

10.2. Review of Council policies

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ATTACHMENTS	1. Council Policy Access to Information 1 2 [10.2.1 - 5 pages] 2. Council Policy Asset Management 1 3 [10.2.2 - 4 pages]
CSP LINK	5. Our Civic Leadership 5.1 Lead North Sydney's strategic direction 5.2 Strong civic leadership and customer focussed services 5.3 Community is engaged in what Council does 5.4 Council services are efficient and easy to access

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is for Council to commence a review of Council policies, beginning with Access to Information Policy and Asset Management Policy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Over the coming year, Council will undertake a review of all policies.
- Council Policies on the policy register that are due for review will be reviewed and presented to Council for readoption.
- The review will aim to improve the consistency, focus and ease of use of Council's policy framework, including the use of a new Council Policy template.
- To commence the review process, this report presents the reviewed versions of the Council policies below:
 - o Access to Information Policy
 - o Asset Management Policy

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council readopt the revised versions of the *Access to Information Policy* and the *Asset Management Policy* as attached to this report.

Background

Council's Policy Register lists several policies due for review. These will be reviewed across 2025/26 and reported to Council for readoption. The exception to this will be policies that have been recently reviewed or adopted in 2024. These will be revisited in their next scheduled review cycle and will not be reported to Council in 2025.

A Council policy is a statement of the mandatory principles guiding Councils activities and decision making and is established by a resolution of Council. Policies are binding and apply Council-wide. Policies are external facing and are published on Councils website.

As part of Councils overall improvement initiatives, a comprehensive review and redraft of Council policies is being undertaken this term with a view to ensuring policies clearly outline the policy direction.

A review of current policies indicates that overtime policies have become a mix of policy, procedure, communication, and duplication of legislative provisions. The review aims to reduce this to ensure effective and efficient administration of policies. Clearer, more focused policies are typically more effective and subject to less risk.

Report

The following policies have now been reviewed and are included for Councils adoption. Neither policy contains material change that would impact decision making or operations from current practices.

Access to Information Policy – fully revised and rewritten, retaining the key principles of the previous version. The latest version outlines our requirements and our approach under Government Information (Public Access) 2009 in a simpler and easier to understand manner.

A copy of the current policy is available on Council's website at the following link:

<https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/directory-record/2963/access-to-information-policy>

Asset Management Policy – fully revised and rewritten, retaining the key principles of the previous version. The latest version has an increased emphasis on related ISO Standards that apply to Asset Management principles and management systems for better referencing against our strategic objectives.

A copy of the current policy is available on Council's website at the following link:

<https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/directory-record/1327/asset-management-policy>

Consultation requirements

Community engagement is not required.

Community consultation will be utilised if, during our policy reviews, a substantive change in the purpose or principles of the policy is recommended.

Financial/Resource Implications

There are no direct financial implications of this report other than the resources assigned to the policy review, which will be current internal resources.

Legislation

- *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*
- *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (NSW)*
- *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) (GIPA)*

ACCESS TO INFORMATION POLICY

READOPTED:

14 April 2025

NEXT REVIEW:

2028/29

DOCUMENT TYPE:

Council Policy

POLICY OWNER:

Director Corporate Services

POLICY REFERENCE:

CNCL_POL_ECM8209314



1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose is to outline Council's principles and commitment in providing public access to information in accordance with the GIPA Act.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This Policy applies to all Councillors and employees of North Sydney Council.
- 2.2. This Policy applies to all members of the public seeking information held by Council.

3. DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
3.1 Document	Refers to files/correspondence, public registers, development and other applications, Council policies and any record of Council business, in whatever form.
3.2 Information	Refers to records as defined in s.3(1) of the <i>State Records Act 1998</i> : "any document or other source of information compiled, recorded or stored in written form or on film, or by electronic process, or in any other manner or by any other means".
3.3 GIPA Act	Refers to the <i>Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009</i> .

4. PROVISIONS

- 4.1. North Sydney Council aims to provide the community with as much access as possible to information held by Council, consistent with the following principles:
- a) open and transparent government
 - b) consideration of the overriding public interest in relation to access requests
 - c) proactive disclosure and dissemination of information and
 - d) respect for the privacy of individuals
- 4.2. This information will be available in four ways;
- a) As open access information,
 - b) Through the proactive release of the information,
 - c) In response to an informal request, or
 - d) Through a formal access to information application.
- 4.3. In assessing public interest, Council will refer to;

- a) The public interest considerations against disclosure in Section 14 of the GIPA Act; and
 - b) The information for which there is conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure in Schedule 1 of the GIPA Act.
- 4.4.** A formal access to information application may be necessary if the information being sought requires;
- a) A large volume of information
 - b) Extensive research of documents
 - c) Relates to third party personal/business information
 - d) Requires Council to apply the Public Interest considerations under the GIPA Act as noted above
- 4.5.** A formal application for access to information is lodged on North Sydney Council's website through the online form and requires the payment of a statutory application fee as per Council's Fees and Charges. Further processing fees may also apply in accordance with the GIPA Act and Council's Fees and Charges.
- 4.6.** A formal application for access to information will be processed in the timeframes noted under the GIPA Act. These are within 20 working days of receipt of a valid application, which may be extended a further 15 working days if consultation with a third party or retrieval from Council's archives is required.
- 4.7.** The lodgement of a formal application for access to information entitles the applicant to review rights, as detailed in Part 5 of the GIPA Act. These include;
- a) Internal review by Council, to be lodged within 20 working days of the Notice of Decision being given to the applicant, and conducted by a senior officer independent of the original decision,
 - b) External review by Information and Privacy Commission NSW (IPC NSW), to be lodged within 40 working days from the date of the original decision
 - c) External Review by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) to be lodged within 20 working days from the date of when the IPC NSW completed their review.
- 4.8.** Some North Sydney Council information belongs to third parties and is the subject of copyright. Access to this information is provided to members of the public in accordance with the GIPA Act and other relevant legislation, such as the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. Copyright laws

apply to this information and applicants are advised to seek the consent of the copyright owner before reproducing the information in any way.

- 4.9. Council has published an *Agency Information Guide* which includes information about Council, its structure, functions, policies and Council information that is made available to the public.

5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBLE	ACCOUNTABLE
5.1 Responsible Officer	The Service Unit Manager Corporate Governance is the responsible officer for this Policy and is accountable for its currency and communication.
5.2 Mayor and Councillors	Endorse the Policy and ensure that the Governance Strategy aligns with the Policy.
5.3 Chief Executive Officer	Council has delegated the Chief Executive Officer the authority to exercise the responsibilities detailed in this Policy.
5.4 Directors	Directors are responsible for ensuring their Directorate adheres to the requirements of this Policy and providing guidance in respect of the strategic objectives of the Policy within their Directorate and the organisation. In accordance with the requirements of the <i>GIPA Act</i> , an internal review will be done by a person who did not make the original decision.
5.5 Employees	Employees must adhere to the requirements of this Policy and operate within its authorities.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT	LOCATION
6.1 Community Engagement Protocol	Available on Council's website
6.2 Agency Information Guide	Available on Council's website
6.3 Code of Meeting Practice	CNCL POL ECM9128189
6.4 Community Engagement Policy	CNCL POL ECM7972411
6.5 Complaints Handling Policy	CNCL POL ECM9269092
6.6 Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy	CNCL POL ECM10229942
6.7 Open Government Policy	CNCL POL ECM7661696

7. RELATED LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

LEGISLATION or REFERENCED STANDARD	NOTES
7.1 Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009	Governs public access to information held by NSW government bodies, promoting transparency. It

	mandates proactive disclosure, informal and formal access requests, and a public interest test.
7.2 Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018	Supports the GIPA Act by outlining fees, procedures, and agency obligations for public access to government information, ensuring transparency and accountability.
7.3 Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002	Protects personal health information by regulating its collection, use, and disclosure, ensuring privacy, security, and access rights for individuals.
7.4 Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998	Regulates the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information by NSW public sector agencies, ensuring privacy, security, and individual access rights.
7.5 State Records Act 1998	Governs the creation, management, and preservation of NSW government records, ensuring accountability, accessibility, and compliance with recordkeeping standards
7.6 Local Government Act 1993	Section 12 ensures public access to council information, promoting transparency, accountability, and community participation, subject to privacy, confidentiality, and public interest considerations.
7.7 Environmental Planning and Assessment (EPA) Act 1979	Primarily in Section 10.7, ensures public access to planning documents, development applications, and environmental assessments, promoting transparency in planning processes.
7.8 Companion Animals Act 1998	Section 63 provides public access to information on registered animals, including details of ownership, microchipping, and compliance with animal welfare regulations.

8. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Resolution No.	Review Date
1	2 August 2004	Council	794	2008/09
2	16 February 2009	Council	61	2012/13
3	2 August 2010	Council	473	2012/13
4	18 February 2013	Council	61	2016/17
5	25 June 2018	Council	214	2020/21
6	27 July 2020	Council	78	2021/22
7	14 April 2025	Council		2028/29

ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY

READOPTED:

14 April 2025

NEXT REVIEW:

2028/29

DOCUMENT TYPE:

Council Policy

POLICY OWNER:

Director Open Space & Infrastructure

POLICY REFERENCE:

CNCL_POL_ECM9696472



1. PURPOSE

- 1.1** Council is the custodian of a wide range of assets including roads, footpaths, stormwater drains, buildings, land, fleet, and equipment. The purpose of this policy is to set a clear direction for asset management in line Council's strategic goals, community needs and intergenerational responsibilities.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1.** This Policy applies to all assets owned, controlled, or managed by Council. It shall be applied by Councillors, staff, contractors, and lessees (tenants) who conduct activities associated with the creation, acquisition, maintenance, operation, rehabilitation, and disposal of Council's assets.

3. DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
3.1 Asset	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An item, thing or entity that has potential or actual value to an organization (ISO 55000) 2. An item of Infrastructure, Property, Plant and Equipment (AASB 116)
3.2 Asset management System	Management system for asset management whose function is to establish the asset management policy and asset management objectives.

4. PROVISIONS

These provisions guide Council to meet the desired outcomes for Council's assets, consistent with the Community Strategic Plan, Integrated Planning and Reporting legislation and other strategic documents adopted by the Council.

- 4.1** Council will only acquire new assets where there is demonstrable need in the community for the service; and the need cannot be met by using, improving, or repurposing existing assets; and the lifecycle costs of the asset can be afforded by Council.
- 4.2** Council will consider consolidating or disposing of assets where the costs and risks of keeping the asset exceed the benefits to Council and the community.
- 4.3** Prioritisation will be given to the maintenance and renewal of expenditure to keep assets in an acceptable condition and minimise any increase in the renewal backlog.
- 4.4** Council will develop agreed levels of service for all infrastructure categories in consultation with the community.

- 4.4** Council will develop Asset Management Plans informed by relevant Council plans and strategies, including demand forecasts, community surveys and technology changes.
- 4.5** Council will align Asset Management Plans with Council's adopted Long-Term Financial Plan. Any funding gaps will be addressed by balancing risk, lifecycle cost and service levels.
- 4.6** An asset management framework aligned with the requirements of ISO 55001 will be prepared, implemented, monitored and continually improved.

5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBLE	ACCOUNTABLE
5.1 Responsible Officer	The Director Open Space and Infrastructure is the responsible officer for this Policy and is accountable for its currency and communication.
5.2 Mayor and Councillors	Endorse the Policy and ensure that the Asset Management Strategy and Asset Management Plans align with the Policy.
5.3 Chief Executive Officer	Council has delegated the Chief Executive Officer the authority to exercise the responsibilities detailed in this Policy.
5.4 Directors	Directors are responsible for ensuring their Directorate adheres to the requirements of this Policy and providing guidance in respect of the strategic objectives of the Policy within their Directorate and the organisation.
5.5 Employees	Employees must adhere to the requirements of this Policy and operate within its authorities.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

PROCEDURE, PROCESS or GUIDELINE	LOCATION
6.1 Asset Management Plans	As published on NSC Website
6.2 Community Strategic Plan	As published on NSC Website
6.3 Asset Accounting and Capitalisation Policy	CNCL POL ECM7660827
6.4 Financial Management Policy	CNCL POL ECM7661602
6.5 Delivery Program	As published on NSC Website

6.6 Resourcing Strategy incorporating the Long-Term Financial Plan, Asset Management Planning and Workforce Management Planning	As published on NSC Website
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7. RELATED LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

LEGISLATION or REFERENCED STANDARD	NOTES
7.1 Local Government Act 1993	Section 8A and 8B outline that Local Government operate in a financially sustainable manner, including responsibly managing infrastructure and assets. Sections 402 and 403 outline the requirements for asset planning and reporting in line with the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, including the Resourcing Strategy.
7.2 AS ISO 55000:2024 Asset management – Standards Australia	Outlines principles, terminology, and benefits of asset management, providing a framework for managing asset value, risk, and performance effectively.
7.3 AS ISO 55001:2024 Asset management – Asset management system requirements	ISO 55001 defines (Asset) Management Systems Requirements

8. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Resolution No.	Review Date
1	21 June 2010	Council	361	2012/13
2	18 February 2013	Council	61	2016/17
3	29 April 2013	Council	239	2016/17
4	25 June 2018	Council	214	2020/21
5	27 June 2022	Council	176	2024/25
6	14 April 2025	Council	xx	2028/29