

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE **FRAMEWORK**



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OUR VISION

We aspire to provide great experiences, deliver value and create a sustainable future for our community. Delivering outcomes that embrace value in everything we do is fundamental to a vibrant and prosperous community that ‘loves the place we live’ and is summed up in our vision statement –

‘One Coast: Cassowary Coast’.

OUR MISSION

We are committed to delivering great service and value, economic growth, opportunity, prosperity and a relaxed lifestyle.

OUR VALUES

At Council, we are committed to working as one to realise our vision of ‘One Coast: Cassowary Coast’ to ensure great experiences, deliver value and create a sustainable future for our community.

Everything we do is underpinned by three core values:

CASSOWARY COAST A GREAT PLACE TO BE

GREAT EXPERIENCES, DELIVERING VALUE, AND CREATING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

OUR CORE VALUES ARE:

RESPECT
INTEGRITY
COURAGE

We DO what we say through our CORE VALUES, and we DEMONSTRATE this through each of our KEY COMMITMENTS

LEADERSHIP	COMMUNICATION	PERFORMANCE	TEAMWORK
<p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">We all affect outcomes, and lead through our actions and behaviours.</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: small; margin: 0;">CCRC LEADERS WILL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate visible leadership Think of the whole organisation when making decisions Provide clear direction Manage performance and behaviours Manage resources efficiently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have conversations with each other Listen to each other Openly engage, share information and knowledge Give honest and regular feedback Have a ‘how can we?’ approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety is part of what we do every day Understand our roles and our contribution Hold each other to account Achieve results Build capability Test ideas and learn from our mistakes Find better, simpler ways to do things Deliver a great service to our customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributions encouraged by individuals and teams We treat each other with respect Build trusting relationships We empower and support each other We support people ‘having a go’ We recognise and celebrate achievements

*The corporate values were developed following a culture values assessment survey conducted with employees. The top 10 values the culture values assessment revealed what employees wanted to see practiced in the organisation to create the ideal culture. The development of the three core values and supporting key commitments has been as a result of a comprehensive process of engagement with employees.

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Cassowary Coast Regional Council has developed this Corporate Governance Framework to ensure compliance with legislation and best practice democratic local government. The Framework is not a policy or statement of intent, but rather a document which outlines Council's governance policies and practices. It provides readers with an overview of the governance program that has been put in place in order to assist elected members, management and employees in meeting their governance responsibilities. Council is committed to high standards of corporate governance, accountability, open and transparent processes and seeks continuous improvement in this regard.

Principal Stakeholders

The Corporate Governance Framework delivers the following outcomes to its key stakeholders:

Council – a high level of assurance that desired strategic priority outcomes are being achieved efficiently and effectively within an acceptable level of risk

Audit Committee – a high level of assurance that the appropriate control mechanisms are in place to ensure effective delivery of services within an acceptable level of risk

Chief Executive Officer – a high level of assurance that the organisation is consistently delivering community value and Council's strategic priority outcomes

Organisation/employees – a broad-based understanding of corporate governance and its link to ensuring service delivery and community value.

What is Governance

Governance is an important concept and impacts on Council as a whole and on all sectors of the community. The practice of good governance is increasingly seen as critical for ensuring that:

- the organisation meets legal and ethical compliance
- decisions are made in the interests of stakeholders
- the organisation behaves as a good corporate citizen should.

Good governance encompasses authority, accountability, stewardship, leadership, direction and control. The role of leadership is to embed an ethical culture from the top down. It allows Council to evaluate, direct and monitor its activities. Good governance generally focuses on two main requirements:

- **performance**, whereby the organisation uses its governance arrangements to contribute to its overall performance and the delivery of its goods, services or programs.
- **conformance**, whereby the organisation uses its governance arrangements to ensure it meets the requirements of the law, regulations, published standards and community expectations of probity, accountability and openness.

The Australian National Audit Office describes Corporate Governance as:

“formalising and making clear and consistent the decision-making processes in the organisation. An effective system of corporate governance will help facilitate decision-making and appropriate delegation of accountability and responsibility within and outside the organisation. This should ensure that the varying needs of the stakeholders are appropriately balanced; that decisions are made in a rational, informed and transparent fashion; and that those decisions contribute to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation.”

Why is Good Governance Important?

Without good governance processes, Council can have little confidence that it is being run efficiently and is carrying out the objectives and policies set out in the Corporate Plan and supporting documents. Good governance is important because:

- it underpins the confidence that the community has in Council and its services
- it affects the quality of outputs
- it is a value adding activity

- it ensures that Council meets its legislative responsibilities
- it is a strong reminder to Council that it is ultimately accountable to the community it serves.

About this Framework

For Council to demonstrate good governance, there needs to be a clear understanding about responsibilities and accountabilities. This Framework sets out the roles of elected members and administration, and their relationships, along with financial, legal and ethical considerations.

The Framework is structured in five Sections, in line with the principles of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

- Transparent and effective processes and decision-making in the public interest
- Ethical and legal behaviour of Councillors and local government employees
- Sustainable development and management of assets and infrastructure, and delivery of effective services
- Good governance of, and by, local government
- Democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement

Implementation and Review

To ensure compliance and best practice governance, Council will conduct an annual review of the Governance Framework to ensure continuous improvement of corporate governance in the organisation.

The review will ensure the accuracy of the document in line with changing legislation and organisational responsibilities.

Transparent and effective processes, and decision-making in the public interest

1.1 DECISION MAKING AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

1.1.1 The Role of Local Government

Council is responsible for providing transparent and accountable local government to the Cassowary Coast community. Local government in Queensland is established under the *Local Government Act 2009* (the Act). Section 8 of the Act states that a local government is an elected body that is responsible for the good rule and local government of a part of Queensland (known as the local government area).

Local governments have legislative responsibility for many functions and activities that are relevant to local communities. As the level of government often seen as 'closest' to the community, local government activities relate to matters that are fundamental to people's lives and impact strongly on their quality of life.

The Act gives Council flexibility in making decisions and delivering services, without intervention by the state government or the minister responsible for local government.

1.1.2 The Composition of Cassowary Coast Regional Council

The Cassowary Coast Regional Council comprises 7 Councillors including the Mayor. One Councillor is elected from each of the region's six divisions. The Mayor is elected by popular vote from throughout the whole electorate. Local Government elections are conducted every four years on a fixed date prescribed by the State Government, with Councillors elected for a term of four years.

Details of Council's current Divisions and Councillors are available on Council's website.

Details about the role and responsibilities of the Mayor and Councillors can be found in Section 1.3.

1.1.3 Decision Making Framework

The most important function of elected members is their contribution to the strategic decision-making process of Council. Decisions made by Council give direction and authority for the Chief Executive Officer and employees to act upon.

1.1.4 Organisational Structure

Council's local government employees are led by its Chief Executive Officer and Executive Leadership Team (ELT) who are, in general terms, responsible for implementing the Council's decisions. Save for delegated decision-making responsibilities as set out in the Council's Delegation of Authority, Council's CEO and the ELT are not responsible for making strategic Council decisions.

The ELT is responsible for overseeing the performance of the organisation and for delivering the outcomes expected by Council as expressed in Council's Corporate Plan and Operational plan.

A diagram depicting Council's structure and the relationship between Council's CEO and ELT and other employees is located on Council's website.

The organisational structure is reviewed and updated from time to time to ensure that the organisation is in a position to respond effectively to changing corporate priorities.

Proposals for organisational structure changes are approved by the Chief Executive Officer prior to consideration and approval by Council.

Details about the role and responsibilities of the Chief Executive Officer and employees can be found in Section 1.3.

1.1.5 Ordinary Council

Ordinary meetings of Council are held on the fourth Thursday of each month (unless otherwise publicised) at 9am and are open to the public (unless closed to discuss confidential matters under the provisions of the Regulation). Meetings are held at the Council Chambers 38-40 Bryant Street, Tully or another venue as approved by the Chief Executive Officer. Council streams live video and audio of full Council meetings to provide our community greater access

to Council decisions and debate, while eliminating barriers that may prevent the public from attending in person. As well as accessing a live stream of Council meetings, visitors can view archived meetings and follow links to meeting schedules, agendas and minutes on its website.

Cassowary Coast Regional Council is bound by the *Information Privacy Act 2009* to protect the privacy of personal information.

Council meetings ensure the relevant legislation is complied with, the appropriate checks and balances are carried out and decisions are made in an open and transparent manner. A list of agenda items and minutes from the Ordinary Council meetings can be found on Council's website.

1.1.6 Portfolios

The Council adopted a portfolio system on 27 March 2024. The purpose of a system of Councillor Portfolios is to:

- enable each Councillor to take a leadership role for a major priority objective or a responsibility of Council
- enhance communication between the elected Council and the community
- enhance the visibility and accountability of Council in the development of Council policy
- enhance Councillors' capacity to acquire specialised expertise and knowledge in strategic policy development
- facilitate community engagement through the identification of Councillors with specific community issues.

The system of Councillor Portfolios must remain strategic at all times. The portfolio system does not change the legislative requirement for operational matters to be managed by the CEO and staff. The CEO and Directors may need to provide information and support to Councillors as they gain the knowledge and understanding of portfolio issues.

On a periodic basis Council workshops are held where Councillors, with the relevant Director, report on progress on strategic issues in their portfolio areas. This assists in ensuring that all Councillors are aware of issues and developments. Further information is available on Council's Website within the Councillor Information Session and Workshop Policy.

Portfolios held by Councillors can be found on Council's website.

1.1.7 Representation on External Committees

Appointment of elected members in their capacity as a Councillor

Elected members are often appointed to represent Council on various external committees and organisations. Their role is generally to provide advice, identify strategic opportunities and act as a conduit between Council and the community. Appointments to external committees are adopted by Council.

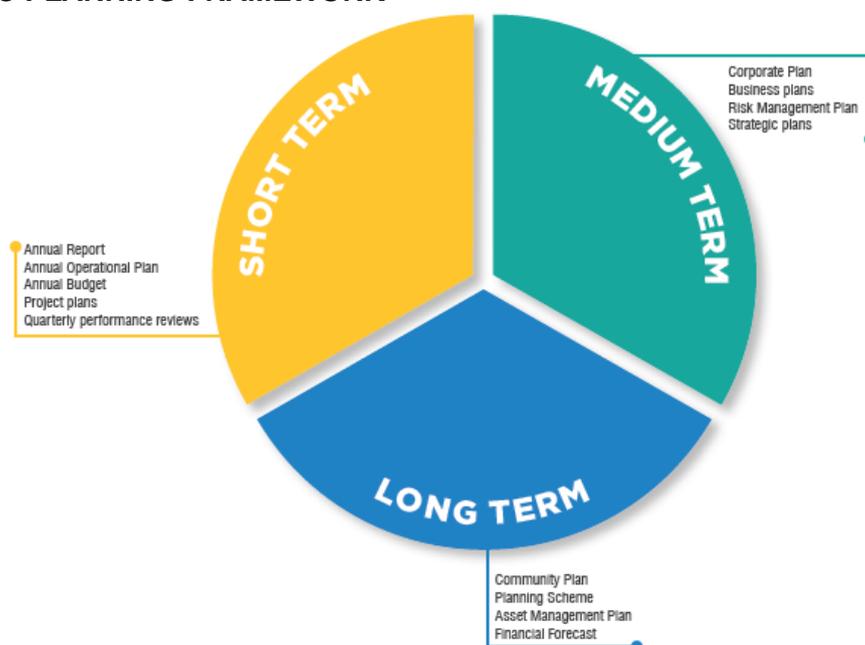
Appointment of elected members in their capacity as a private citizen

It is acceptable for elected members to accept appointments on external committees and organisations in a private capacity along as there is a clear understanding between the elected member and the organisation or committee that this is the case.

1.1.8 Strategic Planning Framework

Council's Strategic Planning Framework is the overarching framework used to assist Council and the community to plan, manage growth, support business development and ensure a sustainable future for Council, the community, the environment and the economy. It is a continuous, systematic process for engaging the community to identify intended future outcomes, monitor how outcomes are being achieved and report how success will be measured. It also ensures methodologies are in place for measuring performance against desired outcomes.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK



The Strategic Planning Framework ensures that efficiencies are achieved through coordinated planning and budgeting and that systems and arrangements are undertaken in an integrated manner to inform a well-considered asset, capital and financial strategic direction for Council.

The Strategic Planning Framework comprises a hierarchy of cascading and interconnecting documents, which when taken together allow Council to turn its long-term aspirations, goals and plans into reality. Some of the documents supporting the framework include:

- Corporate Plan
- Planning Scheme
- Enterprise Risk Management Framework
- Corporate Governance Framework
- Fraud and Corruption Framework
- Business Continuity Management Framework
- Compliance Management
- Strategic Workforce Planning

Further information about the various planning documentation referenced in the Strategic Planning Framework can be found in Sections 0 and 5 of this document.

Ethical and legal behaviour of Councillors and local government employees

1.2 ETHICAL OVERSIGHT OF COUNCIL

Ethics applies to all aspects of Council business and is relevant to the conduct of individuals and entire organisations. Council's core values include respect, integrity and courage. It is good governance to provide a framework or guidance in situations where there are no specific rules or where matters are unclear. These often involve elements of discretion and personal judgement and as such, provide a risk that certain decisions may not be viewed by the public to have been made in its best interests but may be perceived to have been made with a degree of self-interest, dishonest or lack of independence.

Council also operates within the ethical framework guided by the core principles of local government under Section 4 of the Local Government Act 2009 - including transparent and effective processes, and decision-making in the public interest and the ethical and legal behaviour of Councillors and local government employees. In addition, Council's Code of Conduct and the Public Sector Ethics Act applies to all employees. The Code of Conduct plays a key role in demonstrating Council's commitment to the highest levels of integrity and accountability and identifies consistent standards of conduct for all employees.

The Code is consistent with the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* four ethics principles:

- integrity and impartiality
- promoting the public good
- commitment to the system of government and
- accountability and transparency.

Council is also accountable to a range of external bodies that may independently review, investigate or monitor Council's performance, which in turn helps to ensure ethical decision-making. Guidance and oversight are provided by the Crime and Corruption Commissioner, Integrity Commissioner, Local Government Association of Queensland and other ethic advisory bodies. The Queensland Ombudsman, Queensland Audit Office, Office of Information Commissioner, Office of the Independent Assessor, Queensland Treasury and

Queensland Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works also play a key role in the oversight of local government.

The reputation of Council in general relies upon our employees acting with integrity. Council's Fraud Control Plan reinforces ethical practices, including management's actions to eliminate or mitigate incentives or opportunities that might prompt personnel to engage in dishonest, illegal or unethical behaviour.

To assist Council's employees and Councillors to make decisions in the public interest there are a range of frameworks, policies and standards that complement the legislative requirements for local government. These are designed, in part, to achieve good governance and ultimately, to guide Council towards providing value to the community and enhancing public trust and reputation. They include but are not limited to:

- Code of Conduct for Council Team Members (applicable to all employees, including executives and relevant contractors)
- Enterprise Risk Management Framework
- Complaints Management Policy
- Fraud and Corruption Framework
- Training programs - specifically addressing the meaning and applicability to all levels of the organisation of such terms, where used, as 'ethical conduct', 'acting with integrity' and 'public interest'
- Council's values and expectations in relation to behaviour and decision making through statements and human resource management
- Sections establish their Service Level guidelines and community standards to provide clarity on the expectations of employees when interacting with the community, Councillors and fellow employees
- Maintaining registers and minutes of meetings for disclosure of conflict of interests
- Council's Annual Report provides a statement of compliance with policies and procedures that address ethics and integrity
- Council's Public Interest Disclosure Policy
- Achievement and Development Plans for employees
- Providing appropriate induction and training for new employees, with regular

ongoing training for all employees at all levels demonstrating the organisation's sustained commitment

- Training to ensure all employees are aware of relevant policies and are trained in core policies such as Drug and Alcohol, Code of Conduct and Workplace Bullying.

The Code of Conduct provides a guide to ethical decision making.

1.3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1.1 Councillors

Councillors must represent the interests of current and future residents of the local government area. In accordance with the Act, all Councillors are responsible for:

- ensuring Council discharges its responsibilities under the Local Government Act
- achieves the Corporate Plan, and
- complies with all laws that apply to local governments.

Councillors are also responsible for providing quality leadership to Council and the community, participating in Council meetings, policy development and decision making for the benefit of the local government area. Councillors are accountable to the community for Council's performance.

Upon being successfully elected, Councillors are inducted to Council, which provides them with much of the information and resources needed to effectively discharge their responsibilities.

Councillors also participate in ongoing professional development programs and activities.

2.1.2 Mayor

In addition to the responsibilities of all Councillors, the Mayor is also responsible for:

- leading and managing meetings of the local government at which the Mayor is the chairperson, including managing the conduct of the participants at the meetings
- preparing a budget to present to Council
- leading, managing, and providing strategic direction to, the chief executive

officer in order to achieve the high-quality administration of Council

- directing the Chief Executive Officer and senior executive employees, in accordance with Council's policies
- conducting a performance appraisal of the Chief Executive Officer, at least annually, in the way that is decided by Council (including as a member of a committee, for example)
- ensuring that Council promptly provides the Minister with the information about the local government area, or Council, that is requested by the Minister
- representing Council at ceremonial or civic functions.

2.1.3 Chief Executive Officer

Under Section 13 of the *Local Government Act 2009*, Council's Chief Executive Officer has the following responsibilities:

- managing Council in a way that promotes
 - the effective, efficient and economical management of public resources
 - excellence in service delivery
 - continual improvement
- managing Council employees through management practices that
 - promote equal employment opportunities
 - are responsive to the local government's policies and priorities
- establishing and implementing goals and practices in accordance with the policies and priorities of Council
- establishing and implementing practices about access and equity to ensure that members of the community have access to:
 - Council programs
 - appropriate avenues for reviewing Council decisions
- keeping a record of directions that the Mayor gives to the Chief Executive Officer
- the safe custody of:
 - all records about the proceedings, accounts or transactions of the Council or its committees

- all documents owned or held by Council
- complying with reasonable requests from Councillors:
 - for advice to help the Councillor make a decision
 - for information, that Council has access to.

2.1.4 Employees

Also, under Section 13 of the Act, Council employees are responsible for:

- implementing the policies and priorities of Council in a way that promotes:
 - the effective, efficient and economical management of public resources
 - excellence in service delivery
 - continual improvement
- carrying out their duties in a way that ensures Council:
 - discharges its responsibilities under the Act
 - complies with all laws that apply to Council
 - achieves its corporate and community related plans
- providing sound and impartial advice to Council
- carrying out their duties impartially and with integrity
- ensuring the employee's personal conduct does not reflect adversely on the reputation of Council
- improving all aspects of the employee's work performance
- observing all laws relating to their employment
- observing the ethics principles under the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*, Section 4
- complying with a code of conduct under the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*.

All Council employees, including the Chief Executive Officer, are subject to performance management through Achievement and Development Plans while employed by Council. Further details on Achievement and Development Plans can be found in Section 2.2.6.

2.1.5 Delegations

Under Sections 257-260 of the Local Government Act 2009, Council can delegate authority to the Mayor, Chief Executive Officer, a Standing Committee, a Committee Chair or another Local Government.

In turn, the Mayor can delegate to another Councillor (however, the Mayor must not delegate the power to give directions to the Chief Executive Officer). The Chief Executive Officer can delegate authority to an appropriately qualified employee or contractor. However, the Chief Executive Officer must not delegate a power delegated by Council, if directed not to further delegate the power, or as defined by the Act.

Council has a register of delegations, as required by the Act. The Delegations Register records delegations from Council to the Chief Executive Officer, and from Chief Executive Officer to employees or contractors. The Local Government Association of Queensland provides a register template which is updated twice a year during the two major Queensland Parliamentary recesses when key legislation has major or important amendments.

The Register of Delegations is maintained by Governance and is available on Council's website.

2.1.6 Employee Achievement and Development Plans

Council has implemented employee Achievement and Development Plans, aimed to enhance an individual's contributions to Council's objectives and provides an opportunity for personal recognition and job satisfaction. Council is committed to continuously improving performance across all areas of the enterprise. In order to improve performance and develop individual employees, performance appraisals are a key requirement for continuous improvement.

Achievement and Development Plans facilitate the establishment of key performance indicators, career development opportunities and identifies achievements against set performance indicators. Achievement and Development Plans manage consistent and objective methods of appraisal across all Sections and Division across Council. By combining individual and Council objectives in the appraisal, we recognise that we are all part of the one team, with an individual contribution to make as we deliver services for the Cassowary Coast Region.

Achievement and Development Plans provide a platform for ongoing review of Council and personal performance, allowing two-way feedback and employee self-appraisal. Feedback and reviews will be conducted objectively and based on observable and measurable performance, with a focus on individual development and training plans.

1.4 REVIEW AND CONTROL MECHANISMS

2.2.1 Code of Conduct for Council Team Members

Council Employees

All employees of Council must seek to achieve the highest standards of behaviour when dealing with community and each other and must encourage a culture where ethical conduct is recognised, valued and followed at all levels and ensure appropriate action is taken to prevent fraud and corruption. Council has developed a Code of Conduct for Council Team Members which is based on the principles of the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*. Employees are introduced to the Code of Conduct at the point of induction and review its content on a scheduled basis via Council's policy review system.

The Code of Conduct for Council Team Members is available for inspection via Council's website.

Councillors

Before assuming public office, Councillors must understand and commit to complying with the Local Government principles and obligations of Councillors in accordance with *section 169* of the Act, as well as the standards of behaviour set out the *Code of Conduct for Councillors*. The standards of behaviour are summarised as the three R's, being–

- Responsibilities;
- Respect; and
- Reputation.

The *Code of Conduct for Councillors* exemplifies Councillors' commitment to the highest ethical standards through their behaviour and conduct whilst performing their duties as elected officials. Councillors must comply with this policy and are responsible for giving effect to it.

The Code of Conduct for Councillors is available for inspection via Council's website.

2.2.2 Complaints Management

Council has a Complaints Management Policy which ensures an effective, transparent and timely method of responding to complaints regarding Council's services, administrative actions, competitive neutrality, the conduct and performance of Councillors or employee behaviour.

In order to facilitate the effective management of complaints, Council has committed to:

- maintaining policies and procedures and delivering training opportunities to employees
- providing potential complainants with avenues available to lodge a complaint with Council
- providing an environment of continuous improvement through reporting and community feedback.

The Complaints Management Policy is available for inspection via Council's website.

Whilst Council policies are intended to capture all complaints, there are certain processes in complaint management which are regulated by legislation and therefore separate policies or systems may apply, for example:

- complaints about the conduct or performance of the Mayor or Councillors which are dealt with under the Code of Conduct for Councillors and referred to the Office of the Independent Assessor.
- reports of suspected official misconduct and public interest disclosures that are dealt with under the Council's Complaints about the Public official Section 48A of the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* and Public Interest Disclosures Policy, the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* (Qld) and the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010* (Qld) .
- Employee complaints that are dealt with under the Council's Grievance Handling Employment Related Matters Procedure.
- Complaints about a development decisions made under the *Planning Act 2016* or other statutory instrument and legislation.
- Complaints that are primarily contractual in nature and which do not involve alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct, and are responded to in a contractual context.

- Complaints about access application decisions, which are dealt with under the *Right to Information Act 2009* (Qld)
- Complaints about allegation of breaching the *Human Rights Act 2019* and obligations.

2.2.3 Human Rights Act 2019

Council adopted a Human Rights Policy in December 2022 which upholds Council's human rights obligations and complies with legislative requirements. A copy of this policy is available on Council's website.

The intended outcomes of the policy include:-

- assisting all areas of Council to meet our human rights obligations;
- promoting a dialogue about the nature, meaning and scope of human rights with the community;
- improving our services, actions, decision-making processes and governance frameworks;
- building the capacity of council officers to comply with the Act;
- maintaining customer service levels, whilst managing human rights complaints in accordance with legislative requirements; and
- enhancing community confidence in our legislative compliance and the reputation of Council as being accountable and transparent.

2.2.4 Unreasonable Customer Conduct

Council has an Unreasonable Customer Conduct Policy which considers the individual circumstances of unreasonable customer conduct (UCC) and provides reasonable and proportionate responses that are designed to manage the impacts of the conduct as well as resolve any underlying or substantive issue. The Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Unreasonable Customer Conduct Business Operating Procedure. The Policy is available for inspection via Council's website.

2.2.5 Fraud and Corruption

Council has a Fraud and Corruption Framework (which includes a Fraud Control Plan and supporting Fraud and Corruption Control Policy) that commits to rigorously managing the risk of fraud and corruption, and to investigating and prosecuting cases of fraud or corruption affecting Council, to the fullest extent possible under the law.

The Fraud Control Plan outlines Council's approach to the prevention, detection and reduction of fraud and corruption in both internal and external dealings. The Fraud and Corruption

Control Policy is available for inspection via Council's website.

2.2.6 Confidentiality

Council employees will have access to confidential information in the course of their duties. Council is committed to preserving the confidentiality of information held by it in accordance with its Information Privacy and Confidentiality Policy. Councillors and employees must not access Council information except to the extent that is necessary for them to perform their official duties.

There are several laws which require Council to make available information to members of the public or government bodies. Council will fully comply with its obligations under those laws.

Council's Information Privacy and Confidentiality Policy is available for inspection via Council's website.

Details about Right to Information and Information Privacy can be found in Section 0.

2.2.7 Contact with Lobbyists, Developers and Submitters

Councillors will manage its business-related interactions with lobbyists, developers and submitters to preserve confidence in Council, minimise the likelihood of claims being made of improper dealings, bias or conflict of interest and promote integrity. Council has a policy for Councillor Contact with Lobbyists, Developers and Submitters and is available for inspection via Council's website.

2.2.8 Councillor Acceptable Requests

Council has a Acceptable Request Policy and Guideline in relation to the provision and exchange of information and advice between employees and Councillors. The Policy ensures that requests for information comply with the intent and purpose of the Principles of the *Local Government Act 2009*. Employees are to provide reasonable assistance to Councillors in the exercise of their role and the performance of their duties. Interaction must always be carried out in a professional manner with respect and regard for Councillor and employee positions.

2.2.9 Investigation Policy – Conduct of Councillors

The Investigation Policy is a policy detailing how complaints about the suspected conduct breach of Councillors will be dealt with as required by section 150AE of the *Local Government Act 2009*. A local government must adopt, by resolution, an investigation policy (the policy) about how it deals with the suspected conduct breach of councillors referred, by the independent assessor (the Assessor) under section 150AE (1), LGA, to the local government to be dealt with, and must be published on the local government's website, section 150AE (4), LGA. A copy of this policy is available on Council's website.

2.2.10 Expenses Reimbursement for Councillors

The Expenses Reimbursement for Councillors Policy provides for payment of reasonable expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by Councillors for discharging their duties and responsibilities as Councillors and for the provision of facilities to Councillors for that purpose and is available on Council's website.

2.2.11 Conflict of Interest

Council Employees

All Council employees must perform their duties in a fair and unbiased way, ensuring that decisions made are not impacted by self-interest, private affiliations, or the likelihood of gain or loss for them or others that they may wish to benefit or disadvantage.

A conflict of interest occurs when private interests interfere, or appear to interfere with the performance of official duties.

Private interests include personal, professional or business interests, as well as the interests of individuals that you associate with, such as family, dependants and friends.

Conflicts of interest fall into three categories.

- Actual – there is a direct conflict between your current duties and your existing private interests
- Potential – your duties and private interests could conflict in the future
- Perceived – it could appear that your private interests could improperly influence the performance of your duties

Conflicts of interest can arise inside or outside of the workplace. They may be:

- Pecuniary – where there is a reasonable likelihood of financial loss or gain. May result from an employee (or a relative or close associate) owning property, holding shares or a position in a company bidding for government work or accepting gifts or benefits.
- Non-pecuniary – where there is no financial component, but may involve self-interest, personal or family relationships or other affiliations. Includes any tendency toward favour or prejudice resulting from friendship, animosity or other personal involvement that could bias your judgement or decisions.

The Council Code of Conduct for staff requires all Council employees and contractors to declare any conflicts of interest.

All Council officers are required to disclose conflicts of interest and any gifts and benefits to the Chief Executive Officer under Council's Code of Conduct. All tender and recruitment selection panel members are required to complete a declaration that there is no conflict of interest.

Councillors

Councillors must declare Prescribed and Declarable conflicts of interests (as defined in the Act) at Council and Committee meetings to ensure transparency, accountability and integrity. Any declaration will be dealt with in accordance with the Act and noted in the minutes. It is a standard item of every Council, Information Session, Workshop and Committee agenda.

Councillors are reminded at every meeting of their obligations to declare any Prescribed and Declarable conflicts of interest.

2.2.12 Related Parties

Council is committed to complying with the disclosure requirements for related party transactions under the Australian Accounting Standards. Disclosure of relevant related party information will provide greater transparency and improve the quality of the financial reporting process. A system has been implemented to identify, monitor and disclose related party transactions to manage the risk of non-compliance with the related party disclosure objectives of the Australian Accounting Standards. The Related Party Disclosure Policy is available on Council's website.

2.2.13 Secondary Employment

The Secondary Employment Business Operating Procedure provides guidance to employees on how Council will identify, manage and monitor secondary employment to ensure that these risks are managed properly, consistently and fairly.

Secondary employment includes employment as an employee or contractor, self-employment, involvement in a private business or partnership, provision of paid consultancy services, or service as a company director. These all involve a contract of employment that may create obligations that can conflict with government employment.

2.2.14 Register of Interests

As required by the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, Council maintains a register of interests for Councillors, the Chief Executive Officer, senior contract employees and persons who are related to all of the aforementioned. Register of Interests for all Councillors are available via Council's website, while statements for all other people are kept by the office of the Chief Executive Officer.

2.2.15 Public Interest Disclosure

Council's Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Procedure outline its commitment to investigating all public interest disclosures in a confidential and timely manner. Council encourages and supports public interest disclosures of wrongdoing in Council and will take appropriate action to investigate each disclosure.

Reportable conduct is conduct by a person or persons connected with Council which is dishonest, fraudulent, corrupt, illegal, a breach of legislation or local laws, unethical, unsafe work practices, conduct which may cause financial or non-financial loss to Council, gross mismanagement, serious or substantial waste or repeated instance of breach of administrative procedures.

The Public Interest Disclosure Policy is available on Council's website.

2.2.16 Travel and Accommodation

Council's Travel and Accommodation Policy provides guidelines for travel and accommodation arrangements for employees and elected members attending official Council business. The policy provides guidelines that are intended to:-

- ensure clear and consistent understanding of policy requirements;
- ensure compliance by Council with all legal and regulatory obligations;
- ensure the best use of travel funds and enable Council to better manage its annual travel budget; and
- support staff while conducting Council business away from the normal workplace.

This policy is available by Council via Council's intranet.

2.2.17 Provision of Legal Assistance for Employees, Councillors and Committee Members

The Provision of Legal Assistance Policy is designed to protect the interests of individual current and former Council employees, councillors and non-elected Council Committee members where they become involved in legal proceedings because of their official Council roles, functions and duties.

In each case it will be necessary to determine whether assistance with Legal Representation Costs is justified for the good rule and local government of the Cassowary Coast Regional Council area.

This policy provides criteria and circumstances for assessing the appropriateness of expending Council funds on the legal representation of Council employees, councillors and non-elected Council committee members.

This Policy is available on Council's website.

2.2.18 Audit Committee

Council has established an Audit Committee in accordance with Section 208 – 211 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* and Section 105 of the *Local Government Act 2009*. The Audit Committee provides an independent forum where representatives of Council, independent specialists and management work together to fulfil specific governance responsibilities that contribute to the improved performance of the organisation. It plays a key role in assisting Council to fulfil its governance and oversight responsibilities in relation to a number of areas including, financial reporting, internal control systems, risk management, legal and regulatory compliance and audit functions

Council's Audit Committee consists of independent and Council members in accordance with legislative requirements. The members experience is diverse and includes experience and skills in financial, risk management, legal and governance matters.

The committee provides recommendations on findings directly to the Council particularly when issues are identified that could present a material risk or threat to Council. In addition, the Audit Committee submits minutes to Council of meetings outlining relevant matters that have been considered by the committee as well as the committee's opinions, decisions and recommendations.

The Committee conducts a self-assessment review at least on a bi-annual (two years) basis to evaluate the committee activities in accordance with the Audit Committee Charter.

2.2.19 External Audit

Each year, the Queensland Audit Office, or contractors appointed on their behalf, audit Council's financial statements and provide an independent audit report to Council. Any significant issues the Queensland Audit Office identifies are reported to Senior Management and Council and also made public through the Auditor General's Reports to Parliament.

The audit report identifies financial and compliance issues and categorises them into high, medium and low risks. The Queensland Audit Office also rate Council's controls issues and categories them as a deficiency or significant deficiency. These risks are reviewed and addressed by Council's management via the coordination and stewardship of the Office of the Chief Executive Officer. In addition to financial and compliance audits, the Queensland Audit Office carries out performance management system audits and information systems audits.

2.2.20 Internal Audit

Council has established an Internal Audit function in accordance with Section 207 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* and Section 105 of the *Local Government Act 2009*. Council undertakes the Internal Audit function through Council's contracted chartered accounting firm who provides an independent and objective review and advisory service to provide assurance

to the Audit Committee and management that Council's controls are designed to manage Council's risks and achieve objectives by operating in an efficient, effective and ethical manner. The Internal Auditor attends the Audit Committee meetings and provides members with updates on the assurance programs and other relevant activities.

The primary objectives of the Internal Audit function are to evaluate Council's systems of internal control in order to provide assurance that:

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

Sustainable development and management of assets and infrastructure, and delivery of effective services

PLANNING

3.1.1 Planning Scheme

The Cassowary Coast Planning Scheme was adopted on 3 July 2015 (and amended on 17 August 2018). The Planning Scheme sets the vision as to how Cassowary Coast should grow. The Planning Scheme encourages housing choice and affordability for residents and seeks to control the cost of living for the community by managing our future infrastructure needs. It also facilitates the ongoing residential, commercial and industrial demands to create further jobs and investment in the Region.

The primary function of the Planning Scheme is to:

- Further the aims of the *Planning Act 2016* and the vision for the region to achieve ecologically sustainable development
- Provide a robust, responsive and transparent environment for simplified development assessment reflecting the aspirations of the local community
- Provide a blueprint for the future economic development and social well-being of the region.

The Cassowary Coast Planning Scheme is available via Council's website.

The Council is expected to commence a review of the Planning Scheme in 2024-2025.

3.1.2 Local Government Infrastructure Plan

The *Planning Act 2016* requires that all Councils have a Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP) as part of their planning scheme and was adopted on 28 November 2019. The LGIP is the outcome of integrating land use planning with long term infrastructure planning, to identify the trunk infrastructure required to support the intended urban development pattern of the region. It therefore shows the trunk infrastructure Council intends to provide and informs Council's Long Term Financial Planning and the Long Term Asset Management Plan.

The purpose of an LGIP is to:

- integrate infrastructure planning with the land use planning identified in the planning scheme;
- provide transparency regarding a local government's intentions to provide trunk infrastructure;
- enable a local government to establish the cost of infrastructure provision to assist its long-term financial planning;
- ensure that trunk infrastructure is planned and provided in an efficient and orderly manner;
- provide a basis for the imposition of conditions about infrastructure on development approvals.

3.1.3 Financial Planning

Council's long-term financial strategy and financial plan support the implementation of the Council's long-term plans. Long-term financial planning is an essential governance tool, which supports:

- fiscal responsibility and financial sustainability
- transparency and accountability to the local community and other stakeholders
- appropriate levels of inter-generational equity
- the delivery of reporting against financial targets and goals
- the capacity of managers to effectively plan and deliver their services
- the development of performance measures and target service levels
- the development of Council's annual budget.

Section 169 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* requires that the long-term financial forecast must cover a period of at least 10 years and include the relevant financial sustainability ratios, including

- asset sustainability ratio
- net financial liabilities ratio
- operating surplus ratio.

Council has utilised the Queensland Treasury Corporation Financial Forecasting Model as a consistent and comprehensive platform for financial forecasting and data analysis.

Council is currently in the process of developing a financial sustainability strategy.

3.1.4 Annual Budget

The annual budget supports the delivery of the annual Operational Plan and is consistent with the priorities identified in Council's key plans. The budget identifies the initiatives funded for the coming year and is presented to Council at the annual budget meeting together with a report setting out the financial operations and financial position of Council for the previous financial year. Council's budget must include statements of Council's financial position, cash flow, income and expenditure and changes in equity and is accompanied by a suite of associated policies including the Debt, Investment, Revenue and Council Concession Policies. A budget summary is included with the budget and operational plan documents, summarising the budget for the community.

The annual budget is available for inspection on Council's website. Monthly Budget Reports are completed by all Sections and reviews of the budget conducted quarterly.

3.1.5 Procurement Management

Council maintains a Procurement Policy to ensure transparency and accountability in the procurement of all goods and services in line with Section 198 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*. The Procurement Policy and associated documents sets out the approved processes and methods for purchasing goods and services within Council.

All Council procurement must be conducted in strict compliance with Section 104 of the *Local Government Act 2009*, including the sound contracting principles as follows:

- value for money
- open and effective competition
- the development of competitive local business and industry
- environmental protection
- ethical behaviour and fair dealing.

Council may also have to comply with other procurement requirements, particularly in the expenditure of grant monies received from other government departments. A copy of the Procurement Policy is available on Council's website.

An internal Procurement Review Board was established in 2024 to consider and approve the procurement methodology and strategy for councils' significant procurement and contracting activities both pre and post market.

3.1.6 Asset Management Planning

Asset management planning is an essential tool for the long-term provision of asset-based services to the community. The *Local Government Regulation 2012* requires that Council prepare and adopt a long-term asset management plan covering a period of at least 10 years. The Plan must provide strategies to ensure the sustainable management of Council's infrastructure and the assets mentioned in Council's asset register. It must also state the estimated capital expenditure for renewing, upgrading and extending the assets for the period covered by the plan and be consistent with Council's Long-Term Financial Plan.

Council has adopted a Strategic Asset Management Plan which outlines how Council will deliver on its commitment for the provision and upkeep of infrastructure and associated services. Council has also developed a Strategic Asset Management Plan 2022 and has in place the following detailed plans:

- Buildings Asset Management Plan
- Fleet Asset Management Plan
- Marine Asset Management Plan
- Recreation and Natural Areas Asset Management Plan
- Sewerage Asset management Plan
- Stormwater Asset Management Plan
- Transport Asset Management Plan
- Water Asset Management Plan
- Waste Asset management Plan
- ICT Asset Management Plan

Council's Asset Management documentation informs the Long-Term Financial Plan by providing financial projections for asset capital investment (i.e. renewal and new and upgrade works) and asset operational and maintenance costs for Council's current and future asset portfolio.

A copy of the Cassowary Coast Regional Council Strategic Asset Management Plan is available on Council's website.

3.1.7 Project Management Framework

A Project Management Framework has been developed to assist all employees in Council who would manage and deliver projects to the wide range of Council's portfolio of capital and operational programs delivering consistent best practice project management.

The Framework provides structure, guidance and tools necessary for a consistent, controlled and rigorous approach to managing projects, appropriate to type, risk and complexity. It specifically provides the following benefits:

- the identification and management of project risks
- the consistent application of project management practice by all of the sections within Council
- the effective integration of relevant sections' needs in the early phases of a project
- the effective transfer and sharing of information between sections at the end of project delivery
- an increased project management capability and capacity within Council
- establishing effective understanding of operational and capital works project approval process
- incorporating strategic planning objectives into project management functional requirements and processes.

Democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement

4.1 COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMMUNITY

4.1.1 Community Engagement

Council is committed to ensuring inclusive and effective community engagement and has adopted a Community Engagement Policy to guide its efforts.

The Community Engagement Policy is based upon the following principles:

- to promote good governance and guide Council in effective community engagement to support good decision-making in the public interest.
- to provide the community with a clear understanding of Council's governance role and the avenues available for meaningful public participation in Cassowary Coast Regional Council decision making.
- to provide meaningful avenues for the Cassowary Coast Region community to contribute to shaping its future, and to participate in tackling local problems and meeting local needs.
- strengthen organisational community engagement capacity by establishing within Council, a model that encourages a coordinated approach to community engagement across Council.
- establish clear processes, to be applied across all of Council activities including tools, to assist with planning and decision making for engagement activities.
- build community capacity by offering appropriate opportunities for members of the community to respond to and engage with Council in its decision making processes and by building skills, relationships and networks in individuals and communities.

The Community Engagement Policy is available on Council's website.

Council's strategic approach to community engagement focuses on the principles adopted in the **International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)** model ensuring Council will:

- communicate strategies and frameworks that support the public and other stakeholders in communicating their information needs to Council
- develop strategies and frameworks for communicating Council decisions to the community;
- develop community engagement policies, procedures and practices, which include how the Council engages with the community when developing policies affecting external operations and how Council considers community comments
- promote open and transparent engagement throughout Council and community through collaborative participation.

4.1.2 Customer Promise

Council's Customer Promise is a public statement that reflects our commitment and provides a clear framework for what you can expect. Council promises to understand the community's needs and deliver a service you value. We will listen, treat you with respect and get to know you. We will empower our people to respond appropriately. We will build and strengthen our relationships with all customers, and we will responsibly manage the region on your behalf.

Council has adopted Customer Service Level Standards. These Standards provide details about the level of service to be provided by Council, the process for payments, contacting us, and requesting our services. When working with you we are committed to ensuring you experience quality service that delivers value and service that:

- you value,
- is managed confidentiality,
- is transparent,
- and acknowledges of your disputes and complaints.

4.1.3 Community Survey

Council has a commitment to an open and transparent way of communicating with the

community. Council commissions surveys for different projects or initiatives to gain independent feedback on the views and expectations of the community. The surveys seek a range of resident input, satisfaction and opinions on the importance of various services that Council provides and residents' satisfaction with the standard of these services. The results provide valuable information for Council's ongoing strategic planning, quality improvement processes and how best for Council to engage with the community.

4.1.4 Media Relations

Media relations is an important component in achieving Council's mission and goals through effectively informing, educating and promoting Council's programs, services and facilities to residents. Council is committed to maintaining a professional, informative and courteous relationship with all levels of the media. The Media and Communications Policy provides guidance as to Council's procedures regarding requests for media coverage or information by the media.

The Media and Communications Policy is available on Council's website.

4.1.5 Advertising Spending Policy

Council may place paid advertisements in various media to promote, inform and educate the public about its services and programs. Council's Advertising Spending Policy ensures that expenditure on advertising is appropriate and in the interest of the public. Advertising should be used for the purposes of Council or the benefit to the community is advanced. Advertising should not be used to promote particular achievements or plans of individual Councillors or groups of Councillors. In particular advertising that is paid for by Council should not be used to influence the voters in an election.

4.1.6 Advisory Committees

Council adopted an Advisory Committee Policy in February 2023 to provide a consistent framework for the establishment, conduct and management of Advisory Committees in accordance with the Local Government Act 2009 (Qld) and Local Government Regulation 2012 (Qld). A copy of the policy is available on Council's website.

The objectives of Advisory Committees are appointed to:

- Support Council to deliver good governance and transparency in Council decision

making;

- Provide a diverse cross-section of community representation for input and engagement into the specific purpose of an Advisory Committee;
- Develop and foster economic, social and environmental sustainability and resilience within the Cassowary Coast Community; and
- Encourage and strengthen innovation and collaboration between Council and the Cassowary Coast Community and stakeholders.

Good governance of, and by, local government

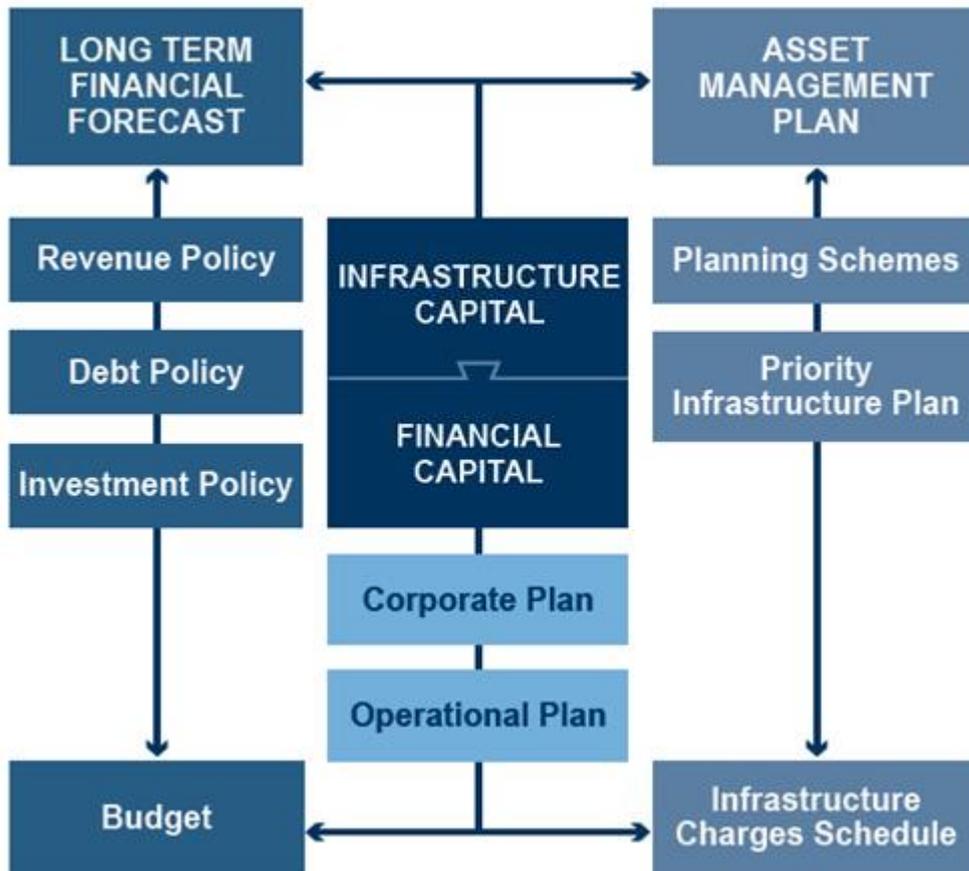
5.1 PLANNING

5.1.1 Strategic Planning

The Mayor is responsible for leading, managing and providing strategic direction to the CEO in order to achieve the high quality administration of the Council. The Mayor is supported by Councillors who must participate in policy development for the benefit of the local government area.

It is then for the CEO and local government employees to implement the Council's policies and priorities in a way that promotes effective, efficient and economical management of public resources, sustainability, excellence in service delivery and continual improvement.

Council's strategic planning framework sets the benchmark for all of the things that Council does. The diagram below sets out, at a high level, the strategic framework at Council and the relationships that exist from plan/policy/scheme through to the long term Vision.



5.1.2 Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan 2021-25 is a high-level strategic document that sets the direction for Council for the next five years. It is one of the most significant planning documents adopted by Council and is the means by which council delivers on its mission to continue to build on the foundations of the new regional council.

The Corporate Plan is built on a strong platform that values our past experiences and recognises our future opportunities. Success in realising our opportunities is dependent on good planning, strong leadership and a commitment to collaboration and partnering between Council, community, business and other levels of government.

The Corporate Plan provides for a shared objective that ensures alignment of actions and service delivery by all departments within council.

The Corporate Plan puts into effect the five guiding principles that the community has said are important to it. These include—

- Community – Our People
- Economy – Our Future
- Region – Our Natural Environment
- Organisation – Our Team
- Infrastructure – Our Built Environment

The Corporate Plan sets a strategic direction and seeks to balance the often competing needs throughout the region. It has been developed while being mindful of the financial challenges facing a community that is still rebuilding from past cyclones. It identifies a number of key focus areas, priority objectives for each, and the strategies that will take us forward. The Corporate Plan is supported by three principal planning tools.

- Asset Management Plan
- Long Term Financial Plan
- Planning Scheme

Council's Corporate Plan also defines the outcome measures that it will use to demonstrate progress towards achieving the vision. These measures are reported against through Council's Annual Report. Council's Corporate Plan is available on Council's website.

5.1.3 Operational Plan

The Operational Plan links Council's strategic directions (set out in the Corporate Plan) to the projects, initiatives and ongoing activities to be delivered for a particular financial year and funded through Council's annual budget.

The plan is comprised of a number of deliverables which Council is committed to delivering over a financial year. Council is required to report quarterly on the progress of all operational deliverables to ensure financial responsibility and the sustainability of our region and community assets.

Progress on the implementation of the Operational Plan is measured using a suite of performance measures and reported quarterly through the Corporate Performance Report,

by the Chief Executive Officer to Council. The Council's Operational Plan is available on Council's website.

Quarterly Corporate Performance Reports are prepared to measure performance against Council's Corporate and Operational Plan. Further information is available in Section 5.2.3.

Our Operational Plan and Budget sets the direction for the financial year and identifies how we will measure our performance.

5.1.4 Business Plans

Divisional and sectional business plans are encouraged within Council as a best practice approach to business planning and are currently in development. The business plan defines the purpose of the division or section and their role within the Corporate Plan context. It defines how the division or section intends to address the service-related challenges it expects to face over the next three to five years and links the defined standards of services with projects and resources.

Business plans pull together details from various other planning resources and business management information such as risk, human resources, financial projections, asset management, capital works and future resource requirements. Most importantly, the business plan details the projects and activities that the division or section will deliver for the next three to five years, bridging the gap between the five year Corporate and one-year Operational Plan to achieve an integrated and streamlined planning process.

5.1.5 Community Strategies and Action Plans

Council has developed several community strategies and action plans, resulting from a variety of engagement activities and discussions with community representatives, organisations and community members.

The following Strategic Action Plans have been adopted:

- Economic Development Strategy
- Events Strategy
- Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

- Community Scorecard Action Plan
- Coastal Hazards Adaptation Strategy
- Unsealed Roads Improvement Plan
- Strategic Workforce Plan
- Open Space Strategy

5.2 PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING

5.2.1 Annual Report

Council must adopt its annual report within one month after the day the general purpose financial statements are certified by the auditor-general and the report must be placed on Council's website within two weeks of Council adopting the Annual Report. The Annual Report is one of Council's key accountability documents. It provides a comprehensive assessment of Council's performance in implementing the long-term five year Corporate Plan and annual Operational Plan. The Annual Report is also one of the only documents that provides a report on Council's financial performance throughout the preceding financial year.

The Annual Report is available on Council's website.

5.2.2 Annual Financial Statements

Council's general-purpose financial statements are prepared pursuant to Section 176 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* and other prescribed requirements. The statements must accurately reflect Council's financial performance and position for the financial year, must be prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, must present a true and fair view of the Council's financial position and of its financial performance and cash flows for the financial year ended on that date. The financial Statements are audited by the Queensland Audit Office.

The financial Statements are included in Council's Annual Report which is available on Council's website, Customer Service Centres or Cassowary Coast library branches.

5.2.3 Quarterly Corporate Performance Reports

Section 174 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* requires the Chief Executive Officer to present a written assessment of the local government's progress towards implementing the annual Operational Plan at meetings of the local government held at regular intervals of not more than three months.

Council meets this requirement through the preparation of a Quarterly Operational Plan and Budget Review Reports, which provides substantive evidence for Council and the community of progress in delivering on the annual Operational Plan.

Progress against each operational planning goal and objective is measured using deliverables and provides the basis for an annual assessment of progress towards meeting the goals and objectives outlined in the Corporate Plan. Council's quarterly Corporate Performance Reports are available on Council's website.

5.3 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.3.1 Enterprise Risk Management

Council has an Enterprise Risk Management Framework. This document demonstrates that Council understands and manages risk and seeks to ensure there is consistency to the methods used in assessing, monitoring and communicating risks across the organisation.

There are two distinct parts contained within the Enterprise Risk Management Framework:

1. An overview of Council's Strategic Enterprise Risk Management Framework. This maps Council's approach and the structures and processes that support an integrated risk management environment, which links business objectives and supports management decision making on a daily basis - all of which will ultimately enhance Council's delivery of services to the community.
2. The specific processes associated with risk management activities within Council. It facilitates the preparation and documentation of comprehensive risk management practices across Council in line with Council's risk appetite and tolerance levels.

Risk owners work closely with their teams to champion risk awareness and encourage the

integration of risk management in Council's organisational culture. The Enterprise Management Framework and Policy is available on Council's website.

5.3.2 Business Continuity Management

Council recognises the importance of organisational resilience to create systems and processes designed to assist Council prepare for, respond to and recover from any interrupted critical business functions. Effective business continuity management helps to prevent and mitigate the severity of potential business interruptions on the organisation and its stakeholders. Council has developed and is currently reviewing a Business Continuity Management Framework, including an overarching Business Continuity Plan and associated sub-plans.

In the event of a significant business interruption, Council will:

- ensure key critical business functions are restored and maintained as soon as possible
- endeavour to ensure the confidence of employees, the community and stakeholders
- fulfil regulatory and contractual requirements and obligations
- mitigate financial, legal/regulatory, service delivery, well-being and reputation/brand consequences.

5.3.3 Disaster Management

In accordance with the *Disaster Management Act 2003* and other relevant legislation, regulations and standards identified in the State Disaster Management Group Strategic Policy Framework, Council's disaster management function serves to increase the resilience of the Cassowary Coast community in the event of a significant emergency or disaster within the region.

Effective coordination of disaster response involves the implementation of all relevant plans, processes and procedures, together with the timely activation of the Cassowary Coast Local Disaster Management Group and Council's Disaster Coordination Centre.

The primary aim of the Cassowary Coast Local Disaster Management Group is to ensure that the community can return to normal functioning as quickly as possible following a

disaster event. This involves ensuring that critical infrastructure and essential services are restored as soon as possible, providing longer-term psycho-social support and welfare to those in need, minimising and redressing environmental impacts and facilitating recovery of the business sector. The Local Disaster Coordination Centre is also responsible for coordinating with Regional/State and National disaster management groups.

The Local Disaster Management Group Plans are available on Council's website.

5.3.4 Insurance

Council's insurance is centrally managed through the Office of the Chief Executive Officer. The Section manages Council's insurance program, public liability claims, third party property damage claims, motor vehicle and plant damage claims and Council property damage claims. Workers compensation insurance is managed by Council's People and Culture Section.

The following insurance covers are in place to protect Council and its employees:

- Public Liability (including Cyber Liability)
- Industrial Special Risks
- Motor Vehicle
- Equipment and Machinery
- Employment Practises
- Councillors and Officers Liability
- Personal Accident (Employees & Volunteers)
- Travel and Accommodation
- Marine Hull
- Marine Operators
- Workers' Compensation

The public process and incident form for making an insurance claim with Council are available by contacting Council's Customer Service Centre.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

5.4.1 Information Communication Technology (ICT) Governance including Cyber Security

In recognising the importance of ICT, Council's Executive Team established an Information Management Steering Committee (IMSC). The IMSC is the senior governance and policy making body for ICT at Council. Its role is to ensure that the planning and investment in ICT as approved by the Executive Team, is implemented to support Council's strategic and operations goals. The IMSC reports to the Executive Management Team.

5.4.2 Record Keeping

Council is committed to ensuring all records retained are complete and accurate and can be identified, accessed and retrieved in a useable format that preserves the record's evidential integrity. Council's Records Management Policy provides guidance to employees to ensure mandatory compliance with the Public Records Act 2002.

5.4.3 Information Security

Council information must remain secure and accessible only to authorised users. The completeness, accuracy and trustworthiness of Council's information and information systems must be maintained at all times. Council is committed to ensure information systems are appropriately protected from loss of confidentiality, integrity and availability.

5.4.4 Right to Information

Under the *Right to Information Act 2009* any person has the right of access to most documents held by Council. Documents held include paper files, printouts, computer records, files, visual material, and audio recordings. Council has developed a Right to Information Policy, which acknowledges the right of the public to:

- obtain information about Council's structure, policies and activities unless disclosure would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest
- ensure that personal information held about members of the public by Council is accurate and complete.

The Right to Information Policy is available on Council's website.

A publication scheme is also available on Council's website which outlines the following information:

- **About Us** (Who we are and what we do) – agency information, location and contacts, constitutional and legal governance
- **Our Services** (The service we offer) – a description of the services offered by the agency, including advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases
- **Our Finances** (What we spend and how we spend it) – financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts
- **Our Priorities** (What our priorities are and how we are doing) – strategy and performance information, plans assessments, inspections and reviews
- **Our Decisions** (How we make decisions) – policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations
- **Our Policies** (Our policies and procedures) – current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities
- **Our Lists** (Lists and registers) – information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the agency.

5.4.5 Information Privacy

The protection of personal information which can identify an individual is a matter of great significance to Council. Council is committed to protecting the privacy of individuals and has developed an Information Privacy and Confidentiality Policy to facilitate this. Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the collection, use, disclosure and handling of all personal information by Council complies with all relevant legislation.

The Information Privacy and Confidentiality Policy is available on Council's website.

5.4.6 Information Management and Information Governance

Council values information as a core strategic asset and will govern and manage it according to its lifecycle. Information Management is of key importance to good governance. Council is committed to the management of its information and continuing value in accordance with the relevant legislation and best practice standards.

5.4 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

5.5.1 Policies, Administrative Directives and Procedures

Council maintains policies, business operating procedures and work instructions which provide guidance to its decisions and actions.

Council policies focus on the strategic and statutory decision-making obligations of the Council. The policy may relate to an express power or duty or a matter that is non-statutory and entirely discretionary. A Council policy decision will impact the Local Government's strategic, financial or operational resources and may also impact service levels provided to the community. Care must be taken to ensure that Council Policy does not cross over into the statutory functions and responsibilities of the CEO for the day to day operations of the Local Government.

Administration Policies are an important component of internal governance, providing principles for the control of activity and decision making relevant to the Chief Executive Officer's duties for managing the day to day operations of the local government.

The CEO is therefore the decision maker for the adoption, amendment or revoking of Administration Policy.

A procedure is the second level of the Policy Framework, which is more detailed than a Policy and describes the who does what and when (in sequence order). They may directly relate to a policy or the stand-alone performance of an administrative function or activity. A BOP establishes the internal controls that support, consistent service levels, maximise efficiency and effectiveness, meet compliance obligations, mitigate risk and ensure operational standards.

Work instructions should be very detailed on "how" to accomplish a specific job, task or assignment.

All approved policies are included in a policy register on Council's website and copies of the policies are available for public inspection on request. All policies have review dates and are reviewed and evaluated in accordance with a schedule, ensuring that corporate policies are up-to-date, accurate and continuing to achieve their objectives.

5.5.2 Legislative Compliance

The Governance team is currently developing a compliance management framework which aims to deliver an effective, organisational wide compliance management system that will enable Council to demonstrate its commitment to compliance with laws, legislative requirements, industry codes and practice and set standards for good governance and practice.

5.5.3 Local Laws

Local laws are statutory instruments adopted by Council to assist in the good rule and governance of the local government area, enabling Council to regulate matters to serve the community.

Local Laws are available on Council's website.

5.5.4 Registers

Cassowary Coast Regional Council has several listed registers open to inspection. This list is published on Council's website and the public may request to view any of these registers by contacting Council.

Supporting Documentation

6.1 Annual Governance Cycle

Item and Section Reference	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Corporate Plan Review												
Operational Plan adopted												
Annual Report adopted												
Quarterly Corporate Performance Reports adopted												
Audit Committee Meetings												
External Audit												
Internal Audit Work Plan												
Community Survey (biennial or as required)												
Risk Assessment Reviews												
Business Continuity Management Review												
Insurance Premium finalisation												
Annual Budget Adopted												
Financial Statements & Community Financial Report												
Disaster Management Review / Test Exercise												

6.2 Governance Principles in Practice

Principal	Council Documentation	Objective	Performance Monitoring
<p>Transparent and effective processes, and decision-making in the public interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision Making and Management Structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles and Values Organisational Structure Ordinary Council Committee Charters Strategic Planning Framework Corporate Plan Operational Plan Budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve an integrated approach to planning Achieve community and corporate goals Address complex/strategic issues Support transparency and effective decision making Provide effective management and operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council agendas and minutes available via Council's website within agreed timeframes Council's total operating surplus/(deficit) Council's operating surplus/(deficit) variance from budget Council's debt/borrowings Percentage of Council officer recommendations adopted by Council Number of cancelled and special Council meetings convened Attendance rate of Councillors at standing and full Council meetings Attendance at Committees Percentage of Operational Plan activities not completed within target Volume and quality of feedback received during Corporate Plan review Number of Operational Plan activities across Corporate Plan goal and outcome areas Number of risk management strategies incorporated into the Operational Plan annually Number of matters referred to the Queensland Ombudsman's Office
<p>Ethical and legal behaviour of Councillors and local government employees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roles and Responsibilities Review and Control Mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegated Power and Authorisations Policy Achievement and Development Plans Code of Conduct for Employees Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy Workplace Bullying Policy Employee Employment Screening Administrative Directive Complaints Management Policy Fraud and Corruption Control Policy Fraud Management Plan Information Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Councillor Contact with Lobbyists, Developers and Submitters Policy Councillor Interaction with Staff Policy Councillor Register of Interests Public Interest Disclosure Policy Audit Committee Charter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide formal authority and delegation Merit based recruitment and selection Conduct its business with integrity, honesty and fairness Comply with all relevant laws, regulations, codes and corporate standards Achieve Council's desired culture Show leadership qualities, recognise performance, build positive working relationships, manage underperformance, achieve continuous improvement Rigorously manage the risk of fraud and corruption Preserving the confidentiality of information held by the Council Transparent, effective and timely resolution of complaints Encourage and support public interest disclosures of wrongdoing in Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of complaints received Number of fraud/corruption matters reported to the Crime & Corruption Commission Number of Public Interest Disclosures received Evidence of reduction of high and medium risks identified by external audit Percentage of internal audit plans implemented Percentage of outstanding annual employee performance management Fraud and Corruption risk rating Employee turnover rate Percentage of employee with outstanding policy training/assessment Contribution to employee training Number of items of Council property reported stolen Value of reportable loss reported to the Queensland Audit Office
<p>Sustainable development and management of assets and infrastructure, and delivery of effective services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Report Annual Returns Financial Statements Community Financial Report Planning Scheme Budget Procurement Policy Asset Management Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor performance of Council Communicate performance to stakeholder groups Make recommendations about matters that need action or improvement Monitor, oversee and enhance the Council's corporate governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback received on Annual Report Percentage of Operational Plan activities carried over financial years Benchmarking activities with other local governments Asset Management Key Performance Indicators Financial Sustainability Ratios Number of Planning Appeals Compliance with Planning Act timeframes Whole of Council asset consumption ratio Asset sustainability ratio Percent of total Council spend allocated locally
<p>Democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicating with the Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement Policy Customer Service Charter Media and Communications Policy Advertising Spending Policy Reconciliation Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for involvement in Council's decision making Inform, educate and promote Council programs, services and facilities Provide customers with the highest standards of customer service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and type of consultation processes undertaken Number of unique visits to Council's website Customer satisfaction with call centre contact Media release pick up rate Changes to methods for the community to contact the Council and Council providing information to the community

<p>Good governance of, and by, local government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Performance and Reporting • Risk Management • Records management • Legal Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan • Business Plan • Operational Plan • Annual Report • Annual Returns • Corporate Quarterly Performance Reports • Enterprise Risk Management • Business Continuity Management • Insurance Policies • Right to Information Policy • Information Privacy and Confidentiality Policy • Policies and Procedures • Local Laws • Registers • ICT Governance • Information Security Policy • Records Management Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure risk-based decision making within the Council • Ensure organisational resilience during significant business interruptions • Insure against financial loss • Provide the public with access to documents held by Council • Provide local laws to govern administrative and regulatory roles • Clearly state Council's intent, commitment and position on strategic issues • Monitor performance of Council • Ensure secure storage and management of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of policies adopted, reviewed and rescinded • Evidence of declining operational risk • Percent of organisation with current business continuity strategies • Number of Right to Information and Information Privacy requests • Percentage of risk strategies addressed in Operational Plan • Ratio of insurance premium to total claim value • Ratio of insurance claims upheld against the number submitted • Percentage of policies/procedures overdue for review • Promotion of performance to the community • Percentage of Operational Plan targets met • Number of Business Continuity Plans adopted and implemented • Availability of Council's information communication systems during gazetted business hours • Reported breaches of the Information Security Usage Policy
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6.3 Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
Act	Local Government Act 2009.
Advisory Committee	A committee made up of Councillors and representatives from the community that report through Council's Standing Committees
Benchmarking	A process of comparing performance with standards achieved in a comparable environment, often with the aim of improving performance.
Business Continuity	Business Continuity Management is a management and governance process, which ensures the impact of a potential disruption to Council's critical operations is minimised and that critical operations are sustained until normal services are restored.
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	The most senior officer in the administration. He or she is directly accountable to the Council.
Community	The entire population of the local government area made up of numerous local and shared interest groups e.g. residents, ratepayers, business investors.
Community Engagement	The process of formally engaging the community either through seeking input in a particular area or through providing information to the community on the organisation's plan, activities and performance.
Corporate Governance	Corporate Governance is how decisions are taken and implemented; how organisations are controlled and managed to achieve their objectives; and how organisations are directed, reviewed and held to account.
Corporate Governance Framework	Council's Corporate Governance Framework details the various instruments used in Council to ensure exemplary standards of corporate governance. It aims to reinforce the accountability standards within Council and ensure that the organisation's objectives are being achieved efficiently and effectively to ultimately deliver community value/
Corporate Plan	Council's Corporate Plan outlines the Council's vision and translates it into medium and long-term priorities, outcomes and strategies for a minimum five-year period.
Corporate Values	Council's approved corporate values are: Respect, Integrity and Courage
Council	The Elected Members of Council under the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
Councillor	An individual elected representative of a local government
Council Meeting	The Elected Members meeting formally in accordance with legislation.
Delegation	The Council routinely delegates its powers to the Chief Executive Officer who is empowered under the Local Government Act, with certain exceptions, to further on-delegate these powers to other Council officers.
Directors	The senior positions in the organisation directly responsible to the CEO.
Elected Member	An elected representative of the local government; also referred to as Councillors or Mayor.
Employee	An employee of the Council including casual or contract employees.
Ethics	A system of moral principles, by which actions and proposals can be judged.
Executive Team	Comprised of the CEO, Directors, Manager People & Safety and Manager Governance Risk and Performance .
External Audit	External auditors appointed by Queensland Audit Office, or contractors appointed by the Queensland Audit Office, audit Council's financial statements and provide an independent audit report.
Internal Audit	Council's Internal Auditors provides an independent evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of internal control established and implemented by management.
Local Government Act 2009	The Local Government Act 2009 and amendments or regulations.

Term	Meaning
Local Laws	A law adopted by Council that reflects community needs and helps ensure the good rule and government of the Region. They allow Council to establish permit or license regimes for activities that require regulation, to create offences for unacceptable behaviour and to allow for the issue of compliance or abatement notices.
Mayor	A person elected by the community to hold the position as the elected leader of the Council.
Operational Plan	Council's Operational Plan translates strategic and operational aims and objectives into actions to give effect to a one-year portion of the Corporate Plan.
Deliverables	The effect, impact and result on, or consequence for the community, environment or organisation, of strategies services, policies or activities.
Performance	The results of activities and progress in achieving the desired outcomes over a given period of time.
Risk Management	A risk is the effect of uncertainty of Council achieving its objectives. It may be the chance of something occurring that has the potential to cause loss, damage or injury.
Stakeholder	A person or organisation with an interest in the outcome or output or is affected by services, activities, policies, services, programs, or strategies.
Strategic Planning	The process by which the organisation envisions its future and develops strategies, goals, objectives and action plans to achieve that future.
Terms of Reference	A document which defines the purpose, scope, stakeholders and high level deliverables from a particular activity, requirement or Working Group.
Vision	A statement that embraces the desired future the organisation is working towards.