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1. Statement

This is an overarching policy that outlines Council’s broad approach to enforcement and provides a framework that promotes understanding of the manner in which compliance and enforcement activities are undertaken. The Policy is supported by detailed procedures that provide further guidance to staff. It establishes clear guidelines for the exercise of Council’s powers in dealing with potential unlawful activity within Council’s jurisdiction. It provides practical guidance on how Council staff are to assess potential unlawful activity to determine if it requires further investigation, the courses of action available to Council for dealing with unlawful activity, how to decide whether enforcement action is warranted and, if so, the process to be used in deciding which type of enforcement action is appropriate in the circumstances.

2. Purpose and Principles

The purpose of this policy is to assist Council staff to act promptly, consistently and effectively in response to allegations of unlawful activity. This is to ensure that:

- Council responds quickly and effectively to allegations of unlawful activity
- Council exercises its regulatory functions consistently and without bias
- Council regulatory functions are exercised proactively
- The rules of procedural fairness are applied when making decisions that concern regulatory matters
- Enforcement action is proportionate to the offence in each case
- There is widespread understanding of the Council’s approach to enforcement, including the circumstances which will be taken into account when assessing different enforcement options; and
- Council allocates its limited resources in the most appropriate manner consistent with the public interest, its policy objectives and current regulatory issues

Our compliance and enforcement activities will be guided by the following principles:

- Our decisions will be fair, reasonable, respectful and reliable
- Our regulatory responses will be consistent, efficient and proportionate to the risk
- Our decisions and actions will be informed by evidence
- We will be transparent, and accountable for our decisions and actions
- We will monitor, review and report on our effectiveness
- We will continue to improve the way we regulate
- We will engage to listen, learn and respond.

3. Strategic Plan Links

This policy aligns with the following iFuture 2021-2026 Corporate Plan themes:

- Safe, Inclusive and Creative
- Natural and Sustainable
- A Trusted and Leading Organisation

4. Regulatory Authority

Section 28 of the **Local Government Act 2009** provides the power for local governments to make and enforce local laws that are necessary or convenient for the good rule and government of their local government area. In addition, Council has the responsibility of administering a range of State legislation.

- *Local Government Regulations 2012*
- *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Meeting Conduct Policy
- Meeting Conduct Procedure
- Conflicts of Interest for Employees Policy
- Conflicts of Interest for Employees Procedure – Identifying, Disclosing, Managing and Monitoring

5. Human Rights Commitment

Ipswich City Council (Council) has considered the human rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)* (the Act) when adopting and/or amending this policy. When applying this policy, Council will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and give proper consideration to a human right relevant to the decision in accordance with the Act.

6. Scope

The Policy applies to all areas of Council operations that have a compliance and enforcement component. This Policy applies a risk-based approach to compliance and enforcement management to ensure resources are focussed on those matters posing the most significant risk to the community and environment. This approach is used for both proactive compliance activities and also in response to reports alleging unlawful activity (reactive compliance). Council will undertake compliance and enforcement action where appropriate in accordance with this Policy document.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

General

This policy applies to all Councillors and Council officers and is directly relevant to officers involved in the compliance and enforcement of Legislation and Local Laws.

Delegations from the Chief Executive Officer are required to officers to enable them to undertake investigation or compliance and enforcement action.

Councillors and Officers have significant responsibilities and must ensure that they comply with the relevant Codes of Conduct and Council Policies and Procedures in the execution of their duties. In particular, they must manage any conflicts of interest.

The Chief Executive Officer shall have overall responsibility for Council's legislative compliance framework.

Role of Officers

All council officers have a responsibility to ensure that they remain abreast of Legislation and Local Laws which affect their area of work.

The Executive Leadership Team are to ensure that adequate training and instruction is given to staff to ensure that legal obligations regarding their responsibilities are identified and met.

Managers must ensure that procedures and systems are established to support compliance and enforcement actions in accordance with this Policy.

Role of Councillors

Compliance and enforcement matters are sensitive and easily susceptible to allegations of impropriety, bias or inconsistency. In order to manage those risks, and be consistent with the Councillors' Code of Conduct and the Councillor – Staff Interaction Policy, Councillors are:

- Not to attend on-site meetings with Council staff, the complainants, or persons the subject of an investigation or enforcement action, or;
- Not to direct staff in relation to particular outcomes relating to investigations, enforcement options or actions.

Councillors can assist individuals who raise concerns with them by referring them to the relevant functional area so that the appropriate action can take place.

8. Key Stakeholders

The following Council Departments and Branches will be consulted during the review process:

- Planning and Regulatory Services Department
- Legal and Governance Branch

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy is to be reviewed at least every two (2) years or sooner if necessary to accommodate changes in legislation.

10. Definitions

The following are the definitions of key terms in this Policy:

Council means the Ipswich City Council.

Councillor means a duly elected person of the Ipswich City Council.

Conflicts of Interest for Employees

Actual conflict of interest means there is a real conflict between the Council employee's official duties and their personal interests.

Potential conflict of interest means personal interests that could conflict with a Council employee's official duty. This refers to circumstances where it is foreseeable, that a conflict may arise in the future and steps should be taken now to mitigate that future risk.

Perceived conflict of interest means the public or a third party could form the view that personal interests could improperly influence an employee's decision or action, now or in the future. Whilst it may or may not eventuate as an actual conflict, it is important to disclose a perceived conflict of interest, for transparency purposes.

Enforcement means a range of procedures and actions taken by Council to ensure that a person or organisation comply with their statutory obligations.

Public Interest means the interests of the community as a whole or a group within the community or individuals.

Risk means a potential impact that may cause physical, financial, environmental or other harm resulting in loss of value of goods, loss of life or loss of amenity.

11. Policy Owner

The General Manager (Planning and Regulatory Services) is the policy owner and is responsible for the authoring and reviewing this policy.