

GRIFFITH CITY COUNCIL **REPORT**

CL03

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF SERVICES - GRIFFITH CITY COUNCIL
FROM: Brett Stonestreet, General Manager

SUMMARY

This report presents for Council's consideration the final report from Blackadder Associates in relation to the first phase of the organisation's service review program. The document assesses Council's readiness for a series of service reviews using Best Value methodology. This report seeks Council's endorsement in principle of the recommendations included in the review document and to progress the first phase of Best Values Reviews.

RECOMMENDATION

(a) Council endorse in principle the 'Review of Council Readiness for Best Value Reviews' Report inclusive of recommendations contained therein, subject to any amendments as determined by Council.

(b) The General Manager prepare a report for Council's consideration in terms of an implementation plan for the various recommendations referred to in (a) above.

(c) (i) Council undertake the Customer Focus Review across the entire organisation commencing in the current financial year (2013/14) and a variation be made to the budget through the March 2014 quarterly review process to undertake this project.

(ii) That Blackadder Associates be engaged to assist with this review using Best Value Review Methodology.

(d) Council undertake the Roads Design, Construction, Maintenance and Associated Services Best Value Review during the 2014/15 financial year and that provision be made in Council's draft 2014/15 budget (Operational Plan) for this purpose.

(e) As a matter of Policy, Council undertake the Customer Focus Review and Roads - Design, Construction, Maintenance and Associated Services Review with the objective of achieving best practice. These two reviews will not result in outsourcing of these services.

BACKGROUND

Councillors are aware that the Minister for Local Government released the final reports of the Independent Local Government Review Panel and the Local Government Acts Task Force for public comment on 8 January 2014. Council subsequently considered both reports and resolved at its 11 February 2014 meeting to make a submission. That submission was lodged on Monday 10 March 2014.

One of the themes within the Independent Panel Report is that of "Improvement, Productivity and Accountability" and one of the key recommendations within this theme is as follows:

Recommendation 21. "The Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines are to be amended to incorporate regular service reviews. The service reviews will be part of the Delivery Program."

During 2013, Griffith City Council, in anticipation of such a recommendation from the Panel, resolved to commence a program of service reviews in 2014. To assist this process, in January 2014 Council engaged the services of Blackadder Associates initially to undertake an organisation wide review to assess Council's capacity or readiness to conduct specific service reviews. The final report "Review of Council Readiness for Best Value Reviews" has been received and is included as an attachment to this report. The document has been workshopped with Councillors and contains several recommendations.

The Report includes a preliminary prioritisation table of various services reviews (refer page 39). This table was prepared by the consultants following discussions with staff and Councillors. The intention at this point is to determine only the first two services for review with prioritisation of subsequent reviews to be further deliberated by Council.

It is also intended to have external assistance in conducting the first two reviews only such that the Best Value Review methodology is well established.

Griffith City Council has undergone considerable adjustment during the last 3 years especially from the perspective of organisation structural change. The staff of the organisation have demonstrated remarkable maturity in working together during this period to refocus the organisation toward a long term financially sustainable path. I commend my staff in this regard.

The next phase is for Council to examine its various services in an objective way to explore opportunities for improved efficiency and effectiveness. Our goal is to achieve best practice or best value in all our service outcomes. Council delivers many services at a very high standard but there are always opportunities for self examination and possible improvement. Engaging with our customers and bench marking against others is certainly key to this process.

My staff are ready to engage productively in this review process and I would like to reassure them that they will be given the opportunity to identify improvements and implement these with a sense of security. Recommendation (e) above, seeks Council's support in this regard.

OPTIONS

- (a) As recorded in the recommendations to this report.
- (b) That Council resolve as per the recommendations as recorded in the report subject to nominating two alternative service review priorities to those included in this report.
- (c) That Council note the "Review of Council Readiness for Best Value Reviews" Report.

STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

a) Policy Implications

Not Applicable

b) Financial Implications

Should Council endorse the recommendations in the report the impact on budget will be as follows:

2013/14 Budget (Current year) - Customer Focus Review - \$16,500 ex GST plus travel and accommodation.

2014/15 Draft Budget - Roads - Design, Construction, Maintenance and Associated Services Review \$40,000 Ex GST estimate only.

c) Legal/Statutory Implications

There is no statutory requirement at this stage to undertake service reviews but Council intends to take a proactive role in the Local Government reform process.

CONSULTATION

Councillors, Senior Management Team, Middle Managers and External Consultants

STRATEGIC LINKS

a) Growth Strategy Plan

'Growing Griffith 2030 - Griffith Community Strategic Plan'

Leadership Theme Goals:

To engage in an integrated planning framework that ensures a sustainable future for Griffith and its community

To engage with the community and others in decision making and planning.

To collaborate with partners

To be a respected, professional and accountable organisation

To encourage community well-being and safety.

b) Corporate/Business Plan

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT: To employ sound financial and other management practices so as to optimise use of Council's resources and ensure that the recipients of Council's services receive value and contribute on an equitable basis.

STAFF RESOURCES: To employ adequate numbers of appropriately trained and motivated personnel to efficiently and effectively undertake the functions of Council.

COUNCIL SERVICES: To provide services in an effective and cost efficient manner that will satisfy the identified needs of the community.

DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT: To practice systems of control and industrial promotion that recognises the need for a balance between sustainable economic development and environmental protection.

ATTACHMENTS

UNDER SEPARATE COVER

- (a) Final report "Review of Council Readiness for Best Value Reviews"