



Councillor Workshop

POLICY

Policy Version 1.0

Category: Statutory/Legislative

Adopted: February 2026



Councillor Workshop Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set consistent procedures for the planning, conduct, and recording of Councillor Workshops (also referred to as *informal meetings / briefings / workshops*) so Councillors can:

- a) be briefed on complex or strategic matters;
- b) ask questions and seek clarification of officer advice; and
- c) provide strategic guidance to inform future reports—without making (or appearing to make) Council decisions outside a formal Council meeting.

This policy supports good governance and transparency consistent with the local government principles under the *Local Government Act 2009* (the Act).

Scope

This policy applies to:

- a) all Councillors;
- b) the CEO and all Council employees attending or presenting at a Councillor Workshop; and
- c) invited external attendees (e.g., consultants, agency representatives) when present.

This policy does not replace Council's statutory meeting procedures (Standing Orders / Meeting Procedures) which apply to formal Council and committee meetings under the *Local Government Regulation 2012* (the Regulation).

Definitions

Term	Definition
Councillor Workshop (Workshop)	A non-statutory, non-decision-making forum convened for information exchange, briefings, strategic discussion, and guidance.
Formal meeting	A local government meeting (Council/committee) conducted under the <i>Local Government Regulation 2012</i> , including public availability of agendas and open meeting requirements, subject to lawful closed-session resolutions.
Decision	A resolution, vote, or determination of Council (or a committee) that binds Council or directs action requiring Council authority.
Confidential information	Information that is confidential to Council and/or not suitable for public release (e.g., legal advice, negotiations, personnel matters), consistent with applicable legislation and Council policy.



Policy principles

Workshops will be conducted to:

- a) support informed, transparent decision-making at formal meetings;
- b) avoid “decision-making by workshop” (including implied decisions or commitments);
- c) uphold Councillor standards of conduct and respectful behaviour; and
- d) ensure appropriate management of conflicts of interest.

Status of Workshops

Workshops are not formal meetings of Council. A formal decision must not be made at a Workshop, and any matter requiring a Council decision must be taken to a formal meeting for determination.

Where a Workshop results in a clear preferred option or direction that will later require Council resolution, the matter must be progressed through a Council report and decided at a formal meeting.

Convening Workshops

Workshops may be scheduled:

- a) as part of an adopted annual/biannual meeting calendar; or
- b) as needed by agreement of the Mayor and CEO (or delegate).

The CEO (or delegate) will coordinate Workshop dates, times, location, and logistics with the Workshops usually being held monthly at least 2 weeks prior to an Ordinary Meeting of Council.

Urgent Workshops may be called where required to brief Councillors on time-critical matters. (Where possible, provide reasonable notice and supporting papers.)

Chairing and facilitation

The Chair of a Workshop will be the Mayor or the CEO (or another officer nominated by the CEO), as determined by Council practice and/or meeting procedures.

The Chair is responsible for:

- a) maintaining order and respectful conduct;
- b) keeping discussion within the scope of the agenda;
- c) ensuring no decisions are made; and
- d) managing declarations of conflict of interest.

Attendance and participation

- Typical attendees: all Councillors, CEO, Executive/Senior Leadership Team, and presenting officers.
- External attendees may attend by invitation of the Mayor/CEO and must only be present for the relevant agenda item(s). Their name/organisation should be listed on the agenda.
- Councillors should advise the CEO’s office as early as possible if they are unable to attend.



Workshop notice, agenda and papers

- An agenda will be prepared for each Workshop. As a minimum, a Workshop should include an agenda, participants, allocated time, and relevant papers/presentations.
- Unless urgent, the agenda and supporting papers should be distributed to Councillors at least 2 business days prior to the Workshop (or another timeframe set by the CEO to suit operational capacity).

Requesting agenda items

- a) Councillors may request items be placed on a future Workshop agenda by written request to the CEO at least 10 business days prior, unless urgent.
- b) The CEO determines final agenda content, having regard to relevance, readiness, and resourcing.

Late items: Late items may be raised with the permission of the Chair, but must be limited to briefing/discussion only and not result in decisions.

Public access and transparency

- Workshops are not formal Council meetings. Unless Council determines otherwise, Workshops are not open to the public (including live-streaming), except where the Mayor/CEO invites attendance for a specific purpose.

To support transparency, Council will:

- a) ensure all decisions are made at formal meetings (open to the public unless properly closed under the Regulation); and
- b) publish formal meeting agendas/minutes in accordance with legislative requirements (for formal meetings).

Conduct and Confidentiality

Required standards of conduct

All participants must conduct themselves in a way that supports good governance and respectful, productive discussion. This includes:

- a) acting in a manner consistent with the local government principles and good governance obligations under the *Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)*;
- b) treating all participants with respect and courtesy;
- c) listening without interruption and allowing each Councillor a reasonable opportunity to ask questions;
- d) focusing discussion on the agenda item, strategic issues, and clarification of officer advice;
- e) avoiding personal criticism of Councillors, staff, or community members; and
- f) maintaining confidentiality especially where information is confidential or commercially sensitive (see clause 11.6).

Role of the Chair

The Chair (Mayor/CEO as applicable) is responsible for ensuring:

- a) orderly proceedings and adherence to the agenda and time allocations;
- b) balanced participation (including managing repeated contributions);



- c) respectful conduct; and
- d) that the Workshop remains a non-decision-making forum and does not become a substitute for a formal meeting.

Speaking protocol

- a) Councillors will generally speak through the Chair.
- b) Presenting officers will be invited by the Chair to provide briefings, answer questions, and note follow-up actions.
- c) Where discussion becomes circular or outside scope, the Chair may close discussion and direct that the matter be taken on notice or progressed to a formal report.

Strategic guidance vs decisions

- a) Workshops are for briefing, exploration of options, and strategic guidance only.
- b) A Workshop must not be used to seek or record votes, consensus determinations, or commitments.
- c) Any required decision must be taken at a formal Council/committee meeting in accordance with the *Local Government Regulation 2012* meeting requirements.

Requests to staff and directions

- a) Councillors may request additional information, analysis, or a report through the Chair/CEO.
- b) Councillors must not direct staff to undertake work outside established CEO instructions, delegations, or adopted work programs.
- c) Where a request has operational, resource, risk, or policy implications, the CEO may:
 - i. place the item on a future Workshop agenda;
 - ii. refer it to the Executive/Senior Leadership Team for consideration; or
 - iii. recommend it be progressed to a formal meeting.

Confidentiality, information handling and communications

- a) Where confidential, legally privileged, negotiation-sensitive, or personnel-related matters are discussed, participants must maintain confidentiality and comply with Council's information security, privacy and records obligations.
- b) Participants must not disclose confidential Workshop material externally or on social media.
- c) Public statements must not imply a Council decision has been made.

Electronic devices, recording and meeting etiquette

- a) Mobile phones should be on silent.
- b) Audio or video recording by Councillors or attendees is not permitted unless authorised by the CEO for governance/recordkeeping purposes.
- c) The Chair may direct a recess where conduct is impacting the orderly running of the Workshop.

Managing disruptive conduct

If a participant's behaviour is disruptive or inconsistent with this clause, the Chair may:



- a) call the participant to order and request that the behaviour cease;
- b) require the participant to withdraw from discussion on an item;
- c) direct a short adjournment/recess; and/or
- d) in serious or repeated cases, close the Workshop or request the participant leave (with the CEO to manage follow-up in accordance with relevant conduct processes).

Conflicts of interest

- Councillors must manage conflicts of interest consistent with the *Local Government Act 2009* conflict provisions and Council's conflicts process.
- Where a Councillor identifies a conflict in a matter being discussed at a Workshop, the Councillor must:
 - a) disclose the conflict to the Chair and CEO;
 - b) not improperly influence other Councillors in relation to the matter; and
 - c) absent themselves from the discussion where appropriate, or comply with any lawful participation pathway that applies to formal decision-making.
- The CEO (or delegate) will ensure a record is kept of disclosed interests at Workshops (see section 13).

Records and outcomes

Workshops do not take formal minutes and do not record resolutions (because no decisions are taken).

For each Workshop, the CEO (or delegate) will maintain a Workshop Record containing at least:

- a) date/time/location;
- b) attendees/apologies;
- c) topics discussed (high-level);
- d) declared interests/conflicts (names and matter); and
- e) an Action Register (tasks, responsible officer, due date).

Where a matter is to proceed to a formal meeting for decision, the subsequent Council report should note (where relevant) that the matter was the subject of a Councillor Workshop briefing.

Use of Workshop outcomes in decision-making

Officers may use Workshop feedback to:

- a) refine options, risk analysis and recommendations;
- b) identify additional information required; and
- c) clarify Councillor questions to be addressed in the final report.

A Workshop must not be used to:

- a) secure an informal "vote" or commitment;
- b) direct staff to act outside delegated authority; or
- c) circumvent formal meeting requirements.



Communication

This Policy will be communicated to Councillors and Winton Shire Council employees and an Workshop invited attendees.

Related Council Documentation

- Winton Shire Council Employee Code of Conduct
- Winton Shire Council Councillor Code of Conduct
- Winton Shire Council Standing Orders Policy
- Winton Shire Council Model Meeting Procedure
- Winton Shire Council Policy Development Framework
- Winton Shire Council Conflict of Interest Policy
- Winton Shire Council Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Winton Shire Council Documents Management Policy
- Winton Shire Council Information Policy RTI

Legislation, recognised Authorities and other sources

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Local Government Regulation 2012*
- *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*
- *Human Rights Act 2019*
- *Information Privacy Act 2009*
- *Integrity Act 2009*

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed in 2 years or as otherwise required. Review will be by resolution of an Ordinary Meeting of Council.

Record of amendments and adoptions

Date	Version	Reason for amendment	Date adopted by Council & Resolution Number
19/02/2026	1.0	New Policy	19/2/2026 Res # 2026/36

