity monitored by the Travel Coordinator.

Membership points accrued on Council business must not be used for personal travel and, where possible, should be used to offset future Council travel expenses.

Councillors have the option to purchase corporate membership at the applicable rate available to Council.

### **3.11. Use of a motor vehicle to attend events**

Unless otherwise approved (e.g. for medical reasons), if a Councillor chooses not to use Council provided or arranged travel to attend an event, the Councillor is responsible for meeting all travel and accommodation expenses during the period of travel to the event via motor vehicle.

### **3.12. Hire cars**

The requirement for a hire car should be identified at the time of seeking Council approval for attendance. Any subsequent need for a hire car must be approved by the authorising person.

### **3.13. Taxi and cab charge vouchers**

Cab charge vouchers are available from the Travel Coordinator. Councillors are encouraged to use this facility as an alternative to seeking reimbursement for taxi costs. Any unused vouchers must be returned to Council's Travel Coordinator immediately upon return to Council. Liability for any misuse or loss of vouchers rests with the traveller.

The use of cab charge vouchers for travel between Gold Coast and Brisbane is not permitted unless approved by the authorising person in advance of the travel and shown to be more beneficial than other options available. Similarly, reimbursement of these fares will not be considered unless prior authorisation is given.

Cab charge must only be used to attend official Council functions. Incidental travel while attending an event must be met by the Councillor.

### **3.14. Limousine service**

Where cost effective to do so, a limousine service will be arranged by the Travel Coordinator. Where practical, a limousine service will be arranged for the Mayor for all airport transfers.

# Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities for Mayor and Councillors Policy

## *Attachment B Councillor Travel and Accommodation Procedures*

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### 3.15. Meals and incidentals

Daily allowances or cash advances for meals and incidentals will be paid in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

#### 3.15.1 Domestic travel

For domestic travel, a daily meal and incidental travel allowance will be paid to Councillors in lieu of actual cost reimbursement. Where a daily meal and incidental allowance is paid, the reimbursement of any other expense is subject to approval.

Where possible, payment will be paid into the Councillor's nominated bank account as part of the weekly pay cycle before departure.

For domestic travel, the daily allowance will be calculated taking account of meals included in the event registration or provided in the travel package. Where a conference dinner or meal (including breakfast or lunch) is included in the registration, the respective allowance for that meal will be deducted from the total daily allowance. If the Councillor chooses not to attend a provided dinner/meal, then the full cost of the alternative meal shall be at the Councillor's expense.

Breakfast allowance is paid if the traveller is required to depart home prior to 6.00 am.  
Dinner allowance is paid if the traveller returns home after 6.30 pm.

For conference and course attendance where an overnight stay is required, the following example will be used as a guide.

#### Example:

A Councillor travels to Sydney for a two-day conference commencing Monday morning and finishing Tuesday afternoon. Travel to Sydney on Monday morning is considered impractical. The Councillor leaves on Saturday and returns on Tuesday night. The conference registration includes dinner on Monday night and lunches for both conference days but no breakfasts. Travel home on Tuesday is on a late afternoon flight arriving home before 6.30 pm. The Councillor is required to pay for accommodation on Saturday night and the following allowance will be pre-paid:

Sunday night dinner

Incidentals for Monday

Monday breakfast

Tuesday breakfast

No further claims for meals or incidentals will be accepted.

A prior night's accommodation shall only be approved where travel to the event on the day of commencement is not practical.

# **Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities for Mayor and Councillors Policy**

## ***Attachment B Councillor Travel and Accommodation Procedures***

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Incidentals will be paid for each full day the Councillor is required to be away from home. This allowance will include such items as, laundry/dry cleaning, newspapers, phone calls,

bus fares, stationery and other similar incidental travel related incidental expenses not specifically covered in this policy.

Where a Councillor is required to travel but no overnight accommodation is required, the Councillor is entitled to reimbursement for the reasonable cost of meals and expenses as determined above. A pre-paid allowance will not be made and all claims for part day travel expenses must be made on return from the event as an out of pocket expense claim, with receipts attached. Statutory Declarations will not be accepted in any circumstances.

### **3.15.2 International travel**

For international travel, a travel advance will be paid which must be reconciled on the Councillor's return. Actual business related costs will be reimbursed on presentation of original receipts.

Where a Councillor is travelling on approved international travel, a travel advance of up to \$200 per day may be paid to cover eligible business related expenses including meals and incidental expenses.

Acquittal of the cash advance for international travel is required within seven (7) days of travel completion. Councillors must keep a diary of all business related expenses including original receipts. The travel advance must be reconciled against actual business related costs incurred. Claims without receipts will not be accepted. Foreign language receipts must be appropriately explained/translated. Any overpayment must be repaid to Council.

A corporate credit card may be issued in lieu of a travel advance (see section 22 below).

### **3.16. Parking**

Council will reimburse the cost of parking fees incurred in order to attend an event where Councillors attend in their official capacity. Supporting receipts are required for reimbursement. All claims under \$55 may be made through petty cash.

Where airport parking is used for the duration of an event, the cost of the parking shall be reimbursed upon presentation of receipts. Airport parking facilities shall only be used where it is economical to do so and after all other reasonable methods of transport to and from the airport have been considered. Approved claims for reimbursement shall be presented to the Travel Coordinator for processing.

### **3.17. In-room internet connection for business purposes**

Where in-room internet connection is required for undertaking Council business, reasonable connection costs may be claimed on completion of travel.

# Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities for Mayor and Councillors Policy

## *Attachment B Councillor Travel and Accommodation Procedures*

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### **3.18. Expenses not subject to reimbursement**

Expenses **will not** be reimbursed for personal items or costs unrelated to Council business; e.g.:

- Alcohol;
- Babysitting fees;
- Kennel fees;
- Airline club fees;
- Toiletries;
- Barber or hair stylist;
- Traffic infringements;
- In flight and in house movies;
- Tourism related costs;
- Mini bar purchases;
- Personal telephone;
- Social events; and
- Reading materials

As a guide, expenses not normally reimbursed at home, will not be reimbursed when travelling.

### **3.19. Expenses reimbursement process**

Where practical, Council will pay all travel and accommodation expenses before departure, however, any claim for allowable expenses not covered by the advance may be made at the completion of travel.

Reimbursement of legitimate business expenses not covered by the incidental allowance must be made on the Out of Pocket Expenses Claim Form with original receipts and submitted to the Director City Governance for approval. Statutory Declarations will not be accepted in any circumstances. All claims must be submitted to the Travel Coordinator for processing.

### **3.20. Travel insurance**

Council has travel insurance arrangements in place, including medical and luggage components, that cover all employees and Councillors on authorised Council business, conferences, courses, etc. Details may be obtained from the City Solicitor.

### **3.21. Accompanying partners and personal travel arrangements**

All travel and accommodation for partners of Councillors must be arranged by and paid by the Councillor. Personal arrangements may be booked through Council's contracted

# Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities for Mayor and Councillors Policy

## *Attachment B Councillor Travel and Accommodation Procedures*

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supplier, if desired. The supplier will invoice the Councillor prior to departure. Council will not pay for any private travel expenses.

The Travel Coordinator will not arrange private travel for Councillors or their partners except where the partner is travelling as an official delegate of Council.

### **3.22. Credit cards**

A credit card may be made available for Councillors to meet overseas travel expenses. Credit cards will be issued with the approval of the Chief Executive Officer. The credit card should only be used for extraordinary business expenses directly related to the Councillor's attendance at the event.

Examples of extraordinary costs are accommodation (where Council's pre-payment is not acknowledged or honoured by the hotel), missed flights (where contact with Council's travel services provider is not possible) or where specific instruction is received from Council's Travel Coordinator to use the card to meet business related expenses.

Personal expenses, including those covered by the daily allowance must not be charged to the card, e.g. meals, incidentals, gifts, clothing, tourism or other similar cost.

A Statement of Expenses form (including all receipts) must be used to reconcile all credit card expenditure. Foreign language receipts must be appropriately explained/translated. This must be approved by the **authorising person** and provided to Council's Travel Coordinator within seven (7) days of completion of the travel.

Credit cards must be returned to the Travel Coordinator for safe storage upon completion of travel.

### **3.23. Councillor reporting arrangements for Conferences and Courses:**

Councillors shall ensure on their return, that a report be presented to the respective Council committee summarising the conference and course content and highlighting areas of interest and/or benefit to Council. The responsibility for submission of the report rests with the Councillor leading any delegation. The report must be submitted to Council within thirty (30) days of return from the conference/course attended.

# Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities for Mayor and Councillors Policy

## *Attachment C Terms and Conditions for Use of a Motor Vehicle*

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### **4.1 Motor Vehicle Allocation - General**

The Chief Executive Officer or delegate, may approve the private use of a Council vehicle by a Councillor in accordance with the following terms and conditions, or as otherwise determined by the Chief Executive Officer.

A Councillor may be allocated full private use of a vehicle seven (7) days per week. Council will provide the following for the vehicle:

- Service, maintenance, registration and insurance;
- Fuel costs (subject to below); and
- Breakdown service.

### **4.2. Suspension or termination of a vehicle allocation**

The vehicle allocation will cease when the term of office of the Councillor finishes.

The Chief Executive Officer may suspend or terminate a vehicle allocation on the breach of any condition of the allocation, or under any circumstance not covered by the allocation terms and conditions.

### **4.3. Licence requirements**

The Councillor must hold a valid driver's licence and present this licence for inspection prior to taking custody of the vehicle.

Any Councillor who drives or allows another person to drive a Council vehicle without a valid driver licence or learner permit shall have their vehicle allocation terminated immediately.

Any Councillor who loses their licence through disqualification or suspension, or fails to renew their licence, must report this to the Chief Executive Officer immediately and their vehicle allocation will be suspended for the period of the disqualification or until the licence is renewed.

### **4.4. Use of the vehicle**

The vehicle shall not be used:

- for transportation of persons or goods for hire or reward;
- for any unauthorised or unlawful purpose;
- in any way that could adversely affect Council's image or conflicts with Council's interest;
- whilst it is in an unsafe or defective condition; or
- for any personal business venture.

# Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities for Mayor and Councillors Policy

## *Attachment C Terms and Conditions for Use of a Motor Vehicle*

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Smoking is prohibited in all Council vehicles.

#### **4.5. Maintenance and care of the vehicle**

The Councillor is responsible for ensuring proper and adequate care, use and maintenance of the vehicle at all times during private use

Proper and adequate care and maintenance of the vehicle includes:

- garaging (or suitable parking if garaging is not practical);
- locking the vehicle at all times while unattended;
- interior and exterior cleaning (note that only approved drivers are permitted to use automatic car wash facilities - this will be indicated on the vehicle fuel card);
- checking of normal running items frequently but not less than weekly (oil, battery, radiator, tyre pressure, lights including brake lights, etc);
- ensuring servicing is completed when directed by sticker and/or workshop direction; and
- reporting of defects/problems as soon as possible to the workshops and ensuring repair.

If the vehicle is not cared for to the satisfaction of the Chief Executive Officer, it shall be regarded as a breach of these terms and conditions and as grounds for the suspension or termination of the agreement.

#### **4.6. Fitting of accessories**

Accessories such as roof racks and tow bars etc are not to be fitted without the approval of the Director Engineering Services.

Standard features such as front and rear mudflaps, headlight protectors, floor mats and a cargo barrier (wagons), will be fitted prior to delivery. Requests for any other accessories to be fitted are to be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer with reasons for the request. The Chief Executive Officer will determine whether the driver or the Council will bear the cost.

#### **4.7. Liability of a Councillor**

If the vehicle is involved in an accident and the claim is rejected by Council's insurers due to a breach of the insurance contract on the part of the Councillor or any person operating the vehicle with the consent of the Councillor, the Councillor shall pay such amount as rejected by Council's insurers.

Any basic excess or age excess applicable to a claim relating to an accident occurring during private use of the vehicle is to be paid by the Councillor. The amount applicable is to be paid upon receipt of the insurer's invoice.

# Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities for Mayor and Councillors Policy

## *Attachment C Terms and Conditions for Use of a Motor Vehicle*

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Repayment of any debt arising from the above condition may be made through payroll deductions over a period of not more than twelve months.

Council will accept no responsibility for theft, loss or damage to personal property of the driver of passengers carried in the vehicle.

In the event of an accident, any unauthorised use of a vehicle will result in payment of costs by the Councillor.

#### **4.8. Allocation and replacement of the vehicle**

The type of vehicle allocated to the Councillor and the replacement of the vehicle will be in accordance with Council's policy (see 2.5) and fleet replacement program, as determined from time to time.

Council does not guarantee to immediately replace a vehicle that is being repaired due to a breakdown or accident.

When a vehicle is replaced, the Councillor must attend a handover of the vehicle by the Workshop Fleet Management Section, which includes a check of the Councillor's licence and completion of a checklist to ensure the Councillor is aware of the Terms and Conditions of use and Workplace Health and Safety requirements.

#### **4.9 Accident or breakdown**

In the event of an accident or breakdown, the driver is to utilise the services of the RACQ (or similar reciprocal organisation). All accidents must be reported to the Workshop Fleet Management Section and appropriate documentation relating to the accident/breakdown endorsed. This total process must be completed within two (2) working days of the incident occurring.

Mechanical breakdowns must be reported to the Workshop Fleet Management Section at the Carrara Depot.

Should the accident or breakdown occur in an area remote from Gold Coast City Council, the driver may arrange urgent repairs and replacement parts, if necessary. All repairs are to be carried out only by recognised dealer service centres. Reimbursement will be made upon production of relevant receipts.

The Councillor may be expected to assist in the return of the vehicle to Council in his/her own time. Any costs not met by Council's insurer or the relevant breakdown service association that relate to the recovery of the vehicle after an accident or breakdown, are to be met by the Councillor.

# Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities for Mayor and Councillors Policy

## *Attachment C Terms and Conditions for Use of a Motor Vehicle*

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Towing of the vehicle is to be restricted to RACQ or its agent(s) if Council assistance is unavailable. If the vehicle has been towed by RACQ to a service centre or holding yard, the Councillor is to advise the Workshop Fleet Management Section at the Carrara Depot immediately (if during working hours) or the next working day.

#### **4.10 Fines and penalties**

The Councillor shall pay all fines or penalties resulting from their use of the vehicle including parking infringements, red light camera and speed camera infringements. The Councillor must report all known infringements immediately to the Manager Fleet and Plant.

#### **4.11. Unreasonable wear and tear**

The Councillor shall reimburse Council for any costs incurred by Council in the cleaning or repairing of the vehicle in excess of Council's reasonable assessment of normal wear and tear, which arises from the allocated use of the vehicle.

#### **4.12 Nominated drivers**

The vehicle is to be used primarily by the Councillor. The Councillor may, at any time during the licence period, formally nominate other persons to drive the vehicle during periods of private use, subject to above conditions. The nominated persons shall be permitted to drive the vehicle unaccompanied by the Councillor, provided that person's use of the vehicle does not adversely affect Council's comprehensive insurance policy for that vehicle. The Councillor shall be held responsible for the actions of the nominated persons while in control of the vehicle.

Provided the Councillor is present in the vehicle, a person other than a nominated driver is permitted to drive the vehicle provided that driver holds a valid driver's licence or learner's permit.

Unless an emergency exists at the time, it is not permissible for any person, other than the Councillor or the Councillor's nominated driver to operate the vehicle without the Councillor being present in the vehicle.

# Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities for Mayor and Councillors Policy

## *Appendix (i) Incidental Expenses Acquittal*

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Councillors are not required to attach receipts to an acquittal of an advance for incidental expenses.

A Statutory Declaration to the effect that the expenses have been incurred, and identifying the event and amounts, for the purpose of the role of Councillor will be sufficient in the first instance.

Suggested lead-in wording to appear on the Statutory Declaration:

***“I declare that the expenses shown in the attached list have been incurred by me in my role as Councillor and that I have the necessary receipts and diary records to prove those expenditures. I have not attached receipts to my acquittal for the reason that some receipts also include personal and/or private expenses. I will make the receipts available for inspection if required for audit or other lawful purpose.”***

Any advance for incidental expenses is governed by the Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities for Mayor and Councillors Policy and therefore is the expenditure of public monies. It is possible (probable) that the Queensland Audit Office, or the Auditor General’s delegate, will include an examination of the acquittals in the 2009/10 audit. The acquittals will be available to the public under the Right to Information Act 2009 and accordingly it is also possible that the media may take an interest in the acquittals.

Refer Attachment A Guidelines 1.6 Incidental Expenses