



COMMUNICATION AGREEMENT

CEO and Councillors

February 2026

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1. Purpose

This Communication Agreement establishes the agreed principles, responsibilities, and processes that guide communication between the Council, Councillors, and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

It ensures:

- Effective, transparent, and legally compliant communication
- Respect for the respective roles and responsibilities under the Local Government Act 1995
- Consistency with the Local Government Act 1995 (sections 5.92C), Local Government Regulations Amendment Regulations 2025 and sector best practice
- Clear expectations that support high-quality governance and the CEO's performance objectives

This Agreement applies to all communication undertaken in an official capacity by Councillors, the CEO, and employees.

2. Principles

The Council and CEO commit to the following principles:

2.1 Role Alignment

Communication will reinforce and respect the distinct roles of Council (strategic direction, policy, oversight) and the CEO (operations, administration, staffing and strategic implementation).

2.2 Legislative Compliance

Information access and communication will be conducted in accordance with:

- The Local Government Act 1995
- The Local Government Regulations
- Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates
- This Communication Agreement

2.3 Relevance

Councillors will only request information relevant to the performance of their statutory functions.

2.4 Transparency and Fairness

Information provided to one Councillor will be shared with all Councillors where appropriate.

2.5 Timeliness

The CEO will ensure responses to Councillor requests are provided promptly and within agreed timeframes.

2.6 Respectful Interactions

All communication is undertaken in a respectful and professional manner, supporting constructive working relationships.

2.7 Informal Interactions

Workshops, catch-ups and incidental communication are encouraged for relationship-building and understanding; however, they are **not** mechanisms for formal Requests for Information.

3. Scope and Application

3.1 This Agreement Applies To:

- Councillors
- The CEO
- Employees when interacting with Councillors under the direction of the CEO

3.2 This Agreement Does Not Apply To:

- Deliberations at Council or Committee meetings
- CEO recruitment, performance review, or termination
- Councillor contact with the City in their personal, ratepayer, or community member capacity

4. Definitions

Administrative Matter

Routine matters relating personally to a Councillor, including:

- Scheduling of meetings
- Training, travel, and event arrangements
- ICT support or access
- Allowances, reimbursements, and compliance obligations
- Other logistical or administrative support

Administrative Request

A request for assistance or information relating solely to an administrative matter.

Councillor Portal

Means the City's secure, confidential SharePoint site used to access and manage information and documents relating to Councillors and Council business.

Councillor Request Form (CRF)

The City's online form that is used to submit a Request For Information (RFI).

Nominated Employee

Employees appointed by the CEO and authorised to receive and manage RFIs or administrative requests.

Report It

The City's online form used by the public, and Councillors, to submit maintenance reports, available on the City's website.

Request for Information (RFI)

A formal request made by a Councillor to access information held by the City, that is relevant to the performance of their statutory functions.

Working Day

A Day other than Saturday, Sunday, or a public holiday.

5. Nominated Employees

5.1 The CEO will nominate at least four employees who are authorised to receive and manage:

- Requests for Information
- Media enquiries (for the Mayor)
- Administrative requests

5.2 The register of nominated employees will be maintained and made available to Councillors on the Councillor Portal.

5.3 The CEO may determine which officer is best placed to respond to any request.

7. Councillor-Initiated Access to Information

7.1 Requests for Information (RFI)

Purpose: To obtain information required for a Councillor's statutory functions.

Issue or Topic	Mechanism	Process	Timeframe	Used to Generate a RFI	Distribution
Access to information relevant to decision-making, agenda preparation, community matters, project details, financial information, or strategic issues	CRF	1. Submit through CRF. 2. Auto-acknowledgement issued. 3. CEO or nominated employee may clarify scope. 4. Written final response provided.	Auto-acknowledgement within 2 working days . Final response within 10 working days , or estimated timeframe provided.	Yes	Provided to all Councillors , except where confidential, personal to the requester, or where CEO + requester agree otherwise.
Request for advice relating to preparing a motion or amendment	CRF				
Request for clarification or additional info relating to correspondence received by a Councillor	CRF (attach correspondence)				
Request relating to matter included in an upcoming Council or Committee agenda	CRF	CEO uses best endeavours to provide response before meeting			

CRF = Councillor Request Form (available online at the Councillor's Portal)

7.2 Administrative Requests

Purpose: Support for an individual Councillor's administrative needs.

Issue or Topic	Mechanism	Process	Timeframe	Used to Generate a RFI	Distribution
Meeting scheduling, attendance/apologies, leave of absence	CRF or email Councillor Support Mayor – email Executive Officer	May be verbal or written; Written advice may be requested for clarity	Auto-acknowledgement within 2 working days . Final response within 10 working days , or estimated timeframe provided.	No	Not shared with Councillors
ICT support (login issues, device support, software access)	CRF or email ICT support				
Training, conferences, travel, event attendance	CRF or email to Councillor Support Mayor – email Executive Officer				
Reimbursement, allowances, entitlements	CRF				
Compliance obligations (gift declarations, conflicts, returns)	CRF or email Councillor Support				

CRF = Councillor Request Form (available online at the Councillors Portal)

7.3 Operational and Customer Requests

Purpose: Address service delivery concerns or maintenance issues

Issue or Topic	Mechanism	Process	Timeframe	Used to Generate a RFI	Distribution
Service or maintenance issue (e.g., potholes, waste, lighting, graffiti)	Report It	Submitted directly to operational teams	Within service levels	No	Not shared
Escalation of unresolved operational issues	CRF or Email CEO if unresolved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submit through CRF. 2. Auto-acknowledgement issued. 3. CEO or nominated employee may clarify scope. 4. Written final response provided. <p>If escalated to CEO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Email CEO, include previous correspondence 2. CEO acknowledgement 3. CEO final response, or estimated timeframe provided 	<p>Auto-acknowledgement within 2 working days.</p> <p>Final response within 10 working days, or estimated timeframe provided.</p>	No	Not shared

Report It = Online form used by the public and Councillors to submit maintenance requests, available on the City's website

7.4 Governance Forums

Purpose: Provide context, briefing and strategic guidance to Councillors.

Forum	Frequency	Purpose	Participants	Used to Generate a RFI
Council Workshops	1 or 2 per month, ~2-to-4-hour duration	Confidential in-depth briefings; early input on policies, plans, strategies and budgets; general discussions; contentious issues; used by CEO to canvas Council prior to taking action under delegation	Councillors, CEO, Executive, Employees (by invite)	No
Strategic Workshops	November & March, 2 days duration	Long-term planning, budget priorities; Strategic priorities; Operating priorities; Advocacy priorities; Budget direction	Councillors, CEO, Executive, Employees (by CEO invite)	No
Public Briefing Sessions	Monthly, ~ 2-hour duration	Clarify agenda items via Q&A	Councillors, CEO, Executive, Employees, Public	Yes Questions and answers recorded in OCM agenda. CRF lodged if further information is required.
Councillor Catch Ups	Monthly, ~1-hour	General discussions; feedback provided to the CEO via Mayor or Deputy Mayor. Actions responded to at CEO discretion.	Councillors (CEO on request)	No CRF lodged if further information is required.

Forum	Frequency	Purpose	Participants	Used to Generate a RFI
Mayor, Deputy Mayor & CEO Weekly Catch Up	Weekly, ~1-hour duration	Advocacy, scheduling, organisational performance and media matters. Councillors kept informed by circulation of meeting notes.	Mayor, Deputy Mayor, CEO, Executive Officer, Manager Advocacy and Government Relations	No
Councillor & CEO Teams Chat	Daily	Rapid situational updates; urgent/emergency information; Informal	Councillors, CEO	No

8. Resource Considerations

The CEO may refuse a RFI where complying with the request would unreasonably divert staff time, financial resources or operational capacity from the City's core functions.

9. Correspondence Sent by the Mayor

- Correspondence sent by the Mayor on behalf of the City will be provided to all Councillors.
- Exceptions may apply for ceremonial, congratulatory, or low-impact correspondence.
- The CEO will maintain a log of correspondence on the Councillor Portal that is accessible to all Councillors.

9. Responding to Media Enquiries

- The Mayor may discuss media enquiries directly with the CEO or a nominated employee without lodging an RFI.
- The CEO ensures consistent organisational messaging and support.

10. Requests Must Not Be Made During Social or Incidental Communication

To maintain clarity and avoid misunderstandings:

- Formal requests (RFIs) cannot be made in workshops, informal conversations, Teams chats, or social interactions.
- If information is sought, the Councillor will be directed to lodge a CRF.
- Informal requests to the CEO or Executives are not treated as RFIs, and any actions occur at the CEO's discretion and under CEO delegation.

11. Out-of-Hours Expectations

- Employees are not required to respond to requests outside normal business hours.
- Emergencies (e.g., cyclone, major incident) may require exceptions, at the discretion of the CEO.

12. Formal and Informal Discussions with Employees

- This agreement governs all discussions between Councillors, Council, and Employees.
- Councillors are required to refrain from discussing Council matters with employees, particularly issues or disputes related to employment, as these will be addressed in accordance with legal contracts and relevant employment legislation.
- All employment queries should be directed to the CEO or relevant Executive, and Councillors should politely refuse any involvement.

13. Dispute Resolution

If a Councillor is dissatisfied with the final response to a RFI, the following process will be followed:

- Stage 1: Meeting between the Councillor, Mayor (or Deputy Mayor if the Mayor is the requester), and CEO.
- Stage 2: If unresolved, the matter may be referred to Council for determination, and Council will consider the reasons for the CEO's response.

Council's decision is final and may override the CEO's refusal to provide information on the grounds of resource allocation grounds (clause 8).

14. Review and Expiry

This Agreement:

- Will be reviewed annually as part of the CEO's Key Performance Indicators
- Must be re-adopted after each Local Government election
- Expires upon the appointment of a new CEO and must be renegotiated

15. Version Control

Date	Version	Action
1 Dec 2025	First draft	Discussed at Councillor workshop. Councillor feedback requested.
2 Feb 2026	Final draft, minor edits for clarity	Discussed at Councillor workshop. Councillor feedback requested.
23 Feb 2026	Final draft (amended)	(Proposed) Adopted by Council at February OCM

Appendix A: Councillor's Quick Guide

This guide shows how to request information, lodge issues and communicate effectively under the Communication Agreement.

1. When You Need Information → Use the CRF

Councillor Request Form (CRF)

The CRF is the **official method** for all Requests for Information.

Use the CRF when you need:

- Information to assess or debate a Council agenda item
- Project, financial or service information
- Clarification on a community issue
- Advice to prepare a motion or amendment
- Information about correspondence you've received

Timeframes

- **Auto-acknowledgement:** within 2 working days
- **Final response:** within 10 working days (or estimated timeframe)
- **Shared with all Councillors** unless confidential or exempt

2. When You Need Administrative Support → CRF or Councillor Support (email)

Examples:

- ICT help
- Meeting scheduling
- Travel, training or events
- Allowances or reimbursements
- Compliance support

These requests **do not** get shared with Council.

3. When You Hear About An Operational Issue → Use “Report It”

Examples:

- Broken footpath
- Overflowing bin
- Faulty streetlight
- Parks, roads and maintenance issues

Operational teams respond directly within service levels.

If unresolved → contact Director, then CEO.

4. What Not To Do

The following **cannot** be used to lodge a formal request:

- Workshops
- Councillor Catch Ups
- Strategic Workshops
- Public Briefing Sessions
- Teams Chat
- Social conversations with staff

If you need information → use the CRF.

5. Mayoral Correspondence

The CEO provides Councillors with copies of correspondence sent by the Mayor on behalf of the City, except where:

- Ceremonial or congratulatory
- Confidential
- Otherwise agreed

6. Media Enquiries

The Mayor will discuss media enquiries directly with the CEO or a nominated employee.

Councillors who receive media enquiries should refer them to the CEO's Office.

7. Out-Of-Hours Contact

- Staff are **not required** to respond outside business hours.
- Emergencies (cyclones, crises) will be handled under the City's incident protocols.

8. Disputes About Information

If you disagree with a response:

1. Meet with Mayor/Deputy Mayor and CEO
2. If unresolved → Council determines the matter

9. In Summary

- ➡ **Need information?** → Use the **CRF**
- ➡ **Need admin support?** → CRF or Councillor Support
- ➡ **Operational issue?** → Use **Report It**
- ➡ **In a workshop/catch-up?** → Discussion only, not RFIs
- ➡ **When in doubt?** → Ask Governance or the CEO