

Local Government Participation and Elections Review

Strategic Alignment – Our Corporation

Public

Tuesday, 20 February 2024
City Finance and Governance
Committee

Program Contact:
Alana Martin, Manager
Governance

Approving Officer:
Anthony Spartalis, Acting Chief
Operating Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks Council endorsement of a submission as part of the State Government's Local Government Participation and Elections Review. The Review asks for the following feedback:

- ways to better engage and participate with councils;
- ways to encourage a greater number of more diverse candidates for election to councils;
- ways to increase voter turnout;
- ways to ensure that council elections are run efficiently, with the highest level of integrity.

The aim of this State Government consultation is to inform reform proposals and the development of the bill to amend local government legislation.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 27 February 2024 for consideration

THAT THE CITY FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL

THAT COUNCIL

1. Endorses the submission to the Local Government Participation and Elections Review being undertaken by the Office of Local Government, and included in Attachment A to Item 7.6 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Finance and Governance Committee held 20 February 2024.
 2. Authorises the Acting Chief Executive Officer or delegate to make minor, typographical or syntactical updates to the documents contained in Attachment A to Item 7.6 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Finance and Governance Committee held 20 February 2024.
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IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	Our Corporation <i>Demonstrate bold capital city leadership and robust with our community at the heart of our decisions</i>
Policy	Not as a result of this report
Consultation	Not as a result of this report
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Feedback gathered via this consultation will play a key role in informing reform proposals and the development of the bill to amend local government legislation, including the: <i>Local Government Act 1999 (SA)</i> <i>Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 (SA)</i> <i>City of Adelaide Act 1998 (SA)</i>
Opportunities	Council's submission allows it to advocate for improvements for the specific provisions as they apply to the City Adelaide, as well as those provisions that apply to the whole sector.
23/24 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Proposed 24/25 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Not as a result of this report
23/24 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

1. The Office of Local Government is conducting a state-wide consultation, giving the community an opportunity to provide feedback on ideas and suggestions on how communities can better engage with their councils throughout a council term and, particularly at election time. The aim of this consultation is to inform reform proposals and the development of the bill to amend local government legislation.
2. As part of the review the Office of Local Government has prepared a discussion paper (Link 1 view [here](#)).
3. The review is divided into four areas
 - 3.1. ways to better engage and participate with councils;
 - 3.2. ways to encourage a greater number of more diverse candidates for election to councils;
 - 3.3. ways to increase voter turnout; and
 - 3.4. ways to ensure that council elections are run efficiently, and with the highest level of integrity.
4. A summary of each topic is provided below.
 - 4.1. Topic One covers ideas and suggestions for:
 - 4.1.1. A new Community Engagement Charter (see draft charter prepared by the Local government Association (Link 2 view [here](#)))
 - 4.1.2. More accessible council meetings
 - 4.2. Topic Two covers ideas and suggestions for changing:
 - 4.2.1. Council members' allowances
 - 4.2.2. Flexibility of council meetings
 - 4.2.3. Extent of local promotion for council nominations
 - 4.2.4. Term limits for council members
 - 4.2.5. Training requirements for candidates
 - 4.2.6. Timing for publishing of nominations
 - 4.2.7. Ward structure
 - 4.2.8. Council boundaries
 - 4.3. Topic Three covers ideas and suggestions for changing:
 - 4.3.1. The nature of voting for councils (compulsory vs voluntary)
 - 4.3.2. Eligibility to vote in Council elections
 - 4.3.3. Methods of voting
 - 4.3.4. Timing of council elections
 - 4.3.5. Election promotion methods
 - 4.3.6. Amount of candidate information provided to voters
 - 4.4. Topic 4 allows for the Council to provide specific feedback on ideas for improvement.
5. A draft submission has been prepared and is included in Attachment A for Council's consideration.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – Local Government Participation and Elections Review Discussion Paper

Link 2 - Draft LGA Community Engagement Charter.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – City of Adelaide Submission into Local Government Participation and Elections Review

- END OF REPORT -