

# Ward Meetings Policy



<b>VERSION NO.</b>	5
<b>APPROVAL</b>	Council Approved: TBC
<b>TRIM REFERENCE</b>	TBC
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<b>RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE</b>	General Manager Customer and Corporate Support
<b>POLICY TYPE</b>	Council
<b>POLICY OWNER</b>	Manager Governance, Risk and Integrity

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<b>REVISION RECORD</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Revision Description</b>
24 May 2010	1	Created
27 May 2013	2	Reviewed
26 March 2018	3	Reviewed
23 August 2021	4	Reviewed and aligned with the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> .
20 May 2024	5	Reviewed

## 1. Purpose

This Policy provides an outline of the protocols and guidelines for Councillors to undertake Council funded and/or supported meetings with Ward constituents.

## 2. Scope

This Policy applies to all Councillors wishing to hold Council funded and supported meetings with ward constituents.

This Policy applies to Council funded and supported meetings held by Councillors within their ward and with other Ward Councillors.

This Policy does not apply to informal Councillor conducted meetings with ward constituents on specific ward or municipal issues that are not funded or supported by Council.

## 3. Governance Principles and Council Plan alignment

### 3.1 Governance Principles

Principle (a) - Council actions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law

Principle (b) - priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.

Principle (d) - the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making.

Principle (e) - innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.

Principle (i) - the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

This policy aligns with the *Local Government Act 2020 (the Act)*, Governance Rules and Councillor Code of Conduct and has considered the overarching governance principles and supporting principles.

### **3.2 Council Plan Alignment**

Strategic Direction: Well-governed - Council will be collaborative, accountable, transparent, responsive, well-informed, and efficient.

Strategy: Actively seek broad community participation.

The Ward Meetings Policy directly addresses the Strategic Direction of the Council Plan by encouraging community participation and feedback.

## **4. Policy Details**

Council recognises the importance of Ward Councillors directly engaging with Ward constituents throughout the Council term at Meetings funded and supported by Council.

This Policy provides four different types of Ward Meetings, which seek to accommodate for the collective and individual engagement by Ward Councillors with Ward constituents on matters concerning individual and multiple Wards and the municipality as a whole.

Types of Ward Meetings contained in the Policy are:

- Type One Ward;
- Type Two Ward;
- Pop-Up Feedback Sessions; and
- Virtual Meetings.

Meetings provided for in the Policy are not decision-making meetings and instead serve as a consultation method for Ward Councillors with the community.

### **4.1 Procedures**

#### **4.1.1 Type One Ward Meeting**

Type One Ward Meeting must involve two or more Councillors and can only be called for the respective wards of the Councillors calling the meeting. Given the nature of a Type One Ward Meeting it is expected that all involved Ward Councillors will work cooperatively and reach collective agreement on the particulars of the Type One Ward Meeting as specified in this clause.

#### Frequency

A maximum of two (2) Type One Ward Meetings may be held per Ward per calendar year.

In consultation with the Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer, additional ward meetings may be organised if the issue/topic is deemed appropriate in the context of resourcing considerations and significance of the matter.

#### Chairperson

A Councillor may chair the Type One Ward Meeting by mutual agreement of all Ward Councillors participating. A Councillor may not chair two consecutive Type One Ward Meetings.

Alternatively, Ward Councillors may request that an external facilitator be engaged to chair the Type One Ward Meeting. Where such a request is made, the Governance department will be responsible for the engagement of the facilitator.

Council officers must not chair a Type One Ward Meeting.

#### Agenda

Agenda items must be determined for a Type One Ward Meeting to assist the Chief Executive Officer in identifying the relevant senior officer to attend the meeting in an advisory capacity as per clause 5.2.4 of the Policy.

All Ward Councillors involved in the Type One Ward Meeting may have input into the agenda.

#### Promotional Material

The following promotional material will be used to promote a Type One Ward Meeting:

- Flyers – distributed to all properties in the relevant Wards
- Press Release
- Advertisement in Kingston Your City – where deadlines accommodate
- Advertisement on Kingston's Website
- Advertisement on Kingston's Social Media Platforms

### **4.1.2 Type Two Ward Meeting**

Type Two Ward Meetings involve one (1) Ward Councillor and consultation with other Councillors is not required. Type Two Ward Meetings must only be called in the ward the Councillor was elected.

#### Frequency

A maximum of four (4) Type Two Ward Meetings may be held per Councillor per calendar year.

In consultation with the Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer, additional ward meetings may be organised if the issue/topic is deemed appropriate in the context of resourcing considerations and significance of the matter.

#### Chairperson

The Councillor who has called the Type Two Ward Meeting must chair the meeting. An external facilitator cannot be engaged for a Type Two Ward Meeting. Council officers must not chair Type Two Ward Meetings.

#### Agenda

Agenda items must be determined for a Type Two Ward Meeting to assist the Chief Executive Officer in identifying the relevant senior officer to attend the meeting in an advisory capacity as per clause 5.2.4 of the Policy. The Councillor who has called the Type Two Ward Meeting is responsible for determining agenda items.

#### Promotional Material

The following promotional material will be used to promote a Type Two Ward Meeting:

- Printed handbills for Councillors to distribute (Max 500 per Councillor)
- Press Release
- Advertisement in Kingston Your City – where deadlines accommodate
- Advertisement on Kingston's Website
- Advertisement on Kingston's Social Media Platforms

#### **4.1.3 Venue**

Ward Councillor/s involved in a Type One Ward Meeting or a Type Two Ward Meeting may determine the venue for the meeting. A meeting venue will be sought to best to serve the objectives of the meeting. Ward Councillor/s may consult with Council officers for advice on an appropriate venue for a Type One Ward Meeting or a Type Two Ward Councillor Meeting. When determining a venue for a Type One Ward Meeting or a Type Two Ward Councillor Meeting, accessibility and venue size should be taken into consideration to ensure attendees can be accommodated for.

#### **4.1.4 Officer Support**

A senior Council officer will attend Type One Ward Meetings and Type Two Ward Meetings in an advisory capacity. The Chief Executive Officer will determine the senior Council officer to attend the relevant meeting.

A support Council officer will attend Type One Ward Meetings and Type Two Ward Meetings to take notes. The Chief Executive Officer will determine the support Council officer to attend the meeting. The support Council officer will be remunerated for the overtime worked in accordance with relevant Council policies.

It is at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer to determine whether further officer attendance is required at a Type One Ward Meeting or a Type Two Ward Meeting.

#### **4.1.5 Meeting Costs**

The following costs will be met by Council in full for Type One Ward Meetings and Type Two Ward Meetings in accordance with the policy:

- Venue hire (for a venue compliant with clause 5.2.3 of the Policy);
- Engagement of a facilitator (only for a Type One Ward Meeting);
- Distribution of promotional material in accordance with the Policy;
- Design and printing of promotional material;
- Equipment hire where required; and
- Light refreshments.

#### **4.1.6 Attendance**

Council Officers will take RSVPs from community members wishing to attend Type One Ward Meetings and Type Two Ward Meetings for venue and catering purposes.

Councillors from other Wards may attend a Type One Ward Meeting or a Type Two Ward Meeting as observers but not as participants.

#### **4.1.7 Outcomes of Meetings**

Actions requiring officer follow up at Type One Ward Meeting and Type Two Ward Meeting will be recorded in the notes taken by the Council Support Officer.

These actions will be entered into Pathway by officers and actioned in accordance with existing customer request processes.

#### **4.1.8 Pop-Up Feedback Sessions**

Any individual Ward Councillor may hold a Pop-Up Feedback Session in a location within the Ward the Councillor was elected in, such as a shopping centre, shopping strip or park etc.

##### Frequency

Councillors may hold an unlimited number of Pop-Up Feedback Sessions each year subject to clause 6, which places limits on meeting timings.

##### Funding

Given the nominal costs associated with holding such sessions, Council will not provide funding. However, Council will provide equipment including a table, chair, laptop or iPad and Council banner for sessions held.

##### Agenda

It is at the discretion of a Ward Councillor to determine agenda items prior to a Pop-Up Feedback Session.

##### Promotional Material

The following promotional material will be used to promote Pop-Up Feedback Sessions:

- Advertisement in Kingston Your City – where deadlines accommodate
- Advertisement on Kingston's website
- Advertisement on Kingston's Social Media Platforms

##### Officer Support

Officer Support will not be provided for a Pop-Up Feedback Session.

#### **4.1.9 Virtual Meetings**

Virtual Meetings may involve one or more Ward Councillors and are conducted online. Virtual Meetings expand the accessibility to Ward Councillors for the community by providing an opportunity to engage without attending a meeting in person.

##### Frequency

Councillors may hold an unlimited number of Virtual Meetings each year subject to clause 4.1.3, which places limits on meeting timings.

##### Funding

Given the nominal costs associated with holding a Virtual Meeting, Council will not provide funding. However, Council will undertake all arrangements required to hold a Virtual Meeting.

##### Agenda

It is at the discretion of involved Ward Councillors whether to determine agenda items prior to the Virtual Meeting.

##### Promotional Material

The following promotional material will be used to promote a Virtual Meeting:

- Advertisement on Kingston's website; and
- Advertisement on Kingston's Social Media Platforms

##### Officer Support

Officer support will be provided in the arrangement and setting up of a Virtual Meeting for Ward Councillors. Technical support will also be provided if required.

#### **4.1.10 Meeting Timings**

A Type One Ward Councillor Meeting, Type Two Ward Councillor Meeting, Pop-Up Feedback Session or Virtual Meeting should not be called where it will clash with an;

- Council Meeting
- Planning Committee Meeting
- Councillor Information Session; or
- Advisory Committee Meeting

A Type One Ward Meeting, Type Two Ward Meeting, Pop-Up Feedback Session or Virtual Meeting must not be held:

- Within 6 months before a Local Government Election.
- Within 6 months before a State Election.
- Within 6 months before a Federal Election or the latest potential date for Federal Election. Where a Federal Election is called early, the Type One Ward Meeting, Type Two Ward Meeting and Pop-Up Feedback Session will be cancelled where there is the ability to provide at least (2) weeks' notice to the community.

## 5. Key Stakeholders (if applicable)

The key stakeholders considered within this Policy include Councillors, community members and Council officers.

## 6. Internal and External Assessments

### 6.1 Risk Assessment

This Policy has been assessed by the relevant department and any risks associated have been outlined within an Operational Risk Register. The relevant risks include, but are not limited to;

- Security
- Council reputation
- Misuse of Council funding

### 6.2 Delegation and Authorisation (Compliance Framework)

The Chief Executive Officer, General Manager Corporate Services or Manager Governance have delegations under the S7 Instrument of Sub-delegation by Chief Executive Officer to members of Council Staff.

### 6.3 Gender Impact Assessment

A Gender Impact Assessment is not required for this Policy.

### 6.4 Privacy Impact Assessment

A Privacy Impact Assessment is not required for this Policy.

### 6.5 Human Rights Charter

This policy has been reviewed against and complies with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (the Charter). This Policy does not impact any of the limitations outlined by the Charter.

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Councillors	Responsible for ensuring the proposed Ward Meeting type aligns with the intent of the Policy and not bringing Council into disrepute.
Chief Executive Officer and General Managers	Responsible for approving funding for Type One and Type Two Ward Meetings and ensuring alignment with the minimum requirements of this Policy.
Manager Governance Risk and Integrity	Responsible for ensuring the Ward Meeting is held and meets the minimum requirements of this Policy.
Manager Advocacy Communications and Engagement	Responsible for Council officer advertisement assistance for Type One, Type Two and Virtual Meetings.

## 8. Related documents

## 8.1 Legislation

- *Local Government Act 2020*

## 8.2 Documents and resources

- Community Engagement Policy
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Councillor Expenses Policy
- Election Period Policy
- Governance Rules
- Media and External Communications Policy

## 9. Definitions

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<i>Agenda item</i>	means a topic for discussion that is not phrased to promote a view either for or against a matter
<i>CEO</i>	means the Chief Executive Officer
<i>Election Period</i>	means the period of time determined by the State Government immediately prior to a Local Government Election where the current Council have restricted decision making powers.
<i>Pop-Up Feedback Session</i>	means an informal feedback session held by (1) Ward Councillor with constituents of their Ward that is not specifically funded by Council but which Council provides necessary equipment for in accordance with the Policy.
<i>Promotional material</i>	means content published and distributed in accordance with the Policy that informs members of the public of the particulars of a Type One Ward Councillor Meeting, Type Two Ward Councillor Meeting or Pop-Up Feedback Session: Content will always include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ward Councillor/s involved and contact details;</li><li>• Date, time and location of the meeting;</li><li>• Agenda items (this is optional for pop-up feedback sessions); and</li><li>• Council contact details for RSVP purposes</li></ul>



<i>Type One Ward Meeting</i>	means a meeting of two or more Councillors with constituents of their wards to address an issue affecting multiple wards and is funded and supported by Council in accordance with the Policy
<i>Type Two Ward Meeting</i>	means a meeting of one Councillor with constituents of their Ward that is funded and supported by Council in accordance with the Policy.
<i>Virtual Meeting</i>	means an online meeting where one or more Ward Councillors can engage with Ward constituents electronically
<i>Ward</i>	means an electoral district, for administrative and representative purposes, as prescribed by the Victorian Electoral Commission
<i>Ward Councillor</i>	means a Councillor elected to a specific ward.
<i>Ward constituents</i>	means community members associated with the ward of the Councillor through residential, business, recreational or other community affiliation.

**Appendix 1. Summary of Meetings Table**

Meeting Type	Number of Wards	Frequency	What is funded?	Promotional Material	Officer Support (Y/N)
<b>Type One Ward Meeting</b>	Involves two (2) or more Councillors.	Twice per year per Councillor.  In consultation with the Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer, additional ward meetings may be organised if the issue/topic is deemed appropriate in the context of resourcing considerations and significance of the matter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Venue hire (for a venue compliant with clause 5.2.3 of the Policy);</li> <li>• Engagement of a facilitator (optional);</li> <li>• Distribution of promotional material in accordance with the Policy;</li> <li>• Design and printing of promotional material;</li> <li>• Equipment Hire where required; and</li> <li>• Light refreshments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flyers – distributed to all properties in the relevant Ward</li> <li>• Press Release</li> <li>• Advertisements</li> <li>• Advertisement in Kingston Your City – where deadlines accommodate</li> <li>• Advertisement on Kingston’s Website</li> <li>• Advertisement on Kingston’s Social Media Platforms</li> </ul>	Y
<b>Type Two Ward Meeting</b>	Involves one (1) Councillor.	Four times per year per Councillor.  In consultation with the Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer, additional ward meetings may be organised if the issue/topic is deemed appropriate in the context of resourcing considerations and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Venue hire (for a venue compliant with clause 5.2.3 of the Policy);</li> <li>• Distribution of promotional material in accordance with the Policy;</li> <li>• Design and printing of promotional material;</li> <li>• Equipment Hire where required; and</li> <li>• Light refreshments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Printed handbills for Councillors to distribute (Max 500 per Councillor)</li> <li>• Press Release</li> <li>• Advertisements</li> <li>• Advertisement in Kingston Your City – where deadlines accommodate</li> <li>• Advertisement on Kingston’s Website</li> <li>• Advertisement on Kingston’s Social Media Platforms</li> </ul>	Y

		significance of the matter.			
<b>Pop-Up Feedback Session</b>	Involves one (1) Councillor	Unlimited subject to clause 5.2.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No funding.</li> <li>• Council equipment provided including a table, chair, laptop or iPad and Council banner for sessions held.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press Release</li> <li>• Advertisement in Kingston Your City – where deadlines accommodate</li> <li>• Advertisement on Kingston's Website</li> <li>• Advertisement on Kingston's Social Medial Platforms</li> </ul>	N
<b>Virtual Meeting</b>	Involves one (1) or more Ward Councillors	Unlimited subject to clause 5.2.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No funding.</li> <li>• Council will make all arrangements for the holding of a Virtual Meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertisement on Kingston's Website</li> <li>• Advertisement on Kingston's Social Media Platforms</li> </ul>	Y