



Memo to: Mayor Watton and all Councillors

Copy to: Interim General Manager, Directors, Senior Leadership Group, and Communications & Engagement Team

From: Robert Maginnity, Director Corporate and Community Services

Subject: Code of Meeting Practice - Additional Resources

Date: 2 February 2026

Reference: DOC2026/015840

Mayor Watton and all Councillors,

As you are aware, Council's updated Code of Meeting Practice (COMP) came into effect from 1 January 2026. Our updated COMP is based on the revised Model Code of Meeting Practice (the Model Code) released by the Office of Local Government (OLG). The COMP is available for Councillors on the HUB.

The OLG has released [Council Circular 26-02](#) which provides supplementary guidance materials to assist councils to better understand and correctly apply the mandatory provisions of the revised Model Code. The OLG has also released best practice guidance for matters no longer regulated under the Model Code (including Public Forums).

What's new or changing?

The supplementary guidance material includes:

- the *Guidelines on the closure of council and committee meetings to the public* (Closed Meeting Guidelines),
- a *Guide to livestreaming council and committee meetings and public forums* (Livestreaming Guide), and
- the *Model public forum rules*.

In addition, the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) originally issued with [Council Circular 25-20](#) have been updated to address common questions and issues raised by the sector following the introduction of the revised Model Code.

What will this mean for Council?

The Model Public Forum Rules are derived from the former non-mandatory best practice rules previously included in the Model Meeting Code. Council has already included these provisions as supplementary clauses within our updated COMP. No further action is required on this item.

The Closed Meeting Guidelines have been issued under section 10B(5) of the *Local Government Act 1993*, which requires councils and committees to have regard to relevant guidelines issued by the Departmental Chief Executive of the OLG when deciding whether a meeting, or part of a meeting, should be closed to the public.

This ensures a consistent and informed approach to decisions about meeting transparency. No further action is required on this item as information about closing the meeting is included in the business papers.

The Livestreaming Guidelines update the earlier webcasting guidelines introduced when councils were first required to webcast meetings. Issued under section 23A of the Act, councils must consider these guidelines when livestreaming meetings and publishing recordings on their websites.

Council will undertake an administrative update of the COMP to reflect the supplementary guidance released by the OLG. Councillors will receive further updates as required.

Briefings / Workshops

As a reminder, and as referenced within the memos provided to Councillors on 6 and 8 January 2026, the Model Code removed the provisions allowing optional pre-meeting briefing (Agenda Review) sessions and replaced them with mandatory prohibitions to ensure decisions are made transparently at formal Council meetings.

Any information provided to Councillors before a meeting about agenda items must be made public and shared without discussion. The OLG has clarified in their FAQs that a “pre-meeting briefing” means gatherings where staff inform councillors to support decision-making, including workshops and site visits, but excludes training, social gatherings, and meetings held to seek councillors’ views, such as long-term strategic planning. The prohibition applies regardless of whether the agenda has been issued.

A reminder:

- Site visits are no longer able to occur under the COMP. Councillors are strongly advised not to independently visit sites related to DA decisions, as doing so may expose Council to reputational risk and create perceptions of misconduct, undisclosed conflicts of interest, or potential breaches of the Code of Conduct.
- Councillor agenda reviews will no longer occur, as they are inconsistent with the Model Code. Council staff continue to work with the OLG to determine how workshops / briefings can be delivered in a meaningful way that assists Councillors in the performance of their civic functions, within the new constraints.
- The prohibition does not prevent Councillors from requesting information provided that information is made publicly available and shared without discussion, unless it is confidential and properly considered in a closed Council Meeting. To seek information please submit a request in writing via normal processes.

Responses to questions submitted by Councillors

We are currently trialling a process of publishing to our website a copy of response to questions submitted by Councillors. Responses are distributed to Councillors when they are available and published on a weekly basis. Some information may not be able to be published, particular where this includes personal information, commercial in confidence or legally privileged information.

When the questions relate to an item on the agenda for a Council meeting, those memos will be published with the business papers either prior to the meeting or as soon as possible following the meeting.

Where to go to for further information

For further information we refer Councillors to the two previous memos provided on 6 January 2026 (Councillor Memo _ Changes to the Code of Meeting Practice) and 8 January 2026 (Councillor Memo _ Further update – Changes to the Code of Meeting Practice) for further information. These are also available on The Hub.

The supplementary guidance materials and updated FAQs can be accessed on the [Model Code of Meeting Practice for Local Councils in NSW](#) page on the OLG's website at www.olg.nsw.gov.au.

Please note a copy of this memo will be uploaded to Council's website.