

Council Policy – Elected Member Information Requests

Responsible Directorate	Corporate Services
Responsible Business Unit/s	Governance
Responsible Officer	Manager Governance
Affected Business Unit/s	All

Objective

The objective of this policy is to:

- provide guidelines for elected members when requesting information relevant to performing their roles, from the Shire of Ashburton (the Shire) administration.
- ensure that all elected members are equally informed regarding queries, issues or any concerns raised, particularly on matters requiring a Council decision.

Scope

This policy applies to all elected members and the Executive Leadership Team of the Shire.

Policy Statement


Requests for information

Section 5.92 of the *Local Government Act 1995* states that an elected member can access information held by the Shire that is relevant to the performance of their functions under the Act, or any other relevant legislation.

To ensure consistency and integrity in the way requests from elected members are dealt with, requests for information are limited to information that is relevant to the performance of elected members' functions under Sections 2.8, 2.9 and 2.10 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Elected members are to make their requests for information by email to the 'Councillor Support' email address. The following are considered information requests:

- Questions that are policy or strategic in nature, or as required by delegation, and
- Questions regarding content of Council agenda (e.g., clarification of issues or request for further information).



Requests for information will be acknowledged, and a response will be provided by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or relevant Director via the 'Councillor Support' email address.

All requests for information are to be responded to within five working days, unless further time is required, in which case the request will be acknowledged, and an estimated time of final response provided.

Except for requests made in confidence to the CEO, all final responses provided to requests will be sent to all elected members.

All correspondence relating to information requests will be recorded in accordance with the *State Records Act 2000*.

Elected member information requests register

A register of elected member requests for information shall be maintained by the CEO, recording the details of all requests for information made by elected members, including the date of the request, the name of the requesting elected member, a description of the information requested, the date of the response to the request and the name of the officer who responded to the request.

Maintaining confidentiality

Elected members must send confidential requests to the CEO and indicate that a request is being made in confidence. Responses to confidential requests will not be sent to all elected members.

Limitations on requests for information

Elected members shall not request information relating to operational matters.

Requests for services

Governance support

Such provision of services, and/or administrative requests, from elected members are to be sent and resolved through the 'Councillor Support' email address. These requests include, but are not limited to:

- General governance advice including declarations of interest,
- Declaration of gifts received,
- Reimbursement claims,
- Travel arrangements,
- Management of event invitations (including Citizenship Ceremonies),
- Training and conference requests,
- Support in relation to Council meetings,
- IT support, and
- Support in the attendance of external meetings relevant to their role.

IT support

Where IT support is requested, Governance will coordinate with IT and the elected member to resolve the issue.

Council property damage or service requests

If an elected member wishes to report damage to local government property, repairs required, requests for service etc. the Customer Action Request (CAR) system should be used. These requests can be made via the Shire's [website](#).

If an elected member receives a report of damage from a member of the public via email, the email is to be forwarded to the Shire's administration for action, soa@ashburton.wa.gov.au.

Verbal requests

Verbal requests and provision of information, in person or by phone, should be limited to the following circumstances:

- matters considered to be urgent,
- gaining support or information to assist in representing the Shire on an external body or committee,
- an event briefing when representing the Shire in an official capacity,
- a media briefing when representing the Shire in an official capacity, and
- seeking clarification on a request made in writing.

Elected Member Teams Channel

The Elected Member Teams Channel has been designed to provide consistent and easily accessible information for elected members. The information available to elected members via this method is as follows:

- Council and Committee minutes and agendas,
- Confidential presentations and information received during an Elected Member Briefing Forum,
- Documents for consultation,
- Forms,
- Procedures, guidelines etc, and
- Training material.

Definitions

Operational matters are matters considered to be of a procedural nature or in relation to staff.

Requests require a response or actioning and include asking for further information, asking a question or seeking clarity on an issue.

Relevant policies/documents

Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates
Council Policy - Elected Member Briefing Forums

Relevant legislation/local laws

Local Government Act 1995

Section 2.8 Role of mayor or president

Section 2.9 Role deputy mayor or deputy president

Section 2.10 Role of councillors

Section 5.92 Access to information by council, committee members

State Records Act 2000

Office use only

Relevant delegations	Nil			
Council adoption	Date	13 December 2022	Resolution #	171/2022
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