

OFFICERS REPORT**6.1 RESPONDING TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSPECTORATE**

Submitting Councillor: Dr Josh Fergeus

MOTION

That Council:

- 1. Notes the advice issued by the Local Government Inspectorate in July 2022 that “Councils should keep a register of councillor interactions with developers”;*
- 2. Further notes the advice of the Inspectorate that “Keeping a record of the interactions councillors have with developers will ensure any meetings are open and transparent and available for the public to see”;*
- 3. Re-affirms its commitment to the highest possible levels of transparency with regard to Council’s decision-making as to planning and development;*
- 4. Directs the CEO to request that the Inspectorate provides Council with further information pertaining to this advice, and to invite the Inspectorate to conduct a briefing for Council on these matters in the near future.*

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

N/A

IMPACT ON INTERNAL RESOURCES

N/A

COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

Council, in its Council Plan 2021-2025, is committed to “Maintain[ing] the highest standards of good governance”.

Council has undertaken a number of actions since 2017 to improve its transparency in decision making and incorporates these in its decision making processes.

RELEVANCE TO WORK ALREADY UNDERTAKEN BY OFFICERS OR COMMITTEES

Council has considered the question of keeping a record of the interactions Councillors have with developers or the creation of a developer register matter on two previous occasions.

The first occasion was at the 25 August 2020 Council meeting in light of approaches taken by the City of Bayswater, City of Adelaide, City of Vincent, Town of Bassendean, City of Rockhampton, and other Councils which have implemented such a policy (the development of a policy addressing Councillor contact with developers).

The second occasion was at the 31 November 2021 Council meeting. This follows the July 2020 Victorian Ombudsman investigation into allegations of collusion with property developers at Kingston City Council.

On both occasions, Council did not resolve to establish such a register.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

There is existing guidance in legislation and Council policies that affirm how Councillors should consider planning applications and engage with members of the public including developers.