

Intent

Advisory committees are established to:

- Help maintain constructive public relations between Council and the community
- Assist Council in understanding current and changing community needs
- Provide options for Council to address community needs within available resources
- Inform decision making.

Scope

This policy applies to advisory committee members including Councillors, Tablelands Regional Council (TRC) staff and representatives.

This policy does not apply to standing committees, working groups, steering committees or project control groups (other committees).

Policy Statement

Advisory committees are responsible for providing feedback, advice and recommendations to Council. They are not decision-making bodies. Recommendations requiring Council adoption cannot be acted upon until endorsed by Council at an ordinary meeting.

1. Appointment of an advisory committee

An advisory committee is established by Council resolution under the Local Government Regulation 2012 (the Regulation). Council endorses the terms of reference for the committee.

- For skills or community representative-based committees Council will call for expressions of interest. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or delegate and Councillor Chair of the committee selects and appoints members from nominations received..
- For collaborative, agency-based committees Council will seek representation from applicable organisations or specialist personnel to participate.

2. Committee membership

- Committees shall have a minimum of three members excluding TRC representatives.
- Members are appointed for the term of the committee as defined within the terms of reference.
- Committee members may resign in writing from their position at any time.
- If a committee member resigns during the term of the committee, the advisory committee members may seek and approve a replacement for the remainder of the committee's term.
- A TRC officer will act as support person for an advisory committee including preparing agendas, taking and distributing minutes and preparing any reports to Council.
- If Council has not nominated a Chair of a committee, the committee shall appoint the Chair.
- Membership is voluntary and undertaken without expectation of any remuneration.

3. Conditions of membership

- Members have a duty to act honestly and in good faith, exercise reasonable skill, care and diligence in carrying out their duties, and not make improper use of information.
- Members are to work collaboratively towards the purpose of the committee as set out in the terms of reference.
- Differences in opinion should be raised respectfully.
- Membership may be revoked by the CEO for inappropriate conduct, misconduct or inability to carry out the committee's purpose.
- The Chair or responsible TRC officer may endorse the attendance of an alternative representative to attend a committee meeting if a member is unable to attend.
- If any member fails to attend three consecutive committee meetings, without reasonable excuse, their membership may be terminated and expressions of interest sought for a replacement.
- Members are to comply with this policy, the TRC Code of Conduct and endorsed terms of reference for the specific committee.
- Any public or media comment is subject to the TRC Media Policy. Committee members have an advisory role only and must not publicly seek to represent the views of Council or the committee.

4. Meetings

- A meeting can only occur if a quorum is present. A quorum will be determined to be greater than 50% of the members.
- Voting must be open by show of hands and a recommendation is decided by a majority of the votes of the members present.
- Non-member Councillors are entitled to attend meetings and be heard on matters on the agenda.
- Meeting minutes (or a committee report) will provide a record of discussion topics and any resolutions or recommendations.
- All written material associated with the committee is subject to the *Right to Information Act 2009* and may be made available to the public.
- All meetings are open to the public, unless a committee resolves that all or part of the meeting be closed to the public pursuant to section 254J(2) of the Regulation.

Chair responsibilities

- The Chair must ensure meetings and committee functions are carried out in accordance with this policy and the terms of reference for the specific advisory committee.
- The Chair must:
 - ensure the meeting is properly convened and conducted
 - welcome and introduce members and guests
 - keep individuals at the meeting focused on the topics being discussed and encourage all members to participate
 - give all members an opportunity to speak on each topic
 - ensure any non-member Councillor is heard in relation to a topic on the agenda
 - keep track of time
 - ensure meeting content is in accordance with the purpose of the advisory committee
 - ensure recommendations are relevant and understood by members
 - close the meeting.

Meeting agenda

An agenda must be prepared for each meeting and circulated to all members seven days prior to the meeting. Members may raise a topic not listed on the agenda in general business at the discretion of the Chair.

Non-member Councillors may propose a topic for inclusion on the agenda by giving notice of the topic to the Chair at least seven days prior to the meeting. The Chair shall have discretion to accept or reject that the matter be included on the agenda.

Meeting procedure

TRC may, by resolution, exempt an advisory committee from the requirement to take minutes of its proceedings pursuant to section 254G(1) of the Regulation.

If the advisory committee is required to take minutes, then:

- Minutes will be taken by a TRC officer in accordance with the requirements of the Regulation. Minutes are public documents and should reflect the actions supported by a vote and outcomes of the meeting.
- Draft minutes should be circulated to members and Councillors once approved by the Chair.
- Minutes should be presented to Council for noting and or action at the first available ordinary meeting.

If the advisory committee is not required to take minutes, then:

- Pursuant to section 254G(2)(b) of the Regulation, the responsible TRC officer will prepare a report to Council outlining the committee's deliberations and any advice or recommendations as soon as practicable after the end of each meeting (committee report).
- The draft committee report should be circulated to members and Councillors once approved by the Chair.
- The committee report should be presented to Council for noting and or action at the first available ordinary.

Any conflicts of interest that are declared by a member during the meeting shall be recorded in the minutes (or committee report) against the item of business to which it relates. A member with a conflict of interest must leave the room and not participate in the discussion or vote unless authorised to do so by resolution of the other members.

Any members of the committee who are Councillors must deal with conflicts of interest consistently with Chapter 5B of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

5. Recommendations to Council

- An advisory committee may resolve to make a recommendation to Council for further action or investigation.
- A committee cannot act on any recommendation without it being formally adopted or endorsed by Council, or by approval under a specific delegation from Council that provides for the CEO or delegate to give such approval.
- The responsible TRC officer will prepare a report to Council outlining the recommendation of the committee and officer assessment of that recommendation. The officer assessment may present alternative options to the recommendation of the committee for the consideration of Council.
- Council may resolve to act on a recommendation of the committee prior to the minutes being confirmed by the committee.

6. Insurance

The legal liability coverage provided by TRC's membership of LGM Queensland extends to provide legal liability coverage to members of committees established by TRC.

Advisory committees that have the benefit of the legal liability coverage need to be genuinely acting for and on behalf of Council and be genuinely supervised by and reporting to Council. Their status as TRC committees should not be conferred as a device to obtain the legal liability coverage provided by LGM Queensland for any functions or activities which are not genuine TRC functions or activities.

Advisory committees must act within the bounds of their terms of reference or members may be liable for their actions and may not be covered by TRC's insurance under LGM Queensland.

Context

TRC is committed to community engagement through the establishment of advisory committees to ensure the delivery of high quality, accessible and relevant services that reflect community need.

Alignment to Risk Register

This policy mitigates the following risks identified in the TRC Corporate Risk Register:

- COR5 – poor governance
- COR7 – inability to effectively engage with the community

Relevant Legislation

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- Local Government Regulation 2012
- *Right to Information Act 2009*

Related Documents

- Code of Conduct
- Community and Engagement Strategy 2019–24
- Community Engagement Policy
- Media Policy
- Terms of Reference for established Advisory Committees.

Corporate Plan Links

This policy aligns with the following Corporate Plan 2021– 26 themes:

- Our community is active, inclusive, connected and empowered.
- Our infrastructure is well planned, integrated and fit-for-purpose.
- Our organisation is progressive, efficient, transparent and collaborative.
- Our economy is growing, diverse, resilient and agile.
- Our environment is valued, managed and healthy.

Human Rights Commitment

Tablelands Regional Council has considered the human rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld) when adopting and/or amending this policy. When applying this policy, TRC will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights.

Responsibility

Council is responsible for the adoption, amendment and repeal of this policy and the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the development and amendment of any associated procedures and guidelines relevant to the policy.

This policy is to remain in force until otherwise amended or repealed by resolution of Council.

Adopted By	Council	Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer
Adopted Date	14 December 2023	Review Date	14 June 2024
Version	2	This policy repeals any previous versions.	