

1. POLICY CERTIFICATION

Policy title:	Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy
Policy number:	CL012
Category:	Policy
Classification:	Council
Status:	Approved

2. PURPOSE

To strengthen the working relationship between Elected Members and Council's Executive Leadership Team.

To ensure that Elected Members receive advice to assist them in the performance of their civic duty in an orderly, courteous and regulated manner.

To ensure Elected Members have clarity on which staff they can communicate with and the processes for contacting staff.

To ensure staff understand their obligations with regard to providing information to Elected Members and the set service standards.

3 ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

Council is committed to ensuring that all interactions between Councillors and staff are positive and constructive, and conducted in a manner that facilitates Council's optimum performance

4 POLICY STATEMENT

Good governance and effective service delivery are dependent on a good working relationship between the Elected Members and staff. Working as a team to achieve the community's aspirations for the region is critical to the success of the organisation. This requires mutual respect of both staff and Elected Members of each other's roles and responsibilities.

Good open and respectful communication is seen as critical to building strong working relationships between Elected Members and Council staff.

Good governance requires clear and effective communication protocols for Elected Members and senior staff which provide for courteous and respectful communication.

This policy outlines how effective communication and flow of information can be achieved between Elected Members and staff. It provides a table of service standards

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with regard to Councillor and staff interactions; and it provides a dispute resolution mechanism.

All formal advice to Council and to Councillors should be provided through the CEO or Directors.

The CEO is responsible for the administrative management of the Council and is the conduit between Council’s administration and Councillors. Wherever practicable, interaction between staff and Councillors should take place through the CEO.

The Chief Executive Officer authorises the following staff interaction:

- Contact between Elected Members and Directors is appropriate for matters specific to that Director’s area of individual responsibility.
- Contact with other specific staff is appropriate as part of an Elected Member’s role on a Committee, at Council events or meetings, and similar situations.
- In some instances, a Director or the Chief Executive Officer will direct individual staff to contact Elected Members to provide specific information or advice.

Approved Communication Channels for Roper Gulf Regional Council Elected Members						
	CEO	EA to CEO	Directors	Manager Governance, Corporate Planning and Compliance	Communications Co-ordinator	IT Support Staff
Council Plan, Strategy and Policy	x		x			
Civic and Ceremonial	x	x	x	x		
Operational Issues, Service Delivery	x		x			
Media and Communications	x				x	
Information Technology Help		x		x		x
Councillor requests/Questions	x	x				
Code of Conduct	x					

Correspondingly, staff should not seek to make direct contact with Councillors without their Director/Manager’s consent.

5 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY:

The CEO and Mayor will work together to foster a culture which supports the application of this policy and its principles.

The Mayor will be responsible for educating Councillors about the policy, and for supporting policy compliance by Councillors.

The CEO will be responsible for ensuring that the policy is incorporated into relevant administrative procedures and processes. Directors, Managers, Coordinators and Team Leaders will be responsible for educating their staff about the guidelines, and for supporting compliance by their staff.

The policy will be readily accessible to all, published on Council's website.

6 PERSONAL INTERACTION BETWEEN ELECTED MEMBERS AND STAFF

While this policy, and the Code of Conduct, governs the interactions between Elected Members and staff, it does not prevent Elected Members and staff from communicating generally. From time to time, Elected Members and staff may be present at social and community events. In such situations, both parties must refrain from discussing matters relating to Council business.

7 PERSONAL ENQUIRIES

Elected Members and staff must follow the same process as all other members of the public if they require information, action or advice in relation to a personal or private matter.

Elected Members and staff should be mindful of the public perception of their request and direct all general enquiries to the Customer Request Service system as appropriate.

If a staff member receives a request from an Elected Member which is not considered relevant to the Elected Member's civic duties, the Chief Executive Officer is entitled to require the Elected Member to demonstrate how the request relates to their civic duties.

If the Chief Executive Officer is not satisfied that the request relates to the Elected Member's civic duties, the Chief Executive Officer is entitled to refuse to action the request or advise the Elected Member of the normal process for members of the public to make such requests.

8 SERVICE STANDARDS

Service	Standard
Elected Member Service Request and Information: Acknowledged	Within 24 hours
Elected Member Service Request and Information: Response	Within 5 working days
Phone calls to Directors during office hours	Office phone will be attended by either the Director or their assistant. Messages will be returned by a staff member within 24 hours.

9 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Should an Elected Member be dissatisfied with the response provided in relation to their request or the time taken to respond they should, in the first instant, raise the issue with the relevant Director. If after this approach they are still dissatisfied with the outcome, the issue should be raised with the Chief Executive Officer. If the Elected Member is still dissatisfied with the outcome the issue should formally be raised via a Notice of Motion at a Council meeting.

10 DEFINITIONS

CEO	Chief Executive Officer Roper Gulf Regional Council
Councillors	Roper Gulf Regional Councillors
Mayor	Mayor Roper Gulf Regional Council

11 REFERENCES

Acknowledgements (original author/source documents)	
Related Policies	Code of Conduct
Related Publications	<i>Local Government Act</i>

12 DOCUMENT CONTROL

Policy number	CL012
Policy Owner	Governance and Corporate Planning
Endorsed by	Council
Date approved	27 February 2019
Revisions	Nil

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Amendments	Nil
Next revision due	Council will review the Appointment of Acting Chief Executive Officer policy as required but always within 12 months after a general election of the Council.

13 CONTACT PERSON

Contact person

**Manager Governance, Corporate
Planning & Compliance**

Contact number

08 8972 9000