

# Governance Strategy

<b>Approval Body:</b>	Council
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<b>Current Version:</b>	1.0 <i>Council policy documents change from time to time and it is recommended that you consult the electronic reference copy on Casey Council's Website to ensure that you have the current version. Alternatively, you may contact Customer Service on 9705 5200.</i>
<b>Council Plan Reference:</b>	3.2
<b>Compulsory Review Cycle:</b>	4 years
<b>Review Date:</b>	30 September 2023 <i>It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively.</i> <i>Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council.</i>
<b>Responsible Department:</b>	Governance
<b>Relevant Legislation:</b>	<i>Local Government Act 1989 Local Government (General) Regulations 2015 Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 Health Records Act 2001 Freedom of Information Act 1982</i>
<b>Relevant Council Documents:</b>	Governance and Integrity Framework Councillor Code of Conduct
<b>ECM ID:</b>	1338179

## 1. Definitions

Key term	Definition
<b>Council</b>	means Casey City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i>
<b>Councillors</b>	means the individuals holding the office of a member of Casey City Council
<b>Council officer</b>	means the Chief Executive Officer and staff of Council appointed by the Chief Executive Officer
<b>Strategy</b>	is a long-term (3 to 5 year) description of Council will achieve an objective

## 2. Purpose and Intent

Council is committed to achieving good governance, legislative compliance and to further develop meaningful relationships with Councillors and the administration optimise community outcomes.

This strategy outlines the performance pillars and the initiatives that will occur to achieve Strategy from the Governance and Integrity Framework.



### Roles and Working Relationships

The Council of the City of Casey comprises eleven Councillors who are democratically elected by the community in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989.

Council has a statutory responsibility to represent all people that live, participate in and invest within the municipality. The elected Council appoint and review the performance of the Chief Executive Officer of the organisation, determine Council policies and set the strategic direction of the organisation.

### Role of a Portfolio Holder

Councillors may be appointed to portfolios which indicate their leadership of a strategic initiative or policy area. As portfolio holders, Councillors support the Mayor of the Day and are able to gain a deeper understanding of the operational challenges and sector context which apply to a particular area. Portfolio responsibilities are allocated by Council resolution.

- Receive regular briefings on key initiatives and progress against strategic objectives
- Lead in speaking notes, and media comments on portfolio issues
- Develop awareness on a range of services offered through discussion

### **Role of the Chief Executive Officer**

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has a number of statutory responsibilities and is accountable to the elected council for delivering Council's strategies and services. As the head of the organisation, the CEO's role is to provide professional, relevant and timely information and support to the Council. Section 94A of the Local Government Act 1989 identifies the CEO as being responsible for a number of activities including:

- Establishing and maintaining an appropriate organisational structure;
- the day-to-day management of the Council's operations in accordance with the Council Plan;
- providing timely advice to Council; and
- appointing, directing and managing staff.

### **Role of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT)**

The ELT provides a whole of organisation perspective to ensure strategic alignment between the organisation's operations and the achievement of the Council Plan. This includes:

- Contributing to policy development through recommendations to Council
- Operational decision making
- Providing advice/ assistance
- Generating discussion
- Encouraging problem solving
- Leading performance management
- Interpreting and understanding the current and future operational and political environment
- Driving organisational leadership/culture

### **Role of a Director**

Directors are responsible for overseeing the efficient operation of the departments within their Division to assist the City of Casey in achieving its vision and objectives. They play a key role in supporting the CEO and providing advice and information to the Mayor and Councillors. This includes:

- Providing advice and possible recommendations to Councillors on issues raised by community and stakeholder groups on matters relating to the Directors area of management.
- Providing guidance on matters which, for reasons of community interest and benefit, require immediate action and may be advanced under delegated authority of the Chief Executive Officer.
- Providing advice and information on emerging issues and opportunities relating to the Division.
- Providing direction and advice on matters before Council through the review and approval of reports to Council.

### **Understanding and agreement of roles**

A clear understanding and agreement of roles and responsibilities as outlined above contribute to Councillors and ELT acting as an effective leadership team. It ensures each individual is aware of the boundaries of their role and of the shared areas. At the City of Casey the Councillors and ELT have agreed that this works best when there is mutual trust, discussions rather than assumptions and good communication.

The roles of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors are outlined in the Councillor Code of Conduct.

## Working relationships

Strong and respectful working relationships are essential for Council to achieve its vision. Effective working relationships promote a positive culture and provide the organisation with the freedom to focus on opportunities and delivering great outcomes, rather than spending effort overcoming problems associated with negative relationships. The key working relationships at the City of Casey are between the:

- Mayor and Councillors
- Mayor and CEO
- Mayor and Directors
- Councillors and CEO
- Councillors and Directors
- CEO and Directors
- Mayor, Councillors and Chief of Staff

Many Council officers hold positions that require specialised knowledge and skills and are required to provide information, advice and recommendations to the best of their professional ability. Sharing this knowledge with Councillors is a key part of ensuring that Council has the information it needs to make informed decisions.

It is important to note that Councillors cannot direct or improperly influence, or attempt to direct or improperly influence, the functions, duties, actions, recommendations or advice provided by Council officers. Improper direction and improper influence are covered under Section 76E of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

To facilitate the efficient functioning of Council, and ensure timely responses, the CEO has put in place a protocol which requires Councillors to direct all their enquiries to the CEO, the appropriate Director or Manager or specified support staff. Persistent failure to follow this protocol may be addressed through the Councillor Code of Conduct.

## Role of the Office of Mayor and Councillors

The Office of the Mayor and Councillors exists to provide practical support to Councillors and to deliver opportunities to increase the collaboration between the executive, Council officers, residents and elected members of Council. This includes:

- Training and development opportunities
- Advice and mentoring
- Communication and media management
- Support for variety of stakeholder engagement
- Civic events, functions and administrative roles and responsibilities of the Office

The roles of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors are outlined in the Councillor Code of Conduct.

## 3. Current State

Council is governed under various legislation including but not limited to the *Local Government Act 1989*, *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*, *Health Records Act 2001* and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

The public expect that Council is governed in a way that is transparent and to the highest standards of integrity and good governance.

Council's Governance Department is responsible from ensuring compliance with these Acts and ensuring the highest standards of integrity and good governance are achieved by Council.

Council's Advisory Committees and Audit and Risk Committee play a key role in ensuring oversight over Council business and public oversight.

## Stakeholders

**Table 1 - Stakeholders**

Stakeholder	Interest	Method of engagement
Community	People who live and work in the municipality and are affected by Council's decisions.	Casey Conversations, Council Meetings, Advisory Committees, public notices and social media outlets.
Advisory Committees	Enable a platform for public participation in decision-making.	Face to face meetings regularly throughout the year.
Audit and Risk Committee	Monitor, review and advise Council on the standards of its financial control risk management and corporate governance.	Face to face meetings 5 times a year.
Integrity and enforcement agencies (IBAC, LG Inspectorate)	Oversight as to Council's compliance investigative and enforcement functions.	Informal and formal investigations and seek education
Councillors	Elected community representatives and the Council's board.	Council meetings, Council forums and face to face meetings.
Council Officers	Delivering 66 Council services to the community.	Policies, Intranet, education sessions and advice.
Executive Leadership Team	Implementing the Council Plan and maintaining a collaborative relationship with Council	Council Meetings, Council Forums and Face to Face Meetings

## Current Performance

The table below outlines the current performance measures used in the implementation of this Strategy.

**Table 2 - Performance Pillar Measures and Targets**

Performance Pillar	Measure	Targets	Strategic Principle
Advisory Committees	They have a quorum for every meeting and minutes are presented at Council Meetings for approval.	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community interactions/Engagement</li> <li>Good Governance</li> <li>Delegations and Authorising Environment</li> </ul>
Decision-making at Council Meetings	Decision-making is transparent and decisions in Closed Council are minimised and in line with Local Government Performance targets. However, where there may be topics of a confidential nature to be discussed, reports to Council	Limit the number of decisions made in Closed Council to 5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community interactions/Engagement</li> <li>Good Governance</li> <li>Delegations and Authorising Environment</li> </ul>

Performance Pillar	Measure	Targets	Strategic Principle
	<p>will be considered in a 3 tiered approach:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Report to be considered in Open Council with the report included in its entirety</li> <li>2. Report to be considered in Open Council, with a confidential attachment circulated to Councillors including any confidential information</li> <li>3. Report to be considered in Closed Council. Where a report is to be considered in Closed Council, the subject and the reason for confidentiality is to be listed in the agenda.</li> </ol>		
Privacy	Reporting under Part 4 of PDPA is completed each year and data breaches are investigated in accordance with the Data Breach Policy.	Initial investigation of data breaches within 48 hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Governance</li> </ul>
Council business papers	Council Agenda and Minutes are available both digitally and in hardcopy 2 days prior or post Council Meetings.	Within 2 days prior or post Council Meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community interactions/Engagement</li> <li>• Good Governance</li> </ul>
Registers	Ensure registers identified in legislation are current and available as required.	100% current and published by the required deadline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community interactions/Engagement</li> <li>• Good Governance</li> </ul>
Freedom of Information	Requests are processed in accordance with timeframes set under legislation.	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community interactions/Engagement</li> <li>• Good Governance</li> </ul>
Delegations and Authorisations	Delegations and authorisation under various Acts are managed and captured to enable Council to undertake its functions effectively	Delegations and authorisation are reviewed annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Governance</li> <li>• Delegations and Authorising Environment</li> </ul>
Document Management	Frameworks, Strategies, Policies and Processes are reviewed regularly	Reviewed every 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Governance</li> <li>• Community Interactions/Engagement</li> </ul>
Office of Mayor and Councillors	Effective and meaningful relationships between Councillors and the Executive	Quarterly opportunities for team development and strategic engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment and promotion of the Office of the Mayor and Councillors</li> <li>• Support Elected Representatives</li> </ul>

Performance Pillar	Measure	Targets	Strategic Principle
Councillors Profiles	Increase awareness in the community of roles and responsibilities of Councillors	Increased engagement with Councillor related webpages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support Elected Representatives</li> </ul>
Councillor Engagement	Increased engagement of Council Officers	100% Council officer attendance at Councillor Portfolio meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support Elected Representatives</li> </ul>
Regional Councillor Networking	Strong and well networked regional Councillor relationships	Annual regional Councillor event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support Elected Representatives</li> </ul>
Governance Culture	Demonstrated culture of transparency	<p>Staff culture surveys indicate staff work in a safe and supportive environment and are able to raise work items freely with their supervisors.</p> <p>Reduction in level 2 complaints made to Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good Governance</li> <li>Community Interactions/Engagement</li> </ul>

#### 4. Future state

Council aims to be a sector leader for Local Government. The Council will achieve this by implementing 3 strategic initiatives:

Strategic Initiatives	Initiatives	Performance Pillar Improved
Having a continuous improvement mindset to governance and integrity process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop online training for gifts, benefits and hospitality and conflict of interest</li> <li>Develop guidance material for Council officers when submitting reports for Council Meetings</li> <li>Advisory Committees Network meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality</li> <li>Council business papers</li> <li>Advisory Committees</li> </ul>
Becoming a sector leader and supporting other Council's in good governance practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MAV Policy Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy Management</li> </ul>
Educating the community, to increase awareness the of available information via registers, freedom of information and Council business papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website page for registers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registers</li> <li>Freedom of Information</li> <li>Decision-making at Council Meetings</li> <li>Council business papers</li> </ul>
Having a continuous improvement mindset for improvement to the functions of the Office of the Mayor and Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an online information sharing platform</li> <li>Develop online public Councillors profiles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office of Mayor and Councillors</li> <li>Councillors Profiles</li> <li>Councillor Engagement</li> </ul>

Strategic Initiatives	Initiatives	Performance Pillar Improved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance existing civic events.</li> </ul>	
Increasing regional Councillor collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holding an annual networking event</li> <li>Develop regional Councillor training opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Councillor Networking</li> </ul>
Enhance awareness of integrity systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal campaign to coincide with National Fraud Prevention Week</li> <li>Promotion of processes which support reporting of fraud and corruption</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governance Culture</li> </ul>

## 5. Initiatives

Below is a the list of new initiatives that will work together to achieve the future state described in Section 5 above. These initiatives have been selected and prioritised by working with a range of stakeholders. Each initiative's contribution to strategic initiatives above.

**Table 3 – initiatives**

Initiative	Cost	Timing	Contribution to targets
<p><b>Develop online training for gifts, benefits and hospitality and conflict of interest</b> Have available on Council's HRIS online learning for Councillors and Council Officers.</p>	N/A	December 2020	This initiative will contribute to the Conflict of interest and gifts, benefits and hospitality performance pillars.
<p><b>Website page for registers</b> The creation of a dedicated page on Council's website to highlight registers available.</p>	N/A	February 2020	Registers are easy to identify and update.
<p><b>Develop guidance material for Council officers when submitting reports for Council Meetings</b> This guidance will assist Council Officers when determining when a Council report should and shouldn't go to Closed Council.</p>	N/A	December 2019	This initiative will contribute to the target of decision-making at Council meetings by reducing the number of Closed Council reports.
<p><b>MAV Policy Group</b> We will advocate for the creation of a MAV Policy Group to increase the collaboration across the sector regarding policies and legislation.</p>	N/A	June 2023	This initiative will contribute to Casey being a sector leader.

Initiative	Cost	Timing	Contribution to targets
<p><b>Advisory Committees Network meeting</b> Increase the number of committees invited to the network meeting.</p>	\$10,000 per annum	November 2019	This initiative will contribute to the target attendance for Advisory Committees.
<p><b>Develop an online information sharing platform</b> Assist Councillors in finding accurate and timely information.</p>	N/A	October 2020	This will ensure Councillors have access to timely and accurate information which assist in their role supporting residents.
<p><b>Develop online public Councillors profiles</b> Increase the presence of Councillors in the community and better inform residents of the work Councillors undertake.</p>	N/A	June 2020	Enhancing profiles will provide more opportunities for residents to engage with their Ward Councillor and connect with the work that takes place.
<p><b>Enhance existing civic events</b> Furthering opportunities for community participation in Civic events by considering local themes.</p>	N/A	October 2020	Enhance visibility of civic event calendar and opportunities for community partnerships to celebrate and acknowledgement achievements.
<p><b>Holding an annual Councillor networking event</b> Regionally network Councillors to encourage more effective advocacy and decision making that benefit larger areas.</p>	\$3 000	June 2020	Promoting and fostering regional Councillor relationships will encourage more effective advocacy and regional benefits being delivered back to a broader community area.
<p><b>Develop regional Councillor training opportunities</b> Improve the knowledge of Councillors to support better decision making and performance.</p>	\$10,000 per annum	December 2020	Regional training will encourage a more collaborative way of thinking and promote effective decision making.

Initiative	Cost	Timing	Contribution to targets
<b>Internal campaign to coincide with National Fraud Prevention Week</b>	N/A	Annual	Internal communications campaign to enhance staff understanding of fraud controls
<b>Promotion of processes which support reporting of fraud and corruption</b>	N/A	September 2019	Education campaign to embed Protected Disclosure processes and internal reporting channels for staff concerns.

## 6. Budget

The budget is determined on an annual basis and is made public on Council's website.

Commitment	Budget
Councillors	Cost of Governance per Councillor is \$61,000 annually
Advisory Committees	\$40,000 annually

## 7. Breaches

NA

## 8. Document History

Date approved	Change Type	Version	Next Review Date
20 August 2019	Strategy initiation	1.0	31 July 2023