

ITEM 13 POLICY REVIEW: RECRUITMENT OF EXTERNAL MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES

This report presents the *Recruitment of External Members to Committees* policy to Council for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

Council adopt the Recruitment of External Members to Committees policy.

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Clare Phelan, Manager Governance and Information (Acting)

Authorised by: Kylee Cowgill, Director Corporate Services – Connected and Engaged City (Acting)

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Draft revised Recruitment of External Members to Committees policy

BACKGROUND

Council conducts rolling reviews of its policies to ensure that every term of Council has opportunity to review each Council policy. The *Recruitment of External Members to Committees* policy was reviewed in line with this schedule of rolling reviews. The policy remains consistent with its objectives to inform staff, Councillors, community and external bodies of the procedures that are followed during a recruitment process for the appointment of external or community members to Council's committees, reference groups or other external bodies.

Recommended changes to the policy include:

1. Clarifying that the policy includes reference group members; and
2. Inclusion of consultation with councillor members on committees when filling casual vacancies.

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Wollongong 2022 goal "We are a connected and engaged community".

Community Strategic Plan Strategy	Delivery Program 2012-17 5 Year Action	Annual Plan 2016-2017 Annual Deliverables
4.4.4 Policies and procedures are simplified to ensure transparency and efficiency	4.4.4.1 Ensure policies and procedures are regularly reviewed, updated and promoted	Conduct rolling review of Council's policy register

CONCLUSION

The policy has, to-date, worked effectively when recruiting for Council's committees and reference groups and is recommended for adoption.



RECRUITMENT OF EXTERNAL MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES COUNCIL POLICY

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: [TO BE COMPLETED BY CORP SUPPORT]

BACKGROUND

This policy has been developed in order to set out the procedures concerning appointments of external or community representatives to Council's committees or external bodies such as the Joint Regional Planning Panel, that require a nomination, application or expression of interest to be lodged as part of a merit based recruitment process and, where appropriate, Council approval.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to inform staff, Councillors, community and external bodies of the procedures that are followed during a recruitment process for the appointment of external or community members to committees, or external bodies.

Compliance with the procedures outlined in this policy will ensure consistency in the manner in which appointments are made based on the needs of individual committees and ensure Councillors are provided with the relevant information required to undertake their decision making processes.

POLICY STATEMENT

Council is committed to:

- connecting and engaging with its community by encouraging participation on committees and
- good governance of the Council, to ensure the people of Wollongong receive the services that they need in an effective and efficient manner, delivered with honesty and integrity
- maintaining integrity and earning the trust of its community
- ensuring recommendations for appointments to committees, and external bodies will be made from eligible applicants based on merit, according to the relevant needs and established selection criteria
- regular review of appointments to its committees to ensure membership retains adequate experience and knowledge.

Wherever reference is made in this policy to "committees" it can be taken to include reference groups.

POLICY REVIEW AND VARIATION

- 1 Council is to have opportunity to review and adopt, at least once during its Term, each Council policy.
- 2 A resolution of Council is required to adopt any variations to this policy, with the exception of minor administrative changes, such as updates to legislative references, which may be endorsed by the Executive Management Committee (EMC). Endorsement of administrative changes made to this policy by EMC does not alter the requirement for it to be reviewed and adopted by each Term of Council.

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STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES

Purpose

The procedure covers the need to develop criteria, advertising, membership of assessment panel, reporting to Council and the provision of information on candidates to Councillors, to enable an informed decision making process.

Scope

The procedure applies to staff, Councillors, committee members and external bodies requiring Council representation.

Responsibilities

Divisional Managers are responsible and accountable to ensure that this procedure is implemented in their areas of responsibility.

Middle Management/Coordinators/Supervisors will ensure that this procedure is implemented and communicated to staff responsible for conducting the recruitment and appointment process.

PROCEDURE

Appointment Process

When starting a recruitment process for appointments, the following must be considered:

- **Tenure** The length of the appointment.
- **Urgency** How soon the position needs to be filled.
- **Selection Criteria** The level of knowledge, skills and experience required of members and which of these are these essential and which are desirable.
- **Expressions of Interest** The rules and guidelines are applicable to members and if there are any specific expectations required of applicants such as completion of an Expression of Interest form.
- **Appointment** The requirements for ratification of the appointment under the committee or external body's charter. For example whether appointments are approved by the General Manager, committee members, staff or are ratified by Council.

Criteria

It is essential that relevant selection criteria is developed, meeting the requirements of each committee.

The criteria should cover the knowledge, skills set and experience required of appointments. If appointing more than one position, consideration is to be given to whether the knowledge, skill set and experience of members should be the same or if a combination of these factors is required or preferred.

Advertising

Consideration is to be given as to where advertising is to be placed. If local applicants only are required then only local advertising is required. If local applicant location is not required as a criterion, advertising should also be placed in a Sydney metropolitan publication and/or other suitable online publications.

The procedure for placing any advertisement is to be undertaken according to procedures consistent with Council's *Placement of Newspaper Advertisements on Behalf of Council Policy*.

Transparency and accountability

Transparency and accountability throughout the recruitment process for all merit-based appointments, whether remunerated or not, is fundamental to good governance and adequate records must be maintained by assessment panel members. This contributes to building the community's trust and confidence in Council.

Panel members are accountable for their conduct and performance throughout the recruitment process and compliance with applicable Council policies and procedures will be monitored. Council staff and panel members

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must make and keep full and accurate records of any official recruitment activities. Good record keeping assists in improving accountability and provides for transparent decision-making. Records and notes made throughout the process are maintained as evidence of this compliance.

All recruitment processes are to be carried out lawfully, fairly, reasonably and professionally.

Assessment panels

Assessment Panels should consist of at least three members, being:

- Current chair of the committee (or other Independent Member where the Chair is not able to participate or it is not appropriate for the chair to participate)
- Councillor delegates to committee
- Director, senior manager and/or other staff member from relevant division/s

Where appropriate, an external independent person may be requested to participate on a selection panel.

The final determination for the composition of the assessment panel lies with the relevant division manager. Where it is considered that less than three panel members are required, the division manager's approval must be obtained.

Conflict of interests

Panel members must sign a declaration stating they have no actual, perceived or potential conflict of interests in the assessment process prior to the initial assessment of applications, wherever possible.

Where a conflict of interests arises with a panel member at any stage in the process, they must declare the conflict and withdraw from the assessment process or declare the conflict, state how it will be managed and have this approved by their division manager or the public officer in the case of a committee member declaring the conflict.

Panel members must decline any invitation to act as a referee for any applicant.

Confidentiality

Information received from applicants during a recruitment process will be treated as confidential and will be maintained in accordance with Council's *Privacy Management Plan*. Information received from applicants is for use during the recruitment process for the purpose of assessing applications. Intended recipients of the information are assessment panel members, relevant Council staff and Councillors.

Assessment of applications

Where an assessment of applications is required, all assessment panel members should meet together to conduct the initial assessment of the applications received. Panel members must keep adequate evidence of the assessment process, either by scoring of candidates against the selection criteria and/or by recording reasons applications were either considered suitable or not suitable, for example where obvious conflict of interests exist to exclude an applicant. Notes of the reasons candidates were considered not suitable are to be made and kept as an official Council record of the process, for example if they did not meet criteria, details of conflict of interests, received low scores against criteria or other reasons.

Based on the assessment of applications and the requirements of the committee's Charter, assessment panel members may:

- Approve the appointment of independent members to the committee; or
- Conduct interviews of shortlisted applicants, where appropriate and appoint; or
- Make a recommendation on preferred applicant/s for appointment, with or without conducting interviews, to be ratified by Council.

Interviews

Where it is determined that interviews are to be held, the panel should also determine weightings for the selection criteria and develop interview questions against those criteria when they meet to conduct the initial assessment.

Adequate notes of responses made by applicants to each question must be made by panel members during interviews.

After interviews have been completed and the preferred applicant determined, the interview rating sheet is to be completed and signed by all panel members. The interview rating sheet must also nominate and rank the suitability

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of applicants, as the recruitment process can be used if required to appoint the next most suitable applicant if a vacancy occurs on a committee within a period of 12 months from the recruitment closing date.

Referee checks

Where required as part of the assessment process, referee checks are generally to be conducted by the independent member (usually the committee chair) of the panel.

Where a formal qualification is required as part of the selection process, the assessment panel members must verify the qualification is held.

Feedback provided to applicants

Where feedback is requested by applicants, the assessment panel member/s providing feedback should make notes of what was asked and what information was given to the applicant. This forms part of the official Council record and should be entered into the appropriate records container.

Feedback received from applicants

Any feedback received from applicants forms part of the official Council record and should be entered into the appropriate container in TRIM.

Reporting recommendations for appointment to Council

Where the committee's charter requires appointments to be ratified by Council, reports are to be prepared for the consideration of the Council.

Panel members should prepare a confidential information note to Councillors to accompany the report, summarising and scoring each application against the selection criteria for each applicant. A full summary of the application of the recommended applicant/s, showing their suitability for the role, including any qualifications, experience or other (non-personal) information should be included with the confidential information note to Councillors. Where it is considered appropriate, a councillor briefing may be requested. Such information on the successful applicant remains confidential until such time as an appointment is made by Council.

Where applicants do not meet the essential criteria or the panel members believe a ~~fatal~~ conflict of interests exists that would exclude the applicant from consideration, these should be listed in the confidential note with a summary of why the application did not meet the selection criteria or provide details of the ~~fatal~~ conflict of interests.

The Panel's preferred applicant/s should be listed in the 'Recommendation' section of the report to Council, however the final decision on any appointment/s is at the discretion of Councillors at a meeting of the Council.

Casual vacancies

Casual vacancies may be filled by the General Manager in consultation with the chair and councillor members of the committee and advice be provided to Council.

Induction of Successful Applicant/s

The induction of new appointees to Council's Committees should include, as a minimum, copies of:

- Code of Conduct
- Conflict of Interests policy
- Organisational chart
- Key contact details
- Use of Confidential Information policy
- Relevant committee charter
- Meeting timetable/next business paper (where available)
- Annual Report
- Wollongong 2022 Community Strategic Plan
- Pecuniary Interest Declaration Primary Return (where appropriate) – to be lodged within three months from appointment

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Planning and Policy Impact

This policy contributes to the Wollongong 2022 Objective '*our local Council has the trust of the community*' under the Community Goal '*we are a connected and engaged community*'.

Associated Policies

- Codes of Conduct
- Conflict of Interests
- Privacy Management Plan
- Placement of Newspaper Advertisements on Behalf of Council Policy

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SUMMARY SHEET	
Responsible Division	Governance and Information
Date adopted by Council	[To be inserted by Corporate Governance]
Date of previous adoptions	27 May 2013, 15 December 2014
Date of next review	December 2020
Responsible Manager	Manager Governance and Information
Authorised by	Director Corporate Services