



INNER WEST COUNCIL

TERMS OF REFERENCE

HOUSING AND AFFORDABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(Adopted on 7th February 2019)

1. Scope

Advisory Committees provide advice, share relevant information and facilitate partnerships to support Council's decision-making and actions in alignment with Council's Community Engagement Framework.

2. Housing Affordability

As a commonly used rule of thumb, housing is considered to be affordable where households pay no more than 30% of their gross household income on their rent or mortgage payments. This is often regarded as the point at which such households are at risk of having insufficient income to meet other living costs, and deemed to be in 'housing stress'. Those paying more than 50% of gross income are regarded as being in 'severe housing stress'. Affordable housing is a basic need and an essential element of an inclusive, diverse and sustainable city.

3. Purpose Statement

The purpose of all advisory committees is to support Council to implement the Community Strategic Plan - *Our Inner West 2036* through initiatives outlined in Council's *Delivery Program* and actions outlined in Council's annual *Operational Plan and Budget*. Advisory committees also contribute to the Community Strategic Plan principle of working together in a way that is creative, caring and just.

The scope of the Housing and Affordability Advisory Committee is to:

- Monitor and promote the implementation of Council's Affordable Housing Policy and other relevant policies and plans related to affordable housing for very low, low and moderate income households, including essential workers, boarding house residents, homeless people and others experiencing housing stress;
- Serve as a resource for Council in relation to the housing market, trends and community impacts, including supporting access to and opportunities for affordable, sustainable and accessible housing options where relevant;
- Suggestions on improving the development of housing options that support the retention of a diverse and inclusive community and an accessible and sustainable place to live;

- Assist in the development of programs and initiatives to highlight the importance of housing to the wellbeing and dynamism of the community.

The Advisory Committee's role will be to assist Council to develop its policies, plans, programs and services by providing contributions to and feedback on:

- Policy, research and priorities relating to the housing market and trends, and their impacts on the community, including the provision of appropriate, affordable housing and related opportunities as well as identification of service gaps;
- Joint opportunities with State and Federal agencies, peak housing bodies and community housing providers;
- Partnership opportunities with key stakeholders regarding best practice models for affordable, sustainable, accessible, diverse and inclusive housing;
- Implementation of policy;
- Activities, forums, roundtables, projects, programs and events to encourage delivery of affordable and sustainable housing options for the community.

4. Community Engagement Framework

All of Council's Local Democracy Groups including Advisory Committees, working groups and other forums are part of Council's Community Engagement Framework, helping to strengthen local participatory democracy. The Community Engagement Framework guides how Council will engage so that a broad range of perspectives are sought and the community has a strong voice in Council's decision-making. Council engages the community in a range of ways including on specific projects. Members of Local Democracy Groups may also contribute input to specific engagements as individuals.

Effective engagement will:

- ensure community needs and expectations are understood and reflected in the decisions and actions of Council;
- result in better, more sustainable decisions;
- build trust and improve accountability through transparency of decision-making;
- value local knowledge and foster local problem-solving;
- improve understanding of Council's planning, prioritising and resourcing;
- identify critical issues and opportunities early;
- optimise use of limited resources and maximise efficient resource allocation.

5. Code of Conduct Applies to Members

The Code of Conduct applying to member can be accessed here:

www.olg.nsw.gov.au/strengthening-local-government/conduct-and-governance/model-code-of-conduct

6. Timing of Meetings

The Advisory Committee will meet a minimum of four times annually in the Ashfield Service Centre, 260 Liverpool Road, Ashfield NSW 2131. The day and time of these meetings is to be determined.

7. Membership and Roles

Community members are selected by a panel of Inner West Council Group Managers following an Expression of Interest process.

Members appoint a Chairperson at their first meeting. Council encourages community members to chair meetings. If the elected Chairperson is absent, members elect a Chairperson for that meeting. If a member resigns, a replacement will be recruited.

Councillors are welcomed members and are encouraged to attend meetings of Advisory Committees, working groups or forums. Because Councillors are final decision-makers on the elected Council, they are not eligible to propose motions or vote on recommendations at Advisory Committee meetings; however their knowledge, opinion and input are always welcome.

One or more Council staff members will be appointed as conveners of the Advisory Committee. The convener will develop the agenda in consultation with members, attend meetings, advise members about Council policy where relevant and take notes of recommendations resulting from agenda items.

8. Quorum

Although Advisory Committees are not decision-making bodies, a quorum is required for recommendations. The quorum for meetings is 50% plus 1 of all current members appointed to the Housing and Affordability Advisory Committee.

9. Meeting Principles

Members are expected to:

- participate in discussions and offer opinions and knowledge
- treat others with respect and have due regard to the opinions, rights and responsibilities of others
- act with integrity
- attend each meeting where practical
- declare conflicts of interest
- maintain the confidentiality of information where relevant

10. Agendas

Agendas will be circulated to members one week prior to the meeting. Council may refer items to Advisory Committees for advice/recommendation by resolution.

11. Media

The Mayor and the General Manager are the designated media spokespeople for Council in accordance with Council's Media Policy. Advisory Committee, Working Group and Business Forum members may speak to the media about their own views but must not purport to represent Council.

12. Reporting and Transparency

A meeting summary will be published on Council's website within seven days of each meeting, referred to the relevant Group Manager and circulated to members.

Recommendations requiring a Council decision and advice requested by Council are reported through a bi-monthly Local Democracy report at the fourth Tuesday Council meetings of March, May, July, September and November.

13. Review

Council will undertake an interim review of the Advisory Committee structure after one year of operation and a full review at the end of Council term. The review will be reported to Council.

14. Term

The Advisory Committee will function for the remainder of the elected Council term i.e. September 2020. The new elected Council will determine Advisory Committee requirements for their term.

