

Knox Environment Advisory Committee

Directorate:	City Liveability		
Approval by:	Council	Responsible Officer:	Manager City Futures
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1. Purpose

The function of this Advisory Committee is to facilitate stakeholder engagement which supports quality decision making and in turn, the achievements of Council’s goals and strategies under the Knox Community and Council Plans.

The purpose of the committee is to inform and advise Council on environmental and sustainability related issues and Council’s role in improving the natural and built environment.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the Environment Advisory Committee are to:

- Provide input and advice to Council on issues of environmental sustainability (including issues relating to strategic transport and natural resource management);
- Provide input to Council on behalf of the community and community organisations;
- Actively support Council’s consultation with, and advocacy to the broader community;
- Establish working groups and sub committees on an as required basis;
- Monitor and review environmental and sustainability issues (including issues relating to strategic transport and natural resource management) in Knox;
- Within the committee structure advocate to Council for the benefit of the Knox environment; and
- Assist Council in the determining of priority activities to be undertaken and annual objectives.

The establishment and operation of Council committees is a key enabler for the achievement of the goals and objectives contained in the *Knox Community and Council Plans 2021-2025*. While the key directions are interlinked, the Environment Advisory Committee will particularly focus on the following:

- Natural environment and sustainability
- Neighbourhoods, housing and infrastructure.

3. Membership, Period of Membership and Method of Appointment

The Environment Advisory Committee shall comprise the following:

- A maximum of 10 community members
- A maximum of 5 industry/professional members (including government agency representatives from

relevant portfolios)

- Councillors.

3.1 Selection and Recruitment of Community and Professional Industry Representative Members

The process to appoint community members will be advertised on Council's website, digital platforms, publications and through local networks. Applicants must make application via an expression of interest process.

Eligible community and industry/professional members will: live, work or study in Knox; and have an interest in and good working knowledge of environmental management, natural resource management or sustainability.

The approach and method for appointing representatives will include the following:

- Community and professional/ industry members will be selected by a panel comprising a Councillor and 2 Council Officers from the relevant service unit.
- The method of recruitment will be via an expression of interest process.
- Members will be appointed for a two year term.
- All members will be eligible to re-apply for appointment, however continuous membership for longer than four years is discouraged except in special circumstances that may be relevant to this Council Committee, and approved by Council.
- The CEO is authorised to approve short-term membership extensions where the purpose is to align recruitment activities across multiple Council committees.
- Council will be responsible for appointing all Councillor, community and industry/professional representative members.
- Casual vacancies which occur due to community members being unable to complete the full term of their appointments may be filled by co-opting suitable candidates from a previous selection process for the remainder of the previous incumbents' terms. If there is no suitable candidate from the previous selection process, the Council Committee may appoint by another method, as approved by the CEO. The selection panel will make a recommendation to the CEO, who will have the authority to appoint the recommended candidate to the committee for the remainder of the previous incumbent's term.
- Professional/industry representatives unable to attend a committee meeting are able to nominate a proxy or alternate member from the organisation they represent. Any proxy attendance should be notified to Council's nominated officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. It is expected the appointed professional/industry representative will provide an appropriate briefing of the committee purpose and objectives and relevant meeting notes to enable active participation and contribution of the proxy representation to the meeting.
- The committee may invite observers to meetings from time to time. This is at the discretion of the committee.
- Guests may also be invited to attend and participate at meetings, this would generally be for a specific purpose and/or specified period of time. This is at the discretion of the committee.

3.2 Councillors

Council will appoint Councillor representation annually.

Unless otherwise appointed to the committee by Council, the Mayor is, by virtue of the Office, an ex officio member of the committee. It is important that whilst the Mayor may not chair these meetings, appropriate recognition should be given to the presence of the Mayor if in attendance.

The role of Councillors is to participate in the meetings, listen to community and stakeholder views and keep the Council informed, through reports on committees by Councillors at Council meetings, on issues of community interest being considered at meetings.

3.3 Council Officers

Council officers will be nominated to support the committee by the CEO as required to provide advice and administrative support to the committee.

4. Delegated Authority and Decision Making

The committee acts in an advisory capacity only and has no delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of Council.

5. Meeting Procedures

The committee will meet approximately every two months with a minimum of 6 meetings per year, and an annual schedule of meetings will be agreed upon at the first meeting of the committee in each year.

The committee is not required to give public notice of its meetings and its meetings are not open to the public.

At the commencement of each financial year the committee will develop a work plan for the upcoming year. This will generally be aligned with the Community and Council Plans. The committee may also highlight any emerging issues which will also be documented. For efficiency purposes the business of the committee throughout the ensuing year should align with the work plan and list of emerging issues.

Meetings will follow standard meeting procedure protocols, which are in summary:

- Commence on time and conclude by the stated completion time;
- Be scheduled and confirmed in advance with all relevant papers distributed (as appropriate) to each member;
- Encourage fair and reasonable discussion, participation and respect for each other's views;
- Focus on the relevant issues at hand; and
- Provide advice to Council as far as possible on a consensus basis.

5.1 Quorums

There will be no designated quorum for Council Committees. A Council Committee can proceed if Councillor nominee/s are not present at the meeting.

5.2 Joint Committee Meetings

From time to time, Council Committees may decide that a joint meeting of two or more Council Committees will be beneficial for progressing the work of a Council Committee or for sharing ideas and providing updates on key issues of relevance in progressing the work of the Council Plan. Such committee meetings will only occur where requested and agreed by two or more Council Committees.

6. Chair

The position of Chairperson shall be held by a Councillor and shall be reviewed annually immediately following Councillor appointments to committees. The position of Chairperson is to be agreed upon between Councillors. When this cannot be achieved, the Mayor of the day shall determine the Chair. The Chairperson's responsibilities includes ensuring all Council Committee members have the opportunity to participate/contribute at meetings.

If the Chairperson is not present at a meeting, any other Councillor who has been appointed to the committee shall be appointed Chairperson. In the absence of any other Councillor representative/s, a staff member appointed by the relevant Director may Chair the meeting.

7. Agendas and Meeting Notes

Agendas and meeting notes must be prepared for each meeting. The Agenda must be provided to members of the committee not less than 4 days before the time fixed for the holding of the meeting.

The Chairperson must arrange for meeting notes of each meeting of the committee to be kept. The meeting notes of a Council Committee must:

- (a) contain details of the proceedings and recommendations made;
- (b) be clearly expressed;
- (c) be self-explanatory; and
- (d) incorporate relevant reports or a summary of the relevant reports considered by the committee.

Draft meeting notes must be:

- (a) submitted to the Committee Chairperson for confirmation within 7 days of the meeting;
- (b) distributed to all Committee Members following confirmation from the Chairperson and within 14 days of the meeting; and
- (c) submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for information.

Agendas and notes from meetings are circulated to members in a timely manner. The Annual Committee Report is presented to Council each year and is available to the public. The Annual Committee Report provides a summary of the topics and emerging issues discussed by the Committee over the preceding 12 month period.

8. Voting

As this is an advisory committee, voting on issues is not required. Any recommendations will generally be developed through consensus. Where a matter cannot be agreed, the differing opinions should be clearly expressed in the notes of the meeting.

9. Conflict and Interest Provisions

In performing the role of Advisory Committee member, a person must:

- Act with integrity;
- Impartially exercise his or her responsibilities in the interests of the local community;
- Not improperly seek to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person;
- Treat all persons with respect and have due regard to the opinions, beliefs, rights and responsibilities of other persons;
- Commit to regular attendance at meetings; and
- Not make improper use of information acquired because of their position or release information that the member knows, or should reasonably know, is confidential information.

Meetings of Committees will typically constitute a Meeting Conducted under the Auspices of Council pursuant to Council's Governance Rules and Councillors are consequently required to comply with the conflict of interest provisions as set down in the Local Government Act 2020 and Chapter 5 of the Council's Governance Rules.

Councillors must:

- Disclose that conflict of interest by explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those present immediately before the matter is considered;

- Absent themselves from any discussion of the matter; and
- As soon as practicable, provide the CEO with a written notice recording the nature of the conflict.

Typically, where a member of staff or a community member has a conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest in relation to a matter before the Council Committee, they must disclose the matter to the Council Committee before the matter is considered or discussed. Disclosure must include the nature of the interest and be recorded in the meeting notes. It will be at the discretion of the Chairperson if the staff and/or community member remains or leaves the room whilst the matter is discussed, and this must also be recorded in the notes of the meeting.

All members of a Council Committee must agree to participate in training on the Conflict and Interest provisions. Training shall be provided in consultation with Council's Governance team

10. Planning & Reporting

10.1 Annual Work Plan

Council Committees are required to formulate an annual work plan that aligns with Council's Community Plan and Council Plan. From time to time Council Committees may be requested to include training, or other business in their agendas that is outside their agreed Work Plan, on matters such as:

- Occupational Health and Safety;
- Child Safe Standards;
- Conflict of Interest and relevant governance matters;
- First Nations matters;
- Emergency Management; and
- Other topics that may be of relevance to individual Council Committees.

Council Committees will need to accommodate such requests, particularly where there are statutory obligations. However, every endeavor should be made to minimise the impact of such matters on the ongoing business of the Committee.

10.2 Annual Report

Council Committees are required to prepare a formal report on an annual basis in line with their stated objectives. The report must be adopted by the Council Committee and should directly reflect the objectives and the performance measures of the committee as set out in its Terms of Reference. Once adopted by the Council Committee, the report will be distributed as provided for within the Terms of Reference.

11. Administration Support

Administration support will be provided by the City Futures Department.

12. Contact with the Media

Contact with the Media by Councillors or staff shall be undertaken in accordance with the Councillor and Staff Media Policies. External committee members, should they have contact with the media in relation to a Council Committee, shall liaise with Chairperson in the first instance and then the Council Communications team, if deemed necessary, and must not at any stage purport to be a spokesperson for Council or the Council Committee.

13. Review Date

The Advisory Committee must be reviewed on a regular basis, with a review date generally not exceeding a 4 year period. If the committee has a relevant function at the end of the standard review period, a report must be presented to Council including a review of the committee’s Terms of Reference and seeking endorsement from Council to continue to act for a further period.

14. Meals

Council will provide reasonable meals for meetings at times that immediately precede, follow or extend through normal meal times. The provision of meals will be determined by the CEO or delegate, and be within the capacity of the City Futures department budget.

15. Administrative Updates

From time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this policy. Where an update does not materially alter this policy, such a change may be made administratively and approved by the Chief Executive Officer. Examples of minor administrative changes include changes to names of Council departments or positions, changes to Federal or State Government department names or legislation; or other minor amendments that do not have material impact on the provisions or intent of the Policy. Where any change or update is considered to be a material change, it must be considered by Council or a relevant Delegated Committee.