



Informal Council Meetings Policy

Policy Statement

Informal meetings are those that are called outside of meetings convened under s.5.4 of the LGA.

Elected members meet informally to consider information that will help them to become fully informed before deciding matters at an Ordinary Council Meeting. Informal Council meetings enable elected members to:

- (a) stay focussed on strategic matters that are aligned to achieving community aspirations;
- (b) clarify areas of uncertainty and ask questions; and
- (c) request further information that assists them to become fully informed before making formal decisions.

The policy has been developed in line with the principles of accountability, openness and transparency, probity and integrity, authority for the chair and meeting notification detailed in the [DLGSCI Operational Guideline 05 – Council Forums](#).

Policy Details

Informal Council meetings include:

1. Strategic Workshops (Confidential)
2. Workshops
3. Agenda Forums

Policy Objective

1 Strategic Workshops (Confidential)

These workshops provide the opportunity for elected members to discuss ideas and explore concepts relevant to achieving the community's strategic objectives. The CEO and relevant staff attend. They assist to identify what further research or information may be needed to determine if the matter will proceed to Council for a formal decision.

These workshops are not open to the public. This enables the opportunity for creativity to flow and ideas to be explored. Some things discussed at these workshops may eventuate in a Council report and formal decision, others may not.

Strategic Workshops generally involve projects or matters that are in the early planning stages. There is further work needed to get them to a point where it can be decided whether they will proceed to Council for a formal decision.



No formal decisions are to be made at Strategic Workshops on matters that are subject to quasi-judicial processes, that is those where decisions involve legal rights and interests that can be appealed.

1.1 Roles and responsibilities

Elected Members	CEO
Disclosure rules applying to Council meetings constituted under the LGA also apply. Disclosure should lead to an individual departing the Strategic Workshop.	Disclosure rules constituted under the LGA also apply.
The Mayor (or Deputy Mayor in the Mayor's absence) is to chair Strategic Workshops. All questions from elected members relating to development matters are to be directed through the chair	Adequate notice is to be given of the time, location, and content of Strategic Workshops.
Remain focussed on strategic matters	Seek input from elected members as to what research and further information may be required to assist them when considering a matter
Explore ideas and concepts or opportunities for advocacy that relate to strategic objectives	Provide Council with correct/adequate information to enable ideas/concepts to be fully explored
Observe appropriate behaviours and follow the guidance provided in the General Procedures for Informal Meetings	Ensure the scope is made clear of what is required for Council to determine if the matter will progress
Maintain confidentiality about matters discussed.	Provide presentations to assist Council

2 Workshops

From time to time an informal workshop may be convened to discuss specific issues or for Councillors to consider presentations. The purpose of workshops is to enable Council to gain a better understanding of issues relating to subject matter.



No formal decisions are to be made at workshops including those that are subject to quasi-judicial processes, where decisions involve legal rights and interests that can be appealed.

Depending on the subject matter, these workshops may, or may not, be open to the public.

2.1 Roles and responsibilities

Elected Members	CEO
Disclosure rules applying to Council meetings constituted under the LGA also apply. Disclosure should lead to an individual departing the workshop.	Disclosure rules constituted under the LGA also apply.
The Mayor (or Deputy Mayor in the Mayor's absence) is to chair workshops. All questions from elected members relating to development matters are to be directed through the chair.	Adequate notice to be given of the time, location, and content of the workshop.
Observe appropriate behaviours and follow the guidance provided in the General Procedures for Informal Council Meetings	Provide elected members with correct/adequate information, including presentations, to assist them to gain an understanding of specific issues

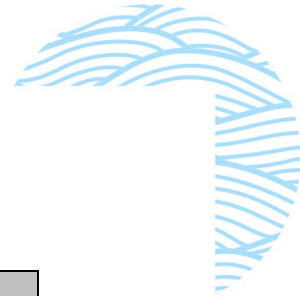
3 Agenda Forums

These forums present the draft OCM agenda to elected members. They give an opportunity for elected members to gain maximum knowledge by asking questions about officer's reports; receiving further information or presentations; or requesting specific information. In this way, elected members can be fully informed before the OCM where formal decisions are made.

No formal decisions are made at these forums, including those that are subject to quasi-judicial processes, where decisions involve legal rights and interests that can be appealed.

The report content as listed on a draft OCM agenda presented to an Agenda Forum may change after the forum. Additionally, some items may be included on a final OCM agenda that are not considered at an Agenda Forum and go straight to Council for a decision.

Agenda forums are open to the public.



3.1 Roles and responsibilities

Elected Members	CEO
Disclosure rules applying to Council meetings constituted under the LGA also apply. Disclosure should lead to an individual departing the workshop.	Disclosure rules constituted under the LGA also apply.
The Mayor is to chair Agenda Forums. All questions from elected members are to be directed through the chair.	Adequate notice to be given of the time, location, and content of Agenda Forums.
Ask questions, request further information about draft OCM agenda items.	Provide a draft OCM agenda for Council to consider prior to Agenda Forums.
Observe appropriate behaviours and follow the guidance provided in the General Procedures for Informal Council Meetings.	Provide elected members with correct/adequate information to assist them to become fully informed.
The s.5.23 LGA requirements apply to open the meeting to the public except where an item is exempt from this requirement under any of the s.5.23 exemption categories. The meeting is to be closed for such matters.	Provide responses to any questions taken on notice at an Agenda Forum before the OCM.

Policy Objectives

This policy provides details of informal meetings elected members can attend outside of those provided in s.5.4 of the LGA. These informal meetings are not for formal decision-making; rather, they provide opportunities for elected members to ask questions and seek further information about the subject matter of formal decision making. The policy provides roles and responsibilities for elected members and the CEO attending these meetings.

Definitions

CEO means Chief Executive Officer of the Town of Mosman Park

LGA means *Local Government Act 1995*



Agenda Forum means an informal meeting held by Council to ask questions, receive presentations, and seek clarity on information in an officer's report included in a draft OCM agenda.

OCM means an Ordinary Council Meeting pursuant to s.5.3 of the *Local Government Act 1995*

Strategic Workshop means an informal meeting held for elected members to receive input and guidance on the development of matters that have a strategic impact and/or relate to the delivery of the Town's Strategic Community Plan.

Town means the Town of Mosman Park

Workshop means any other informal meeting of Council, which may be called from time to time, for the purpose of raising and discussing matters or considering presentations that are issue-specific with strategic and/or community significance.

Governance References

Local	<i>Local Government Act 1995, s.2.7(1) Role of Council</i> <i>Local Government Act 1995, Pt 5, Div 2 Council meetings, committees and their meetings and electors' meetings</i>
Organisational Compliance	Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries Operational Guideline 05 – Council Forums – January 2004 General Procedures for Informal Council Meetings

Policy Administration

Directorate:		Officer title:
Executive Services		Chief Executive Officer
Next Review		Review Cycle
2025 2027		Minor review Major review
Version	Date	Ref
1.	22 August 2017	OCM-137-2017
2.	23 February 2021	OCM-025-2021
3.	27 June 2023	OCM-061-2023