



George Town Council

DRAFT Special Committees Policy

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Introduction

This Policy sets out the guidelines and procedures for the creation and maintenance of Special Committees.

Background

This policy provides a process and guidelines to Council in addition to Section 24 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, which states:

24. Special Committees

- (1) *A council may establish, on such terms and for such purposes as it thinks fit, special committees.*
- (2) *A special committee consists of such persons appointed by the council as the council thinks appropriate.*
- (3) *The council is to determine the procedures relating to meetings of a special committee.*

Policy Statement

The George Town Council's Mission Statement is:

“To commit to lead, work with, support, listen and respond to our community”.

One strategy in the realisation of this Mission Statement is the establishment where appropriate of special committees to undertake specific tasks or projects on behalf of the Council.

Policy Objective

The objective of this policy is to provide a mechanism for the establishment of special committees that considers the options, is equitable, transparent and accountable, and promotes good leadership in the community.

Statement of Principles

The principles recognised by Council in establishing this policy are:-

1. The importance of effective civic leadership with integrity for the betterment of our community.
2. The Council will encourage community participation and involvement and recognises the valuable role residents and community groups can play in assisting the Council to set priorities so that they accord with community needs.
3. Issues of equity and consistency in Council decisions and processes and the need for transparency and accountability will be paramount.

Link to Strategic Plan

George Town Council Strategic Plan 2012-2017

Goal 1 – To be a responsible, accountable local government.

Strategy: Acknowledge and communicate the roles and responsibilities of Council in advocating for and representing the community.

Objective: Actively engage with the community on roles and responsibilities of Council.

Legislation

- Local Government Act 1993

Internal Council Documents

- George Town Council Risk Management Policy No. 33

Guidelines and Procedures

The following procedures will apply in considering the need for and establishment of Special Committees of Council in accordance with the Local Government Act, and should be incorporated into any report to Council regarding the review or establishment of such a committee. The process is an internal one except where Council specifically determines that the Community Consultation Policy should apply. The procedures align with the flowchart in Attachment 1.

Identify the Need for a Special Committee

Before establishing a Special Committee of Council, careful consideration should be given to whether the circumstances call for such an action. Other options for addressing the identified issue should be considered, with the establishment of a Special Committee being just one potential remedy.

If a more suitable alternative is identified, the process for establishment of a Special Committee of Council should cease.

Identify the Purpose of the Proposed Committee

Once it is determined that a Special Committee of Council is the most appropriate remedy for an identified issue, the purpose for which the Committee will be formed should be articulated. The purpose should specifically address the identified need, and should include details of the roles and responsibilities of the proposed committee that, if properly executed, will directly lead to the resolution of the need or issue. Any budgetary implications or responsibilities should be considered at this stage.

If the purpose, roles and responsibilities and budget have not been identified, the process for establishment of a Special Committee of Council should cease.

Identify Committee Membership

Identification of Committee membership comprises three distinct steps:

1. Determination of membership criteria;
2. Selection or nomination of members; and

Guidelines and Procedures (Cont.)

3. Appointment of members.

(Steps 2 & 3 are described here only for purposes of considering the implementation of a Special Committee. The actual selection and appointment of members will not occur until after the Terms of Reference have been finalised).

When considering the most appropriate membership for the Committee, the following points should act as a guide:

- Need for any specialist skills or knowledge;
- Need for balanced representation (considering age, gender and diversity of interests and experience);
- Whether the nature of the Committee calls for resident or tenant representation and what balance will be achieved across stakeholder groups;
- Need to balance desire for diverse representation with consideration for practical operation of the committee and the relative benefits of restricting membership to no more than twelve people;
- The extent, if any, of Council representation on the Committee, whether Councillor and/or Staff representation, how they will be appointed and what role they will play on the committee;
- Membership tenure and any restrictions on number of consecutive terms.

Options to consider for identification and selection of Committee members-elect include:

- Direct appointment by Council;
- Direct invitation to either individuals or organisations;
- Public advertisement of committee member vacancies;
- Election of members where appropriate (e.g. for an area committee);
- A combination of any of the above.

Appointment of Committee members will not occur until members-elect are ratified by Council in a formal meeting.

If the membership criteria and method of identification and selection has not been determined, the process for establishment of a Special Committee of Council should cease.

Identify How the Committee Will Operate

When considering operating procedures for a proposed Special Committee, the following points should act as a guide:

- How the Committee will operate;
- Whether there will be office bearers, how they will be appointed and the term of appointment;
- Whether an executive will be able to meet outside normal Committee meetings;
- How often the Committee will meet;
- How the Committee will report to Council and the Community;
- Whether the Committee will have an operating budget and how that will be managed;
- Which Council department will have administrative, budgetary and operational responsibility for the Committee;

Guidelines and Procedures (Cont.)

- What degree of administrative support will be provided to the Committee and whether sufficient resources exist within the organisation to deliver that support.

All Special Committees of Council will be reviewed annually against the Special Committee Policy and Procedures. A review of existing Special Committees of Council will be conducted upon adoption of the Policy, and thereafter all reviews will be conducted in or as near as possible to December of each year.

If the operational procedures have not been determined, the process for establishment of a Special Committee of Council should cease.

Establish Terms of Reference

After consideration of the previous steps and before proceeding with the establishment of a Special Committee of Council, Terms of Reference for the proposed committee should be developed and approved by Council. The Special Committee of Council Terms of Reference Template (see Attachment 2) should be used to prepare the document.

The selection and appointment of Committee members should not proceed before the Terms of Reference have been formally adopted by Council.

Selection or Nomination of Members

The method of selection of members should proceed as determined by Council in the above guidelines.

Establish Committee

Once the above steps have been completed, the Special Committee of Council may be established and members-elect appointed by determination of the Council in a formal meeting.

Risk Management

This Policy aligns itself to Council's Risk Management Policy No. 33 in that it promotes the maintenance of overall set performance standards and the regular review and improvement of Council practices and procedures.

Scope of Policy

This Policy applies to George Town Council workers and the public.

Implementation of Policy

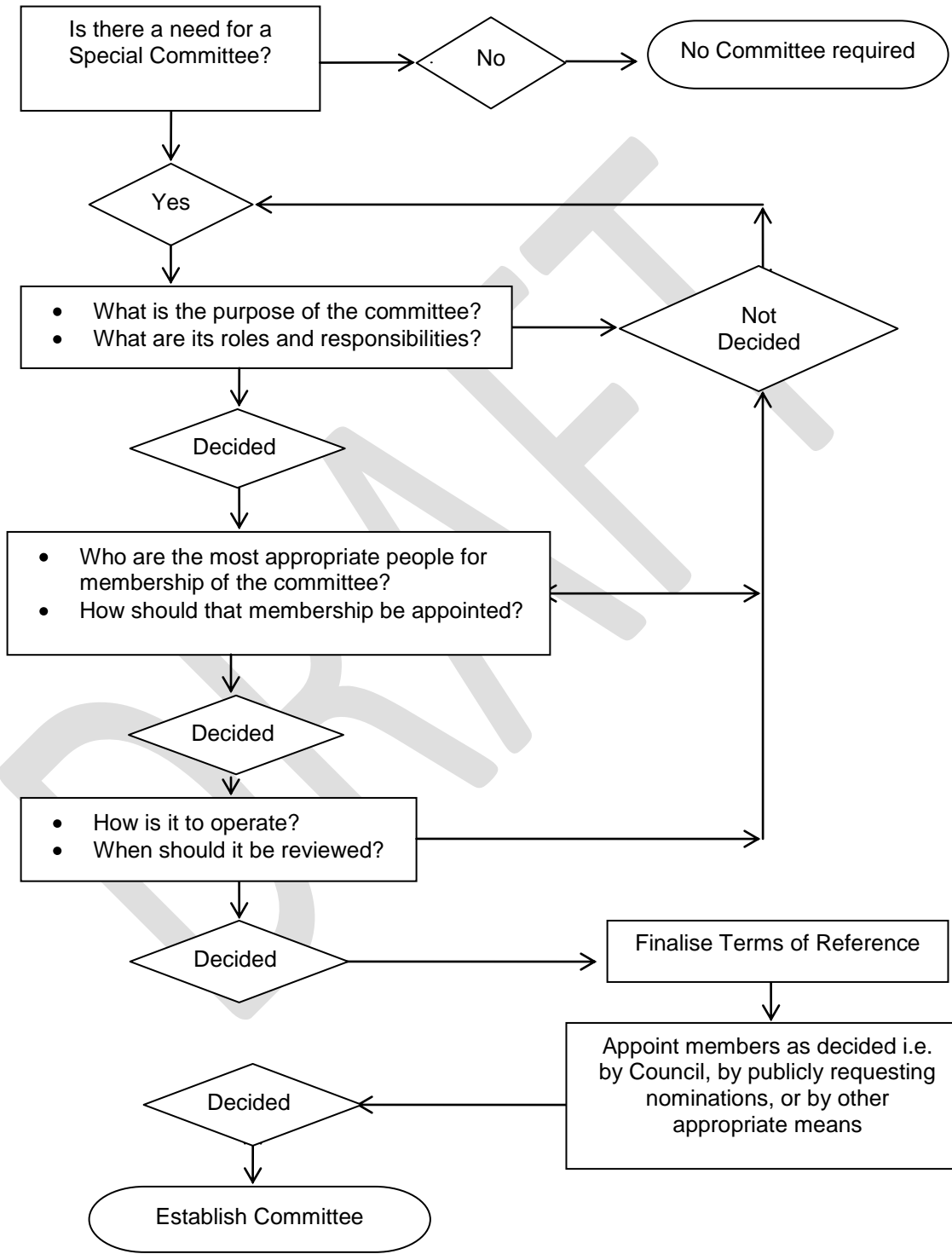
This Policy rescinds Council's previous Special Committees Policy No. 7.

This Policy shall be reviewed annually by the General Manager and the Executive Team to ensure its continued suitability and effectiveness against relevant legislation and the requirements of Council's Risk Management Strategy.

Responsibility

Responsibility for the operation of this Policy rests with the General Manager.

Process Model



Terms of Reference Template

TERMS OF REFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

- “The XYZ Committee is established as a Special Committee of Council”
- Why the committee was established
- When it was established
- Under what legislative power it was established

AIM

- Main purpose of the committee (in one sentence)

OBJECTIVES

- Key tasks of the committee – e.g. ‘to provide specialist advice and support to Council relating to ...’

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Key method of operation of the committee – e.g. ‘The XYZ committee advises and makes recommendations to Council on matters relating to ...’.
- Include any key responsibilities, such as managing a facility, administration of any finances
- Consider its powers, whether it has the ability to establish sub-committees, and how it will communicate with Council and community

MEMBERSHIP

- Provide specific information about eligibility for membership
- Make-up of the membership
- How members are nominated and appointed (note: a Special Committee of Council appointed under the Local Government Act can only be appointed by the Council)
- Consider: whether resident or tenant or community or a combination of representatives, number of members/number or representatives from each stakeholder group, representation from Council and/or Council Staff, whether committee is to be chaired by a Council or Community representative
- Include information about whether and which executive office positions there will be and how those positions are determined
- Provide details of term of appointment to the committee and whether there are any restrictions on number of consecutive terms

Terms of Reference Template (Cont.)

MEETINGS

- How often the committee will meet (or minimum number of meetings to be held each calendar year)
- Number of members required for a quorum
- Whether Council officers are to attend meetings
- Whether an executive group may be formed to meet outside whole committee meetings
- Whether any administrative support is to be provided to the committee

DEFINITIONS

- A description of any key terms or concepts that apply to the role or responsibilities of the committee (e.g. “For the purposes of this Committee, Access and Equity is defined as follows...”)
- Definition of the term “Special Committee of Council” as prescribed in the Local Government Act

REVIEW PERIOD

- Details of any review period (e.g. “The Committee’s terms of reference, membership and responsibilities shall be reviewed annually by Council”)
- Intended length of the Committee and any qualifiers (e.g. “The Committee is established for a period of two years from [date] or until the completion of the ABC project”)