



CITY OF PARRAMATTA

Environment Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

11 April 2022

1. Purpose of Environment Advisory Committee

General Purpose

- 1.1 To advise Council on the needs or issues of our community and to inform Council's decision making and work relating to our community.

Specific Purpose of Environment Advisory Committee

- 1.2 To provide advice, input and feedback to Council on Environment and sustainability issues in the City of Parramatta local government area.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

General Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 The Environment Advisory Committee has no executive powers and will act in an advisory capacity only.
- 2.2 The Environment Advisory Committee has been established to provide feedback, input and advice to Council and is directly responsible and accountable to the CEO in undertaking its responsibilities.
- 2.3 The key responsibilities of the Environment Advisory Committee are:
 - a. To represent the views, interests and/or identified issues that affect the within the Parramatta local government area within the scope of Council's authority;
 - b. To provide advice, input and feedback to Council on issues that fall within the parameters of its authority and relate to the particular communities / identified issues the Committee is concerned with.
- 2.4 The responsibilities of the Environment Advisory Committee may, in consultation with the Committee, be revised or expanded by Council resolution from time to time.

Specific Roles and Responsibilities of the Environment Advisory Committee

- 2.5 To provide advice to Council on the implementation and monitoring of the Community Strategic Plan, the Environment Sustainability Strategy and any key plans or actions that support Environment sustainability and our natural environment.
- 2.6 To provide input on the development and review of Council policy on strategic environmental issues.
- 2.7 To actively support Council's consultation with and advocacy to the broader community on environment and sustainability related matters including the circular economy, preservation and management of bushland and waterways, mitigating and adapting to our changing climate, biodiversity, carbon reduction, renewable energy, integrated water management, sustainable development and sustainable transport.
- 2.8 To assist Council in determining of priority activities to be undertaken and annual objectives.
- 2.9 To provide advice and/or recommendations to Council on matters referred to the Committee by the Council.
- 2.10 To establish working groups on an as required basis.
- 2.11 To provide advice on industry trends and emerging issues.

3. Membership

Duties of Appointed Members

- 3.1 To attend and participate in a compulsory induction workshop which will include information on the role of the Environment Advisory Committee, the role and responsibility of members and Council, Council's Code of Conduct and other related policies and protocols.
- 3.2 To attend and participate in meetings of the Environment Advisory Committee (including any planning sessions and relevant training).
- 3.3 To work co-operatively with other members in achieving the aims of the Environment Advisory Committee.
- 3.4 To raise issues of concern within the scope and objective of the Environment Advisory Committee.

- 3.5 To positively and actively contribute ideas and suggestions relating to items on meeting agendas.
- 3.6 To participate in the discussion and to vote on outcomes of the Environment Advisory Committee.
- 3.7 To provide advice and recommendations to Council on items on meeting agendas.
- 3.8 To action and follow up tasks established by the Environment Advisory Committee and resolved by Council.
- 3.9 To report back to existing networks within the communities they represent on Council's role, responsibilities and its decisions relating to the Environment Advisory Committee.
- 3.10 To use existing networks to remain informed regarding the views and interests of the particular group / community they represent.
- 3.11 To advise the Chair if they are unable to attend and to liaise with Alternate Members for attendance at meetings.

Alternate Members

- 3.12 Alternate members may attend meetings of the Environment Advisory Committee in either capacity as an appointed or alternate member.
- 3.13 If an appointed member is unable to attend a meeting for any reason, then the alternate member is to be notified of their absence. If a member has not given notice of an absence and is not present, the alternate member assumes the role of member until such time the appointed member is present.
- 3.14 Any member who is appointed as an alternate member will be provided with all information (meeting invite, agenda, minutes, presentations, etc.) as an appointed member.

Member Attendance at Meetings

- 3.15 If a member is absent for two (2) consecutive meetings without an apology, the Committee Convenor, in consultation with the Chair, will attempt to contact the member to clarify whether they are still interested in continuing to be a member of the Environment Advisory Committee.
- 3.16 If a member is absent for three (3) consecutive meetings without an apology,

and there has been no response from the Committee member explaining their absence, their position will be declared vacant and the declaration of the vacancy must be recorded in the minutes of that meeting.

3.17 Members may elect to participate in a meeting by audio-visual means.

Member Leave of Absence

3.18 Members may apply to the Committee Convenor for a leave of absence, and the granting of such leave of absence is at the discretion of the Environment Advisory Committee. All applications for leave of absence must be recorded in the minutes of the Environment Advisory Committee meeting.

Membership

3.19 Council encourages participation from across the wider community. Membership is limited to no more than two consecutive terms, at the discretion of Council.

3.20 Membership of the Environment Advisory Committee is voluntary. Members are entitled to reimbursement for costs associated with travel to and from Environment Advisory Committee meetings, including public transport costs, parking fees and travel vouchers.

3.21 The term of membership coincides with the term of the Council or such other period as resolved by Council. At this time, all positions are declared vacant.

Specific Membership Criteria

3.22 The Environment Advisory Committee will comprise such members as are appointed by Council from time to time, including:

- a. Three (3) Councillors appointed by the governing body;
- b. One (1) Councillor alternate appointed by the governing body;
- c. The Chief Executive Officer (or their delegate);
- d. Up to 10 community representatives appointed by Council, through a registration of interest and selection process. whereby members meet the following criteria:
 - Demonstrate skills and capacity to contribute to the Committee or be an employee or member of an organisation whose primary function relates to sustainability; and
 - live, work, study or have a strong commitment to the City of Parramatta LGA.

Ex-Officio Members

- 3.23 All Councillors are ex-officio members of the Environment Advisory Committee.
- 3.24 Depending on the nature of issues raised, relevant Council staff and/or other stakeholders or guests will be invited to attend the meetings.
- 3.25 Ex-officio members may contribute to the meeting as permitted by the Committee Chair.
- 3.26 Ex-officio members are non-voting positions.

Observers

- 3.27 Non-members of the Environment Advisory Committee are able to attend meetings with the permission of the Convenor and Chairperson of the Environment Advisory Committee.
- 3.28 Observers are able to participate in discussions to the extent as permitted by the Chairperson.

4. Chairperson/Deputy Chairperson

Duties of Chairperson/Deputy Chairperson

- 4.1 Duties of the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson are to:
 - a. To chair meetings according to Council's Code of Conduct, the Terms of Reference and Guidelines, and meeting agendas;
 - b. To make recommendations for Agenda items in relation to the business of Council and the purpose of the Committee;
 - c. To facilitate the discussion of items on the agenda in a timely manner;
 - d. To facilitate the moving of recommendations and voting by Committee members;
 - e. To ensure all Committee members have the opportunity to participate;
 - f. To facilitate the participation of Ex-Officio members, Guest Speakers and Observers present at the meeting;
 - g. To participate in Committee training as organised and offered by the City of Parramatta Council.

Election of Chairperson/Deputy Chairperson

- 4.2 The Lord Mayor of the day is the Chairperson of the Environment Advisory Committee.
- 4.3 The Lord Mayor may delegate the role of Chairperson to another Councillor Advisory Committee member on an annual basis, or for the term of the appointment to the Environment Advisory Committee.
- 4.4 The Environment Advisory Committee will vote annually to determine its Deputy Chairperson.
- 4.5 If the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson are absent from the meeting, the Environment Advisory Committee will nominate a Chairperson for the meeting amongst those in attendance.

Absence of Chairperson/Deputy Chairperson

- 4.6 If the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson are absent from a meeting, the Environment Advisory Committee will nominate a Chairperson amongst its members for that meeting.

Working groups

- 4.7 The Environment Advisory Committee may determine to establish working groups to enable focus on key priority areas or specific subjects and to maximise the value of members' time.
- 4.8 Working groups may consist of both members and ex-officio members, and may invite staff members or other subject matter experts to provide advice / guidance as appropriate.
- 4.9 Working groups of the Environment Advisory Committee have no executive powers and will be established to provide advisory services only.
- 4.10 Working groups are directly responsible and accountable to the Environment Advisory Committee for all responsibilities.

Member Vacancies

4.11 Where a vacancy occurs:

- a. Within six (6) months from the appointment of members, the vacancy may be filled firstly by a person on the eligibility list if they are still interested and available to join the Environment Advisory Committee; or
- b. After six (6) months from the appointment of members, and more than 12 months from the end of the Environment Advisory Committee's term, an Expression of Interest utilising Council, Community and Committee members' networks should be undertaken.

4.12 Vacancies will not normally be filled within the last 12 months of a Environment Advisory Committee term.

5. Meetings

Frequency of Meetings

5.1 The Environment Advisory Committee will meet bi-monthly or as determined by the Chair. Details of meeting commitments will be detailed in any expression of interest information package.

Location of Meetings

5.2 Meetings will be held in Council offices, council facilities, or on-site at Environment locations as required.

5.3 Provisions will be made for remote attendance at Environment Advisory Committee Meetings.

Urgent Business

5.4 The Environment Advisory Committee may be required to consider urgent business outside of the regular meeting cycle.

5.5 A special meeting of the Environment Advisory Committee may be called by the Chairperson following a reasonable request from a member of the Environment Advisory Committee, the Chief Executive Officer, or by resolution of the Council.

5.6 If a meeting is unable to be called, the business may be considered via alternate methods, including email.

Voting Membership

- 5.7 The 'voting membership' of the Environment Advisory Committee will be initially determined by the number of members appointed to the Environment Advisory Committee at the time of the formation of a new Committee, and thereafter:
- a. increased by any additional members appointed to the Environment Advisory Committee (remaining within maximum membership); or
 - b. reduced by any resignations received from members (remaining within min membership); or
 - c. reduced by any lapsed member/s whose membership has been declared vacant.
- 5.8 For Committees where membership contains Council Officers, Council Officers are "non-voting" members. All other members are "voting" members.

Quorum

- 5.9 The quorum for Environment Advisory Committee meetings shall be half plus one of the 'voting membership'. In instances where there is an odd number of voting members, the number will be rounded up to the nearest whole number.
- 5.10 Where there is no quorum present after a period of 15 minutes has elapsed, an informal meeting may be conducted at the discretion of the Chairperson at which the Environment Advisory Committee may receive any presentations and undertake informal discussion. No actions or recommendations may be made until a further meeting of the Environment Advisory Committee is held when a quorum is present.
- 5.11 Where there is no quorum, an Environment Advisory Committee is not able to determine any decisions or actions and can only deliberate on issues. Any decisions or actions must be held over to the next meeting where a quorum is present.
- 5.12 No minutes are kept of meetings which do not have a quorum but informal notes may be taken to enable any proposed recommendations or decisions to be presented to a further meeting when a quorum is present (note that case law has determined that decisions of inquorate meetings cannot strictly be 'ratified' by a later meeting – they must be made afresh).

5.13 In the event that there are two consecutive non quorate meetings suffered, the Convenor will contact the Chair and each Environment Advisory Committee Member to determine their continuation on the Committee. If required, a fresh Expression of Interest process will be undertaken.

5.14 Members may participate in meetings by audio-visual means of communications.

Minutes of Meetings

5.15 The minutes of the Environment Advisory Committee meetings will contain details of the attendance for each meeting, a short summary of the discussion item and any action / outcome from the discussion.

5.16 Minutes of the Environment Advisory Committee meetings will be provided to Councillors on a regular basis. Minutes will be published on Council's website.

5.17 Where the Environment Advisory Committee establishes an action or recommendation arising out of the Committee discussion, a report will be provided to a Council meeting presenting those actions / recommendations for consideration.

6. Other Roles

Role of the Committee Convenor

- 6.1 The Environment Advisory Committee is convened by a Council officer known as the 'Committee Convenor'. The Convenor is responsible to:
- a. set the agenda with input from members and/or Council including allocation of time for agenda items;
 - b. attend each meeting;
 - c. ensure meetings are run according to Council's Code of Conduct and the Terms of Reference;
 - d. liaise between the Environment Advisory Committee and other officers within Council as determined by the Environment Advisory Committee's business;
 - e. finalise Environment Advisory Committee minutes;
 - f. prepare Council reports on specific actions / recommendations from the Environment Advisory Committee
 - g. act as moderator of meetings where the majority of participants attend via remote means.

Role of the Secretariat

- 6.2 Council's Governance Team provides secretariat support to the Environment Advisory Committee and is responsible to:
- a. Set of meeting dates;
 - b. communicate meeting dates to members, staff and Councillors;
 - c. distribute the agenda to members, staff and Councillors at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting;
 - d. manage RSVPs to meetings;
 - e. arrange appropriate catering for the meeting;
 - f. prepare draft minutes;
 - g. finalise draft minutes within seven (7) days of the meeting;
 - h. provide draft minutes to the Environment Advisory Committee Convenor;
 - i. distribute minutes to members, staff and Councillors
 - j. facilitate reviews of the Terms of Reference as required.

7. Conflict of Interest

- 7.1 Environment Advisory Committee members are to declare at the commencement of each meeting any pecuniary or non-pecuniary conflict of interest they have regarding any issue on the agenda.
- 7.2 All conflicts of interest declared are to be recorded on the appropriate form and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- 7.3 If necessary, the member concerned should consider leaving the room while the matter is being discussed.

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1 Where Environment Advisory Committee meetings include consideration of confidential information relating to members or the business being discussed, members are required to respect the principles of confidentiality.
- 8.2 With the exception of the Lord Mayor, Councillors who are members of the Environment Advisory Committee cannot speak to the media about Environment Advisory Committee matters. Media matters are required to go through the Lord Mayor and Council's media unit.

9. Council's Code of Conduct

- 9.1 All members must abide by Council's Code of Conduct at all times.
- 9.2 All members must attend and participate in a compulsory induction workshop prior to attendance at their first meeting which will include information on Council's Code of Conduct.
- 9.3 No member of an Environment Advisory Committee is able to make media or public comment on behalf of the Environment Advisory Committee or Council at any time.

10. Training

- 10.1 All members of the Environment Advisory Committee are required to attend an Induction Workshop.
- 10.2 Other training will be provided to members where this is required to enable them to fulfil their duties.

11. Environment Advisory Committee Representation / Attendance at Forums

- 11.1 From time to time, the Environment Advisory Committee may be approached to supply a representative to another Committee of Council. Where the Environment Advisory Committee determines that representation is appropriate, nominations will be called for at the meeting and a vote shall take place to select a representative.
- 11.2 Representatives shall be entitled to reimbursement of the equivalent public transport fare to and from the meeting or forum, or be provided with vouchers for alternative transport.

12. Changes to Terms of Reference

- 12.1 The Terms of Reference of the Environment Advisory Committee are ratified by Council and any changes or additions to them must be approved by Council.

Community Membership Application Process

- 1.1 Following the Council election and Council determination of which Environment Advisory Committees are to be formed, Council will then implement an Expression of Interest process to recruit members for the Environment Advisory Committees and this will be publicised through the following channels for a minimum of two (2) weeks:
 - a. Council's dedicated webpage for Environment Advisory Committees (which is to include all relevant documentation, EOI forms, Council Officer contact details, etc);
 - b. Council's website homepage carousel;
 - c. Direct communications with former Environment Advisory Committee members;
 - d. Advertising in any available community newspaper reaching residents of the City of Parramatta Local Government Area;
 - e. Social media advertising;
 - f. Advertising across relevant community networks relevant to each Advisory Committee;
 - g. A message through the Lord Mayor's column;
 - h. Any other channel as deemed appropriate by the Environment Advisory Committee Convenor.
- 1.2 All applicants for membership must apply using the relevant Expression of Interest form that requires applicants to address the stated criteria for membership. Previous members are entitled to apply for membership using the Expression of Interest form. Committee membership may be subject to a criminal history check.
- 1.3 The Executive Director responsible for the Environment Advisory Committee will determine the Selection Panel comprising three (3) Council Officers to assess Expressions of Interest against the Terms of Reference and stated criteria of the Environment Advisory Committee.
- 1.4 In addition, access and equity principles will be applied in the selection of members and the composition of the Environment Advisory Committees will reflect a diversity of views and opinions, variations in length and quality of related experience, age and gender balance.
- 1.5 The Selection Panel will prepare a report on all applicants detailing:
 - a. any previous membership of City of Parramatta Environment Advisory Committee/s;
 - b. whether the applicants meet the selection criteria for the Environment Advisory Committee;
 - c. any additional considerations;
 - d. panel recommendations for applicants.

- 1.6 Membership applications are to be reported to Council for approval.
- 1.7 Any applications that meet the criteria but are not appointed as members, will be retained on an eligibility list for a period of twelve (12) months following any expression of interest process undertaken to appoint members. The eligibility list will expire twelve (12) months from the date Council appoints its members.

Ends