

Policy number	Policy 051
Policy title	Agenda Briefing Forum, Concept Forum and workshops
Strategic outcomes supported	CL2 – Communication and engagement with community CL3 - Accountability and good governance

Policy objective:

To set out the purpose, structure and proceedings of the Town’s informal (non-statutory) meetings that fall under Part 17 ‘Briefings and Other Informal Forums’ of the *Town of Victoria Park Meeting Procedures Local Law 2019*, which include the Agenda Briefing Forum, Concept Forum and Council workshops.

Policy scope:

This policy applies to all elected members, officers of the Town and any member of the public involved in informal meetings.

Policy definitions:

Agenda Briefing Forum refers to the non-statutory meeting held by Council to ask questions, receive presentations and seek clarity on officer reports presented within the draft Ordinary Council Meeting agenda.

Concept Forum refers to the non-statutory meeting held by Council to provide input and guidance on the development of matters that have a strategic impact and/or relate to the delivery of the Strategic Community Plan.

deputation refers to a presentation made by up to five people affected (adversely or favourably) by a matter on the agenda.

officer report refers to a report presented to Council by an officer of the Town, which includes professional advice and a recommendation, from which a Council decision is sought at the Ordinary Council Meeting.

workshop refers to any other 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.

Policy statement:

1. This policy seeks to ensure that informal meetings are responsibly managed, transparent and are in line with principles of good governance.

Agenda Briefing Forum:

2. The purpose of the Agenda Briefing Forum is to maximise the opportunity for elected members to be informed, and seek additional information, on an officer report contained in the draft Ordinary Council Meeting agenda, before it is presented for a decision at the Ordinary Council Meeting. No decisions or debate are to be made at the forum.
3. While the formal meeting structure of Council and committee meetings do not apply to this forum, the general conduct of the forum must be in line with the *Town of Victoria Park Meeting Procedures Local Law 2019* for the purpose of preserving order.

4. This forum is held on the first Tuesday of each month, unless otherwise determined by Council.
5. This forum is open to members of the public, except in matters deemed to be confidential in nature, in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995*.
6. Elected members are to disclose any conflicts of interest to the Chief Executive Officer. Participation on an agenda item will not be allowed where the interest declared is of a financial, indirect financial or proximity nature.
7. While every endeavour is made to ensure that all items to be presented at the Ordinary Council Meeting are included in the Agenda Briefing Forum, there may be instances where items will not be ready in time for the forum and will have to be presented straight to Council for a decision.

Officer Presentation at Agenda Briefing Forums

8. Elected members may request that an officer presentation be provided on any report item, upon approval of the Chief Executive Officer. The time allotted for such presentations is no longer than 10 minutes, unless otherwise approved by the Presiding Member.

Public Participation at Agenda Briefing Forums

9. Members of the public are to be given opportunities to participate at the forum.

Deputation on a report item

10. A request to make a deputation at the forum must be submitted in writing and approved by the Chief Executive Officer.
11. All requests must be sent no later than 6.30pm on the Monday preceding the forum.
12. Any documents that will be presented at the forum must be provided at the time of making the request.
13. The Town is to ensure that any member/s of the public that are directly impacted by an agenda item are advised of their ability to make a deputation at this forum.
14. The time allotted for public deputations is not to exceed 10 minutes on any agenda item, unless otherwise approved by the Presiding Member.

General public participation through questions and statements

15. Public participation is limited to only those items on the agenda.
16. Public participation at the end of the forum is limited to those members of the public who did not participate in the first public participation time at that forum.
17. The time allotted for each public participation time will be a minimum of 15 minutes. Any extension of time will be in five minute increments and at the discretion of the Presiding Member.
18. All public questions must be asked through the Presiding Member. The Presiding Member may answer the question or choose to call upon an officer of the Town, or another elected member, to assist with responses.

Record of Agenda Briefing Forum

19. While formal minutes of the forum will not be kept, notes regarding any action to be undertaken, discussion held and any public participation, will be recorded and be made available on the Town's website within five working days after the forum has been held.
20. Recordings of the forum are to be kept and made available on the Town's website.
21. Notes and recordings for matters which are deemed confidential in nature, in line with the *Local Government Act 1995* and any other relevant legislation, will not be made publicly available.
22. The Agenda Briefing Forum notes are to be received by Council at the relevant Ordinary Council Meeting to promote transparency and ensure that any additional information regarding a report item is appropriately included into the decision-making process.

Concept Forum:

23. The purpose of the Concept Forum is to provide elected members and officers with an opportunity to discuss ideas, strategies and concepts for items in development. This forum is strictly for elected members to provide input and guidance on the development of matters that have a strategic impact and/or relate to the delivery of the Strategic Community Plan.
24. Topics to be considered are typically those that will require an eventual Council decision. They must be aligned to the Town's Strategic Community Plan.
25. Matters that are presented for information only must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer and be considered contentious, high risk or to have significant community impact.
26. No decisions are to be made at a Concept Forum.
27. Both elected members and officers may add an item to the forum agenda by making a submission in writing using the approved form.
28. This forum is not open to the public, unless upon invitation by the Chief Executive Officer.

Officer Presentation at a Concept Forum

29. Elected members may request that an officer presentation be made on a topic, upon approval of the Chief Executive Officer. Requests must be made at least five working days before the distribution of the forum agenda.

Public Participation at a Concept Forum

30. Members of the public, including relevant community, advisory, project and reference groups of the Town, and other such stakeholders, may, from time to time, be invited to attend the Concept Forum by the Chief Executive Officer. Any such engagement must be in line with Policy 103 – Communications and engagement and Policy 101 – Governance of Council Advisory and Working Groups.

Record of a Concept Forum

31. While formal minutes of the forum will not be kept, notes regarding any outcomes will be recorded and distributed to all elected members.

32. Additional documents or information requested to be provided to elected members during the course of a forum are to be provided to elected members separately to the notes of the forum, via email or the Councillor Portal.

Workshop:

33. It is recognised that Council may need to convene an informal meeting other than an Agenda Briefing Forum or Concept Forum.
34. The purpose of a workshop is to gain a better understanding on an issue-specific topic, or as a form of community engagement, in line with Policy 103 – Communications and engagement.
35. Attendance at the workshop is to be determined on a case-by-case basis and may be open to the public. The Presiding Member or the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Presiding Member, may convene a workshop by providing at least five working days' notice to all elected members, and all anticipated attendees.
36. No decisions are to be made at a workshop.

Related documents

[Town of Victoria Park Meeting Procedures Local Law 2019](#)

[Policy 103 – Communications and engagement](#)

[Policy 023 - Elected Members – Provision of Information and Services](#)

[Policy 101 – Governance of Council Advisory and Working Groups](#)

Responsible officers	Coordinator Governance and Strategy Governance Officer
Policy manager	Manager Governance and Strategy
Approval authority	Council
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Revision history

Version	Action	Date	Authority	Resolution number	Report number
1	Approved	19/03/2019	Council	40/2019	Item 10.1
2	Reviewed and amended	20/04/2021	Council	78/2021	Item 15.4
3	Reviewed and amended	20/07/2021	Council	165/2021	Item 15.3
4	Review and amended	12/04/2022	Council	73/2022	Item 15.5
5	Administratively amended	24/08/2023	Delegation		
6	Reviewed and amended	12/12/2023	Council	254/2023	Item 11.4