Councillor Induction And Professional Development Guidelines

2018

NSW
GOVERNMENT

About these guidelines

The *Councillor Induction and Professional Development Guidelines* (the Guidelines) have been issued under section 23A of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) to assist general managers and council staff to develop, deliver, evaluate and report on the induction and professional development programs they are required to provide mayors and councillors under the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* (the Regulation). Councils are required to consider the Guidelines when undertaking these activities. These Guidelines also apply to county councils, and where relevant, joint organisations.

The Guidelines have also been developed to ensure mayors and councillors are aware of the knowledge, skills and personal attributes expected of them in their civic roles under the Act, and of the support their council should be providing to ensure they are able to effectively fulfil their roles.

These Guidelines are divided into five parts:

Part A	explains the statutory requirements for **induction and professional development programs** for mayors and councillors in NSW.
Part B	guides councils on how to develop and deliver **information sessions** to potential candidates considering nominating for election.
Part C	guides councils on how to develop and deliver **induction programs** for newly elected and returning mayors and councillors.
Part D	guides councils on how to develop and deliver **ongoing professional development programs** that ensure mayors and councillors continue to develop their capabilities throughout their terms in office.
Part E	outlines how councils are to **report** on the induction and professional development activities offered to mayors and councillors and their participation in those activities.

It is acknowledged that many NSW councils already provide induction and ongoing professional development programs for mayors and councillors. It is also recognised that the needs and circumstances of councils vary as do the capabilities of individual mayors and councillors, as well as their development needs. The aim of the Regulation and the Guidelines is to ensure that all mayors and councillors across the state have access to such programs, and that the programs delivered by councils meet a consistent minimum standard. The Guidelines have also been designed to be used flexibly by councils and to accommodate, and in some cases build upon, existing programs.

These Guidelines include:

- details of the capabilities (ie the knowledge, skills and attributes) that mayors and councillors are required to have or to acquire in order to fulfil their roles effectively
- a framework for the development of pre-election information sessions for candidates, and induction and ongoing professional development programs for elected members
- information about the developmental stages of each program and what to consider at each stage, and
- checklists of the content that is required in candidate information sessions and induction programs for elected members.

Contents

Introduction

Background

Mayors and councillors come from a diverse range of backgrounds and bring different knowledge, skills, perspectives and insights to their roles. This is one of the strengths of a democratic and representative system of local government.

However, few new mayors or councillors have extensive knowledge of the system of local government, how a council works, or the full scope of their roles and responsibilities when they assume office for the first time. Some are unaware of the need for mayors and councillors to work as a team, despite their political differences, to make decisions that are in the best interests of the community. There may be others who, if they had been fully aware prior to their election of the nature of the role of a mayor or councillor and of the time commitment involved, may not have nominated to stand.

The role exercised by mayors and councillors is a very demanding one and the community rightly has high expectations of the performance of the mayor and councillors. As the governing body of the council, mayors and councillors must work together as a cohesive team to meet the needs of the community. The multi-faceted nature of the roles also requires mayors and councillors to have a wide variety of skills, experience and knowledge, along with the time, passion and commitment to achieve results for the community.

From their first council meeting, mayors and councillors will be required to work together to make important decisions on behalf of their communities, and to take responsibility for those decisions. These decisions will impact on local communities, the services and infrastructure delivered by the council, and the local natural and built environments. They will often involve significant use of public money. Proper induction into their roles, and the building of the governing body as a unified and collaborative team, are vital if mayors and councillors are to be effective from the start of their terms in office.

Some mayors and councillors may need to develop knowledge and skills in a broad range of areas that are unfamiliar to them in order to undertake their roles successfully. These may include, for example, understanding council meeting procedures or land use planning requirements or interpreting financial statements.

Even experienced mayors and councillors say they can find it challenging to keep abreast of changes to the legislative and policy context for local government as well as changes to their councils' policies and procedures.

Ongoing professional development and training, as well as early relationship building between councillors, is essential if the community is to be well served by their elected representatives on council.

Statutory requirements

The Act prescribes the roles and responsibilities of mayors and councillors both collectively as the governing body of the council, and as individual members of the governing body. It also places a responsibility on each mayor and councillor to make all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform their roles.

To assist mayors and councillors to meet this obligation, the Regulation requires general managers to deliver induction and ongoing professional development programs that will help mayors and councillors to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform their roles. Mayors and councillors have a reciprocal obligation to participate in these programs. Part A of these Guidelines further explains what is required of councils, mayors and councillors under the Regulation.

Each council is required to publicly report on participation in the council's induction and professional development program. Part E of these Guidelines outlines these reporting requirements.

Induction and professional development – an overview

Pre-election candidate information sessions

Whilst not a mandatory requirement, it is recommended that general managers begin induction and professional development activities by holding at least one candidate information session for people considering nominating for election prior to the election.

These sessions are to be designed to ensure potential candidates are fully aware and informed of what will be expected of them if they are elected. Part B of these Guidelines provides more information about how each council could develop and deliver candidate information sessions.

Induction programs

An induction program is a process used within many businesses, government agencies and non-government bodies to welcome new people to an organisation and to prepare them for their new roles.

An induction program ensures the organisation provides a person commencing a new role with all the information they need to do their job in the first few months. It also enables the person to become a useful, integrated member of the organisation, rather than being 'thrown in at the deep end' without understanding how to perform their role, or how it fits in with the rest of the organisation.

In the local government context, a good councillor induction program can build early positive relationships and teamwork between councillors, increase productivity and provide essential knowledge from the moment a mayor or councillor is elected. This can ensure newly elected mayors and councillors become more productive in a shorter period of time.

Councillor induction programs are mandatory in NSW under the Regulation. Part C of these Guidelines outlines how each council should develop its councillor induction program.

Professional development programs

A professional development program is any program which involves a deliberate and ongoing process of improving and increasing the professional knowledge, competence, skill and effectiveness of people in the workplace through professional development activities specific to their needs.

In local government, an effective professional development program can ensure mayors and councillors fill any skills or knowledge gaps they have that may otherwise prevent them from making the best possible contributions to their communities.

Ongoing professional development programs for mayors and councillors are mandatory in NSW under the Regulation. Part D of these Guidelines outlines how each council should develop its councillor professional development program.

Part A:
Statutory and
Policy Context

Statutory requirements

Under section 232(1)(g) of the Act, all mayors and councillors have a responsibility to make all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform their roles.

To support this, the general manager is required under the Regulation to ensure the delivery of:

- an **induction program** for newly elected and returning councillors and a specialised supplementary induction program for the mayor within six months of their election, and

- an **ongoing professional development program** for the mayor and each councillor over the term of the council to assist them to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform their roles. The content of the ongoing professional development program is to be determined in consultation with the mayor and each councillor. It must be needs-based and reflect the specific skills, knowledge and personal attributes required by the mayor, each individual councillor and the governing body as a whole, to perform their roles effectively.

These requirements also apply to councillors and mayors elected during the term of a council to fill a casual vacancy.

Under the Regulation, mayors and councillors must make all reasonable efforts to participate in the activities offered to them as part of an induction or professional development program. Councils are also required to report on the participation of the mayor and councillors in these programs.

Principles, roles and responsibilities under the Act

Councils are required to apply the five sets of guiding principles prescribed under the Act in exercising their functions. These principles (outlined in **Appendix A**) seek to ensure that each council carries out its functions in a way that facilitates the creation of a strong, healthy and prosperous local community. Mayors and councillors must understand these principles and be able to apply them when exercising their functions.

The Act also prescribes the roles and responsibilities of mayors and councillors, both collectively as the governing body of the council, and individually as members of the governing body (these are outlined in **Appendix B**). Mayors and councillors must have a strong understanding of their prescribed roles and responsibilities under the Act in order to be able to fulfil them.

Councils must design their induction and professional development programs to ensure that mayors and councillors have the capabilities (ie the knowledge, skills and attributes) needed to apply the guiding principles and to effectively undertake their prescribed roles and responsibilities.

Reporting requirements

Mayors and councillors are ultimately accountable to the community that elects them for the performance of their duties.

To facilitate this accountability, councils are required under the Regulation to report each year in their annual reports on the participation of the mayor and each councillor in the induction and professional development program during that year.

The information to be reported includes:

- the name of the mayor and each individual councillor that completed council's induction program (where an induction program has been delivered during the relevant year)
- the name of the mayor and each councillor who participated in any ongoing professional development program during the year
- the number of training and other activities provided to the mayor and councillors during the year as part of a professional development program, and
- the total cost of induction and professional development activities and any other training provided to the mayor and councillors during the relevant year.

These reporting requirements do not apply to joint organisations.

Council policy

Each council needs to enshrine its commitment to uphold these statutory requirements and to the induction and ongoing professional development of mayors and councillors in all relevant council policies. This will ensure that councillor induction and professional development is embedded in council's values and operations, and that an effective induction and ongoing professional development program is implemented.

Each council should also ensure that its ongoing professional development program is accommodated by and reflected in its councillor expenses and facilities policy.[1] The expenses and facilities policy should make clear and adequate provision for relevant training and professional development activities as legitimate expenses.

Councils may also wish to consider other mechanisms to reinforce their commitment to ongoing professional development for the mayor and councillors, and develop a structured approach for realising this commitment in practice.

This may be done through developing and adopting a resolution or a charter as a statement of commitment to support ongoing professional development for the mayor and councillors.

Alternatively, councils may wish to develop and adopt a councillor induction and professional development policy. A model policy is provided in **Appendix C.**

Budget

Each council should allocate an annual budget to support induction and professional development activities to be undertaken in that year. Progress against expenditure of the budget allocation should be reported on a quarterly basis as part of the budgetary cycle.

Councils will need to determine the size of the budget allocation, which may change annually, depending on training needs. It is to be expected that costs will be higher in the first year of council's term due to the need to deliver an induction program. The delivery program financial estimates and the Long Term Financial Plan will reflect the varying training and development budget requirements over the term of the council.

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1   A councillor expenses and facilities policy must be prepared by each council in accordance with section 252 of the Act and the Office of Local Government's *Guidelines for the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities to mayors and councillors in NSW*.

Part B:
Pre-Election Information Session
for Potential Candidates

Benefits of a pre-election candidate information session

It is vital that people who are considering nominating for election to a council have a solid understanding of the role before they nominate. This includes an understanding of what will be expected of them should they be elected, and the legislative boundaries they must work within.

Being fully informed will ensure that candidates who nominate have seriously considered whether they have the knowledge, skills and personal attributes required to fulfil the responsibilities of civic office (noting that the specific knowledge required can be developed if these skills and personal attributes are present). Being fully informed will also assist them to judge whether they will be able to effectively meet the demands of representing their community on council.

Whilst not a mandatory requirement, it is recommended that the general manager ensure at least one candidate information session is held prior to nomination day for people considering nominating for election to council.

The benefits of a pre-election information session/s include:

- candidates being fully informed about the:
  - roles and responsibilities of a mayor and/ or councillor
  - legislation and council policies they are expected to comply with
  - time commitment required, and
  - skills, knowledge and personal attributes needed
- candidates being given the opportunity to learn from experienced mayors and councillors
- candidates being given the opportunity to ask council any questions about the role
- candidates being aware of the financial and other support available to them to fulfil the role of a mayor and/or councillor

- candidates understanding that their behaviour as a mayor and/or councillor will be governed by council's code of conduct and that there are penalties for breaches
- council being able to provide potential candidates ahead of time the key dates of any known events that they will be required to participate in during council's term if they are elected so they can make tentative arrangements to attend (for example, council meetings, induction)
- the community benefiting from each candidate seeking election based on a platform that reflects what they can and cannot do or achieve as councillor, and
- reduced tension and conflict due to newly elected mayors and councillors having a better understanding of their roles and what can be achieved by a unified governing body.

Delivering a pre-election candidate information session

Accessibility

The communities served by councils are diverse, and this should be reflected in the people elected to councils. Candidate information sessions therefore need to be highly accessible to ensure as many candidates as possible that wish to attend are physically able to. This includes the venue selected, transportation options available nearby, the time the session is held and the way information is presented and delivered, particularly for people who are visually or hearing impaired.

To ensure candidates that may not be able to attend due to mobility issues or their regional geographic location are not excluded, councils should publish as much information from the candidate information sessions as possible online. Councils, particularly those in regional areas, are encouraged to webcast candidate information sessions.

Timing

Councils can choose when to hold their candidate information session/s, but at least one session should be held before the deadline for nomination to allow potential candidates to be fully informed before they nominate for election. The session/s could be held at council premises, or another appropriate public venue/s, at a convenient time that will enable as many potential candidates as possible to attend. For councils divided into wards, councils could consider the benefit of holding sessions in different wards.

During the information session, councils are encouraged to recommend to candidates that they attend a council meeting/s or a council committee meeting/s to gain further insight into council decision making and meeting practice. The timing of candidate information sessions should allow for candidates to attend a meeting if they wish, and therefore would be best held before a council meeting.

Councils will need to ensure that the details of the candidate information session/s are well advertised in the local community (for example, the council's website, local radio, social media, newspapers, and/or any other effective means) so that any potential candidates are aware the information session/s is being held.

Content

A checklist of the content to be included in a candidate information session/s is provided in **Appendix D**. Recommended content covers the:

- role of council
- roles and responsibilities of the governing body, mayor, councillors, general manager and other staff
- legal and ethical responsibilities of the mayor and councillors
- time commitment required of a mayor and councillor
- support available to assist the mayor and councillors in their roles, and
- knowledge, skills and personal attributes required to successfully fulfil the roles of mayor and councillor.

Delivery

The candidate information session/s is best delivered by the person who is most able to engage attendees and deliver the content in a way that will achieve the outcomes sought. This person could be the general manager, another staff member or an external provider. If the information session/s is not presented by the general manager it is recommended that the general manager still be present to answer any questions.

Mayors or councillors from previous council terms may also be invited to provide an overview of their experience in council, and any significant issues they think potential candidates should consider before deciding whether to nominate. This could take the form of an informal talk, a panel discussion or a councillor question and answer session. Whilst they are welcome to attend, it is not appropriate to invite currently elected members to present at candidate information sessions as current members may choose to re-nominate for election. Current members, however, are able to attend as an audience member if they wish.

Consideration should be given to which delivery method, or combination of delivery methods, would best suit the information being conveyed and should recognise that attendees are likely to have a variety of learning styles.

Resource sharing

There are parts of each council's candidate information session/s that will be common to all councils, for example, the roles and responsibilities of mayors and councillors and the election process.

To achieve greater efficiency, councils are encouraged to share candidate information session resources or jointly hold parts of their session/s with other councils. Joint and regional organisations are also encouraged to develop and/or deliver regional candidate information sessions on behalf of their member councils that candidates can attend. These common sessions could be supplemented by member councils with individual sessions at each council or online content that provides local information specific to that council.

Printed and face-to-face training resources, such as the candidate information pack and other visual aids used in sessions, could also be shared between councils, or developed by joint or regional organisations on behalf of their member councils.

The NSW Electoral Commission provides a range of information and educational resources about the election process and the legal obligations of candidates when nominating and campaigning that council may wish to use. More information can be found at www.elections.nsw.gov.au and www.votensw.info.

Candidate information pack

Councils are encouraged to prepare a candidate information pack for attendees that provides key information for continued consideration after the information session/s. This can take the form of printed material presented in a folder that potential candidates can take away and read, or a dedicated section on council's website that provides all the necessary information. The pack can also include any relevant information or resources made available by external bodies. The NSW Electoral Commission, for example, provides a range of educational resources that guide candidates through the election process.

3. Evaluation

It is recommended that the information session/s be evaluated by council to determine how effective it was in helping potential candidates understand what is involved in being a councillor or mayor, and to enable them to assess their suitability for these roles. Councils could do this by seeking the views of attendees at the end of a session.

For greater insight, councils may also consider surveying the councillors elected approximately six months after the election to assess whether they feel the session gave them an accurate view of their roles and responsibilities, or whether they would have benefitted from any other information being given at the sessions.

The outcomes achieved from the information session/s could include, at a minimum, potential candidates fully understanding:

- the roles and responsibilities of a councillor and mayor, including the knowledge, skills and personal attributes needed to perform these roles effectively
- the legislation, code of conduct and other council policies they will need to comply with
- the time commitment that will be required from them, and
- the financial and other support available to them to fulfil the role of a mayor and/or councillor.

The evaluation could assess whether these outcomes were achieved.

Part C:
Induction Program
for Mayors and Councillors

Benefits of a councillor induction program

Holding an induction program for councillors (including a supplementary component for mayors) each council term is a mandatory requirement under the Regulation. The mayor and all councillors are expected to participate in all induction activities.

The induction program will enable the mayor and councillors to quickly become familiar with how the council works, the rules under which it operates and the complexities of the roles. It is a vital way to ensure new and returning mayors and councillors get the information they need to be effective leaders from the very beginning of the council's term.

It is important that the councillor induction program is not simply used to present dry facts. It is also a vital opportunity to talk with councillors and the mayor about the accepted values and behaviours of the council that they have become a part of.

The induction program is also an invaluable opportunity to sow the seeds for a governing body that functions as a strong, collaborative team. It provides the chance for the mayor and each councillor to understand what motivated their new colleagues to become councillors, and to bond as a team with a common focus on making a difference for the community. It can also be used as an opportunity to have early conversations about how they would like to operate as a team to work towards common goals and to identify success factors for council and the community. It can also establish clear roles and responsibilities and build trust and positive working relationships.

The induction program will benefit mayors and councillors by:

• providing them with access to essential information in a structured and consistent way that will assist them to function well in their role and to make informed and effective decisions from the start of their term in office

• enabling more active and rapid participation in the business of the council

• enabling them to meet, build rapport, share knowledge and experiences, and form positive working relationships with each other

• identifying common goals and a shared vision as a governing body

• introducing councillors to staff to help break down any 'us and them' divide and create one team working for the community whilst still recognising the legislated separation between the two groups

• providing an opportunity for appropriate role models and mentoring relationships to be established between experienced mayors and councillors and new councillors

• helping them to understand key legislation

• helping them to understand their prescribed roles and responsibilities

• briefing them on the 'big picture', and providing them with a clear understanding of council's health and performance

• enabling them to understand and agree on the key issues and tasks for the new council, and to build a vision for the governing body's term

• enabling them to understand key council information, policies and procedures

• enabling them to understand the council and the local government area

• enabling them to feel empowered with key information about the integrated planning and reporting processes and their opportunities for influence, and

• increasing their self-confidence in their ability to perform their roles.

An induction program should also be delivered for any councillors or a mayor elected during the term of a council to fill a casual vacancy.

Returning councillors

Because local government is complex and subject to change, the mayor and all councillors, both new and experienced, are expected to participate in the councillor induction program at the commencement of each council term.

Whilst returning councillors may already know much of the information provided in the induction program, their attendance at these sessions will demonstrate to new councillors that their roles and responsibilities are important. Returning councillors can also contribute valuable information and lessons learnt from previous council terms, and help build a positive and collaborative culture for the new governing body.

Important aspects of the induction program include building trust and positive relationships between the members of the new governing body, establishing working bonds, and the mayor and councillors determining how they can work together as a team. The mayor and all councillors need to be part of this process.

For returning mayors, council can assess the prior knowledge and experience of the returning mayor and provide refresher training as needed as part of the supplementary mayoral component of the induction program. This includes mayors elected midway through the council term who are also expected to undergo mayoral induction.

County councils

County councils are required to deliver an induction program for their member councillors. This includes new members who are appointed to fill a casual vacancy.

Induction programs for county councils are to be delivered as an external supplementary component of the induction program each member participated in at their home council.

This supplementary external component is to be delivered by the county council and focus on providing the councillor the information they need to know about the county council in order to fulfil their role. This could include, for example:

- early functions required of members such as the election of the chairperson
- the functions and directions of the county council
- the county council's business activity strategic plan
- financial information
- applicable regulatory requirements (e.g. for water supply or sewerage infrastructure)
- staffing, and
- local issues.

County councils should also include team building activities in their induction programs (as described below) to set a positive and unifying foundation for the operation of the county council.

Joint organisations

Joint organisations are not required to deliver an induction program for the voting representatives who are elected to their board.

However, joint organisations may choose to deliver an induction program to all board members (including voting representatives and non-voting representatives) to ensure they understand their responsibilities and the role and functions of their joint organisation. Where joint organisations undertake operational functions or deliver services on behalf of member councils, it is strongly recommended that joint organisation board members receive a briefing on these and relevant financial information as part of any induction offered.

Joint organisations may also include team building activities (as described below) to set a positive and unifying foundation for the operation of the joint organisation.

Delivering a councillor induction program

Accessibility

Councillor induction programs need to be highly accessible to ensure that all councillors are able to attend, particularly those with mobility issues or other impairments which may cause attendance to be difficult. Councils should therefore select options which maximise the accessibility of induction sessions. This includes the venue selected, transportation options available nearby, the time the session is held and the way information is presented and delivered, particularly for the sight or hearing impaired.

Councils are also encouraged to publish as much induction material as possible online to enable councillors to access induction materials and other relevant council information when needed.

Planning

Councils should aim to have their induction programs finalised in time to provide potential candidates the proposed induction timetable at the candidate information session/s. Candidates can then make tentative arrangements to enable them to attend the induction program straight after the election if they are elected.

It is important that councillors feel welcome when they start their terms. This will send a supportive message that builds on the positive culture being encouraged for the governing body. Council should also ensure that the resources each councillor and the mayor needs are set up and ready when they start. This includes any IT equipment, office facilities or other necessary resources that will ensure they are productive from their first day in office.

Timing

The Regulation allows a maximum of six months for the delivery of the induction program to provide councils the flexibility to develop an approach that best meets the needs of its mayor and councillors.

The first induction training session should take place, where practical, as soon as possible after the results of the election are declared and prior to the first council meeting. It should aim to provide councillors and the mayor with the information they need to function effectively in their roles, including in meetings, until the rest of the induction program is delivered. At a minimum, this should include training in council's code of conduct, code of meeting practice, preparation for taking the oath of office and electing the mayor (if applicable). The rest of the induction program must be delivered within six months of the polls being declared.

The delivery of the components of the induction program should be timed to reflect the information the councillors and the mayor need in the first week, the first month and the first six months of council. In addition, the relevant components of the induction program should be delivered before the review of the council's community strategic plan, and before the adoption of its delivery program.

Some councils prefer to deliver the full induction program as soon as possible to provide councillors with all of the information and induction training they need from the start of their term in office. However, this approach runs the risk of councillors feeling overloaded with information.

Other councils prefer to deliver the induction program approximately six weeks after the election so that new councillors have the opportunity to gain some practical experience first. However, this approach runs the risk of councillors not being effective or lacking confidence during the weeks preceding the induction training.

Alternatively, some councils choose to use a mixture of these approaches by staging the induction program over a number of weeks. Ultimately, the optimum timing for delivery of an induction program will vary depending on local circumstances.

Content

A checklist of recommended content for induction programs for councillors and a supplementary program for mayors is provided at **Appendix E**.

There should be two core components of council's induction program:

- a knowledge-based component that ensures new mayors and councillors have the information they need to undertake their roles (this includes a supplementary component for the mayor), and
- a team-building component designed to bring councillors together to form a collaborative, positive and united governing body.

Knowledge component

In the first few weeks in particular, new mayors and councillors will need to know:

- their roles, responsibilities and legislative obligations
- what the council does and how the council operates, including an overview of integrated planning and reporting and land use planning
- their financial management responsibilities
- the key issues and tasks for the new council
- the legislation, rules, principles and political context under which councils operate
- the council's organisational structure and the roles and responsibilities of staff
- key council policies and procedures they must comply with
- the role of council meetings and how to participate effectively in them

- the support available to the mayor and councillors, and where they can go to get more information or assistance
- how to speak to the media appropriately and effectively, and
- information on the process for electing the mayor (where applicable).

Mayors will also need to know:

- the roles and responsibilities of the mayor as leader of the council, including ceremonial functions
- how to chair council meetings
- the role and functions of regional and other external bodies (including joint and regional organisations of councils) council is a member of
- how to oversee the general manager, including understanding recruitment processes and leading performance reviews
- how to lead council's integrated planning and reporting, and
- how to manage code of conduct complaints about the general manager.

Team building component

Team building activities should be held, where necessary, depending on the relationships that exist between councillors and how they are likely to function as a team. The activities should aim to ensure mayors and councillors, as a governing body, understand the need to:

- build relationships with each other based on trust and mutual respect
- contribute to a positive and ethical culture within the governing body
- encourage and facilitate collaboration with each other
- work towards consensus as members of the governing body for the benefit of the community
- manage alternative views within the governing body without damaging relationships
- champion and communicate the council's vision and strategic plans as a cohesive team

- respect the diversity of skills and experiences on the governing body, and

- communicate and uphold the decisions of council in a respectful way, even if their own positions are not adopted.

Activities should also help the mayor, as the leader of the governing body, to:

- act as a stabilising influence and show leadership, and

- promote a culture of integrity and accountability within council and when representing council in the community and elsewhere.

Structure and delivery

Each component of the induction program should be presented by the person who is best able to deliver the content and achieve the outcomes sought. This could be the general manager, another staff member or an external provider. Previous or current mayors or councillors may also be invited to provide an overview of their experiences on council, as might an experienced former or current mayor or councillor from outside the council.

The induction program should be conducted in a way that avoids the mayor and councillors being overloaded with information, particularly if this is at the expense of team building. This may be achieved by limiting the length of sessions, having a number of short sessions rather than one longer session and/or through the use of a range of delivery modes and materials.

Some councils structure their councillor induction programs intensively over two or more days – possibly a weekend – while others choose to hold shorter, evening sessions over several weeks. Others choose a combination of these two approaches.

Consideration should be given to which delivery method, or combination of methods, would best suit the information being conveyed and the different learning styles of councillors. Options could include:

- intensive blocks over two or more days (including weekends)

- evening or dinner sessions over several weeks

- a mix of regional and local level induction sessions

- informal briefings from the general manager and other senior staff

- guest speakers and presenters from other councils, state government agencies or other local government groups

- a guided tour of the council's administration building/s, depot, council facilities and local government area

- in-house workshops by council staff and/or professional training providers

- seminars and conferences

- panel discussions

- a mock council meeting or meetings

- training booklets and discussion papers distributed to councillors to work through at their own pace, and/or

- online information and training resources.

Where possible, presentations should be supported by written materials, including an induction manual or handbook that councillors can retain and refer to. Councils are also encouraged to publish these materials online for easy access by councillors.

Resource sharing

There are parts of each council's induction program that will be common to all councils, for example, councillor roles and responsibilities, statutory frameworks, the code of conduct, the code of meeting practice and media training.

To achieve greater efficiency, councils are encouraged to share common induction resources with other councils or jointly hold parts of their induction program with other councils. Joint and regional organisations are also encouraged to develop and/or deliver the common elements of their member councils induction programs on their behalf. These common sessions can be supplemented by member councils with individual sessions that provide local information and team building activities specifically for the elected members of that council.

Printed and face-to-face training induction resources could also be shared between councils, or developed by joint or regional organisations on behalf of their member councils.

The Office of Local Government also offers 'Hit the Ground Running' workshops, held shortly after each council election, which councils may wish to include in their induction program.

Induction manual

Councils should develop an induction manual or handbook to support councillors in the first weeks following the commencement of the council's term of office. This resource may also include relevant background reference material for the longer term, and printed or online resources specifically developed for new councillors. It could also include a copy of the Councillor Handbook which has been developed by the Office of Local Government for councillors. The induction manual may be provided prior to, at or after induction training.

How the information is presented in the induction manual will affect how useful it is. For example, some councils have found that a manual is most likely to be used if the information is presented in a folder. Some councils may consider also providing the information as an online resource. An online resource may be easier for councils to keep updated and can make topic searching easier for users. It will also provide councillors easier access to council information when needed.

Appendix F provides a checklist of the content that could be included in an induction manual or online resource. Recommended content includes:

- basic information about the council
- profiles (demographic, economic etc.) of the local government area
- information about council meetings
- key planning and policy documents and information
- key legislation
- information about support for councillors, and
- useful resources from other state government agencies and independent bodies and/or details about where they may be accessed.

It is suggested that online resources include hyperlinks to electronic versions of any plans, policies or other documents referred to in the councillor induction manual.

Casual vacancies

Under the Regulation, an induction program must also be delivered by a council for any newly elected mayor or councillor who is elected to fill a casual vacancy that arises during the council term.

Evaluation

Councils should evaluate the induction program to determine what elements worked well and whether there were any deficiencies that need to be addressed.

The methodology for the evaluation should be determined when the induction program is being developed to ensure that relevant data is collected. At a minimum, the evaluation should assess whether the induction program resulted in councillors and the mayor:

- understanding the need to build trusting and positive relationships with a common purpose as a team of councillors
- understanding the need to build a cohesive and positive culture for the governing body
- understanding the need to build a positive working relationship with the general manager and other staff
- understanding their roles and the roles of internal and external stakeholders, and feeling confident in their ability to perform their roles
- understanding key council information and how council works
- being aware of all relevant legislation and council policies and procedures, and being committed to complying with them
- understanding the key issues and tasks for the new council
- being able to make informed and effective decisions from the start of their term in office

- being able to effectively participate in council meetings and apply meeting rules correctly from the start of their term in office
- being able to fulfil their integrated planning and reporting responsibilities, including financial management responsibilities
- knowing how to speak to the media appropriately, and
- feeling confident in understanding and using financial information to manage the council's finances.

In the case of the mayor, being able to:

- act as a stabilising influence and show leadership in times of crisis
- build a positive working relationship with the general manager
- oversee the general manager, including leading recruitment processes and performance reviews
- chair council meetings
- undertake their ceremonial functions
- lead the council's integrated planning and reporting, and
- manage code of conduct complaints about the general manager.

Part D:
Professional Development Program for Mayors and Councillors

Benefits of a professional development program for mayors and councillors

Ongoing professional development for mayors and councillors is mandatory in NSW. It is an investment which will enhance the effectiveness of a council's performance in achieving its goals.

The benefits of an ongoing professional development program for councillors and mayors include:

- mayors and councillors representing their communities to the best of their ability
- mayors and councillors feeling confident and supported in their roles
- the governing body making decisions based on a full understanding of all the key issues and consequences
- improved performance of council overall
- greater understanding of, and compliance with, legal responsibilities
- better management of the council's finances and resources, and
- mayors and councillors developing skills and knowledge that they can take into their personal and professional lives.

Developing an ongoing professional development plan

As part of council's professional development program, an ongoing professional development plan must be developed for the mayor and each councillor. The program will span the council's term, with individual activities implemented over time according to priority. The mayor and each councillor is expected to complete all the activities included in their professional development plan.

Assessment

As a first step to developing individual plans, an assessment is required of the knowledge, skills and personal attributes the mayor and each councillor bring to their roles and a comparison made against those that they need to effectively serve their community. Councils may also have additional knowledge, skills or attributes that they need elected members to possess, reflecting the specific services or particular environmental, social or economic challenges facing their community.

Any deficit in knowledge, skills or attributes identified through the assessment process should form the basis of the professional development plans developed for the mayor and each councillor. This process should be undertaken for both new and experienced mayors and councillors.

Activities

The professional development plan developed for the mayor and each councillor must outline how their individual development needs are going to be met within the council term. Professional development activities should be prioritised according to need and approved by the general manager where council funds are required.

Professional development activities should, wherever possible, follow the 70/20/10 learning principle. The 70/20/10 principle requires that:

- 70% of learning activities are provided via learning and developing from experience – for example, on-the-job training, self-directed learning, developmental roles, problem solving, exposure and practice

- 20% of learning activities are provided via learning and developing through others – for example, personal or professional networks, coaching, mentoring, feedback, memberships and professional associations, and

- 10% of learning activities are provided via learning and developing through structured programs – for example, training courses, external or in-house workshops, seminars, webinars and other e-learning and briefing sessions conducted by the council, external training providers or industry bodies.

The 70/20/10 learning principle enables councils and elected members to take into account the varied learning styles the mayor and individual councillors have, as well as the time they have available for professional development, when selecting professional development activities. It also minimises the financial costs of delivering an ongoing professional development program by prioritising learning through on-the-job experiences and networking.

Resource sharing

There may be professional development activities that are common to all councillors or mayors. Councils are encouraged to share educational resources with other councils and/or jointly hold professional development activities with other councils. Joint and regional organisations are also encouraged to develop and/or deliver regional professional development activities on behalf of their member councils.

Timing

The timing of professional development activities for the mayor and councillors should be designed in such a way so as to not overload councillors with learning activities in the early part of council's term. The timing should reflect what knowledge and skills councillors and the mayor need at various points in council's term to undertake their roles.

For example, councils should ensure that the mayor and councillors have acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively contribute to the review of the community strategic plan and the development of the delivery program before these activities are undertaken.

County councils and joint organisations

County councils should offer professional development activities that are relevant to their specific functions and operations and that may be necessary to support decision making in relation to those functions and operations.

While joint organisations are not required to deliver a professional development program, they should consider offering professional development activities relevant to any functions or services provided by the joint organisation on behalf of member councils to support any decision making required by the board in relation to those activities.

Local Government Capability Framework and 'PD in a Box'

Local Government NSW has developed a Local Government Capability Framework. This describes the knowledge, skills and personal attributes needed by mayors and councillors to represent their communities on council and to deliver community outcomes. These are listed in **Appendix G**.

The Framework is supported by 'PD in a Box', a free and confidential online portal that mayors and councillors can use to assess the knowledge and skills they bring to their role and self-identify gaps that require professional development. Mayors and councillors will receive an ongoing professional development plan through the portal, based on their input, which will suggest specific activities that they can participate in to build the skills and knowledge they need.

Councils are able to use this as a tool to support the development of ongoing professional development programs for their mayors and councillors.

The Local Government Capability Framework and PD in a Box can be found at www.lgnsw.org.au.

Evaluation

Councils are to evaluate their ongoing professional development program to assist the council to determine the program's effectiveness and to identify areas of possible improvement.

The outcomes of the professional development program should, at a minimum, include councillors and mayors demonstrating the core skills and knowledge areas listed in council's needs analysis.

The evaluation should assess whether these outcomes were achieved.

Part E:
Public Reporting

Holding elected office in a council is a role that carries with it significant responsibilities. All holders of elected offices in councils owe it to the communities that entrust them with this responsibility to ensure that they hold and maintain the skills necessary to exercise their functions effectively on behalf of the community.

Mayors and councillors are ultimately accountable to the community that elects them for the performance of their functions. For this reason, councils are required to publicly report each year in their annual report on the participation of the mayor and each councillor in the council's induction and professional development programs during that year.

The information published in the annual report is to include:

- the name of the mayor and each individual councillor that completed council's induction program (where an induction program has been delivered during the relevant year)
- the name of the mayor and each councillor who participated in any ongoing professional development program during the year
- the number of training and other activities provided to the mayor and councillors during the year as part of a professional development program, and
- the total cost of induction and professional development activities and any other training provided to the mayor and councillors during the relevant year.

These reporting requirements do not apply to joint organisations.

Appendix A:
Guiding Principles
for Councils under
the Act

General principles (section 8A(1))

Councils should:

- provide strong and effective representation, leadership, planning and decision-making
- carry out functions in a way that provides the best possible value for residents and ratepayers
- plan strategically, using the integrated planning and reporting framework, for the provision of effective and efficient services and regulation to meet the diverse needs of the local community
- apply the integrated planning and reporting framework in carrying out their functions so as to achieve desired outcomes and continuous improvements
- work cooperatively with other councils and the state government to achieve desired outcomes for the local community
- manage lands and other assets so that current and future local community needs can be met in an affordable way
- work with others to secure appropriate services for local community needs
- act fairly, ethically and without bias in the interests of the local community, and
- be responsible employers and provide a consultative and supportive working environment for staff.

Decision-making principles (section 8A(2))

Councils should:

- recognise diverse local community needs and interests
- consider social justice principles
- consider the long-term and cumulative effects of actions on future generations, and
- consider the principles of ecologically sustainable development

Council decision-making should be transparent and decision-makers are to be accountable for decisions and omissions.

Community participation principle (section 8A(3))

Councils should actively engage with their local communities, through the use of the integrated planning and reporting framework and other measures.

Principles of sound financial management (section 8B)

Council spending should be responsible and sustainable, aligning general revenue and expenses.

Councils should:

- invest in responsible and sustainable infrastructure for the benefit of the local community
- have effective financial and asset management, including sound policies and processes for:
  – performance management and reporting
  – asset maintenance and enhancement
  – funding decisions, and
  – risk management practices
- have regard to achieving intergenerational equity, including by ensuring that policy decisions are made after considering their financial effects on future generations, and by ensuring that the current generation funds the cost of its services.

Integrated planning and reporting principles (section 8C)

Councils should:

- identify and prioritise key local community needs and aspirations and consider regional priorities
- identify strategic goals to meet those needs and aspirations
- develop activities, and prioritise actions, to work towards the strategic goals
- ensure that the strategic goals, and the activities developed to work towards them, may be achieved within council resources
- regularly review and evaluate progress towards achieving strategic goals
- maintain an integrated approach to planning, delivering, monitoring and reporting on strategic goals
- collaborate with others to maximise the achievement of strategic goals
- manage risks to the local community or area or to the council effectively and proactively, and
- make appropriate evidence-based adaptations to meet changing needs and circumstances.

Appendix B:
Roles and Responsibilities under the Act

Governing body of a council (section 223)

The mayor and councillors collectively comprise the governing body of a council. The role of the governing body is to:

- direct and control the affairs of the council in consultation with the general manager
- provide effective civic leadership to the local community
- ensure as far as possible the financial sustainability of the council
- ensure as far as possible that the council acts in accordance with the principles prescribed under the Act and the council's plans, programs, strategies and policies
- develop and endorse the community strategic plan, delivery program and other strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the council
- determine and adopt a rating and revenue policy and operational plans that support the optimal allocation of the council's resources to implement the council's strategic plans and for the benefit of the local area
- keep the performance of the council under review, including service delivery
- make decisions necessary for the proper exercise of the council's regulatory functions
- determine the process for the appointment of the general manager and for monitoring their performance
- determine the senior staff positions within the organisation structure of the council
- consult regularly with community organisations and other key stakeholders and keep them informed of the council's decisions and activities, and
- ensure that the council acts honestly, efficiently and appropriately.

The governing body is to consult with the general manager in directing and controlling the affairs of the council.

Individual councillors (section 232)

Councillors are individually and collectively accountable to the local community for the performance of the council. Each councillor has a responsibility to:

- be an active and contributing member of the governing body
- make considered and well informed decisions as a member of the governing body
- participate in the development of the council's integrated planning and reporting framework
- represent the collective interests of residents, ratepayers and the local community
- facilitate communication between the local community and the governing body
- uphold and represent accurately the policies and decisions of the governing body, and
- make all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform the role of a councillor.

The mayor (section 226)

The mayor is often considered the voice of the council and the leader of the community. While the mayor has the same roles and responsibilities as councillors, the mayor is essentially the "first among equals" and is expected to exercise a leadership role within a council. This leadership role is reflected in the mayor's extra responsibilities.

The role of the mayor is to:

- be the leader of the council and a leader in the local community
- advance community cohesion and promote civic awareness
- be the principal member and spokesperson of the governing body, including representing the views of the council in regard to its local priorities
- exercise, in cases of necessity, the policy-making functions of the governing body of the council between meetings of the council
- preside at meetings of the council and ensure that meetings of the council are conducted efficiently, effectively and in accordance with the Act
- ensure the timely development and adoption of the council's strategic plans, programs and policies
- promote the effective and consistent implementation of the council's strategic plans, programs and policies
- promote partnerships between the council and key stakeholders
- advise, consult with and provide strategic direction to the general manager in relation to the implementation of the council's strategic plans and policies
- in conjunction with the general manager, ensure adequate opportunities and mechanisms for engagement between the council and the local community
- carry out the civic and ceremonial functions of the mayoral office
- represent the council on regional organisations and at inter-governmental forums at the regional, state and commonwealth levels
- in consultation with the councillors, lead performance appraisals of the general manager, and
- exercise any other functions of the council that the council determines.

Appendix C:
Model Councillor
Induction and Professional
Development Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate X Council's[2] commitment to ensuring that the mayor and councillors have access to induction and ongoing professional development which will assist them to develop and maintain the skills and knowledge required to effectively perform their civic role and responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 1993* ('the Act').

Scope

This policy applies to all councillors of X Council, including the mayor.

Policy

Statement of commitment

X Council is committed to developing an induction and ongoing professional development program for the mayor and councillors to ensure they can fulfil their statutory roles and responsibilities. As part of this program, the mayor and each councillor will have a professional development plan that identifies specific gaps in their capabilities (ie their knowledge, skills and attributes) and identify professional development activities to build these capabilities.

Induction program

X Council will develop an induction program for new and returning councillors as well as a supplementary program for the mayor to ensure they are provided all the information they need to effectively fulfil their roles in the first few months of Council's term and feel confident in their ability to do so. The induction program will cover[3]:

- an orientation to council facilities and the local government area

- an overview of the key issues and tasks for the new council including council's community strategic plan, delivery program, operational plan, resourcing strategy and community engagement plan

- the legislation, rules, principles and political context under which councils operate

- the roles and responsibilities of councillors and the mayor

- Council's organisational structure, workforce management strategy and the roles and responsibilities of the general manager and council staff

- what Council does and how it operates, including an overview of integrated planning and reporting, land-use planning, natural resource management, financial management and asset management by Council

- key Council policies and procedures councillors must comply with including the code of conduct

- the role of Council meetings and how to participate effectively in them

- the support available to the mayor and councillors and where they can go to get more information or assistance, and

- information on the process for taking the oath of office and electing the mayor at the first council meeting (where applicable).

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2 Insert name of your council.

3 Each council is to list the topics it has included in its induction program. See Part C of these Guidelines for further information.

In the case of the mayor, the program will also cover:

- how to be an effective leader of the governing body and the council

- the role of the Chair and how to chair council meetings

- the mayor's role in integrated planning and reporting

- the mayor's role and responsibilities under the code of conduct

- the mayor's role and responsibilities in relation to the general manager's employment

- the mayor's role at regional and other representative bodies, and

- the mayor's civic and ceremonial role.

The mayor and councillors must have a working knowledge and understanding of these areas by the end of the induction program.

The induction program will also include team building activities to help the governing body establish itself as a cohesive and collaborative team focused on a common purpose with shared values and goals. Activities will aim to ensure mayors and councillors:

- identify how they would like to work together as a team and identify a common vision for the governing body

- build relationships with each other based on trust and mutual respect that facilitate collaboration

- contribute to a positive and ethical culture within the governing body

- work towards consensus as members of the governing body for the benefit of the community

- develop respectful negotiation skills and manage alternative views within the governing body without damaging relationships

- understand what supports or undermines the effective functioning of the governing body

- respect the diversity of skills and experiences on the governing body, and

- communicate and uphold the decisions of Council in a respectful way, even if their own position was not adopted.

Activities should also help the mayor, as the leader of the governing body, to:

- act as a stabilising influence and show leadership, and

- promote a culture of integrity and accountability within Council and when representing Council in the community and elsewhere.

The mayor and councillors, including those re-elected to office, must attend all induction sessions.

X Council will evaluate the induction program at the end of each council term to determine whether it has achieved these outcomes, and to identify and address areas for improvement.

Ongoing professional development program

An individual ongoing professional development plan will be developed for the mayor and each councillor to address any gaps in the capabilities (ie the knowledge, skills and attributes) needed to effectively fulfil their role.

Each professional development plan will span the council's term, and identify professional development activities that the mayor or councillor will participate in. Professional development activities will be prioritised according to need and approved by the general manager where council funds are required in accordance with council's councillor and expenses and facilities policy. The Mayor and councillors are expected to complete all the activities included in their professional development plan.

Professional development activities will, wherever possible, follow the 70/20/10 principle. The 70/20/10 principle requires that:

- 70% of learning activities are provided via learning and developing from experience – for example, on-the-job training, self-directed learning, developmental roles, problem solving, exposure and practice

- 20% of learning activities are provided via learning and training through others – for example, personal or professional networks, coaching, mentoring, feedback, memberships and professional associations, and

- 10% of learning activities are provided via learning and developing through structured programs – for example, training courses, external or in-house workshops, seminars, webinars and other e-learning and briefing sessions conducted by the council, external training providers or industry bodies.

The timing of professional development activities for the mayor and councillors will be designed in such a way so as to not overload councillors with learning activities in the early part of council's term. The timing will reflect what knowledge and skills councillors and the mayor need at various points in council's term to undertake their roles.

The mayor and councillors will be provided with as much notice as possible for upcoming induction and professional development activities.

Responsibilities

The mayor and each councillor are responsible for making themselves available to attend any development activities identified in the professional development plan. The mayor and all councillors must make all reasonable endeavours to attend and participate in the induction sessions and professional development activities arranged for them during the term of the council.

[Identify the role or responsible staff member] is responsible for planning, scheduling and facilitating induction and professional development activities for the mayor and councillors in consultation with the general manager.

The general manager has overall responsibility for X Council's induction and professional development program.

Budget

An annual budget allocation will be provided to support the induction and professional development activities undertaken by the mayor and councillors. Expenditure will be monitored and reported quarterly.

Approval of training and/ or expenses

Professional development activities that require council funds are to be approved by the general manager in accordance with X Council's Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy.
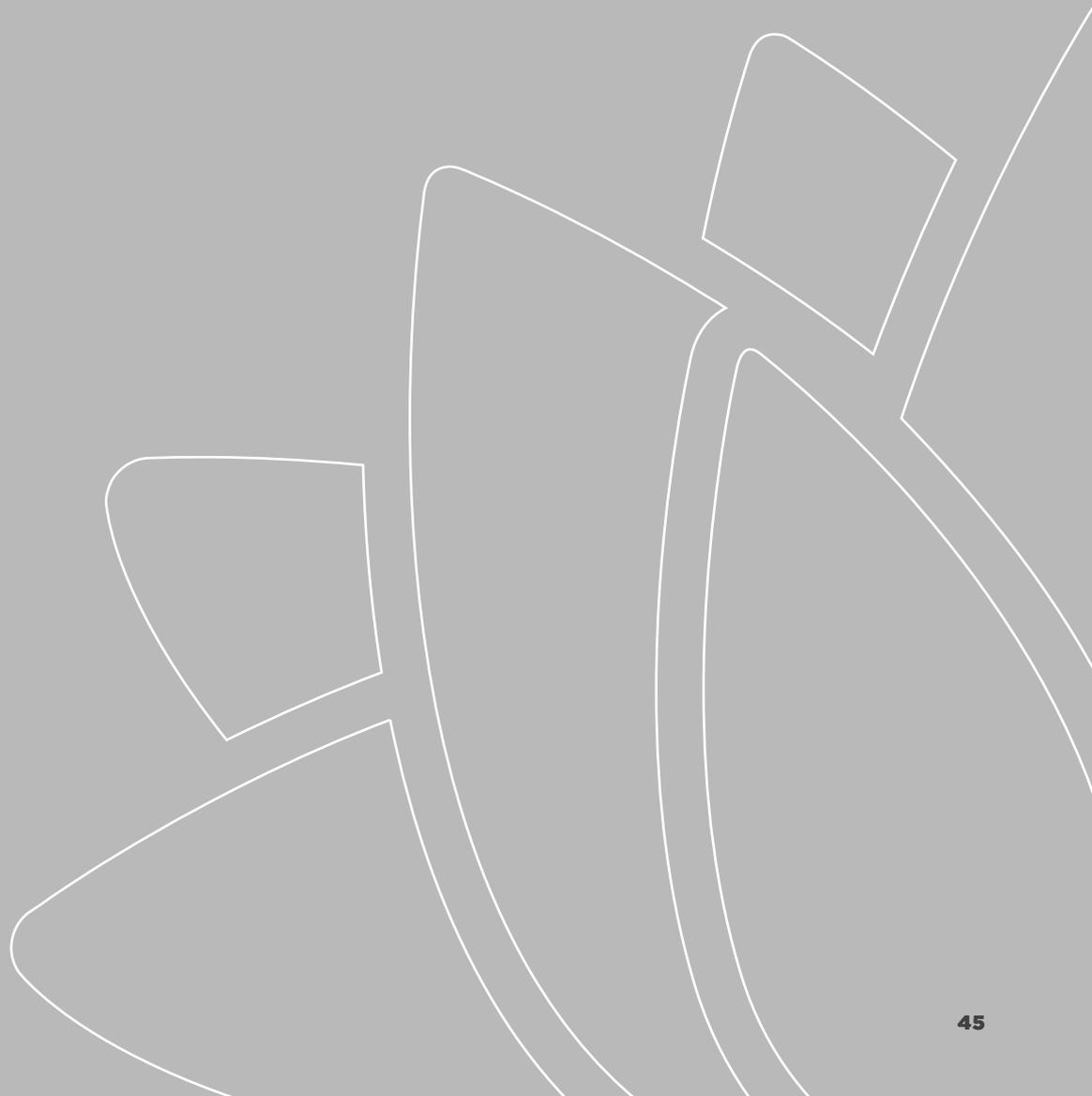
Evaluation

Council will evaluate the professional development program at the end of each council term to assess whether it was effective in assisting the mayor and councillors to develop the capabilities required to fulfil their civic roles.

Reporting

The general manager of X Council will publically report each year in Council's annual report:

- the name of the mayor and each individual councillor that completed council's induction program (where an induction program has been delivered during the relevant year)

- the name of the mayor and each councillor who participated in any ongoing professional development program during the year

- the number of training and other activities provided to the mayor and councillors during the year as part of a professional development program, and

- the total cost of induction and professional development activities and any other training provided to the mayor and councillors during the relevant year.

Appendix D:
Candidate Information Session Content Checklist

Topic Area	Suggested Content
Role of council	• The role and responsibilities of local government • The guiding principles under the Act that govern council's functions • The purpose of council and committee meetings
Roles and responsibilities of councillors and staff under the Act	• The roles and responsibilities of the governing body and individual councillors under the Act, including in relation to integrated planning and reporting • The roles and responsibilities of the mayor as leader of the governing body, including oversight of the general manager • The strategic nature of the roles of elected members compared to the operational roles of the general manager and council staff • The regional and other bodies the council is a member of and the roles of those bodies

Legal and ethical responsibilities	• Requirement to take an oath of office
	• Requirement to meet the ethical standards prescribed under the Act and councils code of conduct, including managing pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests
	• Outline of the legal responsibilities of councillors under the Act and their personal responsibilities under other legislation, for example in relation to:
	  – work health and safety
	  – anti-discrimination
	  – privacy
	  – public access to information
	  – record keeping and records management
	• Outline of any council policies that councillors will be expected to comply with, for example:
	  – councillor and staff interaction policy
	  – code of meeting practice
	  – code of conduct
	  – councillor expenses and facilities policy
	  – conflicts of interest policy
	  – gifts and benefits policy
	  – councillor induction and professional development policy

Skills and knowledge	• Outline of the knowledge, skills and personal attributes needed to perform the roles of a councillor or mayor • Outline of the additional knowledge, skills and personal attributes required by the mayor

Topic Area	Suggested Content

Time commitment	• Participation in council's councillor induction program
	• Participation in the mayor's supplementary induction program
	• Expected attendance at council meetings, including meeting days, times, frequency and possible duration
	• Preparation required for council meetings, for example:
	  – attending pre-meeting briefings
	  – reading business papers
	  – ensuring councillors have a full understanding of issues requiring decisions
	• Potential participation in other meetings, for example extraordinary council meetings, regional bodies, external bodies
	• Potential attendance at community events, ceremonies and other functions
	• Responding to media requests and inquiries
	• Potential participation in formal community consultation processes
	• Answering letters, emails and phone calls from residents and ratepayers as well as participating in regular informal conversations
	• Participation in any other activities that are likely to arise and require the mayor or councillors' time

Support available to assist councillors in the role	• The annual fees paid to councillors and the mayor • Council's expenses and facilities policy • Council's induction and professional development program for councillors and the mayor • The responsibility of the general manager and staff to provide timely information and advice and the administrative and professional support necessary for councillors to effectively discharge their functions
Ways to gain further understanding	• Attendance at a council meeting/s or council committee meeting/s to observe council decision making and meeting practice • NSW Electoral Commission website and other educational materials

Appendix E:
Induction Program
Content Checklist

Topic area	Suggested content

Establishment of a well-functioning governing body	• Team building activities to help councillors and the mayor:
	  – identify how they would like to work together as a team
	  – understand why each councillor is in office and help identify a common purpose and bond between councillors
	  – identify a common vision for the governing body
	  – identify what a successful term in office will look like for council and the community and what is needed from individual councillors and the mayor to achieve this
	  – identify accepted values and behaviours
	  – build relationships with each other based on trust and mutual respect
	  – contribute to a positive and ethical culture within the governing body
	  – value and develop teamwork and collaboration skills
	  – work towards consensus as members of the governing body for the benefit of the community
	  – manage alternative views within the governing body without damaging relationships
	  – develop respectful negotiation and conflict resolution skills
	  – champion and communicate the council's vision and strategic plans as a cohesive team
	  – respect the diversity of skills and experience of the other members of the governing body
	  – communicate and uphold the decisions of council in a respectful way, even if their own position was not adopted
	  – understand what supports or undermines the effective functioning of the governing body
	  – identify appropriate council meeting practice and behaviours
	  – understand their opportunities for influence

Orientation to council facilities and local government area	• Guided tour of the council facilities available to councillors, for example, chambers, offices, utilities • Guided tour of the local government area including council facilities, significant sites and projects • Introduction to council staff to help build a positive team culture between the governing body and administration (whilst respecting the legislated separation between the two)

Topic area	Suggested content
Overview of the key issues and tasks for the new council	• The demographic profile of the local government area • Council's current social and economic health and performance • The key social, environmental and economic concerns facing the community • The key issues and tasks the new council will need to address • Any issues faced by previous councils or useful historical information that may impact or assist the new council • The current community strategic plan and the process that led to its development, including its role in informing the new council's activities • Council's current delivery program, operational plan, resourcing strategy and community engagement strategy • Regional and other bodies council is a member of and the roles of those bodies • Overview of council's assets

Legal and political context of local government	• The relationship of state and commonwealth governments to local government
	• The statutory framework that applies to local government
	• Each of the guiding principles under the Act that govern council's functions
	• The key accountabilities of the council to the community, the NSW Government and oversight agencies
	• The roles and responsibilities of oversight agencies such as the:
	  – Office of Local Government
	  – Department of Planning and Environment
	  – Environment Protection Authority
	  – NSW Audit Office
	  – Independent Commission Against Corruption, and
	  – NSW Ombudsman
	• The role and responsibilities of the Minster for Local Government

Topic area	Suggested content

Roles and responsibilities of councillors and staff	• The process for electing the mayor (if applicable)
	• The roles and responsibilities of the governing body and individual councillors under the Act including:
	  – the strategic nature of their role compared to the operational roles and responsibilities of the general manager and council staff and the limits on councillors role or direction in operational matters
	  – the different roles of the governing body and the general manager in determining council's organisational structure
	  – councillors obligations under council's code of conduct and the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* in their dealings and behaviour towards the general manager and staff
	• The role and responsibilities of the mayor under the Act including:
	  – the mayor's civic and ceremonial role and the functions they exercise under this
	  – the mayor's responsibility for exercising day-to-day oversight, monitoring ongoing performance and leading annual performance reviews of the general manager
	• The roles and responsibilities of the general manager and council staff under the Act including:
	  – the responsibility of the general manager and staff to provide timely information and advice to the mayor and councillors and the administrative and professional support necessary to discharge their functions
	  – council's protocol or policy on councillor and staff interaction and how councillors can request assistance or information from staff or forward constituent requests to staff
	• The regional and other bodies the council is a member of and the roles of those bodies
	• How to speak to the media appropriately and effectively
	• Financial and other delegations
	• Integrated planning and reporting responsibilities

Topic area	Suggested content

Overview of the key functional areas of council operations and staffing	• Council's organisational structure
	• The role and responsibilities of each business unit or functional area within council, for example:
	  – planning and other regulatory functions
	  – assets and infrastructure
	  – financial management
	  – community services
	  – governance
	  – internal audit
	  – teams responsible for implementing key council policies, strategies or programs
	• Council's workforce management strategy
	• An overview of the requirements of the *Guidelines for the Appointment and Oversight of General Managers* released by the Office of Local Government
	• An overview of the general manager's contract of employment, performance agreement and key performance indicators

Topic area	Suggested content

Legal and ethical responsibilities and risk management	• Preparation for taking the oath or affirmation of office
	• All legislation that councillors are expected to comply with, for example in relation to:
	  – local government
	  – work health and safety
	  – anti-discrimination
	  – privacy
	  – public access to information
	  – record keeping and records management
	  – tendering and procurement
	• All council policies and protocols that councillors will be expected to comply with, for example:
	  – councillor and staff interaction policy
	  – code of meeting practice
	  – code of conduct
	  – conflicts of interest policy
	  – councillor expenses and facilities policy
	  – gifts and benefits policy
	  – councillor induction and professional development policy
	  – risk management and internal audit policy
	  – media policy
	• In relation to council's code of conduct:
	  – how to identify, disclose and manage pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests
	  – the process for making and managing code of conduct complaints under the *Procedures for the Administration of the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW*
	  – the consequences of a breach of council's code of conduct
	  – the definition of "corrupt conduct" under the *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988* and the potential consequences of engaging in corrupt conduct
	• Participation in the councillor induction and professional development program
	• How the council manages risk, including:
	  – council's risk management framework
	  – the role of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee
	  – council's internal audit function
	  – external audit

Topic area	Suggested content
Decision-making	• The purpose of council meetings • Prescribed meeting rules and council's code of meeting practice • The role of the chair • How to use closed meetings appropriately • What an orderly, effective and efficient council meeting looks like and how it is conducted • How councillors should prepare for a council meeting, including pre-meeting briefings • The role of business papers and meeting minutes and how to understand and interpret them • The role of committees, the committee structure adopted by the council and the functions of each of council's committees

Strategic planning	• The statutory requirements for integrated planning and reporting, including its conceptual basis, guiding principles and reporting requirements
	• How integrated planning and reporting is conducted by council including:
	  – council's integrated planning and reporting frameworks, timelines and processes
	  – the mayor's and councillors' roles
	  – community consultation and participation
	  – change management processes
	  – reporting mechanisms

Land use planning	• Overview of the land use planning system, including:
	  – relevant legislation
	  – the role of council in land use and development approvals
	  – the development assessment and approval process under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*
	  – the role of independent panels, including Joint Regional Hearing Panels and Independent Hearing and Assessment Panels, in relation to development approvals
	  – the delegations made with respect to development assessments and approvals
	  – the role of environmental planning instruments and how to interpret them
	  – the environmental planning instruments that apply to council's area and the development control plans adopted by council
	  – delegations
	  – the role of oversight agencies, for example, the Department of Planning and Environment and the Greater Sydney Commission
	  – the role of the Minister for Planning

Topic area	Suggested content
Natural resource management	• Council's public land management responsibilities and the statutory requirements that apply to public land management • Council's natural resource management responsibilities and the regulatory frameworks under which it exercises its functions
Water management (for councils that are water utilities)	• Council's water management responsibilities and the regulatory frameworks under which it exercises its functions • Drinking water quality and public health responsibilities • Integrated Water Cycle Management – including water security and asset planning • Water utility operation and performance monitoring
Financial processes and financial management	• The responsibility of councillors for the financial management and sustainability of the council under the Act • Council's long-term financial plan and other components of council's resourcing strategy, including revenue sources • How to interpret and understand the financial information contained in financial reports prepared by council
Asset management	• Asset management planning requirements • Council's asset management strategy
Customer services and complaints handling	• Council's complaints handling process and how councillors should handle constituents' concerns
Support available to assist councillors in their role	• The annual fees paid to councillors and the mayor • Council's expenses and facilities policy • Ongoing professional development for the mayor and councillors • The responsibility of the general manager and staff to provide timely information and advice and the administrative and professional support necessary for councillors to effectively discharge their functions

Supplementary topics for mayor	• How to be an effective leader of the governing body and the council
	• The role of the chair and how to chair council meetings
	• The mayor's role and responsibilities under the code of conduct
	• The mayor's role in integrated planning and reporting
	• The mayor's role and responsibilities in relation to the general manager's employment:
	  – the requirements of the mayor under the *Guidelines for the Appointment and Oversight of General Managers* released by the Office of Local Government
	  – how to conduct day-to-day oversight of the general manager including in relation to credit card use and other expenses, and
	  – how to lead recruitment and performance reviews of the general manager
	• The mayors role on the regional and other bodies they attend on behalf of the council and council's position on the key issues under consideration by these bodies
	• The mayor's civic and ceremonial role and the community functions the mayor will be expected to attend

Appendix F:
Councillor Induction Manual Content Checklist

Topic area	Suggested content
Governing body	• Summary of the shared purpose, goals, vision and success markers identified by the governing body during the induction process • Summary of the values and behaviours identified by the governing body during the induction process that will characterise the council term
Basic information about the council	• Organisational chart and outline of key function and service areas, including those of senior staff • Information and/or chart showing the relationships between councillors and council staff and decision-making processes • List of council facilities and map of the local government area • How to use council's IT system/s • How to raise work, health and safety issues • List of regional bodies and committees council is a member of
Profile of the local government area	• Information about council wards • Population statistics • Useful information about the local government area • Useful information about key issues or tasks for the new council
Information about council meetings	• Council's code of meeting practice • Agenda and minutes of recent meetings • Meeting times and venues • Deadlines related to meetings, business papers and minutes • List of council committees and their composition

Key planning and policy documents and information	• Integrated planning and reporting documents, for example, the current community strategic plan, delivery program, operational plan, community engagement strategy and resourcing strategy, workforce management strategy etc.
	
	• List of financial and other delegations
	
	• Most recent annual report
	
	• End-of-term report of last council term
	
	• Council policy documents, including council's:
	  – policy register/list of policies
	  – code of conduct
	  – councillor expenses and facilities policy
	  – information access policy
	  – councillor and staff interaction policy and protocol
	  – gifts and benefits policy
	  – media policy
	  – conflicts of interest policy
	  – council's risk management framework and relevant internal audit, external audit and risk management related documents
	
	• Any other relevant plans, policies and procedures

Topic area	Suggested content
Key legislation	• Copy of key legislation or relevant excerpts from legislation • Information about the key legislation and regulation under which council exercises its functions, for example: • *Local Government Act 1993* • *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* • *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* • *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* • *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* • *State Records Act 1998* • How to access up-to-date versions of the legislation online (www.legislation.nsw.gov.au)
Information about support for councillors	• How to make a request or claim under council's expenses and facilities policy • Information about the induction and professional development program • Contact details of council officer/s that councillors may contact for information

Topic area	Suggested content

Other useful resources and/or details about where they may be accessed	• Induction program presentations and materials
	• Contact details for key organisations such as the Office of Local Government and Local Government NSW
	• The *Councillor Handbook* released by the Office of Local Government
	• Bluett's Local Government Handbook NSW
	• A copy of useful publications and guidance material produced by NSW Government agencies and other bodies (where relevant) in relation to:
	  – capital expenditure, tendering and procurement (Office of Local Government, Department of Finance, Services and Innovation)
	  – the *Procedures for the Administration of the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW* (Office of Local Government)
	  – the *Guidelines for the Appointment and Oversight of General Managers* (Office of Local Government)
	  – *the Internal Audit Guidelines* (Office of Local Government)
	  – land-use planning and development approvals processes (Department of Planning and Environment)
	  – public interest disclosures (NSW Ombudsman)
	  – access to information and privacy (Information and Privacy Commission)
	  – fraud and corruption (Independent Commission Against Corruption, NSW Audit Office)
	  – external audit (NSW Audit Office)
	  – annual reviews and performance audits of local government (NSW Audit Office)
	  – anti-discrimination (Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW)
	  – council rating determinations (Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal)
	  – councillor and mayoral remuneration (Local Government Remuneration Tribunal)

Appendix G:
Local Government
Capability Framework

Personal attributes

	Clr	Mayor
Manage self		
Talks to the mayor/councillor, general manager and other councillors about own role and responsibilities, and seeks feedback	✔	✔
Pursues responsibilities with energy, drive and commitment	✔	✔
Manages own time effectively, balancing demands in line with council priorities	✔	✔
Shows awareness of own strengths and areas for growth	✔	✔
Looks for and takes opportunities to develop knowledge and skills as a councillor	✔	✔
Honestly examines personal motivation and capability as mayor		✔
Reflects on and integrates feedback, showing a capacity and willingness to modify own behaviours		✔
Display resilience and adaptability		
Is flexible and willing to change their mind in light of new information	✔	✔
Stays calm and objective in challenging situations	✔	✔
Advocates constructively for an idea or position, even in the face of strong, contrary views	✔	✔
Listens when challenged and seeks to understand criticisms before responding	✔	✔
Stays positive and perseveres in the face of resistance or setbacks	✔	✔
Accepts public feedback and responds in a thoughtful and considered way	✔	✔
Reads situations quickly and shows leadership in times of crisis		✔
Acts as a stabilising influence in challenging and emotionally charged situations		✔
Act with integrity		
Is open, honest and consistent in words and behaviour	✔	✔
Tells the truth and admits to own mistakes	✔	✔
Maintains confidentiality	✔	✔
Takes steps to clarify ethical issues and seeks advice when unsure what to do	✔	✔
Follows the code of conduct, legislation and policies applicable to councillors/mayors	✔	✔
Speaks out against illegal and inappropriate behaviour and perceived conflicts of interest	✔	✔
Helps councillors understand their obligations to comply with the codes of conduct, legislation and policies		✔
Identifies and discusses ethical issues with councillors		✔
Promotes a culture of integrity within council and in dealings external to council		✔

	Clr	Mayor
Demonstrate accountability		
Prepares appropriately for council meetings	✓	✓
Acts in the public interest and observes the highest standards of personal conduct at all times	✓	✓
Takes responsibility for fulfilling the role of councillor/mayor to the best of their ability	✓	✓
Is transparent in actions and decision making, declaring potential conflicts	✓	✓
Models the highest standards of accountability, providing transparency to enable public scrutiny		✓
Provides advice on strategies taken by council to be accountable, transparent and efficient		✓

Relationships

	Clr	Mayor
Communicate and engage		
Clearly communicates ideas and arguments	✓	✓
Adjusts tone, pace and message for different audiences	✓	✓
Listens when others are speaking and asks appropriate, respectful questions	✓	✓
Shows sensitivity to cultural, religious and other individual differences when interacting with others	✓	✓
Uses communication channels that are suitable for the diversity in the community	✓	✓
Creates opportunities for people to engage with council and contribute to public disclosure and debate	✓	✓
Community and customer focus		
Keeps up to date on current issues affecting the community	✓	✓
Shows pride in and talks positively about the community and region	✓	✓
Commits time and energy to serving the community	✓	✓
Works towards social, environmental and economic sustainability in the community/region	✓	✓
Collects and uses broad community feedback to identify opportunities for improvement	✓	✓
Builds effective relationships with a range of people who reflect the diversity in the community	✓	✓

	Clr	Mayor
Work collaboratively		
Shares information with other councillors about community issues, stakeholders and activities	✓	✓
Is respectful of council staff and receptive to their advice	✓	✓
Shows respect for the diversity of skills and experience on the governing body	✓	✓
Initiates collaborative forums on issues facing the community	✓	✓
Works together with stakeholder networks for the benefit of the community and region	✓	✓
Encourages councillors to work collaboratively		✓
Builds a productive working relationship with the general manager based on clear expectations, trust and respect		✓
Supports positive relations between the general manager and the governing body		✓
Builds partnerships between council and external stakeholders that are of strategic value to council		✓
Facilitates and supports strategic collaboration with other councils to benefit the broader region		✓
Influence and negotiate		
Uses understanding of political processes and networks to develop a negotiation strategy	✓	✓
Listens to contrary points of view and endeavours to find common ground	✓	✓
Influence others with a fair and considered approach and sound arguments	✓	✓
Avoids starting from an entrenched position and is willing to give and take	✓	✓
Wins concessions without damaging relationships	✓	✓
Establishes and maintains relationships outside council in order to find common ground and further council's position		✓
Anticipates points of contention and plans negotiations accordingly		✓
Steers discussion and debate towards achieving an acceptable outcome		✓

Results

	Clr	Mayor
Plan and prioritise		
Identifies and pursues critical priorities and sets aside less critical activities	✔	✔
Contributes to setting clear performance goals that include quality measures	✔	✔
Considers council performance reports and rollover of projects when making new plans	✔	✔
Considers the impact of changes, e.g. government policy/economic conditions and budgets, on strategic plans	✔	✔
Incorporates sound risk management principles into strategic planning	✔	✔
Works with the general manager to translate strategic direction into a delivery program and operational plan		✔
Monitors progress against the delivery program and operational plan		✔
Considers council's current and potential future role within the community and region when planning		✔
Think and solve problems		
Gathers and investigates information from a variety of sources	✔	✔
Asks questions to get to the heart of the issue and define the problem clearly	✔	✔
Considers the broader context and long-term impacts of policy options	✔	✔
Works with others to assess options and identify appropriate solutions	✔	✔
Create and innovate		
Thinks about issues and opportunities from different viewpoints	✔	✔
Looks for non-obvious solutions	✔	✔
Encourages independent thinking and new ideas from others	✔	✔
Explores innovative solutions with long-standing community-wide impact	✔	✔
Deliver results		
Monitors and provides advice on the delivery of customer/community focused services	✔	✔
Instigates and champions initiatives to deliver community outcomes	✔	✔
Identifies and addresses potential risks to the achievement of council goals	✔	✔
Engages with senior staff about strategies to improve council performance		✔

Resources

	Clr	Mayor
Finance		
Uses basic financial terminology appropriately	✔	✔
Makes informed contributions to debate about the allocation of financial resources	✔	✔
Demonstrates respect for public funds and the obligation to manage council resources responsibly	✔	✔
Is aware of financial risks and strategies to manage and minimise these	✔	✔
Is able to discuss implications of council's long term financial plan, audited financial statements and budget reviews	✔	✔
Identifies and supports opportunities to generate revenue and attract investment	✔	✔
Promotes the role of sound financial management and its impact on council effectiveness		✔
Assets and tools		
Engages in strategic planning to ensure the organisation's assets support delivery of the strategic plan	✔	✔
Makes informed contributions to debate about the allocation of assets to community priorities	✔	✔
Supports asset risk minimisation strategies, plans and outcomes for council	✔	✔
Promotes the role of councils as custodians of community assets	✔	✔
Ensures asset management decisions consider long term financial sustainability	✔	✔
Promotes the role of sound asset management and its impact on long term financial sustainability		✔
Technology and information		
Uses a range of technologies to communicate and engage with the community	✔	✔
Supports the introduction of new technologies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the council	✔	✔
Procurement and contracts		
Exercises commercial acumen in reviewing and approving council contracts and tenders	✔	✔
Makes decisions on council tenders according to value for money, probity and community benefit	✔	✔

Civic leadership

	Clr	Mayor
Represent communities		
Makes themselves available to discuss issues and council activities with members of the community	✓	✓
Seeks to understand the range of views on complex issues in the community	✓	✓
Raises issues that are important to constituents with council	✓	✓
Treats all people in the community impartially and champions their right to be heard	✓	✓
Uses a variety of approaches to gather views from a range of individuals and organisations		✓
Advocates for local interests in dealings with external stakeholders, including other sectors and governments		✓
Inspire direction and purpose		
Demonstrates passion, enthusiasm and personal dedication to council's vision for the community	✓	✓
Champions the community strategic plan and communicates the way forward	✓	✓
Encourages community involvement in council planning processes	✓	✓
Communicates the context and parameters surrounding council strategies and plans	✓	✓
Communicates the purpose and plans using a variety of channels to reach many audiences		✓
Regularly communicates progress against the community strategic plan		✓
Govern responsibly		
Contributes constructively to debate in council	✓	✓
Works towards consensus as a member of the governing body	✓	✓
Contributes to a positive and ethical culture within the governing body	✓	✓
Participates responsibly in exercising council's employer functions in relation to the general manager	✓	✓
Acts in a way that preserves the health and safety of people in the council workplace	✓	✓
Leads constructive council meetings with a view to reaching consensus		✓
Cultivates a positive and ethical culture within the governing body		✓
Works with the general manager to ensure legal and regulatory frameworks are applied consistently by council		✓
Sets clear performance standards for the general manager and monitors progress		✓
Regularly discusses performance with the general manager and addresses performance issues early		✓

	Clr	Mayor
Make quality decisions		
Makes considered decisions on merit in the public interest	✔	✔
Considers information about the context and regulatory environment before making decisions	✔	✔
Considers financial and budget implications, including value for money, in making decisions	✔	✔
Explains council decision-making process to constituents	✔	✔
Communicates the decisions of council in a respectful way, even if own position was not adopted	✔	✔
Assists the community to understand council decisions in context, considering priorities and constraints	✔	✔
Ensures council works through issues, considering all relevant information, before making decisions		✔
Ensures council considers financial and budget implications in making decisions		✔