

# Terms of Reference – Informal Council Meetings

<b>Effective Date:</b>	17 July 2024
<b>Strategic Alignment:</b>	Local Government Act 2009 Corporate Plan – High Performing Organisation
<b>Review Timeframe:</b>	December 2024, then every 2 years

## 1. Informal Council Meetings

Logan City Council (Council) can hold Informal Council Meetings under its general powers in the *Local Government Act 2009*<sup>1</sup>. The aim of these Terms of Reference is to ensure that in exercising those powers, any action is taken in a way that is consistent with the local government principles<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. Purpose

Informal Council Meetings are established as a forum to deliver:

1. **Briefings** - Allow councillors to be provided with detail about future proposed reports to be presented to Committee or Ordinary Council. Councillors will have the opportunity to ask questions and share information to ensure that the final report presented to Committee or Ordinary Council contains all relevant information to enable a fully informed decision in accordance with the local government principles.
2. **Interactive workshops** - Deliver interactive workshops between councillors and officers on strategic and policy issues. Councillors will have the opportunity to ask questions, share information and provide feedback. By way of example, this may include service level reviews or discussions on the content of a new Corporate Plan.
3. **Training** - Build on the councillor induction program and deliver ongoing professional development opportunities for councillors. This could include training sessions on agreed topics or providing detailed information on new or amended legislation affecting Council.
4. **Presentations** - Allow for presentations by external parties to councillors as appropriate.

Informal Council Meetings are not to be used:

1. To replace the need for debate and discussion at Committee and Ordinary Council meetings.
2. To make decisions.
3. To direct what an officer recommends to Council in an agenda report to Committee or Ordinary Council.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

<sup>2</sup> Section 4 of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

### 3. Attendance

The timing of Informal Council Meetings will be agreed between the Mayor (or their nominee) and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

All elected members of Council will be invited to Informal Council Meetings. While encouraged to attend, attendance is not mandatory<sup>3</sup>.

No quorum is required for Informal Council Meetings<sup>4</sup>.

The CEO will determine which officers of Council will attend Informal Council Meetings, having regard to the matters for discussion on the agenda.

The Mayor and CEO may together agree to have external persons attend Informal Council Meetings.

Informal Council Meetings are not open to the public and are not live-streamed.

### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

#### ***Chairperson***

The Mayor will nominate the chairperson of all Informal Council Meetings.

The chairperson shall assume responsibility for:

1. The maintenance of good order at all Informal Council Meetings.
2. Ensuring the Informal Council Meetings comply with the Purpose set out in section 2 of these Terms of Reference.
3. Ensuring decisions are only made in Committee and Ordinary Council meetings.
4. Discouraging informal decision making or straw polls.

#### ***Office of the CEO***

The Office of the CEO will establish and manage a process by which:

1. Officers can submit requests for a particular subject matter to be considered at a future Informal Council Meeting.
2. A forward plan of matters proposed to be presented to Informal Council Meetings is maintained and made visible to the Executive Leadership Team and submitted to the Deputy Mayor for consideration.
3. The Deputy Mayor will consider the forward register of matters and may:
  - a. request any matter be included on the formal register of matters.
  - b. request any matter be included on the agenda of the future Informal Council Meeting.
  - c. otherwise provide feedback as to how they would like to be engaged on that matter, if not through an Informal Council Meeting.

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<sup>3</sup> Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland.

<sup>4</sup> As they are not a local government meeting for the purposes of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

## **Officers**

Officers will be responsible for:

1. Preparing and presenting matters to the Informal Council Meeting.
2. Otherwise engaging with councillors on a matter in the way nominated.
3. Where presenting a report to Committee or Ordinary Council which has been previously presented to an Informal Council Meeting, including a statement in the 'consultation' section of the report that the matter was discussed at an Informal Council Meeting.

## **Corporate Meetings Team**

The Corporate Meetings Team will be responsible for:

1. The consolidation and distribution of the agenda for each Informal Council Meeting. The agenda will include:
  - a. attendance
  - b. adoption of the minutes of the previous Informal Council Meeting
  - c. conflicts of interest
  - d. reports prepared by the organisation
2. Audio recording each Informal Council Meeting.
3. The taking, preparation and distribution of minutes for each Informal Council Meeting.

## **5. Confidential Information**

Confidential information may be provided to Informal Council Meetings and should be clearly marked as 'confidential'.

The release of confidential information, either by councillors or officers is prohibited by the *Local Government Act 2009*.

## **6. Conflicts of Interest**

A councillor who has a conflict of interest in a matter to be addressed at an Informal Council Meeting should not attend the meeting for that agenda item unless Council has previously approved their participation in that matter<sup>5</sup>.

If a councillor first becomes aware of a conflict of interest in a matter during an Informal Council Meeting, the councillor must:

- a. stop participating in the matter at the meeting
- b. immediately inform the meeting of the conflict of interest and leave the meeting while the matter is being discussed
- c. as soon as practicable, provide the relevant completed Conflict of Interest declaration form to the CEO (via [CouncillorConflicts@logan.qld.gov.au](mailto:CouncillorConflicts@logan.qld.gov.au)).

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<sup>5</sup> Conflicts are to be managed in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

The CEO will then place the councillor's conflict of interest declaration on the agenda of the next Committee or Ordinary Council meeting to be managed.

## 7. Definitions

The following definitions apply to this Policy.

Term	Definition
Committee	All and any standing committee, special committee or advisory committee established by Council.
Executive Leadership Team	The Chief Executive Officer and all directors of Logan City Council.
Informal Council Meeting	Councillor Workshop, Councillor Briefing Session or Councillor Professional Development Session which has been agreed to by the Strategic Leadership Team.  For clarity, an Informal Council Meeting does not include an ordinary meeting or a special meeting of Council, or a meeting of a standing committee, special committee, or advisory committee of Council.
Minutes	Minutes will record any actions to be taken, and otherwise include details on each of the topics that were discussed with high level commentary on the discussion that occurred. The minutes will record if a councillor identifies a conflict of interest. The minutes will not include verbatim comments from individual participants in the Informal Council Meetings.  Informal Council Meetings will also be audio recorded.
Ordinary Council	The formal decision-making authority for Council, consisting of the Mayor (who is the Chairperson), the Deputy Mayor and all Councillors.
Strategic Leadership Team	The Mayor and all Councillors of Logan City Council.

## 8. Document Control

Version Control	File No.	Document No.	Council Min No.	Description of Change	Effective Date
1.0	679694-1	17590059	120/2024	Creation	17/07/24