

Introduction

The Local Government Act 1995 (the Act) 5.128 requires Local Governments to prepare and adopt a policy in relation to the continuing professional development of Council Members.

The Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021 Division 2, regulation 4(2)(c) states that, 'A council member or committee member should actively seek out and engage in training and development opportunities to improve the performance of their role.'

Purpose

This policy provides a framework to facilitate continuing professional development of Council Members, enhancing knowledge and skill development, to improve the Council's decision-making ability and the provision of good government for the community.

Policy statement

1. Budget allocations

The Shire Annual Budget will include:

Whole of Council Training and Development

An allocation for the Council as a whole, to be used for:

- Council Member Induction, dealt with under Part 2 of this Policy;
- Mandatory Council Member Training, dealt with under Part 3 of this Policy, and
- Council Capacity Building, dealt with under Part 4 of this Policy.

Council Member Professional Development

An allocation for each Council Member to be used for individual Continuing Professional Development, as specified under Part 5 of this Policy. Council Members may select training and professional development to be funded from this allocation, subject to approval in accordance with this Policy.

Unexpended allocations at the end of a financial year will not be carried forward to the next financial year.

Any professional development proposal that exceeds an individual Council Member's allocation will be referred for a Council decision. Alternatively, the Council Member may choose to privately fund any shortfall. This will not be eligible for reimbursement from a future budget allocation.

2. Council Member Induction

The Shire will conduct a comprehensive induction program after each local government election, providing newly elected Council Members with information that will support them to understand Council Member roles and responsibilities; legislative obligations; personal responsibilities; and strategic direction of the Shire.

3. Mandatory Council Member Training

Council Members are required to complete the Council Member Essentials Course within 12-months from the day on which they are elected, unless exempt under Regulation 36 of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*.

The Shire will provide newly elected Council Members with information on training options from which the Council Member may select according to their preferred delivery mode and availability. The Shire will make the necessary arrangements for enrolment.

4. Council Capacity Building

Within a reasonable period after an election, a Council Workshop will be convened to enable Council Members to collaboratively develop a program of Council Capacity Building.

The CEO will coordinate training in accordance with the agreed program, with details of dates and delivery modes to be determined in consultation with Council Members.

5. Continuing Professional Development

Formats and providers

The continuing professional development format must be reasonable and provided by a relevant industry recognised training provider, peak body, or professional organisation.

Outcomes

Continuing Professional Development must be relevant to the role of a Council Member and offer demonstrable benefit to the Council as a governing body, the Shire as an organisation, and the broader community.

5.1 Application and approval

Request for approval

Council Members who wish to attend training or professional development may make an application by providing the following details to the CEO in writing:

- Course or event title, provider or organiser name, location, and date;
- Copy of, or link to program, course outline or other summary of content;
- An outline of the anticipated benefits of attendance, with reference to the eligibility criteria in this policy; and
- Total estimated costs including accommodation, travel, and sundry expenses.

Applications are to be submitted in reasonable time for registration. The Shire will seek to take advantage of reduced prices for early registration.

Approval

Approval for Council Member attendance may be granted by:
the Chief Executive Officer where:

the application complies with this policy;

- the event is to be held within Australia; and
- Council Member has sufficient funds available in their professional development allocation to meet all costs of attendance.

resolution of the Council where:

- the application has been refused by the Chief Executive Officer;
- the application does not comply with this policy;
- the estimated costs of attendance exceed the available balance of the Council Member's annual professional development allocation; or
- the event is to be held outside of Australia.

Limitations

Approval may not be granted where attendance conflicts with scheduled Council or Committee meetings (e.g., A meeting where important strategic decisions are required or where the meeting may lack a quorum), unless the Council has resolved otherwise.

Where attendance at a particular training or professional development event would require an extended absence, no more than two Council Members may attend, unless the Council has otherwise resolved.

Approval will not be granted for training or continuing professional development that is scheduled to occur in the last six months of a Council Member's term of office.

5.2 Sharing of Knowledge

Council Members should provide a report on their attendance, key features, and benefits of the training or professional development within one month after completion.

Knowledge sharing may be provided as a presentation or verbal update to an informal Council workshop, or a written report provided to the Chief Executive Officer and circulated to all Council Members. Where relevant, copies of resources obtained at the event may also be provided to the Chief Executive Officer for circulation to all Council Members.

6. Registration, travel, and expenses

The Shire will be responsible for the costs associated with training or professional development approved in accordance with this policy, as detailed in this section.

Event Registration and Bookings

Travel, registration fees and accommodation are to be arranged directly by the Shire administration.

Council Members are not to pay such costs and seek reimbursement, except in the case of an emergency or unique circumstances and subject to the Chief Executive Officer's prior approval.

Travel

Where travel is involved, the actual costs of travel to and from the event venue are to be met by the Shire in accordance with the current WA Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Determination for Local Government CEOs and Elected Members (the Determination).

Travel arrangements are to be by the most cost effective and reasonably convenient mode.

Air travel is to be by Economy Class at a time that is convenient to the Council Member. As far as is practicable, tickets will be purchased well in advance, and take advantage of available discount fares.

A Council Member may seek approval to travel within Western Australia by private motor vehicle and be reimbursed for vehicle costs in accordance with the Determination. Approval may only be granted where the cost is approximately equivalent to the most cost effective mode of travel.

A Council Member may choose to upgrade the mode of travel, however additional costs incurred are to be paid to the Shire by the Council Member before the Shire confirms the booking(s).

Accommodation

Reasonable accommodation will be booked for the Council Member for a room at, or in proximity, to the event venue and within the expenditure limitations prescribed in the Determination.

If it is not reasonable to expect travel to occur on the day of the event, the booking may allow for arrival the day prior to commencement, and departure the day following the close of the event.

A Council Member may choose to upgrade their accommodation standard or extend their visit for personal reasons, however additional costs are to be paid to the Shire by the Council Member (including any additional associated or travel costs) prior to the Shire confirming the booking.

Meals and Incidental Expenses

Funding for meals and incidental expenses are to be provided in accordance with the Determination.

Reasonable meal expenses are the purchase of breakfast, lunch, and dinner where these meals are not provided otherwise provided. When meals are included and have been paid for as part of the registration fee or accommodation costs, claims for alternative meals at venues other than the event will not to be paid by the Shire.

Incidental taxi, economy ride share or public transport modes of transport (i.e., to / from airport, event venue) may be claimed for reimbursement on submission of receipts.

Travel Insurance – Intrastate, Interstate, and International

Subject to policy wording and conditions, Council Members are covered by the Shire's corporate travel protection for the duration of their travel relevant to attendance at the approved event, including any incidental private travel taken either side or during the event.

Council Members should review the conditions of the Shire's corporate travel protection policy and member certificate to determine whether it is adequate for their personal needs and circumstances, and so that the Shire and/or the Council Member can make any necessary alternative arrangements.

Accompanying persons/entertainment costs

Council Members are responsible and will be required to pay all costs associated with an accompanying person attending an event (including conference dinners and functions).

The Shire may coordinate accompanying person bookings and registrations for travel, accommodation, and the event / function, with costs incurred to be paid to the Shire by the Council Member prior to the Shire confirming the booking/s.

Booking Change / Modification Costs or cancellations

Costs incurred for changing, modifying, or cancelling a booking for travel or accommodation, where the change or modification is:

- At the request of the Council Member, are to be attributed to their individual continuing professional development allocation or paid by the Council Member; or
- A requirement or for the convenience of the Shire, are to be paid by the Shire.

Loyalty Program and Reward Points

Council Members are not to obtain personal benefit from expenditure of Shire funds and must not claim personal frequent flyer or accommodation loyalty points for air travel or accommodation paid for by the Shire.

7. Report on training

The Shire is required to produce a report detailing the training completed by Council Members during each financial year, in accordance with s.5.127 of the Act.

The report will be provided to Council Members for their information, before being published on the Shire's website within one month of the end of the financial year.

8. Policy Review

In accordance with s.5.128 of the Act, this policy will be provided for the Council's review following each ordinary election. The Shire will ensure the policy review occurs within the first 12-months following each ordinary election.

Application

This policy applies to Council Member training and continuing professional development, including mandatory training required under s.5.126 of the Act.

Procedure

Department:	CEO Division	Next review:	July 2023
Reviewer:	Chief Executive Officer	Legislation:	Local Government Act 1995
Adopted:	Minute OC150/2021, 28.07.21	Delegation:	
Amended:		Risk:	
Policy ref #:		Version:	2