

Council Forums

Introduction

This policy ensures that any meetings held outside formal Council Meetings complies with the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act).

Objective

To guide Elected Members and Shire Officers on holding Council Forums with transparency and accountability.

Scope

This policy applies to all Council Forums involving Shire Officers and Elected Members.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Key documents	Integrated Planning Strategies; Budgets; Reports; Strategic Plans; Project Briefs; Financial Plans; Asset Management Plans; Officer reports; Delegation Register; Policies; and frameworks.
<p>Please refer to the <i>Shire of Toodyay Glossary (Definitions)</i> document located on the Shire of Toodyay (Shire) website for other definitions not listed: https://www.toodyay.wa.gov.au/documents/470/corporate-documents-glossary-(definitions)</p>	

1. Policy Statement

The Shire's meeting structure follows the Governance Framework. Council can only make decisions in formal meetings under the auspices of Part 5 of the *Local Government Act 1995*. Council Forums include:

1.1 Agenda Briefings

- help members understand issues for upcoming meetings;
- provide a Q&A session for members to seek clarity on complex matters; and are
- open to the public and livestreamed.

1.2 Council Briefings

- involve informal discussions on various topics including reports, sector changes, future developments, local issues and regional matters; and are
- not open to the public unless invited by the CEO or Shire President.

1.3 Council Workshops

- Involve informal discussions on strategic matters like Corporate Documents, policies, strategies, plans and local laws; and are
- Not open to the public unless invited by the CEO or Shire President.

2. Development of Key documents

Forums help Shire Officers create, amend and review key documents including:

2.1 Financial Planning activities

Budget Reviews, Annual Budget deliberations and project briefs.

2.2 Strategic Planning activities

Review strategic documents like the Council Plan, financial plans, informing strategies, asset management plans and workforce plans.

2.3 Corporate Document activities

Review delegations, policies, and other corporate documents.

3. Protocols and Procedures

The following meeting procedures apply:

1. Adverse Reflection

- (a) Do not criticize Council decisions; the character or actions of others or use offensive or objectionable language against another Member or employee.
- (b) If anyone does use such language they must take it back and apologize to the Presiding Member.

2. Preserve Order

- (a) The Presiding Member keeps order and can call any Member to order.
- (b) Members must stay quiet and be seated when the Presiding Member speaks.

3. Presiding Member

- (a) The Shire President chairs Council Forums. If absent, the Deputy President or another appointed Member will chair.

4. Disclosure of Interests

- (a) Members and Shire Officers must disclose any financial or proximity interests related to matters discussed at forums.
- (b) Those with such interests must leave the room during discussions.

5. Debate

No debates or decisions are made at Forums.

6. Additional Matters

- (a) Members can request to include matters at a Forum through the Shire President and/or the CEO.
- (b) Members can ask questions, give feedback, or suggest ideas, on other matters.

7. Frequency of Meetings

Council sets the date and time of monthly Forums when adopting its annual schedule. Other dates may be scheduled as needed at the discretion of the CEO and/or at the request of the Shire President to the CEO.

8. Conduct

Members must follow the Shire of Toodyay Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates.

Shire Officers must follow the Shire of Toodyay Worker's Code of Conduct.

9. Quorum

A quorum is not required for Forums but the CEO, in consultation with the Shire President may reschedule if necessary.

10. Managing Conflicts of Interest

- (a) No Member or Shire Officer should raise matters if they have or may perceive to have a Financial or Proximity Interest.
- (b) Members and Shire Officers must disclose interests in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995* and the Shire of Toodyay Code of Conduct.
- (c) Members must make written disclosures of Interest to the Presiding Member at all Forums.
- (d) Officers must make written disclosures of Interest to the CEO at all Forums.
- (e) If the interest is Financial, or Proximity related, the Member or Shire Officer must leave the room during the discussion.

Reference Information

- [Local Government Operational Guideline Council Forums](#);
- [Council Delegates Roles and Responsibilities Policy](#) (GOV12);
- [Live Streaming and Recording of Council Meetings](#) Policy (GOV19);
- [Corporate Documents Policy \(ADM1\)](#).
- [Risk Management](#) (ADM18) – containing the Risk Matrix tables.
- <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/local-government/strengthening-local-government/intergrated-planning-and-reporting>
- <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/local-government/strengthening-local-government/intergrated-planning-and-reporting/informing-strategies>

Legislation

[Local Government Act 1995](#)

[Local Government \(Administration\) Regulations 1996](#)

Associated documents

[Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates](#)

[Code of Conduct for Workers](#)

[Governance Framework](#)

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