1/019 COUNCIL MEETINGS AND FORUMS

Objective

The objective of this policy is to guide a functional, transparent, and legally compliant framework of meetings and forums that:

• Engages the elected members in policy, strategy, and other important complex issues from concept through to adoption:

• Provides an opportunity for elected members to participate in the Council's policy and strategy development agenda in collaboration with the Town's executive and other staff.

• Results in proper and appropriate decision making.

• Establishes timeframes within meeting cycles that provide elected members with the proper opportunity to absorb and comprehend advice and information.

Scope

The scope of this Policy covers ordinary and special council meetings, agenda council forums comprising of agenda briefings, council briefings and council workshops.

Statement

Ordinary Council Meetings

Ordinary council meetings are the principal assembly in which decisions are made by the Council, the peak decision-making body of the Town of Port Hedland.

Meetings are to be convened on the last Wednesday of the month commencing at 5:30pm and conducted in the Town of Port Hedland Council Chambers.

The agenda papers for the council meeting are to be distributed to elected members by 4:00pm on the Friday immediately preceding the ordinary council meeting.

An ordinary council meeting is to be conducted in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995* ('the Act'), the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* and the Town of Port Hedland Standing Orders Local Law 2014.

Council Forums

The principal objective of a council forum is to facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge between the elected members and the administration. The subject matter of a council forum will generally lead to decision making at an ordinary council meeting.

A council forum is not convened under the provision of Act and, therefore, the guidelines relating to procedural and behavioural control is recommended in the "Local Government Operational Guidelines - Council Forums" are to be applied to this policy.

- The Mayor is to control and chair the council forum and all questions and discussions are to be directed through the chair.

- In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor is to preside and in the absence of both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor, a councillor elected by the majority of councillors present is to preside.
- There is to be no decision making, whether implied or otherwise, at a council forum.
- The declaration of interest provisions applying to council meetings are to apply to a council forum.
- A record is to be kept of opening and closing times, attendance, declaration of interest and request for information.

The Town of Port Hedland has three categories of council forum as follows:

1. agenda feedback session;
2. elected member briefing; and
3. council workshop

Agenda Feedback Session

An agenda feedback session is the forum at which the elected members can ask questions, seek clarification, and request further information on all matters due for deliberation and consideration at the forthcoming ordinary council meetings.

The agenda feedback session is closed to the public.

Debating "Debate style" discussion or any statements or expression that might influence or indicated the way in which a council member might vote is not permitted.

An item to be addressed is to be limited to a matter on the agenda which is to be subject to deliberation at the next ordinary council meeting.

An agenda briefing is to be convened on the third Wednesday (or 7 days prior to the Ordinary Council Meeting) of the month commencing at 5:30pm and conducted in the Town of Port Hedland Council Chambers.

Agenda briefing papers are to be distributed to the elected members by 4:00pm on the Thursday immediately preceding the agenda briefing. A request from an elected member for more information or advice is to be recorded and a response is to be circulated to all elected members in a timely manner.

An elected member who intends to submit an alternate motion (i.e. a motion which is materially different to an officer's recommendation) should preferably give notice to do so at the agenda briefing but, in any case, by 4:00pm on the Friday immediately preceding the ordinary council meeting.

Elected Member Briefing

An Elected Member Briefing is a forum at which a staff member or consultant will deliver a presentation, informed by previously distributed supporting materials with the opportunity for questions and feedback from the elected members.

A Elected Member Briefing is not to be open to public.

There is limited time available and a relatively high demand for an Elected Member Briefings.

Consequently, the CEO is to ensure that any item put on the agenda is absolutely essential and that the complexity of the subject matter is such that it cannot be suitably explained by other means such as a comprehensive officer's report via the agenda briefing, a video presentation or a report on the Town intranet or similar means.

All briefings must provide sufficient time at the conclusion of presentations for questions, comments, and requests for clarification from elected members.

As an Elected Member Briefing is not open to the public and does not involve any decision making or formal consideration of matters requiring a decision, there are to be matters which, by their nature, are not to be considered.

Those matters include:

- An application for development approval;
- A recommendation in relation to applications for subdivision approval;
- An initiation of local planning scheme amendment or a rezoning;
- Consideration of a proponent's structure plan; and
- An application for a licence, permit, approval, or authorisation under a local law.

An Elected Member Briefings are convened on selected Mondays and Wednesday of the month commencing at 5:30pm and conducted in the Town of Port Hedland Council Chambers.

Briefing papers and supporting information are to be distributed to the elected members so as to provide five clear working days' notice.

Council Workshop

A Council Workshop is a forum at which the elected members and the staff engage in a facilitated discussion on new or major revision of policy and strategy, the allocation and oversight of financial resources or other important complex issues.

A council workshop is not open to the public.

The CEO and Mayor are to ensure that workshop participants can effectively express themselves and uniform concepts, themes and collective desires can be distilled and summarised. Where practicable, relevant staff should undertake appropriate training in workshop facilitation.

The summarised outcomes of a council workshop are to be used by the CEO to inform the development of all Town of Port Hedland policy and strategy and advocacy positions on complex matters.

Council workshops are convened on selected Mondays and Wednesdays commencing at 5:30pm and conducted in the Town of Port Hedland Council Chambers. Discussion papers and other informing documents are to be distributed to the elected members as to provide five clear working days' notice.

Definitions

"Agenda Feedback Session" is a non-statutory meeting held by Council to ask questions, receive presentations and seek clarification on officer reports presented within the draft Ordinary Council Meeting agenda.

"CEO" means Town of Port Hedland Chief Executive Officer.

"Confidential Briefing" is a non-statutory briefing providing updates to elected members on strategically significant issues and projects.

"Elected Member" is an individual who has been elected and currently holds a valid position, as defined by the Local Government Act 1995, as a council member of the Town of Port Hedland.

"Recording" is an audio only recording that will capture speech, sound, or audio signals in a digital format for playback and future use.

"Workshop" is a non-statutory meeting of Council, which may be called upon from time to time, for the purpose of raising and discussing matters that are issue-specific with a strategic and/or community-wide significance.

Relevant legislation	*Local Government Act 1995* *Town of Port Hedland Standing Orders Local Law 2014* *Local Government Operational Guidelines Number 05* *Town of Port Hedland Code of Conduct* *State Records Act (WA) 2000*
Delegated authority	Nil
Business unit	Governance
Directorate	Corporate Services

Governance to complete this section			
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