

Transparent Governance Community Reference Group Minutes



Date	1 st December, 2020	Time	7.00 pm – 9:00pm
Location	Cunningham Room, Civic Centre		
List of Council Attendees (P = Present, A = Apology, NA = Not in attendance)			
P	Mayor Teresa Harding		
P	Cr Kate Kunzelmann		
P	Cr Jacob Madsen (Chair)		
P	Sonia Cooper – General Manager, Corporate Services (Facilitator)		
P	Jeff Keech – Chief Financial Officer, Corporate Services		
P	Melanie Rippon, Community Engagement Officer, Coordination & Performance		
Community Reference Group Attendees (P = Present, A = Apology, NA = Not in attendance)			
P	Megan Buxton	P	Fuad Paul Forghani
P	Jade Connor	P	John Fraser
NA	Martin Corkery	P	Trevor Reynolds
P	Susan Dunne	P	Christine Ryan
NA	James Fazl	NA	Geoffrey Yarham
P	Warren Keel	P	Marie Kavanagh
NA	Kate den Otter	P	Steve Mallet
NA	Robert Gould	P	Cecil Maddox
NA	David Harris	A	Adrienne Robinson
NA	Mira Yates		

Agenda Item		Participants	Minutes
1	Welcome and Acknowledgment of Country	Cr. Jacob Madsen (Chair)	Cr Madsen opened the meeting, welcomed members and acknowledged Country. Elected representatives, members and staff introduced themselves.
2	<i>Check-in question: How can council best facilitate community engagement for next year's budget?</i>	Sonia Cooper CRG members	A member asked for an overview of the budget development process in Council before the question was discussed. Jeff Keech outlined the following: There are two components that form the budget: 1. Operating budget – based on revenue and expenses, including rates and fees. Budgets and annual plans developed through engagement with branches and sections within Council. Informed by the Corporate Plan (iFuture). The finance team then works with the Executive

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		<p>Leadership Team through a series of internal workshops to for the budget.</p> <p>2. Capital budget – infrastructure and assets. Built through the infrastructure department. A prioritisation process is undertaken based on priority infrastructure plans and a long-term financial forecast (10 years).</p> <p>Mayor provided an overview outlining the budget process from setting rates to working through capital expenditure and operational expenditure using rates, grants and developer contributions. Council’s need to work within the financial sustainability ratios set by Queensland Government. Mayor discussed future opportunity for participatory budgeting which involves residents providing feedback on how they would like rates spent.</p> <p>Members provided the following comments regarding community participation in the budget build:</p> <p>‘Disclose rationale behind budget prioritisation process’</p> <p>‘Where we bring community into discussions. To be carefully planned out’</p> <p>‘Decisions to be made for what benefits all of Ipswich’</p> <p>‘Disclose the cost of assets and services’</p> <p>‘The strategic driver is iFuture (new Corporate Plan)’</p> <p>‘The process is the wrong way around. We needs a proper community engagement program with adequate staff, underpinned by policy & strategy, planned over the long term and developing community plans’</p> <p>‘We always want a simple approach’</p> <p>‘Language used is too complex. Information needs to be in a language that they (community) can relate to’</p> <p>‘The 10 year plan should be a 30 year plan’</p> <p>‘Need to be significant community input & what community wants Promote the various community engagement programs via social media’</p> <p>‘Use CRG members to consult on the iFuture plan in February 2021</p> <p>‘Need to close the loop with community engagement programs. Need to follow up on the outcomes of engagement with the community’</p> <p>‘Council’s YouTube channel is positively received’</p>

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		<p>'Council should improve its facilitation processes' 'The CRGs should be used more in decision making – we aren't used as much as we could be' 'Jacinda Adhern's videos during COVID were excellent' 'Where do you allow the 'right' places for community engagement input' 'Sub-committees are now live streamed at Council. This is working well for community engagement'</p> <p>How can Council best facilitate community engagement for next years' budget process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disclose rationale behind prioritisation process Where we bring community into discussions to be carefully planned out Decisions to be made for what benefits all of Ipswich. Disclose the cost of assets & services Strategic driver Process is the wrong way around 'We always want a simple approach' Language users - too complex - needs to be in a language they can relate to Needs to be significant community input & what community wants Facilitation process by Council should be improved. CRGs should be used more in decision making. CRGs -> future in Feb Need to close the loop with CE programs 'need for follow up' Promote various CE programs via social media. Council's YouTube channel - truly reviewed Where do you allow the 'right' places for CE input? Sub-committees live streamed. 'We aren't being used as much as we could be' Adequate staff Policy's grey planned over long term community plans.
		<p>Questions & Answers: Q: Are priorities driven by state and fed contributions? A: Yes, in some ways e.g. grants for 'shovel ready' projects. It affects the sequencing of projects. Priorities are also based on grant criteria coupled with our infrastructure priorities.</p>

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		<p>Q: How do you get a road to be ‘taken over’ by Council? A: It can’t just happen. It is important to have business cases funded – this is required in Council for large pieces of infrastructure.</p> <p>Q: How much does safety come into it (building and maintaining roads)? A: There is a set methodology & weightings used by State & Federal Governments to prioritise projects e.g. accident counts. So safety does factor into it.</p> <p>Q: How does Council plan a large scale community engagement approach? A: Council has an established process in place for community engagement planning and delivery. It is based on best practice principles & practices (International Association for Public Participation). For large-scale, strategic projects a mixed method approach is used to ensure reach into as many parts of the community as possible.</p> <p>Further comments from members regarding community engagement included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone from the community can provide submissions to Council meetings. This is an avenue to elected representatives. • Most community members aren’t interested in engaging with Council. People are busy raising families and working. There is also still a level of mistrust. There is a need to make engagement opportunities easy and engaging. E.g. language needs to be plain – no bureaucratic language. <p>Sonia Cooper asked members how they would like to receive information from Council. Members responded with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use plain language • Mixed methods – digital and face-to-face

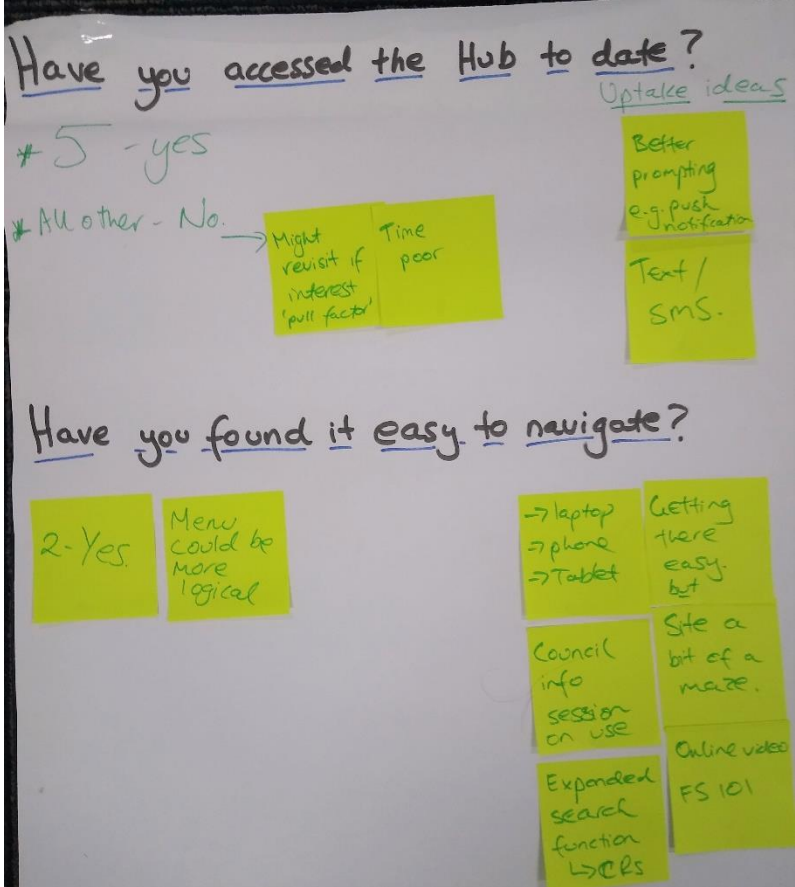
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use CRG members as engagement advocates for the wider community
3	<p>Corporate Governance update</p> <p>Sonia Cooper CRG members</p>	<p>Sonia Cooper referred to and summarised the Corporate Governance progress brief (attachment 1), indicating that progress is being made in maturing, building, strengthening our Corporate Governance culture. Sonia welcomed comments and feedback from members.</p> <p>Sonia indicated that council is now investing significantly in its ICT infrastructure & capability to bring the organisation into line with good practice. The long term strategy is to reduce the spending on ICT once systems are in place.</p> <p>Q: Are the ICT systems comparable across local governments or are they unique? A: We use common systems similar to comparable councils. A business case is in place to deliver the best ICT platform.</p> <p>The Mayor explained that Council’s sub-committee meetings are now live streamed. Councillor briefings are also published online.</p>
4	<p>Transparency & Integrity Hub facilitated discussion</p>	<p>Sonia Cooper summarised the discussion paper (attachment 2) and asked a series of engagement questions in order to improve the hub moving forward:</p> <p><i>Have you accessed the Transparency & Integrity Hub to date?</i></p> <p>‘Yes’ (5 respondents) ‘No’ (6 respondents) ‘Might revisit if there is an interest/’pull factor’ ‘(people are) time poor’</p> <p>Ideas for generating uptake: ‘better prompting, such as push notifications’ ‘text/sms notifications’</p>

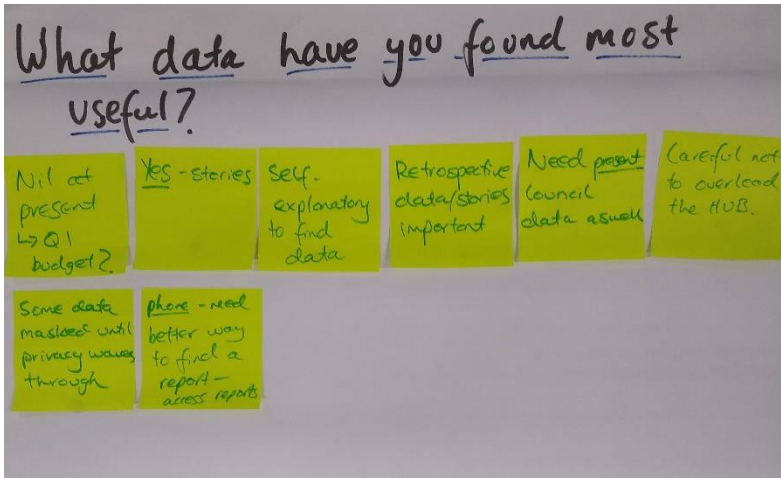
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		<p><i>Have you found the Hub sufficiently easy to navigate? If not, why not?</i></p> <p>‘Yes’ (two respondents) ‘The menu could be more logical’ ‘Getting there is easy but the site is a bit of a maze’ ‘Needs to be user friendly for a laptop, tablet and a phone’ ‘Council info sessions on how to use e.g. online video, Fire station 101 demo and tutorials’ ‘Need an expanded search function against councillors names’ (to clearly understand expenses per councillor) ‘Want to see actual budget tracked against planned budget, not done for this year yet’</p> 

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		<p><i>What data on the hub have you found most useful?</i></p> <p>'Nil at present' 'Yes. Stories' 'Self-explanatory to find data' 'Retrospective data / stories are important' Need present Council data as well' '(be) careful not to overload the Hub' 'some data is currently masked until the privacy wavers are through' (regarding mobile phone devices) 'need a better way to access and read reports'</p>  <p><i>What data do you believe the community would like to see published on the Hub?</i></p> <p>'QAO reports and previous years' 'Regionally significant projects – want to know the latest on Norman Street Bridge, Ipswich to Springfield train etc' 'Councillors expenses by name' 'CBD redevelopment' 'Waste data' 'Audit reports (external)' 'Internal audit reports. Executive summary and key risks' (Action – Sonia Cooper to investigate and advise on this possibility)</p>

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		<p>‘Previous external audit reports’</p> <p>‘Don’t need too much information’</p> <p>‘Declared conflict of interest and for tenderers/suppliers’ (Action – Sonia Cooper to check and advise members on whether or not there is a conflict of interest requirement for tenderers/suppliers as part of the Request for Quote procurement process)</p> <p>‘Probity statement’</p> <p>‘More stories of whats happening’</p> <p>‘Mayor and Councillors meeting and briefings’</p> <p>‘Annual check in integrity of information on the Hub’</p> <p>‘Track amount of local spend’</p> <p>‘Regionally significant projects’</p> <p>‘Allocation of discretionary funding’</p> <p>‘Local tourism attractions’</p> <p>‘Support for local tourism (visitor information centre)’</p> <p>‘Local buy spend data’</p> <p>‘Track interest via page visits’</p> <p>Sonia Cooper advised that at present only two people can upload data onto the Hub, as a way of mamaging risk and maintaining integrity.</p>

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		<p><u>What data do you believe the community would like to see on the Hub?</u></p>
5	Q&A session with Mayor & Councillors	<p>A discussion occurred around the tenderer/supplier process (refer action 2). The Mayor advised that any procurement above \$10,000 in value is now disclosed on the Hub.</p> <p>Q: How is the integrity of the data on the Hub ensured (e.g. what gets published)? A: The Hub features narrow data entry points - only two officers can upload and manage data. There are lots of disclaimers on the Hub due to legacy issues associated with the old data.</p> <p>Members stated that they show data but council doesn't share back how it is used.</p> <p>Q: What processes are in place at Council to protect staff from bullying?' A: Sonia Cooper acknowledged that it is difficult to</p>

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			<p>eradicate the problem completely from the organisation, given the legacy issues, however a number of safeguards have been put into place to protect staff. These are summarised in attachment 3. The Mayor also outlined that the staff / councillor interaction policy is also in place, giving staff an extra layer of protection.</p> <p>Members commented that there needs to be more communications / updates coming from the Shape Your Ipswich community engagement platform after members 'follow' a project.</p>
6.	Actions from last meeting	Sonia Cooper	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data from the September meeting will be analysed and used to formulate the foundations for the new Corporate Plan (2021-2026). Status: Completed. Draft Corporate Plan currently being finalised. The foundations of the plan are based on themed community engagement data, including from the September CRG meetings. The final round of community engagement on the plan will occur in February 2021. This will include an interactive session with the CRGs. 2. A Community Engagement report for phase 1 of iFuture will be disclosed to members, as part of reporting back to the community on this project (attachment 3). Status: Completed. Report disclosed to all CRG members via email on 17/11/20.
7.	Next steps and close	Sonia Cooper	<p>The draft minutes of the meeting will be circulated to members for comment.</p> <p>Sonia Cooper thanked the members for their time and closed the meeting.</p>

ACTIONS:

1. Sonia Cooper to investigate & advise if it is possible to disclose a high level summary (e.g. executive summary and key risks) of internal audit reports
2. Sonia Cooper to investigate & advise on whether or not there is a conflict of interest requirement for tenderers/suppliers as part of the procurement process

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ATTACHMENTS:

1. Corporate Governance update discussion paper
2. Transparency & Integrity Hub discussion paper
3. Staff safeguards at Ipswich City Council

Meeting closed: 8.00 pm

Date of next meeting: February 2021 (date TBA)