Terms of Reference: Sustainability Advisory Group

Version 1.0 | October 2026

Purpose and status

The Sustainability Advisory Group provides a forum for community, council member and Town input on sustainability across the Town's activities. It provides advice to the Administration on improving sustainability performance and on developing and implementing the Town's Sustainability Strategy. The Group includes a standing Wetlands component covering Galup (Lake Monger) and Perry Lakes.

The Group is an advisory forum administered by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). It is not a committee established under section 5.8 of the *Local Government Act 1995*. It has no delegated authority, does not make decisions for the Town or Council, and does not direct employees, commit resources or approve expenditure. Advice from the Group does not bind the Town or Council.

Scope of advice

The Group may provide advice on:

- Guiding principles for environmental sustainability, social wellbeing, responsible economic development and good governance, consistent with the Town's strategic direction.
- How sustainability principles can be reflected in relevant Town plans, policies and strategic work.
- Development, implementation and review of the Town's Sustainability Strategy.
- Emerging sustainability issues, evidence and opportunities for community participation.
- Through the Wetlands component, the matters set out under "Wetlands component" below.

Town officers may seek feedback on proposals before decisions are made through the Town's usual processes.

The Group does not set Town policy, determine operational priorities, approve projects or replace formal consultation, statutory processes or Council decision-making. Matters outside its scope may be referred by the Chair to the appropriate Town officer for consideration.

Membership and appointment

Core membership comprises:

- Two council members nominated by Council.
- Up to six community members selected through an expression of interest process.
- The Director Planning and Community Services and Manager Strategic Planning, or their nominees.
- The Senior Sustainability Officer as Executive Officer, who may also contribute technical advice.

Town officers participate as part of the Administration.

1 Bold Park Drive
Floreat, Western Australia 6014

Phone: (08) 9347 6000
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www.cambridge.wa.gov.au

The CEO appoints community members, having regard to relevant sustainability experience, connection to the Town and a balanced range of perspectives. Council may nominate council members to participate and appoint one of them as Chair. The CEO may fill community vacancies using the same process, including from a recent expression of interest process.

Community and council member participation is for a term of up to two years, normally aligned with the local government election cycle. Members may be reappointed. Participation ends on resignation, expiry of the term or, for a council member, ceasing to hold office. The CEO may end a community appointment for repeated non-attendance, conduct inconsistent with these terms, or another reasonable cause, after giving the member an opportunity to respond.

Members serve voluntarily and no sitting fees are payable. Members contribute their own views and experience, while considering the broader needs of the community. Invited specialists, agencies and other stakeholders may attend relevant items at the Chair's invitation; they are not members.

Wetlands component

The Wetlands component is a standing part of the Group that provides a structured forum to bring together the Town's work, Friends group activity, and independent scientific and community input on Galup (Lake Monger) and Perry Lakes, including their waterbodies and surrounding reserves.

Through the Wetlands component, the Group may provide advice on:

- The condition and management of the lakes and surrounding reserves.
- Monitoring results and knowledge gaps.
- Implementation of adopted management plans and projects for the lakes.
- Emerging environmental issues and opportunities for community involvement and education.

Wetlands component meetings are attended by core members of the Group and the following participants:

- Up to two (2) representatives nominated by each of the Friends of Perry Lakes and Friends of Galup.
- Up to four (4) additional community members with relevant wetlands experience or connection to the lakes, selected through an expression of interest process.
- The Director Infrastructure and Works and Manager Parks and Natural Environment, or their nominees.
- The Natural Environment Officer as Wetlands Coordinator, who may also contribute technical advice.

Wetlands participants are members of the Group for Wetlands component meetings and Wetlands items only. They may attend other Group meetings at the Chair's invitation. Each Friends group nominates its representatives to the CEO, and participation ends if the nomination is withdrawn. Other appointment, term, conduct and interest provisions in these terms apply to Wetlands participants in the same way as to core members.

The Natural Environment Officer coordinates the Wetlands component with the Executive Officer, including preparing Wetlands agenda items and papers, arranging attendance of relevant Town officers and invited specialists, and providing a draft record of Wetlands advice and actions. Wetlands advice is provided to the Director Infrastructure

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and Works, with a copy to the Director Planning and Community Services, for assessment through normal administrative processes.

Chair and support

Council appoints one of its participating council members as Chair. If the Chair is unavailable, the other council member chairs the meeting; if neither is available, the Director Planning and Community Services or delegate chairs the meeting (or, for a Wetlands component meeting, the Director Infrastructure and Works or delegate). The Chair:

- Works with the Executive Officer to settle the agenda.
- Facilitates balanced discussion and identifies advice and differing views.
- Ensures meetings remain within scope.

The Chair has no independent authority to speak or act for the Town.

The Senior Sustainability Officer is the Executive Officer and provides secretariat support for the Group, supported by the Natural Environment Officer for the Wetlands component and other Town staff as required. The Executive Officer:

- Schedules meetings and calls for agenda items.
- Circulates agendas and supporting papers.
- Records attendance, advice and actions, and maintains the Town's records.

Meetings and agenda

The Group meets quarterly, with additional meetings arranged by the Chair and Executive Officer when useful. Dedicated Wetlands component meetings are held at least twice a year, in addition to or combined with Group meetings, as scheduled by the Chair, Executive Officer and Wetlands Coordinator having regard to the Town's wetlands work program. The first Wetlands component meeting will be held no later than 30 November 2026. Meetings are normally held in the Tuart Room at the Town of Cambridge Administration Centre, 1 Bold Park Drive, Floreat, with remote attendance available where practicable. The Executive Officer circulates proposed dates in advance.

Members should send proposed agenda items and supporting information to the Executive Officer at least 10 working days before a meeting. The Chair and Executive Officer settle the agenda, taking account of the Group's scope, available time and relevant Town work. Papers will normally be circulated at least five working days before the meeting. Urgent items may be accepted by the Chair in consultation with the Executive Officer.

Members should advise the Executive Officer if they cannot attend. A meeting may proceed when at least one Town officer and three non-staff members are present, including one community member (or, for a Wetlands component meeting, one community or Friends group member). If attendance is lower, those present may hold an informal briefing, but no Group advice will be recorded.

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Advice, actions and reporting

The Group aims to develop advice through discussion rather than formal voting. Where members have differing views, the meeting record will fairly capture the principal views and any areas of agreement. Advice is provided to the Director Planning and Community Services (or, for Wetlands component matters, as set out under "Wetlands component") for assessment through normal administrative processes. Matters requiring a Council decision are progressed through the usual reporting process, with the Group's input summarised where relevant.

The Executive Officer records the matters discussed, advice offered, differing views, agreed follow-up actions and responsible Town officer, if any. A draft record will normally be circulated within 10 working days and confirmed at the next meeting. Actions remain subject to available resources and the approval of the officer with relevant authority. Substantial new work or expenditure must be considered through the Town's normal approval and budget processes.

Conduct and interests

Members are expected to:

- Attend regularly, prepare for discussion and listen respectfully.
- Allow others to contribute and use information provided for the purposes of the Group.
- Disclose any financial, personal or organisational interest that could reasonably affect, or appear to affect, their contribution before the relevant item is discussed.

The Chair, with advice from the Executive Officer, will determine a practical way to manage an interest and record the disclosure and approach taken. Statutory obligations applying to a council member or employee continue to apply separately.

Information, confidentiality and public comment

Members may request the provision of information, which will generally be provided where deemed relevant to the stated functions of the group. The Executive Officer will identify papers or discussion that the Town considers confidential and explain any handling restrictions. Members must not disclose that material without the Town's authorisation. Other information may be discussed publicly, but members should identify their comments as their own or their organisation's views and avoid presenting them as an agreed position of the Group or the Town.

Members may speak about their own views, but only an authorised Town spokesperson may speak on behalf of the Town. Media enquiries about the Town or the Group should be referred to the Town's communications team. Meeting papers and records are managed under the Town's records and information release processes; they should not be assumed to be either public or confidential solely because they relate to the Group.

Review

The CEO will review these terms at least once every two years, or earlier if the Group's purpose, membership or Wetlands component needs to change. Amendments are approved through the Town's applicable approval process, including Council where it has made a relevant decision about the Group. Changes to the purpose, functions, membership structure or Wetlands component require Council approval.

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Appendix 1: Code of conduct

All members, including Wetlands component participants, are expected to follow this code while participating in the Sustainability Advisory Group. It supplements the conduct and information provisions in these terms of reference. Council members and Town employees remain subject to their separate statutory and employment obligations.

Member commitments

As a member of the Group, I will:

- Attend meetings regularly, prepare for discussion and advise the Executive Officer when I cannot attend.
- Contribute constructively, treat others with respect and allow all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard.
- Be clear whether I am expressing my own view or a view authorised by an organisation I represent; avoid claiming to speak for the broader community without evidence.
- Disclose any financial, personal or organisational interest that could reasonably affect, or appear to affect, my contribution before the relevant item is discussed, and follow the approach agreed by the Chair.
- Use information shared with the Group for its advisory purpose, comply with any confidentiality restrictions identified by the Town, and seek advice from the Executive Officer if uncertain about disclosure.
- Not present my views as an agreed position of the Group or the Town, or speak on the Town's behalf without authorisation. I will refer media enquiries about the Town or the Group to the Town's communications team.
- Not direct Town employees, promise Town resources, or imply that the Group can approve projects, expenditure or Town decisions.

Concerns about conduct

The Chair may address a concern during a meeting, including by asking a member to withdraw a comment, take a break or leave the meeting if necessary to restore orderly discussion. A continuing or serious concern should be referred to the CEO. Before deciding whether to end a community member's appointment under these terms of reference, the CEO will give the member an opportunity to respond. Concerns involving a council member or employee will be managed under the processes applicable to that person.

Acknowledgement

I have read and agree to follow this code while participating in the Group.

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

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