



the place
to live

GOVERNANCE RULES 2020

July 2020

darebin.vic.gov.au



These Governance Rules 2020 are made in accordance with Section 60 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and adopted by resolution of Darebin City Council on 20 July 2020.

Version	Date Adopted by Council	Amendment
1.0	20 July 2020	
1.1	22 August 2022	Incorporate the Minister for Local Government Good Practice Guideline MGP3-3: Virtual Meetings Various refinements to enhance clarity and consistency
1.2	23 October 2023	Election Period Policy updated
1.3	24 June 2024	Election Period Policy updated, including updated Caretaker Period dates

Table of Contents

Contents

AUTHORISATION	6
Date of Commencement	6
COMMITMENT	6
CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION	2
1. Purpose.....	2
CHAPTER 2 – BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT.....	3
2.1 Background	3
2.1.1 In accordance with section 60 of the <i>Act</i> , Darebin Council must adopt and keep in force Governance Rules.	3
2.1.2 These Governance Rules provide to promote and encourage:	3
2.1.3 Peace, order and good government to the Darebin municipality	3
2.1.4 Administration of Council’s powers and functions	3
2.1.5 Local community participation in the system of local government by providing mechanisms within the meeting arrangements for Council to ascertain the local community’s view and expectations ..	3
2.2 Affected Persons Rights and Interests	3
2.3 Context	3
2.4 Definitions	4
CHAPTER 3 – MEETING PROCEDURES	6
Title 6	
Purpose of this Chapter.....	6
Application of the Meeting Rules	6
1. COUNCIL MEETINGS, UNSCHEDULED COUNCIL MEETINGS AND DELEGATED COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL... 7	
1.1. Notice of Meetings and Agenda Distribution.....	7
1.1.1. Calling and Scheduling of Ordinary Council Meetings and Special Council Meetings	7
1.1.2. Calling and Scheduling of Special Council Meetings.....	8
1.1.3. Process to Call a Special Council Meeting	8
1.1.4. Agenda Distribution for Ordinary Meetings and Special Meetings.....	8
1.1.5. Adjourned, Cancelled or Postponed Meetings	9
1.2. Quorums	9
1.2.1. Quorum to be present.....	9
1.2.2. Failure to Raise a Quorum	9
1.2.3. Inability to Maintain a Quorum	10
1.2.4. Inability to Achieve or Maintain a Quorum Due to Conflicts of Interest of Councillors	10
1.3. Time Limits for Meetings	11

1.3.1.	Time Limits for Meetings	11
1.4.	Chairperson may Temporarily Adjourn a Meeting	11
1.5.	Business Transacted Valid.....	11
2.	Business of Meetings	12
2.1.	Order of Business.....	12
2.2.	Change to the Order of Business	13
2.3.	Business at Meetings	13
2.4.	Conflict of Interest	13
2.5.	Presence of Councillors.....	13
3.	Role of the Chairperson	14
3.1.	<i>Mayor</i> to Take Chair	14
3.2.	Appointment of an Acting or Temporary Chairperson	14
3.3.	The Chairperson’s Duties and Discretions	15
3.4.	Chairperson’s Ruling	15
4.	Motions	16
5.	Voting	22
6.	Notices of Motion.....	23
7.	Notice of Rescission or Amendment.....	26
9.	Procedural Motions	30
9.2.	Schedule of Procedural Motions.....	31
10.	Points of Order.....	34
11.	Meeting Conduct	36
	Physical and Remote Attendance.....	36
11.1	Mode of Attendance	36
11.2	Meetings Conducted Remotely	37
12.	Minutes.....	40
13.	Webcasting and Recording of Proceedings.....	41
14.	Submissions	42
15.	Public Questions	44
16.	Petitions.....	46
17.	Election Procedures	48
CHAPTER 4 – DELEGATED COMMITTEES.....		52
CHAPTER 5 – CONFLICTS OF INTEREST		53
5.7	Disclosure of Conflict of Interest by Members of Council Staff in the Exercise of Delegated Power	56
CHAPTER 6 – DELEGATIONS		58
CHAPTER 7 - JOINT COUNCIL MEETINGS.....		59

CHAPTER 8 – WHAT INFORMS DECISION MAKING	60
8.1 Advisory Committees.....	60
8.2 Council Reports.....	61
CHAPTER 9 – OTHER MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS / CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION	63
CHAPTER 10 – COMMUNITY ASSET COMMITTEES.....	64
CHAPTER 11 – ELECTION PERIODS	65

AUTHORISATION

- 1) The Darebin City Council at its Meeting on 20 July 2020 has established these Governance Rules in accordance with section 60 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Date of Commencement

- 2) These Governance Rules commence on 20 July 2020.

COMMITMENT

Good governance and integrity underpin local government democracy, accountability and conduct. Adherence to these principles enables our community to hold the Council to account for its performance and reflects the obligations of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act).

The principles of good governance are to be applied throughout all decision making, corporate governance and democratic governance by adherence to these Governance Rules. The principles of good governance incorporate the overarching governance and supporting principles outlined in section 9 of the Act¹.

Council decision making will also be conducted with transparency. The process by which decisions will be made is transparent and clearly articulated in these Governance Rules for the scrutiny of our community and accountability of Councillors and Council officers.

¹ 9 Overarching governance principles and supporting principles

- (1) A Council must in the performance of its role give effect to the overarching governance principles.
- (2) The following are the overarching governance principles—
 - (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;
 - (b) priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;
 - (c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;
 - (d) the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;
 - (e) innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued;
 - (f) collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;
 - (g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;
 - (h) regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;
 - (i) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.
- (3) In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, a Council must take into account the following supporting principles—
 - (a) the community engagement principles;
 - (b) the public transparency principles;
 - (c) the strategic planning principles;
 - (d) the financial management principles;
 - (e) the service performance principles.

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of the Governance Rules are to regulate:

1.1.1 Proceedings at meetings of Council, Delegated Committees and other meetings conducted by or on behalf of Council where Council has resolved that the provisions of these Governance Rules are to apply

1.1.2 How meeting records will be kept and how to access them

1.1.3 Procedures for the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor

1.1.4 Conduct of Councillors, Council and Staff during the election period in the lead up to local government elections

1.1.5 Disclosure of conflict of interest

1.2 These Rules determine the way in which *Council* (including persons acting with the delegated authority of *Council*), must make a decision:

1.2.1 in the best interest of the Darebin community

1.2.2 fairly, by giving consideration and making a decision which is balanced, ethical and impartial; and

1.2.3 on the merits, free from favoritism or self-interest and without regard to irrelevant or unauthorised considerations.

CHAPTER 2 – BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 In accordance with section 60 of the *Act*, Darebin Council must adopt and keep in force Governance Rules.
- 2.1.2 These Governance Rules provide to promote and encourage:
 - 2.1.3 Peace, order and good government to the Darebin municipality
 - 2.1.4 Administration of Council’s powers and functions
 - 2.1.5 Local community participation in the system of local government by providing mechanisms within the meeting arrangements for Council to ascertain the local community’s view and expectations

2.2 Affected Persons Rights and Interests

- 2.2.1 Before making a decision that affects a person’s rights, *Council* will identify whose rights may be affected and provide an opportunity for that person (or persons) to convey those views regarding the effect on their rights and consider those views.
- 2.2.2 This includes but is not limited to the rights outlined in the Charter of *Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and *Towards Equality, Equal Opportunity Act 2010*, *Gender Equality Act 2020*, Darebin City Council’s Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework 2019-2029.
 - 2.2.2.1 The opportunity provided for a person whose rights have been affected to contribute their views will be documented in any relevant report put before the Council.
 - 2.2.2.2 A Council officer making a decision under delegation that affects the rights of a person will record in writing the opportunity provided to the person to have their views considered.¹

2.3 Context

- 2.3.1 These Rules are to be read in the context of and in conjunction with:
 - 2.3.1.1 the overarching governance principles specified in section 9(2) of the *Act*; and
 - 2.3.1.2 the following documents:
 - (a) Community Engagement Policy;
 - (b) Public Transparency Policy;
 - (c) Councillor Code of Conduct;
 - (d) Employee Code of Conduct; and
 - (e) Other relevant policies.

Note: Any Guidance, Overview Notes and Footnotes within these rules are intended to be explanatory and do not form part of these Governance Rules. They will be monitored and updated as required to reflect changes to legislation or to assist interpretation and understanding.

¹ Section 60(2) *Local Government Act 2020*.

2.4 Definitions

(1) In these Governance Rules, unless the context suggests otherwise the following words and phrases mean:

Act means the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic).

Absolute Majority means the number of Councillors which is greater than half the total number of the Councillors of a Council.

Abstain has the same meaning as a Councillor in attendance at the Meeting who does not vote is to be taken to have voted against the motion or amendment.

Advisory committee means a committee established by the Council, that provides advice to Council.

Attend, attending and in attendance include attend, attending or in attendance by electronic means.

Authorised Officer has the same meaning as in section 224 of the Local Government Act 1989 (Vic) or any other relevant Act..

Chairperson means the Chairperson of a Meeting and includes an acting, temporary and substitute Chairperson.

Chamber means any room where the Council holds a Council Meeting.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) means the person appointed by Council to be its Chief Executive Officer, or any person acting in that position.

Committee means a Committee established by Council, including a Delegated Committee.

Common Seal means the common seal of Council.

Council means the Darebin City Council being all the Councillors collectively.

Council Meeting means a Meeting of the Council convened in accordance with these Governance Rules and includes a scheduled Meeting and unscheduled Meeting (whether held as face-to-face attendance in a set location or via electronic means (virtual) or in a 'hybrid' format that mixes in-person and electronic attendance.

Council staff means a person who is appointed (other than an independent contractor under a contract for services or a volunteer) to enable the functions of the Council to be carried out.

Delegate means a member of Council staff whose powers, functions and duties have been delegated by an instrument of delegation from the Chief Executive Officer.

Delegated Committee means a delegated committee established by Council under section 63 of the Act, or a joint delegated committee established by 2 or more Councils under 64.

Delegated Committee Meeting means a Meeting of a Delegated Committee convened in accordance with these Governance Rules and includes a scheduled or unscheduled meeting (whether held as face-to-face attendance in a set location or via electronic means (virtual) or in a 'hybrid' format that mixes in-person and electronic attendance.

Deputy Mayor means the Deputy Mayor of Council and any person appointed by Council to act as Deputy Mayor.

Disorder means any disorderly conduct of a member of the Gallery or a Councillor and includes:

- i. interjecting when another person is speaking, except, in the case of a Councillor, to raise a Point of Order;
- ii. making comments that are defamatory, malicious, abusive or offensive;
- iii. refusing to leave the Meeting when requested, ordered or directed to do so by the Chairperson in accordance with these Governance Rules; and
- iv. engaging in any other conduct which prevents the orderly conduct of the Meeting.

Electronic Means includes email or facsimile transmission or similar electronic means of communication including utilising in house, hosted or cloud-based file and document sharing software or systems and includes the virtual attendance at Council or Delegated Meetings.

General Manager means a senior officer of Darebin City Council holding the position of General Manager or another position (however designated) reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer.

Majority of the Votes means a majority of Councillors present at the time of a vote voting in favour of a matter.

Mayor means the Councillor elected to the Office of Mayor or any person appointed by Council to be acting as Mayor.

Meeting means a Council Meeting or Delegated Committee Meeting

Unscheduled Meeting means a meeting of the Council convened for a particular purpose or matter that cannot safely or conveniently be deferred until the next Meeting.

CHAPTER 3 – MEETING PROCEDURES

Title

This Chapter will be known as the “Meeting Procedures”.

Purpose of this Chapter

In accordance with s 60 of the *Act* the purpose of this Chapter is to:

- (a) provide for the procedures governing the conduct of *Council meetings*;
- (b) provide for the conduct of meetings of Delegated Committees²;
- (c) provide for the form and availability of meeting records;
- (d) provide for the election of the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor;
- (e) provide for the appointment of an Acting Mayor.

Application of the Meeting Rules

- (1) These Rules apply at all times throughout the Municipality.
- (2) Where applicable these Rules must be read in conjunction with the Councillor Code of Conduct.
- (3) These Rules will apply to all Scheduled and Unscheduled Council meetings and any Delegated Committees established by Council under the *Act*.

² Council currently has two Delegated Committees: Planning Committee and Hearing of Submissions Committee
Governance Rules

1. COUNCIL MEETINGS, UNSCHEDULED COUNCIL MEETINGS AND DELEGATED COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

1.1. Notice of Meetings and Agenda Distribution

Overview:

Ordinary Meetings are held regularly to conduct the ongoing business of the Council.

Special Council Meetings are unscheduled meetings of the Council and are held when called to deal with the specific business detailed in the notice or resolution requesting the Chief Executive Officer to call them

Delegated Committee Meetings are meetings of:

- *a Delegated Committee established by Council pursuant to, and in accordance with, section 63 of the Act; or*
- *a joint delegated committee established by 2 or more Councils under section 64 of the Act.*

Wherever possible, an agenda for each type of Meeting must be provided to Councillors in advance so that they can prepare adequately for the Meeting.

In the case of Delegated Committees that are not comprised solely of Councillors, the Chairperson must provide reasonable notice to the public of meetings of the Delegated Committee. Council must ensure that public notice of any meeting is also published on Council's website).

1.1.1. Calling and Scheduling of Ordinary Council Meetings and Special Council Meetings

- (1) The dates, times and locations of *Council Meetings* will be fixed by Council from time to time.
- (2) Notwithstanding sub clause (1) the date, time and location of a *Council Meeting* may be altered by Council resolution, or the *Chief Executive Officer*, may change the date, time and place of, or cancel, any Meeting which has been fixed and must provide notice of the change to the public.
- (3) A schedule of *Council Meetings* must be prepared and published in publications that are distributed throughout the municipality (including Council publications) and on Council's website at least once each year or with such greater frequency as the *Chief Executive Officer* determines.

1.1.2. Calling and Scheduling of Special Council Meetings

- (1) A notice to call a *Special Council Meeting* must be delivered to the *Chief Executive Officer* in enough time to enable the provisions of this section to be observed.
- (2) Any resolution of Council to call a *Special Council Meeting* must specify the date and time of the *Special Council Meeting* and the business to be transacted. The date and time of the *Special Council Meeting* must not be prior to 6pm on the day following the *Council Meeting* at which the resolution was made.
- (3) Council must at least seven (7) days before the holding of a *Special Council Meeting* give public notice.
- (4) If urgent or extraordinary circumstances prevent the Council from giving the prescribed notice, Council must give such public notice as is practicable and specify in the minutes of the Meeting the urgent or extraordinary circumstances which prevented Council from complying with the seven (7) day notice.

1.1.3. Process to Call a Special Council Meeting

- (1) The *Mayor* or at least 3 Councillors may by written notice call a *Special Council Meeting*.
- (2) The notice must specify the date and time of the *Special Council Meeting* and the business to be transacted.
- (3) The Council may by resolution call a *Special Council Meeting*.
- (4) The resolution must specify the date and time of the *Special Council Meeting* and the business to be transacted.
- (5) The *Chief Executive Officer* must call the delegated meeting as specified in the notice or resolution.
- (6) Unless all Councillors are present and unanimously agree to deal with another matter, only the business specified in the notice or resolution is to be transacted.
- (7) The *Chief Executive Officer* may call a *Special Council Meeting* within 14 days of the result of a Council election being declared.

1.1.4. Agenda Distribution for Ordinary Meetings and Special Meetings

- (1) At least six (6) days prior to a scheduled meeting, an Agenda incorporating the business to be dealt with must be:
 - (a) discussed between the *Chief Executive Officer* and *Mayor* prior to distribution;
 - (b) delivered to each Councillor by electronic means; and
 - (c) published on Council's website.
- (2) If it not possible to comply with sub-clause (1) for any reason, the *Chief Executive Officer* must ensure delivery and publication of the Agenda as soon as reasonably possible.

1.1.5. Adjourned, Cancelled or Postponed Meetings

- (1) The *Chief Executive Officer* may cancel or postpone any Meeting by giving such notice to Councillors via electronic means and the public via publication on Council's website as soon as is reasonably practicable, where they are satisfied that the cancellation or postponement is warranted because:
 - (a) of an emergency;
 - (b) a quorum will not be achieved due to apologies received ahead of the Meeting;
 - (c) there is insufficient material in the Agenda to justify a Meeting being held;
 - (d) holding the Meeting would give rise to a risk to health and / or safety; or
 - (e) of any other circumstances have arisen which make the holding of the Meeting undesirable.
- (2) If a Meeting is adjourned, cancelled or postponed to another day for any reason, clauses 1.1.4(1), (2) and (3) apply to the extent that is reasonably practicable.

1.2. Quorums

Overview:

No business can be transacted at any Meeting unless a majority of the Councillors are present (Quorum).

If there is no Quorum at the commencement of a Meeting or if a Quorum cannot be maintained during a Meeting, the Meeting is to be adjourned to another date and/or time.

1.2.1. Quorum to be present

- (1) No business may be conducted at any *Council Meeting* unless a Quorum is present.
- (2) Quorum means presence by a majority of Councillors.

1.2.2. Failure to Raise a Quorum

- (1) If a Quorum is not present within 30 minutes of the time appointed for the commencement of a Meeting, the *Chief Executive Officer* or, in their absence, another Officer, will adjourn the Meeting to a later time on the same day, or to another date and time not more than 14 days from the original date of the Meeting.
- (2) Unless the Meeting is adjourned to a later time on the same day, the *Chief Executive Officer* or, in their absence, another Officer, must give notice to all Councillors of the adjourned Meeting in accordance with clause 1.1.5 of these Rules.

-
- (3) The requirement in sub-clause (2) does not apply in respect of any Councillor who has been granted leave obtained from the Council pursuant to section 35(1)(e) of the Act and who has not requested the *Chief Executive Officer*, in writing, to continue to give notice of Meetings to be held during the period of leave of absence.

1.2.3. Inability to Maintain a Quorum

- (1) If a quorum is lost after a Meeting has commenced, the *Chief Executive Officer* or, in their absence, another Senior Officer, must immediately adjourn the Meeting for a period not exceeding 30 minutes, at which time, if a quorum is:
 - (a) present, the Meeting resumes; or
 - (b) not present and, after using their best endeavors to regain a quorum, and they cannot do so, they must announce that the Meeting has closed.
- (2) If a Meeting closes under sub-clause (1)b), the undisposed business must be listed at:
 - (a) the next Ordinary *Council Meeting*; or
 - (b) a subsequent *Special Council Meeting* convened for this purpose; or
 - (c) a subsequent Meeting where the undisposed business is included in the business to be transacted for that Meeting.
- (3) All business transacted prior to the closure of a Meeting due to loss of a quorum is valid and capable of being acted upon.

1.2.4. Inability to Achieve or Maintain a Quorum Due to Conflicts of Interest of Councillors

- (1) The Chairperson may defer an item of business in respect of which there is, or is likely to be, a disclosure of a conflict of interest by one or more Councillors that will cause a quorum to be lost, and direct the *Chief Executive Officer* to include that item of business on an Agenda for a future Meeting. This does not require a resolution of Council.
- (2) If a Quorum cannot be achieved or maintained due to the declaration of conflicts of interest by the majority of Councillors, the *Chief Executive Officer* or, in their absence, another Officer, may adjourn the Meeting for a length of time sufficient to enable exemption for the affected Councillors to be obtained from the Minister.

1.3. Time Limits for Meetings

1.3.1. Time Limits for Meetings

- (1) A Meeting must not continue for more than three (3) hours from the time that the Meeting started unless a Procedural Motion for a Continuance is carried (with a mover and seconder, and no debate).
- (2) A Continuance of a Meeting will be in a block period of 30 minutes.
- (3) After the initial 30-minute Continuance, the Meeting must not continue unless a Procedural Motion for a further Continuance is carried.
- (4) A Meeting may only be continued for a maximum of two (2) 30-minute Continuances.
- (5) In the absence of a Continuance or in the event there is further business to be transacted at the completion of two Continuances, the Meeting must stand adjourned and be re-convened in accordance with this Meeting Rules.
- (6) If sub-clause (5) applies, clause 1.1.5 operates with respect to the provision of notice of the adjourned Meeting.
- (7) Notwithstanding sub-clause (5), the Chairperson may seek the agreement of Councillors not to adjourn the Meeting to a subsequent day, if the Chairperson reasonably believes the remaining business will take less than 15 minutes to transact.
- (8) In the absence of a Continuance under this clause:
 - (a) Council may, during the time allowed for the Meeting, resolve that the Meeting be adjourned; or
 - (b) at the conclusion of the time allowed for the Meeting, the Meeting must stand adjourned and any undisposed business must be disposed of in accordance with clause 1.2.3(2).

1.4. Chairperson may Temporarily Adjourn a Meeting

The Chairperson may adjourn a Meeting for up to 10-minutes, at any point in proceedings. This does not require a Council resolution.

1.5. Business Transacted Valid

All business transacted at the Meeting before any adjournment will remain valid and be capable of being acted upon.

2. Business of Meetings

Overview:

The business to be transacted at a Council Meeting is contained in the Agenda provided to Councillors and available to the public on Council's website.

The Chief Executive Officer oversees preparation of the Agenda and determines with the Mayor the content and order of business to facilitate open, efficient and effective processes of government. Council can, admit an item of urgent business after the distribution of the Agenda.

Relevant Provisions of the Local Government Act – Conflict of Interest

Part 6 Division 2 of the Act defines when a Councillor will have a conflict of interest. Any Councillor who has a conflict of interest must comply with the requirements of the Part of the Act and with the Governance Rules of the Council relating to procedures for the disclosure of a conflict of interest.

Among these requirements is the requirement to disclose the existence of a conflict of interest and the type of interest and nature of the interest. This must be done immediately before the consideration or discussion of the item in which the Councillor has a conflict of interest, unless the type and nature of the conflict of interest have been disclosed to the Chief Executive Officer in writing before the Meeting. If the type and nature of the interest have been disclosed to the Chief Executive Officer in writing before the Meeting, only the existence of the conflict of interest and the type of interest must be disclosed in the Meeting.

Whilst a Councillor must disclose the conflict of interest at the commencement of the Meeting when conflicts of interest are called for, the existence of the conflict of interest and the class and nature of the interest must again be disclosed immediately before any consideration or discussion of the relevant Agenda item occurs.

2.1. Order of Business

- (1) The *Chief Executive Officer* is responsible for preparation and delivery of the Agenda, including the determination of the order of business.
- (2) Once the Agenda has been circulated, no further changes will be made to the Agenda, unless the *Chief Executive Officer* determines to issue a supplementary report.
- (3) The Agenda for each Ordinary Meeting (only) must contain the following items:
 1. Opening of Meeting
 2. Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners
 3. Apologies
 4. Disclosures of Conflicts of Interest
 5. Confirmation of the Minutes of *Council Meetings*
 6. Council's Occupational Health & Safety Responsibilities

-
7. Public Question Time
 8. Petitions
 9. Consideration of Reports
 10. Notices of Motion
 11. Urgent Business
 12. Records of Assemblies of Councillors
 13. Reports by *Mayor* and Councillors
 14. Consideration of Reports Considered Confidential
 15. Close of Meeting
- (4) The items to be listed on the Agenda of any Meeting of a Delegated Committee will be determined by the *Chief Executive Officer*.

2.2. Change to the Order of Business

- (1) A change to the order of business may only be made by through a Procedural Motion. (with a mover and seconder, and no debate)
- (2) Changes to the order of business through a Procedural Motion may be made more than once during a Meeting.

2.3. Business at Meetings

- (1) No business can be dealt with at an Ordinary Meeting or Special Meetings unless:
 - (a) it is contained on the Agenda; or
 - (b) it is admitted as urgent business in accordance with 8.1.

2.4. Conflict of Interest

Councillors, members and officers must provide a full disclosure of any conflict of interest in accordance with Chapter 5 of these Rules under Part 6 Division 2 of the *Act*.

2.5. Presence of Councillors

Councillors must be either physically or electronically in attendance for the *Council Meeting* in order to participate in the meeting and vote. Councillors must comply with the provisions of these Rules in respect to Physical and Remote Attendance (refer Clause 11.1 of these Rules).

Note:

To the extent that there may be any conflict or inconsistency between these Rules and the Act, the Act will prevail.

3. Role of the Chairperson

Overview:

In accordance with the Act, the role of the Mayor is to Chair Council Meetings. If the Mayor is absent, the Deputy Mayor (if any) must take the Chair and if both are absent, Council must elect one of the Councillors as temporary Chairperson.

The way in which Council and Committee Meetings are conducted makes a significant contribution to good governance. The Chairperson plays a crucial role in facilitating an orderly, respectful, transparent and constructive meeting by ensuring all Councillors and members of Committees have the opportunity to be heard, matters are adequately discussed, meeting procedures are followed and statutory requirements are adhered to.

The Chairperson is an independent leader of meetings and generally does not participate in debate or move or second motions. Specific duties and discretions of the Chairperson are outlined throughout this Meeting Rules.

3.1. Mayor to Take Chair

- (1) The *Mayor* must take the chair at all *Ordinary Council Meetings* and other Meetings conducted by or on behalf of *Council* at which they are present unless:
 - a) they are precluded from doing so because of a conflict of interest;
 - b) they step down from the chair for a short period with the consent of the Meeting; or
 - c) in the case of a Delegated Committee Meeting, Council or the Delegated Committee has appointed someone else as a Chairperson for that Delegated Committee.
- (2) If the *Mayor* is unable to take the chair or steps down in accordance with sub-clause (1), the *Deputy Mayor* must take the chair.
- (3) If the *Deputy Mayor* is not present or is unable to take the chair, an acting or temporary Chairperson will be appointed.

3.2. Appointment of an Acting or Temporary Chairperson

- (1) The election of an acting or temporary Chairperson will be made by through a procedural motion. (requiring a mover and seconder, and with no debate)
- (2) While considering a motion to appoint of an acting or temporary Chairperson, the Meeting will be chaired by:
 - a) the *Mayor*; or where the *Mayor* is not present
 - b) the *Deputy Mayor*; or where the *Deputy Mayor* is not present
 - c) a Councillor elected by the Council
 - d) *Chief Executive Officer*.

3.3. The Chairperson's Duties and Discretions

In addition to the specific duties and discretions provided in these Rules, the Chairperson has the following duties.

- (1) The Chairperson must not accept any motion or amendment which is determined by the Chairperson to be:
 - (a) defamatory, malicious, abusive or objectionable in language or substance;
 - (b) vague or unclear in intention;
 - (c) outside the powers of Council;
 - (d) irrelevant to the item being considered;
 - (e) purporting to be an amendment but is not;
 - (f) the same as, or similar in intent to, a Notice of Motion or other motion (including lost and lapsed motions) that were considered by Council in the preceding six (6) months, unless the majority of the whole Council consents to it being accepted and debated;
 - (g) it includes a misleading or false statement; or
 - (h) unclear in its intent or may be subject to misinterpretation, the Chairperson must lay the motion on the table until the next *Council Meeting* when advice will be provided by the *Chief Executive Officer* as to the meaning or the motion as worded.
- (2) The Chairperson must allow the *Chief Executive Officer* the opportunity to correct factual errors or incorrect assertions that arise during the Meeting.
- (3) The Chairperson must ensure that silence is preserved in the public galley during a Meeting.
- (4) The Chairperson must call to order any person if their behaviour is disruptive or unruly or interferes with the conduct of the business of Council.
- (5) The Chairperson must call to order any member of the public who approaches the Council table during the Meeting, unless invited by the Chairperson to do so.
- (6) The Chairperson must decide on all points of order in accordance with clause 10.3.

3.4. Chairperson's Ruling

Where the Meeting Rules do not provide for a procedure for a Meeting, the Chairperson will determine the procedure to be followed.

4. Motions

Overview:

This section describes the procedure for introducing a motion or amendment, the rules of debate, foreshadowing a motion or amendment and the duty of the Chairperson in relation to accepting motions and amendments.

A Councillor may move any motion related to an item included in the Agenda. In the interests of transparency and informed decision making, motions or amendments should not introduce new matters to a debate that have not been the subject of the report or background of the motion being considered by Council.

As a resolution must be able to be acted upon, a motion must clearly state what is intended and what its impact will be. This provides clarity for the implementation of Council decisions.

4.1. Moving a Motion

The procedure for moving any motion is as follows.

- (a) A Councillor who wishes to move a motion must raise their hand (not stand).
- (b) The Chairperson will call on the Councillor they determine raised their hand first.
- (c) The mover must state the motion without speaking to it.
- (d) The motion must be seconded by a Councillor other than the mover by raising their hand (not standing).
- (e) The Chairperson is unable to move or second a motion.
- (f) If the Chairperson wishes to move or second a motion, then:
 - i. The *Deputy Mayor* must take the chair or, if there is no *Deputy Mayor* or the *Deputy Mayor* is absent or is the current Chairperson, the Meeting must elect a temporary Chairperson; and
 - ii. Whereupon the Chairperson must vacate the chair and not return to it until the motion has been resolved upon.
- (g) If a motion is not seconded, the motion lapses for want of a seconder. There will be no discussion or debate on a motion that has not been seconded.
- (h) If there is a seconder, the Chairperson must call on the mover to speak to the motion prior to any amendment. This signals the beginning of the debate.
- (i) Prior to the commencement of debate on a motion or an amendment a Councillor may, when no other Councillor is speaking, ask any question of Officers concerning or arising out of the motion for the purposes of clarification. A Councillor may not ask a question of Officers once debate has commenced on a motion
- (j) After the mover has spoken to the motion, the seconder (unless they reserve their right to speak later in the debate) may also speak to the motion prior to any amendment.

-
- (k) Except for the mover of a motion who has a right of reply in accordance with clause 4.5 check of the Meeting Rules, all other Councillors can only speak once to the motion.
 - (l) The Chairperson may only speak to a motion when all Councillors who wish to speak to it have done so, and just before closure of debate by the mover of the motion.
 - (m) After the seconder has spoken to the motion (or after the mover has spoken to the motion if the seconder does not speak to the motion), the Chairperson must call on any Councillor who wishes to speak against the motion, then on any Councillor who wishes to speak for the motion, alternating with all Councillors wishing to speak.
 - (n) After waiting until all Councillors wishing to speak to the motion have spoken, the Chairperson will put the matter to the vote or, if no Councillor indicates opposition or a desire to speak to the motion, the Chairperson will put the matter to the vote immediately.
 - (o) Before putting a motion to the vote, the Chairperson may require the *Chief Executive Officer* or their delegate to read out the text of the motion.

4.2. Debate Must be Relevant

- (1) Debate must always be relevant to the motion or amendment before the Meeting and, if not, the Chairperson must request the speaker to confine debate to the motion or amendment.
- (2) If, after being requested two times by the Chairperson to confine debate to the motion or amendment before the Meeting, the speaker continues to debate irrelevant matters, the Chairperson may direct the speaker to be seated and not speak further in respect of the motion or amendment. The speaker must immediately comply with any such direction.

4.3. Miscellaneous Rules of Debate

- (1) A Councillor must not, in any debate, make any defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive or disorderly statement or comment about any Councillor, Officer or other person.
- (2) If a statement or comment described in sub-clause (1) is made, the Chairperson may, without a point of order being raised, direct the Councillor to withdraw it and the Councillor concerned must immediately and unreservedly do so.
- (3) Failure to comply with Chairpersons direction in relation to clause (1) may result in a warning pursuant to clause 11.4 of these Rules.
- (4) In cases where there is competition for the right to speak at a Meeting, including moving or seconding a motion or amendment, the Chairperson must decide the order in which Councillors may speak.

-
- (5) If a debate is adjourned by Procedural Motion, then the Councillor who moved the adjournment has the right to speak first when the debate is resumed.
 - (6) A Councillor must not be interrupted except by the Chairperson or upon a point of order being taken.
 - (7) A mover and seconder of a motion or amendment are not permitted to withdraw their moving and seconding of the motion or amendment after debate has commenced.

4.4. Right to Ask Questions

- (1) Prior to the commencement of debate on a motion (including a procedural motion) or an amendment a Councillor may, when no other Councillor is speaking, ask any question of Officers concerning or arising out of the motion for the purposes of clarification. A Councillor may not ask a question of Officers once debate has commenced on a motion.
- (2) A Councillor must not ask any question that is in any way defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive or disorderly about any Councillor, Officer or other person.
- (3) The Chairperson has the right to limit questions and direct that debate be commenced.
- (4) A Councillor asking a question under sub-clause (1) is not deemed to be speaking to the motion before the Meeting.

4.5. Right of Reply

- (1) The mover of a motion that has not been amended may, once debate has been exhausted, exercise a right of reply to matters raised during debate immediately before the vote is taken.
- (2) No new matters may be raised in the right of reply.
- (3) If no Councillor has spoken against a motion, there will be no right of reply.
- (4) The mover of a motion loses their right of reply if an amendment to the motion is carried.
- (5) The mover of an amendment to a motion does not have a right of reply.
- (6) After the right of reply has been exercised, the motion must immediately be put to the vote without any further questions, discussion or debate.

4.6. Time Limits for Debate

A Councillor must not speak on any one motion for a time longer than that stated below:

the mover of a motion:	3 minutes
any other speaker:	2 minutes
the mover of a motion exercising a right of reply:	2 minutes

4.7. Moving an Amendment

- (1) A motion that has been moved and seconded may be amended by leaving out, inserting or adding words that are relevant to the subject of the motion.
- (2) An amendment must not be directly Opposite to the motion.

Note:

If a proposed amendment is ruled by the Chairperson to be directly opposite or substantially contrary to the motion, it should be treated as an alternative motion to be considered only in the event that the motion before the Council is lost.

- (3) An amendment may be proposed or seconded by any Councillor, except the mover and seconder of the original motion and the Chairperson.
- (4) If a Councillor proposes an amendment and the original mover and seconder of the motion both indicate their agreement with the amendment, the amended motion becomes the substantive motion without debate or vote.
- (5) A motion to confirm a previous resolution of Council cannot be amended.
- (6) The procedure for moving any amendment is as follows.
 - i. Councillor who wishes to move an amendment must raise their hand (not stand).
 - ii. The Chairperson will call on the Councillor they determine raised their hand first.
 - iii. The mover must state the amendment without speaking to it.
 - iv. The amendment must be seconded by a Councillor other than the mover by raising their hand (not standing).
 - v. The Chairperson is unable to move or second an amendment.
 - vi. If the Chairperson wishes to move or second an amendment, then:
 - vii. the *Deputy Mayor* must take the chair or, if there is no *Deputy Mayor* or the *Deputy Mayor* is absent or is the current Chairperson the Meeting must elect a temporary Chairperson; and
 - viii. whereupon the Chairperson must vacate the chair and not return to it until the amendment has been resolved upon.
 - ix. If an amendment is not seconded, the amendment lapses for want of a seconder. There will be no discussion or debate on an amendment that has not been seconded.
 - x. If there is a seconder, the Chairperson must call on the mover to speak to the amendment. This signals the beginning of the debate.
 - xi. Prior to the commencement of debate on an amendment a Councillor may, when no other Councillor is speaking, ask any question of Officers concerning or arising out of the motion for the purposes of clarification. A Councillor may not ask a question of Officers once debate has commenced on an amendment

-
- xii. After the mover has spoken to the amendment, the seconder (unless they reserve their right to speak later in the debate) may also speak to the amendment.
 - xiii. After the seconder has spoken to an amendment (or after the mover has spoken to the amendment if the seconder does not speak to the amendment), the Chairperson must call on any Councillor who wishes to speak against the amendment, then on any Councillor who wishes to speak for the amendment, alternating with all Councillors wishing to speak.
 - xiv. After waiting until all Councillors wishing to speak to the amendment have spoken, the Chairperson will put the amendment to the vote or, if no Councillor indicates opposition or a desire to speak to the amendment, the Chairperson will put the amendment to the vote immediately.
 - xv. Before putting an amendment to the vote, the Chairperson may require the *Chief Executive Officer* or delegate to read out the text of the amendment.

4.8. Miscellaneous Rules for an Amendment

- (1) A Councillor may speak on any amendment once, whether or not they have spoken to the motion, but debate must be confined to the terms of the amendment.
- (2) Any number of amendments may be proposed to a motion, but only one amendment may be accepted by the Chairperson at any one time.
- (3) No second or subsequent amendment, whether to the motion or an amendment of it, may be taken into consideration until the previous amendment has been dealt with and voted on.
- (4) The mover of an amendment does not have any right of reply.
- (5) Any one Councillor cannot, without the leave of the Chairperson, move more than two amendments in succession.
- (6) If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended then becomes the substantive motion before the Meeting.
- (7) Neither the mover of the original motion, nor the mover of the amendment, has a right of reply to that amended motion.

4.9. Time Limits for Debate for an Amendment

A Councillor must not speak on an amendment for a time longer than stated below, unless granted an extension by the Chairperson:

the mover of an amendment:	3 minutes
any other speaker:	2 minutes

4.10. Foreshadowing Motions

- (1) At any time during debate, a Councillor may foreshadow a motion so as to inform Council of their intention to move a motion at a later stage in the meeting, however, this does not extend any specific right to the foreshadowed motion.
- (2) A motion foreshadowed may be prefaced with a statement that, in the event of a particular motion before the Meeting being resolved in a certain way, a Councillor intends to move an alternative or additional motion.
- (3) Notwithstanding sub-Rule 4.10 (2), the Councillor foreshadowing a motion must not do more than preface the motion with a brief statement.
- (4) The *Chief Executive Officer* or person taking the Minutes of the Meeting is not required to record a foreshadowed motion in the Minutes until the foreshadowed motion is formally moved.
- (5) A foreshadowed motion has no procedural standing and is merely a means of assisting the flow of a Meeting.
- (6) A Councillor foreshadowing a motion under this clause is not deemed to be speaking to the motion or amendment before the Meeting.

4.11. Motions Moved in a Block

The Chairperson may direct that like motions be moved in a block (en bloc) if the motions note actions already taken by Council and / or will not commit Council to take any further action, incurring any expenditure or making any changes to policy.

4.12. Motions and amendments in writing

- (1) The Chairperson may require that any motions and amendments be submitted in writing.
- (2) The Chairperson may adjourn a Meeting while a motion or an amendment is being written or may request Council to defer the matter until the motion or amendment has been written, allowing the Meeting to proceed uninterrupted.
- (3) Any motions and amendments must clearly state the intention and effect of the proposed resolution.

Note:

This is generally interpreted to mean that a resolution must be capable of standing alone, that is, a person reading the decision of Council in the minutes will be able to understand what Council is seeking to achieve without reference to other sources.

5. Voting

Overview:

At the conclusion of debate on a matter before the Meeting, the Chairperson must put the motion or amendment to the vote. Each Councillor is entitled to one vote and voting must be by show of hands. The vote is determined by a majority of the Councillors present at the meeting at the time the vote is taken voting in favour of the motion or amendment.

If a vote is tied, the Chairperson has a casting vote.

5.1. How a Motion or an Amendment is Determined

- (1) To determine a motion or amendment before a Meeting, the Chairperson must first call for those voting in favour of the motion or amendment, then those voting against the motion or amendment. Except for procedural matters the Chairperson will call the names of all those voting in favour of the motion or amendment, then those voting against the motion or amendment and these will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- (2) Voting on any matter is by a show of hands.
- (3) Voting must take place in silence.
- (4) The Chairperson may direct that a vote be recounted to satisfy themselves of the result.
- (5) When a vote is tied, the Chairperson has a second, casting vote and may use this vote as they see fit.
- (6) Pursuant to the *Act*, for the purpose of determining the result of a vote, a Councillor in attendance at the meeting who does not vote is to be taken to have voted against the motion or amendment.
- (7) Once a vote on a motion or amendment has been taken, no further discussion relating to the motion or amendment is permitted.

5.2. Separation of Motions

- (1) Where a motion contains two or more parts, a Councillor may request at any time before a vote is taken that the Chairperson put each part of the motion to the vote separately.
- (2) The Chairperson may grant or refuse such a request at their discretion. This does not require a Council resolution.
- (3) The Chairperson may decide to put any motion to the vote in separate parts of their own volition.
- (4) A part of a motion that is put to the vote separately will not otherwise be considered a separate motion for the purpose of this clause.

6. Notices of Motion

Overview:

A Notice of Motion is a request (in the form of a Council motion) prepared by a Councillor which intends to require the Council to discuss a particular matter and/or make a decision for action to be taken.

Notices of Motion can only be considered at an Ordinary Meeting.

A Notice of Motion is a useful way for Councillor to raise an issue which doesn't require advice or a lot of consideration on an Agenda. For example, it might involve asking Council to recognise a significant achievement of a local community member which is already generally known.

This section outlines the rules and processes that govern the submission of Notices of Motion.

6.1. Notice of Motion Arrangements

- (1) A Councillor may submit a Notice of Motion for consideration at an Ordinary Meeting.
- (2) A Notice of Motion must be lodged in accordance with this clause 6.1.
- (3) The Councillor proposing a Notice of Motion must circulate the draft Notice of Motion (including a brief rationale) to all Councillors for information before lodging it with the *Chief Executive Officer*.
- (4) Evidence that a draft Notice of Motion has been circulated to all Councillors prior to being lodged with the *Chief Executive Officer* must be provided to the *Chief Executive Officer* at the time of lodging the Notice of Motion.
- (5) The full text of any Notice of Motion (including the written rationale) accepted by the *Chief Executive Officer* must be included in the Agenda for the next Ordinary Meeting.
- (6) The *Chief Executive Officer* must cause all Notices of Motion to be sequentially numbered, dated and entered in a register.
- (7) Each Notice of Motion must be considered in the order in which it is entered in the Notice of Motion register.

Note:

A draft Notice of Motion circulated to all councillors should be deemed to be confidential information in accordance with section 3 of the Act until it is determined by the Chief Executive Officer to be valid in accordance with Clause 6.2 and subsequently distributed in the agenda.

6.2. Valid Notices of Motion

A Notice of Motion must:

- (a) be submitted in writing and be accompanied with a brief written rationale prepared by the Councillor outlining any relevant background for the proposed motion;
- (b) be signed (including by electronic means) and dated by the Councillor;
- (c) relate to the objectives, role and functions of Council as outlined in the *Act* and align with the Council Plan;
- (d) do no more than call for a Council report if the Notice of Motion:
 - i. affects the levels of Council service;
 - ii. is inconsistent with the strategic objectives of the Council as outlined in the Council Plan;
 - iii. commits Council to expenditure greater than \$5,000 that is not included in the Budget;
 - iv. proposes to establish, amend or extend an adopted Council policy or position;
 - v. commits Council to any contractual arrangement;
 - vi. concerns any litigation in respect of which Council is a party; or
 - vii. impacts on perceived procedural fairness to a person or entity which is the subject of a pending decision by Council;
- (e) not be the same as, or similar in intent to, a Notice of Motion that has been listed on the Agenda of an Ordinary Meeting within the 6 (six) months preceding the due date for lodgment as set out in sub-clause f); and
- (f) be lodged with the *Chief Executive Officer* no later than 12 noon at least fourteen full days prior to the Ordinary Meeting at which it is intended to be considered to allow enough time to include it on the Agenda.

6.3. Rejection of Notice of Motion

- (1) The *Chief Executive Officer* must reject any Notice of Motion (including the written rationale) if they are of the opinion that:
 - (a) it is the same as, or similar in intent to, a Notice of Motion or other motion (including lost and lapsed motions) that has been considered by Council in the preceding six (6) months;
 - (b) it is defamatory;
 - (c) it is objectionable in language or nature;
 - (d) it is inconsistent with Councillor Code of Conduct;
 - (e) it is vague or unclear in intention;
 - (f) it is outside the powers of Council;
 - (g) evidence of circulation to other Councillors has not been provided to the *Chief Executive Officer*, as required by sub-clause 6.1 4);
 - (h) it relates to a matter that can be addressed through the operational service request process. Or

-
- (i) does not comply with clause 6.2; or
 - (j) it includes a misleading or false statement.
 - (2) If rejecting a Notice of Motion (including the written rationale), the *Chief Executive Officer* must:
 - (a) inform the Councillor who lodged it of the rejection and the reasons for it;
 - (b) provide the Councillor who lodged it 24 hours to amend and lodge a revised Notice of Motion; and
 - (c) if the Notice of Motion cannot be amended to the satisfaction of the *Chief Executive Officer*, notify the Councillor who lodged it of the rejection in writing and the reasons for the rejection.

6.4. Debating a Notice of Motion

- (1) The Councillor who is the author of the Notice of Motion must move the Notice of Motion if the Councillor is present at the Ordinary Meeting at which it is to be considered.
- (2) If the author of the Notice of Motion is not present at the Ordinary Meeting at which it is to be considered, any Councillor present at the Meeting, except for the Chairperson, may move the Notice of Motion.
- (3) If a Notice of Motion is not moved and seconded at the Ordinary Meeting at which it is to be considered, it lapses.
- (4) Except where the Notice of Motion is to confirm a previous resolution of Council, the Notice of Motion may be amended.
- (5) If a Councillor who has lodged or is moving a Notice of Motion wishes to amend it, they may only do so by seeking leave of the Chairperson to amend it prior to it being seconded.
- (6) Once a Notice of Motion has been moved and seconded, neither the mover nor the seconder may amend it.
- (7) A mover and seconder of a Notice of Motion are not permitted to withdraw their moving and seconding of the Notice of Motion after debate has commenced.
- (8) Notwithstanding sub-clause 6), another Councillor may move an amendment to a Notice of Motion, which may be accepted by the mover and seconder, and must be dealt with in accordance with Section 6 of this Meeting Rules.
- (9) Any amendment made to the Notice of Motion must not be directly Opposite to the Notice of Motion.
- (10) No member of the public may make a submission on a Notice of Motion when it is presented at an Ordinary Meeting.

7. Notice of Rescission or Amendment

Overview:

A notice of rescission or amendment is a form of Notice of Motion. Accordingly, all provisions in the Meeting Rules regulating Notices of Motion equally apply to notices of rescission and amendment.

This section describes the circumstances and procedures under which a Council decision can be rescinded or amended.

7.1. Procedure for a Notice of Rescission or Amendment

- (1) Motions to rescind or amend a previous resolution of Council can be made by:
 - (a) a Councillor submitting a Notice of Motion in accordance with section 6 of the Meeting Rules, which is signed by three or more Councillors; or
 - (b) a recommendation contained in an Officer's report included in the Agenda.
- (2) A Councillor may propose a motion to rescind or amend a previous resolution of Council, provided that:
 - (a) the previous resolution has not been acted on, and
 - (b) a written notice, signed by three or more Councillors is delivered to the *Chief Executive Officer* or their delegate setting out:
 - i. the relevant previous resolution to be rescinded or amended; and
 - ii. the Meeting and date when the relevant previous resolution was carried.
- (3) The *Chief Executive Officer*, or other Officer with responsibility for the subject matter of a resolution, may implement a resolution of Council at any time after the close of the Meeting at which it was made.
- (4) A resolution of Council will be deemed to have been acted on if:
 - (a) its content or substance has been formally communicated to a person whose interests are materially affected by it, including by publishing the proposed Minutes of a Meeting on Council's website; or
 - (b) a statutory process has been commenced so as to vest enforceable rights in, or obligations on, Council or any other person.
- (5) The *Chief Executive Officer* or other Officer must defer implementing a resolution which:
 - (a) has not been acted on; and
 - (b) is the subject of a Notice of Motion to rescind or amend it which has been delivered to the *Chief Executive Officer* in accordance with Section 6 of the Meeting Rules, unless deferring implementation of the resolution would have the effect of depriving the resolution of usefulness, giving rise to non-compliance with a legal obligation or placing Council at legal, financial or other risk.

-
- (6) The lodgment and acceptance by the *Chief Executive Officer* of a Notice of Motion to rescind or amend a previous resolution of Council does not prevent the *Chief Executive Officer* or other Officer from giving notice to any person that the Notice of Motion to rescind or amend has been lodged.
 - (7) If a Notice of Motion to rescind or amend a previous resolution of Council is lost or lapses, a similar motion must not be put before Council for at least 6 (six) months from the date it was lost.
 - (8) If a Notice of Motion to rescind or amend a previous resolution of Council is not moved and/or seconded at the Meeting for which it is listed, it lapses.
 - (9) A Notice of Motion to rescind or amend a previous resolution of Council listed on an Agenda must be moved by the Councillor who submitted the Notice of Motion.
 - (10) Notwithstanding sub-Rule 7.1 (9) the *Chair* may allow another Councillor to move the Notice of Motion if the Councillor who submitted the Notice of Motion is not in *attendance*. If the original submitter of the Notice of Motion is not in attendance, the Notice of Motion must not be amended.

7.2. Rejecting a Notice of Motion to Rescind or Amend

If rejecting a Notice of Motion to rescind or amend a previous resolution of Council, the *Chief Executive Officer* must inform the Councillor who lodged it of the rejection and the reasons for it.

8. Urgent Business

8.1. Urgent Business

- (1) Business can only be admitted as urgent business at an *Ordinary Council Meeting* or *Special Council Meeting*.
- (2) Business can only be admitted as urgent business through a Procedural Motion with the exception of matters of urgency as determined by the *Chief Executive Officer* pursuant to Clause 8.1 (3)(g).
- (3) A Procedural Motion to admit an item of urgent business can only be approved by *Council* if the proposed motion of urgent business:
 - (a) relates to or arises out of a matter which has arisen since the distribution of the Agenda deadline to submit Notices of Motion; and
 - (b) cannot safely or conveniently be deferred until the next Ordinary Meeting; and
 - (c) cannot be addressed through an operational service request process; and
 - (d) does not, if passed, commit the Council to any direct expenditure; and
 - (e) will not, if passed, alter the Council Plan or Budget; and
 - (f) will not, if passed, directly and significantly affect the exercise of a person's rights;
 - (g) involves a matter that has been determined by the *Chief Executive Officer* as being required to be dealt with as Urgent Business and which the *Chief Executive Officer* admits to the agenda; or
 - (h) has not been rejected as a Notice of Motion in accordance with Clause 6.3.
- (4) A proposed item of urgent business must:
 - (a) be submitted in writing to the *Chief Executive Officer* no later than 12 noon on the day of the Ordinary Meeting at which it is to be considered,
 - (b) be circulated to all Councillors for information before or at the same time as lodging it with the *Chief Executive Officer*;
 - (c) be signed (including by electronic means) and dated by the Councillor;
 - (d) not be derogatory, defamatory, indecent, abusive or objectionable in language or substance;
 - (e) not be aimed at embarrassing a Councillor or an Officer;
 - (f) relate to the objectives, role and functions of Council as outlined in the *Act* and align with the Council Plan; and
 - (g) do no more than call for a Council report if the matter:
 - i. affects the levels of Council service;
 - ii. commits Council to any contractual arrangement; or
 - iii. concerns any litigation in respect of which Council is a party.
- (5) Any amendment to a motion of Urgent Business must be compliant with Clause 8.1 (4)(e).

-
- (6) Evidence that the proposed urgent business item has been circulated to all Councillors must be provided to the *Chief Executive Officer* at the time of lodging the proposed urgent business item.
 - (7) The *Chief Executive Officer* will advise the *Mayor* of any matter they determine is appropriate for Council to consider admitting as urgent business.
 - (8) No member of the public may make a submission on an item of urgent business when it is presented at an Ordinary Meeting.

9. Procedural Motions

Overview:

Procedural Motions allow for the process of the Meeting to be changed, within certain parameters. Suspension of standing orders is a type of Procedural Motion.

Standing orders are the rules made to govern the procedure at Meetings contained in the Meeting Rules.

The standing orders cover a range of matters including the order of business, rules of debate, Procedural Motions and election procedures. Standing orders can be suspended to facilitate the business of a Meeting but should not be used purely to dispense with the processes and protocol of the government of Council.

9.1. Process for Procedural Motions

- (1) Unless otherwise prohibited, a procedural motion may be moved at any time and must be dealt with immediately by the Chairperson.
- (2) All procedural motions require a mover and seconder.
- (3) The Chairperson may reject a procedural motion if they believe the motion before the Meeting at the time that it is moved has not been adequately or sufficiently debated.
- (4) Notwithstanding any other provision in these Rules, procedural motions must be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Schedule of Procedural Motions in clause 9.2.
- (5) A procedural motion may be moved and seconded by any Councillor except the Chairperson.
- (6) Unless otherwise prescribed, debate on a procedural motion is not permitted and the mover does not have a right of reply.
- (7) A procedural motion must not be amended.

9.2. Schedule of Procedural Motions

MOTION	FORM (WORDING OF THE MOTION)	MATTER IN RESPECT OF WHICH MOTION MAY BE MOVED	WHEN MOTION IS PROHIBITED	CAN THERE BE DEBATE	EFFECT IF CARRIED	EFFECT IF LOST
1. Changes to the order of business	That the order of business be amended as follows:	Any matter, except the - Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners, - Apologies, Disclosures of Conflicts of Interest and Confirmation of the Minutes	Not applicable	No	Change to the order of business	No change to the order of business
2. Deferral of an item of business	That consideration of [Item No, Name of Item] be deferred to [date, time]	Any matter, except the Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners, Apologies, Disclosures of Conflicts of Interest and Confirmation of the Minutes	When debate has commenced on the item of business	Yes but limited to the reasons for deferral. No right of reply	Consideration of the matter will be deferred as set out in the motion	The item of business is considered
3. Adjournment of debate to later time or date	That the debate on this matter be adjourned to [date, time]	Any matter	When another Councillor is speaking	Yes but limited to the time and date. No right of reply	Debate on motion and amendments postponed to the stated date and time	Debate continues unaffected
4. Adjournment of Meeting to later time or date	That the Meeting be adjourned to [date, time]	Any Meeting	When another Councillor is speaking	Yes but limited to the time and date. No right of reply	Meeting adjourns immediately until the stated date and time	The Meeting continues unaffected

MOTION	FORM (WORDING OF THE MOTION)	MATTER IN RESPECT OF WHICH MOTION MAY BE MOVED	WHEN MOTION IS PROHIBITED	CAN THERE BE DEBATE	EFFECT IF CARRIED	EFFECT IF LOST
5. The closure	That the motion be now put	Any matter	When the Chairperson believes the motion on which it has been proposed has not been adequately or sufficiently debated.	No	Motion or amendment in respect of which the closure is carried is put to the vote immediately without further debate	Debate continues unaffected
6. Continuance of Meeting	That the Meeting continue for a further 30 minutes	Any Meeting	When the Meeting has already been extended to the maximum time allowed	No	The Meeting will continue for the additional time resolved	Where all business is not disposed of, the Meeting will stand adjourned at the time of the scheduled closure
7. Extending speaking time	That the time available for the speaker be extended by a further _____ minutes	Any matter	Not applicable	No	Extend the time available for the speaker	No change to the time available for speaker
8. Urgent business	That the matter of _____ be admitted as urgent business	Any matter, subject to clause 8	If the provisions of clause 8 are not met	Yes but limited to the provisions of clause 8. No right of reply	The item is admitted to Agenda for discussion as urgent business	No change to the Agenda
9. Election of temporary Chairperson	That [name] be elected as temporary Chairperson	Not applicable	When the Chair is occupied	No	Temporary Chairperson is appointed and takes the Chair	The Meeting is unable to proceed due to the inability to appoint a Chairperson

MOTION	FORM (WORDING OF THE MOTION)	MATTER IN RESPECT OF WHICH MOTION MAY BE MOVED	WHEN MOTION IS PROHIBITED	CAN THERE BE DEBATE	EFFECT IF CARRIED	EFFECT IF LOST
10. Extending Public Question Time	That Public Question Time be extended by 30 minutes	Not applicable	Public Question Time may only be extended once per meeting	No	Public Question Time is extended by 30 minutes	Public Question Time must cease at the end of the initial 30-minute period
11. To close the Meeting pursuant to section 66(1) of the <i>Act</i>	That the meeting be closed pursuant to section [state relevant section] to consider [state matter]	Any matter	Not applicable	No	Meeting closed to the public	Meeting continues
12. To lay a motion on the table	That the motion be laid on the table until the next <i>Council Meeting</i>	Any motion that is unclear in its intent or subject to misinterpretation	Not applicable	No The Chairperson must lay the motion down in accordance with clause 3.3(h) if they consider the motion to be unclear in its intent or subject to misinterpretation	Motion carried to the next <i>Council Meeting</i>	Meeting continues

10. Points of Order

Overview:

A point of order is taken when a Councillor draws the attention of the Chairperson to an alleged irregularity in the proceedings. Valid points of order and the process for raising and ruling on a point of order are described in this section.

10.1. Valid Points of Order

- (1) A point of order may be raised in relation to anything which:
 - (a) is contrary to the Meeting Rules;
 - (b) is irrelevant to the matter under consideration;
 - (c) is outside the powers of Council;
 - (d) constitutes improper behaviour;
 - (e) is offensive;
 - (f) constitutes a tedious repetition of something already said; or
 - (g) ~~disorder~~; or
 - (h) is a misleading or false statement
- (2) Councillors must refrain from raising purposely disruptive and without proper basis points of order.
- (3) Rising to express a difference of opinion or contradict a speaker is not grounds for raising a point of order.

10.2. Procedure for a Point of Order

- (1) A Councillor raising a point of order must:
 - (a) clearly state the point of order in accordance with the provisions of sub-clause 10.1(1), and briefly describe the nature of why the point of order is being called; and
 - (b) state any section, clause, paragraph or provision relevant to the point of order before resuming their seat.
- (2) If the Councillor raising the point of order does not follow the process in sub-clause (1), the point of order will not be considered.
- (3) The *chairperson* has discretion to refuse a point of order (without discussion) where two (2) points of order against the same Councillor has already been raised while they remain within their current allocated speaking time.
- (4) Notwithstanding sub-Rule 10,2 (3) where the *Chairperson* reasonably believes a Councillor is breaching any sub-Rules under Rule 10.1 the *chairperson* must ask the Councillor to either refrain from such behaviour or retrack their comments. The Councillor must not unreasonably refuse to do so.
- (5) A Councillor raising a point of order under this clause is not deemed to be speaking to the motion or amendment before the Meeting.

10.3. Chairperson to Decide

- (1) The Chairperson must decide all points of order by stating the provision, rule, practice or precedent which they consider applicable to the point raised without entering into any discussion or comment.
- (2) The Chairperson's ruling on a point of order is final.

10.4. Chairperson May Adjourn to Consider

- (1) The Chairperson may adjourn the Meeting to consider a point of order but otherwise must rule on it as soon as it is raised.
- (2) All other questions before the Meeting are suspended until the point of order is decided.

10.5. Dissent from Chairperson's Ruling

- (1) A Councillor may move a motion of dissent in the Chairperson's ruling on a point of order, without speaking to it, by moving:

“That the Chairperson's ruling [setting out that ruling or part of that ruling] be dissented from.”

- (2) A motion of dissent must be seconded, otherwise it will lapse.
- (3) If a motion of dissent is moved and seconded:
 - (a) the Chairperson must leave the chair and the *Deputy Mayor* must chair the Meeting as the temporary Chairperson; or
 - (b) if there is no *Deputy Mayor*, the Chairperson must leave the chair after the Meeting has elected a temporary Chairperson, and the motion must immediately be put to the vote.
- (4) There will be no debate on a motion of dissent.
- (5) The temporary Chairperson must invite the mover of the motion of dissent to state the reasons for her or his dissent.
- (6) The temporary Chairperson must then invite the Chairperson to respond.
- (7) The mover of the motion of dissent and the Chairperson must not speak on the motion for a time longer than one (1) minute each.
- (8) No other speakers can address a motion of dissent.
- (9) The temporary Chairperson must put the motion to the vote in the following form: “That the Chairperson's ruling be dissented from.”
- (10) If the vote is in the negative, the Chairperson resumes the Chair and the Meeting proceeds.
- (11) If the vote is in the affirmative, the Chairperson resumes the Chair and must reverse or vary (as the case may be) their previous ruling and proceed.
- (12) The defeat of the Chairperson's ruling is in no way a vote of no-confidence in the Chairperson and should not be so regarded by the Meeting.

11. Meeting Conduct

Overview:

This section provides clear guidance on the expectations of behaviour by Councillors, Officers and members of the public. This supports an environment that is conducive to effective decision-making and good governance.

Physical and Remote Attendance

11.1 Mode of Attendance

- 11.1.1 Each notice of meeting must indicate whether the relevant *Council Meeting* is to be conducted:
- (a) wholly in person;
 - (b) wholly by electronic means; or
 - (c) partially in person and partially by electronic means.
- 11.1.2 The indication in the notice of meeting must be consistent with any Resolution of *Council* that has expressed a preference for, or otherwise specified, when *Council Meetings* are to be conducted:
- (a) wholly in person;
 - (b) wholly by electronic means; or
 - (c) partially in person and partially by electronic means.
- 11.1.3 If a *Council Meeting* is to be conducted wholly in person a Councillor may nonetheless request to attend by electronic means.
- 11.1.4 Any request made under sub-Rule 11.1.3 must:
- (a) be in writing;
 - (b) be given to the *Chief Executive Officer* no later than 24 hours prior to the commencement of the relevant *Council Meeting*; and
 - (c) specify the reasons why the Councillor is unable or does not wish to attend the *Council Meeting* in person.
- 11.1.5 The *Chief Executive Officer* must ensure that any request received in accordance with sub-Rule 11.1.4 and any other request received from a Councillor to attend by electronic means is made known at the commencement of the relevant *Council Meeting*.
- 11.1.6 *Chief Executive Officer* must not unreasonably refuse any request.
- 11.1.7 A Councillor who is *attending* a *Council Meeting* by electronic means is responsible for ensuring that they are able to access such equipment and are in such an environment that facilitates participation in the *Council Meeting*.
- 11.1.8 Without detracting from anything said in sub-Rule 11.1.7 a Councillor who is *attending* a meeting by electronic means must be able to:
- (a) hear the proceedings;
 - (b) see all Councillors and members of Council staff who are also *attending* the *Council Meeting*, at least while a Councillor or member of Council staff is speaking;
 - (c) must ensure they are in a confidential environment away from all other persons when dealing with any confidential agenda items;

-
- (d) if sub-Rule 11.1.8 (c) cannot be met, the Councillor must leave the meeting and not participate in the confidential item;
 - (e) test their IT equipment is working at least 15 minutes prior to the commencement of the scheduled meeting time;
 - (f) be seen by all Councillors, members of Council staff and members of the public who are physically present at the *Council Meeting*; and
 - (g) be heard when they speak.

11.1.9 If the conditions of sub-Rule 11.1.8 cannot be met by one or more Councillors *attending a Council Meeting*, whether because of technical difficulties or otherwise:

- (a) the *Council Meeting* will nonetheless proceed as long as a quorum is present; and
- (b) the relevant Councillor (or Councillors) will be treated as being absent from the *Council Meeting* or that part of the *Council Meeting*

unless the *Council Meeting* has been adjourned in accordance with *these Rules*.

11.1.10 Nothing in this Rule 11.1 prevents a Councillor from joining (or re-joining) a *Council Meeting* at the time that they achieve compliance with sub-Rule 11.1.8 even if the *Council Meeting* has already commenced or has continued in their absence.

11.2 Meetings Conducted Remotely

If a *Council Meeting* is conducted wholly or partially by electronic means:

- (a) councillors connecting by electronic means must be in *attendance* 5 minutes prior to the scheduled commencement time of the meeting.
- (b) the *Chair* may, with the consent of the meeting, modify the application of any of the Rules in this Chapter to facilitate the more efficient and effective transaction of the business of the meeting.

11.3 Display of Placards and Posters

- (1) A person must not display any placards or posters in the Council Chamber or in any building where a Meeting is being or is about to be held that give rise to a risk to the health and safety of persons in the Council Chamber or building where the Meeting is being held.
- (2) A person must not:
 - (a) display any offensive, indecent, insulting or objectionable item or words, including words that are racist, sexist or homophobic, in the Council Chamber; or
 - (b) obstruct the entrance to the Council Chamber or a building where a Meeting is being, or is about to be, held.
- (3) The Chairperson may order and cause the removal of any placard or poster that is deemed by the Chairperson to be contrary to sub-clause 1) or 2) or is objectionable, disrespectful or otherwise inappropriate.

11.4 Addressing the Meeting

- (1) A Councillor or any other person who addresses a Meeting must do so in a courteous and respectful manner and must take direction from the Chairperson whenever called on to do so.

-
- (2) Any person addressing the Chairperson must refer to her or him as:

Mayor(surname), or Chairperson.
 - (3) All Councillors, other than the *Mayor*, must be addressed as Cr.(surname).
 - (4) All Officers must be addressed as Mr or Ms(surname) as appropriate, or by their official title.
 - (5) Except for the Chairperson, any Councillor who addresses a Meeting must stand and direct all remarks through the Chairperson.
 - (6) It will not be necessary for Councillors to rise when speaking to the Chairperson in a Meeting that is closed to the public (Confidential Business) in accordance with the *Act*.
 - (7) Despite sub-clause 5), the Chairperson may permit any Councillor or person to remain seated while addressing the Chairperson at a Meeting for reasons of sickness, infirmity, disability or otherwise at her or his discretion.
 - (8) Any member of the public attending a Meeting must not interject or take part in the debate.
 - (9) Any member of the public physically attending a Meeting must not utter any offensive, indecent, insulting or objectionable item or words, including words that are racist, sexist or homophobic, or interject or gesticulate offensively in the Council Chamber.
 - (10) Silence must be preserved by the gallery (other than by a person in the gallery who is invited to address the Meeting) at all times during a Meeting.
 - (11) If any member of the public engages in conduct that is improper or disorderly, the Chairperson may direct that person to cease their conduct and the person must comply with that direction.

11.5 Chairperson May Remove a Member of the Public

- (1) The Chairperson may order and cause the removal of any person, other than a Councillor, who disrupts any Meeting or fails to comply with a direction of the Chairperson.
- (2) In causing a person's removal under sub-clause (1), or the removal of an object or material under clause 11.1, the Chairperson may ask the *Chief Executive Officer*, an Authorised Officer or a member of Victoria Police to remove the person or the object or material.
- (3) A person must not refuse or neglect to leave a Meeting, or to remove an object or material, when ordered by the Chairperson.

11.6 Disorderly Conduct by Councillors

- (1) The conduct of Councillors at Meetings is governed by the *Act*, these Rules and the Councillor Code of Conduct.

-
- (2) Where a Councillor engages in improper or disorderly conduct or acts in a way that otherwise disrupts a Meeting, or impedes its orderly conduct, *Council* may, by resolution, suspend that Councillor from a portion of the Meeting or from the balance of the Meeting where the Chairperson has first warned the Councillor to cease that behaviour.
 - (3) Where Council suspends a Councillor under sub-clause
 - (4) (2), the Councillor will take no active part in the portion of the Meeting from which they have been suspended.
 - (5) The Chairperson, or Council by resolution, may order and cause the removal of a Councillor who has been suspended under sub-clause (2) from the Meeting for the duration of the suspension.
 - (6) In causing the removal of a Councillor under sub-clause (4), the Chairperson may ask the *Chief Executive Officer*, an Authorised Officer or a member of Victoria Police to remove the Councillor.
 - (7) A Councillor must not refuse or neglect to leave a meeting when ordered to do so under sub-clause (4).

11.7 Chairperson May Adjourn Disorderly Meeting

- (1) The Chairperson may adjourn the Meeting for either a short time, or to resume another day, if the behaviour at the Council table or in the gallery is significantly disrupting the Meeting.
- (2) If the Chairperson adjourns the Meeting to another day, clause 1.1.5 applies with respect to the provision of notice of the adjourned Meeting.

12. Minutes

12.1. Keeping Minutes

The *Chief Executive Officer* shall ensure that Minutes are kept of each Meeting.

12.2. Confirmation of Minutes

- (1) When confirming the Minutes of a Meeting, opposition can only be expressed on the basis that the record contained in the Minutes is incomplete or inaccurate.
- (2) The Chairperson must not allow discussion or motions on any issue other than an alleged omission from, or inaccuracy of, the Minutes.
- (3) If no Councillor indicates opposition, the Chairperson must, after seeking a mover and seconder, declare the Minutes to be confirmed.
- (4) If any Councillor indicates opposition, they must specify the item or items in the Minutes concerned and can, after asking any questions to clarify the matter, only move a motion to rectify the alleged error(s) in the record.
- (5) A copy of the Minutes shall be sent electronically to every Councillor and placed on the Council website no later than seven (7) days after the Meeting to which they relate.
- (6) The minutes of an Ordinary or *Special Council Meeting* or of a meeting of any Delegated Committee comprised entirely of Councillors will be defined as 'unconfirmed minutes' until they are formally confirmed at the next Ordinary Meeting.
- (7) Once the Minutes are confirmed, they must be signed by the Chairperson of the Meeting at which they were confirmed.

13. Webcasting and Recording of Proceedings

13.1. Webcasting and Recording of Proceedings

- (1) The *Chief Executive Officer* (or their delegate or nominee) may, for the purposes of minute taking, transparency and accessibility of Meetings to the public, record on suitable audio recording equipment all proceedings of a Meeting.
- (2) The *Chief Executive Officer* (or such other person authorised by the *Chief Executive Officer* for that purpose) will conduct a live webcast of the proceedings of a Meeting.
- (3) A recording of a Meeting that is webcast will be made available to the public on Council's website for viewing or listening for a period of four years from the date of the Meeting.
- (4) With the exception of officers responsible for webcasting and recording of the proceedings, any person, including councillors, physically or virtually present at *Council Meetings, Special Council Meetings* or Committee meetings, must not operate film, photographic, tape or other equipment to reproduce sound and/or images at any Meeting without first obtaining the consent of the Chairperson. In deciding whether to give such consent, the Chairperson is to ask whether any person present at the Meeting objects.
- (5) Consent given under sub-clause 4) may be revoked at any time during the course of a Meeting by the Chairperson stating that consent has been revoked and ordering that the recording cease, at which time the recording must cease.
- (6) This clause does not apply to any part of a Meeting that is closed to the public in accordance with section 66(1) of the *Act*.

14. Submissions

Overview:

There are several powers conferred on Council which require a public submissions process– these include the adoption of key Council documents (such as the Council Plan and Budget), proposals to sell Council land, the closure of roads and the making of Local Laws or Rules. This public submission process will be defined in Councils Community Engagement Policy and requires Council to give public notice of the proposal and to consider (and hear if requested) submissions received before making a final decision on the particular matter. The hearing of these submissions are generally dealt with by Councils Hearings Committee (a Delegated Committee of Council pursuant to the Act).

In addition to these statutory public submissions processes, and the process established in relation to planning matters (i.e. where Applicants and Objectors to Planning Matters are afforded the opportunity to make submission before Councils Planning Committee (a Delegated Committee of Council pursuant to the Act). Council has also established a submission process at Ordinary Meetings that enables community members to provide input on certain matters listed on the Agenda, prior to their consideration by Council.

14.1. Community Submissions

- (1) Members of the public may only address an Ordinary Meeting in accordance with the provisions of the Meeting Rules.
- (2) Members of the public will be given the opportunity to make a submission in relation to matters listed on the Agenda for an Ordinary Meeting except for Notices of Motion, Petitions and urgent business.
- (3) Submissions may be presented immediately prior to the Agenda item being considered and prior to any motions relating to the item being accepted.
- (4) Notwithstanding sub-Rule 14.1 (3) Submissions on an agenda item may, at the discretion of the Chairperson, be made once Public Question Time is completed, and in accordance with 14.5 of these Rules.
- (5) Where a separate *Hearing of Submissions* meeting is called to hear public submission on big topics, no public submissions will be taken on that particular item at the relevant *Ordinary Council meeting*.
- (6) Submissions are not able to be made during:
 - (a) any period when a Meeting is closed to the public in accordance with section 66(1) of the Act; or
 - (b) a local government election or caretaker period as defined in Council's Election Period Policy.

14.2. Submissions to Delegated Committees

Submissions to any Delegated Committee will be governed by the processes outlined in the Delegated Committee's Charter or as determined by the Delegated Committee.

14.3. Registering to Make a Submission

- (1) Members of the public wishing to make a submission must register their intention to do so before 12 noon on the day of the *Ordinary Council Meeting or Hearing of Submissions Meeting* and be in attendance on the day of the Meeting to make their submission.
- (2) Submissions can be lodged using one of the following methods:
 - online at www.darebin.vic.gov.au/questionsandsubmissions;
 - by email to Q&S@darebin.vic.gov.au;
 - in person at the Preston Customer Service Centre, 274 Gower Street, Preston; or
 - by mail to PO Box 91, Preston 3072.

14.4. Validity of Submissions

- (1) A submission will be disallowed by the Chairperson if they determine that it:
 - (a) relates to a matter outside the duties, functions or powers of Council;
 - (b) is defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substance;
 - (c) may lead to a breach of Council's statutory obligations;
 - (d) does not relate to a matter listed on the Agenda;
 - (e) relates to a Notice of Motion, Petition or item of urgent business;
 - (f) is aimed at embarrassing a Councillor or an Officer; or
 - (g) deals with a matter that should be, or has been, considered as a confidential matter or relates to any matter in respect of which Council may close the Meeting to the public under section 66(1) of the *Act*.
- (2) No submissions directed at an individual Councillor or Officer will be allowed.

14.5. Making a Submission

- (1) Persons wishing to make a submission must be in attendance during the Meeting, either in person or by representative.
- (2) If the person wishing to make a submission or their representative is not in attendance when the Agenda item is to be considered, their submission will not be read out.
- (3) Submissions must be directed through the Chairperson and must not be directed to individual Councillors or Officers.
- (4) Submissions must be as brief as possible (not longer than two (2) minutes).
- (5) The Chairperson may, at their absolute discretion, extend the time for an individual's submission beyond two (2) minutes.
- (6) The person making the submission must clearly state their name and their suburb.
- (7) The name of the submitter must be recorded in the Minutes, as an official record.
- (8) The content of submissions and any subsequent discussion will not be recorded in the Minutes.

15. Public Questions

Overview:

As outlined in the purpose of the Meeting Rules, Council Meetings are held for Council to make its decisions. Members of the public who wish to address Council must do so under the provisions of Sections 15 and 16 of these Rules.

This section sets out the procedures to be followed to submit a question, the circumstances under which a question may be disallowed.

15.1. Public Question Time

- (1) Subject to sub-clause (2), and any resolution of Council to the contrary, there must be Public Question Time at every Ordinary Meeting to enable members of the public to submit questions to Council.
- (2) Public Question Time will not be held during:
 - (a) any period when a Meeting is closed to the public in accordance with section 66 of the Act; or
 - (b) a local government election or caretaker period as defined in the Councils Election Period Policy
- (3) Public Question Time will not exceed 30 minutes in duration unless extended by resolution of Council through a procedural motion, in which case, it may only be extended for one (1) period of up to 30 minutes.

15.2. Lodging a Question

- (1) Members of the public wishing to ask a question must register their question using the Public Question Time form before 12 noon on the day of the meeting.
- (2) Questions can be lodged using one of the following methods:
 - online at darebin.vic.gov.au/questions and submissions;
 - by email to Q&S@darebin.vic.gov.au;
 - in person at the Preston Customer Service Centre, 274 Gower Street, Preston; or
 - by mail to PO Box 91, Preston 3072.
- (3) Questions that have not been lodged by 12 noon on the day of the *Council Meeting* will not be accepted, and no questions will be taken from people in *attendance* on the night of the *Council Meeting*..
- (4) A maximum of three (3) questions is permitted per person (with no sub parts).
- (5) If more than three (3) questions are received from one person, only the first three questions will be considered.

-
- (6) A further question arising out of anything said in response to a question will be allowed.

A question may not be split into sub-parts.

- (7) Like questions will be grouped together and the *Chairperson* will ask the person from whom the first like question was received to come forward and read their question. A single response will be given by the Chairperson.
- (8) In the event the person whom submitted the first like question is not in *attendance*, the Chairperson will read out the like questions in accordance with sub-clause 15.4 (1), name the persons who submitted like questions and provide a response.

15.3. Questions Not Permitted

- (1) A question may be disallowed by the Chairperson if the Chairperson determines that it:
 - (a) relates to a matter outside the duties, functions or powers of Council;
 - (b) is defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substance;
 - (c) may lead to a breach of Council's statutory obligations;
 - (d) relates to a Notice of Motion, Petition or item of urgent business;
 - (e) deals with a subject matter already answered;
 - (f) is aimed at embarrassing a Councillor or an Officer; or
 - (g) deals with a matter that should be, or has been, considered as a confidential matter or relates to any matter in respect of which Council may close the Meeting to the public under section 66 of the *Act*.
- (2) No questions directed at an individual Councillor or Officer will be allowed.

15.4. Asking a Question

- (1) If a person submitting a question is not in *attendance* during Public Question Time, their question(s) may be read out and a response provided at the Meeting.
- (2) When invited by the Chairperson, the person asking their question(s) may do so, without taking longer than two (2) minutes in total.
- (3) The *Chairperson* will not permit any introductory or background statements to be made in relation to their question..
- (4) Questions must be directed through the Chairperson and must not be directed to individual Councillors or Officers.
- (5) The person asking the question must clearly state their name and their suburb.
- (6) The Chairperson may elect to answer the question themselves or request the *Chief Executive Officer* or any other Officer to respond to a question.
- (7) The name of the person(s), if like questions are grouped together, the question (excluding introductory or background comments) and the response must be recorded in the Minutes, as an official record of the questions submitted to the Meeting.

16. Petitions

Overview:

Petitioning is a long-established process for members of the community to demonstrate community support for a request or views on a matter, and for that request or view to be presented directly to Council. This section sets out the procedures to be followed to submit a petition.

16.1. Lodging a Petition

- (1) Members of the public wishing to lodge a petition via a Councillor must do so before 12 noon on the day of the Council meeting.
- (2) The Councillor proposing to table the petition must circulate a copy of the petition to all Councillors and the *Chief Executive Officer* for information no later than 4 pm on the day of the Council meeting.
- (3) Where a petition is submitted in hardcopy, the Councillor receiving the petition must provide either a scanned copy or photo/s clearly showing the nature of the petition in accordance with 16.1 (2).

16.2. Valid Petitions

- (1) Every Petition submitted to Council must:
 - (a) be in legible and in a permanent form of writing, typing or printing;
 - (b) not be derogatory, defamatory, indecent, abusive or objectionable in language or substance;
 - (c) not aimed at embarrassing a Councillor or an Officer;
 - (d) not relate to matters outside the powers of Council;
 - (e) clearly state the request or describe the action that Council is asked to undertake on each page of the Petition and include the name, address and signature of petitioners; and
 - (f) include the names, full addresses (either postal or electronic) and original signatures of at least 10 people.
- (2) Where a petition is deemed to be invalid, the *Chairperson* at their discretion may grant or refuse such a request for the petition to be tabled. This does not require a Council resolution.
- (3) Where a Petition has been signed by fewer than 10 people, it will be treated as a joint letter and forwarded directly to the appropriate Officer for action as an operational item. These will not be tabled at Ordinary Meetings.
- (4) A petition generated via an online or electronic process that does not contain the signatures of the persons who are represented as having supported it will be accepted only if it complies with all other provisions of sub-clause (1).
- (5) A person must not inscribe upon a Petition a name or signature purporting to be the name or signature of another person.
- (6) Any signature appearing on a page which does not bear the text of the whole of the Petition or request will not be considered by Council.

-
- (7) Every page of a Petition must be a single-or double-sided page of paper and not be attached to any piece of paper other than another page of the Petition.

16.3. Tabling Petitions

- (1) A petition may only be presented to an Ordinary Meeting by a Councillor.
- (2) Any Councillor presenting a Petition is responsible for ensuring that:
- (a) they are familiar with the contents and purpose of the Petition; and
 - (b) the Petition meets the requirements of clauses 16.1 and 16.2.
- (3) Any Councillor, except the Chairperson, may present a Petition to an Ordinary Meeting and must confine themselves to a statement of the:
- (a) persons from whom it comes;
 - (b) number of signatories to it;
 - (c) material matters expressed in it; and
 - (d) text of the Petition.
- (4) A Petition tabled by a Councillor at an Ordinary Meeting may be dealt with as follows:
- A motion may be proposed to accept and note the Petition and resolve to:
- i. deal with it in conjunction with an item on the Agenda; or
 - ii. refer it to the *Chief Executive Officer* for consideration and response; or.
 - iii. call for a report on the subject matter of the Petition.
- (5) If a Petition relates to an operational or service matter, Council must only resolve to refer it to the *Chief Executive Officer* for consideration.
- (6) Where the *Chief Executive Officer* deems a petition to be valid in accordance with Rules 16.1 and 16.2, the originator of a petition may make a submission for a period of 2 minutes once the petition has been formally tabled. No other member of the public is permitted to speak to a Petition when presented at an Ordinary Meeting or ask a question pertaining to the Petition during Public Question Time.

17. Election Procedures

Overview:

The role and functions of the Mayor are provided in the Act. The holder of this significant office is the Chairperson at Council Meetings, is the leader of the Councillors, acts as the principal spokesperson for Council and carries out civic and ceremonial duties.

The purpose of this section is to regulate proceedings for the election of the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor (if any).

17.1. Procedures for Election of the Mayor

- (1) The election of the *Mayor* must be facilitated by the *Chief Executive Officer* in accordance with the provisions of the *Act*.
- (2) The *Mayor* must be elected by an absolute majority of the Councillors.

Method of Voting

The election of the *Mayor* must be carried out by a show of hands or such other visual or audible means as the *Chief Executive Officer* determines.

Determining the election of the Mayor

- (3) The *Chief Executive Officer* must open the meeting at which the *Mayor* is to be elected, and invite nominations for the office of *Mayor*.
- (4) Any nominations for the office of *Mayor* must be:
 - (a) seconded by another Councillor.
- (5) Once nominations for the office of *Mayor* have been received, the following provisions will govern the election of the *Mayor*:

Single Nomination

- (6) If there is only one nomination, the candidate nominated is deemed to be duly elected.

Multiple Nominations

- (7) If there is more than one nomination, the Councillors *in attendance* at the meeting must vote for one of the candidates.
- (8) If one candidate receives an absolute majority of Councillors, that candidate is declared to have been duly elected.
- (9) If an absolute majority of the Councillors cannot be obtained at the meeting:
 - (a) the Council may resolve to conduct a new election at a later specified time and date.
 - (b) sub-Rule 17.1 (9)(a) will continue to apply until an absolute majority of Councillors is achieved.

-
- (10) Notwithstanding sub-Rule 17.1 (9)(b) in the event an absolute majority of Councillors cannot be achieved after conducting three new election processes, the election of the *Mayor* will be determined by lot.
 - (11) If a lot is conducted, the *Chief Executive Officer* will have the conduct of the lot and the following provisions will apply:
 - (a) each candidate will draw one lot;
 - (b) the order of drawing lots will be determined by the alphabetical order of the surnames of the candidates who received an equal number of votes, except that, if two or more candidates' surnames are identical, the order will be determined by the alphabetical order of the candidates' first names;
 - (c) as many identical pieces of paper as there are candidates who receive an equal number of votes must be placed in a receptacle;
 - (d) the word 'Defeated' shall be written on one of the pieces of paper;
 - (e) the candidate who draws the paper with the word 'Defeated' written on it must be declared the defeated candidate (in which event a further vote will be held for the remaining candidates and the above process repeated if necessary, unless there is only one candidate remaining, in which case that candidate will be declared duly elected); and
 - (f) the *Chief Executive Officer* will declare the result of the election and the successful candidate.

17.2. Ceremonial *Mayoral* Speech

- (1) Upon being elected, the *Mayor* may make a ceremonial speech.
- (2) The purpose of the ceremonial speech is to outline priorities for the year ahead based on the adopted Council Plan.
- (3) The ceremonial speech must not exceed five (5) minutes.

17.3. *Mayor* to Take Chair

After the election of the *Mayor*, the *Mayor* must take the chair in accordance with section 18 of the *Act*.

17.4. Role and Procedures for Election of *Deputy Mayor*

- (1) At the Meeting at which the *Mayor* is to be elected, Council may resolve to establish the position of *Deputy Mayor* and elect a Councillor to the position of *Deputy Mayor*.
- (2) The term of a *Deputy Mayor* is to be identical to the term of the *Mayor* as resolved by Council.
- (3) If Council has not resolved to establish the position of *Deputy Mayor*, any provisions in the Meeting Rules relating to the *Deputy Mayor* have no effect.
- (4) The procedure used for the election of *Mayor* will be used to elect the *Deputy Mayor*, except that:
 - (a) the *Mayor* will conduct the election of *Deputy Mayor*; and
 - (b) any references to the office of the *Mayor* shall be taken as a reference to the *Deputy Mayor*.

Relevant Provisions of the Local Government Act 2020

The Act has specific provisions governing the election of the Mayor and the term of office for the Mayor:

Section 25 - Election of Mayor

- (1) At a Council Meeting that is open to the public, the Councillors must elect a Councillor to be the Mayor of the Council.*
- (2) Subject to section 167, any Councillor is eligible for election or re-election to the office of Mayor.*
- (3) The election of the Mayor must—*
 - (a) be chaired by the Chief Executive Officer; and*
 - (b) subject to this section, be conducted in accordance with the Governance Rules.*
- (4) Subject to subsections (5) and (6), the Mayor must be elected by an absolute majority of the Councillors.*
- (5) If an absolute majority of the Councillors cannot be obtained at the meeting, the Council may resolve to conduct a new election at a later specified time and date.*
- (6) If only one Councillor is a candidate for Mayor, the meeting must declare that Councillor to be duly elected as Mayor.*
- (7) In this section, **absolute majority** means the number of Councillors which is greater than half the total number of the Councillors of a Council.*

Section 26 - When is a Mayor to be elected?

- (1) A Mayor is to be elected no later than one month after the date of a general election.*
- (2) The Mayor of the Greater Geelong City Council must be elected for a 2 year term.*
- (3) Before the election of the Mayor, a Council, other than the Greater Geelong City Council, must determine by resolution whether the Mayor is to be elected for a 1 year or a 2 year term.*
- (4) If the Mayor is elected for a 1 year term, the next election of the Mayor must be held on a day to be determined by the Council that is as close to the end of the 1 year term as is reasonably practicable.*
- (5) If the Mayor is to be elected for a 2 year term, the next election of the Mayor must be held on a day to be determined by the Council that is as close to the end of the 2 year term as is reasonably practicable.*

(6) *A Mayor is to be elected within one month after any vacancy in the office of Mayor occurs.*

(7) *The election of a Mayor after the period specified in this section does not invalidate the election.*

(8) *A Councillor elected to fill a vacancy in the office of Mayor caused other than by the expiration of a one year or a 2 year term serves the remaining period of the previous Mayor's term.*

27 - Election of Deputy Mayor

(1) *Section 25, other than subsection (3)(a), applies to the election of a Deputy Mayor by the Councillors as if any reference in that section to the Mayor was a reference to the Deputy Mayor.*

(2) *Section 26 applies to the election of a Deputy Mayor as if any reference in that section to the Mayor was a reference to the Deputy Mayor.*

CHAPTER 4 – DELEGATED COMMITTEES

Overview Notes:

Council may establish Delegated Committees and Advisory Committees as part of its governance framework. Delegated Committees can comprise Councillors, members of Council staff and others and must be chaired by a Councillor. As Council may delegate specific powers, duties and functions to Delegated Committees, their meeting procedures need to be formal.

- (1) If Council establishes a Delegated Committee, these Rules will apply to the Delegated Committee Meetings with any necessary modifications.
- (2) For the purpose of sub-rule (1):
 - (a) a *Council Meeting* is to be read as a reference to a Delegated Committee Meeting;
 - (b) a Councillor is to be read as a reference to a Member of the Delegated Committee;
and
 - (c) a reference to the *Mayor* is to be read as a reference to the Chairperson of the Delegated Committee.
- (3) If Council establishes a Delegated Committee, Council may resolve that a provision of these Governance Rules and, including the Meeting Rules, does not apply to that Committee

CHAPTER 5 – CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Overview Notes:

The Act in sections 127 and 128 defines general and material conflicts of interest and provides exemptions for remoteness and interests in common with a substantial proportion of ratepayers along with other specific circumstances.³

The Act also provides Council must include in its Governance Rules procedures for disclosures of Conflicts of interest, including at meetings conducted under the auspices of Council that are not Council Meetings. Meetings conducted under the auspices of Council include those meetings arranged or hosted by Council.

These Rules provide the procedures for disclosures of conflicts of interest.

5.1 Obligations with regard to conflict of interest:

Councillors, members of Delegated Committees and Council staff and contractors are required to:

- (1) avoid - if possible, situations which may give rise to conflicts of interest;
- (2) identify - any conflicts of interest; and
- (3) disclose or declare - all conflicts of interest.

³ 127 General conflict of interest

(1) Subject to section 129, a relevant person has a

general conflict of interest in a matter if an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the person's private interests could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1)—

private interests means any direct or indirect interest of a relevant person that does not derive from their public duty and does not include an interest that is only a matter of personal opinion or belief;

public duty means the responsibilities and obligations that a relevant person has to members of the public in their role as a relevant person.

128 Material conflict of interest

(1) Subject to section 129, a relevant person has a

material conflict of interest in respect of a matter if an affected person would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter.

(2) The benefit may arise or the loss incurred—

- (a) directly or indirectly; or
- (b) in a pecuniary or non-pecuniary form.

(3) For the purposes of this section, any of the following is an **affected person**—

- (a) the relevant person;
- (b) a family member of the relevant person;
- (c) a body corporate of which the relevant person or their spouse or domestic partner is a Director or a member of the governing body;
- (d) an employer of the relevant person, unless the employer is a public body;
- (e) a business partner of the relevant person;
- (f) a person for whom the relevant person is a consultant, contractor or agent;
- (g) a beneficiary under a trust or an object of a discretionary trust of which the relevant person is a trustee;
- (h) a person from whom the relevant person has received a disclosable gift.

5.2 Councillors and Members of Delegated Committees

- (1) May not participate in discussion or decision-making on a matter in which they have a conflict of interest.
- (2) When disclosing a conflict of interest, Councillors must clearly state their connection to the matter.
- (3) All disclosures of conflicts of interest will be recorded in the minutes of a Council or Delegated Committee Meeting.

5.3 Procedure at a Council Meeting

A Councillor who has a conflict of interest in a matter being considered at a *Council Meeting* or Delegated Committee or Community Asset Committee at which they:

- (1) are in *attendance* must disclose the conflict of interest by fully explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those present at the *Council Meeting* at the point in the meeting where Chairperson requests 'Declarations of Conflicts of Interest to be Made' and immediately before the matter is considered;

or

- (2) intends to in *attendance* must disclose that conflict of interest by providing to the *Chief Executive Officer* before the *Council Meeting* commences a written notice:
 - (a) advising of the conflict of interest;
 - (b) fully explaining the nature of the conflict of interest; and
 - (c) detailing, if the nature of the conflict of interest involves a Councillor's relationship with or a gift from another person, the:
 - i. name of the other person;
 - ii. nature of the relationship with that other person or the date of receipt, value and type of gift received from the other person; and
 - iii. nature of that other person's interest in the matter,

and then immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting announcing to those present that they have a conflict of interest and that a written notice has been given to the *Chief Executive Officer* under this sub-Rule.

The Councillor must, in either event, leave the *Council Meeting* immediately after giving the explanation or making the announcement (as the case may be) and not be in *attendance* at the meeting until after the matter has been disposed of.

5.4 Procedure at other meetings held under the auspices of the Council

A Councillor who has a conflict of interest in a matter being considered by a meeting held under the auspices of *Council* at which they are in *attendance* must:

-
- (1) disclose that conflict of interest by fully explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those in *attendance* at the meeting immediately before the matter is considered;
 - (2) absent themselves from any discussion of the matter; and
 - (3) as soon as practicable after the meeting concludes provide to the *Chief Executive Officer* a written notice recording that the disclosure was made and accurately summarising the explanation given to those in *attendance* at the meeting.
 - (4) the *Chief Executive Officer* or delegate will maintain a register of such conflict of interest disclosures.

5.5 Council staff

- (1) Must act in accordance with the Employee Code of Conduct.
- (2) Must not exercise a delegation or make a decision on any matter where they have a conflict of interest.
- (3) May be permitted to provide advice to a decision maker if a conflict of interest exists, subject to the procedure and disclosure provisions at Rule 5.6 and the Employee Code of Conduct.

5.6 Procedures for disclosures of conflicts of interest by Council Staff

Disclosure by Members of Council Staff Preparing Reports for Meetings

- (1) A member of Council staff who, in their capacity as a member of Council staff, has a conflict of interest in a matter in respect of which they are preparing or contributing to the preparation of a Report for the consideration at a:
 - (2) *Council Meeting*;
 - (3) *Delegated Committee* meeting;
 - (4) *Community Asset Committee* meeting

must, immediately upon becoming aware of the conflict of interest, provide a written notice to the *Chief Executive Officer* disclosing the conflict of interest, fully explaining the nature of the conflict of interest and comply with any process or procedure required by the *Chief Executive Officer* to appropriately manage the conflict of interest

- (5) The *Chief Executive Officer* must ensure that the Report referred to in sub-Rule 5.6 (1) records the fact that a member of Council staff disclosed a conflict of interest in the subject-matter of the Report.

-
- (6) If the member of Council staff referred to in sub-Rule 5.6(1) is the *Chief Executive Officer*:
 - (a) the written notice referred to in sub-Rule 5.6 (4) must be given to the *Mayor*; and
 - (b) the obligation imposed by sub-Rule 5.6 (5) may be discharged by any other member of Council staff responsible for the preparation of the Report.

5.7 Disclosure of Conflict of Interest by Members of Council Staff in the Exercise of Delegated Power

- (1) A member of Council staff who has a conflict of interest in a matter where they are the delegate must, immediately upon becoming aware of the conflict of interest, provide a written notice to the *Chief Executive Officer* fully explaining the nature of the conflict of interest and comply with any process or procedure required by the *Chief Executive Officer* to appropriately manage the conflict of interest
- (2) If the member of Council staff referred to in sub-Rule 5.7 is the *Chief Executive Officer*, the written notice must be given to the *Mayor*.

5.8 Disclosure by a Member of Council Staff in the Exercise of a Statutory Function

- (1) A member of Council staff who has a conflict of interest in a matter requiring a statutory function to be performed under an Act and they are the delegate must, upon becoming aware of the conflict of interest, immediately provide a written notice to the *Chief Executive Officer* fully explaining the nature of the conflict of interest and comply with any process or procedure required by the *Chief Executive Officer* to appropriately manage the conflict of interest
- (2) If the member of Council staff referred to in sub-Rule 5.8 is the *Chief Executive Officer*, the written notice must be given to the *Mayor*.

5.9 Retention of Written Notices

The *Chief Executive Officer* must retain all written notices received under this Chapter for a period of five years.

5.10 Contractors and Consultants

- (1) All Contractors and consultants engaged by Council to provide advice to the decision-making process will be required to disclose conflicts of interest.
- (2) A Contractor or consultant who discloses a conflict of interest will not be engaged to provide advice on that matter unless;
 - (a) the conflict is so remote or insignificant it could not be considered to influence the advice being provided; or

-
- (b) there are no other contractors or consultants reasonably available and qualified to provide the technical advice required; and
 - (c) the conflict of interest is documented in all advice provided by that contractor or consultant.

CHAPTER 6 – DELEGATIONS

Overview Notes:

Council can make decisions (act) in two ways

- *by resolution at a Council Meeting or*
- *by delegation (others acting on its behalf).*

The Act provides for Council to delegate to the Chief Executive Officer. Delegation of Council powers to the Chief Executive Officer and other members of Council staff is a long-established practice to enable day to day operational decisions to be made efficiently.

Delegation of Council powers is primarily enabled and regulated by the Act, however powers, duties and functions may be delegated from a range of other Acts, Regulations and local laws.

Additionally, the Act and other legislation confers some powers duties and functions directly to the Chief Executive Officer. These may also be delegated by the Chief Executive Officer to various positions in the organisation's structure.

Delegations are to a position in the organisational structure rather than to a person.

- (1) A delegate must exercise their duties and perform the duties and functions set out in the Instrument of delegation subject to any specified limitations and in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council.
- (2) A delegate making a decision that will affect any person's rights, will identify whose rights may be affected and provide an opportunity for that person (or persons) to convey their views regarding the effect on their rights, and consider those views.
- (3) Delegates must keep appropriate records of decisions and actions taken under delegation.
- (4) The *Chief Executive Officer* may designate certain decisions made under delegation as matters to be reported to Council.
- (5) Council's public register of delegations will be available on its website.

CHAPTER 7 - JOINT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Overview Notes:

Regional collaboration provides benefits to the Darebin community through collective procurement, increased advocacy and alignment for major projects. While on some matters that are worked on in partnership it's possible for the participating Councils to make their own decisions and determinations, in some circumstances, it may be beneficial to hold Joint Council Meetings as are provided for in section 62 of the Act⁴.

- (1) Council may resolve to participate in a *Joint Council Meeting*.
- (2) If Council has resolved to participate in a *Joint Council Meeting*, the *Chief Executive Officer* (or delegate) will agree on governance rules with the participating Councils.
- (3) Where the participating Councils agree that Darebin will chair a *Joint Council Meeting*, the *Mayor of Darebin* will Chair the *Joint Council Meeting*.

⁴ **62 Joint meetings of Councils**

- (1) Two or more Councils may determine to hold a joint meeting.
- (2) A joint meeting is a *Council Meeting* of each Council for the purposes of this Act and the provisions of this Act, except section 61(3), (4) and (5)(d), apply accordingly.
- (3) A joint meeting is to be constituted by the Councillors of the Councils holding the joint meeting consisting of—
 - (a) the total number of Councillors determined by the Councils holding the joint meeting; and
 - (b) at least 3 Councillors from each of the Councils holding the joint meeting.
- (4) A quorum at a joint meeting is constituted by the number of Councillors that is equal to at least a majority of the Councillors from each of the Councils holding the joint meeting.
- (5) Subject to subsections (2) and (6), the procedures for conducting a joint meeting are to be determined by the Councils holding the joint meeting.
- (6) A joint meeting must comply with any requirements prescribed by the regulations.

CHAPTER 8 – WHAT INFORMS DECISION MAKING

Overview Notes:

Advisory Committees play a key role in connecting community views and experts with the decision-making processes of Council.

These committees:

- *provide advice to Council and to Council officers exercising delegation to make decisions or implement policy;*
- *are usually comprised of community members and Councillors, and may sometimes include representatives of community organisations; and*
- *are essential forums to provide input to the development of Council policy and decision making in their areas of focus.*

Reporting of the activities of these committees to Council is a transparency mechanism.

Council also has Councillor representatives on numerous external committees and organisations to ensure Council's voice is heard in key priority areas. These committees and organisations also inform Council, via its representatives, in regard to sector and/or expert views.

This section also provides for the appointment of Councillors as members of committees established by the Council, and as Council representatives or delegates on external committees and organisations.

Council will seek the views of community members whose rights or obligations may be affected before making a decision. Community engagement on each issue will be undertaken in accordance with the Community Engagement principles of the Act and Council's Community Engagement Policy.

In certain circumstances Council will establish a formal opportunity for members of the community to address a committee established to hear from the community in regard to a specific issue.

Councils Audit and Risk Committee is an advisory committee established in accordance with section 53 and 54 of the Act to assist Council in fulfilling its responsibilities relating to external financial and performance reporting, risk and financial management, corporate governance, internal controls systems and providing advice to drive continuous improvement. It does not have any delegated powers, including executive powers, management functions, or delegated financial responsibility.

8.1 Advisory Committees

8.1.1 Role and Term of Advisory Committees

- (1) In the first year of each Council term, Council will establish its Advisory Committees for the next four years.
- (2) Advisory Committees established by Council will be consulted for input on related policy, strategy or major operational proposals.
- (3) Advisory Committees established by Council, other than the Audit and Risk Committee established by the Council will be chaired by a Councillor, or where appropriate by a community member appointed in accordance with Rule 8.1.2.

-
- (4) Each Advisory Committee will be established in accordance with Model Terms of Reference for Advisory Committees endorsed by Council that at a minimum will prescribe:
 - (a) membership terms that provide for renewal of membership and continuity of contribution, with provision for initial appointments to support rotation of memberships.
 - (b) inclusive and transparent recruitment processes for community member membership and participation.
 - (c) requirements for disclosures of conflicts of interest.
 - (d) a description of the roles of members including attendance and participation requirements, role of the committee, councillor or appropriate community member chair, reporting requirements and confidentiality.
 - (e) frequency and detailed reporting obligations back to the Council.
 - (5) Any person appointed to an Advisory Committee that nominates for election to Council, State Parliament or Federal Parliament must take leave of absence from their Committee position from the time of declaring they have nominated (or intend to nominate). If elected, they will be deemed to have resigned from the Committee.
 - (6) In order to maintain transparency of Advisory Committee operations, the following information is to be published on Council's website in respect of each Advisory Committee:
 - (a) the Terms of Reference
 - (b) the names of all members
 - (c) reports of Committee activities (as reported biannually to Council)
 - (7) All Advisory Committees established by Council, except the Audit and Risk Committee, will sunset on 30 June following each General Council election, unless they have been re-established in the new Council term.

8.1.2 Appointment of Councillors to Advisory Committees and External Committees and Organisations

At the next *Ordinary Council Meeting* after the Meeting at which the *Mayor* is elected, or at a *Council Meeting* held as soon as practicable after that Meeting, Council must:

- (1) appoint Councillors as members of, or representatives on, committees established by Council;
- (2) appoint Councillors as delegates to external committees and organisations; and

8.2 Council Reports

- (1) The *Chief Executive Officer* will determine the form of reports to Council prepared for inclusion in the agenda for a Council or Delegated Committee meeting.
- (2) Reports presented to Council for consideration and decision will address where relevant the following report template headings:
 - Executive Summary
 - Background / Key Information
 - Previous Council resolutions
 - Communications and Engagement
 - Analysis

-
- Alignment to Council Plan / Council Policy
 - Environmental & Sustainability Considerations
 - Cultural Considerations
 - Economic Development Considerations
 - Financial and Resource Implications
 - Legal and Risk Implications
 - Operational Impacts
 - Discussion
 - Options for Consideration
 - Implementation Strategy
 - Related Documents
 - Attachments

CHAPTER 9 – OTHER MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS / CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

(1) Advisory Committees and other Informal Meetings of Councillors

For any meeting of an Advisory Committee established by Council attended by at least one Councillor or a scheduled or planned meeting to discuss the business of *Council* or to brief Councillors, and which is attended by at least half of the Councillors and one member of Council staff; and which is not a *Council Meeting*, *Delegated Committee* meeting or *Community Asset Committee* meeting the *Chief Executive Officer* must ensure that a summary of the meeting is:-

- (a) Tabled at the next convenient *Council Meeting*; and
- (b) Recorded in the minutes of that *Council Meeting*.

The summary of the meeting will include

- (a) The time, date and location of the meeting.
- (b) The councillors in attendance.
- (c) The topics discussed.
- (d) The positions of council officers in attendance
- (e) The organisation that any attendees external to council are representing; and
- (f) Any conflicts of interest declared, including the reason

(2) Confidential Information

If, after the repeal of section 77(2)(c) of the *Local Government Act 1989*, the *Chief Executive Officer* is of the opinion that information relating to a meeting is confidential information within the meaning of the *Act*, they may designate the information as confidential and advise Councillors and/or members of Council staff in writing accordingly.

Information which has been designated by the *Chief Executive Officer* as confidential information within the meaning of the *Act*, and in respect of which advice has been given to Councillors and/or members of Council staff in writing accordingly, will be presumed to be confidential information.

CHAPTER 10 – COMMUNITY ASSET COMMITTEES

Overview Notes:

The Act provides for Council to establish a community asset committee for the management of a community asset such as a hall.

Council may appoint members of the community to the committee and delegate to it powers, duties or functions.

The powers delegated to a community asset committee must be limited in the amount and purpose of any financial delegation.

- (1) These Rules will apply to any Community Asset Committee established by Council.
- (2) Council may resolve, in establishing a Community Asset Committee, that the meeting procedure chapter of these Rules do not apply.
- (3) A Community Asset Committee must report the minutes of all Committee Meetings to the next practicable *Council Meeting*.
- (4) A Community Asset Committee must act in accordance with its adopted Charter, Instrument of Delegation, any Terms of Reference adopted by Council, and the *Act* (in particular, sections 65 and 47⁵)

⁵ **65 Community Asset Committee**

(1) A Council may establish a Community Asset Committee and appoint as many members to the Community Asset Committee as the Council considers necessary to enable the Community Asset Committee to achieve the purpose specified in subsection (2).

(2) A Council may only establish a Community Asset Committee for the purpose of managing a community asset in the municipal district.

Note - See section 47 for delegation to members of a Community Asset Committee by the Chief Executive Officer.

47 Delegations by Chief Executive Officer

(1) The *Chief Executive Officer* may by instrument of delegation delegate any power, duty or function of the Council that has been delegated to the *Chief Executive Officer* by the Council to—

- (a) a member of Council staff; or
- (b) the members of a Community Asset Committee.

Note - This means Council may not delegate directly to a Community Asset Committee.

CHAPTER 11 – ELECTION PERIODS

Overview Notes:

The Election Period Policy governs the conduct of Council, Councillors and members of Council staff during an election period to ensure appropriate decision-making in the lead up to a Council election.

The Election Period prohibits the use of Council resources for any election campaign and puts in place a procedure to ensure Council does not print, publish or distribute any material that may influence the outcome of the election.

11.1 Election Periods Generally

- (1) Council in accordance with section 69 of the Act⁶ will have in place an Election Period Policy that:
 - (a) governs decision making during a local government election period, including what may be considered at a *Council Meeting* or *Delegated Committee Meeting*.
 - (b) prohibits the use of Council resources for any election campaign purposes, including Federal, State or Council elections.
 - (c) sets out the conditions for any community engagement required to be undertaken during an election period, including consultations and Civic events sets out the requirements for any Council publications during a local government election period – including the website, social media, newsletters and advertising – to ensure Council does not publish materials that relate to issues that are the subject of election campaigns.
 - (d) defines roles and responsibilities in relation to who is the spokesperson for Council during an election period.
 - (e) sets out the requirements for a Councillor who is a candidate in an election including a Federal, State or Council election.
- (2) At least once in each Council term and, not later than 12 months prior to the commencement of an election period, Council will review its election period policy.
- (3) The Election Period Policy forms part of these Rules.
- (4) The operation of Council Advisory Committees shall be suspended upon the commencement of the election period ahead of a general Council election.
- (5) Council Committees shall resume meeting following the election and the appointment by the incoming Council of Councillors to each committee.

⁶ **69 Governance Rules to include election period policy**

(1) A Council must include an election period policy in its Governance Rules.

(2) An election period policy must prohibit any Council decision during the election period for a general election that—

(a) relates to the appointment or remuneration of the *Chief Executive Officer* but not to the appointment or remuneration of an Acting *Chief Executive Officer*; or

(b) commits the Council to expenditure exceeding one per cent of the Council's income from general rates, municipal charges and service rates and charges in the preceding financial year; or

(c) the Council considers could be reasonably deferred until the next Council is in place; or

(d) the Council considers should not be made during an election period.

(3) An election period policy must prohibit any Council decision during the election period for a general election or a by- election that would enable the use of Council's resources in a way that is intended to influence, or is likely to influence, voting at the election.

11.2 Election Period Policy

1. Introduction

Section 60 of the *Act* requires Council to develop, adopt and keep in force Governance Rules which include an election period policy in accordance with section 69 of the *Act*.

2. Context

Under Section 69(2) of the *Act*, an election period policy must prohibit any Council decision during the election period for a general election that:

- (a) relates to the appointment or remuneration of the *Chief Executive Officer* but not to the appointment or remuneration of an *Acting Chief Executive Officer*; or
- (b) commits the Council to expenditure exceeding one per cent of the Council's income from general rates, municipal charges and service rates and charges in the preceding financial year; or
- (c) the Council considers could be reasonably deferred until the next Council is in place; or
- (d) the Council considers should not be made during an election period.

A Council decision made in contravention of subsection (a) or (b) above is invalid. Any person who suffers any loss or damage as a result of acting in good faith on a Council decision that is invalid by virtue of it contravening Section 69(2) is entitled to compensation from the Council for that loss or damage.⁷

Under Section 69(3) of the *Act* the election period policy must prohibit any Council decision during the election period for a general election or a by-election that would enable the use of Council's resources in a way that is intended to influence, or is likely to influence, voting at the election.

Section 304 of the *Act* states:

- (1) a Councillor or member of Council staff must not use Council resources in a way that—
 - (a) is intended to; or
 - (b) is likely to—
affect the result of an election under this *Act*; and
- (2) a Councillor or member of Council staff must not use Council resources to intentionally or recklessly print, publish or distribute or cause, permit or authorise to be printed, published or distributed any electoral material during the election period on behalf of, or purporting to be on behalf of, the Council.
- (3) This does not include material that only contains information about the election process or is otherwise required in accordance with, or under, any Act or regulation.
- (4) Section 123 of the *Act* prescribes serious penalties for any Councillor who inappropriately makes use of their position or information obtained in their role, to gain an advantage, or disadvantage another (Misuse of Position).

⁷ Section 69(5)

3. Objectives

To support and ensure the conduct of good governance for Council and the organisation during Election Periods through the transparency and accountability of Councillors, Council officers, and candidates during an election period.

4. Application

Candidates for Elections

Councillors must comply with this policy, regardless of whether they intend to nominate or have already nominated as candidates for election.

Council Officers who are candidates for election must comply with this policy and in addition:

- (a) take leave from their duties for the duration of the election period in accordance with section 256(8) of the *Act* (if not enough paid leave is accrued, unpaid leave will be available).
- (b) return any council equipment (including, but not limited to, motor vehicles, telephones and computers), documents or information which is not available to the public for the duration of the election period.
- (c) immediately resign upon election in accordance with s 256(8) of the *Act*.

Council committee members, including Advisory Committee members who are candidates for election are expected to comply with this policy and in addition:

- (d) submit apologies for any committee meetings or other activities held during the election period.
- (e) return any council equipment, documents or information which is not available to the public for the duration of the election period.
- (f) immediately resign from the committee upon election.

Other candidates for election are expected to comply with the obligations of this policy where they apply.

5. Policy Details

5.1 Election Caretaker Period

During the 'Election Period' for a General Election the Council will be deemed to be in 'Caretaker Mode'.

The *Act* defines the 'Election Period' as the period that starts at the time nominations close on nomination day at and ends at 6pm on election day (32 days).

The 2024 Election Period will commence at 12pm on Tuesday 24 September 2024 and end at 6pm on Saturday 26 October 2024.

During this extended election period Councillors:

- Will continue to fulfil their duties.

-
- - Will continue to engage, and communicate with, the community in their Councillor role.
 - Must comply with the *Act* and Councillor Code of Conduct.
 - Must not use their position to influence Council officers, or access Council resources or information, in support of any election campaign or candidacy.

5.2 Inappropriate Decisions

Pursuant to section 69(2) of the *Act*, Council will avoid making decisions that would affect voting at an election or decisions that may unreasonably bind an incoming Council and could be deferred until after the election.

In addition to the decisions outlined in section 69(2), other examples of inappropriate decisions may include:

- Allocating community grants or other direct funding to community organisations
- Major planning scheme amendments
- Changes to strategic objectives and strategies identified in the Council Plan
- Adopting policy
- Setting advocacy positions.

Council will however, allow an exception to this principle where:

A decision will be considered only if absolutely necessary for Council operational purposes or pursuant to a statutory requirement.

The only items to be considered at an Ordinary Council or Delegated Committee Meeting held during the election period, will be of an administrative nature. For the avoidance of doubt any report considered at an Ordinary Council or Delegated Committee Meeting held during the election period will be subject of certification (i.e. a Caretaker Statement) by the *Chief Executive Officer* in accordance with 5.3 below.

At a Meeting designated to consider Planning and Related Matters, only permit applications that may otherwise be subject of an application to VCAT on the grounds Council has failed to determine within the prescribed time will be considered.

5.3 Extraordinary Circumstances

If the Council considers that there are extraordinary circumstances where the municipality or the local community would be significantly disadvantaged by the Council not making a particular Major Policy Decision, the Council will, by resolution, request an exemption from the Minister for Local Government, in accordance with section 177 of the *Act*.

It shall be the ultimate responsibility of the *Chief Executive Officer* to determine if a matter is a major policy decision. Where possible, the *Chief Executive Officer* will ensure that matters are scheduled for Council to ensure that major policy decisions are resolved prior to the commencement of the Election Period or scheduled for determination by the incoming Council.

Considerations for Officers with Delegated Authority

Before making decisions under delegated authority during the election period, officers should consider the following:

- Whether the decision is 'significant'
- The urgency of the issue (that is, can it wait until after the election?)
- The possibility of financial repercussions if it is deferred
- Whether the decision is likely to be controversial
- The best interests of Council.

Officers requiring assistance in determining whether a decision is likely to be inappropriate should seek advice from the Head of Governance & Risk in the first instance.

5.4 Caretaker Statement

During the election period, the *Chief Executive Officer* will ensure that a Caretaker Statement is included in every report submitted to the Council or to a delegated committee of Council for a decision.

The Caretaker Statement will specify one or more of the following:

- The recommended decision is not an Inappropriate Decision, under section 69(2) of the *Local Government 2020*, or within the meaning of the Election Period Policy.
- The recommended decision is an Inappropriate Decision within the meaning of the Election Period Policy, but the following negative consequences of a failure to make a decision on this matter outweigh the consequences of binding an incoming Council. [*Insert description of negative consequences of failure to make decision*].
- The recommended decision is a Major Policy Decision, pursuant to section 69(2) of the *Local Government 2020*, but an extraordinary circumstances exemption was granted by the Minister for Local Government on [insert date].

During the election period, the Council will not make a decision on any matter or report that does not include one of these Caretaker Statements.

Councillors will refrain from moving motions or raising matters at a meeting that could potentially influence voting at the election.

5.5 Candidacy

A Councillor must not use Council resources for candidacy, or any purpose that may be perceived as being used for candidacy (individual or political party). This applies to a Councillor standing in local, state, or federal government elections, and for any other elected positions, for example, positions on boards. Such use would constitute misuse of position by the Councillor.

5.6 State and Federal Government Elections

Councillors will ensure there is a demonstrable distinction between their obligations to Council and their personal interests as a candidate, or member of a political party, in an election period prior to a state or federal election.

In accordance with the adopted Councillor Guidelines for State and Federal Elections 2018 a Councillor who becomes an endorsed candidate of a registered political party or publicly expresses an intention to run as a candidate in a state or federal election, is a 'Prospective Candidate' and will provide written advice to the *Chief Executive Officer*, as soon as practicable, who will then advise all Councillors.

Councillors must comply with the provisions of the adopted Councillor Guidelines for State and Federal Elections 2018

5.7 Council Publications

Public resources, including Council Publications, must not be used in a way that would influence the way people vote in elections.

Electoral matter

The Council will ensure that it complies with section 304(2) of the Act which requires that a Councillor or member of Council staff must not use Council resources to intentionally or recklessly print, publish or distribute or cause, permit or authorise to be printed, published or distributed any electoral material during the election period on behalf of, or purporting to be on behalf of, the Council unless the electoral material only contains information about the election process or is otherwise required in accordance with, or under, any Act or regulation.

The following definitions from the Act are noted:

Section 3(1) '**electoral material**' means an advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notice that contains electoral matter, but does not include an advertisement in a newspaper that is only announcing the holding of a meeting; '**publish**' means publish by any means including by publication on the Internet;

Section 3(4) '**electoral matter**' means matter, which is intended or likely to affect voting in an election but does not include any electoral material produced by or on behalf of the election manager for the purposes of conducting an election.

Section 3(5) without limiting the generality of the definition of 'electoral matter', matter is to be taken to be intended or likely to affect voting in an election if it contains an express or implicit reference to, or comment on -

- (a) the election; or
- (b) a candidate in the election, or
- (c) an issue submitted to, or otherwise before, the voters in connection with the election.

The *Chief Executive Officer* (or delegate) must certify that any Council publication does not include 'electoral matter' before it can be issued.

For the purpose of this Policy, 'publications' include hard copy and electronic advertisements, social media posts, promotional media releases, fliers, posters, newsletters/updates, booklets, surveys, invitations and group mailouts/emails.

Any publications to be issued during the election period are to be forwarded to the relevant General Manager for approval, and then sent to the Governance Services Unit for vetting for electoral matter.

Once vetted, the publication will then be submitted to the *Chief Executive Officer* (or delegate) for certification. **Appendix 1** contains the certification memorandum required for a publication during the election period.

Council publications available in Council facilities will be reviewed before the election period to identify and temporarily remove anything that might reasonably influence the election.

The *Chief Executive Officer*, or delegate, will be the primary spokesperson for Council communications during an election period.

Media and social media responses and statements will only be issued during an election period in the name of the *Chief Executive Officer*. These will be subject to certification by the *Chief Executive Officer*.

Council officers will not make any public statement that could be construed as influencing the election.

Annual Report

It is a requirement of the *Act* (s 100) that the *Mayor* must report on the implementation of the Council Plan by presenting the annual report at a *Council Meeting* open to the public.

In the year of a general election the *Council Meeting* must be held on a day not later than the day before election day.

As this is a statutory requirement, it does not require certification by the *Chief Executive Officer*.

5.8 Council Resources

It is a requirement of the *Act* (s 304(1)) that a Councillor or member of Council staff must not use Council resources in a way that—

- (a) is intended to; or
- (b) is likely to—

affect the result of an election under this *Act*.

This means that the Council will also ensure other Council resources are not used inappropriately in ways that may influence voting in an election. This includes financial, human and material resources. Any staff member who considers that a particular use of Council resources may influence voting in the election must advise their General Manager or the *Chief Executive Officer* and obtain approval before authorising, using or allocating the resource.

In applying these principles, the Council understands that the following will be the normal practice during the election period:

- Council resources, including offices, support staff, hospitality services, equipment and stationery will be used exclusively for normal Council business during the Caretaker Period, and will not be used for the personal advantage of any Councillor or candidate in connection with any election. This does not apply to the provision of space for the Returning Officer.
- No new publications or pamphlets, including Darebin Community News will be published by Council during the election period.

-
- Speeches for Councillors will only be prepared by Council staff in relation to events that are part of the normal services or operations of the Council and such speeches will not be circulated or available for publication.
 - Council logos, letterheads, business cards, photos or other City of Darebin Council branding/identity are not permitted to be used for, or linked in any way, to a candidate's election campaign.
 - Candidates will not be provided access to databases, contact lists, property counts, email addresses or any other information that would assist in mailing or other distribution of election material.
 - It is recommended that staff who are either following or friends with Councillors / candidates via their social media pages unfriend the Councillor / candidate during this period.
 - There will be no Ward or Councillor 'Meet and Greet' meetings held.
 - The Executive Officer to the *Mayor* and Councillors or any other Council staff member will not be asked to undertake any tasks connected directly or indirectly with electioneering.
 - Reimbursements of Councillors' out-of-pocket expenses during the Election Period will only apply to costs that have been incurred in the performance of normal Council duties, and not for expenses that could be perceived as supporting or being connected with a candidate's election campaign.
 - Where Councillors have Council funded equipment, including laptops, tablets, printers and mobile phones, these are not to be used for election purposes or in a manner that could be perceived as supporting or being connected with a candidate's election campaign.

Council Facilities and Meeting Rooms

Council Facilities / Halls for Hire can be hired by Federal and State political members and officers, and local candidates (including Councillors) at the normal corporate hire rate determined for the facility, in the lead up to an election, but not during the election period.

To avoid a perception that Council facilities are being used to promote any candidacy, no promotional material related to the event / hired use, apart from directional signage, can be displayed in the common public areas of the facility being hired. This will be advised at the time of booking.

Use of the Title 'Councillor'

Councillors may use the title Councillor in their election material, as they continue to hold office during the election / caretaker period.

While a Councillor can refer to themselves as Councillor in all communication issued by the Councillor (verbal or written), it must be made clear that it is the communication of a candidate and not a position of Council.

Photographs and Images

Photographs and images paid for by Council or taken by Council officers are not to be used in electoral material for any candidate. This includes images of Councillors, Council events, and Council owned or maintained infrastructure.

Photographs taken by Councillors, their family or friends, or professional photos they have directly commissioned and paid for, may be used in electoral material.

5.9 Election Signage on Council and Electioneering Practices

In order to ensure Council resources including buildings, assets and land are not used to support any electioneering activity, Council has adopted an [‘Electoral Advertising Signage and Electioneering Policy’](#). This policy provides clear direction on:

- (a) The placement of electoral advertising signs on any Council asset, land, municipal building or road; and
- (b) The requirements for candidates or their supporters electioneering in public places.

Signs illegally placed on Council assets or land are in breach of *Environment Protection Act 2017* and thus subject to infringement.

A copy of the policy will be provided to all candidates and is available on Councils website.

5.10 Public Consultation and Council Events

Public consultation is an integral part of Council’s policy development process and operations, however, there are concerns that consultation undertaken close to a general election may become an issue and influence voting.

Council events in the lead up to an election can also raise concerns over the potential use of sitting Councillors using them for electioneering purposes.

If consultation must be undertaken or an event held during this time, the Council must explain to the community the special circumstances making it necessary and how the risks influencing the election will be mitigated or prevented.

Therefore:

- No formal public consultation, like previously specified in section 223 of the 1989 Act, will be conducted during this period.
- Consultation for the purpose of planning permit applications and operational issues such as canvassing residents’ views on small-scale traffic treatments, installation of single trees and the like will be allowed as they are operational in nature and are unlikely to impact the conduct of the election.
- Consultation on larger projects and initiatives, strategies or plans will not occur during the election period.
- Civic Events will cease during this time.
- No election material or active campaigning is to be conducted at Council sponsored festivals.

Councillors may attend external events as a representative of Council however must not to use the opportunity to promote their election campaign.

5.11 Equitable Access to Council Information

The Council recognises that all election candidates have a right to information from the Council administration. However, it is important that sitting Councillors continue to receive information that is necessary to fulfil their elected roles.

Neither Councillors nor candidates will receive information or advice from Council staff that might be perceived to support election campaigns, and transparency will be observed and practised in the provision of all information and advice during the election period.

Information and briefing material prepared by staff for Councillors during the election period will relate only to factual matters or to existing Council policies and services. All such requests are to be issued through the offices of the responsible General Manager who will maintain a register of requests made and advice provided. Such information will not relate to new policy development, new projects or matters that are the subject of public or election debate or that might be perceived connected with a candidate's election campaign.

A copy of the document / advice will then be passed to the Head of Governance & Risk as issued during the Election Period. The document / advice will be emailed or provided in a hardcopy format to all sitting Councillors and candidates to access. Candidates will be advised of this process in writing.

An Information Request Register will be maintained by the Governance Services Unit during the Election Period. This Register will be a public document that records all requests for information by Councillors and candidates, and the responses given to those requests. Only information that can be reasonably accessed will be released.

All requests for information are to be directed to the Head of Governance & Risk.

5.12 Publicity

It is recognised that Council publicity is intended to promote normal services or operations of the Council. Council publicity will not be used in any way that might be construed as intended to influence the outcome of the Council election.

- During the election period, no Council employee may make any public statement that could be construed as influencing the election. This does not include statements of clarification that are approved by the *Chief Executive Officer*.
- During the election period the CEO will only comment on operational matters or confirm previous resolutions of Council.
- During the election period, publicity campaigns, other than for the purpose of conducting the election, will be avoided. Where a publicity campaign is deemed necessary for a Council service or operation, it must be approved by the *Chief Executive Officer*. In any event, Council publicity during the election period will be restricted to promoting the normal services or operations of the Council.
- Any requests for media advice or assistance from Councillors during the election period will be channeled through the *Chief Executive Officer* or the Manager Governance & Communications. In any event, no media advice and/or assistance or media releases will be provided in relation to election campaign matters, or regarding publicity that involves specific Councillors.

-
- Councillors will not use their position as an elected representative or their access to Council staff and other Council resources to gain media attention in support of matters that could be construed as relating to an election campaign.

Information published on Council's website regarding sitting Councillors will be limited to statements of facts about their roles and responsibilities as a Councillor. For example, contact details, roles and responsibilities as assigned by Council resolution.

Council Websites and Social Media

Councillors may use the title Councillor in their election material, as they continue to hold office during the election / caretaker period.

The only new material published on Council's websites or social media sites during an election period will be:

- The Agenda and Minutes for any Council or Delegated Committee meetings
- The Annual Report
- Key service disruption information

Service information already published on the website will be reviewed to ensure it does not include anything that might be seen as likely to influence the election.

5.13 Assistance to Candidates

A copy of this Policy must:

- be given to each Councillor as soon as practicable after it is adopted,
- be available for inspection by the public at the Council office, and
- be published on Council's website.

The *Chief Executive Officer* will ensure that all Councillors, and staff are informed of the requirements of this policy.

The Council affirms that all candidates for the Council election will be treated equally.

Any assistance and advice to be provided to Candidates as part of the conduct of the Council Election will be provided equally to all candidates. The types of assistance that are available will be documented and communicated to all candidates in advance.

All election-related enquiries from candidates, whether sitting Councillors or not, will be directed to the Returning Officer or, where the matter is outside the responsibilities of the Returning Officer, to the *Chief Executive Officer*.

5.14 Conduct of Council Meetings

Public Question Time and Submissions will be suspended at all *Council Meetings* during the election period.

During the election period, Councillors will limit their discussion during debate to the topic under consideration and will avoid raising electoral matter, where possible.

During the election period Notices of Motions will be suspended at all *Council Meetings*.

Urgent Business will only be admitted in accordance with Councils Governance Rules.

6 Miscellaneous

During the Pre-election period or the Election period, the *Chief Executive Officer* may, at their absolute discretion, introduce additional provisions to this policy they believe are necessary to support the achievement of its stated policy objectives.

Any changes made by the *Chief Executive Officer* will be reflected in an update to this policy and published on *Councils* website and sent to all Councillors and candidates.

7 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The requirements of this policy will be monitored throughout the caretaker period to ensure compliance.

8 Associated Documents

- Governance Rules 2020
- Electoral Advertising Signage and Electioneering Policy
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- Summary of Election Period Restrictions – **Appendix 1**
- Certification Memo – **Appendix 2**
- Definitions – **Appendix 3**

Appendix 1 - Summary of Election Period Restrictions

		Election Period 32 days before election
4	Council staff standing as a candidate	Must take leave and return all Council equipment and information
4	Committee member standing as a candidate	Must lodge apologies for meetings and return all Council equipment and information
5(7)	Council resources used in conjunction with an election campaign	Not permitted
5(7)	Reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses to Councillors	Cannot include expenses that could be perceived as electoral expenses
5(7)	Use of Council logo, letterheads, photo's, phone numbers, or any form of Council branding/identity in campaign material	Not permitted
5(7)	Officer assistance in preparing campaign material	Not permitted
5(7)	Officer provision of databases and contact lists	Not permitted
5(10)	Maintenance of an Information Request Register	Required
5(9)	Routine community consultation	Permitted
5(9)	Significant community consultation	Not permitted
5(6)	Printing, publishing or distributing a handbill, pamphlet or notice containing electoral matter	Not permitted
5(6)-	Printing, publishing or distributing a handbill, pamphlet or notice <u>not</u> containing electoral matter	Permitted following certification by the Chief Executive
5(7)	Publication of the Darebin News or similar publication	Not permitted
5(11)	Councillor details on Council's website	Restricted to names, contact details and committee or other appointments
5(11)	Employee of Council or subsidiary organisation making a public statement that could be construed as influencing the election	Not permitted, apart from clarifications made by the Chief Executive
5(11)	Publicity campaigns for Council services or functions	Should be avoided where possible, and otherwise approved by the Chief Executive.
5(11)	Councillor requests for media assistance	Must be approved by the Chief Executive or delegate but cannot relate to election campaigns or promote individual Councillors
5(2)	Council making Major Policy Decisions	Not permitted, except in accordance with the Act
5(2)	Council making Significant Decisions (defined in Act as inappropriate decisions)	To be avoided, except where it is urgent and cannot be deferred
5(13)	Public Question Time / Submissions at <i>Council Meetings</i>	Suspended

		Election Period 32 days before election
5(13)	Discussion of matters and raising of Urgent Business	Comments by Councillors not to include Electoral Matter. Urgent Business permitted
5(9) 5(11)	Councillor attendance at meetings, events and functions	Permitted
5(9)	Speeches by Councillors at Council events	Limited to a short welcome, with no reference to the election.
5(9)	Annual <i>Mayoral</i> fundraising event (or similar)	Not permitted
5(9)	Attendance by Councillors at external events as representatives of Council	Permitted, but Councillors not to use the opportunity to promote their election campaign.
5(12)	Enquiries to Council from candidates	Shall be referred to the Returning Officer
6	Introduction of additional provisions by the Chief Executive	Permitted

2024 Council Elections



REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATION OF PUBLICATION DURING THE ELECTION PERIOD

1. Author to Complete	
Document Description (attach document):	
Intended Distribution Channel:	
<p>I declare that the material contained in the attached document has been checked by me and to the best of my knowledge, it does not contain any electoral matter.</p>	
Name & Title	<input type="text"/>
Signature	<input type="text"/>
Date	<input type="text"/>
2. General Manager to Complete	
<p>I have reviewed the material contained in the attached document and can advise that to the best of my knowledge, it does not contain any electoral matter.</p>	
Name & Title	<input type="text"/>
Signature	<input type="text"/>
Date	<input type="text"/>
<i>Once signed, return to Head of Governance & Risk for vetting.</i>	
3. Chief Executive Officer to complete	
<p>In accordance with Chapter 11 of the Governance Rules adopted by Council on 22 August 2022, I certify that the attached advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notice may be printed, published or distributed during the election period on behalf of the City of Darebin.</p>	
	<input type="text" value="CEO Name Chief Executive Officer"/>
Signature	<input type="text"/>
Date	<input type="text"/>

Appendix 3 – Definitions

Where terms used in this Policy are defined in the *Local Government Act 2020* (Act), their use in this Policy is consistent with the definitions in the Act.

Words	Meaning/Definition
Act	means the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> (Vic).
Candidate	means a person who is nominated to stand for a Council, Federal or State election.
Chief Executive Officer	means the person appointed by Council to be its Chief Executive Officer, or any person acting in that position.
Councillor	means a person who holds the office of member of a Council.
Council Meeting	means a Council meeting that complies with the Act.
Council Resources	includes offices, support staff, hospitality services, equipment, stationery, or any form or Council branding/identity such as logo's, photo's, letterheads, etc.
Delegate	means a General Manager or Head of Governance & Risk as appointed.
Election Day	means the day of an election as determined under the Act.
Election period	has the same meaning as 'election period' in section 3(1) of the Act and means the period that starts on the last day on which nominations for that election can be received and ends at 6pm on election day.
Electoral advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notice	means any document that is produced for the purpose of communicating with the community and which contains electoral matter, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Newsletters and other circulars (including those sent by email); (b) Media releases; (c) Leaflets, pamphlets, handbills, flyers, magazines and brochures; (d) Any new email, web based publications or social media posts; and (e) Mailouts to multiple addresses.
Electoral Material	means an advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notices that contains Electoral Matter, but does not include an advertisement that is only announcing the holding of a meeting.
Electoral Matter	means matter which is intended or likely to affect voting in an election but does not include any electoral material produced by or on behalf of the election manager for the purposes of conducting an election. Electoral matter is to be taken to be intended or likely to affect voting in an election if it contains an express or implicit reference to, or comment on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the election; or (b) a candidate in the election; or (c) an issue submitted to, or otherwise before, the voters in connection with the election
Inappropriate decisions	Includes any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) decisions that would affect voting in an election; or (b) decisions that could reasonably be made after the election.

Words	Meaning/Definition
Information Request Register	This Information Request Register will be a public document that records all requests relating to Electoral Matters and non-routine requests for information by Councillors and Candidates, and the responses given to those requests.
Member of Council Staff	<p>means a natural person appointed by the Chief Executive Officer (other than an independent contractor under a contract for services or a volunteer) to enable:</p> <p>(a) the functions of the Council to be carried out; and</p> <p>(b) the Chief Executive Officer to carry out their functions.</p> <p>The Chief Executive Officer is also a member of Council Staff.</p>
Public consultation	A process that involves an invitation or invitations to individuals, groups or organisations or the community generally to comment on an issue, proposed action or proposed policy, and includes discussion of that matter with the public.
Publish	means publish by any means including by publication on the internet.
Major Policy Decision	<p>Is defined by the Act to mean a decision:</p> <p>(a) Relating to the employment or remuneration of a CEO, other than a decision to appoint an acting CEO;</p> <p>(b) To terminate the appointment of a CEO;</p> <p>To enter into a contract the total value of which exceeds 1% of Council's total revenue from rates and charges in the preceding financial year.</p>
Significant decision	<p>In the context of this policy, significant decisions include:</p> <p>(a) decisions that may irrevocably commit the incoming Council to substantial expenditure or to other significant actions; and</p> <p>(b) decisions that may have an irrevocable and significant impact on the municipality or a significant section of the community.</p>