



Title: Accountability and Transparency Policy	
Policy Group: Your Government and People	Policy Administrator: Corporate and Legislative Services
Resolution No. CW-146-2022	Policy Number: CLS-05
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1. Policy Statement

- a) The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward (County) provides good government in an accountable and transparent manner by:
- providing for public access and participation to ensure that decision making is responsive to the needs of all its citizens;
 - delivering high quality services; and
 - promoting the efficient use of public resources.
- b) Accountability, transparency and openness are standards of good government that enhance public trust. They are achieved through the County adopting measures ensuring, to the best of its ability, that all activities and services are undertaken utilizing a process that is open and accessible to the public. In addition, whenever possible, the municipality will engage the public throughout its decision-making process which will be open, visible and transparent.

2. Purpose

- a) The Municipal Act, 2001 (the Act) requires the County to adopt and maintain a policy with respect to the manner in which the County will ensure that it is accountable to the public for its actions, and the manner in which the municipality will 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.
- b) This policy incorporates three principles for guiding action:
- Accountability

- Inclusiveness
 - Transparency
- c) The three main reasons why there is a need for accountability in public service are as follows:
1. To ensure the responsible and appropriate exercise of powers;
 2. To provide assurance in respect to the effective and efficient use of public resources and an adherence to the public interest; and
 3. To ensure a process of continuous improvement regarding public administration and governance.

3. Scope

- a) This policy applies equally to the political process, decision making, and to the administrative management of the County. Within the broad accountability framework, legislation provides various checks and balances to ensure accountability and transparency. The County's accountability initiatives, measures and activities to ensure open and accountable governance are set out in Section 8, which shall be amended as required to include new programs and initiatives upon their introduction.
- b) Accountability and transparency will be accomplished by:
- Providing the resources to keep the public and its elected representatives fully informed;
 - Encouraging public participation and consultation to ensure that decision making is open, visible, inclusive and responsive to citizen preferences and needs;
 - Delivering high quality services to our citizens;
 - Promoting the efficient and effective use of public resources; and
 - Ensuring political, administrative and financial accountability, as provided for in section 6.
 - A commitment to full information disclosure.

4. Legislative Authority

- a) This policy is subject to the following:
- The [Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25](#)

5. Definitions

- a) **Accountability:** the principle that the municipality will be responsible to the public for decisions made and policies implemented, as well as its actions or inactions.
- b) **Inclusiveness:** the principle that the municipality actively encourages and fosters public participation and openness in its decision making processes.
- c) **Transparency:** the principle that the municipality's decision making process is open, clear and understandable to the public.

6. Requirements

- a) Transparent decision making

Accountability and transparency require that the County ensure that it is open and accountable to its stakeholders by developing and implementing processes that outline how, when and under what rules meetings will take place. As a rule, the County's meetings will be open to the public and members of the public will have an opportunity to make delegations on specific items at these meetings. Meetings will only be closed to the public where the public interest requires and where holding a closed meeting is permissible by law. Some specific examples of implementing processes include:

- Procedural By-law;
- Adhering to legislated open meeting requirements and, where necessary, closed meeting procedures; and,
- A policy establishing how powers delegated to staff will be exercised.

- b) Communicating and seeking input

The County strives to ensure that, wherever possible, processes and decision making occurs in consultation with its stakeholders, and further, that proper notice is provided to the public and full disclosure of all information is provided. Some specific examples include;

- Establishment of, and adherence to, a Public Notice Policy;
- Using inserts in billings for increased communications with the public;
- Maintaining a County notices in the local media;
- Maintaining a policy respecting the sale and disposition of land;
- Development of various strategic plans and annual reporting on the plans;
- Publication of "CAO Quarterly Reports" - the CAO's quarterly reports to Council and the public; and,

- Actively measuring and reporting on citizen satisfaction to demonstrate a commitment to constantly improve program delivery.

c) Integrity and respect for relationships

The County strives to be open, accountable and transparent to its stakeholders in its relations with citizens, institutions and businesses. Some examples of how the County provides such accountability and transparency are as follows:

- A commitment to adopt and maintain a formal Prosecution Policy defining the respective roles and responsibilities of staff, agents, and Council in the administration of justice;
- A commitment to renewing the Service Strategy, and the development of Corporate-wide Customer Service Standards;
- A commitment to establishing guidelines for appropriate conduct to ensure that the public interest is protected and residents may have trust in the integrity and impartiality of their local government;
- The County will conduct itself in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and ensure that the public has access to information affecting the County, the disclosure of which will not be detrimental to the broader public interest, and that personal information of third parties in the custody of the County will be released only in accordance with that Act; and,
- A commitment to ensure that representatives in public functions abide by the highest of ethical and moral standards.

d) Financial matters

Accountability and transparency require that the County be open, accountable and transparent to its stakeholders in its financial dealings. Some examples of how the County provides such accountability and transparency are as follows:

- Maintenance of internal audit controls;
- Appointment of an Auditor General to identify efficiencies and mitigate financial risks;

- Conduct of a formal Program Review;
- Completion of the annual external audit;
- Making financial statements, reports, agendas and strategic plans available on the County's website;
- Long term financial planning through approval of a Strategic Plans and financial updates;
- Maintaining a formal insurance program to mitigate financial risks;
- A commitment to develop and maintain an Asset Management Program;
- Maintenance of a public purchasing process in accordance with the County's policies and by-laws governing the purchase of goods and services and achieving value for money, including the establishment of valuation benchmarking against which budgetary and purchasing decisions will be measured;
- Maintaining an open budget process with adequate notice of meetings; and
- Establishing, implementing and refining a system of performance measurement and reporting on all County facilities and major programs.

e) Administration

Administrative accountability and transparency requires that the County ensure specific accountability on the part of its workforce by ensuring knowledgeable and competent employees through many different means, as follows:

- Formal system of staff performance management and evaluation;
- Formal, open and fair hiring and employment policies;
- A commitment to assist in funding continuing education;

- Providing a safe, harassment-free, accessible and healthy workplace;
- A formal staff recognition program;
- Establishing, tracking and reporting on clear timelines for achieving objectives;
- A formal system of compensation and benefit review to ensure equity and competitiveness;
- A commitment to continuous improvement;
- A commitment to preserve and demonstrate the County's position as an employer of choice; and,
- A commitment to a high-degree of productivity.

7. Responsibility and Implementation

- a) Council shall determine the manner and timing of consultation with stakeholders related to major policy decisions.
- b) The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is responsible for ensuring that administrative practices and procedures to be followed by staff recognize Council's commitment to accountability and transparency.