

**POLICY NO: 4.2.3**

**COUNCIL BRIEFINGS, MEETINGS & FORUMS – FORMAT, PROCEDURES AND  
MAXIMUM DURATION**

**OBJECTIVE**

To provide:

- a format and guidelines for Council Briefings, Council Meetings and Forums to ensure efficient and effective discussion, debate and decision making;
- protocols and procedures for the orderly and efficient processing of Council Member pre-Council Meeting enquires and requests; and
- a maximum duration in order that Council Briefings, Council Meetings and Forums do not continue longer than a reasonable time.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

**1. COUNCIL BRIEFINGS AND COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Council Briefings will be held for the purpose of and in accordance with the guidelines provided in Attachment 1, as adopted by Council on 20 January 2015 (Item 9.5.2).

Council Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1995, its regulations and the City of Vincent Local Law relating to Standing Orders.

This policy is in addition to the legislative requirements.

**1.1 Maximum Duration**

The Council shall aim to conclude Council Briefings and Council Meetings by 10:00pm or in any case after a maximum duration of four (4) hours.

**1.2 Issue of Agendas**

- The Council Briefing Agenda will be issued to Council Members on Wednesday of the week before the Council Briefing and published on the City's Website at the same time; and
- The Council Meeting Agenda will be issued to Council Members on the Friday immediately following the Council Briefing and published on the City's website at the same time.

**1.3 Pre-Council Meeting Protocols and Procedures**

Pre-Council Meeting requests and enquiries shall be in accordance with the Guidelines and Procedures included as Attachment 2.

## 2. FORUMS

There is a need for the Council to meet and discuss matters relating to the operation and affairs of the City outside the formal Council Meeting framework prescribed by the *Local Government Act 1995* which sets out the formal procedures that apply to such meetings. The Council may from time-to-time wish to conduct Forums which are not prescribed under the *Local Government Act 1995*.

This policy sets out the requirements which apply to Forums.

### 2.1 Maximum Duration

It is aimed to conclude Forums by 9:00pm or in any case after a maximum duration of three hours.

### 2.2 Forum Guidelines

- (a) The conduct of Forums is controlled by the City of Vincent Local Law relating to Standing Orders Clause 12.9 which states:

*“The Council may prescribe guidelines and procedures for the management of Forums.”*

- (b) Forums shall be conducted in accordance with the *“Forum Guidelines”* adopted at the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 10 August 2004 subsequently amended from time-to-time.

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the following Guidelines and Procedures.

<b>Date Adopted:</b>	<b>28 October 1996</b>
<b>Date Amended:</b>	<b>23 November 2010; 20 January 2015</b>
<b>Date Reviewed:</b>	<b>22 July 2003, 22 April 2008, 23 November 2010; 20 January 2015</b>
<b>Date of Next Review:</b>	<b>November 2017</b>

**\*AS AMENDED BY CEO UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY OF COUNCIL ON 20 JANUARY 2015 (ITEM 9.5.2).**

## **POLICY NO. 4.2.3 – ATTACHMENT 1**

### **COUNCIL BRIEFING GUIDELINES:**

1. Unless otherwise determined by Council, Council Briefings will be held in the Council Chamber on the Tuesday of the week prior to the Ordinary Council Meeting, to provide the opportunity for Elected Members and members of the public to ask questions and clarify issues relevant to the specific agenda items due to be presented to Council in the following week.
2. The Council Briefing is not a decision-making forum and the Council has no power to make decisions at the Briefing.
3. In order to ensure full transparency, Council Briefings will be open to the public to observe the process and to ask Public Questions, similar to the Council Meeting process.
4. Where matters are of a confidential nature, they will be deferred to the conclusion of the Briefing and at that point, the Briefing will be closed to the public.
5. The reports provided to Council Briefings are the reports that the Administration intends to submit to Council formally in the subsequent week. While it is acknowledged that Elected Members may raise issues that have not been considered in the formulation of the report or its recommendation, and these may be addressed in the subsequent report to Council, Council Briefings cannot be used as a forum for Elected Members to direct Officers to alter their opinions or recommendations. However, having regard to any questions or clarification sought by Elected Members, the Chief Executive Officer and Directors may choose to amend Administration reports, or withdraw and not present certain items listed on the Council Briefing Agenda to the subsequent Council Meeting in the following week.
6. Council Briefings will commence at 6.00 pm and will be chaired by the Mayor or in his/her absence the Deputy Mayor. In the absence of both, Councillors will elect a chairperson from amongst those present. In general, Standing Orders will apply, except that Members may speak more than once on any item. There is no moving or seconding items.
7. Members of the public present at Council Briefings may observe the process and will have an opportunity to ask Public Questions relating only to the business on the agenda.
8. Where an interest is declared in relation to an item on the Council Briefing Agenda, the same procedure which applies to Ordinary Council meetings will apply. All interests must be declared in accordance with the City's Code of Conduct. The Briefing will consider items on the agenda only and will proceed to deal with each item as it appears in the Agenda. The process will be for the Presiding Member to call each item number in sequence and invite questions or requests for clarification from Elected Members. Where there are no questions regarding the item, the Briefing will proceed to the next item.

9. Notwithstanding 8. above, the Council Briefing process does not and is not intended to prevent an Elected Member from raising further questions or seeking further clarification after the Council Briefing and before or at the Council Meeting in the subsequent week.
10. While every endeavour is made to ensure that all items to be presented to Council at the Ordinary Council Meeting are included in the Council Briefing papers, there may be occasions when, due to necessity, items will not be ready in time for the Council Briefing and will instead be included on the Council Meeting Agenda to be presented directly to Council for determination.
11. There may also be occasions when items are tabled at the Council Briefing rather than the full report being provided in advance. In these instances, Administration will endeavour to include the item on the Council Briefing agenda as a late item, noting that a report will be tabled at the meeting.
12. Unless otherwise determined by the Presiding Member, deputations will generally not be heard at Council Briefings and will instead be reserved for the Ordinary Council meeting, consistent with the City's Standing Orders Local Law.
13. The record of the Council Briefing session will be limited to notes regarding any agreed action to be taken by Administration or Elected Members. The Council Briefing is not a decision-making forum and does not provide recommendations to Council as a Committee might and, as such, the action notes from Council Briefings will be retained for administrative purposes only and will not be publicly distributed unless authorised by the Chief Executive Officer.
14. Questions or statements made at a Council Briefing must relate only to matters listed on the Council Briefing Agenda. Public speaking time will be strictly limited to three (3) minutes per member of the public. Questions or statements made at an Ordinary Council meeting can relate to any matters that affect the City. Questions or statements made at a Special Meeting of the Council must only relate to the purpose for which the meeting has been called.

## **POLICY NO. 4.2.3 – ATTACHMENT 2**

### **1. Pre-Council Meeting Protocols and Procedures**

Pre-Council Meeting requests and enquiries shall be in accordance with the attached Guidelines.

Objective:

To improve efficiency, reduce duplication, better co-ordination and use of resources and to minimise pressure on Employees and Council Members for pre-Council Meeting enquiries and requests.

#### **(a) Closing Time for Council Member Requests and Enquiries**

Council Member requests and enquiries should preferably be submitted to the City's Administration by **midday on the Friday and no later than 9.00am on the Monday** before the Ordinary Council Meeting on Tuesday.

#### **(b) Enquiries received after Closing Time**

Any enquiries received after the 9.00am closing time (on Monday prior to the meeting) are to be referred to the Chief Executive Officer for consideration.

#### **(c) Enquiries to be copied to the Chief Executive Officer**

Where Council Members send an email direct to a Director, a copy is also to be sent to the Chief Executive Officer. This will ensure that enquiries are not duplicated and the most appropriate officer researches the matter.

#### **(d) Nature of Enquiry**

The Local Government Act prescribes that Council Members are only entitled to be provided with sufficient information for them to *"make an informed decision and to perform their duties"*.

To comply with good governance requirements, it is requested that Council Members keep this in mind when submitting a request for information.

#### **(e) Multiple or complex Enquiries about an Item/Matter**

Where a Council Member has multiple (or complex) enquiries about an item/matter, it is preferable for them to send an email and to also request a meeting with the appropriate Director (or Chief Executive Officer if applicable). This will ensure that the matter can be more efficiently/better explained and will minimise the impact on resources.

#### **(f) Requests for Amendments**

The Administration will provide *"alternative recommendations"* and amendments of a substantial or complex nature. If the request is received by the Monday morning cut-off time, these will be prepared and emailed on the Monday evening (or prior to the meeting) – this will allow Council Members to check the amendment and to ensure that they are satisfied that it meets their request.

Straightforward and simple amendments should be moved at the Meeting.