

COUNCIL: PORT MACQUARIE-HASTINGS COUNCIL

PROMOTING BETTER PRACTICE REVIEW - ACTION PLAN (as at May 2008)

RECOMMENDATION	ACTION PROPOSED	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBLE DIVISION	PROGRESS REPORT
1. Council should integrate its long-term plans and strategies into the strategic plan.	Council plans to integrate its long term Strategies into single overarching Strategic Plan.	May 2008	Executive Group and Councillors	Finalised. "Towards 2030" Long Tern Strategic Plan reported to Councillor Workshop in February 2008 and adopted in Council's Corporate Plan for 2008/2011.
2. Council's strategic plan should identify the timeframe to which it applies.	Timeframe likely to be a 20 year time frame	May 2008	Executive Group and Councillors	Finalised. Council has adopted the <i>Towards 2030</i> Long Term Strategic Plan met in June 2008. The Plan has a 20 year timeframe.
3. Council should provide a list of its key plans at the beginning of each focus area section of its corporate plan.	With the current development of Council's KPI's, strategy mapping is occurring as a part of this process. The Corporate Plan will reflect Council's key strategies more fully.	June 2007	Finance and Corporate Services	Finalised. Refinements of Council's key strategies has been reflected more fully in 2007/08 and 2008/9 Corporate Plans
4. Council should reflect its role in the region, that is the region comprised in the Mid North Coast Strategic Alliance, in its strategic focus.	More clearly indicate the role and purpose if the Strategic Alliance in the Corporate Plan.	June 2006	Executive Services	Finalised. Strategic Alliance recorded in Governance Focus Area of the Corporate Plan.
5. Building upon strategies in its social plan, council should prepare long term strategies to meet current and future needs for older people.	An integrated long-term strategy will be developed in 2006. This will build on the issues identified in the Social Plan and also the LGSA Ageing Report	Dec 2007	Community Development	Staff turnover has hampered Council's ability to meet this proposed action. Council is still committed to the further development of this long term strategy and it has been incorporated into Council's <i>Towards 2030</i> Strategic Plan.

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6. Priority strategies to meet current and future needs for older people should be determined on an annual basis and incorporated in council's management plan and budget, the business plans of each section and the work plans of individual officers. Progress in relation to these priorities should be reported on a quarterly basis via the performance appraisal system and management plan reports as well as annually in council's Annual Report.	Priorities to be developed from the long-term strategy and as part of the annual management plan process.	June 2007	Community Development	Finalised. Strategies in Council's Social Plan have been prioritised for 2007/08.
7. Council should review its statement of business ethics to ensure that the statement conveys the view that the provisions that apply to staff also apply to councillors in their decision-making role.	The Statement of Business Ethics will be amended to include Councillors.	May 2006	Finance and Corporate Services	Finalised.
8. Council should review its code of conduct to ensure that it complies with the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW.	Code of Conduct has been reviewed and changes have been made to ensure compliance with the Model Code.	Amended by Council on 6 March 2006.	Executive Services	Finalised.
9. Council should incorporate information about community access to records under section 12 of the Local Government Act into its records management policy.	Council has a separate policy relating to "Public Access to Council Documents". This policy includes information for the public that explains how to access information available under Section 12 of the LG Act. Council has a separate Records Management Policy and this can be expanded to include the existing "Public Access" policy.	June 2006	Finance and Corporate Services	Finalised.

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10. Council should develop a business continuity plan that applies to council's physical and electronic records.	Council currently electronically scans all incoming correspondence and retains an electronic copy of all outgoing letters. These are backed up every night and the backup tapes are stored offsite. The worst-case scenario is that Council would lose the current days incoming and outgoing correspondence.	June 2007	Finance and Corporate Services	Finalised. Server containing electronic records located off site. Physical Records located in off site repository. Only current records stored in Council Administration Building and electronic copies of these documents are stored offsite.
11. Council should review its administrative processes for the completion of pecuniary interest returns to ensure that they accurately reflect signing and lodgement dates.	Council's Administrative processes have been reviewed and will be implemented in conjunction with the 2005/6 Pecuniary Interest returns. Particular note has been taken of the matters raised on page 26 of the PBP report.	July/ September 2006	Executives Services	Finalised. Processes altered to meet the Department's recommendations. All returns have been checked to ensure that they meet the Department's expectations.
12. Council should develop and adopt a policy supporting legislative compliance.	This recommendation has also been identified by the Internal Audit Committee. A policy and guideline are currently being developed.	March 2008	Executive Services	Finalised. Compliance Policy adopted by Council at meeting on 9 July 2008. Compliance Register being developed and will be presented to Council in July 2008 for adoption.
13. Council should continue to develop a comprehensive risk management plan to enable it to identify and manage all significant risk issues facing council in the pursuit of its objectives.	A risk management policy and framework has been developed and approved by the Risk Management Committee, Councils Executive and the Internal Audit Committee.	March 2008	Finance and Corporate Services	Finalised. The risk management policy adopted by Council on Monday 28th May 2007 along with the supporting framework. Risk Management Plan developed and currently with Risk Management Committee for final review prior to reporting to Council for adoption.
14. Council should continue the development of its internal audit function.	Council's Internal Audit function is ongoing and Council adopted the 2005/6 Internal Audit plan in October 2005.	Ongoing	Executive Services	Ongoing.
15. Council should conduct routine fraud risk assessments as part of its risk management responsibilities.	This recommendation is the subject of a report to the next Internal Audit Committee meeting in May 2006. A Policy/Strategy will be developed in the next 3 months and reported to Council for adoption. It should be noted that Council has processes in place that relate to risk minimisation in its Cash Handling and Caravan Park operations.	December 2006	Executive Services	Finalised. Fraud Prevention Policy and Framework developed and adopted by Council May 2007. Staff training carried out in August/September 2007.

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<p>16. Council should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing training to staff on tendering processes, assessment and reporting • undertaking a legal audit of its tendering processes • undertaking an internal audit review of its tendering practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of relevant Council staff will take place in June 2006. • Councils Procurement Policy and Procedures have recently been reviewed and amendments made. They are presently being considered by Council's legal advisors and will be presented to Council in June 2006 for consideration and formal adoption. • This recommendation will be referred to the Internal Audit Committee for inclusion in its ongoing review plan. 	<p>June 2006</p> <p>May 2006</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Finance and Corporate</p> <p>Executive Services</p>	<p>Finalised, but ongoing Training of all staff completed in July 2006.</p> <p>Procedures reviewed and amended policy adopted by Council on 17 July 2006.</p> <p>Internal Audit Committee included as part of 2007/08 Audit Plan.</p>
<p>17. The council should ensure that all reports on procurement provide detail on the assessment criteria used to make a determination on the tender, including any weightings, report against these criteria and the processes underlying any decision.</p>	<p>It is Council staff's normal practice to include this information in reports relating to procurement. The instance identified by the review team was a departure from our normal practice. All future reports on procurement will be checked to ensure that appropriate, assessment criteria is included.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Executive Services</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>

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22. Council should review the role of the Development Assessment Panel and if it retains its operational focus in addition to its determinative role, should not include councillors on the panel.	Review to take place in conjunction with the Deputy Mayoral election and appointment of Councillors to Council and non- Council committees.	July 2006	Development and Environment	Finalised. No Councillors on DAP.
23. Council should adopt processes that ensure that outstanding development applications are dealt with by mandating responses to outstanding requests for information and by refusal, where appropriate.	Revised outstanding application review process being developed. Standard follow up letter advising of refusal if information not provided, developed and implemented.	Commenced April 2006.	Development and Environment	Finalised. Process in place. Review completed.
24. In the preparation of future State of the Environment Reports, council should take into account the provision of: a. environmental advice from other councils and information on the regional setting b. more comprehensive information about the heritage environment and Aboriginal heritage issues c. more comprehensive actions to be taken by council d. evidence of community consultation or involvement of the community in monitoring changes in the environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Advice to be sought from adjoining Councils as part of the SOE preparation. b. These parts of the SOE report will be sought from the local Aboriginal Community c. Council will develop stronger linkages between SOE and Corporate Plan d. Information outlining Community engagement to be included in the SOE report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually Annually 06/07 Annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water and Natural Resources Community Development Water and Natural Resources and Executive Water and Natural Resources 	<p>Finalised.</p> <p>SOE Report has been prepared in line with DLG recommendations.</p> <p>Information included in SOE Report</p> <p>Broader Community Consultation carried out and reference included in 2006/7 SOE Report.</p>

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25. Council should develop a comprehensive asset management plan that incorporates council's asset maintenance program.	The development of this plan has already commenced and will be completed in the next 18 months	June 2008	Water and Natural Resources, Infrastructure Services and Finance and Corporate Services.	Finalised. Asset Management Coordinator appointed. Development of Asset Management Plan and maintenance program proceeding. Progress report was not made to Council in February 2008. However, all Council infrastructure owners are participating in the IPWEA Asset Management program and are well on the way to finalising asset management plans across the Council infrastructure spectrum.
26. Council should monitor the drop in expenditure on asset maintenance to ensure that assets receive the required amount of expenditure to keep them in a satisfactory condition.	No action proposed other than the completion of the abovementioned Asset Management Plans. No drop in maintenance levels have occurred, in fact Transport and Stormwater assets maintenance levels have increased by 66.3% over the last 7 years.		Finance and Corporate	No action proposed.
27. Council should continue the review of its consultation processes as a priority and ensure that these are continually evaluated.	Consultation Policy Review to be finalised by June 2006. The Policy will be reviewed annually as part of the annual policy review.	June 2006	Community Development	Finalised. Policy adopted by Council May 2007.

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<p>28. Council should continue to develop, monitor and report on its customer service standards to ensure accountability to the community and to provide feedback to the council.</p>	<p>Council is currently developing balanced performance measures for all divisions and these will be finalised in December 2006. Some of these will involve measures of customer satisfaction. Council intends to undertake an independent survey of Customer Satisfaction across the board, on at least an annual basis.</p>	<p>Measures developed by December 2006 and surveyed at least, every 12 months.</p>	<p>Executive Services</p>	<p>Finalised. Development of Balanced Performance Measures across all council business units has been completed. These will be further refined in 2008/9, posted to Council's web page and performance measured annually by Community Survey.</p> <p>Council launched the Journey to Excellence program in September 2007 across the whole of organisation to better align with our community's expectations, needs, improve service delivery and further refine Council Performance Indicators.</p> <p>The portfolio of initiatives which comprise the Journey to Excellence program include: Towards 2030 - An overarching framework that integrates Council's asset maintenance, finance, social, infrastructure, environment and land use long term planning and reporting to drive community agreed performance indicators within Council's four focus areas of Social, Environment, Economic Development and Governance Australian Business Excellence Framework - an integrated approach to leadership, management & organisational capability to built a customer focused culture and implement service delivery improvements Gateway Review process -assesses projects at key decision points in their lifecycle to ensure they proceed in a coordinated sequence and outcomes are realized with the optimum balance of cost, benefit and risk</p>

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<p>29. Council should review its Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan to ensure that future plans include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the date it is adopted and reviewed b. specific targets and performance criteria c. a description of the method used to develop the plan d. definitions of key words or a glossary e. a statement about corporate ownership of the policy. 	<p>All Human resources policies will be reviewed prior to inclusion on the Council Intranet site 'Wilson'. The last review date and scheduled next review date will be added to all policy documents for Human Resources</p>	<p>EEO Policy will be reviewed by February 2008.</p>	<p>Executive Services</p>	<p>Finalised. Policy completed and reported to February 2008 Consultative Committee meeting. Policy will be reported to August 2008 Council meeting for adoption as part of annual review of all Council policies.</p>
<p>30. Council should not appoint councillors as members of its consultative committee.</p>	<p>Consultative Committee informed of findings of DLG – Promoting Better Practice Review Matter will be reported to Council in June.</p>	<p>June 2006</p>	<p>Executive Services</p>	<p>Finalised. No Councillors appointed to Consultative Committee.</p>
<p>31. Council should develop a workforce strategy to address its future employment needs, particularly in relation to the age of its workforce and staff availability.</p>	<p>Review and analysis of demographics of Councils workforce Survey of workforce regarding their attitude to flexible work options for mature aged workers. Analysis and recommendation report submitted to Executive Group from survey and additional Best Practice activities in relation to an aging workforce.</p>	<p>April 2006 May 2006 February 2008</p>	<p>Executive Services</p>	<p>Finalised. Survey undertaken in August 2007. Results have been provided to Exec Group and Council staff. Recommendations considered by the Executive Group.</p>