

005	Meetings, Information Sessions and Decision-making Processes	V3 Draft2 Current
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1. PURPOSE

A key role of a Local Government Councillor is to participate in the Local Government's decision-making processes at Council and Committee meetings. A key function of the organisation's CEO is to ensure that advice and information is available to the Council so that informed decisions can be made.

It is not always possible for all information that a Councillor may need to be able to fully and confidently participate in formal decision-making processes to be provided in the course of a formal meeting process. Therefore, the ~~Shire-City~~ utilises a range of mechanisms to ensure informed decisions can be made including workshops, briefing sessions, community access sessions and various electors' meetings in addition to its formal Council and Committee meetings.

This policy sets out the guidelines for the provision of information to Councillors and the Council and other matters relating to the various forums utilised.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all convened information sessions and formally-constituted meetings involving Councillors of the ~~Shire-City~~ of Busselton held in the course of carrying out the business of the local government.

3. POLICY CONTENT

3.1 Information Provision

All Councillors should have access to the same information when making decisions. Councillors' written questions of officers regarding agenda reports shall be circulated to all Councillors for information and the officer's response shall be circulated to all Councillors. Where a question cannot be sufficiently answered at any information session or meeting and further information is required to be provided by an officer, it shall be circulated to all Councillors.

3.2 Reports to Council or Committee

All reports shall include the details of the reporting officer/s and the options that may be available to the Council should it not agree with the officer's recommendation. All reports listed for consideration at a meeting are to be provided at the time of agenda distribution, unless they meet the criteria for a late item of urgent business for consideration by the Council or Committee.

Any officers' report shall not duplicate the subject of a motion of which a Councillor has given notice, and where this is unavoidable, the Councillor's notice of motion will take precedence in the order of business of the meeting.

3.3 Briefing Sessions and Workshops

It is usual for workshops and briefing sessions on a range of matters to be convened to provide information to Councillors to enable informed decisions to be made. Agenda briefing sessions are utilised to discuss matters that appear on the Council agenda, while other workshops and briefing sessions may be utilised for matters that will be determined by the Council at a later time.

The Council currently has a meeting cycle of formal Council meetings, preceded by various briefing sessions and workshops in the week before the meeting and on the day of the meeting. Agenda briefing

sessions are held to provide Councillors with more information and to answer questions relating to matters on a formal agenda. They shall be conducted in an open and accountable manner, subject to the confidentiality provisions relating to agenda reports. In addition, while disclosure requirements only legally apply at formal meetings, it is noted that the Department of Local Government guidelines promote disclosure of interests at agenda forums as participation without disclosing an interest is ethically unacceptable. Interests shall therefore be disclosed at agenda briefing sessions.

Other briefing sessions and workshops are convened to offer the Councillors the opportunity to:

- Explore options and discuss ideas;
- Discuss future agenda items and strategic direction;
- To be briefed on key ongoing projects and have input prior to the allocation of significant resources in taking forward reports to the Council;
- Discuss grievances and concerns to be resolved where possible.

They may be relatively informal and not necessarily open to the general public due to the preliminary and exploratory nature of the discussions.

Formal decisions of the Council are only made during a formal Council meeting and therefore collective or implied decisions that bind the Local Government cannot be made during any briefing session or workshop.

3.4 Community Access Sessions

Community members are offered the opportunity to address the Councillors on items that are listed on an agenda or any other matter of local government business during specially convened Community Access Sessions. The CEO and Directors, or their representatives, are to attend Community Access Sessions.

3.5 Electors' and Special Electors' Meetings

Matters discussed at electors' meetings provide important input into Council decision-making processes. All annual meetings of electors and special meetings of electors shall be convened in [ShireCity](#)-owned buildings to ensure that the venue is appropriate for the conduct of such a meeting.

The CEO, or his representative, shall attend all meetings of electors and is requested to have Directors in attendance, such that wherever possible, electors can be provided with the information that they are seeking at the meeting.

3.6 Council and Committee Meetings

Council and Committee Meetings are conducted in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995*, the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* and the Shire of Busselton Standing Orders Local Law.

Formal decisions of the Council are made utilising the Council and Committee meeting process.

Policy Background

Policy Reference No. - 005

Owner Unit – Governance

Originator – [Governance Manager/Manager, Governance Services](#)

Policy approved by – Council

Date Approved – For consideration

Review Frequency – As required

Related Documents –

Local Government Act 1995

Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996

Department of Local Government Council Forums Guideline

Background/History - Initiated February 2011 to consolidate former policies:

005 – Electors’ and Special Electors’ Meetings;

246 – Governance Reform

230 - Elected Member Forums.

History

Council Resolution	Date	Information
		<u>Version 3</u>
C1107/230	27 July, 2011	Updated to include forum requirements Version 2
C1103/083	9 March, 2011	New Policy to replace two former policies. Version 1