



Minutes

Unscheduled Council Meeting

Tuesday 25 February 2025 at 6pm

Council Chamber,
25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang



**City of
Whittlesea**

Councillors

Cr Aidan McLindon, Mayor	Kirrip Ward
Cr Daniela Zinni, Deputy Mayor	Bundoora Ward
Cr Nic Brooks	Thomastown Ward
Cr Blair Colwell	Mill Park Ward
Cr Lawrie Cox	Ganbul Gulinj Ward
Cr Deb Gunn	Painted Hills Ward
Cr Stevan Kozmevski	Lalor Ward
Cr Jarrod Lappin	Mernda Ward
Cr David Lenberg	Epping Ward
Cr Christine Stow	North Ward
Cr Martin Taylor	South Morang Ward

Executive Leadership Team

Craig Lloyd	Chief Executive Officer
Jacinta Stevens	Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

Order of Business

1 Opening	4
1.1 Meeting Opening and Introductions.....	4
1.2 Apology	4
1.3 Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement	4
1.4 Diversity and Good Governance Statement	4
2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest.....	4
3 Officers' Reports	5
3.1 Draft Election Period Policy	5
3.2 Councillor Social Media Policy	7
3.3 Updated Councillor Communications Policy.....	9
4 Urgent Business	13
5 Confidential Business	13
6 Closure.....	13

1 Opening

1.1 Meeting Opening and Introductions

The Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni opened the meeting at 6pm.

“Welcome to this Council Meeting of 25 February 2025 which is being held in person in the Council Chamber at Civic Centre, 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang and also being live streamed.

I’m Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni and I would also like welcome fellow Councillors and members of the Executive Leadership in attendance tonight.

Cr Brooks, Cr Colwell, Cr Cox, Cr Kozmevski, Cr Lappin, Cr Lenberg, Cr Stow, Cr Taylor and Mayor, Cr McLindon (via MS Teams at 6:18pm).

I would also like to introduce our Chief Executive Officer, Craig Lloyd and ask that he in turn introduce the members of the Executive Leadership Team in attendance today.”

“Good evening everyone, we also have with us Jacinta Stevens, Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO. Jacinta will join us during the meeting.”

1.2 Apology

Cr Gunn

1.3 Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement

The Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni read the following statement:

“On behalf of Council, I recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.

I would also like to acknowledge Elders past, present and emerging.”

1.4 Diversity and Good Governance Statement

The Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni read the following statement:

“At the City of Whittlesea we are proud of our diversity and the many cultures, faiths and beliefs that make up our community. We strive to be an inclusive welcoming City that fosters active participation, wellbeing and connection to each other and this land. We commit as a Council to making informed decisions to benefit the people of the City of Whittlesea now and into the future, to support our community’s vision of A Place For All.”

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

No declarations.

3 Officers' Reports

3.1 Draft Election Period Policy

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

Report Author: Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Council’s consideration and endorsement of the amendments made to the Election Period Policy (**Policy**) leading up to the impending Federal Election.

The amendments made to the Policy, as outlined in the Background/Key Information section of this report, are primarily enhancements to strengthen the obligations of Council officers should they nominate as a candidate in any local, state or federal election.

If Council resolve to adopt the draft Policy officers will commence community consultation seeking feedback between the period 26 February 2025 and 12 March 2025 in accordance with Council’s Community Engagement Policy.

Officers’ Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Resolve to adopt and release the draft Election Period Policy (Policy) at Attachment 1 for community feedback between the period 26 February 2025 and 12 March 2025 via Council’s Engage page.
2. Note following the community feedback period, a subsequent report will be presented to Council seeking formal adoption of the Policy.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved:	<i>Cr Colwell</i>
Seconded:	<i>Cr Brooks</i>

THAT Council:

1. **Resolve to adopt and release the draft Election Period Policy (Policy) at Attachment 1 for community feedback between the period 26 February 2025 and 12 March 2025 via Council’s Engage page.**
2. **Note following the community feedback period, a subsequent report will be presented to Council seeking formal adoption of the Policy.**

CARRIED

COUNCILLOR/S WHO SPOKE TO MOTION

Nil

VOTING

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED (vote against the motion)
<i>Cr Zinni</i> <i>Cr Brooks</i> <i>Cr Colwell</i> <i>Cr Cox</i> <i>Cr Kozmevski</i> <i>Cr Lappin</i> <i>Cr Lenberg</i> <i>Cr Stow</i> <i>Cr Taylor</i>	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>

In accordance with Governance Rule 60.4 the Chair, Cr Zinni adjourned the meeting at 6:11pm for 10 minutes to enable the technology to be assessed.

The meeting resumed at 6:18pm.

The Mayor, Cr McLindon joined the meeting mid-way through Item 3.2 at 6:18pm.

3.2 Councillor Social Media Policy

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

Report Author: Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

In Attendance: Manager Communications & Engagement

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Council’s endorsement for the adoption of a new Councillor Social Media Policy that will assist Councillors in effectively communicating with the City of Whittlesea community.

As part of recent local government reforms it was recommended that councils adopt a Councillor Social Media Policy to ensure Councillors can confidently participate in social media if they choose to, manage and mitigate risks associated with the channel and ensure adherence to the requirements of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

The Policy which provides guidance on how to use social media effectively to maximise community engagement, while balancing community expectations and reputational risk.

This Policy is based on the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) model Councillor Social Media Policy.

Officers’ Recommendation

THAT Council endorse the Councillor Social Media Policy.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved:	<i>Cr Taylor</i>
Seconded:	<i>Cr Lappin</i>

THAT Council endorse the Councillor Social Media Policy.

CARRIED

COUNCILLOR/S WHO SPOKE TO MOTION

Cr Taylor, Cr McLindon, Cr Cox

VOTING		
FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED (vote against the motion)
<i>Cr Zinni Cr Brooks Cr Colwell Cr Cox Cr Kozmevski Cr Lappin Cr Lenberg Cr Stow Cr Taylor</i>	<i>Cr McLindon</i>	<i>Nil</i>

The Mayor, Cr McLindon chaired the meeting from this point in the meeting.

3.3 Updated Councillor Communications Policy

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

Report Author: Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

In Attendance: Sarah Oldman, Manager Communications & Engagement

Executive Summary

The Councillor Communication Policy supports the delivery of exemplary external communications with the diverse City of Whittlesea community through media and communication channels.

The Policy articulates the roles of Mayor, Councillors, CEO, members of the executive, the Public Affairs Department and Council staff in the delivery of impactful external communications to effectively engage the City of Whittlesea community.

The Policy is underpinned by principles of accessibility, inclusivity, transparency, timeliness, responsiveness and accuracy.

The Councillor Communication Policy was adopted by Council on 19 September 2023 and articulates important information about the roles and responsibilities in relation to spokespeople and the use of Council's external communication channels.

Since that time there have been some changes to the state legislative framework, including the Model Councillor Code of Conduct, and amendments to the *Local Government Act*. Additionally, as part of recent local government reforms it was recommended that councils adopt a Councillor Social Media Policy to ensure Councillors can confidently choose to participate in social media while still adhering to the requirements of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

As a result, the Councillor Communication Policy has been updated to reflect both the legislative changes and the recommendations in the Councillor Social Media Policy.

This report seeks Council endorsement for the updated Councillor Communications Policy.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council endorse the update to the Councillor Communications Policy.

MOTION

Moved:	<i>Cr Cox</i>
Seconded:	<i>Cr Lappin</i>

Cr Cox moved the following motion:

Motion

THAT Council:

- 1. Endorse the update to the Councillor Communications Policy.**
- 2. Endorse the media roles and responsibilities table within the Policy for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors as follows:**

Role	Responsibilities as spokesperson
Mayor	Official spokesperson on all strategic matters, resolved Council positions and decisions. Where the Mayor has voted in opposition to a Council decision, the Deputy Mayor will be the official spokesperson for that particular decision.
Deputy Mayor	Acts as the Mayor's spokesperson on all strategic matters if the Mayor is unavailable or the Mayor has authorised to be official spokesperson or the Mayor has voted in opposition of a Council decision. Where the Mayor and Deputy Mayor have both voted in opposition for the same Council decision, the mover of that Council decision will be the official spokesperson for that Council decision.
Councillors	May speak publicly on behalf of Council if authorised by the Mayor or are the mover of a Council decision that was voted in opposition by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Councillors speaking in their capacity as individual Councillors must make it clear they are expressing their 'individual' view and not the 'official' view of Council.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved:	<i>Cr Cox</i>
Seconded:	<i>Cr Lappin</i>

THAT Council:

1. Endorse the update to the Councillor Communications Policy.
2. Endorse the media roles and responsibilities table within the Policy for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors as follows:

Role	Responsibilities as spokesperson
Mayor	Official spokesperson on all strategic matters, resolved Council positions and decisions. Where the Mayor has voted in opposition to a Council decision, the Deputy Mayor will be the official spokesperson for that particular decision.
Deputy Mayor	Acts as the Mayor's spokesperson on all strategic matters if the Mayor is unavailable or the Mayor has authorised to be official spokesperson or the Mayor has voted in opposition of a Council decision. Where the Mayor and Deputy Mayor have both voted in opposition for the same Council decision, the mover of that Council decision will be the official spokesperson for that Council decision.
Councillors	May speak publicly on behalf of Council if authorised by the Mayor or are the mover of a Council decision that was voted in opposition by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Councillors speaking in their capacity as individual Councillors must make it clear they are expressing their 'individual' view and not the 'official' view of Council.

CARRIED

COUNCILLOR/S WHO SPOKE TO MOTION

Cr Cox, Cr McLindon

VOTING		
FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED (vote against the motion)
<i>Cr Zinni</i> <i>Cr Brooks</i> <i>Cr Colwell</i> <i>Cr Cox</i> <i>Cr Kozmevski</i> <i>Cr Lappin</i> <i>Cr Lenberg</i> <i>Cr Taylor</i>	<i>Cr McLindon</i>	<i>Cr Stow</i>

4 Urgent Business

No Urgent Business

5 Confidential Business

No confidential business.

6 Closure

There being no further business the Chair formally closed the meeting at 6:47pm.

Confirmed this 18th day of March 2025.

Cr Aidan McLindon
Mayor