



## **Policy 1.1.15 – Council Member Training and Professional Development Policy**

### **1. Policy Purpose**

To provide a framework for Council Members to meet their statutory obligations for training and to undertake professional development to enhance their effectiveness.

### **2. Policy Scope**

This Policy applies to all Council Members.

### **3. Policy**

#### **3.1 Mandatory Training**

A Council Member must complete the course *Council Member Essentials* training which consists of five modules, within a period of twelve months beginning on the day on which the Council Member is elected. A Council Member is exempt from the requirements if they have passed the following courses within a period of five years ending immediately before the day on which the Council Member commences their term of office.

- Council Member Essentials
  - 52756WA Diploma of Local Government (Council Member)
- or
- The Council Member passed the course LGASS00002 Elected Member Skill Set or Diploma of Local Government 52756WA (Elected Member) in the previous five years.

The mandatory training is valid for five years therefore a Council Member will only be required to undertake the training at every second election.

If a Council Member completes the Diploma of Local Government and as part of that, completed the five modules of the Council Member Essentials, they meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act). They are still required to undertake the Council Member Essentials training at every second election.

If a Council Member is undertaking the Diploma of Local Government and they do not complete all five modules of the Council Member Essentials as part of that study, they will need to complete those units not covered in addition to the Diploma to meet the requirements of the Act. They are still required to undertake the Council Member Essentials training at every second election. The Shire will support Council Members to complete the Diploma and the Costs associated with the Diploma if this is the preferred option for the Council Member, provided that there is sufficient Council Member Training Budget.

Council Members have a responsibility to complete training in accordance with legislation. Non-compliance is an offence under the Act and punishable by a fine not exceeding \$5,000.

The Shire must prepare a report for each financial year on the mandatory training completed by Council Members during the financial year. The report must be published on the Shire's website within one month after the end of the financial year to which the report relates.

### 3.2 Professional Development

In addition to mandatory training, Council Members are encouraged to identify their individual continuing professional development needs to enhance their effectiveness and address skill gaps as required. When determining their professional development activities, Council Members should consider the current or future strategic direction and activities of the Shire and its priorities and the skills that will be needed to assist with decision making.

Council supports the training and professional development activities of Council Members to be able to attend:

- The annual WA Local Government Association Local Government Week Convention
- Up to three separate training events including training courses, seminars or workshops with a cumulative total of up to three days per financial year.

Council Members are encouraged to share with Council learning and insights from training and conferences.

For the purposes of this Policy, the following are not classed as training:

- Advocacy and lobbying.
- Invitations for the Shire to accept or present an award.
- Invitations to the Shire from partnership organisations.

#### **WA Local Government Association Local Government Week Convention**

Council supports the attendance of Council Members and partners to the annual WA Local Government Association Local Government Week Convention.

All costs for Council Members and an accompanying person for accommodation, meals, Partners Program and Conference dinner will be met by Council.

#### **Shire President development**

The role of Shire President is involved in advancing community cohesion and promoting civic awareness, as well as promoting partnerships with other stakeholders.

To enable the skill development of the Shire President in this role, Council supports additional training and professional development activities.

## **Advocacy and lobbying**

The Shire's Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan encourage the creation of a vibrant and connected Shire that supports and improves the community for everyone. Council underpins this purpose through ongoing advocacy and lobbying to higher levels of government and other stakeholders to increase the Shire's funding eligibility and opportunities, and to highlight priority projects.

The Shire President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will represent the Shire in advocacy and lobbying activities. The Shire President may delegate another Council Member to attend where appropriate.

## **Interstate events**

Unless otherwise resolved by Council, a maximum of two Council Members shall attend an interstate professional development event. Should there be more than two nominees, the Shire President has complete discretion on the selection of approved attendees.

## **International events**

All proposals for overseas travel are to be considered at an open meeting of Council and a resolution made as to whether the travel is to take place. Proposals are to include:

- Who is planned to take part in the travel
- Proposed itinerary and expected duration
- Objectives for undertaking the travel, including an explanation of what benefits will accrue from the exercise with an approximate budget
- Detailed costs, including a statement of any amount expected to be reimbursed by the participants.

After returning from the trip, a detailed report is to be provided to Council outlining the achievement of objectives and the benefits to the community that have occurred as a result of the travel.

## **3.3 Approved Training Providers**

Training and professional development activities shall generally be limited to the following:

- WA Local Government Association (WALGA) conferences
- Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) conferences
- Australian Institute of Management
- Australian Institute of Company Directors
- Institute of Public Administration Australia
- Special 'one off' conferences called for or sponsored by WALGA or ALGA on important issues
- Accredited organisations offering training relevant to the role and responsibilities of Council Members

- Other local government specific training courses, workshops and forums, relating to topics on understanding the roles and responsibilities of Council Members, meeting procedures, decision making etc.
- Professional Industry training and conferences that would be of benefit to Council
- Conferences or study tours that address the initiatives and projects that have been outlined in the Shire's Strategic Community Plan or Shire resolutions.

### 3.4 Approval for Training and Professional Development

The CEO is to approve Council Member training and professional development applications where:

- The application complies.
- An application is forwarded to the CEO for approval in a reasonable time to meet the registration deadline.
- Training and development is to be held within Australia.
- There are sufficient funds available in the Council Member allocation to meet the costs of attendance.
- Approval of attendance at an event does not impede a quorum at any scheduled Council or Committee meetings.

An Absolute Majority resolution is required to approve a Council Member request to attend training or professional development where:

- The application does not comply
- Sufficient funds are not available in the Shire's budget for this purpose.

### 3.5 Funding

The Shire will provide sufficient funds in the annual budget for Council Members to comply with their mandatory training requirements as elected members.

Council Members are entitled to a training and professional development allocation, and the Shire will provide sufficient funds in the annual budget for this purpose.

Funding will include actual costs, including registration, accommodation, meal, travel and incidentals which have been incurred. Council Members may elect to utilise training funding for professional membership, equating to one workshop allocation. Membership must relate to their role as a Council Member in local government and be approved by the CEO. Where professional membership is to be paid in a year that a Council Member's term of office is not a full financial year, payment will be on a pro-rata basis.

Expenses for internal workshops, strategic planning days, whole of Council training and development and internal training programs are not included in a Council Member's training and professional development budget.

## 3.6 Allowable Expenses

### **Private vehicle**

Council Member who use their private vehicle for conference travel will be reimbursed for vehicle costs in accordance with the Local Government Officers (Western Australia) Interim Award 2021. Where a vehicle is used instead of air travel, reimbursement will be to a maximum amount equivalent to what it would have cost to travel by air.

### **Air travel**

Where air travel is required, travel requests should be provided at least one month prior to the travel date to allow adequate time for bookings to be made. This will allow the Shire to take advantage of any available discounts for early purchase.

The cost of air travel to and from destinations is to be by the shortest most practical route unless additional travel is contemplated before or after a conference.

All air travel is to be by Economy Class, unless otherwise provided for by Council resolution. For trips in excess of six hours, Premium Economy Class can be used if available for those travel legs. Any costs incurred to allocate a seat in Economy Class will be at the expense of the Shire. The cost of any upgrade to Business Class is to be paid for by the Council Member.

Council Members must not receive any personal frequent flyer loyalty points for air travel booked and paid for by the Shire.

### **Accommodation**

Accommodation will be booked, where practicable, at the associated venue or, if unavailable, at premises in close proximity to the venue. Accommodation charges, including breakfast, are not to exceed the allowance under the annual Commissioner of Taxation Determination for reasonable expense amounts Table 3 of for accommodation, unless specifically approved by Council.

Hire cars will only be paid for by the Shire if the Shire President considers it the most effective means of travel when attending a conference or professional training. Standard taxi fares, or similar, or public transport for reasonable travel requirements, will be reimbursed upon return, on the production of receipts to verify the expense.

If a Council Member decides to extend a stay outside the approved times for the event, or varies the travel arrangements for personal purposes, all additional costs are at the Council Member's expense.

Council Members must not receive any personal accommodation loyalty points for accommodation booked and paid for by the Shire.

### **Meals and incidentals**

Council Member costs for meals, refreshments and incidentals is not to exceed the annual Commissioner of Taxation Determination for reasonable expense amounts Table 2 Food and Drink and Incidentals.

### **Accompanying person expenses**

Where a Council Member is accompanied by another person, costs for or incurred by the accompanying person including, but not limited to travel, meals, registration and / or participation in any event program, are to be borne by the Council Member and will not be paid for by the Shire.

### 3.7 Claiming Expenses

Council Members are advised that care needs to be taken in making application for claims for reimbursement of expenses and to differentiate between expenditure incurred in their private capacity and expenditure necessary to fulfil their role as a Council Member.

Reimbursement of expenses is conditional upon adequate evidence of such expenditure in the form of invoices or receipts.

All claims for reimbursement must be submitted to the Shire President on the expenses claim form within two weeks of completion of the training. Final claims relating to the financial year must be submitted by 31 July of that year. No back payment of claims relating to prior financial years will be permitted.

### 3.8 Travel Insurance

Travel insurance for Shire related business trips including cover for expenses for overseas medical treatment, emergency medical evacuation, flight cancellations, lost baggage and personal effects will be paid for by the Shire.

Council Members must determine whether the benefits and endorsements of the above insurance cover is adequate. Council Members may wish to obtain their own insurance cover, at their own cost, to ensure the benefits and endorsements are adequate for their individual needs.

### 3.9 Training Register

In accordance with the Act the Shire will publish a report on the Shire's website within one month of the end of the financial year detailing the training completed by Council Members.

In order to complete the register, Council Members shall, following completion of the training, provide evidence of completion of the training to the CEO. Council Members will be asked to confirm their completion or attendance as applicable prior to the publication of the register.

The register will state:

- Council Member name
- Each training course or module completed
- The cost of training and any associated travel and accommodation paid for by the Shire
- The training provider or conference name.

For reporting purposes, the costs of training completed as a group will be apportioned to each Council Member that was registered to attend.

## 4. Strategic Objective

The Policy aligns to the following strategic objective:



#### **Effective civic leadership**

Effective civic leadership is visionary and influential. It means listening to the community, balancing competing demands, making fair decisions and acting with integrity.

## 5. Definitions

**Incidentals:** Includes snacks/food that is consumed outside of main meals, official telephone calls, internet and valet parking where public parking is not available.

**Private expenses:** laundry, movies, magazines etc.

## 6. Legislation

- *Local Government Act 1995*  
s.5.126, s.5.127, s.5.128
- Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996  
r.35, r.36

## 7. Related Documents

- Commissioner of Taxation.
- Council Recordkeeping Plan and procedures.
- Council Member training request form.
- Expenses claim form.
- Policy 1.2.3 - Council Member Fees, Allowances and Expenses.

Responsible officer	Chief Executive Officer		
Responsible directorate	Executive Services		
Responsible business unit	Governance and Strategy		
Version control	Date	Resolution	Number
Version 1	26.05.2020	Resolution	20/129
Version 2	18.04.2023	Resolution	23/055