

Policy Review Panel Terms of Reference

Date adopted	24 March 2025
Adopted by	Council
Review due	December 2028
Responsible officer	Head of Governance
Records reference	11102855

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Policy Review Panel (Panel) is to:

- Provide advice and recommendations to Council on draft Council policies, and Terms of Reference for Council Committees
- Review and assess Council policies to determine their relevance and appropriateness
- Review and assess all Terms of Reference for all Council Committees to determine their relevance and appropriateness
- Provide advice to officers on gaps which may exist in the Council policy suite.

2. Membership

Membership of the Committee will include:

- a. A minimum of two (2) Councillors
- b. The sponsoring Member of the Executive Leadership Team and/or relevant Manager or staff member/s.
- c. The Chief Executive Officer
- d. Manager Governance

Position/ Panel Member Type	No. of Positions	Type of Appointment (Term
Chair (Councillor)	1	Appointed	Annually, as appointed by Council
Councillor (not including the Chair)	3	Appointed	Annually, as appointed by Council
Reserve Councillor The Reserve Councillor does not hold official standing unless the Chair or nominated Councillor representative is absent or otherwise unavailable.	1	Appointed	Annually, as appointed by Council
Sponsoring Member Head of Governance	1	Ex-officio	Ongoing
Chief Executive Officer	1	Ex-officio	Ongoing
Manager Governance	1	Ex-officio	Ongoing

2.1. Chair

- a. If the Mayor is a member of the Advisory Committee, the Mayor will automatically assume the role of the Chair. If the Mayor is not a member of the Advisory Committee and the Deputy Mayor is, the Deputy Mayor will serve as Chair. In all other cases, Council will appoint a Councillor representative as Chair. Meetings will be led by the Chair.

- b. If the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, the Chair will nominate a Councillor Representative to undertake the role of the Chair.
- c. The Chair is responsible for fostering a collaborative approach to discussions held throughout the meeting.
- d. The Chair shall not permit any motion, question, or statement that is derogatory or defamatory toward any Councillor, Committee Member or Council staff member.
- e. The Chair has the responsibility to maintain order by addressing any individual who is disruptive or unruly during a meeting.

If a reserve Councillor has been nominated by Council, it should be noted that this is not a formally recognised role. While the reserve Councillor may attend and participate in meetings, they do not hold official standing unless the Chair or nominated Councillor representative is absent or otherwise unavailable. In the instance that the Chair is unavailable, the reserve Councillor may be required to chair committee meetings and perform other duties on behalf of the Committee as appropriate.

2.2. Attendance and Quorum

- a. Members who are unable to attend a meeting should submit their apologies to the Committee Chair.
- b. If a member anticipates being absent for three or more consecutive meetings and wishes to retain their membership, they should request a leave of absence. If a member misses three or more consecutive meetings without applying for a leave of absence, the member will be withdrawn from the committee.
- c. Leave of absence requests must be submitted to the Committee Chair and will be presented to the Committee for a decision.
- d. The Committee shall not unreasonably deny a leave of absence request.
- e. A quorum must be achieved for a meeting to commence. A quorum is at least 50% of each member category present, as detailed in the following table: (Please use the table below as a guide and tailor to your committee)

Total Members in a Category	Minimum Required for Quorum
4 Councillor Representatives	2 must be present

3. Meeting Guidelines

- a. Meetings will be held monthly.
- b. Meetings will be limited to a duration of two (2) hours.
- c. Meetings may be conducted in person and/or online.
- d. The Committee will operate in an advisory capacity to Council. While the Council values the Committee's contributions and input, it is not a decision-making body. Council considers information from a broad range of stakeholders before making decisions.
- e. The Committee does not have the authority to direct Council Officers in their duties.

- f. Committee members shall not publicly comment on behalf of the group or advocate for the interests of individual organisations. The Chair may make public comments, in line with Council's Media Policy.
- g. Council will provide the necessary support for the Committee's effective functioning, including maintaining member contact details, preparing and distributing agendas, minutes, and pre-meeting materials.
- h. The CEO and Head of Governance are invited to attend all Panel Meetings.
- i. The Responsible Officers for each policy or terms of reference will be invited to the Panel meetings to discuss their reports.

4. Agendas and Minutes

A standardised agenda template and minutes template must be used for all Committee meetings. These templates will be provided by Governance to ensure consistency and accuracy in meeting documentation.

Each Committee must designate a dedicated Council staff member to be responsible for preparing agendas and recording minutes. Agendas and minutes must be distributed to Committee members in a timely manner.

The staff member responsible for preparing agendas and minutes, in consultation with the Chair, will determine agenda items, focusing on matters relevant to Council policies, programs, and strategic objectives.

Minutes are presented to Council for receiving and to consider adopting any recommendations made by the committees. The dedicated person for recording minutes must ensure accuracy of minutes prior to presentation to Council.

To ensure transparency in Committee operations, Advisory Committee Minutes will be published in the Council Meeting papers.

5. Conflicts of Interest

Committee members are required to disclose any Conflict of Interest in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*. If a Committee Member has a general conflict of interest (as defined in *Section 127 of the Act*) or a material conflict of interest (as defined in *Section 128 of the Act*) regarding an item under discussion, they must disclose it to the Chair. If a Conflict of Interest arises, the member must take the following steps:

- a. Formally declare the conflict to the Chair and clearly outline the nature of their interest before the matter is discussed at the meeting.
- b. Leave the room or online meeting and refrain from participating in any discussion or decision making related to the matter.
- c. The disclosure and the actions taken must be recorded in the meeting minutes to ensure transparency and accountability.

Should the Chair declare a Conflict of Interest, a nominated Councillor Representative will assume the Chair for that item.

6. Confidentiality and Privacy

Any information discussed, received, used, or created by the Committee should be treated as confidential. Committee members must not disclose any information they know or should reasonably know is confidential, in accordance with *Section 125* of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Members are also prohibited from disclosing, recording, retaining, or reproducing confidential information in any form.

If the meeting is held online, or in a hybrid format (both online and in person), the Chair must seek confirmation from online attendees that they are joining from a confidential space where no one, other than them, can see or hear proceedings of the meeting.

In cases where confidential information is recorded in the minutes and necessary to provide context for a specific component of the minutes, it must be redacted before distribution or publication to ensure privacy and compliance with confidentiality requirements.

The Council may appoint members to a Committee without publicly disclosing their names if doing so could reasonably be expected to endanger their life or physical safety. In such cases, their names will be redacted from publicly available documents, including meeting minutes.

7. Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed at the commencement of each Council term to ensure they remain relevant, effective, and aligned with the needs of the Committee and stakeholders. Council may also review and amend the Terms of Reference as necessary to reflect changing circumstances.

The master document is controlled electronically. Printed copies of this document are not controlled. Document users are responsible for ensuring printed copies are valid prior to use. If printing, please think about whether you need to print in colour.