

POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL

SECTION	COUNCIL RELATED POLICIES	POLICY NUMBER	1.2.7
SUB-SECTION	GENERAL CORPORATE POLICY	EFFECTIVE DATE	February 11, 2021
SUBJECT	Accountability and Transparency Policy		
AUTHORITY	General Government Services Committee –January 28, 2021 Council – February 11, 2021		

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to comply with Section 270 (1) (5) of the Municipal Act, S.O. 2001, as amended, which requires that Municipalities adopt an Accountability Policy.

STATEMENT:

The County of Dufferin is proud to have procedures and practices in place that make it an accountable and transparent level of government.

Accountability is how members of Council and staff are held to account for their actions, how actions are explained and the level of detail that are provided in justification of certain actions.

Transparency relates to the ability of members of the public to observe how decisions are made and implemented.

Section 270 (1) (5) of the Municipal Act, 2001, requires all municipalities to adopt and maintain a policy to determine the manner in which the municipality will try to ensure that it is accountable to the public for its actions and that its actions are transparent to the public.

SUBJECT	Accountability and Transparency	POLICY NUMBER	1-2-7
----------------	---------------------------------	----------------------	-------

Practices in Place:

To maintain public confidence, Council and staff must act and appear to act openly, honestly, ethically, professionally, impartially, and with the best interests of the County at the forefront of all decisions.

- Decisions will be made in keeping with all legislated requirements;
- Serving the public interest will be of primary focus;
- Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined and understood;
- Expectations will be identified and understood and are considered within the capacity of the organization to complete its tasks;
- Clear and timely reporting on actions as required to Council, staff and the public;
- Financial stewardship that aims to achieve a balance between a prudent use of resources and the provision of quality services to the public and that considers both short and long term implications;
- Regular review of roles, responsibilities, capacity and expectations;
- Open access to information regarding County policies, practices, reports, and decision making processes in keeping with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and other relevant legislation and regulations;
- Regular communication of actions and decisions of the County to the public.

Policy

The County of Dufferin demonstrates its commitment to accountability and transparency by providing a sound governance framework comprised of a system of policies, procedures and practices which can be categorized as follows:

1. Legislated Requirements
2. Financial Matters
3. Internal Governance
4. Open Government and Public Participation

1. Legislated Requirements

The County of Dufferin operates in an accountable and transparent manner by following all legislated requirements. Legislation that applies to the County includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Municipal Act
- Municipal Conflict of Interest Act
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Personal Health Information Protection Act

SUBJECT	Accountability and Transparency	POLICY NUMBER	1-2-7
----------------	---------------------------------	----------------------	-------

- Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act
- Planning Act
- Development Charges Act
- Building Code Act
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- Employment Standards Act
- Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Ombudsman Act
- Highway Traffic Act
- Ontario Works Act
- Long Term Care Home Act
- Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act
- Housing Services Act
- Child Care and Early Years Act

2. Financial Matters

The following are examples of policies, procedures and practices the County has in place to ensure financial matters are handled in an accountable and transparent manner:

- Annual budget with multi-year operating and capital plans
- Annual External Auditor Report
- Procurement of Goods and Services By-law
- Sale and Disposition of Land Policy
- Council Expense Policy and Procedure
- Council Conference Policy
- Disposal of Assets Policy

3. Internal Governance

The County of Dufferin has established a number of policies, practices and procedures to govern the internal accountability and transparency of operations as follows:

- Human Resources policies
- Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy
- Health and Safety Policies
- Customer Service Policy
- Privacy Protection Policy

SUBJECT	Accountability and Transparency	POLICY NUMBER	1-2-7
----------------	---------------------------------	----------------------	-------

4. Open Government and Public Participation

The following are policies, procedures and practices that ensure the County is transparent in its actions and that opportunities to participate are encouraged:

- Council Code of Conduct
- Appointment of an Integrity Commissioner
- Procedure By-law
- Notice Policy
- Accessibility Policy and Procedures
- Application to Appear as a Delegation Form
- Public Posting of Council and Committee Agendas and Reports
- Live-streaming of Council and electronic Committee Meetings
- Public question period at Council and Committee meetings
- Routine Disclosure Policy
- Open Data Policy
- Freedom of Information process
- Delegation of Authority Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Use of several social media platforms to inform public of departmental services and council business
 - Circulations to media outlets and affected parties
 - Updating and maintaining a website with explanations of all of the services provided by the County and a list of contact names and information
 - Use of online community engagement tools