

GOVERNANCE

G 1.1 Council Members – Training and Continuing Professional Development

<i>Responsible Department</i>	Chief Executive Officer
<i>Resolution Number</i>	C.4993
<i>Resolution Date</i>	April 2024
<i>Next Scheduled Review</i>	April 2026
<i>Related Shire Documents</i>	
<i>Related Legislation</i>	<i>Local Government Act 1995 s5.128</i>

OBJECTIVE

To give effect to the Shire's commitment to facilitate continuing professional development of Council Members, which enhances their knowledge and develops their skills, thus augmenting Council's capacity for well-informed decision-making and the provision of good government for our community.

This policy provides a framework to assist Council Members to identify and access relevant training and defines the expenses that will be paid by the Shire.

This policy supports compliance with sections 5.127 and 5.128 of the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act), which require Local Governments to prepare and adopt a policy in relation to the continuing professional development of Council Members, and to provide annual reports on training.

SCOPE

This policy applies to Council Member training and continuing professional development, including mandatory training required under s.5.126 of the Act.

POLICY

Part 1 - Mandatory Council Member Training

Council Members have significant and complex roles that require a diverse skillset.

Following each election, the Shire will conduct a comprehensive induction program, providing newly elected Council Members with information that will support them to

understand Council Member roles and responsibilities; legislative obligations; personal responsibilities; and strategic direction of the Local Government.

Continuing/previously elected Council Members are encouraged to participate in nominated elements of the induction program, to assist in fostering a team culture and to refresh their understanding.

All Council Members elected to Council are required to complete the Council Member Essentials Course under the *Local Government Act 1995*. The course must be completed within 12 months of appointment to Council. This course covers the following units:

- a. Understanding Local Government
- b. Serving on Council
- c. Meeting Procedures
- d. Conflicts of Interest
- e. Understanding Financial Reports and Budgets.

A Council Member may be exempt from completing this training if they meet limited exemptions listed in the *Local Government (Admin) Regulations 1996 s.36(1)(a)*.

A Council Member is exempt from the requirement to complete mandatory training if said Council Member has passed the mandatory training or a Diploma of Local Government (Elected Member) in the period of 5 years ending immediately before the day on which the Council Member is elected.

Simply put, once a new Council Member has completed the mandatory training in the first 12 months of being elected, they will not be required to re-sit the course unless they are re-elected into a third term.

The Council Member Essentials Course will be sourced and funded by the Shire at no cost to the individual Council Member.

Part 2 - Continuing Professional Development

The Shire is committed to the Continuing Professional Development of Council Members to benefit Council, the Shire and the community and in accordance with section 5.128 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

This includes Continuing Professional Development that:

- a. Enhances the understanding of Council Member roles and responsibilities, and/or the role and function of Local Government;
- b. Assists Council Members to develop knowledge and skills in relation to the strategic objectives of the Shire;

- c. Enables Council Members to further develop personal and professional skills necessary for excellence in performance of the Council Member role; or
- d. Supports Council Members in developing and maintaining positive and healthy communication, team culture and relationships, to facilitate excellent teamwork to achieve outcomes that deliver good government for the Shire community.

Eligible Continuing Professional Development activities include:

- a. WA Local Government Association (WALGA) and Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) conferences.
- b. Special 'one off' conferences called for or sponsored by WALGA and/or ALGA on important Local Government issues.
- c. Annual conferences of the major professions in Local Government and other institutions of relevance to Local Government activities.
- d. Other Local Government-specific training courses, workshops and forums, relating to the outcomes listed above.
- e. Training relevant to the outcomes listed above offered by accredited organisations.
- f. Conferences, training, workshops or seminars that address the initiatives and projects identified in the Shire's Plan for the Future or other strategic documents.

Council Members may attend professional development opportunities of their choice that supports their role as an Elected Member. Professional development can take several forms including formal qualifications, short-courses, seminars and conferences. Only those Continuing Professional Development opportunities provided by industry recognised training providers, peak bodies or professional/reputable organisations will be supported.

In accordance with Section 5.90A of the *Local Government Act 1995*, the definition of an event includes conferences. Council Policy G 1.2 Attendance at Events – Council Members and the Chief Executive Officer governs attendance at conferences which may contribute to the professional development of a Council Member.

CPD Hours

Each Council Member must complete 10 CPD hours within two years following an ordinary election. Council Members are encouraged to identify their individual training needs to enhance their effectiveness and address any skill gaps. Assistance may be sought from the Shire President or Chief Executive Officer to identify any training that may be beneficial.

Part 3 – Cost of Training

In accordance with this policy, the Shire will fund training provided the training is in relation to a Council Member's role. This includes any costs associated with:

- a. Event registration and booking fees.
- b. Travel.
- c. Accommodation.
- d. Meals and incidentals (excluding alcohol).

Costs incurred for cancelling, changing or modifying a booking for registration, travel or accommodation, where the change or modification is:

- a. At the request of the Council Member, are to be paid by the Council Member;
or
- b. A requirement or for the convenience of the Shire, are to be paid by the Shire.

The Shire will not reimburse any fees in relation to Council Member participation in Continuing Professional Development or mandatory training if the participation occurs during any of the following periods:

- a. The period of 3 months before the Council Member or Shire President's term ends.
- b. If the Shire President or Council Member provides a notice of resignation to the Chief Executive Officer and undergoes training between the date the resignation is received, and their actual end date or;
- c. If the Shire President or Council Member is in a period of suspension.

Any training/professional development proposal that exceeds the Council Member training/professional development budget allocation will be referred for Council decision. Alternatively, the Council Member may choose to privately fund any shortfall.

Part 4 – Request for Approval

Council Members who wish to attend training or professional development may make application by providing the following details to the Chief Executive Officer in writing:

- a. Course or event title, provider or organiser name, location and date;
- b. Copy of, or link to program, course outline or other summary of content;
- c. An outline of the anticipated benefits of attendance, with reference to the eligibility criteria in this policy; and
- d. Total estimated costs including accommodation, travel and sundry expenses.

Applications, including all required details, are to be submitted in reasonable time for registration. Where possible, the Shire will seek to take advantage of reduced prices for early registration.

Approval

Approval for Council Member attendance may be granted by:

- a. The Chief Executive Officer where the:
 - i. Application complies with this policy;
 - ii. Event is to be held within Australia or New Zealand; and
 - iii. There are sufficient funds available in the Council Member training/professional development budget allocation to meet costs of attendance.
- b. Resolution of Council where the:
 - i. Application has been refused by the Chief Executive Officer;
 - ii. Application does not comply with this policy;
 - iii. Estimated costs of attendance exceed the available balance of the Council Member annual training/professional development budget allocation; or
 - iv. Event is to be held outside of Australia or New Zealand.

Part 5 – Reporting

In accordance with s.5.127 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, the Shire is required to report annually on training completed by Council Members in the previous financial year and this must be published on the Shire of Northam website within 1 month after the end of the financial year. This will include the Council Member Essentials Course and any continuing professional development completed by Council Members.

Part 6 – Sharing of Knowledge

In order to realise the maximum benefit for the Shire, Council Members will provide a report on training undertaken (with the exception of mandatory training, unless otherwise requested) to Viva Engage, known as “Yammer”.

The report should include:

- a. Key features and benefits of the training or professional development.
- b. Ideas or innovations identified through training or professional development that relate to the Shire’s strategic objectives.

If further information is requested, time can be made prior to a Council Forum Meeting for a brief presentation.

Part 7 – Council Member Commitment

Council Members are committed to:

- a. Take a positive approach to identifying opportunities for improvement and professional development.
- b. Prepare for, participate in and complete professional development and training approved/booked under this policy.
- c. Apply the benefits of professional development to fulfilling their Council Member role, including by sharing their knowledge with other Council Members.
- d. Make reasonable efforts to confirm their availability, or otherwise, to the Chief Executive Officer before booking deadlines.
- e. When requested, advise the Chief Executive Officer of alternative dates / times that they would be available to facilitate their participation in training.
- f. Advise the Chief Executive Officer, at the earliest opportunity, if they are unable to attend planned / booked training. Where training costs are unable to be refunded, the cost will be taken from the Council Member budget allocation for training/professional development.

Part 8 – Review of Policy

This Policy must be reviewed and adopted by absolute majority within 12 months after each election cycle, or at any other time as required. The Chief Executive Officer must publish the Policy to the Shire's website.