



Better Practice Review

Shire of Broome

2016

Department of Local Government and Communities

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PART I – BETTER PRACTICE REVIEW

The Local Government Better Practice Review (BPR) Program is an initiative undertaken by the Department of Local Government and Communities (Department) to recognise and promote good practice in Western Australian country local governments. The BPR Program is part of the State Government's Country Local Government Fund (CLGF) Capacity Building Program.

The BPR Program involves a review team assigned to work closely with local governments to review key areas of that local government's activities and operations.

Program Objectives

The BPR Program has been designed to acknowledge areas of better practice whilst encouraging improvement in the way local governments conduct their activities to ensure good governance and build the capacity of the local government sector.

The objectives of the program are to:

- Generate momentum for a culture of continuous improvement and greater compliance across the local government sector.
- Promote good governance and ethical regulation.
- Identify and share innovation and best practice in the local government sector.
- Act as a 'health check' by providing departmental advice and support to local governments that may be experiencing operational problems.

Reporting of a BPR

Through the local government completed self-assessment checklist and the collection and collation of additional relevant information prior to an onsite review, the review team will summarise key findings in the areas of:

- Governance
- Planning and Regulatory functions
- Plan for the Future (strategic and corporate planning)
- Assets and Finance
- Workforce planning and Human Resource (HR) management
- Community and Consultation

The onsite visit can take anywhere between one to five days, depending on the size and location of the local government and the scope of the findings. The onsite review is a key component of a BPR as it presents the review team with an opportunity to further expand upon the knowledge gained from reviewing the local government's documents, which in turn assists in analysing and reporting on the above mentioned areas.

The report aims to highlight areas where a local government is demonstrating better practice, as well as providing constructive feedback on addressing any areas for further development. Where appropriate, the areas recognised as requiring further development will feature suggested recommendations that the local government can aim to address through a documented action plan.

Although the report will address some legislative requirements, it's important to note that this is not solely a compliance exercise, and feedback focuses on building the capacity of the organisation to achieve sector standard across a range of functions and operations.

Implementation

The local government has the opportunity to provide commentary and feedback on any findings of the review and/or a response to each area of the report, ensuring the report captures an accurate reflection of the local government. In particular it is requested that the local government review and complete the draft action plan in this report which identifies recommendations for the areas for further development.

PART II – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A BPR took place at the Shire of Broome (Shire) in May 2016. The review team wishes to thank Shire President Ron Johnston, former Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Kenn Donohoe, all staff and elected members for their cooperation and participation in the BPR and for providing valuable information on the Shire's practices and procedures.

This report identifies areas of better practice, strengths and areas for further development under the headings of Governance; Planning and Regulatory; Plan for the Future; Assets and Finance; Workforce Planning and Human Resource Management; and Community and Consultation.

The review found that the Shire is a high-performing local government which functions well; displaying a positive organisational culture, good governance and an emphasis on continuous improvement and innovation across all parts of the organisation. Key documents of the Shire including its various plans, policies and procedures are of an overall high standard and display a number of elements of good and better practice. Other strengths of the Shire relate to its activities in community engagement and development; good financial management; the application of quality organisation-wide integrated planning and a commitment to future-proofing the organisation through the documentation of a variety of practices, procedures and policies, introduction of various human resource and workforce management strategies and the use of innovative and new technologies.

Although the Shire is performing well, it should be noted there is still room for improvement, and accordingly, areas for further development have been identified through this report. While these are relatively minimal, they are identified mainly in regards to the Shire's documentation of policies and/or procedures; the review of key documents; a need to ensure consistency and clarity across documentation, and the need to continue making information available to the community to promote transparency, openness and accountability across the Shire's operations. Where not already commenced, the Shire should consider addressing the areas of further development identified within this report, and where already underway, continue progressing improvements as it seeks to continue achieving good practice, and good governance, into the future.

The Shire is commended for the quality and scope of work it has done to date, in addition to the work, and improvements, it looks to undertake, going forward.

PART III – ABOUT THE SHIRE OF BROOME

The Shire of Broome covers a land area of just under 55,000 square kilometres (km) in Western Australia's (WA) remote Kimberley region. It is located approximately 2,200 km north of Perth and just over 1,800 km west of Darwin in the Northern Territory. The Shire's location in the Kimberley is classified as 'very remote' Australia, in line with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Remoteness Structure classification.



In addition to the Shire, the Kimberley region is made up of three other local governments which include the shires of Derby-West Kimberley, Halls Creek and Wyndham-East Kimberley. These local governments work closely together through a number of various strategic alliances, most notably through the Kimberley Regional Collaborative Group and its various projects. Through the region, the Shire is often seen as a 'regional' leader; contributing to, and guiding, a number of major projects within its own region and across the wider local government sector.

A result of a combination of factors, the Shire experiences a relatively unique population structure; Specifically it is a comparably dynamic and transient population, has a younger age structure with a median age of 32 (as of 30 June 2015, ABS catalogue 3235.0) and a higher Aboriginal population (31% at the 2011 Census); when compared to the rest of the state. The most recent estimated resident population (ERP) figures from the ABS (catalogue 3218.0) put the Shire's population at 17,308 persons as of 30 June 2015, a population increase of 0.4% from June 2014 (revised). While this is a relatively small increase across the 12-month period, the same ERP figures indicate that two Kimberley local governments experienced slight population decline over this period (Derby-West Kimberley and Halls Creek) and the Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley experienced no percentage change in population. ERP figures also indicate that the Shire's population has grown by 12.3% (or 1892 persons) since June 2010.

The Shire and specifically, the town of Broome (and Kimberley region itself) is a major tourist destination due to its natural environment, heritage and pearling industry for example. Accordingly,

the tourism industry and associated services are major industries within the Shire. Other key industries include pearling, fishing, aquaculture, mining and exploration, logistics and agriculture.

Recently, the town of Broome was announced as one of nine regional growth centres through the State Government's Regional Centres Development Plan's (RCDP) initiative. The RCDP initiative seeks to build the capacity of regional centres, encouraging key regional communities to plan and prepare for growth and development through the establishment of strategic economic partnerships known as Growth Plan Partnerships. The partnerships provide a forum for community, government and private sector stakeholders to work together to shape the regional centres economic future. Through the RCDP, the Shire has, and will, receive additional funding and project assistance to undertake projects in collaboration with key stakeholders, to assist in building Broome as a regional growth centre. The Shire, in partnership with these same key stakeholders, has been working towards the completion of the Broome Growth Plan; a document which will form a collective vision for the future of Broome, and guide growth accordingly.

PART IV – REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

1. Governance

Introduction

Corporate governance is important because it enhances organisational performance; manages and minimises risks; increases the confidence of the community and the local government sector; ensures that the organisation is meeting its legal and ethical obligations; and assists in the prevention and detection of dishonest or unethical behaviour.

A local government, having various obligations put upon it by an Act of Parliament to ‘provide for the good government of persons in its district’, must have at its core sound governance, decision making and accountability principles.

Legislative and policy framework

- *Local Government Act 1995 (the Act)*
- *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*
- *Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996*
- *Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996*
- *Local Government (Rules of Conduct) Regulations 2007*
- *State Records Act 2000*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1992*
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003*

Areas of Better Practice

The Shire’s governance practices were considered during the review and as a result of the assessment process the following has been identified as demonstrating better practice:

Area of Better Practice	Why the initiative is considered Better Practice
Organisational culture/workforce values and ethics	<p>A recurring theme in discussions with the Shire during the onsite visit was the importance it placed on open communication lines and staff participation for building a motivated and engaged workforce and a strong organisational culture. The review found that the Shire is actively achieving these outcomes. It has a positive organisational culture, underpinned by strong leadership and effective communication throughout the organisation.</p> <p>Helping to build a good workplace culture, staff from across the Shire come together on a regular basis through various meetings, networks and groups to discuss matters of strategic and operational significance; share information and contribute to organisational goals. These groups include the Shire’s executive management group, management coordination group, workforce enhancement network and technical advisory groups. Regular and purposeful meetings actively contribute to building a positive organisational culture, by ensuring that staff are actively engaged with each other, and the Shire’s decision making processes.</p>

	<p>In addition to staff culture, is also apparent that a good working relationship exists between the Shire's administration and its Council. It is evident that this relationship is one based on mutual respect and a clear understanding of each entity's role within the local government — testament to the strong leadership and positive organisational culture at the Shire.</p>
<p>Customer service and complaints handling</p>	<p>The Shire has a clear set of customer service standards which have been articulated in a Customer Service Charter. A Customer Service Charter is a useful tool to define a local governments service delivery standards, provide information on what community members should come to expect when dealing with a local government and the process on how requests, feedback or complaints are dealt with. The Shire's charter achieves this, clearly outlining its commitment to delivering quality customer service. It is made available to the public via the Shire's website and through a hard-copy brochure at the administration office.</p> <p>Complementing the charter, the Shire also has a good complaints management/handling policy. It includes all best practice recommendations for a complaints handling policy including that it adequately defines a complaint as opposed to a service request and sets out guidelines and parameters for the handling of complaints. It also includes timeframes for response. Supporting the policy, an operating procedure for complaint resolution has been developed to provide 'internal' operational guidelines for dealing with complaints.</p> <p>Together, these documents are a sound foundation for the Shire's customer service and complaints handling processes; demonstrating its commitment to providing a high level of quality customer service.</p>

While the above areas have been specifically identified as examples of better practice and a number of additional strengths are identified below; overall, the Shire was found to display a very level of high performance. Accordingly, while certain examples have been identified as either better practice or a strength, the Shire generally displays better practice elements across a wide range of its governance activities and operations and for this it is to be commended. Examples of such practice include:

- During the onsite visit, the review team observed the May 2016 Ordinary Meeting of Council and notes that the meeting ran well and finished within a reasonable timeframe. During the meeting, there was a good exchange of information between elected members (and the CEO and staff, where required) and overall, decisions were made in a timely and efficient manner, making for an effective and well-run meeting.
- As identified in the above better practice table (and apparent from the observed Council meeting) a good level of rapport and respect exists between elected members and staff. Demonstrating good practice, relationships and interactions between elected members and staff are clearly documented and articulated in both the Shire's Code of Conduct and various policies and procedures (such as Policy 1.1.5 'Formal Communications Policy – Elected Members and Staff').

- Procedures for public participation in Council meetings are well documented, including in the Shire's Standing Orders and through a comprehensive policy included on the Shire's website (policy 1.1.9 'Public Participation at Council and Electors Meetings'). The website also includes readily available and detailed information on petitions and public questions with templates, forms and guidelines.
- In addition to monthly Ordinary Council meetings, the Shire of Broome Council regularly comes together in various forums including through workshops, agenda forums and concept forums. The holding of workshops and forums is considered good practice as they are an effective way of providing elected members with detailed background information on matters which will be before them. This ensures that Council meetings are efficiently run and develops elected member knowledge and expertise in preparation for a Council Meeting. In line with recommended practice, as outlined in the Department's 'Operational Guideline Number 5 - Council Forums', the Shire has adopted a policy to provide for the conduct of its council workshops (Policy 1.2.13 'Forums of Council'). The policy clearly outlines the role and purpose of various forums or workshops including no decision making, declarations of interest, confidentiality and the role of presiding member.
- The Shire has developed a quality induction program for elected members, covering all information required for them to effectively enact their roles as elected representatives. Supporting the induction process, the Shire has developed an Induction Checklist to ensure that new elected members are provided with all resources, and information, required to undertake their roles.
- Complementing the induction program, the Shire has previously provided a comprehensive candidate information process prior to local government elections. Through this process, prospective elected members are essentially heavily "pre" inducted, and made aware of the role and responsibilities before considering nomination. Similar to the induction, the candidate information sessions cover a breadth of information including roles and responsibilities; the Shire's organisational structure and integrated planning and reporting. The Shire is commended the elected members induction, and candidate information programs. Together they provide prospective and/or new elected members with a well-rounded perspective on what is involved in being on Council.
- The Shire has a comprehensive array of policies within its policy manual. Overall, the policies are well-written and clearly understood. The Shire review its suite of policies as a matter of course every two years in line with the election cycle, and more regularly when required. The policies are laid-out in a consistent format and include all relevant information such as date of adoption, date of review, review responsibility, policy objective and other details such as applicable delegations and associated legislation. Having consistency in format and layout across policies is good practice. Supporting the Shire's efforts to ensure consistency across the policy manual and provide direction for the review process, it has developed both a policy (policy 1.1.2 'Policy Manual') and Business Operating Procedure ('Policy Manual Updates') setting out how it will review, update and layout its policies.

- In addition to policy manuals, local governments are increasingly encouraged to develop manuals for operational policies and/or procedures to assist in differentiating Council policies from administrative ones and support the separation of powers as defined by the Act and Regulations. Demonstrating good practice, the Shire has developed a Business Operating Procedure (BOP) manual as a place where it keeps a comprehensive set of BOPs (i.e. internal/administrative procedures/policies). As with the policy manual, the Shire's BOPs are reviewed on a regular basis and set out in a consistent manner; with a procedure for their update, review and layout outlined within its own BOP document, 'Business Operating Procedure Manual Updates'. While the Shire is commended for the overall quality of documentation it has, it should be noted that throughout the review process some minor inconsistencies have been identified within, and between the policies and BOPs. To ensure that documents remain relevant, usable and easily understood, it is important that the Shire properly updates, aligns and references its documents. Where relevant, examples of these inconsistencies/discrepancies will be identified as areas of further development within this report.
- As outlined by the *State Records Act 2000*, local governments are required to keep full and accurate records of their activities. The Shire is fully compliant with all legislative recordkeeping requirements and has developed a good recordkeeping framework to support it in meeting these requirements. Within its recordkeeping framework, the Shire has developed a records keeping policy, recordkeeping plan and two recordkeeping BOPs. It is evident that the Shire places an emphasis on a whole of organisation approach to recordkeeping. Notably, its 'Records Induction and Training' BOP identifies that all staff at the Shire will undergo regular recordkeeping training, while the 'Records Management' policy outlines that recordkeeping requirements apply to all staff, elected members and contractors.
- Organisational risk management involves the systematic identification, analysis, evaluation, control and monitoring of risks. While risk cannot be entirely eliminated, local governments are encouraged to establish risk-aware cultures and establish structures, processes and controls to effectively reduce risk. The Shire's 2014 review of systems and procedures (as required by Regulation 17 of the *Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996*) identified a number of areas for improvement in its risk management processes and procedures; the majority of which are now complete. Most recently, Council endorsed the Risk Management Strategy and procedures (November 2016). Following this, the Shire now has a comprehensive risk management framework, including its Risk Management Policy (policy 1.2.11). Together, the framework clearly outlines how the Shire seeks to manage risk and its commitment to developing a risk aware organisation.
- Further to this, all staff reports to Council meetings now include risk implications. This is important for ensuring that elected members clearly understand the relevant risks and implications of their decisions and recognised good practice for a strategic meeting focus as identified in the Department's 'A Guide to Meetings'.

- The Shire has been actively seeking to develop a robust legislative compliance framework, to ensure that it actively meets, and complies, with all legislative requirements placed upon it. Since May 2016, the Shire has had in place a legislative compliance policy. The policy is a good document which clearly articulates Council's commitment to having appropriate structures and processes in place to achieve legislative requirements. The policy is supported by an organisational/governance calendar to ensure the Shire is meeting its legislative requirement throughout the year. According to the November 2016 Ordinary Council meeting minutes on the Shire's Regulation 17 review, it has also developed a BOP for monitoring and reporting procedures for legislative compliance. It is evident that the Shire has developed a quality framework in respect to legislative compliance.
- Similar to its approach in developing a quality legislative compliance framework, the Shire has actively sought to develop a quality internal control framework. During 2015, Council endorsed the Shire's Internal Control policy (policy 1.1.10) to "provide a framework for the establishment of documented internal controls, that are implemented based on risk management policies and principles". The policy is supported by the comprehensive procedure, 'Internal Control' BOP 1.3.3. The BOP effectively outlines the Shire's commitment to having appropriate and effective controls in place and recognises the various controls in place across the organisation. Demonstrating a whole of organisation approach to internal control and risk minimisation, the BOP clearly identifies that it is each employee's responsibility to ensure that appropriate and effective controls are maintained.
- Overall, the Shire is commended for the quality and scope of work it has undertaken in respect to introducing a wide range of business improvements across the three key compliance areas of risk management, internal control and legislative compliance.

Areas for Further Development

As a result of the assessment process the following areas were identified for further development:

- As required by section 5.103 of the Act, the Shire has developed a Code of Conduct (Code) for elected members, staff and committee members. Upon commencement with the Shire, new employees are required to sign a statement, acknowledging that they have read, understand and agree to abide by the Code; however the same does not apply to elected members and committee members. During onsite discussions, the Shire advised that new elected members are provided with a document to sign, stating that they have received various documents, one of which is the Code (but also includes other documents such as the Annual Report and IPR documents). Committee members are given a presentation on the Code, but not provided with a copy. Both of these practices are sufficient and do not contravene any legislative requirements but could be enhanced. To achieve better practice (and align with general practice across the sector) the Shire should consider introducing formal written acknowledgment of the Code by **all** employees, elected members and committee members.
- Additionally, during the onsite visit the Shire indicated it was looking to review/update its Code of Conduct to ensure it was reflective of current legislative requirements; specifically, to include

new detail pertaining to gifts such as online gift and travel register requirements. The Shire should continue working towards this in addition to considering the above.

- Under Section 5.8 of the Act, local governments may establish advisory committees to assist Council in discharging its operations and duties. In accordance with the Act, the Shire has established various advisory committees to Council (e.g. the Audit Committee and Economic Development Advisory Committee). Each of the committees has its own Terms of Reference (TOR) setting out its membership, purpose, establishment and other relevant legislative requirements — all of which are included within a comprehensive Committee Booklet (noting the committee booklet also includes TOR for working groups). While this is a good document, the TOR for committees are not readily available to the community; either through the agenda or minutes of each committee, or elsewhere on the Shire's website.
- While not a legislative requirement, the provision of such information is recommend practice. It promotes community awareness of, and enhances transparency around, the business of Council; and further is a relatively common practice across the sector. Accordingly, in its efforts to achieve better practice, the Shire should consider including this information on its website (whether through the Committee Booklet or otherwise). This is especially relevant given that the Shire's website currently includes a policy 'Advisory Committees'; but states it has been rescinded and replaced by the committees booklet.
- Business continuity planning forms part of risk management processes. It enables a local government's internal and external services to quickly recover from a range of disasters and additionally, allows a local government to document how it will prevent, prepare for, respond to, manage and recover from the impacts of unforeseen events. The Shire has been working on a draft Business Continuity Plan and is encouraged to work towards finalising a plan. Ensuring that once complete, it links to the Shire's existing organisational risk management and where applicable, it's local emergency management/recovery framework.
- While the May 2016 Council meeting attended by the review team was well run, a number of requests for 'clarifications' were made throughout the meeting by some elected members. For the most part such requests are not problematic, but it should be noted that in some cases, they can cause to slow down the meeting and distract from the strategic decision making process. As already identified, the Shire's elected members and staff regularly come together as a group over the course of a month, outside the formal meeting structure to discuss council business (namely through agenda briefings and workshops). As outlined in Operational Guideline 5, forums provide opportunities for elected members to discuss ideas and strategies, seek clarification and 'gain maximum knowledge and understanding of any issue', thereby allowing the ordinary meeting to focus on the decision making needs of the local government. Further, the Shire provides other avenues for elected members to pose questions outside of the meeting and/or forum/workshop structure (such as its COUHELP email system). Accordingly, elected members should be encouraged to use these avenues for queries, clarifications and for seeking technical information, where possible.

- As already identified, the Shire has well developed procurement and tendering guidelines. During the onsite visit, the review team and Shire discussed its procedures for monitoring the performance of contractors and noted that while they are undertaken on a case-by-case basis and not necessarily documented they are deemed to be satisfactory. Through these conversations, it was discussed that in addition to monitoring contracts, one way local governments can ensure contractual arrangements are appropriately established and scrutinised, is through the thorough and proper induction of contractors. The Shire advised it was working towards developing a comprehensive contractor management/induction project; including reviewing its current 'Contractor Management' BOP and seeking to formalise a contractor induction program. Accordingly, it is encouraged to continue working towards this.
- If not already considered, as part of this process the Shire may wish to consider providing contractors with a copy of its Code of Conduct and request formal acknowledgment of it, ensuring all contractors are aware of the ethical standards and conduct expected of them when representing the Shire (in the same way employees are). A similar approach to this is the development of a Business Ethics Statement. In recent years as a result of various findings of the Corruption and Crime Commission, local governments are increasingly encouraged to develop such statements. Business Ethics Statements act to guide external parties (such as suppliers and contractors) on the expected standards and conduct required when dealing with a local government, or acting on its behalf. The Shire is encouraged to consider developing a Business Ethics Statement as it seeks to achieve better practice.

The Shire's response

The Shire is currently undertaking a Business Operating Procedure (BOP) review which should address the identified issue relating to inconsistencies within and between policies and BOP's.

The Code of Conduct is currently under review with alterations introduced to reflect changes pertaining to gift disclosures. Additionally, induction processes will be enhanced to include formal written acknowledgment of the Code of Conduct by all employees, elected members and committee members.

Terms of Reference documents for Council Committee's will be made available to the public via a Committee Booklet published on the Shire website. The booklet will also be available to inspect at the Shire Administration Office and Library.

A Business Continuity Plan is still under development and will be finalised in the near future. Once finalised, scenario testing will occur to ensure adequate capacity and capability is available and that the document links to current risk and local emergency management plans.

Elected members are proactively encouraged to utilise the available communication channels to seek clarification on issues. In addition to workshops and forums Councillors are provided with various communication channels to ensure that any clarification can occur prior to meetings.

During the 2016/17 budget cycle a new Procurement Coordinator position was approved. While we are yet to fill this position it was introduced to ensure our procurement and tendering capabilities were

enhanced. Contractor and volunteer Induction is a core responsibility of the role in conjunction with developing panels of pre-qualified suppliers. The Shire recently endorsed the Contractor and Volunteer Induction BOP and are working towards an implementation plan to ensure that once implemented it has continued success.

The Shire will consider developing a Business Ethics Statement as part of its Contractor and Volunteer Induction program to ensure better practice.

2. Planning and Regulatory Functions

Introduction

Local governments carry out a number of land-use planning and regulatory functions as well as emergency management functions; the majority of which are enacted by various State Government legislation. A number of these functions are also exercised through relevant local laws, planning schemes and local government policies. The way in which these functions are carried out by a local government, in line with appropriate legislation and in an efficient and effective manner, is important for achieving a wide range of social, economic and environmental outcomes.

Legislative and policy framework

- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *Planning and Development Act 2005*
- *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*
- *Health Act 1911*
- *Dog Act 1976*
- *Dog Regulations 1976*
- *Cat Act 2011*
- *Cat Regulations 2012*
- *Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990*
- *Building Regulations 2012*
- *Emergency Management Act 2005*

Areas of Better Practice

The way in which the Shire carries out its planning and regulatory functions was considered during the review and the following examples identified as demonstrating better practice:

Area of Better Practice	Why the initiative is considered Better Practice
Development Control Unit	<p>As outlined in the Act, a local government may delegate the exercise of its powers or discharge of duties (where permitted) to the CEO who may sub-delegate to relevant employees. The use of delegated authority for staff to determine development applications (DAs) is an example of this type of delegation and is considered to be a crucial component for enabling an efficient and effective regulatory approval system (WALGA, 2015 'Guide for Local Government Planning Delegation').</p> <p>As with many local governments of its size, the Shire has established a system of delegation whereby the determination of certain DAs is sub-delegated to planning staff, in this case the Director Development Services and Statutory Planning Coordinator. To support this function, the Shire has established a Development Control Unit (DCU). It is noted that while the concept of a DCU itself is not unique to the Shire, various practices associated with the Shire's DCU, including its scope (not only</p>

	<p>focusing on the approval of DAs) and the level of transparency associated with its operations, represent examples of better practice. Namely;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DCU brings together a number of key staff from across the organisation including building, health, engineering, rangers and other areas (such as staff involved with events), as required. Staff come together to discuss and provide input not only on DAs, but other permits, licences and event applications. Facilitating conversations across different areas of the organisation which may otherwise not happen, this demonstrates a positive approach to working across business areas, sharing information and breaking down workplace 'silos'. • Ensuring that the role and purpose of the DCU is clearly articulated and understood, the Shire has developed a policy to guide its operations — the DCU Operative Policy. While it is largely procedural based, rather than a policy as such, it does effectively outline the way in which the DCU functions and who is involved. This creates transparency and confidence in the Shire's practices and assures the Council and community, that DAs are being appropriately and consistently determined under delegated authority. • Further enhancing the transparency of the DCU's operations, minutes from the meetings are made available on the Shire website. Minutes include details on each type of application received and discussed at each meeting, including comments/outcomes of applications such as referral to Council (or other agencies where applicable); advertising and/or further information required.
Compliance policies	<p>According to the WA Department of Health, it is recommended good practice for enforcement agencies to adopt a strategic approach to the application of legislative enforcement provisions — something it notes can be achieved through the implementation of an appropriate compliance and enforcement policy and/or strategy (www.health.wa.gov.au 'Compliance and Enforcement of Food Legislation in WA'). While this specific reference applies to food legislation, the same can be said for any other activity as a means to ensure consistency, clarity and transparency in regards to enforcing compliance.</p> <p>Demonstrating this approach to its enforcement activities, the Shire has developed two comprehensive policies, both endorsed by Council, which deal with compliance and enforcement; one for planning (in line with its Local Planning Scheme) and the other for food industry compliance and enforcement (as per the <i>Food Act 2008</i>).</p> <p>While these policies deal with different types of activities, both clearly set out the processes undertaken by the Shire to enforce compliance with appropriate guiding legislation and provide a quality framework for the</p>

	Shire to carry out its enforcement activities in a transparent, consistent and fair manner.
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As a result of the assessment process a number of additional strengths were found:

- As noted above, the appropriate and effective use of delegated authority to determine planning applications is good practice for a number of reasons, including that it allows elected members to focus on more strategic matters, in line with their roles and obligations as defined by the Act. In line with this, almost all (*95%) of the DAs lodged with the Shire on an annual basis are dealt with under delegated authority (* as reported to the review team, by the Shire).
- Planning and regulatory services, including the provision of building and/or development advice, and compliance and enforcement activities, are one of the main ways in which a local government interacts with its community on a regular basis. For this reason, good customer service in respect to these services is key to an effective planning and regulatory system. The Shire demonstrates a commitment to providing a good level of customer service with an emphasis on improving and streamlining its overall customer service experience. By way of example, the Shire has sought to actively upskill its front-line customer service staff to more efficiently deal with technical queries in regards to both planning and building applications.
- Further to this, recently introduced mobility based software for rangers has enabled complaints and/or enquiries to be responded to, in real time, by rangers in the field ensuring urgent and important matters are now being dealt with more efficiently than in the past. The Shire is commended for seeking to improve and enhance its customer service experience and encouraged to continue in its efforts to provide quality customer service.
- The Shire's key land use planning documents are its Local Planning Scheme No.6 and the Shire of Broome Local Planning Strategy. Local Planning Scheme No.6 came into effect in early 2015 and was the first to cover the whole of the Shire, resulting in various changes to planning requirements. As a result of this, and demonstrating a proactive and positive approach to keeping the community informed and updated the Shire developed a number of guidance notes to provide useful and relevant information pertaining to the new scheme which are available on its website.
- The Shire also provides a good amount of general, easy-to-understand information relating to planning, building and other regulatory processes; made available through both its website and in hard-copy format at the administration centre. For example, it has produced checklists to assist the community with planning/building such as the 'How to submit a Planning Application' checklist; numerous information/fact sheets on requirements, restrictions and general issues pertaining to building and development (such as those relating to home occupations, swimming pools and fences) and forms for building/planning permits/applications. Overall, it is evident the Shire seeks to provide its community with good quality information and a high level of customer service relating to various development services.

- Local governments across the state are faced with a number of different emergencies that require appropriate management to enhance community resilience and preparedness. Accordingly, local governments play a critical role in emergency management and as required by the *Emergency Management Act 2005*, have obligations and functions placed upon them. These functions include ensuring that effective and appropriate Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) are prepared and maintained; managing recovery following an emergency and the establishment of Local Emergency Management Committee/s (LEMC) for the district. In line with these requirements, the Shire has prepared a set of LEMA and established a LEMC, which is supported by a comprehensive business plan.
- As a result of the Shire's location in one of the more cyclone-prone areas of Australia, it also undertakes various initiatives to ensure the community is prepared for and aware of, the risks associated with cyclone season. For example, the Shire's website includes advice for being prepared for cyclones and provides links to Bureau of Meteorology material; while information sheets and other resources are available at the Shire administration centre. Providing further support to the community in preparing for potential cyclones, the Shire offers a free 'pre-cyclone clean up' occurring on an annual basis just prior to cyclone season. This is a good community initiative. Additionally, from an "internal"/organisational perspective, the Shire's Occupational Safety and Health induction for new employees includes a presentation on cyclones.

Areas for Further Development

As a result of the assessment process the following areas were identified for further development:

- As noted, the Shire plays an important role in keeping its community informed and updated on the risks associated with cyclones. While this may be the case, during the onsite visit, staff at the Shire discussed the fact they felt it could potentially do more in respect to improving community preparedness, resilience and general awareness of cyclones. Accordingly, the Shire noted it had been considering undertaking a review/reassessing its emergency management documents, procedures, protocols and community resources to ensure all emergencies, particularly cyclones, were appropriately addressed. During these discussions, the review team advised the Shire that some neighbouring local governments had good quality resources and procedures in place in respect to cyclone preparedness and response and accordingly, could provide a useful resource for the Shire in seeking to assess its current practices. The review team commends the Shire for its efforts in seeking to achieve continuous improvement in emergency management and encourages it to work closely with neighbouring local governments to achieve this, as it sees fit.
- As previously stated, the Shire has appropriate LEMA in place and an active LEMC. While a copy of the Shire's LEMAs are available at the administration centre for public viewing (in compliance with s43 of the *Emergency Management Act 2005*), they are not available on the Shire's website, in line with recommended practice of the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC). According to the SEMC website "it is a requirement for each local government in Western Australia to publish LEMAs on their website"

(www.semc.wa.gov.au/portal/districtemergency). The SEMC Local Government Preparedness and Annual Reporting document also requires this through part 5b which requests local governments provide a link to the LEMA on the website. In line with this, the Shire should update its website to include a stand-alone copy of its LEMA.

- With approximately 95% of DAs determined by staff under delegated authority, those that come before Council for decision are generally of a complex and/or contentious nature. To ensure that appropriate decisions are made when dealing with such applications, it is imperative that elected members have a sound understanding of their quasi-judicial role under the *Planning and Development Act 2005*. This is very important in circumstances where a decision may be contemplated by Council that would go against the advice of professional planning officers (as was the case at the May 2016 meeting attended by the review team). Elected members need to understand the risk associated with supporting planning proposals that are inconsistent with the Local Planning Scheme. Such decisions can create undesirable precedents and the perception that a local governments land use planning documents are given little weight, potentially leading to uncertainty in future investment by developers and other negative consequences. If the Shire feels this is currently an issue, or has the potential to be into the future, consideration should be given to elected members undertaking some sort of training in the application of planning legislation.

The Shire's response

The Shire is taking steps to improve its emergency management function and secure additional resources to do so, by applying for funding under the Natural Disaster Resilience Program and the All West Australian's Reducing Emergencies (AWARE) Program to employ an Emergency Management Officer for 12 months. This Emergency Management Officer will be tasked with implementing a number of improvements to the Shire's emergency management functions, including preparing community awareness materials. The Shire is also investigating the potential for a Community Emergency Services Manager position to be funded for the region by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

In the meantime, improvements in bush fire management processes are being implemented, and officers are looking at ways to achieve continuous improvement in the area of emergency management. The current version of the Shire's Local Emergency Management Arrangements will be uploaded to the Shire's website.

Regarding the planning matter presented to Council outlined above, substantial information was provided to Council prior to consideration of the matter regarding the implications should the officer's recommendation not be supported. Officers are not aware of any training that would specifically raise Councillors' awareness of the implications of making decisions that are not consistent with the Local Planning Scheme. If the Department is aware of any such training or is willing to provide it, we would be happy to consider arranging for it to be provided to Councillors.

BPR Team note: While the Department does not provide any training on the role of elected members in regards to town planning matters, WALGA provides a program of courses for elected members to increase their knowledge and understanding of town planning within local government.

3. Plan for the Future

Introduction

The 'Plan for the Future' (Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR)) requirements for local governments in Western Australia came into effect on 1 July 2013. As a result, all local governments are required to have in place a Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan, which together, form the 'Plan for the Future'.

Policy and legislative framework

- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*
- Integrated Planning and Reporting Advisory Standard (IPR Advisory Standard)
- Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and Guidelines (IPR Guidelines)

Review of the Shire's Plan for the Future framework

- The Shires Strategic Community Plan 2013–2033 was adopted by Council at its June 2013 meeting and the Corporate Business Plan in October 2013. As outlined in the IPR Advisory Standard, the Shire undertook a two-yearly desktop review of its Strategic Community Plan in 2015 with Council adopting, by absolute majority, the revised plan in February 2015. The updated version (February 2015) meets all regulatory requirements as outlined in the Act and *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*. Since this time, the Shire has also reviewed its Corporate Business Plan twice; once in February 2015 and most recently in June 2016, to ensure alignment with the revised Strategic Community Plan.
- The Act states that a strategic community plan should undergo a full review every four years and due to the "integrated" nature of IPR, a full corporate business plan review should also occur. In line with this requirement, the Shire will begin to undertake the major review of its plans during 2017/18. Accordingly, the following section will outline the Shire's strengths in regards to its current Plan for the Future framework (both its Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan) and areas for the Shire to consider when undertaking the development of a revised Strategic Community Plan and subsequent Corporate Business Plan revision.

Areas of Better Practice

The Shire's IPR practices were considered during the review and as a result of the assessment process the following is identified as an example of better practice:

Area of Better Practice	Why the initiative is considered Better Practice
Strategic direction and decision making	In line with the roles and responsibilities of elected members as outlined in the Act, it is important that council meetings (and the decisions made at them) have a strategic focus/are of a strategic nature. Key to this is elected members understanding the strategic implications of, and reasons for their decisions. The Departments 'A Guide to Meetings' states one way this can be achieved is by Council meeting agendas

	<p>demonstrating clear links to a local governments strategic/corporate planning documents (i.e. IPR).</p> <p>The Shire, through both its Council meeting agenda and staff reports, effectively does this, and accordingly demonstrates better practice in seeking to guide and elevate elected members decision making in respect to its strategic planning/IPR framework.</p> <p>Council meeting agendas are separated into “sections” in alignment with the Shire’s Strategic Community Plan goals and four priority statements — ‘Our People’; ‘Our Place’; ‘Our Prosperity’ and ‘Our Organisation’. Additionally, officer reports to Council include the strategic implications of each decision, identifying the strategic goals and outcomes which pertain to that report item. By clearly identifying strategic implications throughout the meeting agenda, the Shire’s overall strategic objectives (and ultimately those of the community, through the Strategic Community Plan) become a key part of the Councils decision making process. This promotes good governance, and is good IPR practice.</p>
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As already mentioned, the Shire demonstrates a number of strengths in IPR. These include:

- Staff at the Shire display a strong understanding on the role and purpose of IPR. Particularly, they demonstrate a good understanding on how IPR relates to their roles and duties and how it integrates with the services, activities and projects delivered. By way of example, staff are required to put together project briefs for proposed new projects (over \$8000) through the use of a project brief template. Significantly, the template requires staff to identify the proposed projects link to the strategic community and corporate business plans. This helps to ensure that all new projects being considered by the Shire are done so in relation, and reference to, the ‘Plan for the Future’ — this is good IPR practice and demonstrates an intermediate to advanced standard of IPR integration and application.
- The Shire currently reviews its Corporate Business Plan annually on a ‘rolling’ basis (i.e. one commencing with the current budget year then projected out across an additional four-year period from current/base year). By producing a rolling and evolving plan, elected members, staff and the community are provided with an accurate account of what the Shire has achieved to date, in addition to clearly understanding what it plans to deliver in future years. Given that the delivery of projects and programs are affected by available finances, shifting priorities and/or other external and internal factors (e.g. changing State or Federal Government funding arrangements, global economic conditions, staffing issues) it is good practice that an up-to-date and current plan is produced at each review. Through reviewing its plan on a rolling basis, the Shire clearly identifies its current position in relation to the delivery of projects and Council priorities for the period, and accordingly, communicates its direction for the year ahead to the local community.
- Section 5.53 of the Act states that a local government’s annual report is to contain “an overview of the plan for the future of the district...including major initiatives that are proposed to

commence or to continue in the next financial year". The Shire's Annual Report is utilised well to report its achievements in the context of its IPR framework, above and beyond minimum regulatory requirements. As required by legislation, the Shire's 2014-15 Annual Report included modifications made as a result of the 2015 desktop review of the Strategic Community Plan and clearly outlined all changes made to the Corporate Business Plan, identifying those actions which the Shire completed in the corresponding 12-month period. Further to just including modifications and completed actions, the Annual Report clearly outlines the Shire's activities for the year in the context of the strategies and outcomes of its Strategic Community Plan. The Shire's use of its Annual Report to update the community on its achievements meets an intermediate, to advanced standard of IPR practice, above the minimum statutory requirements.

- The reporting aspect of IPR is important as it provides assurance and a 'check' to the community and local government that 'Plan for the Future' objectives are being met. While the minimum requirement for reporting against IPR is legislated in terms of its inclusion in the annual report, local governments are increasingly encouraged to have in place additional reporting systems to track and monitor progress, and demonstrate success (or otherwise) in achieving desired Plan for the Future outcomes. While there is no one way in which a local government is expected to undertake this reporting, regular internal reporting is recommended and identified as good practice.
- Demonstrating this, the Shire uses the 'Interplan' system for tracking and monitoring its progress against Corporate Business Plan actions. Relevant information on actions is captured in the Interplan system and utilised to produce comprehensive reports. The reports are provided to Council on a monthly basis, through the council information bulletin. They contain a good level of detail on the progress made in achieving actions; including start and end dates, percentage complete and commentary around the status and progress of each action. While this is good practice, to achieve better practice the Shire may wish to consider somehow reporting this information back to the community, as well as the Council, on a regular (or semi-regular) basis, so that it is made aware of the progress being made against Corporate Business Plan strategies and actions. While it is not anticipated the Shire would provide the community with its entire Interplan report as it currently is, it may choose to simplify, or summarise this report in some way. For example, a common method of reporting across the sector is a monthly, or quarterly report in the Council meeting agenda that provides a summary on the progress and status of Corporate Business Plan actions and identifies key achievements for that period.
- At the core of good strategic community planning is effective and meaningful community engagement. Community engagement is crucial to determine local aspirations and needs and as such is a key component in developing/modifying a strategic community plan. As required by legislation, local governments are required to document the community engagement methods used in developing strategic community plans as well as the number or percentage of community members who participated in the engagement. It is evident that the Shire understands the importance of community engagement in this respect and accordingly in the

development of its Strategic Community Plan undertook a good level of community engagement; far exceeding the minimum requirements for community engagement as set by the IPR Advisory Standard.

- For the upcoming full review of the Strategic Community Plan, the Shire continues to demonstrate a commitment to undertaking a broad range of community engagement. It recently advertised an online survey, seeking feedback from the community on its aspirations for the future of the Shire; the outcomes of which will be included in the new plan. It is also using the results of large scale community consultation undertaken as part of the development of the Broome Growth Plan, and feedback received through the preparation of Local Planning Scheme 6 to inform the full review of the Strategic Community Plan. An additional benefit of including community feedback from the development of other plans is that it achieves integration and consistency across these plans. Notably, the IPR Guidelines and Advisory Standard identify an advanced level of IPR is achieved when community aspirations and council priorities integrate with **all** informing plans and strategies of a local government — including asset management, workforce, long term financial plans and other significant documents such as land use planning strategies. While this does represent an advanced standard of IPR, the Shire is well placed to work towards this and encouraged to continue in its efforts to achieve this standard of IPR practice.

Areas for consideration when reviewing the Shire's Plan for the Future framework

- Key to the IPR process is continuous improvement, whereby over time a local government's IPR performance matures beyond basic standard towards intermediate and advanced as outlined in the IPR Advisory Standard and IPR Guidelines. As indicated through this report, the Shire's current 'Plan for the Future' documents are of a good standard, meet all legislative requirements and demonstrate examples of good/better practice. Because of the relative level of maturity already evident in the Shire's IPR documents, there are less significant improvements to be made, which the Shire is commended for. However, there is still room for improvement, with the Shire in a good position to achieve an even more advanced standard of IPR practice. The recently updated IPR Guidelines and Advisory Standard (September 2016) provide advice as to how the Shire can move through the IPR 'continuum' and should be read in conjunction with the below suggestions.
- Legislation requires strategic community plans to have regard to, and be shaped by, a local government's current and likely future resourcing capabilities (Regulation 19C of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations*). The Shire's Strategic Community Plan currently meets these requirements as it includes commentary around the importance of resource allocation to deliver on initiatives and includes a resource table. While this is sufficient, as the Shire seeks to achieve a more advanced standard of IPR, in its revised Strategic Community Plan it may wish to consider incorporating a more detailed level of information on its resource capacity. Specifically, the revised plan could look to include more detail on the Shire's resources as identified in its informing strategies (workforce, asset management and long term financial plans). Note that the newly updated IPR Guidelines (September 2016) include further

detail on this, and in particular, state that a strategic community plan should show a local governments long term 10-year financial profile in addition to asset and workforce requirements and implications. Including more detail in respect to resources will see the Shire's Strategic Community Plan priorities based on realistic resourcing considerations and allow for a more open conversation with the community on what is achievable and what is not; ensuring it remains an effective and realistic planning document into the future.

- Following the Shire's desktop review of its Strategic Community Plan the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) within it were revised, removing the trends associated with them. For example, indicators such as 'Increasing community satisfaction with...' have been revised to state 'Community satisfaction with...' When undertaking the full review of its Strategic Community Plan the Shire is encouraged to provide trends to its success indicators, where relevant, to better assist it in measuring its progress towards achieving them.
- In the revision of its Corporate Business Plan, the Shire may wish to consider the development of operational key performance indicators to measure and monitor its operational performance against the plan. While the current version of the Corporate Business Plan includes a 'measuring outcomes' section, it is noted that these KPIs are from the Strategic Community Plan. The newly released IPR Guidelines identify the importance of including progress measures in both plans. But notably, distinguish high level community outcomes as success measures of a strategic community plan from operational performance measures of a corporate business plan.
- In line with the IPR Guidelines, the Shire's Corporate Business Plan (as available on its website) provides a four-year forecast statement of funding, extracted from the Long Term Financial Plan. Additionally, the Corporate Business Plan notes that the statement should be read in conjunction with the full Long Term Financial Plan, its underlying assumptions and projections. While this may be the case, the Long Term Financial Plan is currently not available from the Shire's website. When undertaking the review of its IPR documents, if the Shire wishes to direct readers to the Long Term Financial Plan, it should consider including it on its website as a supporting document of the Corporate Business Plan (other supporting documents have been included on the website as 'Corporate Plan Appendices' for example).

The Shire's response

The Shire recently undertook a rigorous full review of its Strategic Community Plan (SCP) and Corporate Business Plan (CBP) which was adopted by absolute majority in December 2016.

The 2016 full review of the SCP and CBP encompassed a community engagement process as stipulated within the IPR guidelines. Online and mail out surveys, face to face engagement at retail centres and stakeholder workshops were all utilised in an effort to maximise the reach and effectiveness of the SCP / CBP engagement process.

In addition to the engagement process undertaken during the full SCP / CBP review, the organisation is cognisant of the need to ensure community engagement and feedback is incorporated in the development and review of all associated informing strategies. A community engagement framework

is currently in operation and designed to ensure that all plans and strategies are exposed to a rigorous community review process prior to being presented to Council.

Resources have been allocated in the CBP for 2 and 4 yearly engagement processes to meet the IPR review requirements.

As part of the full IPR appraisal the organisation reviewed its Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) to provide an accurate forecast of the resources available to achieve Councils strategic objectives. While some work is still required to ensure that service levels mirror community expectations, Council is fully aware of the economic impediments facing the Shire and as such ensures realistic and achievable planning processes are implemented. The LTFP will be published to the Shire website following the latest review and update as part of the 17/18 budget process.

It is noted that the Shire's full review took place prior to the DLGC finalising the latest IPR Guidelines and as such some improvements have not been implemented. The organisation will work towards including suggested improvements, such as targeted KPI's, at its next review of the integrated planning documents.

The Shire's Interplan Report, containing progress updates against the actions contained within the Corporate Business Plan is presented to Council each month as part of the Shire Information Bulletin to Councillors. In an effort to enhance the communication of progress to the Community the organisation will investigate the appropriateness of presenting a quarterly agenda item to Council.

4. Asset and Finance

Introduction

Local governments deliver important community services. Effective financial management is crucial to the sustainable delivery of these services to meet community needs and aspirations. Further to this, fully costed asset management and long term financial planning is an essential component of integrated planning and reporting and is required to support and inform a local government's strategic planning and corporate business planning processes.

Legislative and policy framework

- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*
- *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*
- *Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996*
- *Rates and Charges (Rebates and Deferments) Act 1992*
- Asset Management Framework and Guidelines
- Long Term Financial Planning Framework and Guidelines
- Model Long Term Financial Plan
- Integrated Planning and Reporting Advisory Standard (IPR Advisory Standard)
- Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and Guidelines (IPR Guidelines)

Review of the Shire's asset and financial management

- The review assessed a range of the Shire's asset and financial management policies, processes and procedures including:
 - Asset Management Policy/plans
 - Long Term Financial Plan
 - Financial reports
 - Monthly Statement of Financial Activity
 - Rates and charges policies
 - Asset Disposal
 - Investment Policy
- Additionally, the review assessed the Shire's financial and asset sustainability ratios. The below commentary will discuss the Shire's ratio performance and its financial health as well as outlining areas of Better Practice, additional strengths and Areas for Further Development.
- As prescribed by Regulation 50 of the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*, the Shire is to report on seven asset and financial management ratios through its annual financial report. In analysing the Shire's financial sustainability ratios, trends over time provide a more accurate assessment than a single year's results. As at 30 June 2016, five out of seven of the Shire's reported ratios met the Department's recommended benchmark.
- It is noted that the Shire's ratios for 2014/2015 have been adjusted in its 2015/2016 Annual Financial Report as a result of the Shire considering earlier advice from the Department

regarding the inclusion of reimbursements and recoveries in its ratio calculations. The following commentary/analysis on the Shire's ratios is based on the figures provided in the 2015/16 Annual Financial Report, which became available after the onsite visit. Through its annual financial reports, the Shire has reported the following ratios, compared with industry benchmarks:

Statutory Ratios	Benchmark	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
Current Ratio	> 1.0	1.14	1.65	0.90	1.25
Debt Service Cover Ratio	>2.0	5.97	6.59	4.06	12.70
Own Source Revenue Coverage Ratio	>0.4	0.81	0.82	0.87	0.87
Operating Surplus Ratio	>0.01	-0.14	-0.11*	0.01	0.52
Asset Sustainability Ratio	>0.9	0.29	0.50*	0.58	0.72
Asset Consumption Ratio	>0.5	0.72	0.73	0.70	0.74
Asset Renewal Funding Ratio	>0.75	1.67	0.53	2.11	3.05

Please note * = adjusted figures

- As indicated in the table, the Current Ratio decreased to 1.14 in 2015/16 from 1.65 in 2014/2015 but it is still above the benchmark; indicating the Shire is in a good position to meet its short-term financial commitments.
- The Debt Service Cover Ratio measures the Shire's ability to repay debt including lease payments. This Shire's ratio has been above benchmark for the past four years despite its fall in 2013/2014. The ratio improved once again in 2014/2015, mainly due to an increase in operating grants from a 2014/2015 budgeted figure of \$5.5m to an actual figure of \$12.72m in 2014/2015.
- The Own Source Revenue Coverage measures the Shire's ability to cover its cost through its own revenue efforts. Different standards are used to recognise the varying capacities across the sector, i.e. some rural and remote local governments have limited rate bases, whilst other metropolitan and major regional local governments have significant rate bases and other own source revenues. The Shire's ratio is above the basic standard of between 0.4 and 0.6, demonstrating the Shire is effectively able to meet its operating expenses from own source revenue.
- Operating Surplus Ratio is a key indicator of a local government's financial sustainability, measuring the ability to cover operational costs and have revenue available for capital funding or other purposes. The Shire's ratio has been below benchmark for the past two years. This is mainly due to a decrease in operating grants (arising from the early payment of FAG's in 2015), an increase in depreciation (by \$6,501,446) and the reversal of prior years' loss on revaluation of plant and equipment resulting in a negative net result of \$63,126 in 2015/2016. The amounts for the 2014/2015 financial year have been adjusted in the 2015/2016 annual financial report due to loss on revaluation of infrastructure resulting in a negative net result of \$585,321; and the inclusion of reimbursement and recoveries as mentioned earlier. Hence, the ratio for the 2014/2015 year has been published in the 2015/2016 Annual Financial Report as -0.11 (adjusted from 0.13).

- The Asset Sustainability Ratio indicates whether a local government is renewing or replacing existing non-financial assets at the same rate that its overall stock of assets is wearing out. The Shire's ratio has been below the benchmark, and trended downwards for the past four years. The ratio deteriorated in 2015/2016 mostly due to an increase in depreciation caused by revaluation of infrastructure assets. This is considered as a "one-off" item but given the downward trend it is recommended that the Shire reviews its asset condition data as soon as is practicable.
- Asset Consumption Ratio measures the extent to which depreciable assets have been consumed by comparing their written-down value to their replacement cost. The basic standard is met if this ratio is above 0.5 and the IPR Advisory Standard outlines that standard is improving if the ratio is between 0.6 and 0.75. It is encouraging that the Shire's ratio has been above benchmark, and at an almost consistent level, for the past four years.
- The Asset Renewal Funding Ratio demonstrates whether a local government has the financial capacity to fund asset renewal as required. The Shire's ratio for 2014/15 was slightly below the basic standard but improved considerably in the 2015/2016 year, to above benchmark level. This indicates that the Shire is able to fund its projected asset renewals and replacements into the future.

Areas of Better Practice

As a result of the assessment process, the following examples of the Shire's asset and financial management practices were identified as demonstrating better practice:

Area of Better Practice	Why the initiative is considered Better Practice
Asset Disposal Policy	<p>The Shire has developed an Asset Disposal Policy to articulate Council's position regarding the disposal of assets. In line with best practice recommendations, the policy includes a good level of detail around the asset disposal process and considerations undertaken by the Shire when seeking to dispose of assets. Having a policy around this process creates a sense of transparency, openness and good governance.</p> <p>The Shire's policy outlines the statutory requirements for the disposal of assets and how it determines if assets are suitable for disposal. It clearly articulates disposal thresholds and recommended acceptable means of disposal. Further enhancing transparency around the process, and reducing the risk of misconduct and potential conflict of interest, the policy clearly states that the sale of assets to staff should not occur outside of a public process, and that the process followed for disposal is to be fully documented. For these reasons, and those outlined above, the Shire's policy is considered to represent better practice.</p>
Finance and Costing Review	<p>The Shire has developed a formalised quarterly financial reporting process — the Finance and Costing Review (FACR). Through the FACR process, relevant staff are required to formally monitor their income/expenditure in</p>

	<p>order to submit a quarterly income/expenditure report to senior management.</p> <p>During the onsite visit, the Shire discussed the fact that it initiated the FACR process to develop good financial management practices, and a culture of information sharing within its staff and noted it was effectively achieving these outcomes. Various benefits of the process were discussed including better monitoring of cash flows; closer adherence to budgets; and better communication between staff, and across directorates, enabling rollover of funds if and when required, to occur more effectively, efficiently and collaboratively. To support and document the FACR process, the Shire has developed a Business Operating Procedure (BOP). The BOP effectively outlines the roles and responsibilities of staff and senior management through the process and steps that are to be followed.</p> <p>The FACR process demonstrates the Shire's commitment to identifying where improvements need to be made and seeking to address, and achieve, these improvements in innovative ways.</p>
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As a result of the assessment process a number of additional strengths were found:

- The Shire's Long Term Financial Plan meets recommended practice by including all areas identified in the Departments 'Long Term Financial Planning Framework and Guidelines' and 'Model Long Term Financial Plan'. The financial plan was initially developed in 2014-2015 for a 15-year period to 2029-2030. In line with best practice recommendations, the plan is reviewed on annual basis to reflect current economic conditions and changing needs. The annually revised and rebased figures are included within the corresponding years Corporate Business Plan — this is good IPR practice.
- As part of its asset management framework, the Shire has developed (and Council adopted) an Asset Management Policy. Reviewed on a biennial basis by the Shire's Technical Advisory Group, the policy acts as an overarching document for the Shire's asset management practices and provides a foundation for the development of its asset management plans. The policy states which key asset classes Council has adopted asset management plans for and provides linkage to the Strategic Community Plan. It states the responsibilities and reporting duties of Council, the CEO, Executive Management Group, Technical Advisory Group, Asset and Building Coordinator and Directors. It ensures an organisation-wide commitment to asset management and the achievement of the objectives of Council's asset management strategy.
- The Shire recently developed and adopted a Rating Policy (March 2016) to address some ongoing issues with respect to its rating categories (and various, ongoing communication with the Department regarding these issues). The Shire's policy is a clearly written and understood document, providing an insight into the legislation around rating principles and initial and alternative method of valuation based on zoning and land use. Further, the policy seeks to prepare a framework for the Shire in dealing with issues that may arise in the future. Developing a policy to articulate and outlines these principles is good practice as it provides the ratepayer and elected members with transparency and clarity around the process.

Areas for Further Development

Finalising the development of asset management plans was identified as an area for development.

- At the time of the onsite visit, the Shire advised that it was working towards consolidating its existing Asset Management Plans namely, the Building Asset Management Plan and Transport Asset Management Plan into a combined asset infrastructure management plan. The Department has revised the IPR Asset Management Guidelines (available on the Department's website) which recommend an asset management plan include:
 - Reference to asset register which keeps a record of assets, location, acquisition details, disposal, transfer and other relevant information.
 - Defined level of service for each asset category or particular actions required to provide a defined level of service.
 - Demand forecasting and risk management strategies.
 - Financial information such as asset values, agreed depreciation rates, agreed depreciated values, capital expenditure projections for new assets as result of growth, or renewal and upgrade.
 - Strategies to manage any funding gaps, or propose alternative service delivery solutions e.g. leasing, public-private partnerships, share service arrangements.
 - A schedule for asset performance review and plan evaluation.
 - An asset management improvement program
 - Clear linkages to other strategic documents such as the Corporate Business Plan, Long Term Financial Plan, Workforce Plan and Annual Budget.
- Further to this, the Department is aware that the Shire is participating in the Department's National Asset Management Assessment Framework (NAMAF) and Asset Condition and Rating Project (ACR). This is a good initiative from the Shire to expand its knowledge and understanding of asset management and asset condition. Participating in these projects will assist the Shire in the development of a quality asset infrastructure management plan.

The Shire's response

Operating Surplus Ratio and Asset Sustainability Ratio has been detrimentally impacted by inaccuracies in fair value road data leading to significantly over-inflated depreciation figures. This resulted from a lack of understanding of the impact of fair value data by the contractor engaged to undertake road condition assessments. The organisation has investigated options to update its data however a decision was made to hold off based on Auditor feedback. It is envisaged that when the next fair value road assessment is undertaken depreciation will be reduced significantly and operating surplus ratio and asset sustainability ratio will recover to be within DLGC tolerances.

The Shire's Asset Management Plan consolidation was impacted by staff turnover however the draft version is expected to be presented for review imminently. The plan combines transport and building asset management plans and includes a complete asset register, level of service definitions, improvement plan, risk mitigation strategies, depreciation schedules and capital expenditure projections for upgrade, renewal and new outlay. The plan will have clear linkages with other informing strategies.

5. Workforce planning and Human Resources management

Introduction

Workforce planning can be defined as a continuous process of shaping the workforce to ensure that it is capable of delivering organisational objectives now and in the future. Human resources (HR) management assists in providing a framework that aims to have the right people in the right place at the right time to facilitate the delivery of organisational goals.

Legislative and policy framework

- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*
- *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984*
- Workforce Planning Toolkit

Review of the Shire's workforce planning and HR management

- One of the key issues for the Shire in respect to its workforce is its ability to attract and retain quality staff (noting that staff attraction is less of an issue for the Shire than retention) as evidenced by high staff turnover rates which are considerably above industry average. This is due to a number of factors including a mobile, younger population in the Shire, its remote location, unique climate, high cost of living and direct competition with the mining industry for qualified staff — though, as stated in the Shire's Workforce Plan this competition has eased slightly in recent years. High staff turnover/low staff retention creates some specific issues for the Shire in trying to address/increase staff retention, maintain corporate knowledge and build staff capacity to ensure a productive and sustainable organisation.
- The Shire has sought to proactively address these challenges in a variety of ways which include, but are not limited to, offering enhanced staff entitlements; the use of alternative methods for recruiting and developing staff (e.g. traineeships, cadetships); documenting key policies and procedures in an attempt to retain corporate knowledge; and working to enhance staff morale and skillsets through capacity building programs.
- The Shire's workforce planning and Human Resources (HR) practices procedures and documentation were considered during the review. While specific examples have been identified as good practice/strengths or areas for further development, it is acknowledged that as a whole, the Shire's practices and process are of a generally high and consistent standard throughout for which it is to be commended.

Strengths found as a result of the assessment process

- The Shire's Workforce Plan is a good document and most importantly, is a usable document which the Shire is effectively implementing to shape, understand and enhance its workforce to ensure it is capable of delivering its objectives now and into the future.
- As outlined elsewhere in this report it is identified good practice for local governments to develop distinct levels of documentation and/or manuals for operational "policies" and/or

procedures to assist in differentiating these from policies of Council. Effectively demonstrating this, the Shire has developed a clear and distinct, yet integrated hierarchy of documents on HR matters including through its policy manual, business operating procedure (BOP) manual, HR procedure manual and various management directives. By way of example, the Shire's policy manual contains policies which, generally speaking, have financial/budgetary implications and as such require the formal endorsement of Council (e.g. policies on gratuity payments, education assistance for staff and recruitment of executive staff); while the BOP manual includes those HR matters which have an operational focus (e.g. BOPs for employee performance appraisal, managing poor performance and grievances) — this is good practice as it clearly distinguishes the role of Council from administration and supports the separation of powers as defined by the Act and various regulations.

- As required by s5.40 of the Act employees of a local government should be selected and promoted on the basis of merit and equity. Key to this is the development of appropriate policies and/or procedures to guide the recruitment/selection/promotion of staff. This is particularly relevant documentation for an organisation experiencing high staff turnover and regularly undertaking recruitment activities. The Shire's Workforce Plan recognises the role of robust processes for achieving a time/cost effective approach to recruitment and selection, and for aiming to get the right person in the right job. To this end, the Shire has comprehensively documented its approach to recruitment and selection setting out the various roles, responsibilities and processes involved. Documents include a recruitment procedure (BOP 1.1.2), Recruitment and Selection Framework and a comprehensive list of HR procedures and templates.
- The Shire has developed a comprehensive induction process for new employees. The process includes formalised whole of organisation inductions, less formal 'one-on-one' and role specific inductions and incorporates a 'buddy system'. New staff are provided with an employee handbook and required to attend two induction presentations; one focusing on employment conditions, the other on OSH. The induction process is supported by a set of HR procedures, an induction checklist and a post-induction evaluation which is completed by the new employee. New starters are also required to sign that they understand, and agree to abide by relevant policies and procedures affecting their employment including the Code of Conduct and IT Acceptable Use BOP. During the onsite visit the review team was shown an induction video for the Shire, which it was in the process of finalising. The video will be a positive and innovative complement to the current induction processes already being undertaken. It is evident that the Shire aims to provide all new employees with an adequate amount of information to be appropriately inducted into the organisation. This is especially important and good practice for an organisation such as the Shire which experiences considerable staff turnover rates and seeks to ensure business continuity as much as possible.
- In an attempt to address high levels of staff turnover and assist in attracting staff the Shire has in place various attraction and retention incentives/initiatives which are supported by documented policies and/or procedures; which is good practice. These include BOPs, policies outlining Council's position in regards to staff entitlements, and wellness initiatives such as

free gym memberships, annual health checks and vaccinations (supported by the 'Shire of Broome Wellness Framework'). Although it is good practice to have these types of benefits documented, it is important that relevant documentation remains up to date. During the onsite visit the Shire advised it was reviewing various BOPs relating to staff benefits and is encouraged in its efforts to ensure these documents are kept current. Noting this, the review team identified that the Staff Housing Policy (policy 2.2.2) on the Shire's website indicates it was last reviewed in 2003 — suggesting that the policy may not be reflective of current practice, has been rescinded or requires a more current review date to be identified. (further commentary regarding the currency/consistency of documents is included in the 'Areas for Further Development' section)

- The Shire understands the importance of staff development and up-skilling for increasing corporate knowledge and building organisational capacity. In support of this it has sought to take a more centralised and strategic approach to the provision of staff training, with a centralised training budget (rather than budgets within individual directorates) and the development of an organisational training plan — managed through the HR Department. Individual training needs are identified for staff through the annual performance review process, from which common organisational training needs are identified. This ensures that the delivery of training is targeted, relevant and meets overall organisational objectives — recognised good practice in strategic workforce planning (as indicated in the Department's Workforce Planning toolkit).
- As a result of its remote location, the Shire noted it is mostly required to seek out its own training providers and/or send staff a considerable distance away to receive training. To address this, the Shire regularly seeks to promote training on a regional basis, offering opportunities for collaboration with neighbouring local governments. In addition to building its own internal organisational capacity and achieving a cost effective approach to training, this approach to training strengthens the Shire's position as a regional leader and builds strategic alliances with neighbouring local governments.
- The Shire demonstrates a strong commitment to Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) evidenced by a comprehensive and complementary suite of documents including various BOPs and HR procedures which outline how the Shire will support a healthy workplace, how it manages workers compensation claims and how hazard, incident and accident reporting should be undertaken. As previously mentioned, all new employees are also required to undergo a separate OSH induction upon commencing employment. Supporting these internal procedures and processes, in June 2015 Council endorsed the 'Work Safety and Health Policy' (Policy 2.2.8). The policy clearly articulates the Shire's commitment to providing a safe workplace and is made available to the public via its website — this is good practice.
- Working to support a productive and engaged workforce and build staff capacity and morale, the Shire has initiated its Workforce Enhancement Network (WEN) as a platform for staff from across the organisation to come together, lead change, support a positive workplace culture and have input on key workforce and organisational processes. The WEN has a membership

of ten staff and three 'sponsors' (all volunteers engaged via an EOI process) and is supported by a comprehensive Terms of Reference. This ensures the purpose and membership of the group is clearly defined, which is good practice. An initiative such as the WEN is a positive one; it provides a formalised link between staff and management, encourages staff to have an active input into their workplace and an ability to have influence — important for building a sense of morale and common purpose in the workforce.

Areas for Further Development

As a result of the assessment process the following areas, while minor, were identified for further development:

- Employee surveys are a useful way for local governments to collect information on workplace satisfaction levels and other relevant data pertaining to employee attitudes and perceptions. In order to gauge any change in satisfaction levels and/or change in workplace culture it is good practice to conduct such surveys on a regular basis. The Shire's Strategic Community Plan indicates that the Shire will seek to measure improvements of organisational culture every two years through a staff survey — a KPI of outcome 4.1 (i.e. 'An organisational culture that strives for service excellence'). Yet according to the Shire, it last undertook a formal staff survey in 2009. Although this may be the case, the Shire did undertake an environmental scan when developing its Workforce Plan, and during the review advised it intends to undertake another within two years. While this is commendable, it is not clear whether the environmental scanning process will meet the Shire's desired intent in respect to measuring its success in achieving outcome 4.1 (that is, improvement of organisational culture) in the same way that an employee survey would. Accordingly, the Shire is encouraged to consider implementing an appropriate and effective way of measuring and tracking its progress towards achieving desired workforce outcomes as set out in its IPR documents.
- As already identified, the Shire has a number of policies, procedures and processes in place to articulate various HR and workforce matters — something which is good practice, especially for an organisation experiencing high staff turnover and other change. While this is the case, to ensure that documents remain relevant and usable, and assist in retaining corporate knowledge, it is important they are properly updated, aligned, consistent and reflective of current practice. The review team observed some minor inconsistencies in the Shire's HR documents such as:
 - The Probation and Performance Appraisals procedure in the HR Manual provided to the review team refers to BOP 2.023 'Managing Poor Performance'. Managing poor performance is now covered by BOP number 1.1.8.
 - Both the Performance Appraisal procedure and BOP 1.1.0 'Employee Performance Appraisal' state that staff performance appraisals are undertaken by the end of August each year. During the onsite review, the Shire advised amending its performance appraisal process to occur on an employee's anniversary date. Relevant documents should be revised to reflect any change such as this.

- BOP 1.1.3 'Equal Employment Opportunity' refers to the Shire's 'Grievance and Disputes Procedure' as BOP number 2.021, yet this has been replaced by BOP 1.1.6.
- The Shire's website states that Policy 2.2.5 'Staff Motor Vehicle Benefit' has been replaced by internal BOP 2.019. According to documents provided by the Shire, there is no BOP 2.019; it has been replaced BOP 1.1.5 'Use of Motor Vehicles'.
- During the onsite visit, the Shire advised it was currently reviewing some of its HR documents (mainly BOPs) and is encouraged to continue doing so. Accordingly, it should look to resolve any of the above-mentioned discrepancies (if it has not already) and identify any further issues that may exist across its documents in terms of consistency and/or currency.

The Shire's response

A remuneration review is currently taking place and the outcomes stemming from this review will be used to finalise the Staff Housing Policy.

The Shire will investigate an appropriate and effective method to measure and track our progress in relation to achieving desired levels of workforce outcomes as described in the SCP and CBP. This will be used as an additional tool to inform the development of the organisations workforce plan.

In addition, to improve current practice a complete review of HR policy and procedure will be undertaken to ensure currency and accuracy of guiding policy documents.

6. Community and Consultation

Introduction

Delivering appropriate services to the community is one of the fundamental roles of local government. Effective community engagement and consultation allows local governments to interact with the local community to better understand community needs and expectations, assisting in the delivery of services. Consultation and engagement better positions local governments to develop appropriate policies and procedures that will best serve the local community now and into the future.

Legislative and policy framework

- *Disability Services Act 1993*
- International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum
- Western Australian Charter of Multiculturalism

Areas of Better Practice

An assessment of the Shire's community and consultation activities were considered during the review and the following areas identified as examples of better practice:

Area of Better Practice	Why the initiative is considered Better Practice
Community Engagement	<p>Constructive and effective engagement with the community is an area that the Shire recognises as an essential element to good, mutually beneficial decision making. In line with best practice recommendations for community engagement, the Shire has developed a comprehensive community engagement framework to support and guide its focus and activities in respect to engaging with the community.</p> <p>Demonstrating the Shire's commitment to effective community engagement, Council endorsed a Community Engagement Policy which provides a clear statement to the community about how they can expect to be involved in the Shire's decision making processes. In addition to clearly articulating a commitment to undertaking community engagement, the policy outlines that the Shire's engagement processes will be based on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) public participation matrix – a recognised international standard for best practice in conducting community engagement.</p> <p>Supported by the policy and providing an operational guide for the Shire's community engagement activities, the community engagement framework also incorporates a '10 Step Guide' and toolkit for community engagement. These documents provide good quality, useful information on how the Shire will plan and implement community engagement processes and activities. Essentially they act as a when, how and why of community engagement for the Shire, clearly setting out parameters for staff to follow as they embark on a process of community engagement.</p>

	<p>In summary, the community engagement framework documents the Shire's commitment to working collaboratively with the local community to achieve mutually positive outcomes. Through its community engagement policy, 10 step guide and toolkit, the Shire ensures that community engagement is carried out in a considered, coordinated and consistent manner across the organisation.</p> <p>For these reasons, the Shire's community engagement framework and associated processes are considered to represent examples of better practice.</p>
Youth development	<p>The Shire demonstrates a strong commitment to supporting, engaging and encouraging the participation of young people; both within the Shire and across the wider Kimberley region. In recognition of the Shire's work in this field, National Youth Week 2016 was launched in Broome by the then Minister for Youth, Tony Simpson.</p> <p>The Shire's commitment to youth is articulated through the 'Shire of Broome Youth Framework — 'It Starts With You' (2016-2018). The framework was developed in respect to an identified need to increase youth participation and engagement. It sets out a number of priorities and strategies to formally guide the Shire's involvement in youth services and to ensure that young people, and their needs, are formally considered in all future Shire planning. A key initiative of the framework was the establishment of Broome Youth Advisory Council (YAC) which has now been established and is achieving good results.</p> <p>Demonstrating regional leadership and a commitment to achieving best practice, the Shire was instrumental in the development of the Kimberley Regional Youth Strategy. While the strategy was developed as a collaborative project of the Kimberley Regional Group, the Shire was the lead local government on the project. The first of its kind in Western Australia, the strategy represents a proactive and innovative approach to supporting young people in the community. Complementing the work done by the Shire at the local level, the strategy is a positive example of what can be achieved when local governments work together to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.</p>

In addition to the above examples of better practice, it is noted that engaging, supporting and connecting with the local community is something the Shire does well, and is to be commended for. Examples of additional strengths of the Shire include:

- A number of different communication mechanisms are used to keep the local community informed on major projects, services and events. Communication channels include a fortnightly item in the local newspaper; regular e-newsletters (also available by email subscription); media releases and public notices placed on the Shire website; and a social media presence via the Shire's various Facebook pages. Using a range of communication channels to update and inform demonstrates a positive approach by the Shire to connect with

a wide cross-section of its community. This is especially relevant, and important, for a local government with such a diverse community.

- Further illustrating the Shire's commitment to a connected and informed community, it produces a community directory (print and online) to be provided to all households and businesses on an annual basis. The directory includes contact details for residents and businesses and provides information on various services provided by the Shire such as emergency management and recreation facilities. In addition to providing a useful resource for the local community, the directory acts as a good source of information for potential, or current visitors to the Shire, as it includes accommodation and tourism listings.
- As part of the Shire's overall approach to engaging and connecting with the community, it employs a number of methods for receiving feedback from its community, including undertaking regular surveys. One such survey is the biennial community perceptions survey, run through independent research company Catalyse. The perceptions survey provides information about community sentiment across a broad range of services and functions of a local government and allows for benchmarking and comparison with other participating local governments (17 metro and 10 regional).
- It is evident that the Shire participates in the community perceptions survey with the intent that it use the results to improve, and target the services and projects it delivers for the betterment of the community. For example, outcomes from the survey are used to inform the Shire's IPR framework and the associated projects/initiatives it undertakes. For example, surveys have identified anti-social behaviour as a major area of dissatisfaction within the community. The Shire has sought to address these concerns through the development of a Community Safety Plan — also identified as an action within the Shire's Corporate Business Plan. In addition to the development of its Community Safety Plan, responding to community safety concerns is an important function of the Shire's wider community development program; including the Shire's role in establishing the Community Safety Working Group and providing support to the Broome Liquor Accord.
- During the onsite visit, the Shire discussed the ongoing importance of economic development to its future success. The 'Our Prosperity' goal within the Shire's Plan IPR documents identify a number of economic development related actions and projects which the Shire intends to deliver such as regionally aligned economic development outcomes, the development and release of land for industrial and/or commercial use and the development of an economic blueprint for the district (which was completed in 2015/16). In addition and in alignment with the Shire's current activities, it is noted that the soon to be finalised Broome Growth Plan will have a heavy focus on strategic economic development initiatives such as small business and industry support and development. The Shire is encouraged to continue working towards achieving these outcomes for the betterment of the local area and the wider region.
- Further to these 'bigger picture' economic development activities, the Shire recognises the importance of events for driving and contributing to local tourism, place activation, community participation and overall economic development. In line with this, the Shire recently undertook

a body of work to improve its policies, processes and procedures to better support, facilitate and encourage events in the Shire. Following consultation with key tourism/event stakeholders, the Shire's Event Policy was updated in June 2016 with the outcome being that the process for holding an event in the Shire is now more streamlined and user-friendly. Additionally, an Events Attraction Toolkit has been developed, providing a step-by-step guide to assist those wishing to hold events in the Shire. In conjunction with a revised policy, the toolkit is a positive initiative to encourage and support the holding of events in the Shire.

Areas for Further Development

As a result of the Shire's high performance, areas for further development are relatively minor and generally relate to the accessibility of documentation:

- As outlined above, the Shire has sought to better encourage and facilitate events within the local area. Supporting this, a body of event documentation is available on the Shire's website under the 'Events Management' ('Events') page, with a notable exception being the revised events policy (currently it is only available via the 'Council Policy' web page). While this is not necessarily problematic, to ensure ease of access and a user-friendly experience it would be good practice for the Shire to put all its documentation relevant to events in one central place. This is especially relevant given other documentation on the 'Events' page refers to the policy and specifically, the events toolkit references the policy as an addendum on multiple occasions — but, it is not attached. Rather, there is a link to its location on the Shire website (which is not active). Accordingly, to ensure ease of access, it is recommended that a copy of the event policy be made available on the 'Events' page either as a stand-alone document; via an active link to its current web location and/or as an attached addendum to the toolkit.
- In a similar vein, the Shire's Community Engagement policy — as available on the Shire's website — references the Community Engagement Framework as an associated/attached document but it is not attached to the policy, nor available from the Shire's website at any other location. While this is acceptable given the framework is largely an operational document, if the Shire intends for it to be read in conjunction with the policy it should be made available. If not, it is recommended that the policy be updated to remove this reference.

The Shire's response

The Shire website has been updated to improve accessibility of relevant information on the Events page including the Events Policy. The Shire's Community Engagement Framework has also been made available from the same location as the Community Engagement Policy.

Online access to forms and information is an area of improvement that has been identified by the organisation and one that is currently being reviewed and improved. An online booking process is also under development. Additionally budget has been allocated in the 2017/18 budget to implement the recommendations contained in the Shire's Event Attraction Strategy.

PART V – ACTION PLAN

The below action plan presents an opportunity for positive improvement and change by identifying areas of further development for the Shire.

Area for Further Development	Recommendation/Action	Timeframe	Responsibility	Progress Report
Governance				
Code of Conduct	1. Consider requiring elected members and committee members to provide written acknowledgment of the Code of Conduct in the same way that employees do.	November 2017	CEO	
	2. Continue working towards updating the Code of Conduct, as and where required, in line with relevant changes to legislation.	June 2017	Director Corporate Services	
Advisory committees	3. Consider providing TOR for advisory committees to the community, through the Shire's website.	April 2017	Director Corporate Services	
Business Continuity Plan	4. Work towards finalising the Business Continuity Plan and ensure it links to other relevant documents of the Shire (such as the current risk management framework documents).	May 2017	Director Corporate Services	
Contractor management/Business Ethics Statement	5. Work towards the finalisation of the contractor management system, including contractor induction.	November 2017	Manager Human Resources	
	6. Consider developing a statement to guide contractors and suppliers on expected standards and conduct required for dealing with the Shire and undertaking business on its behalf.	November 2017	Manager Human Resources	

Planning and Regulatory				
Local Emergency Management	7. Review/reassess emergency management documents, procedures and protocols as the Shire sees fit.	July 2017	Director Development Services	
	8. Publish a copy of the Shire's LEMA on the website as required by State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC).	The LEMA is already available on the website, however a stand-alone link will be provided.	Director Development Services	
Planning legislation and/or quasi-judicial role of elected members	9. Consider the need for elected members to undertake training in regards to the application of planning legislation.	Awaiting response from DLGC regarding available training.	Director Development Services	
Plan for the Future				
Strategic Community Plan review	10. Continue working towards the full review of the plan in line with legislative requirements and best practice recommendations as outlined in the Act, associated regulations, IPR Guidelines and IPR Advisory Standard.	Completed – full review undertaken and adopted by Council at the OMC held 15 December 2016.	Director Corporate Services	Completed

Corporate Business Plan review	11. Continue working towards reviewing the plan in line with legislative requirements and best practice recommendations as outlined in the Act, associated regulations, IPR Guidelines and IPR Advisory Standard.	Reviewed annually to inform budget process – last review adopted by Council at the OMC held 15 December 2016.	Director Corporate Services	
Corporate Business Plan 'appendices'	12. As with other documents currently available on the Shire's website as 'corporate plan appendices', consider publishing the Long Term Financial Plan in the same way (particularly if it is referenced in the revised version of the Corporate Business Plan).	Amended version of the LTFP will be published following adoption of the 17/18 budget.	Director Corporate Services	
<i>Asset and Finance</i>				
Asset Management plans	13. Continue working towards developing an asset management plan/s, for all major asset classes as per the Department's Asset Management Guidelines.	December 2017	CEO	
<i>Workforce and HR Management</i>				
Workforce Plan	14. Review and update the Workforce Plan to ensure it demonstrates alignment and integration with the Shire's other Plan for the Future documents, once they are complete.	May 2017	Manager Human Resources	
Employee survey/measurement of workforce outcomes	15. As per the Strategic Community Plan (which states an employee survey will be undertaken every two years), look to implement an appropriate and effective way for measuring and tracking the Shire's progress towards achieving desired workforce outcomes.	June 2017	Manager Human Resources	

HR documentation including policies and BOPs	16. Continue the review and update (where required) of HR documents, and through this process, look to eliminate inconsistencies within and between policies, BOPs, HR manual etc.	June 2017	Manager Human Resources	
<i>Community and Consultation</i>				
Website content	17. Ensure that where appropriate, relevant documents are made available to the community via the website; such as documents regarding events and community engagement (and any others where required).	July 2017	Director Community and Economic Development	

APPENDIX 1: BETTER PRACTICE REVIEW CHECKLIST ASSESSMENT

Module 1: Governance	Assessment of the Shire's performance
Values and ethics	✓✓
Code of conduct	✓*
Gifts and benefits	✓
Communication devices	✓
Delegations	✓
Procurement and Tendering	✓
Business Ethics Statement	*
Review of local government systems	✓
Organisational risk management	✓
Business continuity	*
Fraud control	✓
Internal audit	✓
Legislative compliance	✓
External audit process	✓
Audit in local government	✓
Compliance Audit Return	✓
Records management	✓
Access to information by the public	✓
Executive management meetings	✓
Policy manual	✓
Local government meetings	✓
Elected member induction and ongoing training	✓
Expenses and allowances policy	✓
Elected member and staff interaction	✓
Access to information by elected members	✓
Customer service and requests	✓✓
Complaints handling	✓✓
Public interest disclosure	✓
Awards	✓
Strategic alliances	✓
Information technology	✓

Module 2: Planning and Regulatory	Assessment of the Shire's performance
Land use planning	✓
Development Applications process (DCU)	✓✓
Heritage	✓
Regulatory Services/enforcement	✓✓
Caravan parks and camping grounds	✓
Environmental Management	✓
Local Laws	✓
Emergency Management	✓*
Module 3: Plan for the Future	Assessment of the Shire's performance
Strategic Alignment	✓✓
Strategic Community Plan	✓
Corporate Business Plan	✓
Module 4: Asset and Finance	Assessment of the Shire's performance
Asset management	✓*
Long Term Financial Plan	✓
Land assets	✓
Financial management (FACR)	✓✓
Valuations	✓
Rates and charges	✓
Payments of accounts	✓
Disposal	✓✓
Investment	✓
Module 5: Workforce and Human Resources	Assessment of the Shire's performance
Workforce Planning	✓
HR policies and procedures	✓*
Employee surveys	*
Performance reviews	✓
Recruitment and selection	✓
Job descriptions	✓
Equal Employment Opportunity	✓
Staff development – induction	✓

Staff development – training	✓
Grievance management	✓
Occupational safety and health	✓
Exit of staff	✓
Module 6: Community and Consultation	Assessment of the Shire's performance
Community engagement	✓✓
Youth development	✓✓
Volunteer Services	✓
Ageing population	✓
Disability access and inclusion	✓
Arts and Cultural planning	✓
Multicultural interests	✓
Tourism	✓
Economic development	✓

Table key

Better practice, strengths/satisfactory practice and areas requiring further development are defined below:

<p>✓✓</p> <p>Better Practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieves a strong performance or above minimum compliance requirements, obligations and published guidelines etc. • Contributes to continuous improvement within the local government sector • Innovative and/or effective.
<p>✓</p> <p>Strength and/or satisfactory practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complies with the <i>Local Government Act 1995</i> and/or other legislation. • Policies, practices and/or procedures appear to be of a consistently high standard
<p>*</p> <p>Areas for Further Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development has been identified or is progressing in order to improve or enhance local government operations and/or; • Does not satisfactorily meet minimum legislative compliance requirements, legislative obligations, industry standards, policies and published guidelines.
<p>n/a</p> <p>Not applicable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some instances the local government may have indicated in its self-assessment checklist this is not an area applicable to its operations. • Or, the review team has not had an opportunity to examine a particular area in sufficient detail for an overall assessment to be confidently made.