

VISION2020



January 2020

Interim Administrator's report to the community of Ipswich



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A MESSAGE TO IPSWICH RESIDENTS AND RATEPAYERS

It has been just over 16 months since I commenced as your city's Interim Administrator. It has been an honour to serve your city during that time. While it has been very busy and challenging, not once have I regretted accepting the task of helping the Ipswich community and its council to address the problems of the past and set new foundations for the future.

The mayor and councillors of Ipswich City Council were dismissed in August 2018, and since that time I have been impressed by the commitment from many of your council's staff. Not only have staff continued to deliver high levels of service, but they have done so while simultaneously taking up the challenge of reviewing, reforming and resetting many aspects of your council's strategies and operations.

This report brings together a summary of the major initiatives and achievements of your council over the past 16 months. I thought it important that Ipswich community be aware of the major transitions we have embarked on during this time.

The report is structured into two themes:

- How your council interacts with the community; this covers a wide range of issues that we have addressed, many of which would be already public knowledge; and
- How your council operates internally, much of which the public would not be very familiar with as we haven't actively promoted these reforms.

For each issue, I have tried to explain:

- What the situation was before I was appointed as Interim Administrator;
- What we have done on the issue over the past 16 months; and
- What the current situation is from three perspectives of the community, council staff and the incoming elected representatives.

Much has been achieved and yes, while there is still more to do, I am confident that your council is well down the recovery pathway.

My special appreciation is extended to the five members of my Interim Management Committee – Stan Gallo, Steve Greenwood, Robert Jones, Jan Taylor and Simone Webbe – who consistently provided sound and considered advice to myself and have been a superb "sounding board" for David Farmer (CEO) and your council's Executive Leadership Team.

We look forward to observing from the sidelines as your city and your council continues to go from strength to strength under new elected leadership from March 2020 onwards. It has been our privilege to serve the Ipswich community.

Kind regards

Greg Chemello
Interim Administrator



1. WHY YOUR COUNCIL WAS PLACED UNDER ADMINISTRATION

On Wednesday 22 August 2018, the Parliament of Queensland passed the *Local Government (Dissolution of Ipswich City Council) Act 2018*, dismissing the mayor and 10 councillors of Ipswich City Council.

Greg Chemello was consequently appointed by the state government as Interim Administrator of Ipswich City Council under section 5 of that Act. An Interim Administrator has “all the responsibilities and powers of the local government and the mayor” (under 124(2) of the *Local Government Act 2009*). This meant a responsibility to act in the best long-term interests of the residents and ratepayers of the city. That principle has guided every decision made by the Interim Administrator over the past 16 months.

Council’s dismissal was brought about because of the many governance failures noted in the Crime and Corruption Commission’s (CCC) Operation Windage report into culture and corruption risks at Ipswich City Council. The report identified a wide spectrum of serious governance and integrity failures including suspected official corruption, improper use of power and influence for personal benefit, a lack of accountability for public resources, inappropriate relationships between the council and the private sector (particularly property developers and contractors), a failure to keep a fraud risk register, failure to record gifts and benefits received in the council’s gifts and benefits register, and senior members of council influencing decision-making processes to benefit close associates.

To better understand why Ipswich City Council was placed in interim administration, residents and ratepayers should read the [CCC’s Operation Windage report](#). It explains why the city was placed in this unusual position.

At the public hearing into the then-proposed dissolution of your council, the CCC chairperson Mr Alan MacSporran QC said:

“There has been a collapse of public confidence in that council and those councillors. That is what is being addressed here. It is not about them individually being guilty of misconduct or otherwise. It is about systemic failures collectively of good governance, and a lack of transparency and accountability across-the-board. They stand or fall, as they must, under the Local Government Act and the Constitution of Queensland as the body, the entity, collectively responsible for the good governance of that community. There has been a failure of that.”

The goal of your council under administration was to build a better council; to deliver processes for good governance. Governance - the issue at the core of this sequence of events - is the process and culture that guides the activities of an organisation beyond its basic legal obligations. It was not just about making the right decisions, but also about creating the best possible process for making those decisions.

Good decision-making processes, and therefore good governance, have implications for multiple aspects of local government, including consultation policies and practices, meeting procedures, service quality protocols, councillor and officer conduct, role clarification and good working relationships.

The Interim Administrator’s role has been to always act in the best long-term interests of residents and ratepayers, and in doing so prepare the council and the city for a return to elected representation at the March 2020 local government elections.

SUPPORTING LINK:

[Ccc.qld.gov.au/corruption/outcome/allegations-corruption-related-ipswich-city-council-operation-windage](http://ccc.qld.gov.au/corruption/outcome/allegations-corruption-related-ipswich-city-council-operation-windage)

2. A PERIOD OF TRANSFORMATION

2.1 INTERIM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

To support the Interim Administrator, the state government appointed a part-time Interim Management Committee (IMC) comprising five experts in their respective fields to help achieve the goal of bringing about positive ethical change to your council:

- Stan Gallo, a specialist in forensic investigation;
- Simone Webbe, a specialist in governance and ethics;
- Jan Taylor, a specialist in community engagement;
- Steve Greenwood, experienced in local governance, development and business engagement; and
- Robert Jones, a highly credentialed practitioner in financial practices and audit.

Greg Chemello was responsible for the IMC's functions. The role of the IMC was to help rebuild a healthy council culture, implement sound governance and financial management practices, progress key projects and manage considerable policy, procedural and operational reforms. The IMC members attended committee and council meetings in an advisory capacity; they did not act in the place of councillors. Only the Interim Administrator has the power to vote at council meetings in accordance with the legislation.

Following Greg Chemello's departure in January 2020, Steve Greenwood will act as Interim Administrator to oversee the final two months of administration before the March 2020 elections.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

[ipswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/
office-of-the-interim-administrator](https://ipswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/office-of-the-interim-administrator)

[ipswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/
office-of-the-interim-administrator/
role-of-the-interim-management-committee](https://ipswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/office-of-the-interim-administrator/role-of-the-interim-management-committee)

2.2 VISION2020

During this period of interim administration, your council focused on transforming the organisation to be an exemplar of good governance, from which other councils strive to emulate. The various reforms were harnessed under an internal-to-council "umbrella" program; called VISION2020.

In the first phase of VISION2020 in late 2018, the IMC addressed the most pressing issues facing council; urgent issues were quickly resolved during this time.

The second phase of work, from late 2018 to mid-2019, identified opportunities to amend or remove procedures and frameworks which would help realign operations of the organisation towards achieving its strategic goals as defined under the *Local Government Act 2009* and the city's strategic plan, *Advance Ipswich*. The operational realignment also aimed to ensure the council continued to provide quality services to the residents of Ipswich during interim administration.

The third phase, commenced in early 2019, was all about elevating your council to a place of leading practice. A series of staff focus groups, management team workshops and discussions with industry and community leaders were held to explore how council could become a leading local government. This research identified 18 business Transformation Projects; the key operational changes of policy, procedural and operational reforms as well as priority city projects such as the redevelopment of Ipswich's CBD, dealing with waste, upgrading key roads and commencing a new planning scheme.

The following priorities were identified and addressed through this transformation program:

Theme	Description	Project
Whole of Council	Projects which impact multiple departments and functions across Council	- TP#2 People and Performance - TP#8 Knowledge Management - TP#9 Policies, Procedures and Local Laws - TP#14 Legislative Change - TP#15 Community Engagement - TP#17 ICT Strategy
Finance and Reporting	Projects which have a significant financial component, and/or have a large impact on council's budgeting processes	- TP#1 Reporting Framework - TP#3 Procurement - TP#4 Asset Management Framework - TP#5 Strategic Allocation of Capital and Operational Resources - TP#16 Budget Framework - TP#18 Major Project Prioritisation
Risk and Governance	Projects which relate to council's risk management policies and procedures	- TP#6 Complaints Management Framework - TP#7 Risk Management Framework - TP#10 Fraud and Corruption Control - TP#11 Delegations - TP#12 Information and Transparency - TP#13 Councillor Induction

The key achievements of these Transformation Projects are presented in this report among council's many other achievements over the past 16 months.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

lpswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/office-of-the-interim-administrator/interim-management-committee-strategy-and-plan

lpswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/office-of-the-interim-administrator/vision-2020-interim-administrator-update

lpswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/media/articles/2018/transformers-councils-mission-to-be-a-leading-local-government

lpswich.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/118639/City-of-lpswich-Operational-Plan-2019-2020.pdf

3. HOW YOUR COUNCIL INTERACTS WITH ITS COMMUNITY

This chapter addresses the reforms undertaken (and some still underway) in the key areas of council that interact directly with Ipswich residents and ratepayers:

- What your mayor and councillors' roles and responsibilities are;
- How your mayor and councillors should conduct themselves;
- How your councillors are elected by the community through divisional arrangements;
- How your council undertakes community engagement;
- How your council manages its donations and grants to community organisations;
- How your council supports Christmas season events;
- How your council prepares its land-use Planning Scheme;
- How your council deals with development applications;
- How your council is delivering the Ipswich CBD redevelopment;
- How your council prepares local laws;
- How your council deals with public and personal information in its possession; and
- How your council deals with your complaints.

3.1 COUNCILLOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles of the mayor and councillors of local governments across Queensland are defined within section 12 of the *Local Government Act 2009* and, in summary, are to:

- represent the current and future interests of the residents of the local government area;
- ensure the council discharges its responsibilities under the Act;
- ensure the council achieves its corporate plan;
- ensure the council complies with all laws;
- provide high quality leadership to the local government and the community;
- participate in council meetings, policy development, and decision-making, for the benefit of the local government area; and
- be accountable to the community for the local government's performance.

The mayor and councillors provide strategic leadership and direction to the council. They do not have a role in directing or undertaking operational work of the council. The Act (section 170) specifically forbids the mayor and councillors from directing any council employee; other than the mayor directing the CEO.

It is entirely reasonable for Ipswich residents and ratepayers to expect their mayor and councillors to undertake their roles in accordance with the law.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

As previously noted, your former council's dismissal was brought about because of the many governance failures noted in the CCC's Operation Windage report.

Many councillors had a divisionally-based focus (cited further in 3.3). They directed officers and were heavily involved in the day-to-day delivery of council services, rather than focusing on the role of leading the strategies and policies in the best long-term interests of the city as a whole. Indeed, many policies were put in place to provide a specific role for councillors in a number of day-to-day operational activities undertaken by council officers.

Some members of the community continue to be perplexed when it comes to the roles and responsibilities of elected representatives. Many still cannot understand why a councillor should not take personal responsibility for fixing a pothole, restraining a dog, fining a resident or that it is inappropriate (and indeed unlawful) to direct a council officer to do so.

With council's goal to prepare the city for its return to elected representation in March 2020, it was clear that greater awareness was needed of the lawful role of elected representatives, not just for future councillors but for the community as a whole.

WHAT WE DID

A Transformation Project team (i.e. one of the 18 Transformation Projects cited in 2.2 above) was established to ensure incoming elected representatives are set up for success, and that the organisation is best prepared for their return.

After a considerable amount of research, a comprehensive 50-page Candidate Guide was developed as part of an "Ipswich, it's your council" city-wide education and awareness campaign. The goal of this guide was to clarify the roles and responsibilities of a councillor and to provide candidates with the information they need to fully understand the commitment (and limitations) that comes with being an elected representative. It contains a 'must read' checklist for candidates.

The Candidate Guide also provides an overview of the three levels of government, the city's financial position, the major opportunities and challenges facing Ipswich, and a considerable amount of information about the importance of good governance.

A Candidate Information Session was held in late November to provide potential candidates with an opportunity to learn from guest speakers, including the Interim Administrator, CEO David Farmer and representatives from the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs and Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ). A second Candidate Information Session is scheduled to be held on 4 February 2020 at the North Ipswich Reserve from 6pm.

A communications program supporting these key messages has been running on billboards, in the Queensland Times, on ipswichfirst.com.au, on social media and on posters placed in cafes and restaurants around the city.

A comprehensive, four-week induction program has been formulated for incoming councillors following the March 2020 elections. This program will cover all aspects of council business as well as an overview of the priorities and issues the city and organisation is facing. The goal is to provide all new councillors with the information they need to fulfil their city-wide brief and support the future direction of the city. Councillors will also benefit from bespoke, ongoing professional development programs.

The organisation is prepared to provide regular updates to council on the performance of the organisation along with a framework to brief councillors when a matter arises that is of interest or risk to the community.

A set of tools to support incoming councillors was also created, including a paperless agenda system and a councillor portal to support councillors in their day-to-day duties and obligations under the Act. Councillors will also have a team of dedicated councillor support officers.

The project team sought to reset the ways that residents and ratepayers can most effectively contact your council. Access to information about council has been improved by the inclusion of additional information on the council website, including updates on current works and major projects. A refreshed web presence that includes a new mobile app improves the ease in which a resident can lodge a request for service in just a few clicks.

NOW

Community members can expect that they will have easier direct access to council to address problems and issues, and that their elected representatives will have a clear understanding of their strategic leadership role.

Council staff will be expected to respond to community requests for services. Their response will say that they will be interacting with their elected leaders in accordance with the law.

The incoming mayor and councillors will have a comprehensive statement of their roles and have a significant network of support arrangements to assist them to fulfil their roles.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

itsyourcouncil.com.au

lpswich.qld.gov.au

lpswichfirst.com.au

[Ecq.qld.gov.au](https://ecq.qld.gov.au)

[Dlgrma.qld.gov.au/so-you-want-to-be-a-councillor.html](https://dlgrma.qld.gov.au/so-you-want-to-be-a-councillor.html)

lpswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/office-of-the-interim-administrator/declared-candidate-meetings

lpswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/works-and-projects

lpswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/its-your-council/know-your-council/committees-and-meetings

CLOSING THE DIVISIONAL OFFICES

The 10 divisional offices formerly occupied by Ipswich councillors were closed in mid-2019, saving ratepayers some \$2 million each year. The provision of individual offices to councillors is not common practice among other similar-sized local governments, was an unnecessary cost for ratepayers and was part of the former Division-focused approach by some councillors.

These offices will be replaced with three customer service hubs in Rosewood, Springfield Central and Ipswich Central. The new centres will allow residents and ratepayers to pay bills, submit paperwork, lodge complaints and engage with council officers, which was not a function previously available at councillor offices.

Incoming councillors will have a dedicated office in the Administration Building, and will also have access to meeting rooms in all three customer service hubs.

3.2 MAYOR AND COUNCILLOR CONDUCT

The *Local Government Act 2009*, Local Government Regulation 2012, Ministerial directives and various other state legislation stipulate how the mayor and councillors are required to conduct themselves. It is entirely reasonable for Ipswich residents and ratepayers to expect their elected representatives to conduct themselves in accordance with these legal requirements.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

The Crime and Corruption Commission's (CCC) Operation Windage report highlighted several areas of concern related to non-compliance with council policies and procedures, and inappropriate conduct.

WHAT WE DID

A Councillor Integrity Policy Package was created to address several of the CCC's findings. It places appropriate and transparent controls around these risk areas. It is a concise reference guide of policies that will ensure that your elected representatives not only meet but exceed the community's reasonable expectations.

This suite of policies sets leading practice standards for all incoming councillors to ensure good governance, ethical and legal behaviour standards, and transparent and effective processes are in place. The package provides clear benchmarks for all interactions between councillors, council officers and members of the community. The package consists of the following policies:

- 1. Code of Conduct** – Prescribed by the Local Government Regulation 2012.
- 2. Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities Policy** – Required by legislation, this outlines what facilities and equipment a councillor is entitled to and how they will be supported by the organisation.
- 3. Councillor–Staff Interaction Policy** – Required by legislation, sets out the requirements for how a councillor can seek advice, get access to information that the council holds and outlines protocol for interacting with council staff.
- 4. Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy** – Provides guidance on dealing with gifts and benefits, and managing hospitality expenses.
- 5. Lobbyists Developers and Submitters Policy** – Guidelines and protocol for dealing with lobbyists and property developers.

6. Capture and Retention of Public Records –

Outlines the legislated obligations for elected officials in keeping appropriate records.

7. Investigations Policy – Required by legislation, sets out the way in which incidents of inappropriate conduct referred from the Independent Assessor are investigated and reported back to council.

8. Caretaker Period – In addition to the requirements of the legislation, provides clear guidelines and standards for councillors and council officers during an election period.

9. Representation of the City at Official Functions – Provides the protocol for elected representative and officer representation at official functions.

10. Meetings Procedures Policy – Based on the model provided by the state government, provides for a transparent and efficient meeting process.

11. Meeting Conduct Policy – Based on the model, asserts a high standard of behaviour for elected representatives in council meetings.

12. Public Participation at Ordinary Council Meetings – Provides residents and ratepayers with a welcoming, respectful and safe environment to present directly to councillors, in a public forum.

NOW

Community members can expect that councillors will be set up for success and possess the appropriate good governance framework and policies they need to guide their behaviour, help them make the best possible decisions for the city as a whole, and comply with their legislative requirements.

Council staff are expected to provide councillors with the information they require in order to make informed strategic decisions which will guide a high level of service to the community. Staff are also required to abide by the requirements of policy, procedure and legislation.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect to be provided with clear conduct requirements which outline how they should/must interact with staff, stakeholders and the community.

Supporting links:

ipswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/office-of-the-interim-administrator/councillor-integrity-policy-package

3.3 DIVISIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The primary accountability of a local government and its elected representatives is to the entire community. “When performing a responsibility, a councillor must serve the overall public interest of the whole local government area” under section 12(6) of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

This applies regardless of whether a council has electoral divisions (like Ipswich has) or is undivided (i.e. has no councillor divisions). It is entirely reasonable for residents and ratepayers to expect that their mayor and councillors understand this and act in accordance with their legal obligations. Divisions are primarily an election tool every four years, and are not a framework for local governance and council decision-making.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

In the decade following the 2008 amalgamations of many local government authorities across Queensland, Ipswich City Council was structured into 10 divisions, with the voters in each division electing a single councillor.

By 2018, boundaries of the 10 divisions evolved over time as the city’s population grew, with little apparent reference to the principle of ‘communities of interest’ outlined in the *Local Government Act 2009*. Two of these 10 divisions would have been outside the 10 per cent variation of the number of voters allowable under the Act by March 2020.

So, the divisional boundaries needed to be changed before the March 2020 elections to comply with the Act.

In addition, the Crime and Corruption Commission’s Operation Windage report had indicated that a high level of divisionally-focused council policies and funding and councillor conduct contributed to the poor governance arrangements of your former council. Instead of having a council focussed on the strategic direction of the entire city, Ipswich had morphed into a “tale of 10 cities”, with councillors far more focused on their patch, or division, rather than on the city as a whole.

When combined with divisional-based funding programs for both infrastructure and community grants (which have both been discontinued in Ipswich), a councillor can develop a preoccupation with funding allocations for their own division rather than the priorities of the whole city.

For example, in Ipswich about \$7 million each year was distributed via a division-based infrastructure funding pool, where each councillor championed projects within their own division. That's a considerable amount of money each year that could have gone towards major infrastructure projects that would benefit the city as a whole. In addition, the unspent infrastructure pools were rolled into the next financial years and, to give an example, one councillor had amassed in excess of \$2 million available to be spent in that particular division in the lead up to the March 2020 elections.

WHAT WE DID

As the various communities around Ipswich have grown and changed, it could be expected that they will also have differing views on what they want from their council compared to when the city was first established some 160 years ago, and since the 10 divisional arrangement was set in 2008.

Throughout March 2019, council encouraged residents to help "shape their future council" by sharing their views on the most appropriate divisional boundary model for the city. Following a month-long public consultation phase, which included a community information session and citywide survey, a report was presented to the state government recommending the endorsement of a multi-councillor divisional model for Ipswich, suggesting two to three councillors be elected in some four to six divisions.

The Minister for Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs referred the report to the Change Commission which, on 9 July 2019, published a Proposed Determination Report and invited public comments on the proposal.

On 18 October 2019, the Change Commission published its final determination, confirming that Ipswich City Council will be represented by a mayor and eight councillors across four divisions (two councillors per division) at the March 2020 local government elections. The Change Commission noted that multi-member divisions provided greater scope to have more councillors representing rural areas within the council area, offering the opportunity for more inclusive representation.

NOW

Community members can expect to have a diversity of candidates nominating to be their mayor and councillors, with all elected representatives having the clear understanding that – under the law – divisional arrangements are the means of electing councillors every 4 years; they are not the geography of ongoing councillor behaviour and council decision-making for the city.

Council staff are now expected to treat all councillors as representatives of the entire Ipswich City local government area, regardless of their electoral division, and to formulate policy recommendations and deliver services with a whole-of-city approach.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect their communities and staff to be seeking conduct, decisions and council services delivered on behalf of the entire local government area.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

[Shapeyouripswich.com.au/divisional-boundary-review](https://shapeyouripswich.com.au/divisional-boundary-review)

[Ecq.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0021/6546/2019- Ipswich-City-Council_Final-Determination-Report _without-appendices.pdf](https://ecq.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0021/6546/2019-Ipswich-City-Council-Final-Determination-Report-without-appendices.pdf)

3.4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is an important component of good local governance. It is entirely reasonable for residents and ratepayers to expect to be able to contribute to council decision-making that impacts them, their local community and/or their city. Listening to the community helps council to better understand what is important to the community and shapes your council's decisions for the future.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

Previous community engagement practice at council was strongly influenced by councillors and frequently occurred without the benefit of any planned or documented approach. In the absence of any robust and transparent council framework, strategic direction, appropriate resourcing, processes and procedures, your former council was not equipped to facilitate any meaningful and proactive community input into its decision making.

Prior to interim administration, community engagement across council was undertaken in a decentralised manner. Departments within council developed and implemented community engagement activities in isolation using different approaches.

There was no specified unit of council responsible for coordinating and reporting on community engagement activities or supporting council to deliver quality community engagement activities. As a result, from the community's perspective, council often appeared disorganised and inconsistent in its community engagement activities.

WHAT WE DID

Consultants worked with a Transformation Project team of 10 people from across varied disciplines across council between April and September 2019 to develop a community engagement framework. More than 70 council staff provided advice and information.

The **Community Engagement Framework** has been prepared and will be finalised in the first quarter of 2020. In addition to the development of a Community Engagement Framework, several specific community engagement methods were also developed:

- Five **Community Reference Groups** aligned to council's standing committees have been meeting every two months since June 2019 to provide strategic advice to council;

- A digital community engagement platform – **Shape Your Ipswich** was launched on 1 October 2019; and
- **Public question time** is now part of council's new Meeting Procedures Policy.

NOW

Community members can expect well-defined and transparent opportunities to be involved and have a say on council projects, initiatives, and new ideas.

Council staff are expected to use these new engagement methods to seek community advice and views as part of preparation of new proposals for programs and initiatives.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect to have access to more insightful and precise assessments of community sentiments, views and opinions on key issues (in addition to their own discussions with community members).

COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUPS – GIVING THE COMMUNITY A VOICE

During the first few months of interim administration, the Interim Administrator made the tough decision to dissolve some of the long-standing reference groups. Five new Community Reference Groups (CRG) were created that reflect the five Advance Ipswich themes of economic development, resilient communities, growth management, environmental management, and transparent governance.

After an open public invitation process, some 99 local residents were selected to sit on the five Community Reference Groups. Four meetings have been held since June 2019.

These groups were formed to give more people a voice in the decision-making process of council, and to provide the community with a better understanding of how council works.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

ipswich.qld.gov.au/community/community-engagement/community-reference-groups

ipswich.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/110444/Guidelines-for-Community-Reference-Groups.pdf

ipswichfirst.com.au/council-names-community-reference-group-members/

Shapeyouripswich.com.au

ipswich.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/119772/Meetings-Procedures-Policy.pdf

3.5 COMMUNITY DONATIONS AND GRANTS

Providing financial support to community organisations so they can deliver community services and events is a core role of local government. It is entirely reasonable for residents and ratepayers to expect that the allocation of funds to community groups is done in an open and transparent manner and is aimed at achieving “value for money” in terms of gaining community outcomes.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

About \$1.4 million each year was pooled in a discretionary fund for councillors to grant to organisations within their division, at their own discretion (and apparently – contrary to the formal policy – to spend at auctions). The funding pool lacked any material framework for assessing applications or any public reporting transparency.

The Queensland Parliament has recently legislated to ensure no council can ever return to a “my patch” approach to discretionary funding allocation. In a large part, these legislative changes came about because of the former situation in Ipswich. The amount of discretionary funding councillors have access to will now be capped at 0.1 per cent of total general rates for each local government. In Ipswich, this means that future councillors will share a maximum central pool of approximately \$160,000 in discretionary funding across the city.

In July 2018 (prior to the dismissal of councillors), your council had already recognised this arrangement did not meet current community expectations for governance of spending, and a Mayoral and Councillors Discretionary Funding Program was introduced instead. The Mayoral and Councillors Discretionary Funding Program:

- Was publicly advertised and accessible;
- Featured administrative guidelines for potential applicants;
- Allowed for applications to be submitted online via the online grants management system, SmartyGrants;
- Featured more robust eligibility criteria for potential applicants;
- Provided a more comprehensive application process that ensured applicants were required to provide quotes to support the application for funds, and that copies of receipts and invoices were provided as proof of expenditure; and

- Dictated that the responsibility for approvals of discretionary funding lay with the mayor and/or councillors.

The **Community Grants Program** was amended in July 2018, introducing a **Triennial Grants Program** and Quick Response Grants (with applications open all year). The Community Development Grants were increased from maximum funding of \$2500 to \$5000 and a panel was introduced to assess each grant against funding priorities and weighted assessment criteria.

WHAT WE DID

Following the commencement of interim administration, the Mayoral and Councillors Discretionary Funding Program was renamed as the Community Donations Program. The following exclusion criteria were added:

- Funding requests could not be made retrospectively;
- Projects or programs which had already received funding from council (at the time that the application is submitted) were excluded; and
- Applications that requested funding for a project or program scheduled to occur later than 12 months beyond the time of the submission of the application were also excluded.

A new assessment framework was implemented which provided increased transparency and accountability.

The final approval of all community donations is to be made by the mayor based on reports that clearly outline the application and assessment process undertaken by officers. All community donations are now publicly reported to council meetings and listed in the annual report.

Council has a number of funding programs including grants, sponsorships, bursaries, and a community donations program, which are managed across a number of council departments. In July 2019, council decided that the management and administration of all council funding should be centralised in the Community Development Branch.

PriceWaterhouseCoopers was engaged to facilitate a comprehensive report to:

- Review all of council's current grant and funding categories, including policies, procedures and processes;
- Undertake stakeholder engagement across council;
- Undertake a benchmarking exercise against comparable local governments;
- Consider current funding amounts, e.g. too high or insufficient, and whether further investment was required in particular areas;
- Draft a whole of council policy, procedure and guidelines document;
- Make recommendations regarding staff resourcing requirements for ongoing management of council grants under a centralised model; and
- Consider the appropriateness of council's funding approval processes.

NOW

A report based on the findings and recommendations of the review undertaken by PriceWaterhouseCoopers will be presented for council consideration soon. Council is also considering community advice to simplify the process for applying for council funding.

Community members can expect grant applications to be treated with fairness and equity under the watchful eye of an independent panel. A transparent process will ensure value for money, and that events are spread evenly throughout the city. It will be easier for community groups to apply for funding.

Council staff are now expected to ensure that money spent under grants programs is accounted for. They will document and publish the reasons why each grant is approved or otherwise, and present findings to an independent panel for approval, before being presented to the mayor for final sign-off.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect clarity and transparency when viewing criteria attached to grant applications. A smaller pool of discretionary funds will be available, with strict criteria surrounding the use of this money. There will be a gift register, and record keeping of all finances will be compulsory.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

lpswich.qld.gov.au/community/grants_sponsorships/community-donations-program

lpswich.qld.gov.au/community/grants_sponsorships

[Qt.com.au/news/council-discretionary-funds-capped-after-misuse/3889990/](https://qt.com.au/news/council-discretionary-funds-capped-after-misuse/3889990/)

lpswich.qld.gov.au/community/grants_sponsorships/community-donations-program

lpswich.qld.gov.au/community/grants_sponsorships

USING COUNCIL FUNDS TO PURCHASE AUCTION ITEMS

Not all of the \$1.4 million each year of the discretionary funding pool was used for donations to community organisations. An issue uncovered by the CCC was that some former elected representatives used funds unethically to purchase memorabilia and auction items. One former mayor was subsequently convicted as a result of fraud-related charges.

Not only was this a blatant breach of council policy and more evidence of poor governance, the record keeping for the items was poor or non-existent with very little information about how much they were bought for, who they were purchased from, or when they might have been bought.

Your council is now in possession of more than 1,300 individual pieces apparently bought or received by former mayors and a number of councillors. Ratepayers' money was used to purchase bought items, including numerous signed sporting memorabilia, artwork, barbecues, traditional gifts, toys, clothing and merchandise. Many gifted items were not recorded in the gift register.

The CCC has only recently finalised all the referrals of potential corrupt conduct by a number of former councillors in regards to the purchase of auction-related items and memorabilia. As some items were deemed to be potential proceeds of crime, your council has been unable to make a decision about what to do with these items.

Your new councillors will have the task of deciding what is done with the remainder of these items.

SUPPORTING LINK:

lpswichfirst.com.au/what-would-you-do-with-a-spare-700-memorabilia-items

3.6 CHRISTMAS SEASON EVENTS

One of the responsibilities of local government is to promote an active and healthy lifestyle within our community and to encourage a stronger “sense of community” among its residents. One way that many local governments have traditionally done this is by supporting Christmas activities including carols and other community-based events.

As with all grants, it is entirely reasonable for Ipswich residents and ratepayers to expect that the allocation of funds to community groups is done in an open and transparent manner and is aimed at achieving “value for money” in terms of gaining community outcomes.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

Community groups were accessing funds for Christmas events via a number of different channels, including The Community Grants Program, seeking funds directly from the mayor and from (often several separate) councillors through their discretionary funding pools.

In some instances, community groups were double dipping, seeking funding for one aspect of their event (for example, the hire of equipment) from one funding pool, and another aspect of the event (for example, Christmas decorations) from a separate funding allocation.

Christmas events were in fact “case studies” of the potential discrepancies highlighted in section 3.5 of this report and the lack of any overall understanding by council of what council resources (funding, in-kind support and staff time) were applied to events.

In addition, about \$250,000 was spent each year on the Mayor’s Christmas Carols, even though council was financially supporting some 20-plus other carols events around the local government area. While about 5,000 people attended this event, your council felt that a range of other events could attract even higher attendance and participation across the city.

WHAT WE DID

The Mayor’s Christmas Carols event was cancelled, and replaced with a range of other community events.

Key new community events include:

- **Christmas Wonderland in Nerima Gardens.** The 2018 event was attended by almost 14,500 people, with the 2019 event hoisting twice the lights (50,000) and attracting more than 27,000 people;

- **Finding Santa**, an interactive augmented reality trail of 40 sites across the local government area that was used some 10,000 times over the four weeks up to New Year’s Eve; and
- **New Years Eve party** at the North Ipswich Reserve attended by about 2800 people.

Council also developed an annual **Christmas and Festive Season Grants** program. Grants up to \$2000 were approved to 19 successful recipients which in turn recognised the role community organisations play in developing and delivering initiatives that encourage participation in community life, foster cohesion, celebrate diversity and contribute to a vibrant, healthy and sustainable city.

Events, set to attract up to 3000 people, ranged from large scale community carols in the park and an outdoor cinema event, to events catering for disadvantaged groups.

A provision was added to the grant process for multi-year agreements with organisers of events expecting to attract more than 4000 people, offering some security to the future of these community events. Such agreements were signed with Brassall Christmas in the Park and Springfield’s Carols at Robelle Domain.

NOW

Community members can, under the Christmas and Festive Season Grants program, expect a streamlined process to award funding for community events. Criteria for applications will be consistent, at the same time each year, and transparent.

Council staff are expected to follow and process applications in accord with the new policy, thereby providing applicants with clarity and peace of mind.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect to work with a process which fairly promotes a diversity of events during the Christmas period, and a system which allows council to support the longevity of popular events.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

ipswichfirst.com.au/council-supporting-range-of-christmas-festivities-across-ipswich/

ipswich.qld.gov.au/community/grants_sponsorships/community-grants/christmas-and-festive-season-grants

Christmasinipswich.com.au/

3.7 NEW PLANNING SCHEME

A land use Planning Scheme is the legal set of documents and maps that guides the way land, buildings and structures are developed and used in the local government area. Under the *Planning Act 2016*, a Planning Scheme sets out the policies and provisions for the use, development and in some instances the protection of land and buildings, and is your council's legal framework for assessing all development applications. It is entirely reasonable for residents and ratepayers to expect that the Ipswich Planning Scheme reflects a contemporary understanding of the environmental, social/ community and economic issues of the local government area.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

While the current Planning Scheme had been updated a number of times to provide guidance during the highest growth phase in the history of the city, the continuing unprecedented growth in South East Queensland along with the Queensland Government's introduction of new planning legislation, a State Planning Policy and a South East Queensland Regional Plan collectively meant that the Planning Scheme no longer reflected a contemporary approach to land use planning.

WHAT WE DID

In November 2018, council resolved to prepare a new Ipswich Planning Scheme. The process for preparing the new Ipswich Planning Scheme has been endorsed by the Queensland State Government and comprises five broad stages:

Where We Are Now	Stage	New Ipswich Planning Scheme Stage Description
	Stage 1	Preparation and early consultation on a Statement of Proposals including a draft Strategic Framework (Completed) Preparation of the full draft Planning Scheme (Current)
	Stage 2	Submission of full draft Planning Scheme to State Government for review and approval for proceeding to formal public consultation
	Stage 3	Public consultation on draft Planning Scheme and reporting on outcomes of consultation to council and then to State Government
	Stage 4	Final consideration of the draft Planning Scheme following public consultation by the State Government and approval for council adoption of Planning Scheme
	Stage 5	Final adoption of Planning Scheme by council

Consultation on the Statement of Proposals (including the draft Strategic Framework) was undertaken from Monday 27 May to Friday 28 June 2019, with a two week 'informal extension' to Friday 12 July 2019. There were 510 submissions received from the community and other stakeholders.

Each of the submissions has been assessed and a Consultation Report was considered and adopted by council which:

- Summarised issues raised in the submissions;
- Contained responses to the issues raised in the submissions; and
- Provided recommendations regarding how the issues are proposed to be addressed in preparing the new Ipswich Planning Scheme.

NOW

Council staff are preparing a full draft of the Planning Scheme. Views and advice from the community, other stakeholders and the State Government will be used to guide the preparation of a final Strategic Framework and the rest of the Planning Scheme, including the detailed zoning and development code components which will be subject to a further formal public consultation process.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect to be briefed on a draft new Planning Scheme within their first six months in office.

Community members can expect formal public engagement on a draft new Planning Scheme by late-2020.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

ipswich.qld.gov.au/residents/planning-and-development/new-ipswich-planning-scheme

ipswich.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0014/113207/Statement_of_Proposals.pdf

ipswich.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/118742/Consultation_Report.pdf

3.8 ASSESSING DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

All major local governments operate within a framework of delegations for dealing with development applications under their Planning Scheme. It is entirely reasonable for residents and ratepayers to expect that your council has an open, transparent framework that allows development applications to be managed effectively and efficiently, while ensuring that the community, through elected representatives and, for impact-assessable applications an effective community engagement process, can have insight and involvement in major contentious or challenging applications.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

Prior to administration, your council did not have an overarching policy setting out the framework and core principles for processing development applications and development-related activities. Instead, your former council relied predominantly upon the basic requirements of relevant legislation.

The operating processes were then a combination of legislation, delegations, policies dealing with individual matters (such as the resolution of historical appeals), or procedures adopted from dealing with individual matters.

In some instances, work practices were undertaken based on directions, agreements or established practices that have existed for many years, which were not expressed in any single delegation, policy or procedure. The previous framework lacked transparency and in some instances was administratively burdensome and inefficient, which caused inconsistencies and stakeholder confusion.

Of significant concern in terms of governance and transparency was the previous requirement that draft reports and/or recommendations by officers be provided to the then-mayor, planning committee chairperson and local divisional councillor prior to finalisation by the officer. While it was claimed this process enabled the elected representatives to request the application be presented to a formal council meeting to consider, in fact it enabled unofficial interaction by councillors with staff and/or the applicants without the full and open transparency of a council or committee meeting.

WHAT WE DID

An internal project team reviewed best practice delegation frameworks in other local governments. A discussion paper was prepared and provided to the Urban Development Institute of Australia, Planning Institute of Australia, the Property Council of Australia and a range of planning and development leaders in most other South East Queensland Councils. Internal consultation was also undertaken with key contacts across council prior to developing the new framework.

On 16 April 2019, your council adopted the new **Framework for Development Applications and Related Activities** which identified core principles relating to the decision process for development applications and requests, deemed approvals, complexity rating, customer service, initial development assessment panel, issuing of draft conditions, legal matters, park, road and bridge naming, property and kerbside numbering, infrastructure charges, offsets and refunds, infrastructure agreements, development fees and charges, development approval compliance and conflicts of interest.

Part of this new framework requires council staff to provide the mayor and all councillors with a weekly list of development applications received. The mayor and councillors may then seek the CEO's approval for any development application to be brought to full council for decision on the basis that the application raises either:

- A Strategic Public Interest - a matter which is of strategic importance to the whole local government area, or is likely to have a major impact on a significant proportion of the local government area (e.g. several suburbs); or
- A Strategic Policy Issue - a policy matter which is likely to result in a decision precedent on a particular issue which will have a cumulative impact on a significant proportion of the local government area.

The most recent component of the framework adopted was the new **Independent Decision Review Panel Procedure**, which came into effect on 1 November 2019. This independent assessment of certain contentious or difficult development applications provides an additional level of transparency and professional certainty to the applications as all reports will be presented to full council and hence be on the public record.

Additionally, an innovative 'refusals protocol' is being developed. This provides early notification and information to an applicant where an application is likely to be refused (because for example it fundamentally does not reflect the Planning Scheme). It will provide defined opportunities for the applicant to withdraw a proposal, modify the proposal to address the issues or proceed with clear knowledge of the expected outcome.

Your council is one of the first councils in the country to apply these leading practices to the review of development applications, particularly in its use of an independent assessment panel for certain applications.

NOW

Community members can expect development-related practices that are lawful, transparent, accountable, effective, efficient and sustainable, and which maximise achievement of the local government principles.

Council staff can be expected to undertake development assessment in accord with this transparent process.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect to be provided with the most contemporary approach to development assessment by a local government in the state, providing a balance of operational efficiency, yet ensuring open and transparent access for elected representatives to applications of major policy and/or public interest.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

ipswich.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/119401/Framework-for-Development-Applications-and-Related-Activities-Policy.pdf

ipswichfirst.com.au/experts-sought-to-help-with-development-decisions/

3.9 NICHOLAS STREET REDEVELOPMENT

Property development is not a core role of local government. However, in certain circumstances – usually to stimulate economic development – some local governments do develop property. This is often undertaken through a special purpose entity (i.e. a council-owned company established under the *Local Government Act 2009*) to ensure appropriate commercial governance for the project.

It is entirely reasonable for residents and ratepayers to expect that any expenditure by their council on “non-core” activities such as property redevelopment should be undertaken with proper governance arrangements in place, using independent commercial, professional and technical advice, delivered as effectively as possible and reported transparently and accurately to the community.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

From 2008 your former council made a series of decisions that included the establishment of a fully-owned subsidiary company (Ipswich City Properties Pty Ltd), acquiring a number of Ipswich Central sites, negotiating commercial arrangements with various development companies, designing and redesigning optional redevelopment schemes, completing and selling one building (Icon Building) and undertaking overseas trips to review other CBD redevelopments. Much of this activity was funded through borrowings, underwritten by your council.

The redevelopment of the city’s CBD was hindered by a decade of stop-starts, inactivity, poor decision-making and accumulated net costs of \$121.6 million, as highlighted in an independent assessment of your council’s expenditure and revenues undertaken by McGrath Nichols and released in March 2019. That report ([link below](#)) demonstrated that the key costs incurred over the decade were:

- Property purchases and net development costs of \$70.9 million;
- Interest payments of \$38.8 million; and
- Net operating costs of Ipswich City Properties Pty Ltd of \$11.9 million.

The market value of the properties at the start of the administration period was about \$42.8 million. This meant that the city’s ratepayers had effectively incurred an accumulated loss of about \$78 million over the decade. Public transparency of the company’s activities was also very low.

WHAT WE DID

Resolving the best strategy for completing the CBD redevelopment was a key priority under interim administration.

Firstly, clear objectives were defined to drive and frame council’s decision-making on the redevelopment:

- Create an enduring and thriving civic heart for the city;
- Provide a civic, cultural and entertainment precinct that supports and reinforces, rather than competes with, other more retail-focused centres;
- Ensure that existing major service providers and employers in the Ipswich civic heart are secure, and provided with growth opportunities for the future;
- Relocate council’s administration centre to the new civic heart to increase worker population and enable Queensland Health to expand its services;
- Empower private sector investors and occupiers to renew and enliven the retail and entertainment sites; and
- Set a resilient framework for other significant CBD projects.

In late 2018 council decided to dissolve Ipswich City Properties Pty Ltd and transfer all assets and liabilities back into council organisation to ensure transparency for the future. By 30 June 2019, the transfers had been implemented and the company is now effectively closed.

The redevelopment strategy was reviewed by experts. Council sought the advice of a range of experts to determine the best way to complete the redevelopment. Queensland Treasury Corporation, KPMG, Urbis, Brain and Poulter, Rider Levett Bucknall and Ranbury Management Group each provided professional and technical advice to council. This was essential to confirm that the council was pursuing the best approach.

A commercial agreement was executed with Ipswich and West Moreton Health for the sale of council’s current administration buildings and associated land to the hospital. This was absolutely essential to ensure the Ipswich Hospital has room to expand over the next decades to meet the demands of the growing population. Already 1 in 4 jobs in Ipswich Central are in the health-related sector and it is imperative for the CBD’s ongoing vitality that the hospital and associated health and medical businesses and services not be lost to a fringe location due to lack of land.

Leasing experts were contracted by council to market the redeveloped sites to retail, commercial and entertainment businesses wishing to establish in Ipswich Central. This campaign is well underway with, at this stage, some 30% of council's space under negotiation with various businesses including a mix of local business and nationally-known brands.

Local businesses and stakeholders were regularly engaged. Quarterly updates were provided to Ipswich CBD property owners and business operators on progress. A small dedicated team of staff was established to liaise directly with local businesses during construction. Weekly email updates were provided to interested parties. A pilot Façade Improvement Incentive Program has been launched to encourage property owners and local businesses to invest in the facades of their premises. Grants of up to \$15,000 (offered on a dollar for dollar basis) will be made available to interested business, with \$100,000 available through this pilot initiative.

Other attractions are set to include a public art programs, events and activations within the civic space.

After a competitive tender process, JMAC were appointed as the council's construction manager for the new-look shared access Nicholas Street and Union Place. A separate tender process resulted in Hutchinson Builders being appointed as council's construction manager for the civic precinct and the retail, commercial and entertainment buildings.

In its totality, the redevelopment will include a new-look shared-use mall, one way vehicle access along Nicholas Street and Union Place, two major new council libraries (for adult and children), new nine storey council administration building and customer service centre with meeting rooms bookable by community organisations, and a civic plaza larger than Brisbane's King George Square and as big as Melbourne's Federation Square.

Stage one – the opening of a new and improved Nicholas Street – has been completed. The fencing has been taken down, and Nicholas Street traders and shoppers have had their first glimpse of what the new Nicholas Street precinct will provide the city.

Stage two – the opening of the main library and civic space – is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2020. Stage three – the opening of a new council building – is set to be completed in late 2021.

When completed, Nicholas Street will be a new destination for the people of Ipswich and beyond to visit, interact with, and enjoy. In addition, the precincts surrounding the project – the areas known as Top of Town, Riverlink, North Ipswich Reserve, a medical precinct, and Queens Park – are each crucial to the ongoing development and success of Ipswich Central.

NOW

All the major decisions regarding the redevelopment have been made and adopted. The ongoing challenge is to deliver on the strategy and decisions.

Community members can (finally) expect a bustling city heart after construction is completed in 18 months' time. They can expect a thriving food and beverage precinct with nationally-recognised brands, an active entertainment precinct, greater linkages with retail shopping at Riverlink, and restaurants and other businesses in Top of Town.

Council staff can expect contemporary premises from which to better serve the residents and ratepayers of Ipswich. They will have new and modern ways of working which will lead to greater efficiency and productivity.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect a precinct – inclusive of the council chambers – which is publicly accessible, vibrant, and a true civic heart for Ipswich.

IPSWICH CENTRAL MASTERPLAN

The redevelopment of Nicholas Street provides Ipswich City Council with an opportunity to develop a masterplan for the entirety of the Ipswich Central precinct.

The plan will set an agenda for economic and social prosperity, drive jobs growth within the city's central hub, and provide significant opportunities for growth.

In 2020, council will work with the community and key stakeholders to create the Ipswich Central Masterplan. It will initiate place-making and activation plans for the CBD across the river to North Ipswich, west to the industrial precinct in West Ipswich, south to the Ipswich Showgrounds and east to Queens Park.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

2s3qm73gqhw919gp1j6d3qtl-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/mcgrathnicol_icp.pdf

Nicholasst.com.au/

ipswichfirst.com.au/the-fences-are-down-and-nicholas-street-is-officially-open-for-business/

ipswichfirst.com.au/retail-precinct-will-benefit-ipswich-community-for-years-to-come/

ipswichfirst.com.au/new-contract-to-provide-retail-and-entertainment-premises-in-nicholas-street-precinct/

ipswichfirst.com.au/timeline-for-ipswich-cbds-nicholas-st-redevelopment/

ipswichfirst.com.au/nicholas-st-update-core-of-new-council-administration-building-takes-shape/

ipswichfirst.com.au/time-lapse-reveals-pace-of-change-in-nicholas-st-precinct/

ipswichfirst.com.au/nicholas-st-step-closer-becoming-road/

ipswichfirst.com.au/new-cinema-complex-and-indoor-go-kart-track-part-of-plans-for-ipswich-cbd-redevelopment/

3.10 LOCAL LAWS

Each local government across Queensland operates with a range of Local Laws prepared and approved under the *Local Government Act 2009* (sections 26 to 38). It is entirely reasonable for residents and ratepayers to expect that local laws are reviewed regularly by your council to determine whether they need updating in accordance with public expectation, public interest, or whether the situation they were designed to address has changed.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

The most recent review of local laws was conducted in 2013. At that time, there were 52 local laws and subordinates. Much has changed since then, in terms of both legislative environment and community expectations.

WHAT WE DID

Council reviewed its current suite of local laws in early 2019 to ensure they were relevant and contemporary for the city. Ten local laws and eight subordinate local laws were reviewed, resulting in two local laws and one subordinate local law being repealed.

Public consultation and State Government interest checks were conducted on the proposed changes resulting in the amended local laws commencing on 1 November 2019.

Some of the key changes included:

- The local law relating to election signage was modified to eliminate a requirement for approval and payment of a bond by candidates in order to erect signs;
- New local laws are in place to ensure good behaviour at pools, libraries and other council facilities;
- Building owners are now given 14 days to clean graffiti from their premises;
- Pet day care is now licensed, classified as the temporary minding of up to 10 animals at a premises;
- There are new parking areas; and
- People can no longer take dogs into some managed conservation estates and nature reserves.

NOW

Community members can expect its council's local laws to reflect contemporary approaches to ensuring the city is safe, clean and well-managed. They can expect that native flora and fauna is better protected, that pet care is better managed, and that parking areas are more clearly defined.

Council staff are now expected to effectively police and manage the regulation of local laws under their jurisdiction.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect a manageable list of local laws which are contemporary and relevant.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

ipswich.qld.gov.au/business/laws-and-permits-for-businesses/local-laws/local-law-making

ipswichfirst.com.au/big-changes-proposed-for-some-local-laws/

3.11 INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY

Council deals with a range of commercial, public and personal information. It is entirely reasonable for residents and ratepayers to expect that council manages its information with appropriate standards of diligence, that all publicly available information should be readily accessible, and that all private and confidential information should be properly protected from any unauthorised access.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

On 17 May 2018, the Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC) tabled a Compliance Audit Report relating to its review of council's compliance with the *Right to Information Act 2009* (RTI Act) and *Information Privacy Act 2009* (IP Act).

The audit focused on 'leadership and governance', 'culture of openness', 'compliance', 'privacy' and captured the following activities/areas within council:

- Information governance;
- Community engagement;
- RTI/IP application handling;
- Camera surveillance; and
- Ipswich City Council website.

The audit report contained 12 recommendations with implementation timeframes ranging from three months to 18 months. A Transformation Project team was established to implement three of the then six remaining recommendations:

Recommendation 8: Council review its template documents and manual for application handling and ensure the documents are accurate, up to date and support legislatively compliant application handling and good practice.

Recommendation 2: Council design and implement training on right to information and information privacy:

- General obligations;
- Policies and procedures specific to the council; and
- For inclusion in its induction and awareness training, mandatory for all staff.

Recommendation 9: Council communicate interactively with all council departments about their roles and responsibilities in response to applications for information made under the *Right to Information Act 2009* or *Information Privacy Act 2009*.

WHAT WE DID

Recommendation 8: Council's Right to Information (RTI) and Intellectual Property (IP) process manual and templates were reviewed. The manual contains step-by-step processing instructions for staff on how RTI/IP applications should be handled, including:

- How applications should be submitted, acknowledged, assessed and actioned;
- How to process documents requested from various areas of the organisation, including timeframes and the responsibility of staff to provide the information and comply with RTI and IP Acts;
- Correct preparation of the RTI/IP response and release of information;
- Internal review processes;
- The process for referral to another agency for investigation if the applicant is not satisfied;
- How investigation outcomes are to be reported to the applicant;
- How RTI/IP applications are recorded; and
- Reporting requirements to council's Executive Leadership Team and the Office of the Information Commission.

Recommendation 2: RTI/IP Training was delivered to all council staff. The training identified roles and responsibilities in the processing of RTI/IP applications and providing the necessary documentation to the RTI/IP Officer.

RTI/IP training is now undertaken by all new staff and an annual training calendar has been designed.

Recommendation 9: The Governance Manager and RTI/IP Officer met with all general managers and branch managers to discuss their roles and responsibilities in response to applications for information made under the *Right to Information Act 2009* or *Information Privacy Act 2009*.

By finalising all OIC Audit Recommendations, council has demonstrated its commitment to the principles and compliance with the *Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld)* and *Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)*.

NOW

Community members can expect this commitment to be sustained by council staff. Residents and ratepayers can expect that council will continue to make council-held information available to the public as a matter of course (unless there is good reason not to) and council will safeguard all personal information.

Council staff are expected to appropriately process all RTI/IP applications, and to review the RTI/IP management and functions annually. Staff can also expect that training and awareness programs will be audited annually and employee feedback will be utilised to improve the programs.

The new mayor and councillors can expect to lead an organisation that understands and delivers on the right to information privacy requirements of the law.

SUPPORTING LINK:

ipswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/its-your-council/know-your-council/accessing-information/right_to_information

3.12 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Council is required by law and by community expectations to communicate the decisions it makes and why those decisions are made. It is entirely reasonable for residents and ratepayers to expect to know about the ongoing work of council officers and how it impacts the community. Similarly, it is entirely reasonable for residents and ratepayers to know what is happening around them, how they can be involved with the community, and the ways their living environment is changing.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

Your former council did not have any approved or published media policy, nor did it have formal procedures for social media or internal communications. For example, there was no formal mandate or scope for Ipswich First as a primary means of council communicating with the community.

The Media and Communications Branch at the time was highly reactive to the demands of the then mayor and some councillors. The communications strategy was often focused on raising the profile of elected representatives rather than effectively engaging a community about the decisions of council, or helping to build awareness or discussion about important community issues or council programs.

WHAT WE DID

A media policy was approved at the December 2019 council meeting, naming the mayor as the key spokesperson for strategic matters of the organisation and the CEO as key spokesperson for procedural matters. Both have the powers to delegate the role of spokesperson.

The policy states: "We will turn ideas into influence, creating positive social impact. We will provide capacity for our community to build. This will be done fairly, in a publicly responsible manner, and avoid undue advantage to any party in our media endeavour."

Ipswich First has gained in popularity since focusing on issues of economic, environmental or social importance, along with those of civic pride, and has become council's core digital communications tool. During interim administration, the number of people reading articles about - and relating to - council activity has tripled year on year.

All content published on the platform is available freely to all media outlets, and accuracy is paramount.

NOW

Community members can now expect accurate and transparent dialogue from council about its activities, how the public purse is spent, and why decisions are made. They can expect an understanding of how they can become involved within the environment they live. They can also expect to be informed in a way they understand, and in a format which is freely accessible.

Council staff are now expected to treat all community organisations and businesses fairly in terms of media and communication. They are also expected to accurately reflect the decisions of council, why those decisions are made, and how they impact the local communities in any public communication.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect that the communications strategy, inclusive of traditional and digital platforms, is an accurate reflection of the organisation's strategies, decisions and activities.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

ipswichfirst.com.au/

ipswichfirst.com.au/subscribe/

ipswich.infocouncil.biz/Open/2019/12/GC_20191203_AGN_2479_AT_WEB.htm

ipswich.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/124073/Media-Policy.pdf

3.13 COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

Every organisation that deals with the public will inevitably receive some complaints. Local governments are required under the *Local Government Act 2009* to have Complaints Management Systems (CMS) in place and be accountable for their decisions and actions.

Complaints management is about respectfully and effectively addressing any individual's specific complaints about council services and also identifying broader opportunities to make systemic improvements. It is entirely reasonable for residents and ratepayers to expect council to be customer-focused and responsive to complaints.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

Prior to interim administration, your council did not provide an easy avenue for complaints to be lodged. Information on how to lodge a complaint was "buried" in the council website, taking customers nine "clicks" to access the right information.

In addition, council did not specifically identify complaints in its management system. They regularly became mixed up with general service requests. Therefore, there was an inability to ascertain the difference between a request for service and an actual complaint. There was very little focus placed on customer experience levels during the complaints management process.

WHAT WE DID

The objective of this Transformation Project was to establish a Complaints Management Framework that ensured legislative compliance, confidentiality, natural justice, and transparency for customers, council employees, and mayor/councillors. The following outcomes were achieved:

- A Complaints Management Framework was developed in-house in just eight months and is now available on both internal and external websites;
- The external website was updated to include information on customer feedback;
- A centralised Complaints Management Unit (CMU) – separate from the operating teams of council – was created to receive, record, triage, and report on all complaints lodged;
- A reporting structure has been created as part of the CMU framework, with reports analysed by the CMU before being delivered to the relevant operating teams with recommendations on identified trends; and
- Council now has a robust and well-established framework to enable appropriate decisions to be made for all complaint related activities.

NOW

Community members can now expect that any complaint they lodge about a council service and/or officer will be addressed effectively by a professional team – separate to the relevant operational area of council – and with transparency and good governance.

Council staff can now expect that any resident or ratepayer complaints about them or a service they have delivered will be addressed with procedural fairness.

The newly elected mayor and councillors can expect the council to continue to monitor customer experience levels and provide support to relevant operational areas to ensure council is dealing appropriately with complaints.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

lpswich.qld.gov.au/residents/nuisances-and-complaints/complaints

[Ombudsman.qld.gov.au/make-a-complaint/makecomplaint](https://ombudsman.qld.gov.au/make-a-complaint/makecomplaint)

4. HOW YOUR COUNCIL OPERATES WITHIN

This chapter addresses the reforms undertaken in some of the key areas of how your council manages its internal operations; in other words:

- How your council undertakes strategic business planning;
- How your council sets the annual budget and long term financial forecast;
- How your council prioritises major projects;
- How your council deals with risk;
- How your council receives reports and reports to the community;
- How your council sets policies and procedures;
- How your council establishes delegations;
- How your council procures contractors, products and services;
- How your council manages its assets;
- How your council is structured;
- How council manages its people;
- How your council is preventing fraud and corruption; and
- How your council is managing ICT and corporate knowledge.

4.1 STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLANNING

Strategic planning is at the core of sound decisions and governance. Council is obligated under the *Local Government Act 2009* to have a five-year corporate plan that engages the community. There must also be a long-term asset management plan, a long-term financial forecast and an annual budget.

All councillors have the responsibility to ensure that the local government achieves its corporate plan (see section 12(3)(a)(ii) of the *Local Government Act 2009*). It is therefore entirely reasonable for Ipswich residents and ratepayers to expect that council has a clear, robust and factually-based corporate plan, with direct links to annual business, operational plans and the annual setting of the budget.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

Council previously had no established process for the development of high-level strategic business planning. This resulted in a lack of alignment between the community's vision and expectations, and the allocation of council funding and resources.

There was a lack of clarity around how to best balance council's "business as usual" activities with the high level of growth the city is experiencing, and how this aligned strategically with Advance Ipswich, council's community plan. There was also no regular or detailed performance reporting in place to enable the community to see how the council was actually tracking in relation to the delivery of strategic projects.

WHAT WE DID

A Transformation Project team developed a Strategic Business Planning Framework in six months. As part of this, the team researched many other local governments across the nation to review existing strategic business planning frameworks. Organisations such as the Queensland Treasury Corporation (QTC) and various staff from across all council departments were asked to share their thoughts and views.

A business plan delivery schedule and a step-by-step guide on how to use the framework was created. Key roles and responsibilities across the organisation were also clarified during this process.

There is still work to be done in reforming your council's documentation templates to ensure the new framework operates as intended and that there is a consistent approach to how strategic documents are created, operational plans prepared and funding approved.

NOW

The community can expect a more structured approach to ensure that council's strategic plans and decisions contribute towards defined long-term goals while considering the community's aspirations.

Council staff can expect that their work will be more directed towards strategic outcomes as defined in an integrated planning framework.

The new mayor and councillors can expect that the strategic plans and strategies they approve in the future will be reflected and actioned in consequential operational plans and actual services delivered by council staff.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

ipswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/corporate_publications/corporate_plan

ipswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/corporate_publications/advance-ipswich

4.2 BUDGET FRAMEWORK

It is mandatory that each local government across Queensland prepare an annual budget. It is entirely reasonable for Ipswich residents and ratepayers to expect that council's annual budget is prepared under a transparent process that reflects the corporate plan and other long-term planning frameworks.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

While your council had a relatively comprehensive process when compiling its annual budget, the process was not clearly outlined or communicated, nor integrated effectively with council's critical planning process (i.e. corporate plan, infrastructure plans, asset management plans) to ensure projects funded through the budget were clearly aligned with council's overall strategy.

Council's Services Catalogue – the basis on which your council's service standards are set and hence budgets defined – was also well out of date and did not accurately reflect the services council was then actually providing to the community.

WHAT WE DID

A Transformation Project team was established to review the budget framework. The following outcomes were achieved by the team:

- A budget and Long-Term Financial Forecast (LTFF) framework that succinctly outlines the process for the preparation and adoption of budget and LTFF, including roles and responsibilities, was created;
- This framework details documents and plans that will inform the budget process to ensure an efficient and well-informed budget that aligns with council's corporate plan, infrastructure and asset management plans, etc;
- A review of council's Services Catalogue was undertaken to ensure the catalogue details reflect the services council provides to the community; and
- The Services Catalogue will be used to build and inform council's annual budget.

NOW

The community can expect that council's budget and Long Term Financial Forecast will accurately reflect and fund the key strategies of council, align with council's key plans, and ensure the efficient and effective use of council's resources.

Council staff are expected to deliver consistent, appropriate and sustainable core services to the community in accord with a budget and LTFF that reflect and fund the services defined in council's Services Catalogue.

The newly-elected mayor and councillors can expect the budget and LTFF provided to them in April/May 2020 will be based on a more accurate reflection of the key strategies of council, align with council's key plans, and ensure the efficient and effective use of council's resources and the financial sustainability of your council.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

ipswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/corporate_publications/budget

4.3 MAJOR PROJECT PRIORITISATION

Any local government undergoing substantial population growth will be dependent on the delivery of a sequence of regionally significant projects, funded in part by the national and state governments and the private sector. Ipswich is no different, with critical rail and road infrastructure needed to meet growing population, as well as a range of civic and community facilities.

It is entirely reasonable for Ipswich residents and ratepayers to expect that your council has a robust evidence-based process of defining which regionally significant projects should be prioritised over others, and that council has a rational and effective advocacy strategy in place to secure funding commitments from other levels of government.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

Project prioritisation and advocacy efforts for regionally significant projects (i.e. the key transformational infrastructure projects for the city that required multiple levels of government to invest in) were previously undertaken in an ad-hoc and disjointed manner. This led to inconsistent and diluted investment reasoning provided to key stakeholders such as state and federal governments. The outcome was delayed or non-existent investment and not achieving any significant funding commitment by other levels of government.

WHAT WE DID

A Transformation Project team set out to determine a consistent and evidence-based approach to regionally significant project prioritisation and advocacy. The team undertook significant research, reviewing current processes and consulting with state government departments to determine best practice, and sought to apply these lessons to the Ipswich context.

New processes were developed for prioritisation that demanded rigorous exploration, examination, and verification of solutions that adhere to best practice planning requirements of state and federal governments through business case development.

In support of these rigorous planning requirements, new advocacy processes demand a planned and coordinated approach. It is intended that a project will not be advocated for as a regionally significant project until it has been endorsed by council.

New processes are being implemented, and supported by an **Advocacy Policy for Regionally Significant Projects** as well as a forthcoming **Advocacy Framework for Regionally Significant Projects** to be presented to council in the near future.

When “regional significance” status is determined by council, individually-tailored advocacy plans will be developed to guide messaging and approach to funding bodies.

NOW

The community can expect a coordinated, evidenced-based approach from council staff and elected representatives towards regionally significant projects. This will include greater emphasis on business case development, community consultation and a focus on projects that facilitate long-term economic and social benefits.

Council staff are now expected to be part of a coordinated whole-of-council approach to planning and advocacy of regionally significant projects.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect to be asked by council staff to endorse a number of regionally significant projects in mid-2020.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

ipswich.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/118639/City-of-Ipswich-Operational-Plan-2019-2020.pdf

ipswichfirst.com.au/report-cements-importance-of-ipswich-central-to-springfield-central-rail-line/

ipswichfirst.com.au/experts-sought-to-ramp-up-north-ipswich-stadium-bid/

4.4 RISK MANAGEMENT

Strategic planning, budgeting and risk management are intrinsically linked; it is impossible to undertake sound strategic planning and major project prioritisation without a comprehensive understanding of the inherent risks involved and an assessment of the strategies available to mitigate these risks. It is entirely reasonable for Ipswich residents and ratepayers to expect that your council has a clear risk management framework and reporting arrangements.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

Council previously lacked any robust policies and framework to demonstrate an ability to mitigate risks. A formal risk assessment matrix had been prepared some years ago but was in effect “left on the shelf” and not referred to in subsequent planning and decision-making.

In addition, the formal Audit and Risk Committee of your council (as required under the *Local Government Act 2009*) failed to meet regularly and did not have any influence on council projects or programs in any meaningful way. The committee did not fully utilise the skills and experiences of independent members.

WHAT WE DID

Following a review of the current risk management frameworks and functions, a Transformation Project team was established to develop a consistent whole-of-council approach to Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) in order to proactively identify, manage and respond to issues that represent risk to the achievement of council’s strategic objectives.

Over the past 12 months the project team has delivered:

- An **Enterprise Risk Management Framework** that provides the mechanisms for ensuring that risks are considered and addressed in a systematic way, applying a consistent approach for prioritising, escalating and responding to risks regardless of their nature;
- A **Project Risk Management Manual** that will ensure the continuous improvement in council’s ability to deliver projects successfully. The supporting documents will be used by all staff responsible for delivering projects;

- Training programs for Risk Management, Fraud and Corruption, and Good Decision Making. These training programs will ensure that all staff are educated and trained in risk management, good and ethical decision-making, business continuity planning, project risk management and how to identify and report fraud and corruption; and
- A **Business Continuity Management Framework** that now shapes how business continuity activities within council are governed, managed and maintained. This framework is an essential component of council’s corporate governance practices. It operates in conjunction with related disciplines including enterprise-wide risk management, security and emergency response management. It also establishes how council develops and implements business continuity effectively.

Your council will need to continue to focus on the importance of risk management and the project team is still working to soon finalise:

- A Risk Appetite Statement;
- A Good and Ethical Decision Making Framework;
- A Conflict of Interest Policy; and
- Reporting regimes for risk management and fraud and corruption.

During interim administration, the following milestones were achieved in regards to council’s Audit and Risk Committee and its functions:

- An independent member was appointed to the position of chair to enhance the independence of the committee;
- A new charter was developed;
- A strategic workshop identified the key information and reports to be presented to committee to ensure an appropriate oversight of key issues facing council; and
- A strong focus was placed on ensuring risks are identified, reported on and mitigation actions are in place at a corporate and departmental level.

The Audit and Risk Committee now in place will more effectively discharge the responsibilities and obligations under its charter to act independently and provide oversight, assurance and advice to council in relation to critical matters such as financial reporting, internal controls, governance and risk. This committee now recognises and utilises the expertise and insights of the independent members of the committee. Key information is provided to (and requested by) the committee to enable it to undertake its responsibilities effectively, improving the overall governance and management of risk for council and the community.

NOW

The community can expect that your council now has a robust framework for addressing risk as part of its day-to-day decision making, and an effective Audit and Risk Committee to oversee council's approach to risk.

Council staff are now expected to incorporate the risk management framework as part of their work.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect to be provided with a robust Enterprise Risk Management Framework and a contemporary and active Audit and Risk Committee to provide surety to elected representatives that the council is managing risks appropriately.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

lpswich.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/122876/Audit-and-Risk-Management-Committee-Charter.pdf

lpswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/corporate_publications/audit_committee

4.5 REPORTING FRAMEWORK

Clear, honest and regular reporting is essential to enable the mayor and councillors to know that your council is on track (or otherwise) in delivering on its strategies, services and budget commitments to the community. It is entirely reasonable for Ipswich residents and ratepayers to expect your council to have a sound reporting framework in place that ensures reports to elected representatives and also those to internal management are accurate, timely and meet the needs of council and the community in terms of transparency.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

While the former council met its basic legislative obligations in terms of reporting, reports were not presented in a reader-friendly format to enable information to be easily digested by councillors, council's executive leadership team and the community. There was also a clear lack of a leading practice "performance culture" across council and little appreciation of the value of clear, concise reporting as a means of progressive improvement.

WHAT WE DID

A Transformation Project team undertook a review and consulted across council in regards to legislative requirements, the type of reporting currently being undertaken, desired reporting and best practice benchmarking.

Consolidated work from this project resulted in an **Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework** that highlights the three horizons of plans and reports for council:

- Horizon 1: Community Vision (e.g. community aspirations);
- Horizon 2: Corporate Strategy (e.g. council's Corporate Plan and annual report); and
- Horizon 3: Operational Planning (e.g. council's yearly operational plan and quarterly performance reports).

Key performance indicators and performance measures are being finalised to assist in understanding whether targets and objectives are being met and how to champion a performance culture.

NOW

The community can expect increased transparency to the council's plans and performance.

Council staff can expect the impact of their work will be clearly reported to council's management team, councillors and the community.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect they will be provided with clear and accurate reports on council operations to enable them to make appropriate strategic and policy decisions on behalf of the community.

SUPPORTING LINK:

lpswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/corporate_publications

4.6 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Contemporary local governments operate under a framework of formally approved strategic policies and operational procedures. In general, policies set WHAT should be done and, being strategic, are approved by the elected representatives at a formal council meeting. Procedures prescribe HOW it will be done and, being operational in nature, are approved by the CEO. It is entirely reasonable for Ipswich residents and ratepayers to expect your council to have up-to-date strategic policies that set directions for council operations, and for CEO-approved procedures to be in place that ensure the policies will be delivered with due process and care.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

Prior to administration, council's approach to the development of policies and procedures was ad-hoc, inconsistent and uncoordinated. Council leaders and staff lacked a common understanding of the definitions of policies and procedures across areas of council.

There was a lack of clarity around the definition of councillors' roles with many operational items requiring council or councillor sign off. This was far from "the norm" when it comes to local government practice. Previous policy documents were unclear or ambiguous which brought about a lack of adherence, limited guidance, and little if any consequences for breaching these policies.

Council policies also lacked a strong connection to the organisation's strategic priorities and included many historical documents that did not accurately reflect current or desired work practices. Across council, there was a lack of awareness or appreciation for the purpose of a policy and relevant policy processes, with limited resources available to guide development and ensure adherence.

WHAT WE DID

The outcomes of a Transformation Project team were as follows:

- A cross-council approach was designed to focus on better practice, clarity and genuine engagement in the process;
- New templates and frameworks that reflect best practice approaches to development, review and monitoring were created;
- Priority policies and procedures that contained references to councillors' involvement in operational areas were identified for immediate review. These policies have now been amended, repealed and updated;
- The remainder of the procedures and policies will be transferred to new templates as per the review process;
- Resources were developed and training conducted to educate staff about this new approach to policy development; and
- The policy and procedural search functionality on internal and external websites has been considerably improved.

Prior to administration, council had 214 policies. The above process of reviewing and redefining policies resulted in:

- 137 policies have been repealed;
- 18 policies have been amended/updated; and
- 61 new policies have been adopted.

There are still a few policies under review and will be presented to council in the near future.

NOW

The community can expect clear contemporary policies endorsed by council that set the strategic agenda and expectations of the council.

Council staff can expect clarity and guidance in policies and procedures that will enable them to deliver services to deliver on the strategy set by council.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect to come into an organisation with a suite of contemporary policies that outline the strategic intent for services delivery, council management and councillor conduct.

SUPPORTING LINK:

lpswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/corporate_publications/council-policies

4.7 DELEGATIONS

All major councils operate under a series of delegations so that various legal powers and decisions of council operations are exercised in practice by the CEO or specific council officers. It is impractical for the CEO to personally undertake or approve the multiple day-to-day actions and powers of a council. It is entirely reasonable for Ipswich residents and ratepayers to expect your council to have up-to-date and lawful delegations so that the correct balance is struck between operational efficiency and accountability.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

Your council had a process for managing delegations. However, this process had degraded over time as various state legislative amendments and the repealing of some Acts were not actively monitored by council.

The following issues needed to be addressed:

- Some delegations were not actually delegations under a legislative authority; they were administrative directives or policy decisions;
- There were errors in many delegations;
- Some required delegations were missing altogether;
- There was limited control over who received sub-delegations and no system in place to determine the appropriateness of issuing sub-delegations to individual officers;
- Conditions were placed on many delegations requiring consultation or approval by councillors prior to exercising the delegated power; this was inappropriate because it effectively gave individual councillors the ability to make operational decisions; and
- Council did not have a published register of delegations as required under the *Local Government Act 2009*.

WHAT WE DID

A considerable amount of work has been done on the review of all existing delegations and sub-delegations along with their attached conditions, with the following outcomes:

- Identification of deficiencies in the delegations and process of creating/amending/adding/repealing delegations and sub delegations;
- Removal of redundant and erroneous delegations;
- The sourcing of external providers to review approximately 63 pieces of legislation to compile a register of appropriate council to CEO delegations;
- The engagement of an external provider to assist in drafting more appropriate sub delegations and conditions to be given to council officers so a register of sub-delegations could be compiled;
- Removal of any delegation conditions relating to a divisional councillor's approval where inappropriate;
- Completing a delegations register, which will be published on council's website, which complies with the *Local Government Act 2009* and offers an improved level of transparency; and
- The drafting of new procedures to ensure delegations are constantly updated to reflect changes in legislation and policy (work in progress).

All existing powers delegated from council to the CEO have been repealed and replaced with a new suite (register) of delegations.

NOW

The community can expect that all council powers and decisions will be exercised lawfully, and that they will be able to see on council's website the powers delegated from council to the CEO and from the CEO to officers.

Council officers will be expected to comply with the delegations and sub-delegations and only act within their respective sub-delegations. Officers will also receive training on the delegations that they hold to ensure they make decisions consistent with their delegated authority and any applicable conditions.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect to lead an organisation with a contemporary and lawful set of delegations. They can also expect that future policy and legislative changes will be progressively captured to ensure delegations always remain current and in compliance with policy and law.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

Dlgrma.qld.gov.au/local-government/governance/local-government-delegations.html

lpswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/its-your-council/know-your-council/accessing-information/publication-scheme/our-decisions

4.8 PROCUREMENT

Local governments like Ipswich have significant scale and use public funds to acquire a range of goods and services. It is entirely reasonable for Ipswich residents and ratepayers to expect that your council's procurement arrangements are transparent, based on sound governance principles and minimise any opportunities for fraud and corruption.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

Procurement operated under a decentralised model at council, with small teams operating independently of each other within various departments. While the decentralised procurement model allowed for each department's procurement team to be responsive to the needs and time constraints of their individual departments, over time the established procurement framework was reshaped to focus on the needs of the individual department, as opposed to any whole-of-council approach. The various divisions also had differing levels of compliance with the legislative requirements for procurement. This was far from best practice for local government.

WHAT WE DID

Council has established a centralised procurement model under the management of a specialised procurement branch. The following was achieved as part of this process:

- A Procurement Framework was created to include:
 - Procurement policy
 - Procurement code of practice
 - Procurement procedures
 - Templates, work instructions and process maps
- A comprehensive procurement code of practice was implemented which set the governance, controls and consistency of practice for procurement activities;
- Reporting gaps were identified to support good governance, strategic procurement initiative and continuous improvement opportunities; and
- Business systems were implemented to streamline operational requirements, but also provide auditability and consistency.

Emphasis is now placed on proactive contract management as a foundation for strategic procurement initiatives.

NOW

The community can expect contract management and procurement strategies that deliver the best value outcomes for the city. Businesses working with council can expect a far more consistent approach to procurement, thanks to the implementation of a framework entrenched in governance, probity, and accountability.

Council staff will be expected to comply with the new framework.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect to be provided with a contemporary and effective procurement framework.

SUPPORTING LINKS:

lpswich.qld.gov.au/business/tenders

lpswich.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/115632/Procurement-Policy-2019-2020.pdf

4.9 ASSET MANAGEMENT

All councils in Queensland are obliged to have long-term asset management plans and asset registers (see section 104 of the *Local Government Act 2009*). It is entirely reasonable for Ipswich residents and ratepayers to expect that your council has up-to-date asset management plans in place, and these are linked to the council's long-term financial plan so that the planned asset maintenance and replacement work can be funded.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

Your council previously relied on the experience and knowledge of a select number of its staff to manage projects and maintain infrastructure assets without the formal key governance documentation normally associated with infrastructure best practice asset management.

Systems included various spreadsheets and proprietary software adopted for specific purposes within various professional fields such as maintenance, condition assessment, property services and project management. There was no comprehensive or coordinated approach to asset management across the organisation.

Overall, your former council had little appreciation of the overall status of asset conditions across the local government area and was therefore unable to determine whether the budgeted expenditure on asset maintenance and replacement was sufficient to meet the actual needs.

WHAT WE DID

The Transformation Project team delivered:

- A policy, strategy and framework; the **Strategic Asset Management Framework**;
- Four **Asset Management Plans**, one for each local government asset class:
 - Roads and transport
 - Drainage and flood mitigation
 - Buildings and facilities
 - Parks and recreation
- Systems requirement documentation; the foundation from which council can evaluate market response to its procurement of a whole-of-council electronic asset management system;
- The appointment of a project manager to oversee the project, and a consultant with experience in developing Asset Management Plans to assist in the complex delivery of the four plans;

- Development of a leading practice asset management framework, with the procurement of an integrated electronic asset management system still to be determined;
- Service levels were adopted for all asset classes, with clear maintenance standards and guidelines established to improve forward planning, budgeting, and investment timing – long-term financial planning for roads and transport, drainage and flood mitigation, parks and recreation, and buildings and facilities; and
- A platform to manage and optimise council's workforce planning resources was created.

The work was delivered in response to a Queensland Audit Office report to parliament and a project plan which was drawn in consultation between members of the management team, including staff from various divisions across the organisation.

NOW

Council now has a robust and well-established framework to enable appropriate decisions to be made for all asset management activities. The next step is to identify and implement an integrated electronic asset management system which could require a further three years before it is completely in place.

The community can now expect council resources (staffing, equipment and funding) to be allocated effectively to asset maintenance and replacement through the Strategic Asset Management Framework and Asset Management Plans.

Council staff are expected to be in a position to make better-informed decisions that benefit the city through the implementation of an integrated management system across the whole organisation.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect to be provided with a robust and contemporary Asset Management Framework, with some work still to do in terms of implementing an integrated electronic asset management system.

4.10 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

It is entirely reasonable for residents and ratepayers to expect that your council organisation is structured to most effectively meet the service needs of the community, with clear operational and reporting arrangements.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

Prior to interim administration, Ipswich City Council had seven departments:

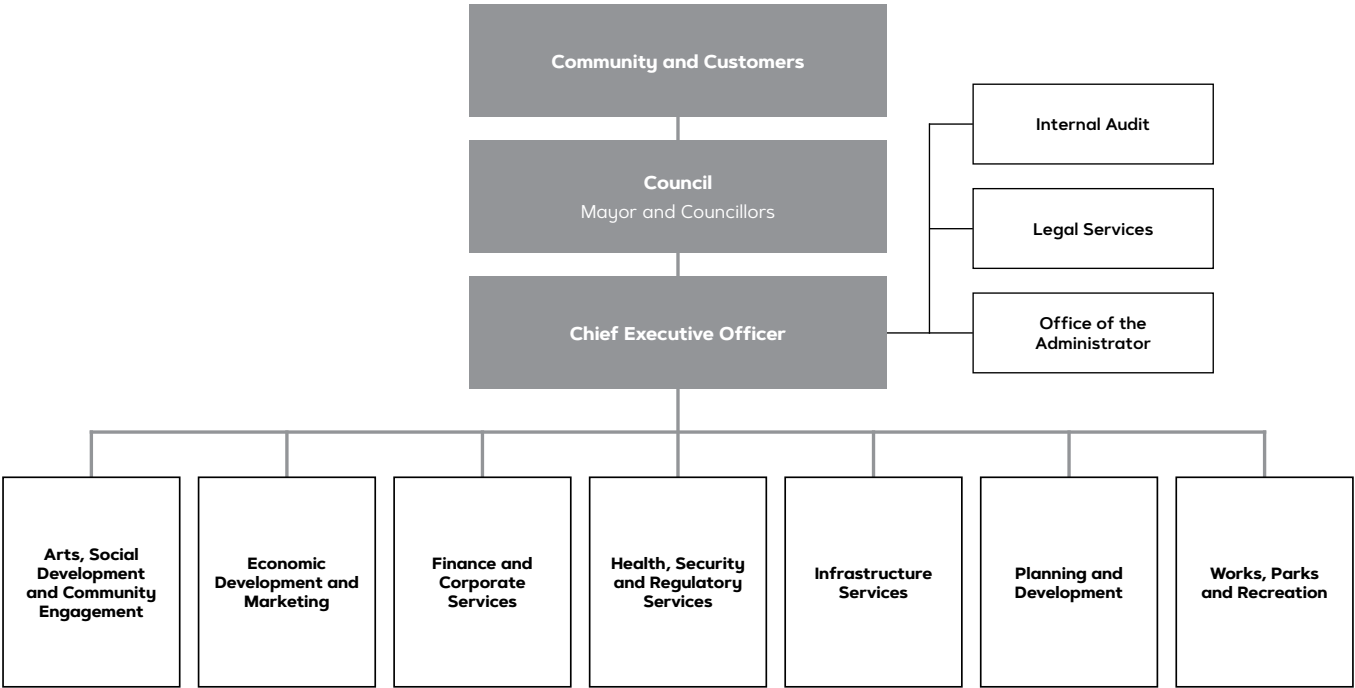


Figure 1 - Previous Organisational Structure

WHAT WE DID

A priority for council’s new CEO, David Farmer, in 2019 was to reduce the number of departments and complete a functional restructure of the

organisation that would allow for more efficient service delivery to the community. This restructure was completed over six months.

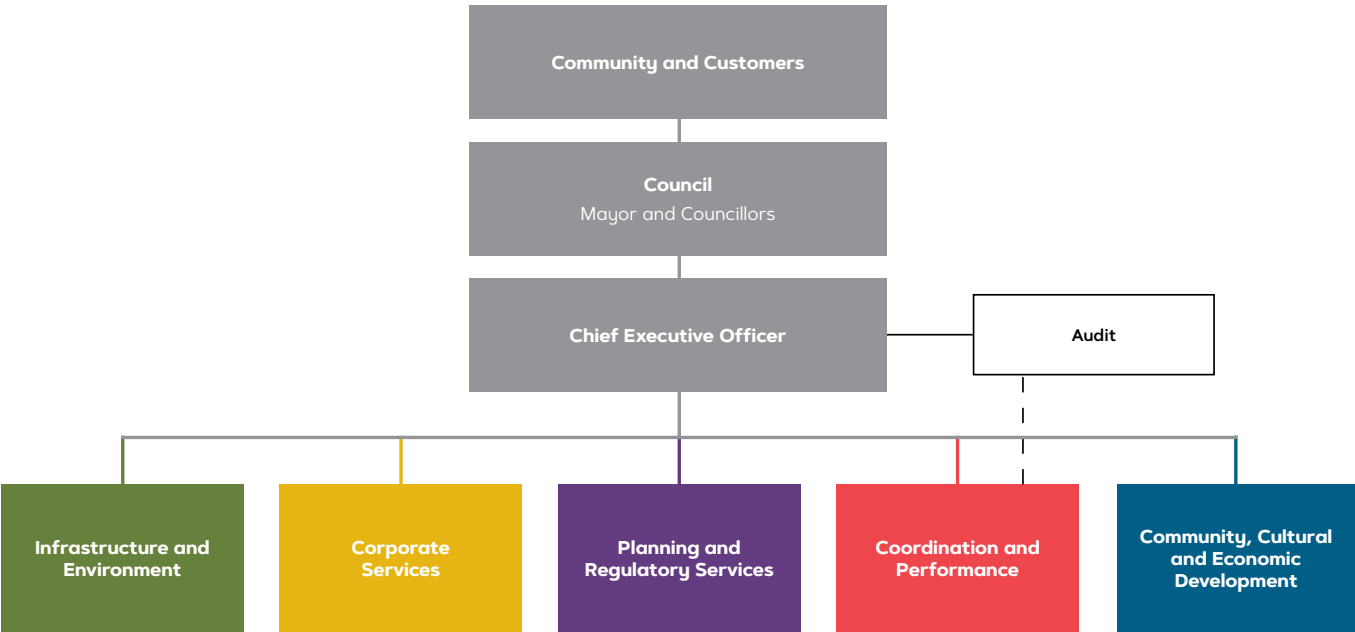


Figure 2 - Current Organisational Structure

NOW

Your council now has five departments and an Executive Leadership Team (ELT) comprising five general managers.

The community can expect this structure to provide more efficient service delivery.

Council staff can now expect their roles and reporting arrangements are better aligned with meeting the council's goals in Advance Ipswich and its corporate plan.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect their organisation to be effectively structured and more responsive to their strategic directions in the future.

SUPPORTING LINK:

ipswichfirst.com.au/changes-to-councils-management-structure-to-streamline-operations/

4.11 PEOPLE AND SAFETY

At the core of any organisation's ability to perform its role are the capabilities and capacities of its human resources. It is entirely reasonable for Ipswich residents and ratepayers to expect that your council has contemporary human resource arrangements that enable the organisation to effectively recruit, train and develop, manage the performance, and ensure the safety of its people.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

The services provided by the People and Culture Branch were largely reactive and transactional in nature; ensuring payroll was administered and recreation leave applications processed etc. There were no human resources, training and development or performance management strategies in place.

No safety management system was in place, and there was no strategic direction regarding the management of safety and wellbeing. It was largely a reactive approach with limited accountability and focus on the prevention of recurring incidents.

WHAT WE DID

A Transformation Project team engaged external Human Resources consultants (Prominence Pty Ltd) to facilitate the design and delivery of a leading practice **People and Culture Framework** and inform the development of a three-year **People and Culture Strategic Plan**.

The team prepared a **Safety Management Framework** aligned to AS/NZS ISO 45001:2018 setting out accountability and responsibility with achievable measurable goals. Your council is now the first council in Queensland to build a safety framework to this standard. The team also developed a **Safety and Wellbeing Strategic Plan** that targets the actual organisational drivers of safety and wellbeing.

NOW

There is still some work to be done in this area. Whilst no organisation is "perfect" in terms of its people management, your council is on the pathway to becoming a leading local government in the way it deals with its own staff.

Progressively, your council is moving from being "reactive and operational" towards becoming "proactive and strategic" through an internal business partner model; a typical contemporary approach whereby specific People and Culture Branch officers are "case managers" for a particular operational division/teams of council.

More focus needs to be placed on the areas of grievance management, performance management, health, safety and wellbeing, leadership development, and recruitment and selection (including diversity and inclusion).

The community can expect progressive improvement in the way your council deals with its own staff.

Council staff can expect to be part of this transition which will probably take a few years.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect this area to be greatly improved compared to previous practice, but still be "work in progress" and to have the strategic reporting in place to enable them to monitor the progressive transition of the organisation.

COUNCIL'S 160 YEAR OLD MOTTO; "CONFIDENCE IN DOING RIGHT"?

When Ipswich City Council was established some 160 years ago, the city founders set a Latin motto within the council crest of *Confide Recte Agens* – "be confident in doing right". This motto is highly relevant to the situation your council was in.

One of the goals under interim administration was to return Ipswich City Council to this position; with staff having confidence in their own actions, and in the actions of their peers and elected representatives.

However, there was a lot of work to be done, particularly on the culture front. The previous culture was one of secrecy and fiefdoms. There was a lack of respect for the law from many of council's most senior leaders, and a culture of "doing deals", which rippled through the organisation.

Council's approach to human resource management was far from contemporary, and staff didn't feel that they could make complaints, or if they did, that they would be treated seriously. With some councillors determined to direct the work of officers in operational matters, there was a clear lack of respect for process and people.

Many staff had been bullied, or were guilty of bullying themselves. Trust was very low. Unfortunately, there were many complaints that simply had to be addressed so we could move forward as an organisation, including some very serious issues. Several people have moved on from the organisation for a number of reasons during this period.

Bringing about a more positive, trusting and inclusive culture hasn't been easy, and there is still work to do. There is no organisation with a "perfect" staff culture. But your council has made some huge inroads on this front so officers feel far more confident about the organisation's ability to "do right".

4.12 FRAUD AND CORRUPTION CONTROL

Local governments are responsible for establishing rules, systems, policies and procedures to prevent fraud and corruption. Given the recent past, it is entirely reasonable for Ipswich residents and ratepayers to expect that your council has a comprehensive set of arrangements to prevent corruption.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

The dissolution of council and arrest of a number of former mayors and senior managers of your council in 2017 and 2018 provided very clear evidence that appropriate arrangements were NOT in place to prevent fraud and corruption with your former council.

WHAT WE DID

This was a key priority under interim administration. A **Fraud and Corruption Control Policy** and CEO Administrative Directive were created. This informs all staff of the requirements and responsibilities for the governance, prevention, detection, and the response to suspected fraud and corruption within council.

A **Fraud and Corruption Control Plan** was also prepared and has been implemented. This provides processes for the effective management of fraud and corruption risks, consistent with council's obligations under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* and is reflective of contemporary best-practice principles in Queensland. It also informs staff and managers of their shared responsibilities for preventing, deterring and detecting fraud and corruption.

A **Fraud and Corruption Risk Register** and **Fraud and Corruption Control Committee** have also been established. Reporting regimes are now in place for risk management, and fraud and corruption. The Fraud and Corruption Control Committee will oversee this work.

NOW

Your council's fraud and corruption control "maturity" is still in its early stages. More needs to be done to strengthen the organisation's management of Public Interest Disclosure by ensuring the new functional responsibilities, supporting work instructions, templates and other tools are all acted on consistently and fairly.

More is also needed in relation to your council's cultural responses to receiving and protecting "whistleblowers". Fraud and corruption awareness training and education will commence shortly under the new framework, and will be key.

The community should expect to see your council has far more effective arrangements in place to prevent, detect and appropriately deal with alleged fraud and corruption, as well as a council culture that has zero tolerance for corruption.

Council staff can be expected to demonstrate zero tolerance for fraud and corruption, and be increasingly confident that any alleged corruption will be managed by council effectively and fairly.

The incoming mayor and councillors can be expected to also demonstrate zero tolerance for fraud and corruption.

DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS DURING INTERIM ADMINISTRATION

An absolute priority for the IMC was to address staff complaints and issues. An independent hotline was established to ensure privacy and to ensure the review of these complaints were dealt with in a secure and consistent fashion.

118 complaints were made by council staff over the 16 months; 51 of which were assessed to be Public Interest Disclosures (PIDs) under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010*; meaning a serious wrongdoing. The allegations covered a wide range of potential corruption and misconduct, including:

- Failure to declare and/or manage conflicts of interest;
- Poor project governance;
- Reprisals against disclosers;
- Abuse of power/misuse of authority; decision-making without reasons for decisions and without record-keeping;
- Cronyism;
- Theft;
- Fraud – CV, timesheets, proper recording of payments received;
- Pressure on council suppliers to provide free and discounted services to employee in private capacity when employee had decision-making influence over the supplier's engagement;
- Unauthorised access to emails;
- Failure to protect confidentiality; breach of information privacy;
- Sexual harassment and racial discrimination;
- Breaches or flouting of procurement rules, including co-opting of others or turning a blind eye, or insufficient diligence to enforce rules (tolerance of rule-bending);

- Improper use of council issued credit cards;
- Adequacy of policy and procedures regarding issue and withdrawal of Penalty Infringement Notices;
- Adequacy of policy and procedures in animal management; and
- Manipulation of HR processes, for example show cause or performance management to bully/harass/reprise; collusion to manufacture evidence against employee.

The Ipswich workload in dealing with some 50 PIDs compares extraordinarily with the PID workload across local government in Queensland; the IMC workload for PIDs was approximately 60% of the entire state's 77 councils' collective total PIDs in 2018-19.

Appropriate action has been taken on all PIDs. Depending on the nature of each complaint, they were referred to the CCC or the Independent Assessor for advice and review, and/or addressed in-house, with the support of external investigators.

All of these PIDs except five have now been finalised. Only one PID is currently under investigation; the other four outstanding PIDs have been investigated and reported on and are in final stages of resolution and decision-making by your council's CEO.

As a result of the outcomes of this significant body of work, a number of people are no longer employed by council. Many findings from these investigations also helped inform the transformation projects of systemic issues that needed to be addressed.

Importantly for ratepayers, no council employee who exited as a result of these investigations was paid any sum outside of their specific legal entitlements under either their employment contract or relevant Enterprise Bargaining Agreement; no-one was "bought out" to leave.

4.13 ICT AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Reliable and effective information and communication technology (ICT) hardware and software, and retention of important corporate knowledge (including document records and emails) is an essential part of contemporary local governance. It is entirely reasonable for Ipswich residents and ratepayers to expect that your council has a strategic framework and appropriate policies and procedures in place so that ICT is up-to-date (but not “gold-plated”) and that key records are kept and accessible within the relevant privacy requirements.

BEFORE ADMINISTRATION

Before administration, council’s portfolio of ICT assets was procured and administered with little transparency to other divisions of council and certainly with no clear alignment with strategic plans (i.e Advance Ipswich and council’s corporate plan) or any overarching ICT framework.

Your former council’s information and knowledge management capability across the organisation was far from mature and was not fully compliant with relevant legislative requirements. While council had a central electronic document records management system, it was not well utilised by council staff. Information governance documentation either did not exist, was incomplete or required revalidation.

WHAT WE DID

A Transformation Program team:

- Formed business-led reference groups across council to guide and support ICT strategy research and development;
- Completed a full review of the current state of ICT services and applications including an extensive, council-wide feedback survey;
- Developed a suite of ICT principles, goals and outcomes to guide ongoing operation and development of ICT services;
- Developed and tested a range of strategic options addressing how council should plan for and procure future business applications; and
- Developed a four-year program of work, consisting of 24 individual initiatives, to drive ICT strategy outcomes.

The ICT strategy has been endorsed by the Executive Leadership Team and arrangements have been made to ensure ongoing sponsorship and outcomes reporting to a newly established ICT Steering Committee.

Council divisional and branch leaders and users of council ICT services will have visibility and influence over ICT services and future ICT investment decisions can be tested against a clear and agreed ICT strategy.

A separate project team was formed in relation to corporate knowledge management and focused on the development, socialisation and finalisation of key information governance documentation. A relaunch of council’s electronic document records management system was conducted, with staff reminded about the requirements for and benefits associated with using this system for records management. The team also commenced the development of a program for records management staff to ensure the organisation is supported by a knowledgeable and skilled team.

NOW

While your council is committed to continuing on the information and knowledge management maturity journey that was commenced by this project, there is still work to be done before your council can be considered “mature” in this area.

Community members can expect to see progressive improvement in the way council’s ICT and knowledge management systems operate.

Council staff are expected to work within the requirements of the knowledge management system, including use of the central electronic records system.

The incoming mayor and councillors can expect the council staff to have ready access to relevant information and be using the appropriate ICT systems.

5. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How much did the Interim Administrator and his team cost the ratepayers?

Less than if a mayor and councillors had been in place.

The total cost if a mayor and 10 councillors had been in place from August 2018 to March 2020 would have been around \$3.4m. The total cost for Greg Chemello and the five professional Interim Management Committee (IMC) members over the same period will be around \$3.2m.

Greg Chemello was general manager of Economic Development Queensland, a State Government commercialised business unit, and carried over his existing CEO level remuneration contract into the Interim Administrator role; he did not seek nor did he receive any additional remuneration or expenses for the role.

The IMC members were each appointed by the State Government on hourly rate contracts. The state invoiced council each month for the costs of the Interim Administrator and IMC members.

Can the governance reforms undertaken under this period of interim administration be undone by a future council?

In the main, no.

Much of the reform to your council's governance arrangements, and former policies and procedures were necessary to make your council compliant with the relevant laws, in particular the *Local Government Act 2009*. That Act has also been amended three times by the Queensland Parliament since August 2018, and council's reforms reflect the new requirements.

Some policies such as the Code of Conduct and Meeting Procedures Policy are mandated by the State Government. Other policies cannot be changed to reflect past practices as that would breach the legislation. Your council's revitalised Audit and Risk Management Committee with an independent chairperson will also have oversight of any proposed policy amendments.

Of course, the council can – and probably should – “fine tune” aspects of the new arrangements in the light of actual experience over the next few years. Any changes will need to be made openly and transparently at a council meeting.

Can incoming councillors set their own remuneration?

No. The maximum remuneration for mayors and councillors for all local governments across Queensland is set each year by the Local Government Remuneration Commission, a State Government entity.

Who keeps the incoming council accountable to deliver on the reforms put in place over the last 16 months?

Ultimately, the voters in Ipswich every four years.

But on the way through, the behaviour and activities of the mayor and councillors is subject to scrutiny by the Crime and Corruption Commission, the recently created Independent Assessor (the State Government body that assesses, investigates and prosecutes complaints about poor councillor conduct), the Queensland Audit Office, Electoral Commission of Queensland, the Department of Local Government Racing and Multicultural Affairs, the staff of council and the residents of Ipswich.

What is the impact of Greg Chemello exiting the Interim Administrator role earlier than the March 2020 elections?

Negligible.

Greg Chemello was offered the role of CEO for another large local government that needs to undergo significant reforms. The Minister for Local Government approved Mr Chemello's transition to that council some two months before the local government elections as:

- all the key strategic decisions and policy directions for Ipswich have been set in place already; and
- council will be moved into “caretaker” mode from mid-February in any case in the lead up to the elections.

The December 2019 council meeting completed the last part of the councillor governance and integrity package for your council ahead of the return of elected representatives at the March 2020 local government elections.

The last key council decision relating to the Nicholas Street redevelopment was also made in December 2019. The task ahead is for council staff, consultants and contractors to deliver on the directions set and decisions made over the past 16 months.

Steve Greenwood (one of the five IMC members) will take over as acting Interim Administrator until the newly-elected council is formed.

There is still a significant body of reform work underway within your council's organisation, driven by the directions established by the Interim Administrator and IMC. But these are organisational and operational reforms and hence will be managed by your council's CEO.

A comprehensive four week induction program is planned for the incoming mayor and councillors, to be coordinated by the CEO and relevant council staff. This training will reflect the governance and policy reforms delivered during interim administration.

Why can't I contact my new councillor about council operational issues after March 2020?

You can, but there are far more effective ways to do that now.

Council's operational work is not completed under direction of a councillor; it is unlawful for a councillor to direct a council staff member.

Your council's call centre has the appropriate procedures and administrative arrangements in place so that all work or service requests are logged, allocated, dealt with and reported back to the enquirer. There is also a new – and separate – complaints management system that handles any subsequent complaints from people unhappy with council's response. This is the way that most large local governments have been operating for years.

Any direct contact with a councillor in regards to an operational service request just adds another unnecessary step to the process as the councillor will refer you to council's call centre (which is contactable by phone, email, online or in person).

Where do I meet my new councillor(s)?

Your mayor and councillors will be issued with tablets and mobile phones, and enabled with remote access to documents and council information, meaning they will be completely mobile and can meet with ratepayers and residents in any location.

The closure of the previous 10 divisional offices and associated operating costs has yielded some \$2m in annual operating cost savings to ratepayers. Office space is provided for all elected representatives at council's administration building in Ipswich Central.

Your council will also have three customer service centres integrated at Rosewood, Ipswich Central and Springfield Central libraries. There will be meeting rooms available for councillors (and the public to book at no charge).

Why does council spend so much money on new growth areas of Springfield and Ripley, compared to the more established parts of the city?

It doesn't.

The land use planning and development assessment system in Queensland requires developers to provide the urban infrastructure needed for their developments, as well as contribute towards the upgrade and new "trunk" infrastructure around their development. This means that the vast majority of new roads, footpaths, kerb and channel, drainage systems, parkland, water and sewerage systems in newer communities are paid by developer contributions.

In effect, new property owners pay for this infrastructure as it is embedded in the price of land acquired from developers.

Over the past three years for example, only some 15 percent of council's capital budget has been spent within the Greater Springfield area.

Can we recoup the \$78 million loss on the Ipswich CBD redevelopment?

It appears very unlikely that the completion of the redevelopment will recoup much of the ratepayer value lost over the previous decade.

The graph below shows that both the civic assets currently under construction and the Nicholas

Street retail assets that will be redeveloped are "profitable" in that they are expected to provide value higher than the costs incurred.

But the combined surplus value of these projects will not be sufficient to recoup the lost value of the past.

Ipswich Central : 10 years to Dec-18

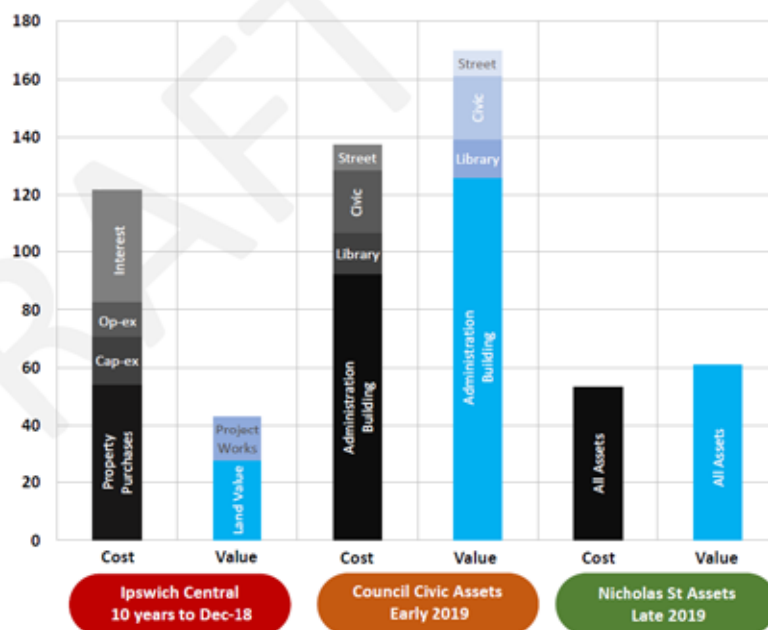
- Sunk cost of project to December 2018
- Value of assets as at December 2018

Council Civic Assets : Early 2019

- Total development cost of project
- Forecast end value of assets

Nicholas St Assets – Late 2019

- Total development cost per KPMG report
- Total value of assets 'As If Complete' and Fully Let per KPMG report



Why do we now have to sometimes obtain licences, approvals and apply for funding for community events when it was far easier before?

In many cases, council has made changes to comply with the existing law or to ensure that council acts in accordance with its own rules.

Your council now manages applications to hold and fund community events through an open, accountable and equitable process.

Specialist council officers are available to assist community organisations applying for event licences or funding.

Why has council committed to building a \$220m stadium at the North Ipswich Reserve?

It hasn't.

A "boutique" 20,000 seat stadium is a necessary prerequisite to secure a national competition licence for football and/or rugby league; an initial cost estimate of \$220m has been based on a preliminary master plan for such a stadium.

In order to help the codes pursue state and commonwealth funding for this venue, your council has provided an in-principle commitment of \$10m to future redevelopment of a stadium at the North Ipswich Reserve, with any actual expenditure by council being subject to the prior achievement of all of the following four prerequisites:

- The outcomes of a Strategic Business Case and Concept Design supporting development of a stadium of this scale;
- A commitment of at least equivalent funding by both the state and commonwealth governments towards the redevelopment;
- An agreement that tenure of the stadium will be transferred from your council to the state, with all subsequent capital and operating costs of the stadium being met by the state; and
- That either sports code obtains a licence or has a commitment to obtain a licence from the relevant sports administrative body to operate an A League or NRL competition team or equivalent.

Why should Ipswich support a bid for a South East Queensland Olympic Games 2032?

The proposed South East Queensland 2032 Olympic bid is potentially very significant for Ipswich with many real transport, sport, economic, tourism and legacy benefits.

The Council of Mayors of Southeast Queensland has driven an Olympic bid to put hard deadlines on key infrastructure we need. For the Ipswich community this potentially includes the Norman Street Bridge, the rail line from Springfield Central to Ipswich Central, and fast rail which will connect Ipswich residents to Brisbane city within 20 minutes.

The quality sporting facilities potentially included are also not reliant on an Olympic bid; again these are needed by the emerging Ipswich community as one of Australia's fastest growing cities.

What are the key economic and employment growth opportunities for the city?

Your council has created an Economic and Workforce Development Plan focused on building prosperity for the city by targeting new industries and attracting investment to the region. Traditional industries such as mining, farming, rail transport, manufacturing and heavy industry that once fed the city's economy and employed locals are in advanced transition as digital technology, dynamic markets and sustainable practices are pushing innovation and improvement.

Ipswich businesses are leading this progress across many sectors - defence, biofutures, advanced manufacturing, food production, transport and logistics, construction, and health.

To read the Economic and Workforce Development Plan visit ipswich.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/111080/Economic-and-Workforce-DevelopmentPlan.pdf.

The Defence Ipswich Action Plan can be found at ipswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/corporate_publications/defence-ipswich-action-plan.

Is tourism really growing in Ipswich?

Yes, the number of visitors to Ipswich continues to increase.

While its heritage has always been a key tourism driver, the city is fast becoming a must-visit for adventurers across sports such as mountain-biking and hiking. Latest data from Tourism Research Australia indicates total visitor arrivals to Ipswich increased by over 20 percent to a total 1,890,070 visitors in the 12 months ending June 2019, conservatively valuing the visitor economy at \$283,263,200.

The City of Ipswich Destination Plan 2019–2023 coordinates the tourism cluster of businesses and focuses activities on increasing visitor demand, visitation and expenditure to support employment in the region.

The tourism cluster is made up of entertainment, hospitality and accommodation businesses and employs more than 15,000 people in Ipswich. The Ipswich Tourism Operators Network (ITON) has grown to 140 businesses. Activities include business engagement and capability development, programs that support domestic group travel, destination publicity/marketing, and visitor servicing with the aim to establish Ipswich as an accessible daytrip and short-break destination within the Southeast Queensland market.



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