



Councillors Workshops and Briefing Sessions Policy and Procedure

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1. Scope

1.1 This Policy applies to all City of Parramatta Council (Council) Councillor Workshops; to Councillors and Council employees^{Staff}; and including contract and casual employees engaged by Council, members of Council Committees and any invited external parties presenters and/or consultants of a Councillor Workshop. Workshops are to be held in the absence of the public.

1.2 This Policy does not apply to pre-Meeting briefings that are arranged by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to brief Councillors on business to be considered at Ordinary or Extraordinary Meetings of Council (refer to Council's Code of Meeting Practice).

2. Purpose

2.1 This Policy establishes the management of Councillor Workshops.

~~The purpose of Workshops and Briefing Sessions is to engage with Councillors, on matters of significant importance and interest.~~

~~The Workshops and Briefing Sessions allow the Lord Mayor, Councillors, Executive and Staff to:~~

- ~~• clarify issues, exchange information (including confidential) and to seek feedback/ general direction on proposals~~
- ~~• provide a forum for discussion on initiatives and discuss options in determining Council's strategic corporate direction~~
- ~~• ensure effective communications and information flow between staff and Councillors~~

| Name of Policy | | |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
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- ~~• provide a team building forum in which to develop trust and understanding between those attending the workshops or briefing.~~

~~Councillor Workshops and Briefing Sessions are often held prior to Council making a resolution in a Council Meeting. Workshops and Briefing Sessions are not decision-making forums but an opportunity to provide background information or context and present options that supports a resolution or action in Council. Information provided to these forums are confidential. Feedback obtained from Councillors at a Workshop or Briefing Session will help guide Council Officers in preparing reports or other documents seeking a decision by Council and ensure that all issues and views are properly canvassed in the report or other documents such as submissions.~~

3. Policy

~~Under the Local Government Act 1993, a Council can hold a Workshop or Briefing Session under its general powers as a body corporate. Workshops and Briefing Sessions are informal gatherings and can provide useful background information to Councillors on the business of Council. Councillor Workshops and Briefing Sessions may involve Councillors, Council staff and invited external participants.~~

~~Council Workshops and Briefings often provide Councillors with information that leads to forming a Council position on a particular item or issue. In a majority of cases the information presented is provided under the agreement and understanding that it requires the knowledge or feedback from Councillors before a final position can be provided to Council in the form of a report. The information provided in these forums is confidential.~~

- 3.1 The purpose of Workshops and Briefing Sessions is to engage with, provide an avenue for Council Staff outside of the formal Council meetings (i.e. Ordinary or Council Meetings) to provide to Councillors, on matters of significant importance and interest background information or context to any item proposed by the CEO and/or Lord Mayor. These may include, but are not limited to:

The Workshops and Briefing Sessions allow the Lord Mayor, Councillors, Executive and Staff to:

- clarifying issues, exchanging information (including confidential) and to seek feedback/ general direction on proposals;
- providing a forum for discussion on initiatives and discuss options in determining Council's strategic corporate direction;
- ensuring effective communications and information flow between Staff

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and Councillors; or

- providing a team building forum in which to develop trust and understanding between those attending the ~~W~~workshops or briefing.

3.2 Where a meeting is organised between a Councillor an Authorised or otherwise approved Staff member, and the Staff member is in a role below an Executive Team position, a minimum of two Staff must be in attendance.

4. Delegations

4.1 There are no Administrative and/or Legislative Delegations applicable to this Policy.

5. Procedure

5.1 Workshops and briefing sessions can ~~may~~ be organised:

- (a) aAs a result of a resolution at aof Council Meeting;
- (b) aAs approved by the CEO, Executive Team, or in consultation with the Lord Mayor.

5.2 Councillor Workshops and Briefings may be attended by external participants and Council Sstaff, including a range of Sstaff who are not listed under the Council's Interaction Between Councillors and Staff Interaction Policy.

5.2.1 Workshops are generally held on weekdays, or as advised by the CEO and/or Lord Mayor.

5.2.2 Remote attendance is permitted for Workshops for all attendees.

5.3 Feedback obtained from Councillors at a Workshop will help guide and inform actions and outcomes for matters discussed.

5.4 Action items and outcomes are to be made available to Councillors within 28 days.

Chairperson

5.5 The Lord Mayor or in their absence, Deputy Lord Mayor, will Chair Workshops/Briefing Sessions. The CEO or a member of Staff nominated by the CEO is to preside at Councillor Workshops.

In the absence of the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor, the Chair will be selected from amongst the Councillors in attendance.

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Quorum

~~Although Workshops and Briefing Sessions are not decision-making forums, attendance by Councillors at these sessions provide an opportunity for informal discussion on a matter prior to it being considered at a Council Meeting.~~

~~5.6 A quorum for the purposes of whether a Workshop or Briefing Session will proceed will be at least four Councillors.~~

Respect Conduct obligations

~~Councillor Workshops and Briefings may be attended by external participants and Council staff, including a range of staff who are not listed under the Interaction Between Councillors and Staff Policy.~~

~~5.7 Councillors and Staff are to observe their general conduct obligations of the as set out by Council's Code of Conduct, and are to remain courteous, professional, and respectful of all attendees.~~

~~5.7.1 The Chairperson willis to call to order anyone attendee who behaves in a manner contrary to the general conduct obligations of the Council's Code of Conduct, including, but not limited to, the use of offensive behaviour or language.~~

Confidentiality

~~Matters discussed in Council Workshops and Briefings are generally confidential in that they contain information that could provide an unfair or false representation of Council's position on a particular matter. Information provided as part of Workshops and Briefings that is marked confidential should be treated the same as matters held in the Confidential Agenda in Council.~~

~~5.8 Participants must maintain the integrity and security of confidential information provided during Workshops.~~

~~5.9 Confidential information has the same meaning outlined in the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) (LG Act).~~

~~5.9.1 Photos or videos of presentations are The recording of Workshops by attendees using any device, audio or video, is not permitted.~~

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5.9.2 Confidential information distributed to an external party or media would be considered as a breach of sSection 664* of the Local Government Act LG Act (Disclosure and Misuse of Information) in that, Councillors must not, at any time, disclose materials classified as confidential in reports presented to our discussions held at Council.

~~Confidential items for the purpose of this policy relate to the same as per the Council Code of Meeting Practice:~~

- ~~a) Information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business~~
- ~~b) Commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed:
 - ~~I. Prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it, or~~
 - ~~II. Confer a commercial advantage on a competitor of the council, or~~
 - ~~III. Review a trade secret~~~~
- ~~c) Information that would, if disclosed, prejudice the maintenance of law~~
- ~~d) Matters affecting the security of the council, Councillors, council staff or council property~~
- ~~e) Advice concerning litigation, or advice that would otherwise be privileged from production in legal proceedings on the ground of legal professional privilege.~~
- ~~f)a) Alleged contraventions of any code of conduct requirements applicable under Section 440.~~

Conflicts of Interests

~~5.10 Councillors and staff are reminded of their obligations under the Code of Conduct.~~

~~Conflicts of interests at Workshops are to be managed in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct. Councillors and Sstaff are responsible for the identification, declaration, and management of any conflicts of interests. Forms will be made available provided at Wworkshops to assist in declaring interests.~~

Chair

~~The Lord Mayor or in their absence, Deputy Lord Mayor, will Chair Workshops/Briefing Sessions.~~

~~In the absence of the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor, the Chair will be selected from amongst the Councillors in attendance.~~

Quorum

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~~A quorum for the purposes of whether a Workshop or Briefing Session will proceed will be at least four Councillors.~~

Remote Attendance

~~Workshops and Briefing Sessions are held in the Level 12 Boardroom at 126 Church Street, Parramatta.~~

~~Due to COVID-19, the introduction of remote Workshops/Briefing Sessions provided Councillors with the flexibility to attend sessions, whilst juggling other work/personal commitments.~~

~~Attendance at Workshops/Briefing Sessions will continue to remain flexible, with provisions being made for in-person and remote attendance.~~

Catering

~~Light refreshments will be provided at Workshops/Briefing Sessions in accordance with Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy.~~

Record Management

5.11 Formal minutes of Workshops are not required. However, the following records must be created:

- (a) the date, subject, and purpose of the Workshop;
- (b) attendance by Councillors and presenters or facilitators;
- (c) any documents distributed or presentation slides presented;
- (d) any conflicts of interests declared at the Workshop, including a record of how the conflict of interest was managed;
- (e) register of action items and outcomes; and
- (f) audio and/or video recording of the Workshop (for access only per the outlined legal definition/reasons).

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Procedure

~~Workshops and briefing sessions can be organised:~~

- ~~1. As a result of a resolution at a Council Meeting;~~
- ~~2.1. As approved by the Executive Team in consultation with the Lord Mayor.~~

5.12 The following table outlines the steps and responsibilities for organising Workshops and Briefing Sessions:

| Step | DetailStep | Responsibility |
|------|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | Annual dates for Workshops and Briefing Sessions are set, calendar placeholder invites sent to Councillors and Executive Team, and dates entered into the Councillor Portal and on Council's intranet | Governance |
| 2 | Request sent to Governance for a Workshop or Briefing session | <u>Staff / Facilitator</u> |
| 3 | Date tentatively booked in the Workshop / Briefing Session schedule | Governance |
| 4 | Confirmation of Workshop / Briefing sessions | Executive Team |
| 5 | Complete Workshop / Briefing Session briefing note and send to Governance | Facilitator |
| 6 | Update calendar invite to "CONFIRMED" with details of the session. Attach briefing note and add any additional internal invitees | Governance |
| 7 | Send details of the confirmed Workshop / Briefing Session to external invitee | Facilitator |
| 8 | Prepare pP resentation material <u>and provided</u> to Councillors <u>a minimum of two (2) days within 48 hours</u> prior to the Workshop / Briefing session, except in exceptional circumstances approved by the Lord Mayor. (if possible) | Facilitator |
| 9 | Coordinate Councillor RSVPs for confirmed Workshop / Briefing Session | Governance |
| 10 | If confirmed number of Councillors is less than quorum, cancel session | Lord Mayor / CEO |
| 11 | Supply four (4) hard copies for Councillors in attendance OR, should more than four (4) Councillors request a copy, supply each Councillor who has put in a request with a copy, whichever is the larger. | Facilitator |

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| Step | DetailStep | Responsibility |
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| 12 | Hold session and capture Councillor and staff attendance | Facilitator |
| 13 | Complete Outcomes Summary and send to Governance | Facilitator |
| 14 | Upload Outcomes Summary and any presentations / handouts to Councillor Portal | Governance |
| 15 | Register Workshops / Briefing Sessions briefing note, presentation / handouts and Outcomes Summary in record management system | Governance Facilitator |

6. Definitions

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| <u>Briefing:</u> | Sessions at which information is presented prior to items being put forward at a Council Meeting. |
| <u>Councillor</u> | A person elected or appointed to civic office as a member of the governing body of Council, including the Lord Mayor. |
| <u>Staff</u> | A person who is directly employed by Council on a full time, part time, temporary, or casual basis. |
| <u>Workshop:</u> | Sessions which Councillors and Staff meet to discuss and/or have input into Council strategies. |

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| REFERENCES | Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 |
| POLICIES | Code of Conduct Code of Meeting Practice Interactions Between Councillors and Staff Interaction Policy Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy |
| ATTACHMENTS | <u>Nil</u> |

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