

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide the ongoing development of councillors to ensure they have the opportunity to possess:

- The necessary competencies to exercise sound judgment on the various issues faced by the Wodonga Council (the council); and
- The characteristics that lead to effective decision-making.

Scope

This policy applies to all councillors of the council.

Definitions

Development: this includes professional development such as conferences, seminars, forums, delegations or similar events, and documentation and reading material that assists councillors in their broad civic leadership role. This development may be delivered at the council, external to the council, or via video conferencing and on-line.

Policy

The council will allocate funds through its budget process to meet the development needs of councillors, collectively and individually. The budget will allocate an amount for the development of councillors collectively, as well as an amount for the development of councillors individually.

4.1 Development offered collectively

4.1.1 Newly elected council

Training in each of the following components will be offered for the councillors at an introductory level within the first six months of each new council. The training would be highly recommended for new councillors and, given changes in legislation and practice, along with the opportunity to share experiences, highly desirable for continuing councillors.

- Meeting procedures, including chairing of meetings
- Relationship between councillors and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and staff
- Good governance, including conflict of interest and the code of conduct
- Financial training
- Planning legislation
- Media training
- Team building and interpersonal skills
- Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) or Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) councillor development programs, or similar

4.1.2 Local government industry events

Council will attempt to regularly send representatives to the following local government industry events.

- Australian Local Government Association National Assembly
- MAV Annual Session
- MAV Plenary Session
- MAV Councillor Development Weekend
- Regional Cities Victoria
- Regional Capitals Australia

4.1.3 Site visits

From time to time the council may confront issues that require a site visit eg: visits to other local government areas to inspect commercial opportunities, libraries, residential developments, recreation facilities, community initiatives, etc. These visits would not form part of the development policy and budget, but rather would be funded by the councillors' travel and accommodation budget.

4.2 Individual development

4.2.1 Identifying needs

Independent of the development offered to the councillors as a group, councillors are encouraged to identify their individual development needs. Each councillor is encouraged to seek the assistance of the CEO in analysing his or her particular requirements and in identifying appropriate courses, seminars and training to meet those needs and interests. The development of specific programs for individual councillors does not preclude other councillors from having similar needs and jointly participating in these programs.

4.2.2 Conferences, seminars, forums, or delegations

- a. A councillor who is funded by the council to attend a conference, seminar, forum, delegation or similar event, shall participate as a representative of the council, not as an individual.
- b. Councillors may participate in conferences, seminars, forums, delegations or similar events where it can be demonstrated that attendance will:
 - Provide information on a contemporary issue, so that the councillor can contribute to discussion or debate, leading to informed decision making;
 - Put forward the council's viewpoint during formation of a collaborative policy, or stance on an issue;
 - Meet community expectations that councillor representation is necessary for the benefit of the community;
 - Provide development to the councillor in areas relevant to the strategic objectives identified by the council in the Council Plan; or
 - Provide improvements to the built, social, economic and natural wellbeing of the community.

- c. Following participation in an event covered by this section the councillor shall submit a written delegates report for inclusion in the council agenda within 28 days of attendance. The detail in the report would reflect the type and extent of the professional development, but as a minimum should document:
- whether the objectives of the participation were met;
 - the benefits to the councillor, council and the community;
 - the value of future attendance or representation by the council at similar events.

4.3 Funding

4.3.1 The council will allocate funds for development during the budget process each year. The budget allocation will cover all costs associated with the development, including travel, accommodation, registration fees, sustenance, and incidentals. This allocation will provide for development at two levels:

- Collective development to cover such things as training for a new council and attendance at local government industry events.
- Individual development will provide for a set amount for each councillor per annum.

4.3.2 A councillor who does not use their annual allocation for individual development cannot carry forward any outstanding allocation into the next financial year.

4.3.3 Any unexpended funds from an individual councillor can be formally transferred to another councillor to assist in funding attendance at a conference or seminar in that same year, providing all other policy provisions and requirements have been met. This transfer of funds would not ordinarily occur prior to March 31 in any financial year and would be subject to approval in advance as provided for in clause 4.4.3.

4.4 Approval

4.4.1 To maximise the effectiveness of allocated resources, the council will only meet the cost of development outlined in this policy, subject to approval by the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Mayor.

4.4.2 A councillor is required to complete an Application form (appendix A) to facilitate participation in individual development.

4.4.3 If a request for individual development cannot be accommodated within the budget allocation the CEO may approve the leave, or may choose to refer it to a council meeting for a decision. Any development approved outside of the approved budget will be subject to a report to the council via the budget variation report submitted to the council each quarter.

4.4.4 Individual development involving overseas travel must be specifically approved by council resolution at a public council meeting, notwithstanding

that it may otherwise meet these policy provisions and be within the budget provisions.

4.4.5 Arrangements for travel, accommodation and the general reimbursement of costs associated with development will be in accordance with the Councillor Support and Expenses policy.

4.5 Reporting

Expenditure approved under this Policy will be reported in the council's Annual Report. Regulation 14(2)(db) of the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014* requires that the Annual Report include details of the expenses for each councillor, categorised separately as;

- travel expenses;
- car mileage expenses;
- childcare expenses;
- information and communication technology expenses; and
- conference and training expenses.

Attachments

Application Form - Councillor Development

Related policies

Councillor Support and Expenses Policy
Election Period Policy
Councillor Code of Conduct

Related legislation

Local Government Act 1989
Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

References

N/A.

Review

The council may review this policy at any time but unless otherwise requested at least every four years. Ideally the four yearly review will occur within the first 12 months of a new council. Minor amendments to the policy may be authorised by the CEO at any time where such changes do not alter the substance of the policy eg: typographical errors, a change to the name of a related policy, or a change to the name of legislation.

Title:	Councillor Development Policy
Reference No:	CP05/00018
Business Unit:	Governance and Customer Focus
Category:	Policy
Version:	Five
Approved By:	Council, resolution of July 17, 2017
Next Review:	July 2021

**Appendix A
Application Form - Councillor Development**

Councillor's name:

Type of development - tick one ✓

Conference, seminar or forum

Delegation

Other

Name of development event (attach any relevant information you may have):

.....

..... Location:.....

Date/s: Total cost: \$

Break down of costs:

.....

(use this space to show calculation of costs eg: fees, travel, accommodation, meals, etc).

How will this development meet the policy criteria (refer section 4 of policy)?

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(attach additional pages if insufficient space)

Signed: Date:

OFFICE USE ONLY

Budget Allocation Available: \$ Ledger No:

Does the request for development meet the criteria in the Councillor development policy? Yes / No

Professional Development Approved: Yes / No

Signed:
Chief Executive Officer