
COUNCILLOR PORTFOLIO POLICY

INTENT

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines defining the roles and responsibilities of the Mayor and Councillors as representatives for designated portfolios of Council. This policy ensures effective utilisation of Councillors' individual expertise while maintaining appropriate governance frameworks and community engagement processes.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- The Mayor and all Councillors of Council;
- The Chief Executive Officer and Directors who assist with the implementation of this policy; and
- Community members and stakeholders engaging with Council on portfolio-related matters.

DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Councillor	The Mayor and Councillors of Cook Shire Council.
Portfolio	A designated area of Council responsibility assigned to a Councillor for representative and community engagement purposes.
Portfolio Councillor	A Councillor appointed to act as representative and community liaison for a specific portfolio area.
Strategic Level	High-level policy, planning and community engagement matters, as distinct from day-to-day operational management.
Sounding Board	The role of providing advice, feedback and community perspective to the Executive Leadership Team on strategic matters.

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POLICY STATEMENT

Council recognises that Councillors act as elected community representatives and "sounding boards" for strategic issues and suggestions from senior officers, members of the business community, and other Councillors. The portfolio system provides a structured approach to community representation while ensuring all Councillors remain accountable to the whole local government area.

Each portfolio shall be assigned to a Councillor by resolution of Council. Portfolio assignments may be changed at any time through Council resolution.

PORTFOLIO SYSTEM OBJECTIVES

The portfolio system is designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. **Workload Distribution:** Share the workload associated with being an elected member equitably across all Councillors, ensuring no single Councillor bears disproportionate responsibility for community engagement and representation.
2. **Skills Utilisation:** Maximise the benefit of Councillors' individual skills, knowledge, and background by strategically linking them to portfolio areas that align with their expertise and interests.
3. **Community Access:** Enable the community to easily identify which Councillor to approach for specific strategic issues, improving accessibility and responsiveness of Council representation.
4. **Informed Decision Making:** Generate well-informed discussion among the whole of Council by ensuring each Councillor develops deep knowledge in their portfolio area while contributing to broader Council decisions.
5. **Strategic Sounding Board:** Facilitate Councillors acting as effective sounding boards for strategic issues and suggestions from senior officers, community members, and other Councillors relating to their portfolio areas.
6. **Community Reporting:** Ensure Councillors maintain active communication with the community, reporting back on Council decisions, initiatives, and strategic directions within their portfolio areas.

ROLE OF PORTFOLIO COUNCILLOR

Portfolio Councillors are outward-focused community representatives whose role includes:

Strategic Engagement:

- Identifying opportunities and challenges within their portfolio area
- Participating in strategic plan development for their portfolio
- Representing Council on external bodies as resolved by Council.

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Community Liaison:

- Serving as key point of contact for industry groups, community organisations, and associations
- Attending meetings, forums, and deputations as required
- Engaging with stakeholders to understand community needs and priorities
- Facilitating community input into Council's strategic planning processes.

Council Communication:

- Keeping the Mayor informed of significant portfolio issues
- Liaising with other Councillors on cross-portfolio matters
- Reporting portfolio feedback to Council meetings
- Ensuring accurate representation of whole-of-Council positions rather than personal views.

Knowledge Development:

- Staying fully informed of portfolio-related matters reported to Council
- Conducting research and seeking additional information as necessary
- Engaging with community and requesting briefings from officers in accordance with established guidelines.

Objectivity and Balance:

- Portfolio Councillors must maintain objectivity in their representative role, actively seeking and considering diverse community viewpoints
- When providing strategic advice or acting as a sounding board, Portfolio Councillors should present balanced perspectives that reflect the breadth of community views, not just those aligned with their personal or professional interests
- Portfolio Councillors should be mindful of potential conflicts of interest and declare any personal or professional connections that may influence their portfolio activities.

LIMITATIONS OF PORTFOLIO ROLE

Portfolio Councillors do not have authority to:

- Become involved in operational matters of the organisation
- Give directions to staff or independently set policy
- Commit Council funds or promise funding for projects
- Make strategic or policy decisions on behalf of Council.

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POWERS AND AUTHORITIES

The portfolio system provides no formal delegated authority to Portfolio Councillors. It provides an opportunity to develop strategic leadership and maintain heightened knowledge across the region in specified areas of Council responsibility.

The portfolio system operates within the legislative framework that requires:

- Corporate decisions on policies and resources to be made at properly constituted Council meetings
- Compliance with provisions preventing Councillors from giving directions to staff
- All Councillors to serve the overall public interest of the whole local government area.

REPORTING PROTOCOLS

Council Reporting

- A standing agenda item shall be included in Councillor Workshops for portfolio reports
- Portfolio Councillors shall update all Councillors on significant issues arising in their portfolio area
- Written reports are preferred for complex strategic issues
- Any business arising from previously notified matters shall be updated through the portfolio agenda item.

Community Reporting

Portfolio Councillors shall:

- Provide regular updates to the community through appropriate channels, which include Councillors reports in ordinary council meetings, community meetings, social media, and other channels as approved by the Mayor
- Report on Council decisions and initiatives relevant to their portfolio
- Communicate strategic directions and policy developments
- Seek community feedback on proposed initiatives and policy directions.

Media Protocols

- All media statements shall comply with Council's Media Management Policy
- Only the Mayor and CEO are authorised to speak to the media on behalf of Council
- Individual Councillors remain free to make personal comments to the media but are not authorised to speak on Council's behalf
- Portfolio Councillors must clearly distinguish between personal views and Council positions when engaging with media.

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KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	RESPONSIBILITY
Mayor	Overall Council spokesperson; may hold specific portfolio responsibilities; coordinate between Portfolio Councillors and Executive Leadership Team.
Portfolio Councillors	Act as community liaison and representative for assigned portfolio; participate in strategic planning; report to Council on portfolio matters; engage with relevant stakeholders.
Chief Executive Officer	Facilitate portfolio implementation; ensure appropriate support to Portfolio Councillors; maintain governance compliance.
Directors	Provide professional advice and support to Portfolio Councillors; prepare reports and briefings; assist with stakeholder engagement.
All Councillors	Participate in informed discussion on all portfolio matters; support portfolio system objectives; maintain whole-of-Council perspective.

REFERENCES, LEGISLATION AND GUIDELINES

Local Government Act 2009

Local Government Regulation 2012

Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Councillor Acceptable Requests Guidelines

Media Management Policy

IMPLEMENTATION/COMMUNICATION

This policy shall be:

- Provided to all Councillors upon adoption
- Published on Council's website
- Referenced in induction materials for new Councillors

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- Reviewed as part of regular policy review cycles

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring appropriate administrative support is provided to enable Portfolio Councillors to fulfil their roles effectively.

APPROVED BY

Council Resolution 2025/168

REVIEW

SPONSOR:	Manager Office of the CEO
OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEW:	Executive Support Officer
ADOPTION DATE:	26 August 2025
REVIEW DATE:	In the first 6 months following the quadrennial local government elections.

THIS POLICY IS TO REMAIN IN FORCE UNTIL OTHERWISE DETERMINED BY COUNCIL

AMENDMENT HISTORY

VERSION	AMENDMENT DETAILS	AMENDMENT DATE	APPROVAL
1.0	New Policy	26 August 2025	2025/168

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