

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY GROUP

This Charter is to be read in conjunction with the “Committees, Advisory Groups, Representative Meetings and Working Groups Policy”.

1. Establishment

The Environmental Advisory Group is established by Council resolution (C28.09.2023).

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Environmental Advisory Group (the group) is to provide strategic advice to Council on environmental and sustainability issues.

This advice is related to the strategic outcome “*Natural Environment: A natural environment that is protected, sustainable and enjoyed*” with the objectives and strategies:

- a. Protecting natural areas and biodiversity
- b. Water management that is efficient and sustainable
- c. Waste management that is efficient and sustainable
- d. Energy management that is efficient and sustainable

Source: *Strategic Community Plan 2020-2030*

3. Powers

The group has no delegated authority to make any decisions for or on behalf of Council and are not authorised to:

- Expend or authorise the expenditure of any Shire funds
- Correspond with any party
- Speak on behalf of the Shire or Council
- Issue any media release
- Issue any instruction to Shire employees.

The group does not have executive powers or authority to implement actions in areas over which the CEO has legislative responsibility and does not have any delegated financial responsibility.

Recommendations from the group are advisory only and shall be given due consideration in decision making processes but will not be binding on staff or Council.

4. Membership

The group shall consist of the following members:

- a. Up to two council members
- b. Up to eight external members

If authorised by the group, council members attending as observers may participate in the meeting (but are not able to vote).

An external member absent for three consecutive meetings without leave shall forfeit their membership.

The CEO and employees are not members of the group. The Manager Planning and Environment is to provide administrative support to the group.

The group may invite, through the CEO, Shire employees or others to attend meetings and provide pertinent information where necessary but such persons shall not be entitled to vote on any item arising out of that meeting.

5. Appointment

Members are appointed to groups by Council for a term to expire on the date of the subsequent ordinary local government elections.

If for any reason, a member is unable to hold office for the full period of their appointment, Council shall fill that vacancy. The member appointed shall hold office for the balance of the term of the member originally elected.

4.1. Council Members

Council members are appointed in keeping with the principles of section 5.10 of the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act).

4.2. External Members

Nominations for external members to apply for a position on the group will be advertised in accordance with the “Committees, Advisory Groups, Representative Meetings and Working Groups Policy”.

External members should possess:

- a. knowledge and/or expertise in environmental sustainability issues; and
- b. demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the Shire of Mundaring landscape, ecology and communities.

Potential applicants for the role of external member will be required to provide a statement on their skills and experience in order to be considered for appointment.

Applications for external members shall be assessed against the selection criteria with a report providing recommendations for appointment to be considered by Council.

4.3. Presiding Member

The presiding member and deputy presiding member are to be appointed by the group at its first meeting.

The presiding member is to be a council member appointed to the group.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Each member is expected to conduct themselves in keeping with the provisions with the Act, *Meeting Procedures Local Law 2015* and the Code of Conduct to have open and honest discussions and to treat each member and employees with due courtesy and respect.

Council members and employees are to disclose financial, proximity and impartiality interests in accordance with the Act. External members are to be aware that any conflict of interest needs to be recognised to ensure that probity is maintained at all times.

Each member is responsible for attending meetings, reviewing relevant material to enable informed discussion and contributing to impartial advice to inform Council decision making.

In addition to the above, the specific roles for each membership type are as follows:

- Council members are responsible for ensuring that the committee adheres to the direction set by Council, contributing from a Shire-wide perspective, and ensures the delivery of the committees objective.
- External members/representatives are responsible for contributing to the delivery of the group's objectives within the scope of their skills, knowledge and capabilities.
- The presiding member is responsible for ensuring that the group adheres to the direction set by Council, that all members have an opportunity to participate in discussions in an open and encouraging manner and ensuring the timely consideration of items.

Where the presiding member is unable or unwilling to chair the meeting, the senior employee tasked with supporting the group will chair the meeting (but does not have voting rights).

- Employees are responsible for conducting necessary research as set by Council's priorities, as well as providing ad hoc professional advice, and for administering its meetings.

7. Meetings

Meetings shall be held generally in keeping with the provisions of the Act, the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* and the *Meeting Procedures Local Law 2015*. Due consideration is to be given to the "Committees, Advisory Groups, Representative Meetings and Working Groups Policy".

Ordinary meetings will be held at least three times per year.

Special meetings may be held:

- a. if called for by either the presiding member or at least two members in a notice to the CEO setting out the date and purpose of the proposed meeting; or
- b. if so decided by the group; or
- c. if called for by Council.

Meeting quorum is at least 50% of the number of members of the group whether vacant or not. Each member of the group at a meeting will have one vote. Decisions are to be made by consensus (i.e. members are satisfied with the decision even though it may not be their first choice). If not possible, the presiding member can make the final decision.

If a member is unable to attend a meeting, they must advise the presiding member as soon as reasonably practicable.

8. Recording and Reporting

The Record of Proceedings shall record:

- details of any disclosure of interest and the extent of such interest.
- times any member has departed and/or re-enters the meeting.
- consensus agreement on actions.

The Record of Proceedings will not reflect verbatim discussion on issues or matters discussed prior to consensus agreement being reached. Following each item, the presiding member will read out the agreed recommendations where there is a the consensus view. Where consensus is not achieved, the various alternative views held by members will be recorded.

9. Changes to Charter

This Charter is to be reviewed prior to each ordinary local government election.

The group may recommend changes to this Charter, with Council to endorse any changes.

10. Term

The group can only be disbanded by Council.

Document Control

Item	Date	Reviewed by
Group established (in current format)	September 2023	C28.09.2023