COUNCIL COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Christine Posgate |1/3/37-49 | #5830130

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. Schedule two Ordinary Meetings per month for the second and fourth Wednesday of each month;
2. Dissolve all Standing Committees and rescind associated Terms of Reference;
3. Continue with existing Advisory Committees and the Audit Committee with no change in their operations; and
4. That these changes become effective in the month of September 2018.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Consistent with the organisation ethos of continuous improvement, careful consideration has been given to the effectiveness of the current Committee structure. This report outlines those considerations and research undertaken. Two differing options have been identified which it is believed would improve the effectiveness of Council decision making:

Option 1 (Recommended)

- Two Ordinary Meetings per month scheduled for the second and fourth Wednesday;

Option 2

- One Planning and Environment Committee Meeting each month scheduled for the second Wednesday; and
- One Ordinary Meeting per month scheduled for the fourth Wednesday.

Option 3

- No change to existing arrangements

BACKGROUND:

Section 264 of the Local Government Regulation 2012 enables Council to establish Standing Committees and Special Committees which are generally constituted to deal with a particular area of Council’s jurisdiction or activities on an ongoing basis. These Committees may or may not have decision making capabilities depending on the
delegated operational powers under Section 257 of the *Local Government Act 2009*. Council’s Standing Committees are outlined below.

Section 264 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* also enables Council to also appoint Advisory Committees. The difference between a Standing Committee and Advisory Committee is twofold:

- Advisory Committees cannot have powers delegated to it hence they have no decision making capabilities;
- Advisory Committees are formed for specific purposes and are not Standing Committees – the purpose tends to have specific lifespan for example – Tobruk Pool Steering Committee, CPAC Steering Committee etc

The balance of this report only considers Council’s Standing Committees – it is not intended to consider Council’s Advisory Committees.

There is one other type of Committee – the Audit Committee and Council is required to have an Audit Committee by virtue of Section 105(2) of the *Local Government Act 2009*. The balance of this report does not consider the operations of Council’s Audit Committee.

**COUNCIL’S STANDING COMMITTEES:**

Consistent with a resolution of Council on 11 May 2016, Council operates with six standing Committees as follows:

- Planning and Environment Committee – full decision making delegation
- Governance Committee – no decision making delegation
- Water and Waste Committee – no decision making delegation
- Infrastructure Services Committee – no decision making delegation
- Community and Sport Committee – no decision making delegation
- Cultural Committee – no decision making delegation

The Planning and Environment Committee is chaired by the Deputy Mayor, comprises the Mayor and all of the Councillors and has full decision making delegation.

The other Committees are chaired by individual Councillors and comprise the Mayor and four other Councillors. These Committees do not have formal decision making delegation. The positions they arrive at in each meeting require further ratification at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council before they are binding.

Council’s meeting structure is as follows:

- Second Wednesday of each month – Planning and Environment Committee
- Third Wednesday of each month – all other Committees
- Fourth Wednesday of each month – Ordinary Meeting
MEETING TIMES:

Meetings are scheduled to commence at 9am on Wednesdays with agendas issued to Councillors on Friday afternoon prior to the meeting. No change is proposed to this timing.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITY:

The activity in each of the Committees over the past twelve months (July 2017 to June 2018) is outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>No Meetings</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Noting</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Environment</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and Waste</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure Services</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport and Community</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Committee</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE:

Consistent with the organisation ethos of continuous improvement, careful consideration has been given to the effectiveness of the current Committee structure. Some thoughts on the positives and negatives of the Committee structure are outlined below.

Advantages of Existing Committee Structure

- Given the timeframes associated with the Planning Act, it is preferable to have two decision making forums each month to ensure these timeframes are met. The Planning and Environment Committee and the Ordinary Meeting achieve this and are working well.
- Governance is of utmost importance to any public sector entity but particularly a local government. The Governance Committee arguably provides this focus on governance.
- Meetings are spread out over three Wednesdays each month which means there are three agendas, albeit smaller ones.

Disadvantages of the Committee Structure

- With the exception of the Planning and Environment Committee, the other Committees are all Standing Committees whose decisions on the day are not binding until ratified by the full Council at an Ordinary Meeting.
- With the exception of the Planning and Environment Committee, conflicts of interest need to be considered at the Committee meeting by Committee members and then again at the Ordinary Meeting by all Councillors prior to the matter being considered – in this regard it is very easy for a Councillor who is not a member of a Committee to inadvertently miss making a declaration at the Ordinary Meeting when the minutes of the Committee are being adopted.
With the exception of the Planning and Environment Committee, the need to ratify positions of Committees and consider conflicts of interest has seen a practice where all Councillors tend to attend Committee meetings which impacts on the available time of Councillors.

With the exception of the Planning and Environment Committee, the timing of Committee meetings sees them follow one after the other. Councillors are on some Committees and not others however the absence of a set time means it is easier to attend all meetings which impacts on the available time of Councillors.

Having more meetings as opposed to less impacts on officer time in terms of attendance.

The Committees which do not have full decision making delegation are still public forums however their decisions are not binding. This creates a layer of red tape from a public perception viewpoint ie “I thought this was already decided…."

Whilst having a Governance Committee arguably indicates a specific focus on governance (which is of the utmost importance), it could be equally argued that having a Governance Committee which comprises less than half of the Councillors is less than ideal as governance responsibilities should be the responsibility of all Councillors.

WHAT DO OTHER COUNCILS DO?

Outlined below is the outcome of research of other similar sized local governments. There is no consistency whatsoever. In fact, activities range from Sunshine Coast who have no Committees and one Ordinary Meeting a month to Logan which has eleven Committees with no decision making and an Ordinary Meeting each month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council</th>
<th>Ordinary / General</th>
<th>Committees</th>
<th>Status Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>No delegated authority, minutes ratified at Ordinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockhampton</td>
<td>Bi-monthly</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>No delegated authority, minutes ratified at Ordinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Full authority of Council to approved items within certain exemptions eg;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Contacts up to $2M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Adoption of Council policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Budget adjustments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morton</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>One standing Committee ‘Coordination Committee’ full council and conducted as part of General (Ordinary) meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>No delegated authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redlands</td>
<td>Bi-monthly</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OPTIONS:

For the reasons outlined above, consideration should be given to a different structure could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Council decision. Two options have been identified below along with the obvious third option:

Option 1

- Two Ordinary Meetings per month scheduled for the second and fourth Wednesday;
- All other Standing Committees are dissolved;
- There is no change to the existing Advisory Committees or Audit Committee.

Option 2

- One Planning and Environment Committee Meeting each month scheduled for the second Wednesday;
- One Ordinary Meeting per month scheduled for the fourth Wednesday;
- All other Standing Committees are dissolved; and
- There is no change to the existing Advisory Committees or Audit Committee.

Option 3

- No change to existing arrangements

Christine Posgate
General Manager Human Resources & Organisational Change