



CUMBERLAND CITY COUNCIL

Council Meeting

Wednesday, 4 March 2020 at 6:30pm

Cumberland City Council Chambers

Merrylands Service Centre, 16 Memorial Avenue, Merrylands

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Regents Park Ward

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Item No: MM03/20-23

MAYORAL MINUTE - FORMALISING PROCESS FOR THE REVIEW OF THE GENERAL MANAGER'S PERFORMANCE

Author: Mayor Steve Christou
File Number: SC486

SUMMARY

Following the review of the General Manager's performance for the 12 months from July 2018 to June 2019, the review panel agreed that a more thorough and robust procedure should be implemented to assess the progress of the General Manager against key deliverables on a more frequent basis.

In addressing this recommendation, a process of documenting Council's progress against the operational plan on a quarterly basis has commenced. Whilst this provides Council with increased visibility about the budget and key projects, it does not suffice in terms of maintaining regular and open dialogue with the General Manager regarding overall performance in the role and other areas of focus for the organisation more broadly.

Councillors receive regular feedback from the community about their interactions with Council and where areas for improvement are identified, this needs to be relayed to the General Manager on a regular and systematic basis, with plans implemented to continually improve the organisation's operations and performance. Currently this occurs informally, however for an organisation of the size and scale of Cumberland, a more formal process is recommended.

In view of this, it would be prudent for the panel to meet and discuss additional mechanisms by which to conduct a more frequent formal review of the General Manager's performance against the set agreement and to allow the panel to seek feedback from all Councillors, and then convey this to the General Manager.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Obtain a report from the Director of People and Performance recommending a procedure by which Council can more regularly and thoroughly assess the performance of the General Manager in addressing the matters outlined above; and**
- 2. Convene the review panel to conduct a half-yearly performance review with the General Manager against the key deliverables for the current review period and that a report be provided back to Council summarising the outcomes of this review.**

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

Item No: MM03/20-24

MAYORAL MINUTE - COST SAVING MEASURES

Author: Mayor Steve Christou
File Number: SC486

SUMMARY

As Councillors are well aware the operating result for Council in 2018/19 was a deficit of around \$6.4 million. While year to date results at end of January 2020 are much better clearly results such as this are not sustainable and it is incumbent on Council to return the budget to a position where it returns surpluses each year. This will not be an easy task.

A structural problem in the budget has been identified which means that as a minimum Council is required to find ongoing savings in the budget of around \$7 million each year. While I acknowledge that there are a number of factors contributing to this situation, lingering in the past is not the answer. We need to move forward and rectify the problem.

At budget workshops held in November and February, a large number of options have been discussed as to how these savings can be achieved. It is clear that we will have to look for cost saving measures across the full range of Council services and activities. No area is immune. I was very disturbed however to learn that the United Services Union had issued a publication implying that Council had taken a decision to exit the provision of education and care of children. This is not true – Council has not formally considered any savings measures and no decisions have been made. It is my priority to ensure that child care places are protected.

It is critical in these difficult financial times however that every service that Council provides and every back office activity is as efficient and effective as possible and this is the task that Councillors have set for the organisation.

In identifying cost saving measures however it is also important that Council does not do silly things. I was recently advised by a resident that a decision had been made to scale back the payment of the nappy allowance to our child care workers. I was mortified when I learnt of this. This is going too far. Our Child Care workers carry a very important responsibility. Reducing their nappy allowance is not the answer to fixing Cumberland's overall budget problems. I believe that the payment of the nappy allowance should be reinstated for these hardworking staff providing a service to Cumberland's working parents.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council reinstate the nappy allowance for staff working in Council's child care centres.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil