

Learning City Portfolio Committee

**Terms of Reference**

**Purpose of Committee**

The purpose of the Learning City Portfolio Committee (“***the Committee***”) is to:

* Provide high-level/strategic input into topics relating to the portfolio area, as identified in the Annual portfolio work plan.
* Consider current and emerging issues related to the portfolio and provide advice in relation to the implementation of relevant objectives, themes and actions outlined within the Wyndham City Plan;
* Provide advice and input into Council's formulation and development of relevant policies and strategies as they relate to the portfolio;
* Provide advice on the likely impact of any relevant State and Commonwealth policies on the local community in relation to the portfolio;
* Maintain a good relationship with, and have broad oversight over, other existing Advisory Committees relevant to the portfolio;
* To advocate community views on issues related to the portfolio;
* Ensure that community engagement practices on important policies and strategies are conducted in ways that are consistent with Council’s Community Engagement Framework; and
* In providing advice, the Committee will consider the balance of the social, economic, environmental and cultural impacts on the broader Wyndham community.

**Objectives of the Committee**

The objectives of the Committee are:

* To receive reports and provide comment on relevant Council policies, strategies and activities as they relate to the portfolio;
* To advocate community views on issues relating to the portfolio; and
* To provide recommendations to Council on ways to better inform and engage the community on issues related to the portfolio.

**Membership of Committee**

The Committee will be comprised of between 8-12 members at any one time.

Membership of the Committee will include:

* The Councillor Portfolio Holder/ Chair (1);
* The Deputy Portfolio Holder (1) – optional attendance;
* The sponsoring Director/Manager (1);
* A minimum of three (3) and maximum of six (6) community participants with a combination of skills, networks and interests;
* Subject matter experts will be engaged on a needs basis as dictated by the strategic need of the work being undertaken by the committee.; and
* Other relevant Wyndham City staff as required.

In the case that a second Councillor has been nominated as a Deputy Portfolio Holder, it should be noted that this is not a formally recognised role. Whilst the Deputy Portfolio Holder is able to attend and participate in meetings, he/she has no official standing unless the Portfolio Holder is absent or otherwise unavailable. In such instances the Deputy Portfolio Holder may be required to chair committee meetings and to perform other duties on behalf of the Committee as appropriate.

Members of the Committee will be appointed by Council following the completion of a formal Expression of Interest process. Selection will be based on demonstration of the following attributes and skills:

* Demonstration of interest and/or specialist knowledge;
* Strong community linkages with the ability to represent a broad range of community views;
* Knowledge of relevant service providers, community organisations and/or industry/ business partners, related to the portfolio, which operate within Wyndham;
* Ability to interpret State and Commonwealth Government policy as it relates to the portfolio;
* Willingness to constructively participate in an advisory capacity; and
* Formal acceptance of the Terms of Reference and Confidentiality Agreement.

It should be noted that:

* Each community participant of the Committee is selected as an individual, and not as a representative of any group or organisation, whereas subject matter experts may be selected either as individuals or as members drawn from relevant community wellbeing organisations in Wyndham.
* In the event that a member is not able to attend a meeting, he/she cannot nominate a proxy to attend in their place.
* A member who is absent from two (2) consecutive meetings, without forwarding an apology, will be deemed to have resigned from the Committee.
* In the event of a resignation, new members will only be recruited if the number of community participants and/or subject matter experts falls below the specified minimum. Recruitment for these vacancies will occur as per the Expression of Interest process outlined within the following section.

**Recruitment**

Recruitment to the Committee will occur via the following Expression of Interest process;

* As a minimum requirement, all vacancies to be advertised in the Wyndham Star Weekly and on Council’s website and social media accounts. Other advertising to be undertaken as practical, based on relevant time and/or budget considerations.
* Application process to be open for a minimum of three (3) weeks.
* Applications to be assessed by a panel that consists of the Portfolio Holder, Sponsoring Director/Manager and a nominated member of Wyndham’s Governance team.
* Shortlisted candidates to be interviewed by the aforementioned panel, with all successful and unsuccessful applicants to be notified by email, pending endorsement by Council at an Ordinary Council or Special Council Meeting.
* Once officially endorsed by Council, successful applicants to be offered a place on the Committee, subject to them providing a signed Participation and Confidentiality Agreement.

**Term**

The Committee is established for a term of forty-three (43) months commencing in March 2017.

The Committee will cease prior to the commencement of caretaker period for Local Government Elections in October 2020.

**Extent of Authority**

The Committee is an Advisory Committee of Council. It has no power to commit Council to any decision or action, or to direct Council staff in their duties. It may make recommendations for Council consideration, however Council reserves the right to accept or reject any or all recommendations that are made by the Committee.

**Commitment of Committee Members**

Members of the Committee agree to and will:

* Attend committee meetings and contribute to and actively participate in discussions;
* Respect and value the different contributions made by other Committee Members and other attendees at committee meetings;
* Contribute to and support collaborative, consensus-based decision-making;
* Positively promote the work of the Committee;
* Participate in good faith and demonstrate independent thinking; and
* Maintain confidentiality in relation to committee discussions and deliberations.

**Meetings of the Committee**

Meetings of the Committee will adhere to the following protocols;

* The Committee will meet on a quarterly basis, with meetings to be held at the Wyndham Civic Centre, 45 Princes Highway, Werribee. A schedule of meeting dates will be provided to all Committee members at the commencement of their term.
* All meetings will commence at 6pm and will finish no later than 9:00pm. Dinner will be provided.
* A majority of members is required to establish quorum.
* Meetings are not open to the public, although guests can be invited pending approval by the Chair.
* Where appropriate, meetings will also include Council staff who have significant responsibility for policy, planning and/or service delivery related to the portfolio.
* Special meetings of the Committee can be called by the Chair as required, although a minimum of seven (7) days’ notice must be provided to all members.
* Administrative support for the Committee will be provided by Council, under the direction of the sponsoring Director/Manager.
* The Committee may establish Working Groups that consist of some of its members, Council staff and individuals engaged for specific purposes to progress specific areas of work for defined periods of time.
* Meetings of the Committee will be conducted through a combination of formal meetings and electronic media; not all consultation activities will require members to be physically present.
* Notice and agenda of each meeting, including the minutes and an action sheet of the previous meeting, will be circulated at least seven (7) days in advance.
* The Councillor Portfolio Holder will meet with the sponsoring Director/Manager on a monthly basis in order to remain informed about the progress of the activities of the Committee and any other emerging issues.

**Reporting of Meetings**

The reporting of meetings will occur as follows;

* Following each meeting of the Committee, a written report will be provided to Council. These reports will be presented to an Ordinary Council Meeting, and briefly introduced by the Chair (i.e. the Councillor Portfolio Holder) during Delegates Reports.
* Reports will be provided to Council as soon as practicable, and after the Report has been approved by Committee.
* While the decision-making model to be followed will be a collaborative, consensus-based one, when there are important policy and other disagreements of the Committee, these will be accurately and transparently reported to Council.

**Confidentiality**

Information of a confidential nature may be tabled and/or discussed at Committee meetings to assist or inform discussions. Committee Members will be expected to sign a Confidentiality Agreement in respect of such information prior to the commencement of their term.

**Reimbursement**

Section 75A of the Local Government Act allows for the reimbursement of expenses for members of Council committees and Council may reimburse members of Council committees for necessary out-of-pocket expenses incurred while performing duties as a Committee member.

Participation on the Committee is on an honorary basis, however, participants can claim for reimbursement of expenses incurred to enable them to attend meetings. This includes reimbursement for family care and travel expenses. Reimbursements will be made in accordance with existing policy and guidelines.