

Policy:	Council Workshops
Department:	Governance
Approved by:	Policy and Services Committee
Effective date:	15 March 2023
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide clarity to staff, or other subject matter experts called on to deliver workshops, on the preparation and delivery of Council workshops.
- 1.2 To provide clarity to elected members and the public on what to expect from a Council workshop.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy covers Council workshops only, and does not include Elected Member training, Council and Committee meetings, or internal staff only workshops and training.

3. Principles

- 3.1 This policy is based around the following principles:
 - The Council is transparent with the public and community.
 - Staff are committed to the responsibility of enhancing elected members knowledge and awareness for better decision-making.
 - Consistency in workshop administration, delivery and presentation format will provide a better learning environment for elected members.

4. Background

- 4.1 Council workshops provide a valuable opportunity for staff and other subject experts to provide information to elected members that is relevant for future Council decisions.
- 4.2 Workshops provide an opportunity for staff to be able to answer any questions that elected members may have about a particular topic or issue, outside of the formal setting of a Council meeting.
- 4.3 Council workshops are considered informal in that the Council's Standing Orders do not apply. However, the workshops are still subject to administration procedures, and control through a Chair type role, which is usually allocated to the Mayor, or Deputy Mayor.
- 4.4 Although workshops are largely initiated and developed as a one-way communication method of *informing*, there is an element of *involving* elected members by seeking feedback, in that staff will take note of elected members concerns and opinions about particular issues and provide clarification on any concerns. However, this policy makes

it clear that no decisions, or parts of decisions, will be sought at workshops, or agreed to at workshops.

- 4.5 The decision on whether or not a workshop is warranted is made by the Senior Leadership Team and approved by the Chief Executive, and may be influenced by the upcoming work programme, or upon request by elected members themselves. A workshop would be beneficial where an information presentation will increase knowledge and/or competency, and elected member decision making is improved by looking at a topic in-depth and allowing for elected members to seek clarification to enable a greater understanding of the topic.

5. Workshop Administration

- 5.1 Workshops are scheduled by the Governance Team, and are usually scheduled to be held immediately prior to a Council or Committee meeting.
- 5.2 A memo must be prepared by the subject expert or relevant Director prior to the workshop, using the standard *Workshop Memo Template*. This must be reviewed and approved by the Chief Executive and put into Diligent by the Friday before the workshop at the latest to give elected members sufficient time to work through the material.
- 5.3 Supplementary material may be provided to elected members, for information purposes in addition to the memo. The *Powerpoint Presentation Template* should be used for any live visual presentation unless unsuitable to do so.
- 5.4 The staff member responsible for delivering the workshop must have in-depth knowledge and be able to answer basic questions on the topic being presented. They must have adequate presentation skills and have a thorough awareness of why the information is to be presented to elected members, and be clear on the expected outcomes.
- 5.5 Notes will be recorded for workshop by the Governance Team, or another similarly skilled staff member. The notes from the workshops will be available to the public upon request.
- 5.6 Any exceptions to the process above must be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Chief Executive.

6. Appendices

- *Workshop Memo Template* D21/43144
- *Powerpoint Presentation Template* D21/26692