



1 BACKGROUND

Council's corporate decision-making process is based around a structure of two Standing Committees comprising three Councillors and the Mayor (Committees), a Standing Committee comprising all the Councillors (General Committee), and the Ordinary Meeting.

The rules for the conduct of Standing Committees is dictated by the Local Government Act and Council's Standing Orders.

Standing Committees can only deal with the subject matters for which they were formally established. Our Standing Committees deal with the following:

Planning & Environment Committee

Membership: Cr Brian Stockwell, Ingrid Jackson, Jess Glasgow and Tony Wellington

Areas of Responsibility:

The responsibilities associated with the functions of:

- Development Assessment Planning;
- Building and Plumbing;
- Strategic Land Use Planning; and
- Environment (including Sustainability and Natural Areas).

Services & Organisation Committee

Membership: Cr Joe Jurisevic, Frank Pardon, Frank Wilkie and Tony Wellington

Areas of Responsibility:

Those responsibilities associated with the functions of:

- Community Services (including Community Facilities, Libraries and Galleries, Waste Management, Environmental Health, Local Laws and Community Development);
- Infrastructure Services (including Infrastructure Planning, Design and Delivery, Asset Management, Civil Operations and Building and Facilities);
- Corporate Services (including Finance, ICT, Revenue Services, Procurement and Fleet and Property);
- Executive Services (including Governance, Customer Service, People and Culture and Community Engagement);
- CEO's Office and Economic Development.

Unless formal delegation of power by the Local Authority has been given, Standing Committees have no statutory powers and can only recommend on a course of action to the Council.

2 WHY THIS SYSTEM WORKS WELL

What distinguishes this system from other Local Government systems is:

- the relatively small number of Councillors on each Committee
- the levels of trust in Committee Councillors to operate on a whole of Shire approach
- the informality of the processes and the interaction between Councillors and staff
- consensus in preference to the majority decisions

Approximately 85% of all Council decisions are the result of a recommendation from the two Committees direct to the Ordinary Meeting. The more difficult and contentious issues are dealt with by the General Committee which consists of all Councillors.

3 THE PROCESS

Council programs and responsibilities are allocated between the two Committees. Based on a monthly meeting cycle, and under the direction of the CEO, items for Council consideration are placed on to the agenda of the appropriate Committee.

4 THE COMMITTEE CONVENTION FOR DEALING WITH ISSUES

A Committee has the choice to either -

- deal with an item by making a recommendation direct to the Ordinary Meeting of the Council,
OR
- decline to deal with an item, and refer it for inclusion on the agenda for the General Committee Meeting.

Committee Recommendation direct to Ordinary Meeting:

If all Committee Councillors, the Mayor and staff agree on a course of action, even if it may not be exactly the same as recommended on the Committee Agenda, the matter is usually directed straight to the Ordinary Meeting.

Exception:

If the magnitude or significance of the issue before the meeting is such that, notwithstanding unanimous support for a course of action, other Councillors need to be given an opportunity to speak on the issue, or alternatively, if the issue may warrant broader consideration by all Councillors.

Referred to General Committee

- where Committee Councillors are unable to reach a unanimous agreement on the proposed course of action for any issue,
OR
- where the Committee Councillors disagree with the course of action proposed by the staff (apart from minor changes),
OR
- upon request of a non-Committee Councillor,
OR
- where the issue is of significance and should be discussed with all Councillors.

The item should not be dealt with by the Committee, but referred to the General Committee.

Reports can only be referred directly to the General Committee when an issue arises which, due to timing, could not have been referred to a Committee or cannot wait until the next round of meetings.

5 ROLE OF NON-COMMITTEE COUNCILLORS

Any Councillor not a member of the Committee may request that a particular item be referred to General Committee.

In such instances, non Committee Councillors are encouraged to attend the Committee Meeting and raise their views with Councillors and staff in an effort to reach a consensus or understanding. If unable to attend the Committee meeting, the Councillor should brief the Committee Chair (on the concerns held) prior to the meeting.

Non Committee Councillors are welcome to observe at Committee Meetings however they should not assume the role of an extra Committee member. If attending as observers to the meeting, non Committee Councillors should not seat themselves at the meeting table.

6 REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO GENERAL COMMITTEE

If a Committee chooses not to deal with an agenda item and instead refer it to the General Committee, they shall indicate the reasons for the referral and those reasons shall be listed in the General Committee Agenda as a guide for all Councillors.

Likewise, a request for referral by a non-Committee Councillor must include the reasons for the referral to General Committee.

7 UNLISTED BUSINESS IS POOR GOVERNANCE

Items of business should not be dealt with by the Committee unless the item is listed on the agenda circulated to all Councillors.

Late reports should not be referred to the Committees, General Committee or Ordinary Meeting unless approved by the CEO. The CEO will discuss with the Mayor before referring any late reports to a Council Meeting. As a general rule, late reports will only be referred due to timing or emergent issues.