

9.1 COMMITTEE FRAMEWORK POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATE

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Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Committee Framework Policy (**Appendix**)

Horsham Rural City Council Committee Structure (**Appendix**)

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to detail an internal review of Council's Committee Framework Policy and Structure and recommend changes based on that review.

Summary

- When the Committee Framework Policy was adopted, Council requested that a follow-up review of the new Committee structure occur after implementation of the policy.
- This review was undertaken in April 2024
- Recommendations from the review have identified minor changes to the Committees Framework Policy and Structure that reflect current practice and changes that have evolved in the committee structure since 2022.
- A number of operational recommendations have also been identified that will improve the flow of information, compliance with processes and improve the functioning of Advisory Committees and Community Reference Groups.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Adopt the revised Committee Framework Policy (**Appendix**).
2. Adopt the revised Horsham Rural City Council Committee Structure (**Appendix**).
3. Approve the Strategic Planning Expo as part of Council's annual strategic planning process.

REPORT

Background

In 2021, following the implementation of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council officers undertook an extensive review of Council's Committee Structure to ensure it complied with the new Act. The review was conducted over a 12-month period and resulted in the adoption of a new Committee Framework Policy and Committee Structure in December 2021.

Discussion

When the Committee Framework Policy was adopted, Council requested that a follow-up review of the new Committee structure occur post implementation of the policy. This review was undertaken in April 2024 with the following scope:

Included in the scope:

- IAP2 level of engagement – Consult (internal).
- The review focused on Committees established by Council.
- Internal review and reflection of the new committee structure post 2022 implementation with a view to implementing continuous improvement and refinement.
- Consideration of the Annual Strategic Expo outcomes and links to formal committee structure.
- Provide recommendations for changes to the Committee Framework Policy and Structure.
- Update Committee Framework Structure and website post review and approval by Council.

Out of scope:

- The review did not consider Committees established in accordance with government legislation i.e. Community Asset Committees, Delegated Committees and Regulatory Committees.
- Review of current Terms of Reference and templates.

The engagement undertaken as part of the review included the following:

1. Internal survey of Council officers who resource the current Advisory Committees and Community Reference Groups, namely:
 - Aerodrome Advisory Committee
 - Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal Advisory Committee
 - Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange Advisory Committee
 - Older Persons Advisory Committee
 - Disability Advisory Committee
 - Natimuk Economic and Social Plan Project Advisory Committee
 - Horsham City Centre Central Activity District (CAD) Community Reference Group.
2. Focus group discussion with Council contact officers for Council owned or managed Recreation Reserves and Halls to assess effectiveness of liaison with community users of Council assets
3. Review of Merit system and number of requests received from community users of Council assets (preferred method of contact)
4. Review of Strategic Planning Expo – Outcomes report.

The above review identified a number of recommendations to update and improve Council's Committee Framework Policy and Structure. Of the fourteen recommendations, five recommendations require changes to the Community Framework Policy and Structure (recommendations 1,2,4,12 and 13) while the remaining nine are operational in nature.

Recommendations for consideration

Annual Expo

Council's Committee Structure currently includes the annual Strategic Planning Expo (as approved by Council at the 27 June 2022 meeting). An Expo has been held in 2022 and 2023 thus far, engaging with over 450 people annually. The Engagement Report from each Expo has provided input to Council's annual Council Plan development process. A 2024 Expo is currently in the planning phase with the event expected to be held in August.

Recommendation 1. The Expo continues as a recognised element of Council's Annual Strategic Planning process.

Recommendation 2. Remove reference to the Expo in the formal Committee Structure and Committee Framework Policy.

Advisory Committees

Recommendation 3. Aerodrome Advisory Committee to reform following adoption of the Aerodrome Master Plan in 2024. New Terms of Reference to be established.

Recommendation 4. Remove reference to Arts and Culture Advisory Committee. This Committee was not formed following the adoption of the Creative Horsham Strategy which recommended activity/project-based groups to be established as required (in-line with Council's Community Reference Group structure).

Recommendation 5. Council Officers cannot be the Committee Chair as they are ex-officio members of, and provide secretariat support for, the Committee.

Recommendation 6. Consideration be given for the relevant Director to be an ex-officio member of each Advisory Committee.

Recommendation 7. A formal induction process to be provided for all new community members on Advisory Committees.

Recommendation 8. Ensure each Committee's Terms of Reference includes reference to a regular review of those Terms.

Recommendation 9. Advisory Committee members to attend a Council briefing – minimum one meeting per year.

Recommendation 10. Improve IT storage solutions for, and access to documents by, Committee members so that Agendas, Minutes and other documentation can be managed electronically.

Recommendation 11. Administrative support to be provided to Committees in relation to governance matters (eg: ownership of policy, website updates, recruitment of members, compliance with Terms of Reference) facilitated through the Council officer representative with support from the governance team.

Community Reference Groups

The Central Activity District Community Reference Group is the only currently active CRG. There are no recommendations for changes to the Policy in relation to these groups.

Recommendation 12. The Structure diagram be updated to remove non-active Community Reference Groups and add the Horsham City Centre Central Activity District (CAD) Community Reference Group.

Autonomous Community User Groups

The 2021 review changed Recreation Reserve Advisory Committees to autonomous user groups with access to Council Officers for concerns/issues.

Recommendation 13. Remove reference to autonomous community user groups from the Committee Framework Policy and Structure as they are not part of the Council's formal committee structure.

Recommendation 14. Clearer identification of correct contact points in Council for users of Council facilities:

- Facility Development – ROSP – include email and phone number- Maintenance – Customer Request on-line and Customer Service/Building Maintenance Team for urgent requests
- Bookings – specific for each facility

This information to be provided on updated webpages for each of the Recreation Reserves.

Options to Consider

Council could opt not to accept the recommendations resulting from the review of the Committee Policy and Structure but should note the review was requested when the policy was adopted.

Sustainability Implications

There are no implications regarding sustainability.

Community Engagement

This was an internal review so no community engagement undertaken. The recommended changes to the Committee Framework Policy and Structure will not impact external representatives on Council Advisory Committees or Community Reference Groups

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The review of the Committee Policy and Structure plus associated recommendations demonstrate Council's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement.

Collaboration

The review required direct collaboration with key Council staff.

Financial Implications

The review was undertaken within existing resources.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Local Government Act 2020

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2021-2025 Council Plan:

Goal 1 – Community

- 1.1 Contribute to building a vibrant, diverse and resilient community
- 1.3 A community that is empowered in shaping the future of our region

Goal 5 – Leadership

- 5.1 Good governance through leadership and connection with community
- 5.3 High organisational standards focussing on continuous improvement

Risk Implications

N/A

Conclusion

Major changes to Council's Committee structure were implemented with the 2021 review. The proposed changes to the Committee Policy Framework and Structure reflect current practice noting the changes that have evolved since the last Committees Review in 2021.