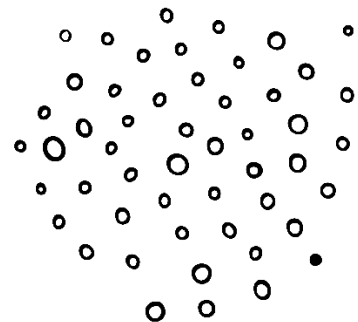




Governance Framework 2026



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References

1. Introduction

The Governance Framework ensures that the Town of Bassendean is compliant and accountable in how it manages its processes and relationships with stakeholders. We are committed to the principles of good governance as defined by the WA Public Sector Commission:

1. Roles and Responsibilities
2. Management and Oversight
3. Organisational Structure
4. Operations
5. Ethics and Integrity
6. People
7. Finance
8. Communication
9. Risk Management

Good governance is a set of responsibilities and practices, policies and procedures used by an agency's executive to provide strategic direction, ensure objectives are achieved, manage risks and use resources responsibly and in a transparent way.

The Town of Bassendean practices good governance by ensuring that the Town is legally and ethically compliant, that decisions are made in the interests of all stakeholders and that the Town behaves as a good corporate citizen.

The Governance Framework:

- provides clear guidelines for the roles of the Council, Chief Executive Officer, and employees and ensures that all responsibilities are properly allocated and discharged by those accountable
- develops a culture of best practice in relation to governance processes
- assists the Council and CEO in delivering good governance
- meets its compliance requirements
- enables processes throughout the Town by setting guidelines, and
- provides an induction tool for new employees.

For the Town to demonstrate good governance, there needs to be a clear understanding about responsibility and accountability. This Governance Framework has been produced to set out the roles of Council Members and the organisation, and their relationships, along with financial, legal and ethical considerations.

The Town's framework consists of four key principles required to achieve excellence in governance:

- Culture and Vision
- Roles and Relationships
- Decision-making and Management, and
- Accountability.

2. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Act	<i>The Local Government Act 1995</i>
Audit	A process by which an external auditor provides an independent opinion on financial statements and compliance with relevant legislation.
Business Unit	A work group of the organisation that consists of a Manager and employees that perform functions.
CEO	The CEO is responsible for managing the local government's administration and operations. The CEO is appointed by and directly accountable to the Council.
Code of Conduct	Sets out the expected standards of professional conduct.
Community	Those people who share the connection, interests, shared identity and feeling of belonging to the Town.
Committee Member	A member of a committee appointed by the Council but does not include a Council Member.
Corporate Management Committee	The CEO, Directors and key advisors.
Council	Council Members meeting as Council to govern the affairs of the Town as set out in the Act.
Council Member	An individual elected representative of a local government.
Committee	A Committee of Council established by Council under the Act and constituted by Council Members, employees or members of the public.
Council Meeting	A meeting of Council conducted in accordance with the Act.
Council Plan	The integrated Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan for the future of the Town.
Department	The Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety.
Director	A senior position in the organisation engaged by and directly responsible to the CEO.
District	The area of the State prescribed by legislation that a local government is required to control.

Elected Members	The Mayor and Council Members of the Town.
Employee	A person employed by the Town in accordance with the Act.
Local Government	A body corporate established under the Act.
Manager	An employee in the organisation directly accountable and responsible for a Business Unit of the organisation.
Mayor	A person elected by fellow Council Members to undertake the role of Mayor.
Natural Justice	The right to be given a fair hearing and the opportunity to present one's case, the right to have a decision made by an unbiased or disinterested decision maker, and the right to have that decision based on logically probative evidence.
Organisation	Includes employees of the Town, led by the CEO.
Regulations	The Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996.
Rules of Conduct	As per Division 4 - Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021
Stakeholders	Individuals and organisations that have an impact on the strategic direction and decision-making processes of the Town.
Long Term Financial Plan	Long-term financial plan summarising the financial impacts of the objectives and strategies in the Council Plan.
Town	The local government of the Town of Bassendean and includes the Council and the organisation.

3. Local Government Defined

Local government is the most local level of government within Western Australia, responsible for providing essential services and implementing local laws for a specific community, such as the Town. It operates at the grassroots level to meet local needs, with its powers and functions defined by the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Local governments are established as a body corporate and consist of an elected governing body, known as a council, and an administrative body led by a chief executive officer.

The Mayor and Council Members form the Council, and the following principles apply:

- Council Members are able to exercise decision-making authority as a member of Council after they are elected and formally sworn in and when they meet as a Council.
- All lawful decisions are made at Council meetings or through delegations that are formally made by Council to the CEO, an employee or a committee. The CEO can also sub-delegate decision-making authority to other employees, however not all decisions made by the Town require formal delegation.

The CEO is the only employee appointed by Council and is therefore ultimately accountable to Council. In this regard, the role of the CEO, as detailed in section 5.41 of the Act, includes, but is not limited to:

- causing council decisions to be implemented
- managing the provision of services and facilities that the council has determined the local government is to provide in the district
- determining procedures and systems for —
 - implementing the local government's policies as determined by the council, and
 - otherwise managing the local government's administration and operations.
- being responsible for the employment, management, supervision, direction and dismissal of other employees, and
- ensuring that records and documents of the local government are properly kept for the purposes of this Act and any other written law.

As the Council's principal advisor, the CEO:

- advises, and procures advice for, the council in relation to the local government's affairs and the performance of the local government's functions, and
- ensures that the council has the information and advice it needs to make informed and timely decisions.

3.1 Functions of Local Government

To consider the issue of good governance in the context of local government, it is also necessary to consider the functions of local government, which includes the following:

Planning and Monitoring achievement

Planning for the development and wellbeing of the community is a critical role for a local government. The Act requires local governments to develop and adopt a - 'plan for the future', which sets overall direction for the Town through long-term planning. Examples include the Town's Council Plan (providing the direction for the ongoing management of Town activities) and the Long Term Financial Plan.

Lawmaking and enforcement

A local government makes decisions in areas over which it has legislative authority but cannot duplicate or contradict federal or state law. Laws made by local governments are called local laws and cover such issues as activities permitted on public land, animal management and use of local government facilities. Local laws are enforced by employees of the Town. A local government is also responsible for enforcing other legislation under which it has authority.

Administrative

The Town has a range of responsibilities under State legislation and administers laws that affect a person's rights and interests. Decisions made by local governments must be based on relevant considerations and facts, be procedurally fair and follow the principles of natural justice.

Policy Development

Local Government policy development is a formal process to create high-level guidance providing a consistent framework for decision-making and operations, ensuring alignment with strategic goals and community expectations.

Representation

When Council meets it represents the views of the local government constituents on matters of concern to the community. Council Members represent the interests of electors, ratepayers and residents of the district. Council Members need to listen to and be interested in the wider community and not just the people in the ward who elected them.

Advocacy

Local governments have a role advocating on behalf of their community to other levels of government, statutory authorities and private interests whose activities may have an impact on the community.

Service Delivery

Local governments must ensure that services are delivered in the most efficient and effective manner. The Act provides a degree of autonomy to local governments to determine policies, in consultation with their communities, about the nature and level of services provided. A local government should ensure the delivery of quality services for which it has responsibility.

3.2 Community defined

An appreciation of the term community is integral to an understanding of what constitutes good governance at a local government level. When discussed in connection with good governance the term is often used as though it is a homogenous entity and presupposes that there is a single community interest, community demand or community need.

The population within the Town of Bassendean district consists of a diversity of communities, for example, the business community, the educational community, the visitor community and the resident community. These can be further broken down into subsets, for instance, the retail community, the developer community and the tenant community. Additionally, local communities can be defined by geographical area.

Often such diverse communities do not share the same aspirations, goals and interests. One of the challenges for all levels of government but particularly local government, is how to govern so that different, and often competing interests are recognised, addressed and managed.

When 'community' is referred to in this framework, it means the many groups, individuals and interests represented within the Town of Bassendean district.

4. Governance in Local Government

4.1 Definition of Governance

Whilst the definitions of governance can vary between the public and private sector, CPA Australia in its publication 'Excellence in Governance for Local Government' defines governance as follows:

'Governance is the process by which decisions are taken and implemented, the process by which organisations go about achieving their goals and producing their outputs and the process by which organisations are directed, controlled and held to account.'

Governance can be seen as encompassing:

- authority
- accountability
- stewardship
- leadership
- ethics and values, and
- culture.

Democratic governance occurs when governments govern as a result of being elected. Good democratic governance exists when a government governs for and on behalf of its community as a whole. This provides the democratic basis, which is essential to an understanding of good governance in the local government sector.

Good governance involves a focus on:

- a clear vision and positive organisational culture
- clarity of roles and responsibilities
- robust management practices and systems which support both internal and external accountability, and
- public access to decision-making and information.

4.2 Good Governance in Local Government

Good governance in local government is about ensuring the local government can manage its many complex responsibilities effectively and in the best interests of the community. When a local government practices good governance, the community is more connected and engaged, appropriate services are provided and there is more effective use of the local government's resources.

Good governance in local government combines the characteristics of good governance and the definitions and roles of local government. Good governance in local government requires the following:

- Councils being elected by, representative of, and accountable to the community.
- Council Members making decisions on behalf of and in the best interests of the community.
- Policies and programs reflecting the mandate local governments have been given by their electors.
- Policy enactment arising from the Council Plan with appropriate performance management to assess the local government's progress.
- Community participation in decision-making.
- Council Members providing leadership to the community and reflecting the community's collective aspirations.
- A management structure which implements the local government's goals in accordance with the local government's priorities and approved budget.
- Provision of services which meet the community's needs (sometimes in partnership with other levels of government, business or community organisations).
- Local government being well placed to facilitate coordination and integration at a local level.
- Cooperation between local governments and other spheres of government.

4.2.1 Good Governance in Practice

Good governance needs to be practised within the local government, and between the local government, the community and other levels of government. Key internal and external issues include:

Internal

- Effective and positive working relationships.
- Sound, relevant and timely advice.
- Advice is provided through reports, briefings, strategic sessions and other means of communication.
- Good processes that contribute to good decisions.
- Decisions are made that are clear, accountable and transparent.
- Council Members need timely and quality information in order to perform their role. Processes are required to meet the legitimate information needs of Council Members.

External

- To ensure that a local government and its community share a sense of direction and purpose, long term planning is vital. This must be done in a way that all stakeholders feel they have ownership.
- Performance management enables a local government to be accountable to its community. It assesses whether a local government has done what it said

it would do with the resources with which it has been provided, and within the defined time frames.

- Balancing 'community-wide' and sectional interests is central to democratic governance.
- Accountability of a local government to its community is a key factor in good democratic governance.
- Good governance means a community feels engaged, knows what is going on, is included in decision making, and feels part of the governing process.
- Informed decisions are based on well researched information, and some of the best information comes from the opinions of those who are affected by a decision or interested in an issue. Good consultation methods are needed to elicit these opinions.
- Another important aspect of good governance is community leadership. Sometimes local governments need to lead or influence communities on particular issues.
- Communities expect good services, systems and facilities to be planned and provided.

5. Governance Principles

For the purposes of the Town's Governance Framework, the principles contained in the 'Excellence in Governance in Local Government' developed by CPA Australia have been used. The principles provide the foundation for good governance and a means for assessing the extent to which good governance is occurring at the Town. Contained under each principle are a range of activities and actions put into operation at the Town to support that particular principle.

Principle One: Culture and Vision

There is a clear vision and a Council Plan that is produced through a comprehensive and inclusive process, which is owned by all sectors of the community. There is a positive culture and value system in place that promotes trust, openness and honesty, in which constructive, respectful questioning is encouraged, and accountability is clear.

Principle Two: Roles and Relationships

There is clarity about the roles within a local government and there exists an approach to defining and implementing these. There are effective working relationships that are promoted and supported within and between the Council Members, the CEO and the organisation.

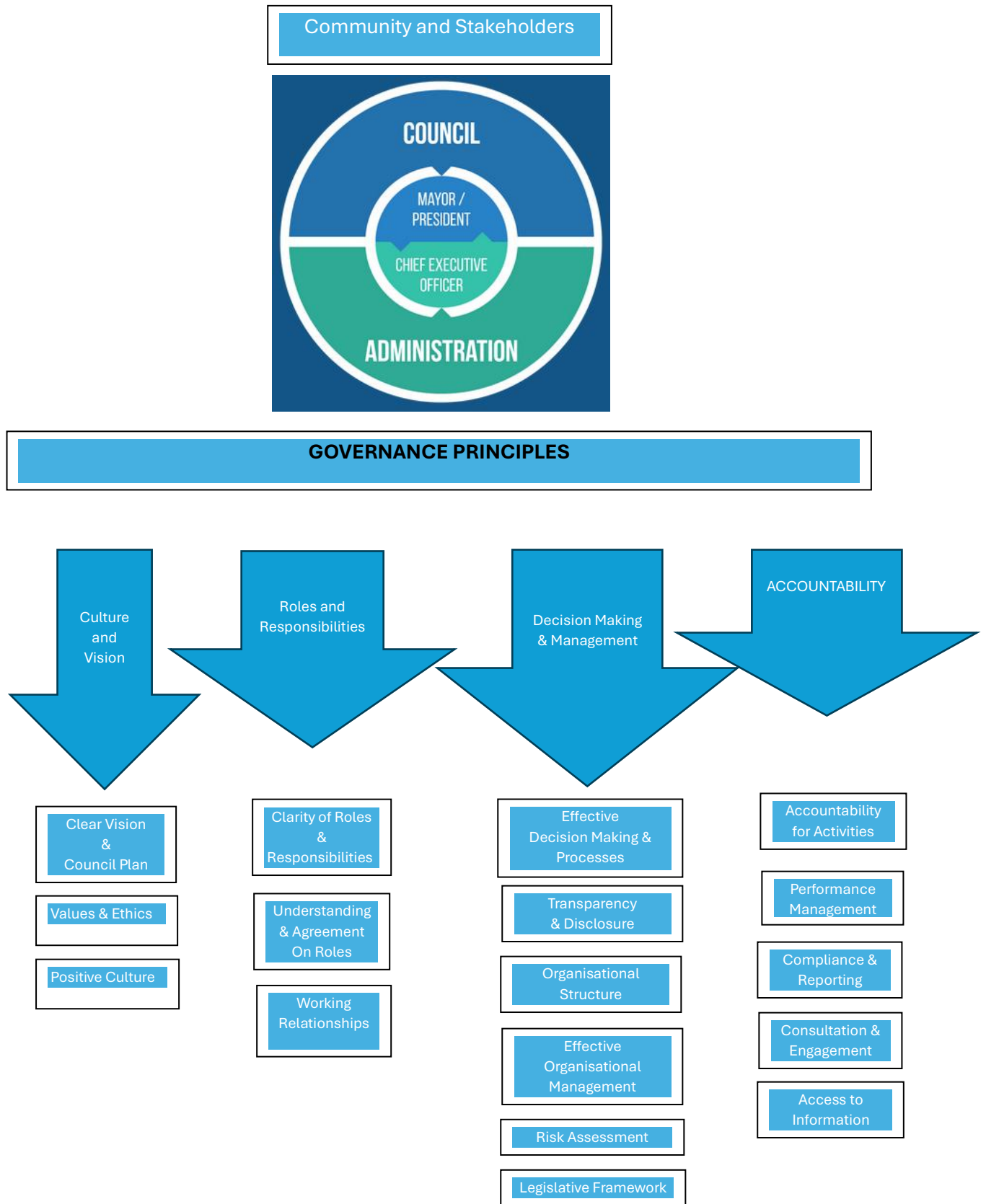
Principle Three: Decision-Making and Management

There are effective decision-making processes in place that reflect transparency and accountability, underpinning excellence in local government. An adequate organisational structure should be in place that serves the Town's operations and progresses the organisation towards the achievement of the Town's strategic objectives. There should be robust and transparent business management practices established and maintained to meet the Town's accountability to its community, particularly in terms of stewardship of community assets and finances, both now and into the future. An effective approach to the identification, assessment, monitoring and management of risks should be established and maintained. Effective delegations should be implemented and maintained to enable Council to focus on strategic issues.

Principle Four: Accountability

The Town must account for its activities and have systems and processes that support accountability. The Town should have an active performance management system in place that enables Council Members and employees to be openly accountable for their performance. The Town should establish internal structures that provide for independent review of processes and decision-making to assist it meeting its accountability to stakeholders. Consultation should be undertaken that is appropriate to the scope and potential impact of the matter. It should respect the position and opinion of all sections of the community. The outcomes of the consultation should be taken into account when the decision is made, and feedback should be provided to those who participated.

6. Governance Framework Diagram



7. Principle One: Vision and Culture

In response to the findings of the 2022 MARKYT Community Scorecard that received 1,125 responses, enabling Council and the Administration to understand and appreciate the needs and aspirations of community members, the Town developed the 2023-33 Council Plan, an integrated Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan.

7.1 Vision

7.1.1 Vision and Values

Our vision for the Town of Bassendean is to be a safe, healthy and inclusive community that respects and celebrates cultural heritage and diversity; a home by the Swan for everyone to enjoy.

We share responsibility for climate action and the adoption of sustainable practices to conserve and enhance our environment and natural heritage, including the Swan River ecological corridor, tree canopy, and nature reserves.

We accommodate population growth responsibly with sustainable development, housing diversity, and tree-lined streets. We value and respect our built heritage and have excellent social infrastructure.

Our town centre and precincts are vibrant and welcoming, supporting a diverse range of businesses and local employment opportunities. Community events, markets and other attractions help to draw visitors and connect the community.

Council effectively engages the community, makes well-informed, responsible and transparent decisions, embraces innovation and best practice, and maintains financial sustainability.

Our Values guide our behaviour and decision making as an organisation and how we strive to lead and serve our community.

People: Councillor, staff and volunteer contributions are vital in striving to meet our diverse community's aspirations and wellbeing.

Heritage: Preserving and communicating our shared history and heritage increases our capacity to balance today's needs with long-term interests of future generations.

Sense of Place: We recognise that maintaining our natural environment is crucial to our future. We acknowledge that our community requires Council to preserve and enhance our streetscapes, built and natural environment, and to protect the Swan River as our greatest asset.

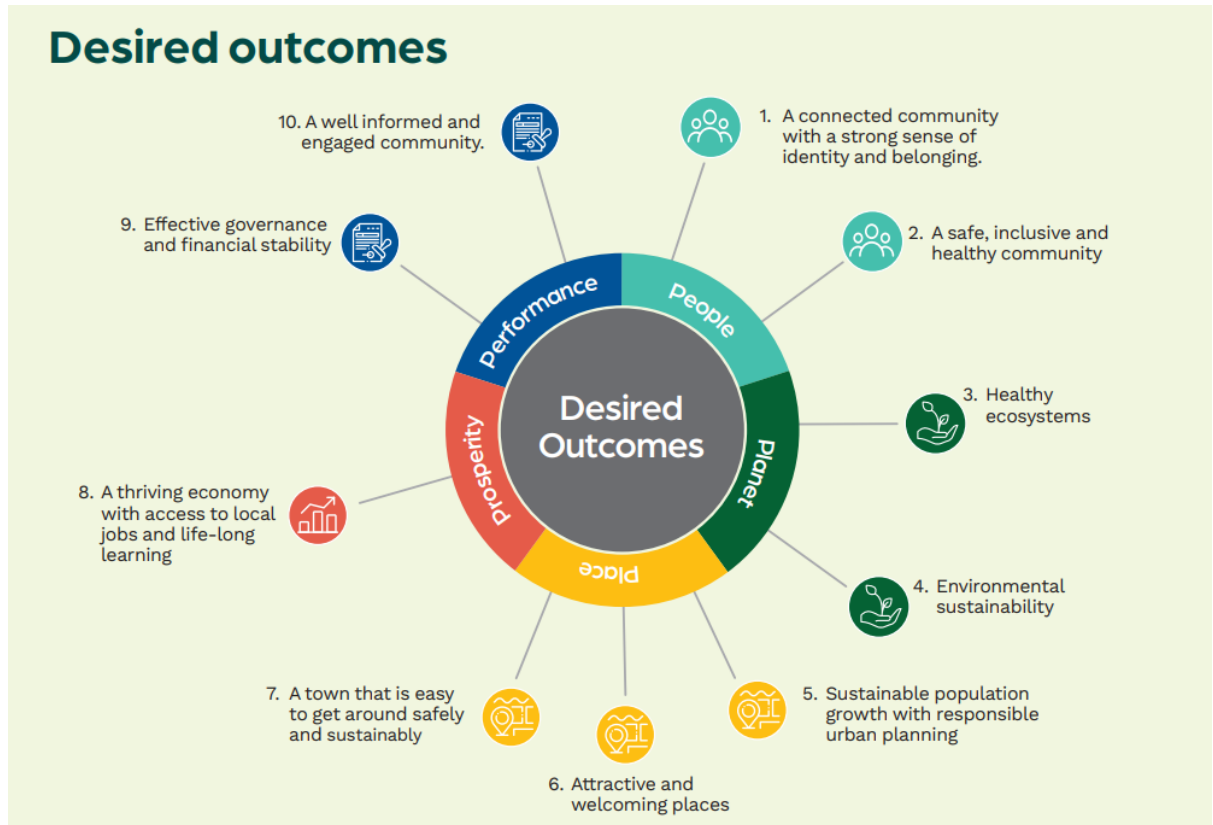
Partnerships: Collaborative partnerships and regional cooperation increase value to our community and the East Metropolitan Region.

Excellence: We strive to achieve the highest standards in local government and to consistently provide consultative, ethical and responsive services.

7.1.2 Integrated Planning Framework

As specified in the State Government’s Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and Guidelines, the Council Plan has been informed by the Long-Term Financial Plan, Asset Management Plans, Workforce Plan, Risk Management Framework and various issue-specific strategies and plans.

The Council Plan has the following desired outcomes:



Council and the community are kept up to date with the status of each action under these desired outcomes via a Quarterly Report.

7.2 Culture

A positive culture promotes openness and honesty, makes accountability and responsibility clear and encourages debate on important issues. It is also more likely that the organisation will retain high calibre employees who want to work and participate in the activities of the Town. The Town’s culture should consist of the following elements in pursuit of excellence in governance:

7.2.1 Support for frankness, honesty and questioning

Council Members are to debate issues openly and honestly. Officers are to provide frank and timely advice to the CEO and Directors, who in turn are to provide sound and frank advice to Council Members and Council.

7.2.2 Innovation

The Town considers new and better ways of going about its business in the achievement of its goals, through innovation which will be assessed critically by using appropriate risk management and other analysis.

The Town has dedicated itself to encouraging a climate of innovation and continuous improvement.

7.2.3 Effective management structures and practices

The Town is to have a management structure that meets its goals and needs, and the structure is characterised by efficient and effective use of human resources with clear accountability. Management practices and protocols reinforce accountability and outcomes and must also incorporate the nurturing of people's capacities to do their jobs.

7.2.4 Communication and engagement

The Town is to have effective communications policies, practices and protocols, internally and externally, and be open to, and encourage, feedback from all stakeholders and the community.

7.2.5 Conduct and ethical standards

For people to have confidence in those who govern and participate in the governance process, they must have trust that governments are acting for the common good. People need to believe that governance is characterised by honesty and integrity and that those in government will behave accordingly.

The Town has two Codes of Conduct that outline the principles, values and behaviours expected of all Council Members, Committee Members, Local Government election candidates and employees:

- *The Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates (adopted by Council), and*
- *Employee Code of Conduct (approved by the CEO)*

In general terms, the community are entitled to expect that the following general principles should guide the behaviours of Council Members, committee members and employees:

- *Act with reasonable care and diligence.*
- *Act with honesty and integrity.*
- *Act lawfully and in good faith.*
- *Identify and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.*
- *Treat others with respect and fairness.*
- *Avoid damage to the reputation of the Town.*
- *Not be impaired by mind affecting substances such as drugs and alcohol.*

7.2.6 Fraud, misconduct and corruption

The Town expects Council Members, Committee Members and employees act in accordance with their respective codes of conduct and behave ethically and honestly when performing their functions and during their interactions with each other, the community and all stakeholders of the Town. In support of the behavioural expectations, the Town has also developed a Fraud and Corruption Policy which articulates the Town's "zero tolerance" position on fraud and corruption. It also details the internal controls in place and the expectations that are placed on Council Members, Committee Members, employees and the broader community, to prevent such activity and to identify and report such activity.

7.2.7 Confidentiality

Local government business involves significant amounts of confidential information being supplied or maintained. This information could be about commercial matters, individuals or businesses or legal issues. The Act, Regulations and the codes of conduct detail how general information and confidential information is to be treated, accessed and used by Council Members and employees.

Council Members, committee members and employees must not make improper use of information in the performance of their duties to gain directly or indirectly an advantage for themselves or another person, or to cause detriment to the Town. Confidential information, or information that is deemed confidential by the CEO must not be disclosed, unless authorised by law or the respective code of conduct.

7.2.8 Disclosure of conflicting interests

The nature of the Town's business may result in conflicts of interests arising between an individual's personal interests and the performance of their public or professional duties. Conflicts of interests may arise from several sources, including friends, relatives, close associates, financial investments, past employment and the like. It is not only important to ensure that real or potential conflicts are handled appropriately but also perceived conflicts of interest.

Council Members, committee members and employees are to comply with the requirements for disclosure of interests as prescribed in the Act, the Town's Council Meeting Procedures Local Law 2020 and the Town's codes of conduct. Council Members, committee members and employees of the Town must ensure that there is no actual or perceived conflict between the fulfilment of their public or professional duties and their personal interests, which may include the interests of those persons closely associated to them.

7.2.9 Acceptance of gifts

The Town's Employee Code of Conduct and the Act contain provisions in respect of Council Members, employees and committee members seeking and/or accepting certain types of gifts and gifts of a certain value while performing in their respective roles. Both the Code of Conduct for Employees and the Act detail the disclosure requirements for gifts accepted in a full and transparent manner. All disclosures must be made to the CEO (or if the disclosure is from the CEO to the Mayor) in a prompt and full manner and in writing within the appropriate register. These registers are made available for public inspection and on the Town's website.

WA local governments are also required to adopt a policy relating to the attendance of Council Members and chief executive officers at events such as concerts, conferences and functions. The policy must address the provision of tickets to events, payments in respect of attendance and approval of attendance by the Town, and the criteria for approval. Acceptance of such tickets can affect how Council Members can participate and be involved in the decision-making process of meetings. The Town's Attendance at Events Policy has been adopted for this purpose.

7.2.10 Comprehensive induction programs

The Town's objective of a positive work culture is communicated to Council Members and employees through effective induction programs. Induction and training for Council Members is provided to assist in understanding the functions and role of local government, governance in local government and how to operate effectively to produce good outcomes for their community.

The Town's induction programs for both Council Members and employees focus on:

- *the differing and complementary roles of Elected Members and employees*
- *working relationships*
- *decision-making processes*
- *responsibility, accountability and delegations*
- *conduct and ethical standards of behaviour*
- *functions, services and activities of the Town, and*
- *organisational values and culture.*

7.2.11 Learning and training opportunities

The Town invests in training both for Council Members and employees and the learning will be focused on what is required to achieve organisational goals. Training for Council Members and employees is important, and opportunities are offered to assist in the development of skills required to fulfil their roles.

In their first twelve months from being elected, Council Members are required to undertake mandatory training around a number of core competencies important for a Council Member to understand and to help them fulfill their role in public office.

The Act also requires local governments to adopt a policy for continuing professional development for Council Members which must be reviewed every two years after the biennial local government elections. For this purpose, the Town's Council Member Continuing Professional Development Policy contains the training and development provisions for Council Members.

8. Principle Two: Roles and Relationships

8.1 Roles

An understanding and acceptance of the different roles of Mayor, Council Members and employees, with cooperation between all parties, underpins good governance at the Town. The relationship between Council Members and the CEO respects the diversity of opinion and the rights of all points of view to be heard with courtesy and respect.

8.2 The role of Council

The Council's governing role includes the following —

- overseeing the allocation of the Town's finances and resources
- determining the Town's policies
- planning strategically for the future of the district
- determining the services and facilities to be provided by the Town in the district
- selecting the CEO and reviewing the CEO's performance, and
- providing strategic direction to the CEO.

8.3 Roles and responsibilities of the Mayor

The Mayor —

- provides leadership and guidance to the council and council members, including guidance as to the roles of the council and council members
- acts as the principal spokesperson for the Town, and carries out civic and ceremonial duties on behalf of the Town, at all times acting consistently with council decisions
- presides at meetings of the council, ensuring that meetings are orderly and held in accordance with this Act
- promotes, facilitates and supports positive and constructive working relationships among council members, and
- liaises with the CEO on the Town's affairs and the performance of its functions.

8.4 Roles and responsibilities of the Deputy Mayor

The Deputy Mayor performs the functions of the Mayor when authorised to do so under section 5.34 of the Act, specifically:

If —

- the office of Mayor is vacant; or
- the Mayor is not available or is unable or unwilling to perform the functions of the Mayor,

then the Deputy Mayor may perform the functions of Mayor, as the case requires.

8.5 Roles and responsibilities of Council Members

A Council Member —

- represents the interests of the electors, ratepayers and residents of the district and takes account of the interests of other persons who work in, or visit, the district
- participates in the deliberation and decision-making of the local government at council and committee meetings
- facilitates communication with the community about council decisions
- facilitates and maintains good working relationships with other councillors, the mayor or president and the CEO
- acts consistently with section 2.7(3) to (5), specifically:

(3) For the purpose of ensuring proper governance of the local government's affairs, the council must have regard to the following principles —

- *the council's governing role is separate from the CEO's executive role as described in section 5.4, and*
- *it is important that the council respects that separation.*

(4) The council must make its decisions —

- *on the basis of evidence, on the merits and in accordance with the law, and*
- *taking into account the local government's finances and resources.*

5) The council must have regard to the need to support an organisational culture for the local government that promotes the respectful and fair treatment of the local government's employees, and

- maintains and develops the requisite skills to effectively perform their role.

8.6 Roles and responsibilities of the CEO

The CEO, as the Town's chief executive officer, is responsible for managing the local government's administration and operations.

The CEO's executive role includes the following —

- causing council decisions to be implemented
- managing the provision of services and facilities that the council has determined the local government is to provide in the district
- determining procedures and systems for —
 - implementing the local government's policies as determined by the council, and
 - otherwise managing the local government's administration and operations.

- being responsible for the employment, management, supervision, direction and dismissal of other employees, and
- ensuring that records and documents of the local government are properly kept for the purposes of this Act and any other written law.

The CEO is the council’s principal advisor and, as such, does the following —

- advises, and procures advice for, the council in relation to the local government’s affairs and the performance of the local government’s functions, and
- ensures that the council has the information and advice it needs to make informed and timely decisions.

The CEO —

- liaises with the Mayor on the Town’s affairs and the performance of the Town’s functions, and
- speaks on behalf of the Town if the Mayor agrees.

The CEO performs any other function specified or delegated by the Town or imposed under this Act or another written law as a function to be performed by the CEO.

8.7 Roles and responsibilities of employees

The quality of the Town’s governance heavily relies on each employee taking individual responsibility as well as being part of a collective team effort.

While on duty employees are to give their time and attention to the Town’s business and ensure their work is carried out efficiently and effectively, so the standard of work reflects favourably on them and the Town.

In carrying out their duties, employees achieve good governance when:

- they reflect the positive values and standards of behaviour the Town expects
- their duties are performed and conducted in a professional way
- information is managed and maintained appropriately, and records are kept of their duties, decisions and work-related activities
- resources of the Town, including information, is used efficiently and effectively; not misused; and waste is to be minimised, and
- conflicts of interest are identified and reported including disclosure of gifts and benefits obtained from certain parties.

8.8 Working relationships

Council Members are members of a team, elected by their constituents to work collectively in the interests of the whole community. Good governance is dependent on a mature and constructive working relationship between Council Members.

Council Members should behave in a manner that generates community trust and confidence in them as individual Council Members and enhances the role and image of both the Council and the Town.

Council Members are expected to:

- conduct their ongoing relationship with other Council Members, employees and the community with respect and courtesy
- act within the law at all times
- act in good faith and not for improper or ulterior motives
- act in a reasonable, just and non-discriminatory manner, and
- undertake their role with reasonable care and diligence.

8.8.1 Working relationships between the Mayor and Council Members

The relationship between Mayor and Council Members is critical to good governance and effective relationships between the Mayor and Council Members will help to achieve the outcomes within the Council Plan 2023-33 and to promote the credibility of the Town.

8.8.2 Working relationships between the Mayor and CEO

The Mayor and CEO work closely together and the relationship should be characterised by openness and good communication, with each keeping the other informed about important and relevant issues.

8.8.3 Working relationships among Council Members

Council Members need each other to achieve their individual and collective goals. Effective relationships between Council Members assist in achieving a successful Council, a pleasant working environment and a Council with public credibility.

8.8.4 Working relationships between Council Members and the CEO

The CEO and Council Members are likely to be in regular contact about issues, concerns and information. As with the Mayor/CEO relationship, a level of trust needs to be fostered which in turn, is based on good communication and understanding of each other's role and function.

8.8.5 Relationships between Council Members and employees

Individual Council Members must not seek to foster special relationships with employees for the sole purpose of seeking information that may not otherwise be available to all Council Members.

Employees are accountable to the CEO. They are not accountable to Council Members and are not required to take direction from them.

8.8.6 Council member access to information

Section 5.92 of the Act provides that a Council Member can have access to any information held by the Town that is relevant to the performance of their functions under the Act or any other written law.

8.8.7 Effective relationships – summary

The information in this section provides an insight into the role Council Members, the CEO and employees need to play in developing effective relationships. There are fundamental role differences between the Council, Council Members, the CEO and employees.

The focus of Council and Council Members should be on strategy, policy and outcomes.

The CEO and employee's role is to focus on advice, implementation and operations.

9. Principle Three: Decision Making and Management

9.1 Effective decision-making

Decision-making is the most important activity undertaken by the Town, both by Council and the administration. Effective decision-making processes increases the likelihood that the decisions themselves will be in the best interests of the entire community. The Council can only make decisions by resolution, that is, a motion being considered at a properly convened meeting and passed by the required majority vote.

Many of the decisions made by the Town (including Council and employees) are subject to administrative law, and therefore subject to challenge or appeal.

Further, the Town's Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates outlines the following in relation to Accountability:

A council member or committee member should —

- a) base decisions on relevant and factually correct information
- b) make decisions on merit, in the public interest and in accordance with statutory obligations and principles of good governance and procedural fairness
- c) read all agenda papers given to them in relation to council or committee meetings, and
- d) be open and accountable to, and represent, the community in the district.

Importantly, the CEO is to ensure that Council receives quality and timely advice and relevant information to enable informed and effective decisions.

All reports provided to Council need the necessary background information and detail including options, financial or legal impacts, and any associated risks.

9.2 Decision-making forums and processes

9.2.1 Council meeting schedule

Ordinary Council Meetings are held monthly, except January. Ordinary Council Meetings commence at 6.00pm in the Council Chambers on the fourth Tuesday of each month, except in December, when the date is amended to allow for the festive season.

A Council Meeting Calendar is created and is available on the Town's website.

Tuesdays are identified by the Town as the most suitable to undertake Council business.

Workshops (not open to the public) provide a forum for two-way communication between Council Members and the CEO (and other employees designated by the CEO) on strategic or complex matters and are generally conducted on either the first or second Tuesday of the month.

Council Briefing Sessions are used to inform Council Members of the items

of business to be presented at the Ordinary Council Meeting. They are open to the public, livestreamed and questions, statements and deputations relating to an item on the current agenda are permitted. Council briefing Sessions are generally held on the third Tuesday of the month.

Ordinary Council Meetings are the formal meetings of Council. They are required to be open to the public and are livestreamed by the Town. The meeting can be closed to the public for certain items of business as prescribed by the Act. To promote transparency and accountability required for good governance, the closure of meetings is applied as infrequently as possible.

Ordinary Council Meetings are generally held on the fourth Tuesday of the month.

Council Members are requested to attend all sessions that assist in informing the decision-making process.

9.2.2 Committee meetings

Council has established two Committees of Council delegated with some powers and duties to assist with its decision-making responsibilities

- *Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee, and*
- *Complaints Committee.*

Committees report to Council and are subject to the requirements of the Act and the Town's Council Meeting Procedures Local Law 2020.

Council also appoints Council Members to the Bassendean Local Emergency Management Committee (BLEMC), two as Members and one as a Deputy Member. These appointments are made at the Special Council Meeting following each Local Government election.

9.2.3 Electronic meetings

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary for Council and committee meetings to be conducted by electronic means or for Council Members to attend via electronic means. Regulation 14D of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996 provides guidance on the circumstances that a meeting may be held by electronic means.

Electronic meetings pose a range of challenges in terms of public participation and governance arrangements therefore they are only held in emergency situations.

Council Members may attend via electronic means where circumstances prevent them from attending in person. Regulation 14C. (2)(b) of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996 states 'if the member is otherwise authorised to attend the meeting by electronic means by the mayor, president or council.'

Once the Mayor is aware that a Council Member is to be attending via electronic means they are to inform the CEO to ensure the appropriate mechanisms are available to implement the request.

In deciding whether to authorise a member to attend a meeting by electronic means, the Mayor must have regard to whether the location from which the member intends to attend the meeting, and the equipment that the member intends to use to attend the meeting, are suitable for the member to be able to effectively engage in deliberations and communications during the meeting.

9.2.4 Representation on external committees, boards and groups

The Town is represented on the following external bodies:

- *Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA)*
 - *Two Council Members (2 Voting Delegates)*
- *Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council (EMRC)*
 - *Two Council Members (Councillors), and*
 - *One Council Member (Deputy Councillors)*
- *Metro Inner Development Assessment Panel*
 - *Two Council Members (Local Members), and*
 - *Two Council Members (Alternate Local Members).*

Appointments to external bodies are made at the Special Council Meeting following each Local Government election.

9.2.5 Agendas and minutes

The level of decision-making and transparency needed for good governance requires comprehensive meeting agendas and minutes to be prepared. Matters to be considered at meetings of Council or committees are to be presented in an agenda prepared by the CEO. Agendas comprise of reports prepared by the administration. Reports are structured to include information on the background, details, statutory requirements, any financial considerations and risks of the proposal under consideration. All reports are the professional advice of the administration and contain recommendations as to the most appropriate course of action to take based on the information presented.

The decision to adopt, amend or reject a recommendation rest with Council. Where a Council decision is different to that which has been recommended, reasons for that decision must be stated and recorded.

Agendas are made available to Council Members and the public before the Council Briefing Sessions and Ordinary Council Meetings. Where a committee is open to the public, committee agendas are also made available.

Unconfirmed Council and committee minutes are to be made available to the public. The minutes of a meeting (other than confidential items presented at the meeting for discussion) include attendances, all motions, their movers and seconders and the decisions that have been made.

9.2.6 Apologies and leave of absence

An important function of a Council Member, when being a part of the governing body of Council or a committee, is to attend and participate in the decision-making processes at meetings. Council Members who are going to be absent from a meeting of Council or a committee should submit an apology. For extended periods of absence, Council Members should apply to Council to grant leave of absence for that extended period. Leave of absence is not to be granted to a Council Member in respect of more than six consecutive ordinary meetings of the Council without the approval of the Minister, unless all of the meetings are within a period of three months. A Council Member who is absent, without first obtaining leave of the Council, throughout three consecutive ordinary meetings of the Council is disqualified from continuing their membership of the Council unless all of the meetings are within a two-month period.

9.2.7 Meeting procedures and conduct

The Council has adopted a local law that provides a set of enforceable meeting procedures and rules to:

- *ensure better decision-making of council and its committees*
- *assist in the good and orderly conduct of meetings*
- *greater community understanding of the business of the Council.*

Council Members are to familiarise themselves with the meeting procedures as any breaches may result in the matter being referred to the Local Government Inspector.

The Town's Council Meeting Procedures Local Law 2020 includes how public question time, statements, deputations and other public participation occurs at meetings.

9.2.8 Lobbying and meetings with external parties

Stakeholders utilise lobbying as an opportunity to communicate with Council Members and employees as part of a democratic and accessible system of government. However, problems can arise when a Council Member or employee is lobbied to consider factors, other than the relevant facts, they should appropriately consider when determining any matter as a decision-maker. Council Members and employees are to recognise the difference between appropriate and inappropriate lobbying and the risks associated if they fail to resist inappropriate lobbying.

Council Members must not, when lobbied, commit or indicate their vote on a matter that is before Council, or intended to be considered by Council. Similarly, employees are not to indicate their approval or otherwise on a proposal or application put forward to the Town, until such time as an assessment and/or consideration of a proposal or application is formally undertaken by the Town.

9.3 Decisions on land use planning and development

9.3.1 Administrative role

The Town has particular decision-making responsibilities under planning legislation, other state laws and planning policies.

The Council and employees are therefore responsible for applying and assessing factual situations and circumstances against the legislative regime detailed in the Act, the Planning and Development Act 2005 and other relevant planning laws.

Council as a body, and each Council Member individually, must be certain that they have a clear understanding of the relevant facts and law before making a decision.

9.3.2 Planning schemes

Under the Planning and Development Act 2005 local governments are required to have a planning scheme in place for their respective district. A local government's planning scheme is required to be consistent with the Metropolitan Region Scheme, which is administered by the State Government and must also take into consideration State Government planning strategies, plans and policies.

The provisions of a planning scheme are formulated through a collaborative and consultative process involving the State Government, the local government and the broader community. The State Government, through the Minister for Planning provides final approval to the content of a planning scheme and once published in the Government Gazette, the scheme comes into operation and has the force of law.

The role of Council in administering a planning scheme includes:

- *consideration of development applications*
- *consideration of subdivision proposals*
- *consideration of Planning Scheme Amendment proposals (whether suggested by the Town or by the community)*
- *enforcement of planning scheme provisions*
- *development of planning policies*
- *review of an existing planning scheme*
- *formulation of a new planning scheme.*

Council is provided with the professional advice from specialist planning officers in exercising its role in relation to each of these matters. This advice provides Council Members with detailed information relating to the particular planning issue requiring Council determination.

9.3.3 State Administrative Tribunal

In certain circumstances applicants have rights of appeal to challenge a planning related decision of Council or an employee. It is therefore important for Council Members to gain a full understanding of the issues and follow proper process before reaching a decision. The State Administrative Tribunal (SAT) reviews decisions made by local governments regarding a range of matters including town planning and building approvals. Applications can be made to the SAT for a review of decisions made by local governments under a range of enabling laws.

9.3.4 Planning delegations

The Town's planning scheme and State planning legislation permits Council to delegate its decision-making powers to certain qualified persons, subject to certain conditions. This is important in terms of allowing those applications that meet certain criteria to be determined by employees. The criteria used for determining the types of development that can be decided by employees is set out in the Delegations Register, which is reviewed annually or earlier if so determined by Council.

9.3.5 Design Review Panel

The Town has a Local Planning Policy (No. 9) prepared under Schedule 2 of the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015.

The Town has an agreement with the City of Bayswater relating to the use of the City of Bayswater Design Review Panel (DRP) to undertake design review of proposals and applications for land within the Town of Bassendean.

The Policy details the types of proposals required to be subject to formal Design Review and to formalise the arrangement with the City of Bayswater in relation to its DRP.

Proposals and applications on land within the Town of Bassendean are considered by the City of Bayswater DRP as if it were a Town of Bassendean DRP.

9.3.6 Development Assessment Panels

The Development Assessment Panel (DAP) is an independent body that makes decisions on certain development applications, replacing the local government authority and/or the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) as the original decision makers.

The Town of Bassendean forms part of the Metro Inner Development Assessment Panel (DAP). The DAP meets and determines development applications within certain class and value thresholds.

Development applications that need DAP determination are submitted to the Town of Bassendean. The Town then informs the DAP of the received

application and conducts an assessment according to the relevant planning framework.

The assessment process may include advertising of the application for public comment or referral to state government agencies, if required by the planning framework.

The Town assesses the application against the local planning scheme, policies, and relevant state planning policies. This includes evaluation of the potential impacts of traffic, noise, environmental, built form, and impacts on the community.

Once the application has been assessed, the Town's Planning Officers will prepare a Responsible Authority Report (RAR). The RAR will include a comprehensive assessment of the proposal against the relevant planning frameworks and will include reference to any public submissions, and a recommendation on how the application should be determined.

9.4 Declarations of Interest

One important aspect of the Town's decision-making responsibilities is how conflicts of interests are identified, recorded and treated throughout the organisation. It is not only important to ensure that real or potential conflicts of interests are handled appropriately but also perceived conflicts of interests.

Interests can be categorised as being:

- financial interests
- proximity interests
- interests that may affect impartiality

9.4.1 Financial interests

It is a statutory obligation and duty of Council Members and committee members to vote on every item of business discussed at meetings of Council or a committee (with delegated authority). However, a Council Member or a committee member may be excluded from presiding and voting in the meeting if that person, or a person that is closely associated to them, has a direct or indirect financial interest in the subject under discussion.

Attention is drawn to Division 6 of Part 5 of the Act which details disclosure of financial interests in matters affecting local government decisions. This division defines financial interests, closely associated persons, and interests that need not be disclosed by Council Members and committee members.

9.4.2 Proximity interests

Council Members and committee members also have a responsibility to declare interests around matters that are in close proximity to that person's

land. Section 5.60B (1) of the Act states a person has a proximity interest in a matter if the matter concerns:

a) a proposed change to a planning scheme affecting land that adjoins the person's land

(b) a proposed change to the zoning or use of land that adjoins a person's land, or

(c) a proposed development (as defined by section 5.63(5) of the Act [the development, maintenance or management of the land or of services or facilities on the land] that adjoins the person's land.

Similar to financial interests, a Council Member or committee member with a proximity interest must disclose their interest (in accordance with sections 5.65 of the Act) and not preside or participate in discussion on the matter (section 5.67 of the Act).

9.4.3 Impartiality interests

Council Members are required to disclose any interest which could, or could reasonably be perceived to, adversely affect their impartiality, and includes an interest arising from kinship, friendship or membership of an association. The disclosing of an interest that may affect impartiality is to be made immediately before the matter is discussed at a Council or committee meeting or in a written notice given to the CEO before the meeting. The disclosure of an interest that may affect impartiality does not affect the ability of the Council Member to discuss or vote on the matter.

The Town's Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates deals with disclosure of interests that may affect impartiality:

22. Disclosure of interests

- (1) In this clause —
 - interest** —
 - (a) means an interest that could, or could reasonably be perceived to, adversely affect the impartiality of the person having the interest; and
 - (b) includes an interest arising from kinship, friendship or membership of an association.
- (2) A council member who has an interest in any matter to be discussed at a council or committee meeting attended by the council member must disclose the nature of the interest —
 - (a) in a written notice given to the CEO before the meeting; or
 - (b) at the meeting immediately before the matter is discussed.
- (3) Subclause (2) does not apply to an interest referred to in section 5.60 of the Act.
- (4) Subclause (2) does not apply if a council member fails to disclose an interest because the council member did not know —
 - (a) that they had an interest in the matter; or
 - (b) that the matter in which they had an interest would be discussed at the meeting and the council member disclosed the interest as soon as possible after the discussion began.
- (5) If, under subclause (2)(a), a council member discloses an interest in a written notice given to the CEO before a meeting, then —
 - (a) before the meeting the CEO must cause the notice to be given to the person who is to preside at the meeting; and
 - (b) at the meeting the person presiding must bring the notice and its contents to the attention of the persons present immediately before any matter to which the disclosure relates is discussed.
- (6) Subclause (7) applies in relation to an interest if —
 - (a) under subclause (2)(b) or (4)(b) the interest is disclosed at a meeting; or
 - (b) under subclause (5)(b) notice of the interest is brought to the attention of the persons present at a meeting.
- (7) The nature of the interest must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

9.4.4 Disclosure of interests of employees

Similar to Council Members and committee members, employees should ensure that there is no actual or perceived conflict or incompatibility between the important fulfillment of the public or professional duties and either their personal interests, or those persons closely associated with them.

Section 5.70 of the Act states ‘an employee who has an interest in any matter in respect of which the employee is providing advice or a report directly to Council or a committee must disclose the nature of the interest when giving

the advice or report.’ There is no requirement for employees to leave meetings where interests have been disclosed, however in most instances’ employees do remove themselves from the meeting.

In situations where an employee has been delegated a power or duty by the CEO, and the employee has an interest in the matter, the employee must not exercise the power or discharge the duty and must either disclose the nature of the interest to the CEO (or should the employee be the CEO, disclose the nature of the interest to the Mayor).

The Town’s Employee Code of Conduct also places a requirement on employees to disclose any interests, where the interest could, or could reasonably be perceived to, affect the impartiality of the employee having the interests and includes an interest arising from kinship, friendship or membership of an association. In some situations, this may require the employee to disqualify themselves from dealing with a particular matter.

9.4.5 Primary Returns and Annual Returns

Section 5.75 of the Act requires Council Members and certain employees to complete a Primary Return within three months of commencing in Office or being employed at the Town.

A Primary Return is a snapshot of personal financial information as it exists upon the start date of a Council member or an employee.

At the end of each respective financial year, Council Members and certain employees must complete an Annual Return. An Annual Return retrospectively discloses any changes to the information previously disclosed, or any new interest information to disclose since completing their last return.

Primary Returns and Annual Returns assist with the decision-making process as they highlight an individual’s interests at a particular point in time, thereby clarifying whether a conflict of interest may arise.

9.4.6 Related Party Disclosures

Related party disclosures are governed by Australian Accounting Standard (AASB) 124, requiring annual disclosure of relationships with Key Management Personnel (KMP) and other related parties in the financial statements.

A system has been implemented to identify, monitor and disclose related party transactions to manage the risk of non-compliance with the related party disclosure objectives of the Australian Accounting Standards.

9.5 Protection from liability

Council Members are not protected in the same manner as Members of Parliament for statements they make in the Council Chamber.

In a Council meeting, a Council Member fulfils a public duty and is therefore given limited legal protection. However, unlike Members of Parliament, a Council Member's privilege is qualified. This means that protection is only provided as long as the statements are made in good faith. Statements made with malice or made recklessly are not protected by qualified privilege. Statements made by Council Members outside Council and Committee meetings are unlikely to attract qualified privilege.

However, under section 9.57A (2) of the Act 'a local government is not liable to an action for defamation in relation to matter published on its official website as part of a broadcast, audio recording, or video recording, of council proceedings.'

The Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates also states that a Council Member must not make improper use of their office as a Council Member to cause detriment to the local government of any other person. This provision has relevance to what a Council Member can say whilst performing in their role as a Council Member.

Division 4 of Part 5 of the Act also protects Council Members, committee members and employees from any actions in negligence that the person has done, or has not done, in the performance of their functions under the Act or any other written law. However, the Town may not be necessarily protected from claims of negligence.

9.6 Legislative framework

The Town is constituted under the Act and has a formal geographical area, known as a district. The general function of the Town is to provide for the good government of people living and working within its district and includes legislative and executive powers and responsibilities given to it through the Act.

Overall, the Act is intended to provide excellence in governance through:

- better decision-making by local governments
- greater community participation in the decisions and affairs of local governments
- greater accountability of local governments to their communities
- more efficient and effective local government.

To allow local governments better decision-making, greater accountability and to be more efficient and effective, the Act provides several ways of achieving these objectives.

9.6.1 Delegations

Delegations form part of the Town's decision-making approach. Delegations entrust certain types of decisions to the CEO, employees or committees.

Under the Act both Council and the CEO are given certain functions and duties to be discharged. Council may delegate authority to the CEO to

perform some of its functions and duties on its behalf. The use of delegated authority means that the large volume of routine work of Council can be effectively managed and acted on promptly, which in turn facilitates efficient service delivery to the community.

The CEO may delegate to any other employee the authority to perform functions and duties that are exercisable by the CEO under the Act or that have been delegated to the CEO by Council (with the exception of the power to delegate). This accords with employees being responsible to the CEO and the CEO being responsible to Council.

Delegations of authority are required to provide employees of the Town with the power to exercise duties and make determinations. It is essential that the Town's delegations are performed in a manner that is in accordance with the delegation and is compliant with the relevant legislation. The Town is required to keep records on the exercise of its delegations and delegations by Council are to be reviewed on an annual basis.

9.6.2 The concept of 'acting through'

Section 5.45 of the Local Government Act 1995 states:

'(2) Nothing in this Division is to be read as preventing - (a) a local government from performing any of its functions by acting through a person other than the CEO; or (b) a CEO from performing any of his or her functions by acting through another person.'

The principle factor for determining when Acting Through may be appropriate is that the function or duty is mandatory and requires no, or very limited, discretion in order to fulfil the function or perform the duty.

9.6.3 Authorised persons

Legislation may include an express (written) power for Local Government to appoint an 'authorised person' or a requirement for a person to be authorised before they can perform a specified function prescribed in that legislation.

Once appointed, the person authorised is responsible for fulfilling the powers and duties assigned to them under law, which may be subject to limitations or conditions. The appointment of an authorised person must also be in writing; this is known as the Instrument of Authorisation (sometimes referred to as a Certificate of Authorisation). In some instances, legislation prescribes the Form that must be used (prescribed forms are found in the subsidiary Regulations).

Legislation often includes a prescribed process that must be followed when appointing authorised persons. These processes can differ substantially between different legislation. In some instances, the appointment process can be delegated from the Local Government to the CEO, in others a Council resolution is specifically required.

9.6.4 Local Laws

Many Acts of State Parliament contain provision for subsidiary legislation (Regulations or Local Laws) to be made.

Regulations are intended to deal with the administrative detail or implementing a particular provision of an Act, or in an area that is not contentious such as setting of fees and charges.

Local Laws are also subsidiary legislation, made by Local Governments. Local Laws must not contravene any State or Federal Act or Regulation, and in the event of any inconsistency, the Act or Regulation will override the Local Law to the extent of the inconsistency.

The Act outlines the process by which the Council may adopt local laws. This legislative role allows the Council to adopt a regulatory regime that may be enforced through the courts, by the issue of infringement notices or by performing other executive functions to enforce the local laws.

The process for making a local law provides the community with a six-week advertising period to allow opportunity for comment on proposed local law. The local law is then presented once more to Council and any public submissions are considered. Upon final adoption, the local law is published in the Government Gazette.

The Town has Local Laws relating to:

- *Activities on Thoroughfares and Trading in Thoroughfares and Public Places*
- *Animals, Environment, Nuisance and Pests*
- *Bee Keeping*
- *Cats*
- *Council Meeting Procedures*
- *Dogs*
- *Dust and Building Waste*
- *Fencing*
- *Health*
- *Parking*
- *Property, and*
- *Waste*

When adopting local laws, Council must be aware that they operate with the force of legislation, and the Town has a duty to enforce all its local laws.

Within a period of 15 years after the day on which a local law commenced or was last reviewed, the Town must carry out a review of the local law to determine whether it considers that the local law should be repealed, be amended or remain unchanged.

This review process also allows for community consultation and feedback.

9.6.5 Policies

Policies provide the Council and the organisation with the ability and direction to make decisions that are consistent and unbiased. A policy can also provide detail on the way the Town undertakes, or requires others to undertake, certain works or activities.

Policy means a concise statement of strategic objectives or principles that give effect to the Town's obligations or objectives. Effective Policy minimises risk, guides subsequent decisions and actions and ensures that the Town's community is served in an open, accountable, consistent and sustainable manner.

The Council has the following level of policy:

- *Council Policies - these are strategic policies that set governing principles and guide the direction of the organisation to align with community values and aspirations. These policies have a strategic, external focus and align with the vision and strategic direction of the Town.*
- *Administrative Policies - these policies are developed for administrative and operational requirements. They have an internal focus.*

9.6.6 Executive functions

The Council is responsible for overseeing the executive functions of the Town. The executive functions of the Town are to provide services and facilities. In performing its executive functions, section 3.18 of the Act states the following:

- (1) A local government is to administer its local laws and may do all other things that are necessary or convenient to be done for, or in connection with, performing its functions under this Act.*
- (2) In performing its executive functions, a local government may provide services and facilities.*
- (3) A local government must satisfy itself that the services and facilities it provides:*
 - (a) integrate and coordinate, so far as practicable, with any provided by the Commonwealth, the State or any public body*
 - (b) do not duplicate, to an extent that the local government considers inappropriate, services or facilities provided by the Commonwealth, the State or any other body or person, whether public or private*
 - (c) are managed efficiently and effectively.*

9.7 Business management

The management of corporate business within an organisation is important to the concept of governance. As part of the Town's Integrated Planning Framework, the Town developed the Town of Bassendean Council Plan 2023-33, an integrated Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan.

The Plan describes:

- A future vision for the Town of Bassendean
- How the Town will achieve and resource its objectives
- How success will be measured and reported

Many of the plan's objectives and actions are linked to informing strategies.

Detail on specific projects and their milestones are reported to Council and the community on a regular basis. Business Units are required to plan and budget to operationalise the specific projects and milestones in the Town's Council Plan as well as other plans and operational outcomes.

9.8 Financial management

9.8.1 Role of the CEO

The CEO is to:

- (a) ensure that the resources of the Town are effectively and efficiently managed*
- (b) assist the council to undertake reviews of fees and charges regularly (and not less than once in every financial year), and*
- (c) undertake reviews of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the financial management systems and procedures of the Town regularly (and not less than once in every 3 financial years) and report to the Council the results of those reviews.*

The CEO must ensure that the fundamentals are in place including, but not limited to:

- appropriate financial systems, plans, strategies and protocols*
- adequate resources to support the Town's activities and financial monitoring and performance*
- suitable internal review and audit mechanisms*
- an organisational culture where responsibility and accountability are clearly delineated and understood*
- adherence to and compliance with legislative provisions.*

9.8.2 Financial management planning and principles

The Council is ultimately responsible for the financial management of the Town. Good financial management requires both Council and the administration to play their role. The Town has developed a long-term financial plan that is consistent with strategic initiatives within the Council Plan 2023-33. Council is to ensure that it receives sufficient reports and other information to adequately monitor its performance, resource allocation, expenditure and activities, and the efficiency and effectiveness of its service delivery.

There are several mechanisms that Council undertakes in delivery of their accountability for the financial state of the Town. These include but are not limited to:

- *oversee the progress of the Town's annual capital works program and any modifications of capital works projects required*
- *oversight of the services provided by the Town and the standards of service delivery being cognisant of financial management activities, funding proposals and long term strategic financial planning*
- *regular review of the Long Term Financial Plan.*

Council has also established an Audit and Governance Committee to oversee and advise the Council on matters of accountability and internal control.

9.8.3 Annual Budget

One of the responsibilities of Council under the Act is to prepare and adopt the Town's Annual Budget. In preparation of the Annual Budget the Town is to have regard to the contents of the Council Plan and prepare a detailed estimate for the current year of:

- (a) the expenditure by the Town*
- (b) the revenue and income, independent of general rates, of the Town*
- (c) the amount required to make up the deficiency, if any, shown by comparing the estimated expenditure with the estimated revenue and income.*

Under Regulation 33A of the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996 the Town is required to conduct a review of its Annual Budget which considers the changes in its operating environment since the beginning of the financial year with a view to forecasting the financial impacts likely to arise for the remainder of the year.

The review is to be submitted to Council on or before 31 March each year.

9.8.4 Strategic Financial Plan

The Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (DLGIRS) Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework for local government identifies a ten-year Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) as a core informing strategy to the Council Plan that enables local governments to set priorities based on their resourcing capabilities for the delivery of short, medium and long term community priorities. The LTFP is also an indicator of a local government's long term financial sustainability and allows early identification of financial issues and their longer term impacts.

The LTFP is a ten-year rolling plan that includes robust forecast budgets for four years aligned with strategic objectives, from which annual budgets can be developed. It is by its nature a forecasting document, which aims to inform decision making and priority setting, and assist in the management of funding requirements, community assets and risk. In a dynamic environment, long

term financial planning is necessarily subject to some uncertainty, due to various factors like economic trends, demographic change and political influences, but the level of uncertainty reduces as the time horizon shortens.

The LTFP summarises the financial impacts of the priorities, projects and objectives identified in the Council Plan 2023-33 and assists in setting the future financial direction and decisions of the Town.

9.9 Asset management

An organisation practices good governance when it manages its assets in a financially viable, efficient and sustainable manner.

The Town's capital works program is a ten-year plan for specific capital projects across transport, recreation, property, waste, fleet and equipment and technology asset classes. While informed by asset management principles, the capital works program will continue to be refined as the Town improves its asset management practices through improved condition assessments and ratings facilitated by better resourcing.

9.10 Organisational structure and human resource management

Good governance is achieved when an organisational structure is in place that adequately serves the Town's operations, and those operations are planned to achieve the established goals and the strategic direction set for the Town. Part of the role of the CEO is to establish an organisational structure which will facilitate the delivery of projects and programs within the Council Plan 2023-33.

To enable the Town to continue to provide high quality services to the community now and into the future it is critical that the Town develops and maintains a skilled, flexible and sustainable workforce.

In line with the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (DLGIRS) Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework the Town has developed a Workforce Plan to provide a strategic framework for organisational workforce planning and management. This will enable the Town to attract and retain a suitable, committed and professional labour force that will ensure the Town achieves its strategic priorities within the Council Plan 2023-33 and deliver quality services to the community.

All employees are required to undertake a Performance Development Review each year. These reviews assess specific job performance, behavioural indicators, business planning outcomes as well as determining an employee's training and development needs.

9.11 Records management

The Town's corporate records are to be managed in accordance with the Town's Record Keeping Plan and Record Keeping Policy.

All Council Members, employees and contractors are responsible for maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of all business transactions and ensuring all corporate documents are retained within the Town's official recordkeeping system at the point of creation regardless of the format.

The Town has a Record Keeping Plan that outlines how record keeping can be undertaken in accordance with:

- *State Records Act 2000*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1992*, and
- *Local Government Act 1995*.

9.12 Risk management

The Town is responsible for providing a wide and diverse range of services to its community. All of these activities involve some form of risk, which must be managed to ensure that aims and objectives are achieved, services are delivered and that opportunities to deliver better and more cost effective services are realised. If the Town is not aware of, or has not adequately assessed or managed some risks, it could result in financial loss, threats to public or employee safety or lead to substantial adverse publicity.

The Town is committed to ensuring that effective risk management remains central to all its operations while delivering its range of services to the community. The management of risk is the responsibility of senior management and all employees and is an integral part of the Town's organisational culture. Risk management philosophies are reflected in the various policies, protocols, systems and processes in place, that guide the Town's operations.

The Town has an integrated risk management framework and policy, based on current best practice standards to manage risks and ensure the quality of the Town's services to the community are not adversely affected. Strategic oversight of risk and compliance occurs at the Committee and Council level and independent external assurance is provided by the Town internal audit function.

The Town's Governance team proactively guide the Town's risk management culture, contribute to its internal audit and governance obligations and ensure regular reporting to the Audit and Governance Committee.

10. Principle Four: Accountability

10.1 Principle of accountability

Excellence in governance is based on the principle that the people involved in providing governance, being the Council Members and employees, are held to account for what they do and for the Town's performance. The public trust placed in the Town and in its Council Members to act in the public interest can be justified in the manner in which their duties have been performed.

Accountability systems need to provide disclosure and for the review of decision-making and processes. These systems must record and support the Town's accountability to its stakeholders and its legal accountability to the State Government.

Risk management systems aim to ensure that community assets are protected. An internal audit system, a comprehensive consultation and engagement policy and framework all support good decision-making by ensuring that Council Members are aware of the views of those who will be affected by any decision.

The fundamental importance of accountability is that the Town exists to govern for and on behalf of its community. Systems and values must reflect this accountability.

Accountability systems that provide disclosure and review of decision-making and processes are integral to good governance and are reflected through:

- open and transparent government so that people can follow decision-making processes and outcomes
- consultation so that communities feel that they are being heard
- good information and communication processes so that communities are kept informed.

10.2 Performance management and reporting

The Council is accountable for monitoring performance in the achievement of the Town's strategic direction, goals and financial outcomes which are set through the Council Plan 2023-33, the Long Term Financial Plan and the Annual Budget. The management of the Town's performance and the reporting of that performance to the community is achieved in several ways.

10.2.1 Quarterly reporting

The Town has developed a reporting system to provide Council with the necessary information to enable it to assess performance against the Council Plan 2023-33 that incorporates actions from several informing plans and strategies.

Quarterly progress reports against the Town's Council Plan 2023-33 incorporating the Corporate Business Plan provide Council and the community with a full assessment of the Town's progress in relation to the achievement of pre-determined milestones for major projects and programs. Full progress reports against the Town's Capital Works Program are also provided at the same time as the Council Plan progress reports to Council.

10.2.2 Financial reporting

Financial reporting is a basis for accountable financial management and it is required by the Act. Financial reporting undertaken at the Town is as follows:

- **Monthly Financial Activity Statement** - *timely and accurate reports are essential to keep Council in an informed position to ensure the Town meets its financial responsibilities. In accordance with the Act and the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996, Council is required to prepare a monthly statement of financial activity reporting on the source and application of funds as set out in the Annual Budget.*
- **List of Payments** - *Council has delegated to the CEO the exercise of its authority to make financial payments from the Town's Municipal Fund. Therefore, in accordance with Regulation 13(1) of the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996, a list of accounts paid by the CEO is prepared each month for Council, showing each account paid since the last list was prepared.*
- **Annual Financial Report** - *in accordance with the Act, the Town is required to prepare an Annual Financial Report each financial year, which provides information about the Town's financial activities, income and expenditure. The Town's Annual Financial Report is to be audited by an external auditor and is to be considered by the Town's Audit and Governance Committee before being submitted to Council for adoption. The Annual Financial Report forms part of the Town's Annual Report, which is received and discussed by the community at the Annual General Meeting of Electors.*

10.2.3 Annual Report

In accordance with Section 5.53 of the Act the Town is to prepare an Annual Report each financial year. Other than just financial information the Town's Annual Report includes, among other things, the auditor's report, internal information and an overview of the Town's 'plan for the future' (Council Plan 2023-33) including major initiatives that are proposed to commence or to continue.

The Town's Annual Report is the key reporting document that satisfies the Annual Report requirements under the Act. It provides detailed information to all of the Town's stakeholders about how the Town intends to operate in a sustainable manner whilst addressing the many challenges it faces. The report reviews the progress made against initiatives outlined in the Council Plan 2023-33.

The electors of the Town's district are to receive the Annual Report at the Annual General Electors Meeting, usually held in February each year. At this meeting, the community can ask questions of the Town on various aspects of the Annual Report.

10.2.4 Council Member Performance Accountability

Under the Local Government Act 1995 (Act), the Model Code of Conduct provides for a mandatory code of conduct to be observed by all Mayors, Council Members and committee members, including the rules of conduct.

At present, these rules are enforced by the Standards Panel, which consists of Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (LGIRS) staff members, a Council Member and a person with relevant legal knowledge.

The Local Government Amendment Act 2024 (Amendment Act) amends the Act and advances a second tranche of reforms, including the introduction of the Local Government Inspector (the Inspector) to oversee compliance and conduct for the local government sector and the Adjudicator function to review conduct breach complaints.

A conduct breach is committed where a Council Member contravenes a rule of conduct.

- Allegations will be submitted to the Inspector, who will be able to use basic investigative powers to collect relevant evidence, such as video footage of council meetings. Complaints that are frivolous, vexatious, trivial, misconceived or without substance will not satisfy the initial assessment.*
- When the Inspector decides that a breach complaint it received alleges a conduct breach, other than a recurrent breach, the Inspector must refer the complaint to the Principal Adjudicator.*
- On receipt of a conduct breach, the Principal Adjudicator will either deal with the conduct breach themselves or allocate it to one of the Deputy Adjudicators.*
- Adjudicators will be responsible for reviewing evidence briefs (provided by the Inspector), receiving submissions from the respondent, requesting parties to participate in mediation (where applicable), and making decisions on conduct breach complaints.*

From the commencement of the Inspector's powers and functions, the making of findings and sanctions against council members for conduct breaches will be referred to a Principal Adjudicator

Serious Breaches

A serious breach is an offence committed by a Council Member against a written law when the person is acting in their capacity as a Council Member. Most of the offences of this nature are within the Act, which include:

- *failure to declare an interest (section 5.65)*
- *failure to submit an annual return (section 5.76)*
- *failure to declare a gift (section 5.87A)*
- *failure to vote (section 5.21).*

The Town of Bassendean commits to the Above the Line Mindset of:

- **Thinking**
 - *Solution focussed*
 - *How can I add value?*
 - *Make work meaningful*
- **Communication**
 - *How can we fix this?*
 - *Us, we, ours*
 - *Encouragement, enthusiasm*
- **Actions**
 - *Get help with problems*
 - *Set challenging goals*
 - *Share thoughts with others*
- **Systems and processes**
 - *Planned and data-informed decision making*
 - *Celebrate wins and milestones*
 - *Review and report*

What does this look like in practice?

Council Members apply critical thinking to their decision making by not leaving thoughts unsaid ... the Chamber is the place to have views heard, respectful debate is important.

Council Members formulate their view from reading reports and information provided by the administration's subject matters experts, hearing the views of the community and their colleagues. They should remove personal bias and be objective, they represent the whole community rather than the loudest in the community and seek to understand the impact on future generations.

When moving (and seconding) recommendations Council Members are clear that the recommendation represents the desired outcome, not just to get the matter debated or as a courtesy. Any action that causes the process to be less efficient or effective without added value is considered frivolous.

Importantly, once a resolution has been carried, Council Members support the outcome; the time for changing the direction or outcome is in the debate and the content of the recommendation.

Importantly, we act with integrity. We are honest, open, take responsibility, and act in the public interest in all our dealings with each other, and our community. We strive for personal and collective excellence. This is the purpose of the Councillor declaration which is made and signed at each Ordinary Council Meeting.

An annual attendance fee is paid in lieu of a meeting fee on the assumption that each council member will attempt to be present at as many meetings as possible and have prepared themselves appropriately to engage and formulate an opinion based on the information.

10.2.5 CEO performance review

The Council is accountable for managing the CEO's performance and is responsible for setting the CEO's Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and subsequently monitoring performance.

As required by the Act, Council has adopted a policy for the standards for CEO recruitment, performance and termination.

10.2.6 Employee performance review

In accordance with the Act the performance of all employees is to be reviewed at least once in relation to every year their employment. The Town's comprehensive Professional Development Review process provides a mechanism for employee performance to be assessed as well as training and development opportunities to be identified.

10.3 Audits and oversight

10.3.1 Compliance Audit

It is a requirement of the Act that the Town conducts an annual audit of its compliance with statutory requirements and responsibilities placed on it under the Act.

The Compliance Audit Return is submitted to the Local Government Inspector each year after its adoption by Council. The Compliance Audit Return provides prompts in relation to the local government's statutory obligations

such as local laws, tenders, meeting processes, disclosure of financial interests and financial management. It provides a useful tool for the Town to ensure compliance with the Act.

In addition to this requirement the Town has established a number of internal compliance mechanisms to ensure its practices and procedures meet its obligations in relation to good corporate governance.

10.3.2 Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee

The audit function of the Town is achieved by two means – the establishment of an Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee and the appointment of an Internal Auditor.

The Act requires Council to establish an Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee to perform the following functions:

- receive and review reports related to the Town’s compliance audits required under the Act and regulations*
- make recommendations to council on actions to be taken in relation to those reports*
- receive and review reports on the effectiveness of the Town’s systems and procedures in relation to financial management, legislative compliance and risk management*
- make recommendations to council on improvements to those systems and procedures*
- receive and review reports on any actions the Town is required to take under the Act, or has decided to take in relation to a compliance audit report or report into the effectiveness of the Town’s systems and procedures, and*
- perform any function conferred on the ARIC under the Regulations or another written law.*

10.3.3 External Audit

Each year, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG), or contractors appointed on its behalf, provide the independent oversight of the local government sector and audit the Town’s financial statements with an audit report being provided to Council. Any significant issues the OAG identifies, are reported to the Town, the Mayor, the Town’s CEO and the Minister for Local Government.

The audit report is examined by the Town which is to implement appropriate action in respect to the significant matters that may be raised and detail such action in a report to be submitted to the Minister for Local Government within three months of the Town receiving the audit report.

In addition to financial and compliance audits, the OAG may carry out performance audits that examine the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of programs and organisations, including compliance with legislative provisions

and internal policies. Performance reports are also submitted to both Houses of Parliament.

10.3.4 Internal Audit

The Town has developed an internal audit program that focuses on areas of risk including financial and non-financial systems and compliance with legislation, regulations, policies and best practice.

The primary objectives of the program are to independently evaluate the Town's systems of internal control to provide assurance that:

- *the Town is achieving its goals and objectives efficiently, effectively and in an ethical manner*
- *financial and operating information produced is accurate, timely and complete*
- *there is compliance with relevant laws, regulations and other external requirements and with policies, protocols and other internal requirements*
- *Town assets and liabilities are competently managed and protected against loss or other negative consequences.*

Recommendations are developed and agreed with management for audit recommendations and follow-ups conducted to ensure that they are implemented as agreed.

10.4 Customer Service and Complaints Management

The Town of Bassendean (Town) is committed to providing high quality customer service, delivering the best outcomes for our community with regard to the long-term interests and needs of our community. The Town's purpose includes to carry out the decisions of Council and to supply the goods and services necessary to sustain and respond to the specific local needs of our community. In doing this, the Town's employees bring strong leadership, experience and knowledge and act with integrity, accountability and transparency.

10.4.1 Service standards and customer advocacy

The Town understand the importance of customer service and are committed to delivering high quality customer service, through accurate, relevant and appropriate advice.

- a. *Our employees will:*
 - *identify themselves*
 - *be polite, helpful and courteous*
 - *listen to you to understand your needs*
 - *follow through on our commitments to you, and*
 - *encourage, welcome and value your feedback.*

- b. *Our actions will be:*
 - *open, fair and impartial*
 - *responsive to your needs, and*
 - *completed within a specified timeline.*
- c. *Our information will be:*
 - *accessible within the legal frameworks which apply*
 - *accurate, consistent and relevant, and*
 - *collected lawfully and not misused.*

The Town's Customer Service Charter is available on the Town's website.

10.4.2 Formal complaint and reporting mechanisms

The Town's Customer Service Charter outlines how to provide compliments, suggestions or make a complaint.

Further, as a public entity, the Town is subject to external complaint and reporting mechanisms that are in place to ensure all public entities, including local governments, perform in a way that demonstrates integrity and fairness and are in place to prevent:

- *improper conduct*
- *action which may constitute an offence under a written law*
- *substantial, unauthorised or irregular use of or mismanagement of public resources*
- *substantial and specific risk of injury to public health, prejudice to public safety or harm to the environment*
- *matter of administration which could be investigated by the Ombudsman.*

The Town is subject to reporting and review mechanisms conducted by external agencies, including:

- *minor breach and serious breach complaints about Council Members to the Local Government Inspector under the Local Government Act 1995*
- *public interest disclosures made under the Public Interests Disclosure Act 2003*
- *misconduct complaints to either the Public Sector Commission or the Corruption and Crime Commission under the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003, and*
- *investigating and resolving complaints about the decision making of local government to the WA Ombudsman under the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971.*

10.5 Access to information

Under the Act any member of the public can access certain information held by the City, but there is not an unfettered right of access to the Town's information. There are some documents not accessible to the public or available for viewing; however, being a 'public body', the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 1992 apply.

All Council Members and employees should be aware of freedom of information implications when creating documents, whether it is internal or external and must undertake proper record-keeping in the fulfilment of their duties and responsibilities while at the Town.

As a general rule any written material generated by employees or Council Members may become public knowledge and subject to a freedom of information request and investigation. Freedom of information gives individuals a right to access certain records held by both state and local government agencies.

REFERENCES

The following documents have been used in the development of the Governance Framework for the Town of Bassendean:

- *City of Bayswater Governance Framework 2020*
- *City of Joondalup Governance Framework 2021*
- *Introduction to Local Government Decision Making – WALGA Governance Resources*
- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*
- *Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996*
- *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*
- *Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021*