

Accountability and Transparency Policy

Purpose/Application

The *Municipal Act, 2001, as amended* (the Act) requires that all municipalities adopt and maintain a policy with respect to the manner in which the municipality will try to ensure that it is accountable to the public for its actions, and the manner in which the municipality will try to ensure that its actions are transparent to the public. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the delivery of the municipality's activities and services in accordance with the principles as outlined herein. This policy has been developed in accordance with the Act to comply with Section 270.

Definitions

- i) Accountability – The principle that the municipality is answerable to the public for decisions made and policies implemented, as well as its actions or inactions.
- ii) Transparency – The principle that the municipality actively encourages and fosters public participation and openness in its decision making processes. Additionally, transparency means that the municipality's decision making process is open and clear to the public.

Policy Statement

The Council of The Corporation of the Township of West Lincoln acknowledges that it is responsible to provide good government in an accountable and transparent manner by:

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

Accountability, transparency and openness are standards of good government that enhance public trust. They are achieved through the municipality adopting measures ensuring, to the best of its ability, that all activities and services are undertaken utilizing a process that is open and accessible. In addition, wherever possible, the municipality will engage the public throughout its decision making process which will be open, visible and transparent to the public.

Policy Requirements

The principles of accountability and transparency shall apply equally to the political process and decision making and to the administrative management of the municipality.

i. Financial Matters

The municipality will be open, accountable and transparent in its financial dealings as required under the Act. Some examples of how the municipality provides such accountability and transparency are as follows:

1. internal/external audit
2. reporting/financial statements
3. long term financial planning
4. asset management
5. purchasing/procurement policy
6. sale of land policy
7. budget process

ii. Internal Governance

The municipality's administrative practices ensure specific accountability on the part of its employees through the following initiatives:

1. hiring policy
2. orientation/continuing education

3. health and safety standards
4. responsibility for ensuring that administrative practices and procedures recognize Council's commitment to accountability and transparency

iii. Public Participation and Information Sharing

The municipality ensures that it is open and accountable through implementing processes outlining how, when and under what rules meetings will take place. The municipality's meetings will be open to the public when and as required under the Act, and members of the public will have an opportunity to make delegations or comments in writing on specific items at these meetings. In addition, the municipality has adopted policies which ensure that participation by the public can be meaningful and effective, through timely disclosure of information by various means including print media, websites, etc. Some specific examples include:

1. procedure by-law
2. delegation rules
3. records retention
4. planning processes
5. public notice policy