

Draft

Workshop Policy

January 2024



Mackenzie
DISTRICT COUNCIL

REVISION HISTORY

Date Created:	January, 2024
Review Date:	Review at the start of each triennium
Department:	Governance
Responsible Officer:	Governance Advisor
Sponsor:	General Manager – Community Development, IT and Engagement
Approved by:	Chief Executive Officer
New Review Date:	

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide clarity on the preparation and delivery of Council and community board workshops.
- 1.2 To provide clarity to elected members and the public on what to expect from a workshop.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy covers Council and community board workshops/briefings. It does not include working groups, working parties, elected member training, formal Council, formal committee or community board meetings, or internal staff-only workshops and training.

3. Principles

- 3.1 This policy is based around the following principles:

- Council is transparent with the public and community. All workshops and meetings are open to the public by default. Exceptions are decided on a case-by-case basis.
- Staff are committed to enhancing Elected Members' knowledge and awareness for better decision-making.
- Consistency in workshop administration, delivery and presentation format will provide a better learning environment for elected members and more information for the public on key issues.

4. Background

- 4.1 Council and community board workshops provide a valuable opportunity for staff and other subject experts to provide information to elected members that is relevant and help inform future decisions made by Council.
- 4.2 Workshops provide an opportunity for staff to be able to answer any questions that Elected Members may have about a particular topic or issue, outside of the formal setting of a meeting.
- 4.3 Council workshops are considered informal in that the Council's Standing Orders do not apply. However, the workshops are still subject to administration procedures and control through a Chair type role, which is usually allocated to the Mayor or Deputy Mayor.
- 4.4 Although workshops are largely a one-way communication method of informing, there is an element of elected members seeking feedback and discussion. Staff will take note of elected members' concerns and opinions about issues and provide clarification on any concerns. However, no decisions, or parts of decisions, will be sought at workshops, or agreed to at workshops.
- 4.5 All decisions by elected members will be made and communicated at formal meetings run under Standing Orders and the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (LGOIMA).

- 4.6 The decision on whether a workshop is needed is made by the Chief Executive, and may be influenced by the upcoming work programme, or upon request by elected members themselves. A workshop would be beneficial where an information presentation will increase knowledge and/or competency, and elected member decision making is improved by looking at a topic in-depth and allowing for elected members to seek clarification to enable a greater understanding of the topic.

5. Workshop Administration

- 5.1 Workshops for councillors will usually be held on those Tuesdays not already booked for formal meetings. They are administered by the chief executive's office.
- 5.2 Workshops for community boards can be held at any time that suits the members and are administered by the governance advisor.
- 5.3 All workshops will be listed on the council website with the following information:
- Title and Subject Matter
 - Purpose
 - Location, day, time
 - Duration
 - Supporting documents (if available)
 - Whether the workshop is open to the public or public excluded. If it is public excluded a reason will be provided.
- 5.4 Workshop details will be included in the meeting advert that is currently published in the Timaru Courier once a month.
- 5.5 Supplementary material or power point presentations may be provided to elected members, for information purposes, before or during the workshop. Copies of all material produced at workshops will be provided to the administrator and Chief Executive for approval to load onto the council website unless the material meets the public excluded exceptions in LGOIMA (see below for policy on public excluded workshops).
- 5.6 There is no legal requirement to provide supporting documentation in advance of a workshop, however every effort will be made to make documents available to elected members at least two working days before the workshop. (i.e. by the Thursday afternoon the week before).
- 5.7 The staff member responsible for delivering the workshop must have in-depth knowledge and be able to answer basic questions on the topic being presented. They must have adequate presentation skills and have a thorough awareness of why the information is to be presented to elected members and be clear on the expected outcomes.
- 5.8 Either written/typed notes will be recorded at workshops by an attending staff member, or workshops will be recorded by technology (Dictaphone or Teams recording). The notes and/or recordings from workshops will be archived and available to the public on request.

6. Public Excluded Workshops

- 6.1 Council workshops will be open to the public by default, unless one or more of the exceptions outlined in LGOIMA apply. Reasons to make a workshop confidential include matters of personal privacy, commercial sensitivity, and legal privilege.6.2 The decision on whether to hold a workshop in public excluded will be made by the chief executive and the governance advisor after considering all factors including the level of public interest in the subject matter.
- 6.3 Council is committed to recording a clear reason for closing a workshop, where justified, on a case-by-case basis. Public excluded workshops will be listed on the website with the reason for closure.
- 6.4 Any exceptions to the processes outlined in this document must be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Chief Executive.