



NORTHERN MIDLANDS COUNCIL

POLICY MANUAL

MEETING PROCEDURES

- Originated Date:** Adopted 23 September 2002 – Min. No: 379/02 (as Policy 32)
- Amended Date/s:** Revised 25 January 2010 – Min. No: 15/10 (388/06)
Amended 22 March 2010 – Min. No. 69/10
Amended 21 September 2015 and incorporating Recording of Meeting Policy (formerly Policy 51) – Min. No. 253/14
Amended 20 August 2018 – Min. No. 218/18
Amended 28 June 2021 – Min. No. 214/21
Amended 18 September 2023 – Min. No. 23/0329
- Applicable Legislation:** *Local Government Act 1993*
Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2015
- Objective** The objective of this policy is to set Council meeting procedures for the following:
1. Public Question Time during Council meetings;
 2. Public representations on planning items during Council meetings
 3. Petition procedures during Council meetings;
 4. Recording of Council meetings; and
 5. Appointment of Council Representatives to Committees of Council, or a committee external to Council.
- Administration:** Governance
- Review Cycle/Date:** Every 4 years. Next review June 2027.

1 INTRODUCTION

The *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2015* allow for Public Question Time, Public Representations on planning items, Petitions, Recording of Council meetings and the establishment of Committees of Council. Whilst the legislation identifies how these processes can occur, there are some lower level procedures required to be set out by Council. This policy stipulates those guidelines.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Live Streaming of Council Meetings Policy.

2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Regulation 31 of the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2015* relates to the provision of Public Question Time during a Council meeting. Regulation 31(7) of the Regulations stipulate that “a Council is to determine any other procedures to be followed in respect of public question time at an ordinary council meeting.”

Public question time is to commence at approximately 5.30pm and is to be conducted in accordance with the following guidelines:

- At each Council Meeting, up to 20 minutes, or such longer period as Council may determine by resolution at that meeting, is to be provided for persons at the meeting to ask questions.
- A person seeking to ask a question must firstly identify himself or herself by stating their name and the town they reside in.
- If more than one person wishes to ask a question, the Mayor is to determine the order in which those questions are asked.
- Questions must be directed to the Mayor who shall answer or direct the question to the appropriate Councillor or Council Officer. A question will be answered if the information is known otherwise taken on notice and responded to in writing within 10 working days. Questions should preferably be in writing and provided to the



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General Manager at the Council Meeting.

- A person is entitled to ask no more than two questions on any specific subject. If a person has up to two questions on several subjects, the Mayor may defer those questions until other questions have been asked and refer back to that person only if time permits.
- Each speaker is limited to a maximum of 3 minutes.

3 REPRESENTATIONS ON PLANNING ITEMS

A maximum of four persons per item (two for and two against) will be permitted to address Council on a planning item. After the representation has been made, Councillors are permitted to ask questions of the party who made the representation.

Each speaker is limited to a maximum of 3 minutes.

4 PETITIONS

Part 6, Division 1 of the *Local Government Act 1993* refers to the presentation of a petition to Council. Council is to treat any petition received in accordance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

5 RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

Regulation 33(4) provides that “a Council may determine any other procedures relating to the audio recording of meetings it considers appropriate”.

In addition to the Live Streaming Policy, Council is to audio record meetings to assist Council officers in the preparation of minutes of proceedings.

The provision for audio recording of Council meetings in this policy:

- only applies to formal Council meetings (ordinary meetings, special meetings and Annual General meetings);
- does not apply to closed sessions of Council;
- does not apply to Committees of Council;
- the recording will not replace written minutes and a transcript of the recording will not be prepared by Council;
- the recording may be used by Council staff to assist with the preparation of the minutes;
- the minutes of a meeting, once confirmed by Council, prevail over the audio recording of the meeting;

A member of the public may only use an audio recorder, or any other recording and/or transmitting device, to record the proceedings of a meeting of Council with the written permission of the General Manager for the express purpose proposed. The Northern Midlands Council reserves the right to revoke such permission at any time.

6 APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL AND OUTSIDE BODIES

Sections 23 and 24 of the *Local Government Act 1993* permit Council to establish Council Committees or special Committees of Council. From time to time Councillors may be invited to represent Council on committees external to Council.

With the exception of appointments made by the Council under any enactment, all representative appointments of the Council to community committees and outside bodies expire at the first Council meeting following every ordinary Council election.

At the first ordinary meeting following a Council election, Council is to appoint a Councillor representative to all Council Committees and Special Committees of Council in accordance with the following procedure:

- a list of all Council committees and special committees of Council is to be produced at the ordinary Council meeting;



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- Councillors are to nominate which committee/s they wish to be a representative on;
- in the event two or more Councillors nominate for the same committee, all of those Councillors can be appointed as a representative to that committee, except where that committee specifies that there is to be only one Councillor representative, in which case the Councillors are to vote on which Councillor is to be appointed, with the nominee having the least number of votes to be eliminated and this process followed until there is one nominee remaining. In the event there is a tie, the Mayor is to have the casting vote.
- if there is a casual vacancy for a representative appointment made by Council, then the Council is to elect a replacement appointee to fill the vacancy at the earliest available meeting of the Council in accordance with the above procedure.

7 REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed every four years or more frequently, if dictated by operational demands or legislative changes.