



Employee Advice Guidelines Policy

Adopted Date: 28 March 2008

Policy Number: GRC 002

Policy Type: Statutory

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Department: Executive Office

Version	Decision Number or CEO Approval	Decision Date	Status / History
1	GRC 0002	28 March 2008	CEO Policy
2	GRC 0002	20 October 2009	Approved by CEO
3	GRC 0002	09 August 2011	Approved by CEO
4	GRC 0002	11 May 2012	Post-Election Workshop
5	GRC 0002	24 April 2012	Review 2017
6	GRC 0002 - OM-0148/17	23 August 2017	Review 2020
7	GRC 0002 – OM- 068/20	27 May 2020	Review August 2024
8	Reviewed and Amended – OM-109/23	19 July 2023	Review August 2024

BACKGROUND

Goondiwindi Regional Council promotes a culture within its organisation that values a close working relationship between elected members and staff so that elected members are able to quickly access information, and seek advice from appropriate staff to enable them to undertake their duties effectively.

This policy is made under section 170A of the *Local Government Act 2009*, which states that:

- (1) A councillor may ask a local government employee to provide advice to assist the councillor to carry out his or her responsibilities under this Act.
- (2) A councillor may, subject to any limits prescribed under a regulation, ask the chief executive officer to provide information, that the local government has access to, relating to the local government.

Example of a limit prescribed under a regulation—

A regulation may prescribe the maximum cost to a local government of providing information to a councillor.

- (3) If the advice or information requested under subsection (1) or (2) relates to a document, the requirement under subsection (9) to comply with the request includes a requirement to provide a copy of the document.

- (4) Subsections (2) and (3) do not apply to information or a document—
- (a) that is a record of the conduct tribunal; or
 - (b) that was a record of a former conduct review body; or
 - (c) if disclosure of the information or document to the councillor would be contrary to an order of a court or tribunal; or
 - (d) that would be privileged from production in a legal proceeding on the ground of legal professional privilege.
- (5) A request of a councillor under subsection (1) or (2) is of no effect if the request does not comply with the acceptable requests guidelines.
- (6) Subsection (5) does not apply to—
- (a) the mayor; or
 - (b) the chairperson of a committee of a local government if the request relates to the role of the chairperson.
- (7) The *acceptable requests guidelines* are guidelines, adopted by resolution of the local government, about—
- (a) the way in which a councillor may ask a local government employee for advice to help the councillor carry out his or her responsibilities under this Act; and
 - (b) reasonable limits on requests that a councillor may make.
- (8) In this section a *local government employee* includes a person prescribed under a regulation.
- (9) The chief executive officer must comply with a request made to the chief executive officer under subsection (1) or (2)—
- (a) within 10 business days after receiving the request; or
 - (b) if the chief executive officer reasonably believes it is not practicable to comply with the request within 10 business days—within 20 business days after receiving the request.

Maximum penalty—20 penalty units.

- (10) If the chief executive officer forms the belief mentioned in subsection (9)(b), the chief executive officer must give the councillor notice about the belief and the reasons for the belief within 10 business days after receiving the request.

- (11) In this section—

former conduct review body means a regional conduct review panel or the Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal under this Act as in force before the commencement of the *Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2018*, section 18.

POLICY STATEMENT

- Set out below are guidelines covering the interaction between Councillors and staff pursuant to provisions of the *Local Government Act 2009* (The Act) as set out above. The purpose of this policy is to support exceptional corporate governance in accordance with the local government principles by providing clear guidance to Councillors and employees to assist them in complying with the provisions of the Act and serving the needs of our community.

Acceptable Request Guidelines:

- Communications by Councillors with employees must be conducted in accordance with the principles of the Act and comply with Council policies.
- Councillors must not request staff to undertake work for the Councillor or any other person.
- Councillors must not take advantage of their official position to improperly influence officers or pursue matters of material personal interest.
- A Councillor cannot make strong suggestions to a Council Officer as to what information or recommendations should be contained in an Officer's Report.
- Council Officers must not comply with requests from Councillors that are contrary to these guidelines. Where such requests are received a report must be made to the Chief Executive Officer.
- Council Officers cannot lobby Councillors on matters regarding industrial relations or matters of personal interest.
- All reasonable assistance will be provided to Councillors in the exercise of their role and the performance of their duties.
- To facilitate the timely and accountable flow of information Councillors are asked to submit requests, with the exception of straight forward advice on administrative matters, via email.
- Requests for information, advice or action by Councillors of a strategic nature should be made to the relevant Departmental portfolio holders (councillors), Director or Chief Executive Officer.
- Annexure One provides a list of Officers nominated by the CEO and the operational areas in which they are authorised to provide information and advice.
- Councillors should forward general customer requests to mail@grc.qld.gov.au with a copy to the relevant officer as nominated in Annexure One of this policy.
- In addition, the CEO may, from time to time delegate Council Officers with relevant expertise in relation to special projects to liaise with Councillors. Any such delegation must be approved by the CEO.
- In the event of an emergency outside standard office hours, Councillors are to utilise Council's advertised emergency contact numbers.
- Council Officers who receive a request from a Councillor for information or assistance should inform their Departmental Director.
- Departmental portfolio holders (elected members), upon the establishment of portfolio holders ,may, subject to prior approval and clarification from the relevant Director, request reasonable assistance from the nominated person to assist with secretarial support where required to carry out activities directly related to their portfolio activities.

- Council Officers must respond to a Councillor request within an appropriate time frame, advising the action taken and where appropriate also notify the Councillor of the outcome of the said action.
- Any response to a Councillor must have due regard to the provisions of all relevant Acts, legislation, council plans, local laws and policies.
- Officers must ensure at all times that requests for assistance which involve the expenditure of funds or the use of resources not specifically provided for in the budget, are referred to the Chief Executive Officer for approval. This could involve obtaining a Council resolution to authorise the expenditure.
- Interaction between Councillors and Council Officers shall, at all times, be carried out in a professional manner with due regard for each other's respective positions.
- Straightforward meeting/agenda/diary/general daily matters should be directed to the Secretary – Executive Office.

PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of this policy are:

- to provide clear guidelines for directing requests and information to staff by elected members;
- to ensure elected members have access to all information and advice that is necessary for them to exercise their statutory role in Council;
- to ensure that staff are aware of the need for elected members to access information and advice quickly and efficiently to enable them to undertake their duties; and
- to ensure that both staff and elected members are aware that there are inappropriate actions and interactions which are not permitted under this policy or governing legislation.

REVIEW DATE

August 2024 or as determined earlier at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer.

ANNEXURE ONE – AUTHORISED STAFF CONTACT DETAILS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Position	Current Incumbent	Contact Details	Approved Relevant Matters
Council report author	Various		To seek clarification of the contents of an agenda item prior to a meeting.
Secretary – Executive Office	Kim Parker	4671 7437	Meeting coordination, media, diary matters, vehicle availability, conference / meeting attendance & registrations, accommodation arrangements, civic and other receptions, invitations, business cards.
Legal Officer	Krista Roberts	4671 7407	Legislation research, obtaining publications and other literature, legal and governance/compliance issues.

Human Resources Officer	Debbie Elliott	4652 0216	Human Resource matters.
Manager Planning	Ronnie McMahon	4671 7436	Matters relating to planning.
Town Planning Administrator	Penny Dawson	4671 7460	Matters relating to planning.
Economic Development/Project Management Officer	David Hayward	4653 2615	Matters relating to project management and economic development.

COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE

Position	Current Incumbent	Contact Details	Approved Relevant Matters
Director Community and Corporate	Jason Quinnell	4671 7402	Finance and administration policy and operational issues, disaster management & natural resource management policy, Community Services policy and operational issues, economic development policy issues, Building and Environmental Health policy, Environmental Health and waste management operational issues and complaints mitigation, animal control issues, relevant local laws and regulatory compliance issues, library services, building certification.
Council Report author	Various		To seek clarification of the contents of an agenda item prior to a meeting.
Facilities Manager	Terry Gleeson	4671 7435	Operational matters in relation to council buildings, halls, swimming pools etc., community services policy matters.
Community Development Officer	Megan Boyd	46717401	Media, external funding opportunities, status of external funding applications, RADF, council donations and grants.
Manager Finance	Bradley Pyle	4671 7414	Financial policy, budgets, rates and charges.
Manager Customer Services and Disaster Management	Teresa Pfingst	4671 7410	Disaster Management matters.
Building Certifier	Kevin Gore	46717 440	Building matters.
Manager Natural Resource Management	Rebecca Morrissy	4671 7458	Stock routes, rural services

DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING SERVICES

Position	Current Incumbent	Contact Details	Approved Relevant Matters
Director Engineering	Dion Jones	4671 7455	Technical Services policy and operational issues, development and subdivision issues, water park, works, water and sewerage, assets, fleet services.
Council Report author	Various		To seek clarification of the contents of an agenda item prior to a meeting.
Manager Works	Luke Tanner	4671 7461	Operational issues relating to roads, drainage, town maintenance, parks.
Manager Water & Sewerage	Trevor Seth	4671 7457	Operational issues relating to water, sewerage and plumbing.