

Guidelines for Meeting Practice - Standing Committees and Strategic Advisory Committees

October 2024



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Introduction

1 Scope

- 1.1 This Guideline applies to Strategic Advisory and Standing Committees established by resolution of Council.
- 1.2 This Guideline does not apply to CN's Legislative Committees or Special Purpose Committees.

Members

2 Election of Councillor Members

- 2.1 Council will elect Councillor Members at the commencement of each Council term or when a Councillor membership becomes vacant, by resolution of Council.

3 Appointment of Chairperson

- 3.1 The Chairperson will be appointed by Council resolution from among the Councillor members.
- 3.2 Where a Committee operates under a Co-Chairperson model, as determined by the Committee terms of reference, the election of a Co-Chairperson will take place at the first meeting of the Committee in a new Council term, and then re-elected annually based on preference resolved by the Committee (eg. annually or for a Council term):
 - a) The Facilitator will administer the Co-Chairperson election.
 - b) If there are more than two nominees for the Co-Chairperson position, the nominee receiving the lowest number of votes will be eliminated and a further round of voting will take place to elect the Co-Chairperson. This process will continue until a nominee is elected.
- 3.3 If the Chairperson is absent from a Committee meeting, a Member of the Committee will be nominated by the Committee to chair the meeting.
- 3.4 In the case of resignation or termination of membership of the Chairperson and/or Co-Chairperson a new Chairperson or Co-Chairperson should be appointed in accordance with this clause.

4 Appointment of Stakeholder Organisation representatives

- 4.1 The appointment of Stakeholder Organisation representatives will:
 - a) Seek to achieve a mix of skills to facilitate the sound functioning of the Committee; and
 - b) Have expertise relevant to the Committee's terms of reference.
- 4.2 The Chairperson, with the assistance of the Facilitator, will identify relevant Stakeholder Organisations to be represented on the Committee, prior to the first Committee meeting of the new Council term.
- 4.3 The Facilitator will invite the identified Stakeholder Organisation to nominate a representative for membership of the Committee in writing to the Facilitator. Any changes to the nominated representative should also be made in writing to the Facilitator.
- 4.4 If an appointed representative is unable to attend a meeting from time to time, the relevant Stakeholder Organisation may nominate an alternative representative to attend on their behalf, with prior written notice to the Facilitator. The Facilitator is to note the representative's absence and their alternate representative, at the Committee meeting for endorsement by the Committee, and recording in the meeting minutes.

5 Appointment of Community Representatives

- 5.1 The appointment of Community Representatives to the Committee will:
 - a) Seek to achieve a mix of skills to facilitate the sound functioning of the Committee; and
 - b) Seek to represent the diversity within and interests of the community.
- 5.2 Community Representatives will be appointed following a public Expressions of Interest (EOI) process prior to the first Committee meeting of the new Council term.
- 5.3 Written applications must be lodged with CN and address the selection criteria determined by the Chairperson and Facilitator of the Committee.
- 5.4 Applications will be assessed by the Chairperson and Facilitator of the Committee on merit according to the selection criteria in accordance with clause 5.1.
- 5.5 If more applications than positions are received, and deemed suitable for appointment as Community Representatives, offers of membership will be made to the top applicants and the remainder placed on an eligibility list.

6 Cessation or Termination of Membership

- 6.1 Membership will remain until:
 - a) The Member resigns in writing to the Facilitator, or
 - b) The membership is terminated; or
 - c) The day before the next scheduled local government election (or any such later date as determined by the Minister for Local Government).
- 6.2 Where there is a pattern of a Member's non-attendance at Committee meetings:
 - a) The Facilitator may discuss an option with the Member to relinquish their position on the Committee to allow for a more active member.
 - b) The Facilitator may terminate the membership of any Member where;
 - The Member's non-attendance occurs over three consecutive Committee meetings without prior notification of their non-attendance; or
 - The Member's conduct is inconsistent with the Committee terms of reference or the standards of CN's Code of Conduct.
- 6.3 The Facilitator will provide a warning to a Member prior to enacting clause 6.2 (b). This warning will be in the form of a meeting and in writing. It is at the discretion of the Facilitator in conjunction with the CEO to terminate membership. There is no appeal mechanism.
- 6.4 If the terminated Member was a:
 - a) Community Representative, the Chairperson in consultation with the Facilitator, will determine a replacement Member from the eligibility list where applicable. If not applicable, the Facilitator will commence a new EOI process in accordance with clause 5.
 - b) Stakeholder Organisation, the Stakeholder Organisation should nominate a replacement Member to the Committee in writing in accordance with clause 4.3.

Roles and Responsibilities

7 The Committee

- 7.1 The Committee is responsible for:
- a) Focusing on the Committee's interest areas, in accordance with the Committee's terms of reference;
 - b) Providing guidance, advice or recommendations to CN or Council; and
 - c) Consulting with key stakeholders to obtain subject matter expertise.
- 7.2 In carrying out its responsibilities, the Committee must at all times recognise that primary responsibility for management of CN rests with the Council and the CEO, as provided in the Act.
- 7.3 The Committee has no executive powers and cannot make decisions on behalf of CN. Furthermore, the Committee is not a committee delegated authority therefore it cannot exercise powers under s.355 of the Act.
- 7.4 Neither the Committee nor any of its Members may direct any CN staff member in his or her duties.
- 7.5 This Committee is not a CN committee as defined in section 260 of the Act, because its membership is not constituted solely by Councillors.

8 Members

- 8.1 Members are responsible for:
- d) Understanding the relevant legislative and regulatory requirements applicable to CN and specifically the Committee interest areas;
 - a) Being able to contribute the time needed to understand the Committee's business papers and to attend Committee meetings; and
 - b) Providing advice and feedback on matters brought before the Committee.
- 8.2 Members must conduct themselves in accordance with the standards of CN's Code of Conduct.
- 8.3 Conflicts of Interest must be declared and managed in accordance with the standards of CN's Code of Conduct. A record of a declared conflict of interest in the minutes is sufficient.
- 8.4 Pecuniary or significant, non-pecuniary conflicts of interest must be managed by the Member excluding themselves from the meeting during the discussion of the relevant agenda item. Such exclusion should be recorded in the minutes.
- 8.5 Members who are Community Representatives must also comply with CN's Volunteer Framework.

9 Chairperson

- 9.1 The Chairperson will officiate and conduct each meeting.
- 9.2 The Chairperson of the Committee may, if considered reasonably necessary and with the approval of the CEO, request external professional advice to allow the Committee to meet its responsibilities.
- 9.3 The CEO may facilitate, and provide the necessary financial resources, to engage the provision of any such external professional advice required.

10 Facilitator

- 10.1 The Facilitator will be a suitably qualified CN officer, appointed by the Executive Director.

10.2 The Facilitator is responsible for:

- a) Overseeing and be responsible for the functions of the Secretary;
- b) Accepting or rejecting (in consultation with the CEO) items of business;
- c) Ensuring Members are familiar with the committee terms of reference and the standards of CN's Code of Conduct;
- d) Facilitating discussion at committee meetings, provide input to meetings and be an active (non-voting) Member of the Committee;
- e) Focusing the Committee on its responsibilities outlined in the terms of reference and the meeting agenda items;
- f) Acting as the communication link between the Committee and CN;
- g) Managing the resources available to the Committee;
- b) Managing the performance of the Committee with the Chairperson;
- h) Where appropriate, liaising closely with the facilitators of CN's other committees to assist with the collaboration between committees, the sharing of information and the efficient and effective use of CN and committee resources; and
- c) Working closely with the Chairperson to administer the Committee, its meetings and performance.
- i) Reporting to Council any resolutions of the Committee requiring a decision which falls outside the functions delegated to the CEO, in accordance with clause 17.3.

10.3 The Facilitator position may be shared among a number of suitably qualified CN officers or be the same person.

10.4 The Facilitator may take on the role of a Secretary while performing their responsibilities as a Facilitator.

11 Secretary

11.1 The Secretary will be a suitably qualified CN officer appointed by the Facilitator.

11.2 The Secretary is responsible for:

- a) Preparing agendas;
- b) Maintaining membership and meeting attendance registers;
- c) Distributing business papers and taking minutes at Committee meetings;
- d) Publishing agendas, minutes and Committee business papers on CN's website;
- e) Booking meeting venues and organising the provision of any necessary equipment;
- f) Providing administrative assistance to the Facilitator; and
- g) Administering the EOI process or Community representatives on the Committee, in accordance with clause 5.

11.3 The Secretary position may be shared among a number of suitably qualified CN officers or be the same person.

Meetings

12 Meeting schedule

12.1 The Committee will meet at least four times per financial year or as otherwise resolved by the Committee. The Committee may amend the meeting schedule by resolution.

12.2 Meeting dates will be determined as follows:

- a) By resolution of the Committee at the last meeting of the preceding financial year for the following financial year, or if an election year till the end of a council term; and

- 12.3 In the first year of a Council term, the first meeting date of the Committee will be as is set out in the Terms of Reference or otherwise determined by the Chairperson and Facilitator, with subsequent meetings during the financial year to be resolved by the Committee at their first meeting.
- 12.4 Additional meetings may be scheduled by the:
- a) Chairperson;
 - b) Committee by resolution;
 - c) Council; or
 - d) Lord Mayor or CEO.
- 12.5 Unless otherwise resolved by the Committee, all meetings of the Committee will be closed to the general public.
- 12.6 Meetings may be cancelled by the Chairperson in conjunction with the Facilitator where there is no quorum, an emergency or in other circumstances determined by the Chairperson and/or Facilitator. In such circumstances, members will be advised in writing.

13 Attendance at meetings

- 13.1 In addition to Members, the following may be in attendance at any meeting of the Committee:
- a) The Lord Mayor or Deputy Lord Mayor (voting attendee);
 - b) Councillors not appointed as Members of the Committee;
 - c) CN staff; and
 - d) External personnel by invitation of the Committee.
- 13.2 The attendees in 13(b) to 13(d) do not have voting rights.

14 Quorum

- 14.1 A quorum is constituted by attendance of a majority of Members including at least one Councillor Member.
- 14.2 If a quorum is not achieved, an informal meeting may be conducted at the discretion of the Chairperson.

15 Meeting agendas and business papers

- 15.1 The Facilitator will ensure that notice of meetings, including the agenda and business papers, are provided to the Committee at least five business days prior to the day of the meeting.

16 Minutes

- 16.1 All Committee business will be properly minuted and recorded by the Secretary.
- 16.2 The draft minutes will be:
- a) Approved by the Facilitator;
 - b) Distributed to the Committee no later than 10 business days after the meeting; and
 - c) Approved by the Committee at the next meeting as final by resolution.
- 16.3 Minutes, once adopted by the Committee are to be:
- a) Managed in accordance with CN's Records Management Policy; and
 - b) Published on CN's website (ensuring CN meets its privacy obligations), unless the committee determines otherwise in accordance with clause 16.4.

16.4 At its first meeting, the Committee is to determine if adopted minutes should be placed on CN's website. Confidential and/or matters of a sensitive nature will be redacted from the published minutes at the discretion of the Chairperson or Facilitator.

17 Resolutions of the Committee

17.1 The Committee is expected to make decisions by open vote and record its resolutions in the minutes of the Committee meeting.

17.2 The CEO (or their delegate) may action resolutions as they deem appropriate in accordance with their individual delegations and authorisations.

17.3 A report to the Council for a decision will be required where resolutions fall outside the functions delegated to the CEO.

Reports to Council

18 When are reports to Council required

18.1 Reports to Council are required:

- a) To appoint Councillor members to the Committee, in accordance with clause 2.1;
- b) To appoint the Chairperson of the Committee, in accordance with clause 3.1;
- c) To adopt the meeting cycle in the first financial year of a council term in accordance with clause **Error! Reference source not found.**;
- d) To report annually on the performance of the Committee, in accordance with clause 19; and
- e) Where a Council resolution is required to enact a recommendation of the Committee, or where the Committee otherwise wishes to report information to the Council.

19 The Committee's Annual Report

19.1 The Chairperson with the assistance of the Facilitator is to complete the Committee's Annual Report (for the period July to June each year).

19.2 It is at the discretion of the Chairperson and Facilitator to provide the Committee's Annual Report in their preferred format, provided that the information contained within the template at **Annexure B**, is included.

19.3 The Committee's Annual Report is to be endorsed by the Committee at the final meeting of each financial year, prior to being reported to Council.

Public Comment

20 Official spokespeople

20.1 The Lord Mayor and CEO are the official spokespeople for CN, in accordance with CN's Media Policy, and no Members should speak to the media or members of the public on behalf of CN or the Committee.

Working Parties

21 Establishment and dissolution

21.1 Working parties are established by resolution of a Committee to investigate and make recommendations to the Committee on defined topics or carry out specific tasks.

21.2 When establishing the Working Party, the Committee's resolution should include:

- a) The terms of reference of the working party, using the template provided at **Annexure C**;
- d) The resources, if any, that the Committee will allocate to the Working Party;

e) Any other matters relevant to the Working Party.

21.3 A working party will cease to operate in accordance with the terms of reference.

22 Membership

22.1 The Committee will determine the number of members to the Working Party including:

- a) The number of Committee members;
- b) The number of other members.

22.2 Members will be invited to join the Working Party in writing by the Committee's Facilitator. Cessation or Termination of Membership

22.3 Clause 6 of these Guidelines apply.

22.4 Chairperson

- a) The Chairperson will be appointed by the Committee from among the Working Party members;
- b) The Chairperson will be:
 - i. A Councillor;
 - ii. If a Councillor is not a member of the working party, a member of the Committee; or
 - iii. If a member of the Committee is not a member of the working party, any other member of the working party.

22.5 Secretary

- a) The Secretary will be appointed by the Committee or Executive Director and may be a Working Party member or CN officer.
- b) CN officers appointed as Secretary will be members of the Working Party but will not be voting members.

23 Roles and Responsibilities

23.1 Clause Members are responsible for:8 to 112 of these Guidelines apply.

24 Meetings agendas, business papers and reports to Committees

24.1 The Chairperson and Secretary are responsible for scheduling meetings, including the agenda and business papers.

24.2 The Chairperson is responsible for reporting to the Committee as required, at least annually.

Annexure A Definitions

Act means the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW).

CEO means Chief Executive Officer of the City of Newcastle and includes their delegate or authorised representative.

References to the Chief Executive Officer are references to the General Manager appointed under the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW).

Chairperson means a Member appointed pursuant to clause 3 and includes **Co-Chairperson**.

City of Newcastle (CN) means Newcastle City Council.

Committee means the Strategic Advisory or Standing committee established by resolution of Council.

Community Representative means a Council Volunteer appointed to the Committee pursuant to clause 5.

Council means the elected Council.

CN Staff means employees of CN (including full time, part time, fixed term and casual) or Specific Talent Contractor who is engaged under a CN position description

CN Volunteer means an individual who gives their time to CN willingly for the common good and without financial gain.

Facilitator means a CN staff member appointed to fulfil the tasks set out in clause 10.

Legislative Committee means a committee required by legislation.

Member means each of the individuals appointed in accordance with clauses 3 to 6.

Secretary means a CN staff member appointed to fulfil the tasks set out in clause 11.

Special Purpose Committee means a committee established to advise on a particular subject area.

Stakeholder Organisation means a stakeholder organisation nominated by the Chairperson to be represented on the Committee, pursuant to clause 4.

Standing Committee means a committee that continues in existence across successive council terms to manage issues that are of ongoing importance to CN.

Strategic Advisory Committee means a committee established for the duration of a council term to focus on strategic issues that are relevant to the Council at that time.

Working Party means an informal subgroup of a Committee for the purposes of investigating and making recommendations on defined topics, to carry-out specific tasks and to provide guidance and advice to the Committee.

Annexure B Template - Committee Annual Report

[xx] Committee Annual Report



Foreword from the Chair

Facilitator to coordinate the forward in conjunction with the Chair (consider including photos of members – Approved Councillor photos are available on CN's website)

Membership

Include the following details:

- 1. Councillor Chairperson and Councillor member names (consider including photos)*
- 2. Summary of stakeholder and community members and a note that all members have been appropriately inducted [where relevant]*

Objective of the committee

List as per Terms of Reference

Summary of key items of business considered

This section is to be completed at the discretion of the Chairperson and Facilitator and should summarise business of the committee in the financial year.

Summary of key achievements

This section is to be completed at the discretion of the Chairperson and Facilitator and should summarise key achievements of the committee in the financial year.

This may include information about any Working Party established by the committee.

Summary of performance and governance

Date of Meeting	Quorum achieved	Members in attendance	Agenda circulated to members and published on CN's website	Declaration of conflicts of interest listed as agenda item	Minutes circulated to members, adopted by the committee and published on CN's website
DD month year (eg. 1 January 2022)	[Quorate/ Inquorate]	List names /positions of Councillors, stakeholder members and community members in attendance	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
DD month year (eg. 1 January 2022)	[Quorate/ Inquorate]	List names /positions of Councillors, stakeholder members and community members in attendance	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
DD month year (eg. 1 January 2022)	[Quorate/ Inquorate]	List names /positions of Councillors, stakeholder members and community members in attendance	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No

Annexure C - Template - Working Party Terms of Reference

[INSERT NAME] WORKING PARTY TERMS OF REFERENCE

ESTABLISHED BY [Insert Name of Committee]

PURPOSE

1. To provide [insert purpose].
2. [Add as required]

MEETING SCHEDULE & DISSOLUTION DATE

[Insert meeting schedule]

For example: Monthly, on the third Wednesday of the month commencing at 3.30pm

[Insert dissolution date] or [the working party is established for the duration of the Council term]

CHAIRPERSON

The [name] Committee appoints by resolution the Chairperson and Secretary for the Working Party.

MEMBERS

Chairperson - [name]

Secretary - [name]

Members - [names]

Document Control

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Related Document Information, Standards & References

Related Legislation:	Local Government Act 1993
Related Policies (Council & Internal):	CN's Code of Conduct
Related Procedures, Guidelines, Forms or documents:	Strategic Advisory and Standing Committees - Terms of Reference
Standards, Codes or other references:	CN's Volunteer Framework

Relevant Newcastle 2040 Theme/s

Term / Abbreviation
Liveable, Sustainable, Creative, Achieving Together

Version History

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Guidelines for Meeting Practice - Advisory Committees - v1- ECM: 6693583 Working Party Operating Procedures - v1 - ECM: 6815866