

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.*

RATIONALE

Council has previously considered the matter of a register of contact with property developers and has elected not to establish a register.

Since the Local Government Inspectorate is advising Councils to establish such a register, it is prudent to revisit the issue.

Failing to respond to the advice of the Local Government Inspectorate opens Council up to significant future risk.

While Council prides itself on aiming for the highest standards of governance, this motion will serve to improve standards of transparency.

Over recent years there have been a number of high-profile matters relating to probity and corruption in local government, including these two examples in our region. By ensuring the highest standards of transparency, Council will increase community confidence, particularly in relation to its management of development and planning proposals.

Although Council has now missed the opportunity to be a leader in this space, such a policy would mitigate some of the unavoidable reputational damage experienced by all Councils resulting from recent investigations.