

Parramatta City Council Advisory Committees

CORE TERMS OF REFERENCE

June 2009.

1. **Primary Purpose of Advisory Committees**

To advise Council on the needs or issues of a particular community and inform Council's decision making and work relating to this community.

2. **Background**

2.1 Council's Core Terms of Reference for Advisory Committees cover all Council's Advisory Committees and provide a clear operating framework for Advisory Committees to work within.

2.2 In addition to the Core Terms of Reference each of Council's Advisory Committee's have their own Guidelines which include each Committee's primary purpose, its membership including roles and responsibilities and meeting frequency.

2.3 Where there is a contradiction/ difference between the Core Terms of reference and a particular Advisory Committee's Terms of Reference, the Core Terms of Reference will apply.

3. **Roles and Responsibilities of Advisory Committees**

3.1 To represent the views, interests and/or identified issues that affect communities within the Parramatta area within the scope of Parramatta City Council's authority.

3.2 To provide advice, input and feedback to Council on issues that fall within the parameters of its authority and relate to the particular communities or the identified issue the Advisory Committee is concerned with.

4. **Membership**

4.1 All members of Council's Advisory Committees must live or work within the Parramatta local government area and meet the stated requirements of membership relevant to each Committee.

4.2 The duties of members are to:

- (i) Attend and participate in a compulsory induction workshop which will include information on the role of the Advisory Committee, the role and responsibility of members and Council, Council's Code of Conduct and other related policies and protocols.
- (ii) Attend and participate in meetings of the Advisory Committee (including planning sessions and relevant training)
- (ii) Work co-operatively with other members in achieving the aims of the Committee

- (iii) Contribute ideas and suggestions relating to items on the agenda
- (iv) Provide advice and Recommendations to Council on items relating to the agenda
- (v) Action and follow up tasks established by the committee and resolved by Council.
- (vi) Report back to existing networks within the communities they represent on Council's role, responsibilities and its decisions relating to the Advisory Committee they are a member of.
- (vi) Use existing networks to remain informed regarding the views and interests of the particular community they represent.

4.3 Ex-officio Members

- (i) All Councillors are ex-officio members of all Advisory Committees
- (ii) Depending on the nature of issues raised, relevant Council staff and/or other stakeholders will be invited or co-opted to attend the meetings
- (iii) Guest speakers may attend meetings if invited to do so for particular reasons by the Committee and as approved by the Council Officer convening the Committee.

All of the above are non-voting positions.

5. **Membership Application process**

5.1 The term of membership is four (4) years and coincides with Council elections. At this time, all positions are declared vacant.

5.2 Council will then implement an Expression of Interest process to recruit members for the Committees and this will be advertised in the local media and promoted through Council's and relevant community networks.

5.3 All applicants for membership must apply using the relevant Expression of Interest form which require applicants to address the stated criteria for membership.

Previous members are entitled to apply for membership using the Expression of Interest form.

5.4 An interdepartmental panel of 3 Council Officers will assess Expressions of Interest against the stated criteria of each Committee. In addition, Access and Equity principles will be applied in the selection of members and the composition of the Committees will reflect a diversity of views and opinions, variations in, length and quality of related experience and gender balance.

5.5 Membership applications are then submitted to Council for its decision and ratification.

5.6 Where a casual vacancy occurs the Council Officer convening the Committee is responsible for distributing information regarding the vacancy and encouraging applicants to fill the vacancy, through existing Council, community and the Committee members' networks. Applicants must apply using the Expression of Interest Form which will be forwarded to Council for its decision and ratification.

6. Chairperson/Deputy Chairperson

6.1 Each Advisory Committee votes annually to determine its Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson.

6.2 If the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson are absent from the meeting the Committee will nominate a Chairperson for the meeting.

6.3 Duties of the Chairperson or Deputy are to:

- (i) Chair meetings according to Council's Code of Conduct, the Terms of Reference and Guidelines and meeting agenda
- (ii) Liaise with the Council Officer Convening the Committee to determine the Agenda for each meeting
- (iii) Facilitate the discussion of items on the agenda in a timely manner
- (iv) Facilitate the moving of recommendations and voting by Committee members
- (v) Ensure all committee members have the opportunity to participate

7. Attendance

7.1 When a member is absent for three (3) consecutive meetings without an apology, their position will be declared vacant, however, contact shall be made by the Council Officer who convenes the Committee following the second absence to clarify whether or not she/he is still interested in continuing to be a member of the Committee. If there is no response by the following meeting their membership will cease and their position declared vacant.

8. Frequency of Meetings

The Terms of Reference of each Advisory Committee will state the frequency of its meetings.

9. Quorum

9.1 The quorum for any committee meeting shall be one member more than $\frac{1}{2}$ the existing voting membership.

9.2 Where there is no quorum, a Committee is not able to determine any decisions or actions and can only deliberate on issues. Any decisions or actions must be held over to the next meeting where a quorum is present.

10. Secretariat/ Council support

10.1 Each Advisory Committee is convened by a Council Officer. This officer sets each meeting's agenda with input from membership and/or Council, attends each meeting, ensures meetings are run according to Council's Code of Conduct and the Terms of Reference, liaises between the Committee and other officers within Council as determined by the Committees business, finalises Committee minutes and prepares Council reports on the Advisory Committee.

10.2 Council's Executive Support Team provides secretariat support to each Advisory Committee and is responsible for taking draft minutes and distributing minutes and the agenda to members prior to each Committee meeting.

11. Conflict of Interest

11.1 Committee members are to declare any pecuniary or non pecuniary conflict of interest regarding any issue on the agenda at the commencement of the meeting.

11.2 All conflict of interest is to be declared and recorded in the minutes, and if necessary, the parties involved will be asked to leave the room while the matter is discussed.

12. Confidentiality

12.1 Where Committee meetings include confidential information relating to members or the business being discussed, members are required to respect principles of confidentiality.

13. Council's Code of Conduct

13.1 All Members must abide by Council's Code of Conduct at all times.

13.2 All members must attend and participate in a compulsory induction workshop which will include information on Council's Code of Conduct.

13.2 No member of an Advisory Committee is able to make media or public comment on behalf of the Council at any time.

14. Training Opportunities

In addition to the compulsory induction workshop which all members of Advisory Committees are required to attend, training will be provided to members where this is required for them to fulfil their duties.

15. Representation on/from other Council Advisory Committees and Attendance at Forums

15.1 From time to time one Advisory Committee may be approached to supply a representative to another Committee of Council. Where the Committee determines that representation is appropriate, nominations will be called for at the meeting and a vote shall take place to select a representative.

15.2 Representatives shall be entitled to reimbursement of the equivalent public transport fare when they attend such meetings.

16. Changes to the Terms of Reference:

The Core Terms of Reference and each Advisory Committee's particular Terms of Reference are ratified by Council and any changes or additions to them must be ratified by Council.