

Policy - Councillor meetings with registered lobbyists and property developers

Purpose

To outline requirements for the Lord Mayor and Councillors to publish details of meetings with registered lobbyists and property developers.

Scope

This policy applies to the Lord Mayor and Councillors in relation to meetings held in their capacity as a City of Sydney Councillor or directly relating to matters involving the City of Sydney Council.

This policy does not apply to meetings at which the Lord Mayor or a Councillor is not in attendance.

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Registered lobbyist	A lobbyist who is required to register with the NSW Electoral Commission under the Lobbying of Government Officials Act 2011, sections 9(1) and 9(2), as follows: <i>9(1) A third-party lobbyist is required to be registered in the Lobbyists Register.</i> <i>9(2) An individual engaged to undertake lobbying for a third-party lobbyist is required to be registered in the Lobbyists Register in respect of the third-party lobbyist.</i>
Lobbyists Register	The Register of Third-Party Lobbyists maintained by the NSW Electoral Commission in accordance with s8(1) of the Lobbying of Government Officials Act 2011
Property developer	An individual or a corporation that carries on a business mainly concerned with the residential or commercial development of land, with the ultimate purpose of the sale or lease of the land for profit as defined in the Electoral Funding Act 2018; or Any other party proposing development that would be the subject of a decision by resolution of Council and/or the Central Sydney Planning Committee.
Meeting	A discussion which may be face to face, online or by telephone.

Policy Statement

Lobbying is an integral and legitimate activity for the functioning of a democratic system.

Lobbying also carries inherent risks of corruption, undue influence, unfair access and biased decision-making that are detrimental to the public interest and effective local governance.

It is in the public interest that lobbying is fair and does not undermine public confidence in impartial decision-making. This policy aims to ensure community expectations are met in relation to ethical and transparent lobbying of Councillors.

Records of meetings

Councillors are required to record all meetings with registered lobbyists and property developers, and the purpose of the meeting, from that date. Meetings recorded should include scheduled or organised meetings as well as any substantial or significant discussions held outside a scheduled meeting.

Councillors should always be aware of their obligations under the Code of Conduct, and the obligations in this policy are in addition to the requirements of the Code of Conduct. This includes, but is not limited to, clauses 3.13 and 3.14 of the Code of Conduct relating to land use planning, development assessment and regulatory decisions.

Councillors are not required to record requests for meetings which are not accepted, only meetings which they participate in.

Councillors are required to complete the form at **Attachment A** and submit it to the Office of the CEO every three months. Forms are to be submitted to the Office of the CEO within one week of the end of the relevant reporting period.

Councillors are required to submit a 'nil' return if they have not held any relevant meetings.

It is the responsibility of Councillors to undertake the required due diligence to ensure that any meetings held with registered lobbyists and property developers are recorded on the form.

The Office of the CEO will publish the forms on the City's website within three weeks of the end of the relevant reporting period. The forms will remain on the website for 12 months. Where a Councillor does not submit a form for a relevant period this will be noted on the City's website.

Training

Councillors will be trained in this Policy as part of the induction process following each election.

Compliance

A failure to comply with this policy or to provide true and accurate records may constitute a breach of the City’s Code of Conduct.

Responsibilities

Office of the CEO will:

- Publish records of meetings with registered lobbyists and property developers on the City’s website
- Update the website every three months
- Remove entries after 12 months

The Lord Mayor and Councillors will:

- Complete and sign the form at Attachment A every three months, including where no relevant meetings have been held
- Undertake the necessary due diligence to ensure the form is complete and accurate
- Submit the form to the Office of the CEO within one week of the end of the reporting period.

Consultation

The Lord Mayor and Councillors, Office of the Chief Executive Officer, Risk and Governance and Legal Services have been consulted in the development of this policy.

References

Laws and Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying of Government Officials Act 2001 (NSW) • Electoral Funding Act 2018 (NSW)
Policies and Procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Conduct
Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council resolution NOM 14.10 - 19 February 2024 • Premier’s Memorandum M2015-05-Publication of Ministerial Diaries and Release of Overseas Travel Information.

Review period

The Policy will be reviewed and put to Council for endorsement following every Council election, in conjunction with the Code of Conduct.

Approval Status

Council approved this policy on 10 October 2024.

Approval History

Stage	Date	Comment	TRIM Reference
Original Policy	8 April 2024	Approved by Council	2024/238651
Reviewed	10 October 2024	Approved by Council	2024/238651
Commence Review Date	10 January 2028		
Approval Due Date	10 October 2028		

Ownership and approval

Responsibility	Role
Author	Manager, OCEO
Owner	Manager, OCEO
Endorser	Chief Executive Officer
Approver	City of Sydney Council

ATTACHMENT A - RECORD OF MEETINGS WITH REGISTERED LOBBYISTS AND PROPERTY DEVELOPERS

Councillor Name:

Period:

Councillors must disclose all meetings with registered lobbyists and property developers for the period on this form.

It is the responsibility of the Councillor to undertake the required due diligence to ensure that any meetings held with registered lobbyists and property developers are recorded. In relation to registered lobbyists, this should include a review of the register of lobbyists which can be found at - <https://elections.nsw.gov.au/funding-and-disclosure/public-register-and-lists/register-of-third-party-lobbyists>

If no meetings with registered lobbyists or property developers have been held, please enter “NIL” in the below table and sign and submit the form.

Date	Organisation / Individuals in attendance	Purpose of Meeting

Councillors must inform relevant persons at the time of meeting that their name and purpose of the meeting will be published on the City’s website in accordance with the Councillor meetings with registered lobbyists and property developers policy.

I confirm that I have undertaken the required due diligence to comply with the Councillor meetings with registered lobbyists and property developers policy and that the information I have provided on this form is complete and accurate.

Councillor signature:

Date: