

Council Member Communication with Shire Officers

Objective

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that effective protocols and guidance are in place to:

- Provide clearly defined communications and contact channels between Council Members and Shire officers;
- Improve efficiency in communication, reducing duplication and loss of productive time;
- Provide support to Council Members in the effective performance and discharge of their duties as elected member; and
- Provide a commitment by Shire Officers to timely responses to Council Member requests.

Policy

Council and the Shire are committed to establishing a respectful, harmonious, and effective working relationship between all Council Members and appropriate officers of the Shire through open communications between each party.

The *Local Government Act 1995* ("the Act") provides that the Chief Executive Officer is the primary point of contact between Council Members and the Shire Administration, it is recognised that from time to time, this may be impractical and inefficient.

The Chief Executive Officer may appoint specific Shire officers to receive communications from Council Members. The Chief Executive Officer has the sole discretion to withdraw the delegation from any appointed Shire officer at any time, in accordance with the Act.

The Shire will provide a response within an agreed timeframe. If the matter is unable to be finalised within the agreed timeframe, an update will be provided by the due date.

Information provided to one Council Member will be provided to all Council Members, unless the matter relates to a personal issue, or the Chief Executive Officer considers that it is in the public interest that a matter be confidential, and is not likely to be subject to consideration by Council at a future time.

Email Contact

Email correspondence from Council Members to any Shire Officer other than the Chief Executive Officer must be cc'd to the Chief Executive Officer and the relevant Director, unless the matter relates to a personal issue, including but not limited to the payment of meeting fees, reimbursements, etc, which may be emailed directly to a member of the Governance team.

Council Members should email service requests or requests for information to crrequests@eastpilbara.wa.gov.au and cc the Chief Executive Officer and **AllCouncillors** (which may be found in the Address function).

Telephone Contact

Where the Chief Executive Officer has approved contact with a designated officer, a file note of telephone calls should be made by the officer and Council Member in accordance with the *State Records Act 2000* and a copy of the officer's note confirming the discussion sent to the CEO and relevant Director.

Councillor Portal

The Chief Executive Officer will investigate enhanced use of the Councillor Portal as a means of communication with Council Members, including the option of recording requests directly through the Councillor Portal.

Information provided to Council Members in Council Workshops and other meetings of the Council will be uploaded to the Councillor Portal, together with other relevant documents that assist Council Members in the discharge of their duties.

It is noted that the full capabilities of the Councillor Portal are yet to be realised. This policy will be reviewed following a review of communications options available through the Councillor Portal.

Confidential Matters

Where a Council Member seeks to have a matter dealt with confidentially, they should contact the Chief Executive Officer or Manager Governance, Risk and Procurement directly.

Commitment to Timely Responses

The Shire commits to using best endeavours to respond to requests as quickly as possible. In any case, a response will be provided within five (5) working days of a request being received through the crrquests@eastpilbara.wa.gov.au inbox, in accordance with this Policy. If the matter is unable to be resolved within that timeframe, an update will be provided instead.

In all instances, if the Chief Executive Officer is unable to resolve the request, the matter will be referred to Council for its consideration.

Conduct

Council Members must abide by the *Shire of East Pilbara Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates* at all times. Council Members may not direct operations.

Authorisation Details

References:	<i>Shire of East Pilbara Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates</i>		
Authorised by:	Council		
Date:	22 March 2024	Item No.	12.1.3
Review/Amendment Date	28 March 2025	Minute No.	2025/117
Next Review	Following each ordinary election		
Responsible Directorate	Chief Executive Officer		
Responsible Officer	Manager Governance, Risk and Procurement		
File No.			