



GLADSTONE
REGIONAL COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN AUDIT RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF
GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL

HELD AT THE GLADSTONE ENTERTAINMENT CONVENTION CENTRE,
56 GOONDOON STREET, GLADSTONE QLD 4680

ON **WEDNESDAY 16 JUNE 2021** COMMENCING AT **9:00AM**

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PRESENT

Kerry Phillips (Chairperson) (via teams)

Sandra Collins

Stephen Coates

Cr Natalia Muszkat (proxy)

Cr Desley O'Grady

Officers:

Leisa Dowling, Chief Executive Officer

Mark Holmes, General Manager Finance, Governance and Risk

Theunis Mienie, General Manager People, Culture and Safety

Carly Quinn, General Manager Strategy & Transformation

John Tumbers, General Manager Operations

Jason Swemmer, Manager ICT and Acting Ethics Integrity and Audit Specialist

Rowena Smallcombe, Ethics Integrity and Audit Specialist

Brooke Saunders, Manager Governance (via teams)

Rachael Millett, Executive Secretary

Ashlyn Chalker, Compliance & Audit Officer

Nerrilynne Taylor, Team Leader Financial Operations

Jessica Rossow, Statutory Accountant

Tania Brown, Manager Asset Governance

Emma Caitlin, Disaster Response Specialist

Others in Attendance:

Steven Bosiljevac, PwC (via teams)

Mansheel Kumar, PwC (via teams)

Dale Hassell, QAO (via teams)

Vaughan Stemmett, QAO (via teams)

Cr Rick Hansen (Observer)

1. COMMITTEE IN CAMERA

There were no matters to report from the Committee in Camera Session.

2. CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

2.1. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

There were no matters to report from the Chief Executive Officer's Report.

2.2. LEGAL REPORT

There were no matters to report from the Legal Report.

3. APOLOGIES

An apology from Cr Kahn Goodluck was received.

4. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

5.1. CONFIRMATION OF AUDIT RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR 17 MARCH 2021

Purpose:

Seeking confirmation of the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee Meeting Minutes of the 17 March 2021.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the Committee confirm the Minutes of the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee Meeting held on the 17 March 2021.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Stephen Coates

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

6.1. AUDIT RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE OPEN TASKS REPORT

Purpose:

Standing Item to update the Committee on the Open Tasks Report.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the Committee note and receive the Open Tasks Report.

Discussion:

It was noted that there were 4 items shown on the open tasks report with 2 actions complete and 2 actions not yet due.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Cr O'Grady

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

7. GLADSTONE AIRPORT CORPORATION PRESENTATION

7.1. GLADSTONE AIRPORT CORPORATION PRESENTATION

Purpose:

A presentation to the Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee will be held by Gladstone Airport Corporation (GAC) presenting its shareholder presentation for the financial year 2021 for quarter 3 in accordance with the Statement of Corporate Intent.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the presentation from Gladstone Airport Corporation be received.

Discussion:

An overview of the report was provided by the Gladstone Airport Corporation (GAC) and it was noted that there has been a great improvement in the confidence in travel over the past months with flight numbers and schedules returning to pre-COVID conditions however passengers numbers have not improved as quickly as hoped although it has been in line with budget estimations. It was discussed that pre-COVID passenger numbers may not return for some time and will be dependent on restrictions and international travel returning.

The Committee was advised of the funding opportunities and funding received with the projects underway and completed shown on page 42 of the agenda. The following was noted regarding the projects undertaken and underway at GAC:

- The resurfacing/rejuvenation of the runway and taxiway has been completed.
- The new security screening point redesign experienced delays however it is anticipated that this will be opening in the coming week.
- Northern apron and drainage issues will be rectified by end of this year.
- The installation of a new car parking ticketing system has shown an increase in revenue and has enabled gaps with regards to parking charges to be identified.
- Security screening point redesign and extension has experienced some delays however it is anticipated that this will be opening in the coming week.

It was noted that GAC has celebrated employee milestones including 25 years, 15 years and 10 years of service and one employee is transitioning to retirement this year and another employee will be transitioning to retirement next year.

A discussion was held regarding security systems tests and screening procedures with any gaps identified resulting in additional training and procedural improvements.

Members enquired regarding the anticipated charter flights and passenger numbers with advice received that the charter flight requires a minimum number to operate and working within accommodation availability and restrictions. Members further enquired regarding marketing and promotion of the charter flight and working with airlines to increase numbers with advice received that whilst GAC isn't involved in the airlines marketing, Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Ltd (GAPDL) is working with the airlines to encourage marketing.

Members enquired if GAC have considered revisiting/reviewing the GAC vision and mission with a view to aligning with Council's corporate plan and economic strategy with advice received that the

vision and mission is reviewed annually through a strategy meeting and will include consideration of Council's corporate plan and economic strategy.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Stephen Coates

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

8. NOTING PAPERS

8.1. PEOPLE CULTURE AND SAFETY REPORT

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee with an update of the People Culture and Safety statistics and activities.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the People Culture and Safety update report be received and noted.

Discussion:

It was noted that an amendment to the Actual FTE 19 March 2021 Total Positions shown in the People, Culture and Safety report (page 79 of the agenda) be made to reflect the correct total positions as 690.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Cr O'Grady

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

8.2. MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR PERIOD ENDING APRIL 2021

Purpose:

To provide the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee with the Monthly Financial Reports for Period ending 28 April 2021 that were presented to Council on 18 May 2021.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee note the Monthly Financial Reports for Period ending 28 April 2021.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Cr O'Grady

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

8.3. ASSET MANAGEMENT REPORT

Purpose:

To provide an update on Council's asset management activities including a summary of the current status of Council's asset data and future data improvement actions.

Officer's Recommendation:

It is recommended that the update be noted.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Cr O'Grady

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

8.4. CONTRACTS & PROCUREMENT REPORT

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to present procurement KPIs for the quarter ending 30 April 2021.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the Contracts and Procurement Report is received and noted.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Cr O'Grady

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

8.5. STRATEGIC ICT UPDATE

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide the committee with a quarterly update on the work managed by the Strategic ICT team.

Officer's Recommendation:

Note the quarterly update provided.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Cr O'Grady

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

8.6. INSURANCE REPORT

Purpose:

To provide an update to the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) with an overview of the claims for compensation following damages or loss that Council has received from members of the public and third parties.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the Insurance Report is received and noted.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Cr O'Grady

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

9. INTERNAL AUDIT

9.1. ETHICS INTEGRITY AND AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

Purpose:

To provide an update on the progress of Ethics, Integrity and Audit Activities over the past quarter.

Officer's Recommendation:

1. The Ethics Integrity and Audit progress report be received and noted.
2. The update on Ethics Integrity and Audit activities be received and noted.

Discussion:

The committee noted that the overdue actions have plateaued which was anticipated whilst transitioning to Beakon and that the 2020/21 Internal Audit Plan is being completed with the remaining 3 reviews underway. It was further noted that the 2021/22 internal audit plan will be presented to the Committee at the next scheduled meeting.

Members noted that there were some business improvement opportunities showing as overdue, with some of those opportunities noted as high risk issues. Members encouraged council officers address those. Members further noted that it would be difficult to demonstrate the value of internal audits if opportunities that are identified aren't implemented in a timely manner.

Members requested further information regarding the Payroll Audit Report and actions and raised concerns there may be opportunities for fraud with advice provided that officers are outworking the opportunities identified and noted that although there were no specific findings or direct concerns regarding fraud, investigations are continuing into further improvement in this area. Members provided advice that the action identifies a need for a better system of metrics that could identify fraud and without that there may be a false sense of security and noted that the report is showing 'Nil Progress Report' with advice received that the progress updates will be followed up.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Sandra Collins

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

9.2. INTERNAL AUDIT

Purpose:

Presentation of internal audit and compliance assurance projects undertaken since the last Audit Risk and Improvement Committee meeting.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the report on the internal audit and assurance projects undertaken since the last committee meeting be received.

Discussion:

The committee was provided with an overview of the reports relating to Mental Health, Building Certification and Evacuation Procedures for Community Buildings. Officers commented that the mental health audit was very positive and although very difficult to quantify, it was pleasing to see the awareness and processes that council has in place, noting that employee mental health it is an important aspect of health to recognise.

The committee commended the Mental Health audit, the positive feedback that has been received and suggested consideration of training for officers working with vulnerable people and stakeholders in the community. A discussion was held regarding the topic of the COVID pandemic and understanding the impact to people across council and the community and further consideration of people with families living overseas with the committee noting the timeliness of the audit. The committee was advised that Council passed approval for an application for mental and physical health in the workplace and a staff focus group has been formed, which includes good representation across council, with a culture survey to be completed of which the responses will assist in developing initiatives.

Members enquired regarding the pre-employment medicals findings, noting that the pre-employment medicals are not being undertaken on anyone apart from labourers, and questioned why would local government be different than the private sector with advice received that this is currently under review however there is insufficient evidence to expand pre-employment medicals to all positions. Further advice was received that the contract for the pre-employment medicals was renewed prior to the audit and the inclusion of additional roles was not in the scope for this contract.

A discussion regarding performance reviews and the implementation strategy was held. Members recommended different processes be put in place for performance reviews and development reviews as the development review should be performed by the manager once removed, as the manager once removed will be able to identify the breadth of opportunity for the employee. Advice was provided that career aspiration reviews are being conducted with the process to be implemented throughout the business.

Members enquired if there has been any progression in solving the recruitment of an additional building certifier difficulty with advice received that there is currently active recruitment for a building certifier however an industry wide issue with availability of qualified building certifiers currently exists. It was noted that investigations into alternatives, barriers to recruitment and the development of someone into the position are underway.

Members requested clarification regarding the Executive Summary of the building certifier report with the table on page 139 (also shown on page 155) of the agenda showing 4 total recommendations and 2 high risk, 2 low risk and 2 business improvement opportunity recommendations, totally 6, with advice received that this would be reviewed.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Sandra Collins

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50am and reconvened at 11:05am.

10. EXTERNAL AUDIT

10.1. INTERIM MANAGEMENT LETTER AND REPORT

Purpose:

To provide the committee with the results from Council's interim external audit.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the Interim Management Letter and Report be received and noted.

Discussion:

The deficiencies identified in the Interim Management Letter and Report were presented to the committee.

Members noted the rating value reconciliations and recognised the improvement in this area. It was recommended that council consider the timings of changes prior to any rate runs. Members enquired regarding the materiality of the impact of those valuation updates not being completed and further, if any assessment has been completed regarding the impact. Advice was received that the impact was not significant and the process is now on track.

Members noted the reconciliation between TechOne and Pathway and recognised and commended officers on the identification of the vulnerability and implementation of controls.

Members expressed concern regarding the findings that depreciation for certain infrastructure assets is being calculated on a condition-based depreciation method instead of a straight-line basis and associated impacts. Officers advised that the asset valuation data has not yet been received to enable an analysis of the impacts and identify required actions.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Cr O'Grady

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

10.2. QUEENSLAND AUDIT OFFICE BRIEFING PAPER

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to allow Queensland Audit Office to provide an update to the committee.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the Queensland Audit Office Briefing Paper dated 28 May 2021 be received and noted.

Discussion:

The Queensland Audit Office (QAO) Briefing paper was presented with Section 3 Managing Cybersecurity Risks (page 209 of the agenda) and Appendix A (page 214 of the agenda) Key Questions for Audit Committees Regarding Cyber Security highlighted. Members and officers received a recommendation that all boards should consider asking the suggested questions regarding cyber risks within the organisation. Additionally, examples of cyber-attacks around the world and their impacts was mentioned and it was noted that QAO have released a blog regarding cyber security which is available on their website. Members reaffirmed the importance of cyber security and further requested that responses, from Council, to the questions shown in Appendix A be presented to the next Committee meeting.

Members were advised that the briefing for audit committee chairs has been held with a copy of slides from the briefing available on the QAO website. Members were further advised that the strategic audit plan is now referred to as the Forward Work Program.

A discussion was held regarding the reference in the report that "entities need to ensure they obtain value for money for the goods and services they procure...." and achieving a balance between buy local policy and value for money and the impacts, such as discouraging competition and diminishing best practice or service, a buy local policy might cause. A further discussion regarding the benefits of completing a review to determine the value for money that a buy local policy has was held and that buy local policies raise awareness and inspire reflection on the practices being undertaken rather than specifying the value. Members confirmed the importance of aspiring to buy local and to set targets and procurement processes, with a caution that the legislation is prescriptive relating to the value for money proposition, and ensuring local suppliers are meeting the standards of local government.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Sandra Collins

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

11. FINANCE REPORTS

11.1. 21/22 BUDGET OVERVIEW

Purpose:

To provide the budget overview report for the 2021/22 year to the Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee receive the 2021/22 budget overview report.

Discussion:

Members were advised that Council passed the 2021/22 Budget yesterday (15 June 2021) with an overview of the budget provided in the agenda. Members were pleased that council adopted the budget so early and acknowledged that this placed Council in a good position to launch into the new financial year.

Members were further advised that the 2021/22 Operational Plan was adopted along with the budget. Members requested a copy of the operational plan be distributed to the committee.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Cr Muszkat

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

11.2. FINANCIAL STATEMENT PREPARATION TIMELINE

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee members with the proposed 2020/2021 Financial Statement Preparation Timeline for their consideration and feedback.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee note the attached proposed financial statement preparation timeline.

Discussion:

Members were advised that the financial statement preparation timeline has been split into pre-accrual and post accrual to enable efficiencies to be created and build team capability. Members commended the report and endorsed the initiative in building the capacity and capability within the team.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Stephen Coates

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

11.3. DRAFT PROFORMA FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee members with the draft 2020/2021 proforma financial statements for their consideration and feedback.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee note the report.

Discussion:

Members were advised that there has been a delay in the preparation of the Draft Proforma Financial Statements making it not possible for their presentation at the meeting, however they would distributed to the committee to facilitate a flying minute as soon as possible. Members requested an additional document showing tracked changes be distributed along with the draft proforma financial statements to demonstrate the difference between last year and this year.

Members further recognised that the customisation of the draft proforma financial statements may create delays and issues as opposed to utilising the standard statement template.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Cr O'Grady

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

11.4. PROPOSAL FOR SIMPLIFIED CONSOLIDATION OF PROPERTY PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Purpose:

To provide the committee with the attached position paper detailing a proposal for simplified consolidation of property, plant and equipment within the consolidated financial statements.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the committee provide feedback on the proposal within the attached position paper prior to submission to external audit and the Queensland Audit Office.

Discussion:

Members were provided with an overview of the report and confirmation of the management recommendation for the simplified consolidation method due to the benefits of time saving, simplicity of documentation and consistency across the assets. Members enquired regarding any negatives with regards to the simplified consolidation method with advice received that the simplified consolidation method would remove the completion of consolidated adjustments which would be outside the accounting policy, however the risk level is low as the adjustments are considered immaterial. Members were further advised that consolidated adjustments will only be completed when material.

Members welcomed the opportunity to undertake a more simplified approach which avoids the complexity around the preparation of statements allowing them to be completed on time and further encouraged the asset team to look further into asset accounting in regards to the simplified approach to assess materiality.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Stephen Coates

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

12. ASSET MANAGEMENT

12.1. VALUATION METHODOLOGY REPORT

Purpose:

To provide an update on Council's asset valuation methodology including a summary of the current status of Council's comprehensive valuations undertaken.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee note the update provided.

Discussion:

Members were advised that an extra resource has commenced which will assist in completion of valuations within the timeframes and were further advised that officers have been liaising closely with PriceWaterhouseCooper (PwC) in highlighting issues. Members commended the report and the collaboration with PwC.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Sandra Collins

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

13. RISK MANAGEMENT

13.1. QUARTERLY RISK REPORT

Purpose:

To provide an update to the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) on implementation of Council risk management framework for the period ending 30 June 2021.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the Risk Management Quarterly Report be received and noted.

Discussion:

Members were advised that officers are outworking the organisational risks from a service provision level rather than a business unit level through consideration of the services that are provided to the community and mapping the operational risk based on those services. Members enquired about the change of approach and were advised that the service provision approach aligns with other activities being undertaken within council and the focus on a collaboration across council. It is anticipated that the organisational risks will embed more effectively in the culture by taking the service provision approach.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Stephen Coates

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

13.2. BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

Purpose:

To present Council's Business Continuity Plan for information.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee note the attached Business Continuity Plan developed to manage disruption related risk in Council's operations.

Discussion:

Members were provided with a summary of the report, the COVID-19 Pandemic planning and response and the development of the Business Continuity Plan (BCP). Members enquired about an emergency contacts list and if it was to be included in the BCP with advice received that the BCP is separate to the Emergency Response Plan and the Emergency Response Plan will hold the contact details is currently under review. Further discussion was held regarding testing of the BCP and emergency response plan with members recommending that alternate officers be utilised in the test.

Members congratulated officers on the thoroughness and development of the BCP.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Sandra Collins

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

14. OFFICER'S REPORTS

14.1. ANNUAL STATUS REPORT - COUNCIL POLICIES AND CORPORATE STANDARDS

Purpose:

To provide the Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee with an update on the currency of Council's Policies and Corporate Standards.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the committee receive and note the report.

Discussion:

Members were provided with an update on the continuing renewal of the council policies and the supporting documentation to those policies and it was noted that it is an ambitious work plan ahead, with 42 documents to be reviewed prior to December, and resources are being stretched however the reviews are on track. It was further noted that through various project works, such as maximising works delivery, more documentation is being identified as required. Members were provided with an overview of the review process which includes stakeholder consultation sessions, via email, teams, online and in person to obtain feedback, and the inclusion of consultation with councillors earlier in the process on relevant policies.

Members enquired if there has been an improvement in the process and if the work plan is achievable with advice received that officers are hitting the targets and ongoing monitoring and review of the workplan is undertaken and where required a risk assessment is completed to determine if any reviews can be rescheduled. Members requested a copy of the work plan and schedule be circulated to the committee to review.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Cr O'Grady

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

14.2. ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMMITTEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES AGAINST THE POLICY

Purpose:

To provide annual confirmation that all responsibilities outlined in the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee Policy have been carried out.

Officer's Recommendation:

That the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee confirm that the responsibilities outlined in the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee Policy have been carried out for the period July 2020 to June 2021.

Decision:

Moved Kerry Phillips
Seconded Stephen Coates

That the Officers recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

15. SELF-DEVELOPMENT

- Stephen Coates reported that hearing the emerging risks from around the other companies and council's he works with provided ongoing self-development and encouraged the committee to consider other organisations emerging risks, what they might be and how they might apply to Gladstone Regional Council.
- Kerry Phillips advised that she has started working with Mt Isa Council and Noosa Shire Council and identifying the parallels with Gladstone Regional Council and further advised that she has encouraged Mt Isa Council to reach out to Gladstone Regional Council for advice on those similar issues and highlighted the benefits in bringing shared insights to the committee.

16. COUNCIL REFERRALS

Nil.

17. GENERAL BUSINESS

Nil.

18. CLOSED SESSION - AUDIT REPRESENTATIVES

There were no matters to report from the Closed Session – Audit Representatives.

There being no further business the chairperson formally closed the meeting.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 1:00pm

CERTIFICATION

I hereby confirm that I have read the minutes and they are a true and correct record of the proceedings of the meeting. I certify that these 30 pages form the official copy of Gladstone Regional Council Audit Risk and Improvement Committee Minutes of the 16 June 2021.

.....
Kerry Phillips (Chairperson)

...../...../.....
Date