

Governance Rules

Summary & proposed changes | April 2021

Purpose of the Governance Rules

Council's Governance Rules determine the way Council:

- Makes decisions:
 - in the best interest of the City of Whittlesea community;
 - fairly and on the merits of the question;
 - in a way that ensures any person whose rights will be directly affected by a decision will be entitled to communicate their views and have their interests considered;
- Elects its Mayor and Deputy Mayor;
- Conducts Meetings of Council and Delegated Committees;
- Gives notice of Meetings and records and makes available Meeting records (Minutes and livestreamed Meetings);
- Is informed in its decision making through community engagement, Advisory Committees and Administrator/Councillor areas of responsibility, and Council officer reports;
- Requires the disclosure and management of conflicts of interest.

The Governance Rules also include:

- Rules for the conduct of Council and Councillors during Election Periods, through the Election Period Policy; and
- An overview of alignment of the Governance Rules within Council's democratic and corporate governance.

Proposed changes to the Governance Rules

The Governance Rules have been in operation since 1 September 2020. Council has assessed the effectiveness of the Rules and identified several ways to improve how Council meetings operate and community access to meetings.

The following is a summary of the proposed changes to the Governance rules that we are seeking your feedback on:

- Page 8: The Governance Framework explicitly states that Council's deliberations will be guided by the overarching governance principles in the [Local Government Act 2020](#)
- Section 11.2 on page 14: Discretion for Council to record in the minutes whether a prayer, good governance pledge, reconciliation statement or affirmation is read at the commencement of a meeting

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- Section 12.5 on page 15: Provision for Officers to present reports and speak for up to 5 minutes and a further 2 minutes by extension
- Section 17 on page 18: Provision for the community to ask questions at Council meetings instead of having a separate Public Question Time Policy and Procedural Guidelines
- Section 18 on page 20: Provision for a lead petitioner or a petition signatory to speak to the petition/joint letter for up to 2 minutes at the meeting at which it is tabled
- Sections 17.3, 17.6, 18.10 on pages 19 and 22: Availability of assistance to any community member seeking or requiring support to write questions or to present to Council
- Sections 51 and 52 on page 35: Publication of a register of Council meeting attendance quarterly on Council's website
- Throughout the Rules:
 - Wording has been changed to be more focussed on purpose and community engagement
 - Minor drafting changes made to amend obsolete legislative references, and consequential amendments made to ensure the Rules are legally consistent.