

# Councillor Portfolios - Community Policy

<b>Effective Date</b>	27 April 2020
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Customer Support and Governance Manager
<b>Link to Corporate Plan</b>	<i>Advocacy - A Regional Voice</i> <i>Strong Diverse Economy</i> <i>Active Vibrant Community</i> <i>Quality Lifestyle</i> <i>Sustainable Organisation</i>
<b>Review Date</b>	April 2028 (Post Election)
<b>Related Legislation</b>	<i>Local Government Act 2009</i> <i>Local Government Regulation 2012</i>
<b>Related Documents</b>	<i>Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland</i> <i>Acceptable Request Guidelines - Council Policy</i> <i>Media Relations Policy - Council Policy</i> <i>Councillor Briefings and Workshops - Council Policy</i> <i>Councillor Expenses Reimbursement - Statutory Policy</i>

Policy Version	Approval Date	Adopted/Approved
1	7 May 2008	Ordinary Meeting of Council
2	22 February 2012	Ordinary Meeting of Council
3	18 December 2013	Ordinary Meeting of Council
4	13 April 2016	Post-Election Meeting of Council
5	27 April 2020	Post-Election Meeting of Council
6	19 September 2024	Ordinary Meeting of Council

This policy may not be current as Council regularly reviews and updates its policies. The latest controlled version can be found in the policies section of Council's intranet or Website. **A hard copy of this electronic document is uncontrolled.**

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## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define and establish a Councillor Portfolio system which will enable collaboration with community and stakeholders, support the implementation of Council's strategic priorities aligned with the portfolio subject area, and create opportunities for partnerships and innovation.

## 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Councillors of Western Downs Regional Council, the Chief Executive Officer, Executive and Senior Leadership teams, Communications and Marketing team, and the Executive Support team. Section 12 of the *Local Government Act 2009* prescribes the responsibilities of Councillors and the *Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland* sets out the principles and standards of behaviour expected of Councillors when performing their roles, responsibilities, and obligations as elected representatives for their communities.

## 3. POLICY

### 3.1 Introduction

The functional areas of Council are divided into distinct portfolios, each with strategic objectives designed to achieve long-term success for the Western Downs region. At the beginning of a new term of Council, Council will assign each Councillor a portfolio. Portfolios may be reviewed as Council deems appropriate or in the event of a Council by-election.

Assigning Councillor portfolios:

- (a) ensures the workload associated with being an elected member is shared across all Councillors;
- (b) ensures Councillors' individual skills, knowledge, interests, and background are utilised;
- (c) assists the community to identify which Councillor to approach regarding a specific strategic issue; and
- (d) helps facilitate Council's engagement with the community and productive, professional, and appropriate relationships within the organisation to advance the delivery of Council's strategic priorities and services as identified in the Corporate, Operational, and Strategic plans.

### 3.2 Role of Portfolio Councillors

- (a) The portfolio Councillor's role is to represent Council in that portfolio subject area, understanding key issues and opportunities for Western Downs Regional Council. The Councillor may be actively engaged in their portfolio area and attend external stakeholder meetings.
- (b) Portfolio Councillors will be well-informed of issues relevant to their portfolio and will endeavour to have a detailed understanding of the relevant issues. Conducting further research may be necessary, including engaging with the community and requesting further information from Council Officers.
- (c) Portfolio Councillors are not responsible for the performance outcomes of their portfolio areas.
- (d) The communication of information to Councillors in general will not change, with all Councillors being kept informed of issues requiring all Councillors' knowledge for possible future Council action.
- (e) Requests for information must be consistent with Council's *Acceptable Request Guidelines - Council Policy*.
- (f) Portfolio Councillors may provide an elected representative's viewpoint and act as a sounding board for Executive and Senior leadership and Council on issues relating to their portfolio.
- (g) Any media enquiries will be handled by the Mayor, as prescribed by the legislative responsibilities of the Mayor to act as spokesperson for Council. Portfolio Councillors will abide by the *Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland* in respect to making any public comment.
- (h) Portfolio Councillors will be given preference to attend training and conferences relating to their portfolio, subject to budget considerations.
- (i) Portfolio Spokespersons must manage operational enquiries received from the community in accordance with *Acceptable Request Guidelines - Council Policy*.
- (j) Portfolio Councillors may report on key focus areas and issues on matters relating to their portfolio in Council workshops and briefings sessions, for example the Councillors 'Around the Grounds' session.



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## 3.3 Support

The Executive and Senior Leadership team and Executive Services Support team must provide appropriate support to Portfolio Councillors to enable them to:

- (a) be across the details of portfolio relevant proposals coming before Council;
- (b) be well placed to present and advocate portfolio issues within the community;
- (c) remain informed of research and other developments relevant to their portfolio; and
- (d) understand and communicate the implications of decisions by other levels of government on portfolio matters.

## 3.4 Engagement between Portfolio Councillor and Executive and Senior Leadership

- (a) Portfolio Councillors may regularly meet with the relevant General Manager (and Senior Leadership as deemed appropriate) to be informed of topical issues, proposed legislative changes, and industry and technology updates etcetera. These meetings should be strategic in nature and be held as often as required.
- (b) Portfolio Councillors may discuss the proposed content of reports with the General Manager but the report preparation and content will always remain the Officer's responsibility and must be prepared free from improper influence or direction from the Portfolio Councillor.
- (c) Any issues or problems relating to a portfolio should be discussed with the relevant General Manager in the first instance. Where the issue or problem cannot be resolved between the Portfolio Councillor and the General Manager, the matter is to be escalated to the Chief Executive Officer and/or the Mayor.

