

REFORM OPTIONS:**COMMENTS:**

Brighton Council Workshop: 17/01/23

Establish a Tasmanian Local Government Charter which summarises councils' role and obligations, and establishes a practical set of decision-making principles for councils

Value in making roles of local government clearer.

As long as State Government doesn't handball everything to local government.

Councils do, and need to do, much more than roads and rubbish; wellbeing of residents is extremely important.

Would not like to see State Govt taking things off Local Govt that function better there e.g jobs hub

More meaningful partnership between State/Local/Other Councils needed.

There are currently vastly different community perspectives of what councils do.

Councils around the state have huge variation in how they see their role, this variation will be hard to narrow unless State Govt lead on this.

Council's cannot continue to take on additional roles without being funded appropriately for them.

Comment: Support the charter concept, with the proviso it needs to be negotiated with local government and fit for purpose.

Embed community wellbeing considerations into key council strategic planning and service delivery processes

Comment: Full support; but if legislated it needs to be clear what it means in practical/implementation terms.

Require councils to undertake Community Impact Assessments (CIA's) for significant new services or infrastructure

Need to define what they are and to what level and scale of development of new infrastructure and service they would be required for.

Does this only apply to council services or infrastructure, or is this intended to also apply to private and/or GBE projects as well?

Could this also be a requirement for rezonings and subdivisions?

On surface the idea is sound, but depends on how big it is/framework and what the cost and resourcing implications are relative to the scale of the service or project.

Comment: Supportive of the concept, but have concerns regarding costs and resources burden.

<p>Develop an improved councillor training framework which will require participation in candidate pre-election sessions and, if elected, ongoing councillor professional development</p>	<p>A lot of good work is being done in-house at Brighton, including workshops and training for new councillors.</p> <p>Concerned that this requirement could be viewed as hypocritical due to these requirements not applying for people who nominate for State or Federal government. Why is local government singled out for pre-election education when other forms are Govt aren't?</p> <p>There could be a better single handbook for new and/or aspiring councillors.</p> <p>There are clear advantages to candidates having a clear understanding of local government and the councillor role prior to standing.</p> <p>Agree with need for ongoing professional development.</p>
<p>Review the number of councillors representing a council area and the remuneration provided</p>	<p>Believe the current number of 9 is appropriate, as it provides for good diversity and representation across the community.</p> <p>With the current Act, there is a clear benefit in having an odd number of elected representatives to avoid tied or default negative votes.</p> <p>Concern that this option is designed to reduce the number of elected representatives around the state and decrease community representation.</p> <p>Wards can be very counterproductive. They can split the Council into factions and lead to councillors not acting in the interests of the <u>whole</u> community. This is not good for the community.</p> <p>Council is assuming a reduction in councils and boundary changes is likely to be a recommendation from the review, with a review of scale relative to potential revenue and infrastructure responsibilities.</p>
<p>Review statutory sanctions and dismissal powers</p>	<p>Comment: Full support</p>
<p>Establish systems and methods to support equitable and comprehensive representation of communities</p>	<p>Comment: Open to exploring / more detail required</p> <p>Concern regarding Wards as mentioned above, with a danger of creating territorialism and factions.</p>
<p>Require consistent, contemporary community engagement strategies</p>	<p>Comment: Full support</p>

<p>Establish a public-facing performance reporting, monitoring and management framework</p>	<p>Supportive of the concept, but the system needs to somehow recognise the diversity in how broad some councils approach their role and how narrow the approach of others is. Otherwise performance comparisons will be misleading.</p> <p>Needs to be some understanding of how broad role is of Council; financial matrix; comparisons – this relates back to the Charter concept.</p>
<p>Establish clear performance-based benchmarks and review ‘triggers’ based on the public-facing performance reporting, monitoring and management framework</p>	<p>Supportive of the concept, as long as KPI’s / benchmarks are meaningful and truly relevant to local government.</p> <p>Concern raised about lack of transparency on what those benchmarks would be; needs to be a transparent and consultative process around what they would be.</p> <p>Is the LG Review trying to create like for like municipalities? This is near impossible, as even when there are some geographic and population similarities, there is often different needs and demographics.</p>
<p>Implement a shared State and local government workforce development strategy</p>	<p>Comment: Supportive. Open to explore / more detail required</p>
<p>Target key skills shortages, such as planners, in a sector-wide or shared State/local government workforce plan</p>	<p>Comment: Supportive. Open to explore / more detail required</p>
<p>Establish ‘virtual’ regional teams of regulatory staff to provide a shared regulatory capability</p>	<p>This happens to a large extent already.</p> <p>Supportive of expansion and improvements to this approach.</p>
<p>Deconflict the role of councillors and planning authorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Refer complex planning development applications to independent assessment panels appointed by the Tasmanian Government ○ Remove councillors’ responsibility for determining development applications ○ Develop guidelines for the consistent delegation of development applications to council staff 	<p>Supportive of some large projects being taken away from council, eg. Bridgewater Bridge was taken off Council which had merit.</p> <p>Still see that Councillors has a role in what projects within the planning scheme get approved.</p> <p>Still think we should retain some responsibility with DA’s in our community</p> <p>Some councillors would rather see Performance Criteria decreased as they believe they are currently far to open and broad. If this was done decisions would be more black and white, with less discretion, which would make it easier for Council decisions.</p> <p>Comment: Broadly unsupportive of statutory planning being taken away from councillors.</p>
<p>Greater transparency and consistency of councils’ resourcing and implementation of regulatory functions</p>	<p>Comment: Full support.</p>
<p>Increase support for the implementation of regulatory processes, including support provided by the State Government</p>	<p>Comment: Full support.</p>

Strengthen connections between councils' strategic planning and strategic land-use planning by working with State and Commonwealth Governments	Comment: Full support.
Require councils to collaborate with others in their region, and with State Government, on regional strategies for specific agreed issues	Comment: Full support (dependant on specific issues/considerations) Full support of greater and better-structured regional collaboration, and a more active / formal partnership with the State government when appropriate. There do need to be mechanisms to allow for only including the councils for which a particular strategy or issue is relevant, rather than forcing all members to be involved in everything.
Establish stronger, formalised partnerships between State and local government on long-term regional, place-based wellbeing and economic development programs	Greater collaboration between State and Local Governments would be positive – currently no formal mechanisms to engage between local and state government on particular issues. Lack of engagement or formal mechanisms for collaboration with the State Government is a problem, as is a lack of a clear direction or policy position from the State on various matters. Lack of communication and co-ordination between State Government departments creates a lot of problems and inefficiencies for local government.
Introduce regional collaboration frameworks for planning and designing grant-dependent regional priorities	Comment: Open to exploring / more detail required. The concept is good, but it will require State support and appropriate mechanisms for achieving reasonable equity in cost and benefit for the relevant partners.
Support increased integration (including co-location) of 'front desk' services between local and state governments at the community level	Comment: Open to exploring / more detail required Wary of poor service levels in some State Govt departments – Councils could not get away with the service levels and lack of accessibility that many State departments do. Concern that this means Councils takes over front desk operations for State functions, without adequate funding.
Explore how councils are utilising sound taxation principles in the distribution of the overall rating requirement across their communities	This is a significant issue for Brighton, having a flat rate system. Assumption that the LG Review Board and Government would prefer all Councils to have a consistent rating model. The Review Board seem to prefer rates to be wealth tax rather than a charge based on provision of a service. This is a philosophical different between viewing rates as another form of 'progressive taxation' or a fee for a service provided. Community satisfaction with Brighton's rating system is very high. Open to exploring various mechanisms, including more and better use of specific and temporary charges for certain projects or infrastructure to enhance the concept of inter-generational equity. Unanimous councillor agreement that Brighton Council wish to continue with flat rating.

Enhance public transparency of rating policy changes	Unsure what isn't currently transparent?
Examine opportunities for improving councils' use of cost-reflective user charges to reduce the incidence of ratepayers' subsidising services available to all ratepayers, but not used by them all	Brighton Council have been doing this for the last 30 years. Supportive of this approach.
Consider options for increasing awareness and understanding of the methodology and impacts of the State Grants Commission's distribution of Federal Assistance Grants	Comment: Support
Investigate possible alternative approaches to current rating models, which might better support councils to respond to Tasmania's changing demographic profile	See comments above. Comment: Open to explore / more detail required
Standardise asset life ranges for major asset classes and increase transparency and oversight of changes to asset lives	Caution is needed here, as this could effectively mean all councils must use the same constructions methods to ensure standardised life ranges. There are a range of extremely valid reasons for using different methods. There are also a range of factors that influence life ranges in different areas, in addition to construction methods, such as climatic factors. The focus should be on sound defensible asset life assessments, not necessarily standardisation across all areas.
Introduce requirement for councils to undertake and publish 'full lifecycle' cost estimates of new infrastructure projects	Comment: Open to explore / more detail required
Introduce a requirement for councils to undertake regular service reviews for existing services	Comment: Supportive. Open to explore / more detail required
Support councils to standardise core asset management systems, processes, and software across councils	Forcing different independent businesses to use the same software will be very difficult to achieve in reality, potentially anti-competitive and not more efficient over the long term.