



WAVERLEY
COUNCIL

Code of Practice for Precincts 2026



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1. Introduction

Waverley Council aims to ensure that Councillors, Officers and all those who work with or are associated with Council adopt the highest ethical standards.

Precinct Committees do not constitute committees of Council as set out under the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* and as such are not bound by Waverley Council's Code of Conduct, but they are bound by the Precinct Policy and Procedures and the Code of Practice for Precincts, Council endorsed documents.

As a Council supported initiative, we want to make sure that Precinct members, particularly Precinct Executives act with integrity, honesty and fairness.

The intention of this Code is to strengthen the role and functions of Precinct Executives, Precinct Meeting attendees and public perceptions surrounding their activities.

All Precinct Executives, members, visitors and anyone attending a meeting are bound by the Code of Practice for Precincts. This Code outlines responsibilities in areas such as relationships with other Precinct members (including Meeting attendees), Councillors and Council Officers, conflicts of interest, and management of information.

Councillors are bound by Waverley Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors and Council Officers are bound by the Waverley Council's Code of Conduct for Staff.

2. Key Responsibilities

When attending a Precinct Meeting or carrying out other activities on behalf of the Precinct, you are responsible for your own good conduct.

All Precinct Executives, members, visitors and anyone attending a meeting should:

- Be inclusive and courteous to the public, Council Officers and Councillors and other Precinct members
- Help create an environment that is free of harassment and discrimination
- Show respect to all other members of the Precinct Meeting including new members
- Approach their involvement in Precinct activities with honesty and integrity
- Uphold the Waverley Council Precinct Policy and Procedures and the Code of Practice for Precincts

3. Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest arises when your own interests, or those of people or organisations close to you, conflict with your obligations to the Precinct members and to Council.

If you are a member of the Precinct Executive Committee, you need to ensure that any interest you may have in a matter does not influence, and could not be perceived as influencing, the way in which a matter is discussed or any decision made by the Precinct at their Meeting.

Please also note, a conflict of interest could also include the personal interest of a Precinct Executive member's family, relative, friends, associates, employer or anybody close who has a personal interest in a matter being discussed by a Precinct.

When there is any pecuniary interest (interest that you, a family member or someone you know well have in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss) the Precinct Executive member must declare that interest and stand down from the Chair of the Meeting during the debate.

Some examples might help clarify what must be declared.

For example:

- Example 1: If a proposed development is next door to a Precinct Executive members residence and they wish to raise the matter at a Precinct Meeting, they must declare a personal interest and temporarily step down from their position during discussion of the item. This protects Executive members from any claim of bias and allows for free discussion of the item with their active participation. The declaration of interest by Precinct Executive members also protects the reputation of the Precinct. Declarations ensure that people can be confident that the personal interests of the Precinct Executive do not unduly influence the decisions of the Precinct Meeting.
- Example 2: A Precinct Convener or Chair of a Precinct Meeting could also be considered to have a conflict of interest if they misuse their position, because of an interest, to inappropriately direct discussion or not allow free discussion of a matter.
- Example 3: A Precinct Secretary could be considered to have a conflict of interest if they, because of an interest, inaccurately record the minutes.
- Example 4: A Precinct Member lives within the Precinct and owns a local café and would like to raise a Motion at the Precinct Meeting that the Precinct endorse a Parklet be installed outside of their café for customers.

When a Precinct Executive member or someone attending a Precinct Meeting makes a disclosure of a conflict of interest (declaration), the Secretary will record the following in the Meeting Minutes:

- Who declared the interest (their initials) and the general nature of the interest declared
- The point at which the Chair steps down and then, following debate and resolution of the matter, when the Chair resume their position and a summary of actions, if any

Similarly, members of the Precinct Executive Committee should not accept gifts or benefits from a third party (e.g. external agency or a developer) that could appear to gain someone an advantage or be seen to influence them in their role/activities.

4. Confidential and Personal Information

Precinct Executive Committees may be given confidential or personal information in the course of their work as Precinct Representatives. If so, Precinct Executives must maintain the security of any confidential or personal information and not share, use or remove any information, unless authorised to do so as part of your Precinct responsibilities.

Precinct Executives will ensure Attendance Records and recording of Meeting Minutes are maintained in accordance with the Waverley Council Precinct Policy and Procedures and Code of Practice for Precincts.

5. Council Resources

Council resources should only be used for Council approved Precinct purposes.

Council resources include materials, equipment, documents, records, data and information.

You must use Council resources, ethically, effectively, efficiently and carefully in the course of your role as a Precinct Executive member and must not use them for private purposes.

6. Public Comment – Precincts speaking to the Media

From time to time, the media may contact Precinct Executives and Precinct Members for information or comment.

Members of Precincts should only provide comment as a resident and not speak on behalf of the Precinct.

If a Precinct has determined a matter (i.e. the Precinct has formally resolved a Motion on the matter and has sent it to Council), the member of a Precinct should refer the media to Council's website to where the Precinct Meeting Minutes and Response Reports are publicly available.

If the matter has only been discussed, but no Motion has been endorsed by the Precinct, the Precinct Executive or Precinct Member can express their personal views as a member of the public but they must not make any statement to the media as a representative of the Precinct, and they must not make any public statement to the media or at public events that would lead someone to believe that they are speaking on behalf of Council or expressing its views or policies.

Members of the Precinct Executive Committee and general Precinct Members are also not to post opinions on social media; or write public opinion pieces for any type of media, which are signed off in association with the Precinct, but they can do so as a resident if they wish to.

In the event that Precinct Executives and Precinct Members do not abide by the Code of Practice for Precincts, they need to be aware that they are personally responsible if any material they distribute or post on websites or social media is considered to be defamatory or they make defamatory comments. Council cannot be held responsible for the remarks of individual Precinct Executives or Precinct members.

7. Alcohol and Drugs

You should not participate in Precinct Meetings while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs that could impair your ability to make informed decisions or cause danger to the safety of yourself and/or others.

If your Precinct Meeting is held at a licensed venue that serves or provides alcohol as a refreshment option at your Meeting, please ensure that it is served responsibly. Providers of alcohol must prevent drunkenness and minors from accessing liquor and must understand that irresponsible liquor practices may lead to problems both on and off the premises. In cases of emergency, it is acceptable to call the Police.

8. Recording of Minutes

The Secretary is responsible for accurately recording the minutes of the Precinct Meeting, including any decisions of the Meeting.

When Motions are moved and seconded, the person's initials should be recorded in minutes. When referring to a Council Officer in Precinct Meeting Minutes, position titles should be used, rather than the Officers personal name.

Precinct Executives may choose to audio and/or video record meeting proceedings for the sole purpose of assisting with the preparation of minutes. Prior to the commencement of the Meeting the Meeting Chair should inform the Meeting of their intention to do so and seek the meeting's unanimous approval. Once permission has been granted at the concurrence of the Meeting, the Precinct Chair rules that such equipment can be used for the sole purpose of developing the Precinct Meeting Minutes. At no such time can recordings be uploaded to any social media platforms or websites. The Minutes of the Meeting once confirmed prevail over any audio and / or video recording.

In the event of an allegation being made at a Precinct Meeting, no identifying information e.g. names or addresses should be included in the minutes to ensure privacy. The Minutes should record the nature of the complaint and general location (if applicable) and that the matter will be referred to the appropriate Council Officer. Minutes that may cause offence or contain slanderous or defamatory comments will not be posted on Council's website.