



Local Government Inspector

Guidance Note

Good Governance in Practice

Purpose of this guidance note

This guidance note sets out the Local Government Inspector's expectations for good governance in practice. It has been informed by the monitoring assignment conducted at the City of Perth between January and June 2026. It is for educational purposes only.

- 1. Respectful communication:** good governance is supported by professional language, respectful treatment of others, and constructive consideration of different views. Conflict between individuals may be addressed through self-resolution, facilitated discussion, mediation or other formal processes.
- 2. Agreed communication channels:** clear communication protocols and consistent information-sharing practices help to ensure that all elected members have equitable access to the material they need to make decisions.
- 3. Meeting practices:** elected members can help to ensure council meetings run more efficiently by observing meeting procedures. This includes providing questions, motions, alternate motions, amendments and information requests within set timeframes. Questions and debates are constructive when communication is respectful, questions are concise, and discussions are directed to the matter before council. Allowing the administration reasonable time to prepare accurate advice helps support effective decision-making.
- 4. Confidentiality:** careful handling of confidential information maintains trust between individuals and supports effective decision-making. Local governments can provide staff with appropriate training on:
 - what constitutes confidential information;
 - how to handle and protect confidential information; and
 - when to seek advice if the status of information is uncertain.

5. Responsible use of social media: the standards of accuracy, respect, confidentiality and professionalism applicable in meetings and other official settings are also relevant to communication on social media. Local governments should endorse a social media policy that is aligned with the relevant Code of Conduct.

6. Healthy and safe working relationships: workplace behaviour can affect employees and elected members. Good practice includes awareness of personal behaviours and clearly identifying and managing psychosocial hazards early. Psychosocial hazards can be managed by controls such as clear protocols, early intervention to reduce risks, training, and structured debriefing.

7. Training and capability: governance capability can be supported through:

- regular role and conduct training;
- comprehensive and standardised induction for elected members, including relationship building following each election cycle;
- clear dispute-resolution protocols;
- facilitated relationship-building;
- periodic reviews of statutory policies; and
- leadership support.

8. Review statutory policies: statutory policies benefit from regular review to confirm that they remain compliant and reflect good local government practice. The policy review could incorporate a compliance check against relevant legislation and a benchmarking exercise to assess the policy purpose, intent and content approach of other local governments.

Good governance reflection questions

- Are council and administrative roles clearly understood and respected?
- Are all elected members receiving information through consistent and transparent channels?
- Are motions, alternate motions, amendments and information requests for meetings provided to administration within the required timeframes?
- Is confidential information identified and dealt with appropriately?
- Are disagreements between individuals addressed early, respectfully, and through proportionate processes?
- Are psychosocial risks identified, controlled and reviewed?
- Are statutory policies regularly reviewed and current?