



NAME OF POLICY: Elected Member Training & Development

POLICY MANUAL: Governance

BACKGROUND

Section 80A of the *Local Government Act 1999*, requires councils to adopt a training and development policy for Elected Members. In particular, Section 80A, states that:

80A—Training and development

- (1) *A council must prepare and adopt a training and development policy for its members.*
- (2) *The policy must be aimed at assisting members in the performance and discharge of their functions and duties.*
- (3) *A council may from time to time alter its policy, or substitute a new policy.*
- (4) *A person is entitled to inspect (without charge) a policy under this section at the principal office of the council during ordinary office hours.*
- (5) *A person is entitled, on payment of a fee fixed by the council, to a copy of a policy under this section.*

The City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters is committed to providing training and development activities for Elected Members, including the mandatory training requirements in accordance with the Local Government Association of South Australia's Training Standards (LGA Training Standards).

This Policy incorporates the requirements for Elected Members to undertake the mandatory training within the first year of election to office, which complies with the LGA Training Standards, as defined in regulation 8AA of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2013* (the Regulations).

KEY PRINCIPLES

Section 59 of the *Local Government Act 1999*, sets out the role of Elected Members:

- (1) *The role of a member of a council is –*
 - (a) *as a member of the governing body of the council -*
 - (i) *to participate in the deliberations and civic activities of the council;*
 - (ii) *to keep the council's objectives and policies under review to ensure that they are appropriate and effective;*
 - (iii) *to keep the council's resource allocation, expenditure and activities, and the efficiency and effectiveness of its service delivery, under review;*
 - (b) *as a person elected to the council—to represent the interests of residents and ratepayers, to provide community leadership and guidance, and to facilitate communication between the community and the council.*

The role of Elected Members is complex, requiring the identification of community needs, setting objectives to meet those needs, establishing priorities between competing demands and allocating resources. It is therefore vital that Elected Members are provided with assistance and training to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to perform their role.

POLICY

The Council recognises that attendances by Elected Members at conferences/seminars contributes to the personal and professional development of the Council and is consistent with the Council's objectives.

Registration fees, accommodation, travelling expenses and other out of pocket expenses shall be borne by the Council in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1999*. The amount payable by the Council for travel by air shall be the equivalent of a return economy class airfare. Reimbursement of all expenses will be based on the principle of cost neutrality to the participant.

The amount available to individual Elected Members for conference/seminar attendance shall be in accordance with the amount allocated specifically for this purpose in the Council's annual budget.

All Interstate and international travel shall be authorised in advance by the Council.

In instances where an Elected Member's spouse, partner or another family member travels with the Elected Member, the Elected Member shall meet the full cost of any expenses incurred by the spouse, partner or another family member. These costs must be paid in full to the Council at the time of the conference registration and prior to travel being undertaken. Any additional costs incurred by the Elected Member's spouse/partner/family member shall be reimbursed to the Council within 30 days of return from travel.

Any Elected Member who is offered sponsorship in the form of conference registration or other costs in an official capacity, wholly or partly by any government agency, external organisation or person, shall immediately make this known to the Mayor and General Manager, Governance & Community Affairs.

All arrangements for Elected Members to attend conferences/seminars will be coordinated by the General Manager, Governance & Community Affairs.

Training and Development Plan

The Council will develop and adopt a training and development plan each year, in order to ensure that activities available to all Elected Members contribute to the achievement of the strategic and good governance objectives of the Council.

The mandatory training requirements for Elected Members following a general or supplementary election will be scheduled in the first 12 months following the general or supplementary election to ensure that all Elected Members comply with the Regulations.

The LGA Training Standards consist of the following training modules:

- Module 1 - Introduction to Local Government - Role and function of Council Members
- Module 2 - Legal Responsibilities
- Module 3 - Council and committee meetings
- Module 4 - Financial Management and Reporting

In preparing its training and development plan, the Council will utilise a range of strategies to identify the needs of the Council and match these needs against its strategic and good governance objectives.

Options to identify the training and development needs of Elected Members may include:

- assessment of the needs of Elected Members, utilising the Local Government Association Self Assessment Tool for Council Members;
- needs as identified by legislation;
- needs as identified by the General Manager, Governance & Community Affairs; and
- at the request of Elected Members and other staff.

Planning of training programs will be dependent on budget requirements and relevance to the time period, (ie following a general or supplementary election).

The Council recognises that some of the training needs of Elected Members will be specific to their legislative and governance roles and functions such as:

- Strategic Planning;
- Role and function of Council Members;
- Financial Management;
- Meeting Procedures;
- Conflict of Interest; and
- Elected Member Code of Conduct.

The Council has also identified the following skills, knowledge and attributes as key competencies required by all Elected Members to ensure they can fulfil their roles:

- Relationships between Elected Members, the Chief Executive Officer and staff;
- Working with external stakeholders;
- Principles of good governance and risk management;
- Community Consultation;
- Policy evaluation;
- Critical analysis;
- Effective communication; and
- Leadership.

Other training issues will emerge that are directly related to specific service areas and other community issues and address environmental, social and economic challenges facing the community.

It is recognised that a range of delivery methods will be required to support the training needs of Elected Members, including:

- “in house” workshops and training sessions conducted by the Council;
- attendance at seminars and conferences offered by organisations such as the Local Government Association of South Australia, the Australian Local Government Association, Local Government Professionals Australia and other private providers in order to provide an opportunity for Elected Members to gain new skills, network with Elected Members and staff from within and outside of South Australia;
- ensuring Elected Members are kept up to date with industry issues and trends via relevant publications, journals, research papers, media articles, etc;
- on-line training courses; and
- provision of training booklets and discussion papers that could be distributed to Members for information.

The Council's Training and Development Plan will include the agreed delivery method to respond to the needs of Elected Members identified during the development of the training plan.

Annual Budget Allocation

A budget allocation will be provided to support the training and development activities undertaken by the Council and progress against expenditure of the budget allocation will be reported on a quarterly and annual basis to the Council and in the Council's Annual Report.

All training undertaken by Elected Members will be recorded in the Elected Members' Training Register.

Elected Member attendances at Conferences will be included in the Elected Members' Allowances and Benefits Register.

Both Registers will be updated as required to reflect attendances and associated costs.

Attendance at Training Programs/Conferences

The Training and Development Plan will determine the nature of training to be made available, however, access to training programs not directly conducted by the Council, will require approval upon application and must link to the Training and Development Plan unless otherwise agreed by the Council.

The following approval process will apply to attendances at training programs and/or conferences/seminars that are not directly conducted by the Council:

1. Requests to undertake specific training programs or attend conferences/seminars are to be forwarded directly to the General Manager, Governance & Community Affairs.
2. The General Manager, Governance & Community Affairs may approve the attendance and commitment of expenditure for an Elected Member to attend personal development training and/or a conference/seminar, in accordance with the following criteria:
 - the location of the training and/or conference/seminar is within the State;
 - sufficient funds are available within existing budget accounts to fund the application; and
 - the personal development opportunity is necessary or expedient to the performance or the role of the Elected Member.
3. Requests to undertake specific training programs or attend conferences/seminars that are located Interstate or Overseas will be forwarded to the Council for consideration and approval, in accordance with the following criteria:
 - Attendance at an Interstate conference is to be restricted to a maximum of up to three (3) Elected Members and attendance at International conferences be restricted to a maximum of one (1) Elected Member, unless otherwise determined by the Council. In determining whether to approve attendances beyond the maximum, the Council will take into account the nature of the conference/seminar in terms of its relevance to the Council, the cost of attendance (including registration, accommodation and travel), and its impact on the budget which has been allocated to Elected Member Training.
 - Elected Members wishing to attend an Interstate or International conference and/or seminar are required to complete and submit an Expression of Interest to the General Manager, Governance & Community Affairs setting out the following:
 - why the Elected Member wishes to attend the Conference and/or Seminar;
 - what the Elected Member expects to gain/learn from attending the conference and its benefit to the Council; and
 - how the conference relates to the particular interests on Council of the Elected Member.

Following attendance at a conference and/or seminar, individual Elected Members will be required to prepare or deliver a brief written report outlining the nature of the conference and/or seminar and the benefits gained through attendance. The report shall provide comment on the value of the conference/seminar, benefits to the City and provide recommendations for further action (if applicable). In the event that two (2) or more Councillors attend the same conference, for the purposes of this Policy, only one written report is required which may be a joint report.

A copy of any written reports from Elected Members of their attendance at conference and/or seminars will be distributed to all Elected Members.

A quarterly report regarding Elected Member attendances at training programs and/or conferences and seminars will be prepared and distributed to the Council.

Payments/Reimbursements

The reimbursement of expenses for training which is requested by an individual Elected Member must be associated with the approval provided either by the Council or the General Manager, Governance & Community Affairs, consistent with the Training and Development Plan or through a separate resolution endorsing attendance at the training program/activity.

Where approval has been granted or attendance at a training program approved, an Elected Member may seek reimbursement of expenses in accordance with the relevant provisions of the *Local Government Act 1999* and Regulations.

Expenses associated with the following items will be reimbursed:

- travel to and from the conference/seminar venue to attend the conference/seminar;
- travel to and from official conference/seminar functions;
- car parking associated with the conference/seminar and relevant functions and activities;
- meals; and
- reasonable out of pocket expenses.

Annual Reporting

The Council's Annual Report will include a section regarding the operation of this Policy, the nature of matters raised in the Training and Development Plan, attendances by Elected Members and expenditure allocated and used for training of Elected Members.

REVIEW PROCESS

The Council will review this Policy within 12 months of the next Local Government Election to be conducted in November 2022. The Council does, however, have the ability to review this Policy at any time if considered desirable.

INFORMATION

The contact officer for further information at the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters is the Council's General Manager, Governance & Community Affairs, telephone 8366 4549.

ADOPTION OF THE POLICY

This Policy was adopted by the Council on 5 June 2006.
This Policy was reviewed by the Council on 6 July 2009.
This Policy was reviewed by the Council on 2 August 2011.
This Policy was reviewed by the Council on 1 April 2019.

TO BE REVIEWED

2023.