



## CONSIDERATION OF PRINCIPLES OUTLINED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020

Principle	Comment
<b>Governance and Strategic Principles (section 9)</b>	
Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law	The purpose of the policy is to ensure compliance with the Local Government Act 2020 and its regulations in relation to the reporting of Councillor expenses.
Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations	The policy aims to ensure value for money and transparency in relation to Councillor expenses, being mindful that expenses are met from public funds.
The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted	There are no significant impacts on this principle.
The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making	There are no significant impacts on this principle.
Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued	The public reporting of expenses is best practice and has been recognised as such by the Local Government Inspectorate. Regular updates of the policy ensure that continuous improvement is achieved.

Principle	Comment
<b>Governance and Strategic Principles (section 9)</b>	
Collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought	The expenses policy is benchmarked against like policies from other councils from across the State and informed by guidance provided by the Victorian Auditor General's Office, Local Government Inspectorate, the Independent Broad Based Anti Corruption Commission and Local Government Victoria.
The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured	One of the objectives of the policy is to ensure that legitimate Councillor expenses are met by the organisation in accordance with legislative requirements.  Requirements for expenditure on conferences and training over \$1500 to be approved via Council resolution, with public benefits identified, is an important way of ensuring expenses are kept within reasonable limits.  A high level of documentary evidence is required to be provided through the expense approval process.
Regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making	Benchmarking has been undertaken and advice from external State agencies and probity bodies taken into consideration in the drafting of the policy.
The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured	Transparency is gained through reporting of expenses through the Audit and Risk Committee, which is then published on Council's website, along with decisions for conference/training attendance over \$1500 requiring two Council reports – one for approval and the second reporting on the learnings and relevance to the Shire and its community post attendance.
Principle	Comment
<b>Community Engagement Principles (section 56)</b>	
A community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope	The Council expenses policy is an internally focussed policy and so no community engagement has been undertaken for this review – the policy was released for public comment when initially adopted in 2020.
Participants in community engagement must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation	There are no significant impacts on this principle.
Participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement	There are no significant impacts on this principle.

Principle	Comment
<b>Community Engagement Principles (section 56)</b>	
Participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement;	There are no significant impacts on this principle.
Participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making	There are no significant impacts on this principle.
<b>Public Transparency Principles (section 58)</b>	
Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act	Transparency is gained through reporting of expenses through the Audit and Risk Committee, which is then published on Council's website, along with decisions for conference/training attendance over \$1500 requiring two Council reports – one for approval and the second reporting on the learnings and relevance to the Shire and its community post attendance.
Council information must be publicly available unless— (i) the information is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act; or (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest	Transparency is gained through reporting of expenses through the Audit and Risk Committee, which is then published on Council's website, along with decisions for conference/training attendance over \$1500 requiring two Council reports – one for approval and the second reporting on the learnings and relevance to the Shire and its community post attendance.
Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community	The policy has been drafted in plain English, noting that there is technical language that has to be used given the policy is required by legislation.
Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated	The policy and Councillor expenses are available via the Council Agenda and Minutes section on Council's website, Council meetings are held in public and people are able to request to inspect reports or ask for printed copies via our customer service centres.
<b>Strategic Planning Principles (section 89)</b>	
A Council must undertake the preparation of its Council Plan and other strategic plans in accordance with the strategic planning principles	There are no significant impacts on this principle.
An integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting is to be adopted	There are no significant impacts on this principle.
Strategic planning must address the Community Vision	There are no significant impacts on this principle.
Strategic planning must take into account the resources needed for effective implementation	There are no significant impacts on this principle.

Strategic Planning Principles (section 89)	
Principle	Comment
Strategic planning must identify and address the risks to effective implementation	There are no significant impacts on this principle.
Strategic planning must provide for ongoing monitoring of progress and regular reviews to identify and address changing circumstances.	There are no significant impacts on this principle.
Financial Management Principles (section 101)	
Revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments and financial transactions must be managed in accordance with a Council's financial policies and strategic plans	The policy and its procedures clearly outline the expenses that can be claimed, the forms to be used to claim expenses and the approvals process to ensure alignment with other financial policies and plans.
Financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances For the purposes of the financial management principles, financial risk includes any risk relating to the following— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the financial viability of the Council</li> <li>(b) the management of current and future liabilities of the Council</li> <li>(c) the beneficial enterprises of the Council</li> </ul>	There are no significant impacts on this principle.
Financial policies and strategic plans, including the Revenue and Rating Plan, must seek to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community	There are no significant impacts on this principle.
Accounts and records that explain the financial operations and financial position of the Council must be kept	There is a detailed expense reimbursement application process and approval process outlined in the policy, which in practice works well with a series of checks and balances in place.
Service Performance Principles (section 106)	
Services should be provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community	There are no significant impacts on this principle.
Services should be accessible to the members of the municipal community for whom the services are intended	There are no significant impacts on this principle.
Quality and costs standards for services set by the Council should provide good value to the municipal community	The policy aims to ensure that only legitimate expenses incurred by Councillors during the course of their duties are reimbursed, as required by legislation, to ensure value for money.

Service Performance Principles (section 106)	
Principle	Comment
A Council should seek to continuously improve service delivery to the municipal community in response to performance monitoring	This review seeks to achieve continuous improvement around expenses application and approvals processes.
Service delivery must include a fair and effective process for considering and responding to complaints about service provision	There are no significant impacts on this principle.

## CONSIDERATION OF CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006 IMPACTS

Council can limit human rights when those limitations can be justified. This means that Council can continue to make decisions on behalf of the community about how best to balance rights, ensure community safety, and use limited funding for competing public interest challenges.

Are there any human rights implications arising from this policy or directive in relation to the 20 substantive rights? Note: some rights have been excluded that do not apply to local government (eg deprivation of liberty)	Analysis
Recognition and equality before the law (section 8)	The policy is designed to provide equal access to expense reimbursement for all Councillors in accordance with legislation.
Right to life (section 9)	There are no impacts on this right.
Protection from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (section 10)	There are no impacts on this right.
Freedom from forced work (section 11)	There are no impacts on this right.
Freedom of movement (section 12)	There are no impacts on this right.
Privacy and reputation (section 13)	There are no impacts on this right.
Freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief (section 14)	There are no impacts on this right.
Freedom of expression (section 15)	There are no impacts on this right.
Peaceful assembly and freedom of association (section 16)	There are no impacts on this right.
Protection of families and children (section 17)	There are no impacts on this right.

Right to take part in public life (section 18)	The reimbursement of expenses is designed to support the participation of Councillors in public life and to discharge their roles and responsibilities regardless of their background or family situation.
Cultural rights (section 19)	There are no impacts on this right.
Property rights (section 20)	There are no impacts on this right.
Liberty and security of person (section 21)	There are no impacts on this right.
Fair hearing (section 24)	There are no impacts on this right.
Rights in criminal proceedings (section 25)	There are no impacts on this right.
Overall, does the policy, local law or decision raise human rights issues?	No.
<b>Are there any human rights implications arising from this policy or directive in relation to the 20 substantive rights? Note: some rights have been excluded that do not apply to local government (eg deprivation of liberty)</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
Overall, does the policy, local law or directive restrict or interfere with the scope of the human right/s identified?  If yes, are the limitations or restrictions reasonably and demonstrably justified under Section 7 of the Human Rights Charter?	No.
Are there any less restrictive means reasonably available to achieve the purpose that the limitation seeks to achieve?	No, the policy is a legislated requirement of the Local Government Act 2020.

## GENDER EQUITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Gender impact assessments (GIAs) are designed to help organisations think critically about how policies, programs and services will meet the different needs of women, men and gender diverse people. The purpose GIAs is to create better and fairer outcomes, and make sure all people have equal access to opportunities and resources.

Your gender can affect your needs and experiences. This means that policies, programs and services can affect people of different genders in different ways. If we don't think about how their work affects different people, they might unintentionally reinforce inequalities.

A gender impact assessment must:

- assess the effects that the policy, program or service may have on people of different genders
- explain how the policy, program or service will be changed to better support Victorians of all genders and promote gender equality
- where practical, apply an intersectional approach to consider how gender inequality can be compounded by disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of other factors such as age, disability or ethnicity.

Step 1 – Defining the issues and challenge your assumptions	
What is the issue the policy or directive is aiming to address (think about why it is needed)?	The policy is a legislated requirement that sets out how Councillors can legitimately claim expenses they incur in the course of discharging their duties.
Are the people who are targeted and impacted by the policy or directive included in the decision-making?	Yes, Councillors are the decision makers in terms of the adoption of this policy.
Do you think that people of different genders access this policy or directive at the same rate?	Access to this policy varies depending on a Councillor's personal circumstances.
Do the different social roles and responsibilities that people take on affect the way people access and use this policy or directive?	It is noted that those in caring/parenting roles are supported through the reimbursement of care costs while they are attending Council related business. Again, access to this policy varies depending on a Councillor's personal circumstances.
Do you think that everyone who accesses this policy or directive has the same needs from it?	No, access to this policy varies depending on a Councillor's personal circumstances. Some Councillors may not choose to claim expenses or be paid an allowance and that is a legitimate decision for them to make.
Do the different social roles and responsibilities that people take on affect the way people access and use this policy or directive?	The policy is aimed at supporting all Councillors in meeting legitimate expenses regardless of the social roles they play.

What additional needs might there be for people with disabilities, or from different cultural identities, ages, gender identities, sexual orientations or religions?	The expenses policy aims to cater for varying needs of Councillors to support them in discharging their roles and responsibilities.
<b>Step 2 – Understanding the policy context</b>	
What information is available to understand who is likely to be affected by the policy or directive?	We have two years' worth of expense claims, questions and comments from Councillors as data to support the review of this policy.
Do you already have this information?	Yes
How will you find the further information you need? Think about internal data, research, consultation.	No further data is required.
What did the research and evidence tell you? List key points and references/evidence	Councillors access the policy at different rates and depending on the particular circumstances they face at differing times within their term as Councillor.
Have you consulted with affected stakeholders on this aspect? State if it was formal or informal consultation. What were the key issues/outcomes/views?	Many discussions have been held during the time that the policy has been in operation.
What information is available to understand the lived experiences of the diverse groups who will be affected?	We have two years' worth of expense claims, questions and comments from Councillors as data to support the review of this policy.
Do you already have this information?	Yes
How will you find the further information you need? Think about internal data, research, consultation.	No further data is required.
What did the research and evidence tell you? List key points and references/evidence	Councillors access the policy at different rates and depending on the particular circumstances they face at differing times within their term as Councillor.
Have you consulted with affected stakeholders on this aspect? State if it was formal or informal consultation. What were the key issues/outcomes/views?	Many discussions have been held during the time that the policy has been in operation.
How is this policy or directive likely to have different impacts for different people?	Councillors access the policy at different rates and depending on the particular circumstances they face at differing times within their term as Councillor.
Do you already have this information?	Yes



How will you find the further information you need? Think about internal data, research, consultation.	No further data is required.
What did the research and evidence tell you? List key points and references/evidence	Councillors access the policy at different rates and depending on the particular circumstances they face at differing times within their term as Councillor.
Have you consulted with affected stakeholders on this aspect? State if it was formal or informal consultation. What were the key issues/outcomes/views?	We have two years' worth of expense claims, questions and comments from Councillors as data to support the review of this policy.
<b>Step 3 – Options analysis</b>	
What are the policy options? For each option describe the proposed policy solution. Provide a brief description of the proposed strategies, activities or service design elements and how they will meet the needs and create benefit for the target audience.	There are no other options given the strong and strict legislative requirements around Councillor expenses.
What are the potential policy options and what gendered impact might they have?	The range of expenses that are able to be claimed address gender equity impacts.
What are the gendered costs and risks? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who is likely to be negatively impacted by this? How are the most vulnerable groups likely to be impacted?</li> <li>Will this reduce a certain group's access to economic resources or opportunities? If so, are they already disadvantaged?</li> <li>Does it reinforce harmful gender stereotypes, for example, further promoting men in a male dominated industry?</li> </ul>	Councillors, regardless of their circumstances, have equal access to expense reimbursement.
What are the gendered benefits? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will some people benefit more because they have greater access, or does this policy, program or service do everything it can to ensure resources are distributed and used equally?</li> <li>Will it contribute to transforming gender norms in a positive way? Eg will it contribute to a more balanced distribution of unpaid care labour and family responsibilities between women and men?</li> <li>Will it make women and children safer in public or private spaces?</li> </ul>	Support is provided for those in care giving/parenting roles to ensure there is support for Councillors in these circumstances.

Will some people benefit more because they have greater access, or does this policy, program or service do everything it can to make sure resources are distributed and used equally?	Councillors have equal ability to claim expenses.
Will it contribute to transforming gender norms in a positive way?	The support for care givers/parents means that there are positive outcomes for all genders and social roles.
Does your policy, program or service potentially have negative unintended consequences for certain groups of people?	None that Council is aware of.
Overall, do the benefits outweigh the costs or vice versa?	Yes.
<b>Step 4 Recommendations</b>	
Provide the rationale for the proposed recommendation and include any mitigation strategies that could be used to avoid any harmful unintended outcome.	There are no harmful unintended outcomes and the policy has been successfully implemented for the past two years.
Include here the rationale for your recommendation as well as any mitigation strategies needed. In line with the Gender Equality Act, explain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how your recommendation meets the needs of persons of different genders</li> <li>• how it addresses gender inequality</li> <li>• how it promotes gender equality.</li> </ul>	The expenses policy aims to cater for varying needs of Councillors to support them in discharging their roles and responsibilities. It aims to support gender equality in supporting those in care giving/parenting roles.

## CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION/MITIGATION AND SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The Local Government Act 2020 requires council to consider climate change mitigation and adaptation measures in all its key decision making, which includes policy development.

Council is also in the process of finalising a Climate Change Action Plan after declaring a Climate Emergency in 2021.

The Victorian Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2017-2020 sets out Council's responsibilities under the Act [Victorias-Climate-Change-Adaptation-Plan-2017-2020.pdf \(climatechange.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au/victorias-climate-change-adaptation-plan-2017-2020.pdf). The following factors should inform your analysis statement:

- Provide leadership and good governance, represent the needs and values of local communities, and foster community cohesion
- Manage climate change risks to council community services and assets, with support from the State Government
- Identify the needs and priorities of the municipality and communicate these to State Government where needed

- Develop and deliver locally-appropriate adaptation responses
- Build the resilience of local assets and services
- Plan for emergency management at the municipal level, provide relief and recovery services, and support emergency response operations
- Help the State Government understand localised impacts and responses
- Work with the community to help people understand and get involved in climate change adaptation
- Help connect the State Government with the community.

**Sustainable Strathbogie 2030 Strategy (to be updated to the Climate Change Action Plan once adopted)**

Chapter 6 Climate Resilient Shire	Comment
Increasing heat	There are no impacts on this issue.
Changing rainfall patterns, drought conditions, and extreme meteorological conditions	There are no impacts on this issue.
Increased bushfire conditions and declining volunteer numbers	There are no impacts on this issue.
Increased social impacts	There are no impacts on this issue.
Chapter 7 A low carbon shire	Comment
Net Zero by 2025	There are no impacts on this issue.
Energy Efficiency	There are no impacts on this issue.
Energy Storage	There are no impacts on this issue.
Renewable Energy	There are no impacts on this issue.
Community Renewable Energy	There are no impacts on this issue.
Chapter 8 A water sensitive shire	Comment
Conserving valuable potable water	There are no impacts on this issue.

Stormwater management	There are no impacts on this issue.
Adaptive and recycled water resources	There are no impacts on this issue.
Keeping our shire green, cool and resilient	There are no impacts on this issue.
Chapter 9 A zero waste shire	Comment
Environmental impacts of landfill	There are no impacts on this issue.
Limited landfill capacity	There are no impacts on this issue.
Increased illegal dumping	There are no impacts on this issue.
Economic benefits from resource recovery	There are no impacts on this issue.
Chapter 10 An ecologically rich shire	Comment
Deforestation	There are no impacts on this issue.
Rural green infrastructure	There are no impacts on this issue.
Increasing our urban canopy	There are no impacts on this issue.
Rural roadsides	There are no impacts on this issue.
Rivers & Wetlands	There are no impacts on this issue.
Benefitting from our native forests	There are no impacts on this issue.
Chapter 11 An active and connected shire	Comment
Security of fuel supply	There are no impacts on this issue.
Transition to new fuel economy	There are no impacts on this issue.
Enabling access to the outdoors	There are no impacts on this issue.