

CORPORATE POLICY AND PROCEDURE



POLICY	Accountability and Transparency Policy
CATEGORY	Corporate
AUTHORITY	City Clerk's Office
APPROVED BY	City Council
EFFECTIVE DATE	December 17, 2007
REVISION DATE	May 28, 2018

POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Guelph acknowledges that it is responsible for providing good government for the community in an accountable and transparent manner by:

- Encouraging public access and participation to ensure that decision making is responsive to the needs of Guelph residents and receptive to their opinions;
- Delivering high quality services to residents; and
- Promoting the efficient use of public resources.

Accountability and transparency are standards of good government that enhance public trust. They are achieved by adopting measures that ensure City of Guelph processes and services are open and accessible to the public. In addition to ensuring openness and accessibility, the City of Guelph is also committed to engaging its stakeholders throughout the decision making process.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to comply with Section 270 of the Municipal Act, 2001 which requires that all municipalities adopt and maintain a policy with respect to the manner in which they will try to ensure that they are accountable and transparent to the public.

DEFINITIONS

"Accountability" means the principle that the City of Guelph will be responsible to its stakeholders for decisions made and policies implemented as well as its actions and inactions.

"Council" and **"City Council"** mean the City of Guelph's elected representatives, comprised of the Mayor and Councillors.

“Committee” means Committee of the Whole, advisory committee or other committee, sub-committee or similar entity.

“Transparency” means the principle that the City of Guelph actively encourages and fosters stakeholder participation and openness in its decision-making processes. Additionally, transparency means that the City of Guelph decision-making process is open and clear to the public.

“Local Board” means a Local Board of the City as defined in the Municipal Act.

POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Financial Matters

The City of Guelph will be open, accountable and transparent to its stakeholders in its financial dealings. Some examples of how the City of Guelph provides accountability and transparency in financial matters are as follows:

- internal and external audits;
- budgetary reporting and statements;
- long-term financial planning;
- public budget approval process;
- Corporate Asset Management Plan;
- Procurement By-law;
- Delegation of Authority By-law;
- User Fee By-law; and
- Policy for the Sale and Disposition of Real Property Interests.

Internal Governance

City of Guelph administrative practices ensure specific accountability on the part of its employees through the following initiatives:

- commitment of senior management to ensure that administrative practices and procedures recognize City **Council’s commitment to accountability and transparency**;
- performance management and evaluation for employees;
- orientation and continuing education for both employees and members of Council;
- Code of Conduct for Staff;
- Code of Conduct for Members of Council and Local Boards;
- Use of Corporate Resources during an Election Policy;
- Hiring and Employment of Relatives Policy; and
- Joint Health and Safety Committees.

Public Participation

The City of Guelph ensures that it is accountable and transparent to its stakeholders by creating policies that outline how, when and under what rules meetings of Council and Committee occur. Council and Committee meetings will be open to the public, as required under the Act, and members of the public will have an opportunity to make delegations and/or submit comments in writing on specific items at these meetings. In addition, the City of Guelph has adopted a Community Engagement Framework which ensures that public engagement can be meaningful and effective by encouraging participation that is:

- inclusive not exclusive;
- voluntary;
- purpose driven;
- respectful of time and financial constraints;
- adaptable;
- accessible to information and decision-making;
- respectful of diverse interests; and
- regularly evaluated.

Disclosure of Information

The City of Guelph is committed to the timely disclosure of information in accordance with the Public Notice Provisions Policy. Notice may be provided through the following methods:

- publication of agendas;
- posting to the City`s website;
- direct mail delivery;
- emails;
- newspaper advertisement;
- radio advertisement;
- social media;
- postings at City Hall and/or the applicable venue; and
- any means necessary to provide an accessible notice.

The Procedural By-law

The Procedural By-law establishes the rules of order for Council and Committee meetings and ensures a fair and consistent approach to the consideration of City of Guelph business. The Procedural By-law also establishes standards in relation to notice of meetings, distribution of agendas and minutes, resolutions and voting, governance structure and appointments.

Open Meetings

Guelph City Council and Committee meetings are open to the public except as authorized by Section 239 (2) of the Municipal Act.

The Closed Meeting Protocol provides best practices for Council and Committees to follow when considering confidential information in a closed meeting. This protocol outlines practices which go beyond the Municipal **Act's requirements to ensure that** City of Guelph business is conducted in the most accountable and transparent manner possible.

The City of Guelph has appointed a Closed Meeting Investigator to receive complaints relating to compliance with the Municipal Act and the Procedural By-law during closed meetings. Individuals may submit complaints if they believe that City Council violated the Municipal Act or Procedural By-law in relation to a closed meeting.

Code of Conduct for Members of Council and Local Boards

The Code of Conduct for Members of Council and Local Boards (the Code) helps to ensure that members of Guelph City Council and Local Boards of the City of Guelph share a common basis for acceptable conduct.

The City of Guelph Integrity Commissioner (a third-party appointed by City Council) addresses the application of the Code. The Integrity Commissioner has the power to investigate suspected contraventions of the Code and serves as an advisor on appropriate conduct to members.

Individuals may submit complaints to the Integrity Commissioner if they believe a member of Council or a Committee has contravened the Code.