

SHIRE POLICY 4.3

Council Forums and Information Sessions

Responsible Department:	Office of the CEO
Responsible Business Unit:	Executive Assistant
Date of Review:	15 April 2026
Council Resolution:	120426

1. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this Policy is to establish clear governance principles for the conduct of Council Forums and Information Sessions to support informed decision-making, effective communication, and transparent governance.

These sessions are intended to:

- Provide relevant information to assist Councillors in decision-making
- Facilitate communication between Councillors and Shire officers
- Provide opportunities for community and stakeholder engagement where appropriate

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to:

- Elected Members
- Shire employees
- Community members or stakeholders attending Council Forums or Information Sessions.

This Policy governs the conduct and administration of non-statutory meetings, including:

- Agenda Forums
- Information Sessions
- Community Engagement Forums.

These sessions are not formal meetings of Council and do not have decision-making authority.

3. DEFINITIONS

Agenda Forum means a non-statutory meeting held prior to Council meetings where Councillors may ask questions, receive presentations, and seek clarification on items included in the upcoming Council agenda.

Information Session means a non-statutory meeting of Councillors and staff where information, presentations, updates, strategic matters, or agenda-related topics may be discussed.

Community Engagement Forum means a session where Councillors and staff engage with members of the community to share information and receive feedback on local government matters.

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Deputation means a presentation made by members of the public or applicants to provide information or express views on a matter before Council.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

4.1. Governance Principles

The Shire may convene Council Forums and Information Sessions to:

- Support informed decision-making
- Facilitate information sharing and clarification
- Promote transparency and accountability
- Enable appropriate engagement with stakeholders and the community

These sessions must not:

- Be used for formal decision-making
- Become de facto Council meetings
- Undermine statutory Council processes

4.2. Non-Decision-Making Nature

All sessions governed by this Policy:

- Are for information sharing, discussion and clarification only
- Must not involve debate between Councillors
- Must not result in decisions or collective positions

4.3. Agenda Forums

Agenda Forums provide an opportunity for Councillors to:

- Seek clarification on agenda items
- Request additional information
- Receive internal officer briefings
- Discuss complex or confidential matters (where permitted)

Agenda Forums must not include:

- Deputations from members of the public
- Public questions
- Presentations of gifts and awards to the Shire

4.4. Information Sessions

Information Sessions provide a forum for:

- Strategic discussions and policy development (excluding adoption)
- Project updates and progress reporting
- Budget and planning discussions
- Presentations from staff or external stakeholders
- Early-stage matters that may later come before Council

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These sessions replace and consolidate former:

- Briefing Sessions
- Council Workshops

4.5. Community Engagement Forums

Community Engagement Forums support:

- Open dialogue between Council and the community
- Sharing of information on Shire initiatives
- Community input on local issues

These forums are intended to promote inclusive and accessible engagement.

4.6. Transparency and Access

- Agenda Forums and Community Engagement Forums are generally open to the public
- Sessions may be closed where confidential matters are discussed in accordance with legislation
- Information Sessions are generally closed but may be opened where appropriate

4.7. Conflicts of Interest

Elected Members and staff must:

- Disclose financial and impartiality interests
- Manage those interests in accordance with:
 - *Local Government Act 1995*
 - *Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021*

Persons with a financial interest must not participate unless permitted by legislation.

4.8. Conduct and Integrity

All participants must ensure that sessions:

- Maintain professional standards
- Support constructive and respectful discussion
- Do not create perceptions of pre-determination or bias

4.9. Record Keeping and Accountability

The Shire will maintain appropriate records of sessions to support transparency, continuity, and accountability.

As Council Forums and Information Sessions are not formal meetings and are not minuted or livestreamed:

- No deputations, public question time, or formal public submissions are to be permitted
- This ensures that all public representations to Council occur in forums where a formal and transparent records is maintained

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Council (Elected Members) are responsible for participating in sessions to inform decision-making and seeking clarification and engage appropriately.

Shire President is responsible for presiding over sessions.

Chief Executive Officer is responsible for overseeing administration of sessions, ensuring governance compliance and coordinating officer participation.

Employees (officers) are responsible for providing information, reports and presentations and supporting effective operation of sessions.

6. COMPLIANCE

Legislation	<i>Local Government Act 1995 (WA)</i> <i>Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021</i>
Industry	LGIRS Operational Guidelines – Council Forums
Organisational Documents	Position Statement – Transparency & Accountability
Strategic Alignment	

7. ADMINISTRATION

Review Cycle	Every 3 years	Next Review Due	August 2028
Policy Owner	Governance		
Version	Decision Ref	Date	Change
1.0	090517	17/05/2017	Initial adoption
2.0		16/09/2020	Amendment
3.0		15/03/2023	Amendment
4.0	120426	15/04/2026	Amendment