



Corporate Governance Committee

2024/25 Annual Report

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1. Introduction

This Annual Report documents the operation and activities of the City of Playford Corporate Governance Committee from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

The Corporate Governance Committee fulfils the role of Council's audit and risk committee as required by Section 126 of the *Local Government Act 1999*. The Committee monitors the integrity of Council's financial statements, internal controls, audit and risk management systems and strategic management plans.

The Committee is made up of five members consisting of the Mayor, one Council Member and three Independent Members.

The term of the Council Members' appointment is generally for two years but does not exceed the next General Election. Independent Members appointed to the Committee may carry over past an election term.

The Presiding Member must be an Independent Member and will be determined by the Committee for a period of two years, after which they may stand for re-election.

Independent Members of the Committee are appointed to bring current and relevant experience and their capacity to act as a mentor to the Council Members of the Committee.

Independent Members of the Corporate Governance Committee are paid for their services and are remunerated in accordance with the Committee's Charter.

During the 2024/25 financial year, the Committee's membership remained unchanged, with Council reappointing Mr Peter Brass as an Independent Member representative in February 2025. Mr Mark Labaz continues in the position of Presiding Member, as resolved by the Committee on 3 October 2023 (Resolution 5585).

Mayor Glenn Docherty continues his role as Mayor representative, with Cr Shirley Halls re-appointed as the Council Member representative in November 2024.

The table below provides a summary of current Committee Membership and Term of Office details.

Term of Office

Appointed Member	Endorsed by Council	Term Concludes
Mr Mark Labaz	27 February 2024	31 March 2026
Mr Martin White	27 February 2024	31 March 2026
Mr Peter Brass	25 February 2025	31 March 2027 (reappointed – initial term expired on 31 March 2025)

Appointed Member	Endorsed by Council	Term Concludes
Mayor Glenn Docherty	29 November 2022	November 2026
Cr Shirley Halls	26 November 2024	November 2026
Cr Jane Onuzans (<i>Deputy</i>)	29 November 2022	30 November 2024

In November 2024, Council did not appoint a Deputy Member for the Corporate Governance Committee. Cr Onuzans' term concluded on 30 November 2024.

2. Role of the Committee

In accordance with Section 126 of the *Local Government Act 1999*, Council must have an audit and risk Committee. The Corporate Governance Committee is to provide independent assurance and advice to Council on accounting, financial management, internal controls, risk management and governance matters.

3. Charter review and update

The Charter was reviewed by Council in November 2024 to ensure it accurately reflects the role of the Committee and continues to meet legislative requirements. In January 2025, an amendment to the Charter was endorsed by Council, providing the Committee the ability to vary the meeting schedule to assist in ensuring scheduling conflicts and consideration of critical items could be managed effectively.

4. Meetings

The Corporate Governance Committee meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month, commencing at 5:00pm. The Committee meets a minimum of six times per annum and meetings occur at least quarterly. The schedule is determined by the Committee in their work plan.

During the 2024/25 period, the Committee held nine meetings with the average meeting lasting 1 hour and 18 minutes. In accordance with the Committee Charter, three of these meetings were held outside of the work plan schedule to consider critical items.

The Committee considered 41 reports and 12 informal discussion items from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025. The Committee went into confidence on thirteen occasions to discuss matters that the Committee considered necessary to consider in confidence. A list of items considered by the Committee is provided at Appendix 1.

4.1 Presiding Member

The Presiding Member oversees the conduct of the Corporate Governance Committee meetings in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1999* and Code of Practice for Council and Committee Meetings. Their role ensures that all Committee Members have the opportunity to participate in debate and discussions in an open and encouraging manner.

At the October 2023 Corporate Governance Committee meeting, the Committee appointed Mr Mark Labaz as Presiding Member for a 2-year period.

4.2 Record of attendance

The below table provides the record of attendance for Corporate Governance Committee meetings (including Special meetings) held from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

Appointed Member	Total Number of Meetings	Attendance	Attendance Rate
Mr Mark Labaz	9	9	100%
Mr Martin White	9	8	88.88%
Mr Peter Brass	9	8	88.88%
Mayor Glenn Docherty	9	8	88.88%
Cr Shirley Halls	9	9	100%
Cr Jane Onuzans (Deputy Member until 30 November 2024)	0	0	N/A

During this period, the Deputy Member was not required to attend any meetings where the Mayor, or appointed Council Member were unable to attend.

4.3 Administration support

An Executive Officer is appointed by the CEO to support the administration and operation of the Committee. The Executive Officer and relevant staff are available to provide advice during the meeting as required to aid informed decision making. The General Manager Corporate Services held this position during 2024/25.

The CEO has appointed a Minute Taker and Council's Governance team provide administration support, preparing and distributing agendas and meeting papers in advance of the meetings and ensuring minutes are publicly available within five days of the meeting in accordance with the requirements under the *Local Government Act 1999*.

5. 2024/25 Self-assessment

In accordance with the Committee's Charter, members undertook their annual self-assessment for the 2024/25 financial year in August 2025 to assess the ongoing role and effectiveness of the Committee and to report any recommendations to Council as required.

Members of the Executive team were invited to undertake the self-assessment to provide feedback on the performance of the Committee.

All Committee members completed the self-assessment in accordance with 11.1 of the Charter. Three members of the Executive team also completed the assessment.

Activities of the Committee as outlined in the Terms of Reference in the Corporate Governance Committee Charter and a summary of feedback provided via the self-assessment are provided below.

The self-assessment responses are positive with majority of responses rated 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.

A breakdown of the survey responses is provided in Appendix 2.

5.1 Committee members and meetings

Self-Assessment feedback:

- All respondents strongly agreed that the Committee has a sufficient understanding of Council's business to effectively perform its responsibilities. Respondents also strongly agreed that meeting agendas and supporting papers are clear, comprehensive and of sufficient quality to enable informed decision-making.
- The diverse skill mix of the independent Committee members, covering finance, risk management, corporate governance, policy and audit, was noted as a key strength that supports effective Committee performance.
- While no formal training or development opportunities were provided to the Committee during the reporting period, the majority of respondents agreed that Committee Members continue to maintain relevant skills, knowledge and experience.

On average, 89% of respondents expressed strong agreement in this area.

5.2 Committee planning and reporting

At each meeting, the Committee reviewed the work plan which outlines the priorities and objectives guiding the activities of the Committee. In November 2023, following the introduction of new reporting requirements as part of legislative reform, the Committee commenced providing a Communique to Council after each meeting. The Communique summarises the Committee's work during the period preceding the meeting and the key outcomes of the meeting.

Self-Assessment feedback:

- 87.5% of respondents strongly agreed that the Committee's work plan sets out achievable priorities and objectives for the year, with good progress made against the plan.
- All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that recommendations and decisions were monitored, actioned and implemented within agreed timeframes.

The Committee reviews and adjusts its work plan at each meeting to ensure objectives and priorities continue to be met. Looking ahead, the Committee will seek feedback from Council on the usefulness and content of the Communiques to ensure they remain relevant and informative.

5.3 External audit

In October 2024, the Committee met in confidence with the External Auditor, without staff present, to discuss the auditor's remit and matters arising from the external audit process.

During the same month, the Committee also considered Council's contract with the External Auditor in confidence and subsequently made a recommendation to Council regarding the terms of the contract renewal.

The Committee received the External Audit Plan for the 2024/25 financial year from representatives of BDO in preparation for the interim audit scheduled for March 2025. At its February 2025 meeting, the Committee sought clarification on the internal controls risk assessment, provided feedback on the proposed audit scope and formally endorsed the Audit Plan.

In addition, the Committee reviewed Council's 2023/24 annual financial statements, questioning both the External Auditor and management to ensure the statements accurately presented Council's financial position prior to adoption by Council.

Self-Assessment feedback:

- All respondents strongly agreed that the annual financial reports comply with applicable legislation and Australian Accounting Standards and are supported by appropriate management sign-off on the financial statements.

- All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Committee has reviewed the processes in place to ensure that financial information included in the annual report is consistent with the signed financial statements.

5.4 Internal audit

The Internal Auditor is responsible for developing a flexible annual strategic audit plan using appropriate risk and consequence-based methodology, including any risks or control concerns for the Committee to review and provide recommendations on any changes.

During the 2024/25 financial year, the Committee received several internal audit reports including financial controls, payroll project scope review and Software as a Service (SaaS) Audit Report.

Self-Assessment feedback:

- The majority of respondents strongly agreed that the Committee has reviewed and approved the internal audit plan.
- Whilst most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Committee reviews the effectiveness of the system for monitoring Council's compliance with relevant laws and regulations, one respondent disagreed.

Respondents noted that internal audit resources were sufficient, with bespoke audits outsourced to specialist providers. However, staff turnover and resource constraints have delayed the implementation and updating of the Risk Management Framework, limiting the Committee's opportunity to review and comment on its effectiveness. A respondent noted that the Committee has not yet been briefed on the system used to monitor Council's compliance with relevant laws and regulations and is therefore unable to comment on its effectiveness.

5.5 Other matters

During the 2024/25 financial year, the Committee reviewed and provided feedback on two Prudential Management reports prepared in accordance with Section 48 of the *Local Government Act 1999*, commending staff on the quality of the reports.

The Committee also reviewed several Council policies and procedures providing input and making recommendations that were subsequently endorsed by Council.

The Committee engaged in detailed discussion on the proposed Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and accompanying Guideline, providing amendments and feedback to assist administration in further defining reporting mechanisms prior to considering the Policy for endorsement.

Advice was also provided to Council to support the preparation of the 2025/26 Annual Business Plan, including detailed feedback on financial sustainability. The Committee recommended a proposed funding pathway, highlighted key financial assumptions and

identified cost pressures to assist Council's consideration of the draft Annual Business Plan and Long Term Financial Plan.

At the 22 April 2025 Ordinary Council meeting, Mr Mark Labaz addressed the Chamber on the draft 2025/26 Annual Business Plan and Budget, Long Term Financial Plan and Strategic Asset Management Plan for public consultation. The Committee made a recommendation supporting the proposed rate rise prior to Council's endorsement of public consultation.

Self-Assessment feedback:

- 87.5% of respondents strongly agreed that the Committee reviewed and provided commentary on Prudential Management reports prepared in accordance with Section 48 of the *Local Government Act 1999*.
- All respondents strongly agreed that the Committee demonstrates a thorough understanding of Council's strategic management plans including the Annual Business Plan and provides informed review and recommendations on the sustainability of Council's financial performance, taking into account Council's financial indicators.

5.6 Committee feedback

The Committee was provided the opportunity to reflect on its work over the 2024/25 financial year, including identifying areas that could strengthen its effectiveness, recognising work that has been particularly valuable, and noting areas for improvement. A summary of the feedback is provided below.

Aspects of the Committee's work that have been most effective or valuable:

- Review of the 2025/26 Long Term Financial Plan and draft Annual Business Plan.
- Keeping the Council finances on track with the agreed Annual Business Plan.
- Review of policies.
- Examination of audit results, including significant adjustments, uncorrected misstatements and any difficulties or unresolved disagreements with management.
- Review of Prudential Reports.
- Cyber Security incident updates.
- Receiving CEO updates, which have been highly valuable in understanding the organisation's risks and challenges.
- Providing advice on the Strategic Risk Register and advising on the CBD strategy.
- Overseeing the External Audit tender process.
- Committee Members consistently asking insightful questions to understand and assess Council's risk environment.

Aspects of the Committee's work that were less effective or could have been managed better:

- Provision of advice in respect to the Risk Management Framework and Strategic Risk Register was limited due to staff resourcing constraints.

Recommendations to strengthen the effectiveness of the Committee:

- Greater availability of Independent Committee Members to provide assistance on urgent matters as required, rather than waiting for scheduled meetings.
- Enhanced use of the Committee in considering commercial property-related matters during negotiation and consideration stages.
- Consideration of how quarterly financial reviews could be brought to the Committee prior to review by Council.
- Flexibility to amend meeting dates to avoid clashes with other Committee meetings.

In January 2025, Council endorsed an amendment to the Committee Charter enabling the Committee to vary its meeting schedule to better manage scheduling conflicts and ensure timely consideration of critical items.

Appendix 1 | 2024/25 Committee Agenda Items

Meeting Date	Report Title	Report Type
August 2024	Asset Management Policy and Procedure	Decision Report
August 2024	Corporate Governance Committee Work Plan	Information Report
August 2024	Corporate Governance Committee Self-Assessment 2023/24	Information Report
August 2024	Strategic Risk Register	Information Report
August 2024	Risk Assessment Supporting Documents	Information Report
August 2024	Business Continuity Exercise Report	Information Report
August 2024	Financial Controls Audit report	Information Report
August 2024	Content for Corporate Governance Communique	Informal Discussion
August 2024	Munno Para Prudential Report	Confidential Decision Report
August 2024	Chief Executive Officer Update	Confidential Information Report
October 2024	Adoption of 2023/24 Financial Statements	Decision Report
October 2024	Corporate Governance Committee Annual Report 2023/24	Decision Report
October 2024	Corporate Governance Committee Work Plan	Information Report
October 2024	2024/25 Insurance Portfolio	Information Report
October 2024	Risk Evaluation Action Plans Status Update	Information Report
October 2024	Rolling Revaluation Update	Information Report

Meeting Date	Report Title	Report Type
October 2024	Content for Corporate Governance Committee Communique	Informal Discussion
October 2024	External Audit Contract	Confidential Decision Report
October 2024	Findings of External Audit	Confidential Discussion Informal
November 2024 (Special)	Content for Corporate Governance Committee Communique	Confidential Discussion Informal
November 2024 (Special)	Cyber Security Incident Presentation	Confidential Discussion Informal
November 2024 (Special)	Cyber Security Incident Response	Confidential Information Report
December 2024	Content for Corporate Governance Committee Communique	Informal Discussion
December 2024	Corporate Governance Committee 2025 Meeting Schedule and Work Plan	Decision Report
December 2024	Corporate Governance Committee Work Plan	Information Report
December 2024	Fraud and Corruption Control Policy	Decision Report
December 2024	Revaluation of Assets	Decision Report
December 2024	Risk Assessment Supporting Documents	Information Report
December 2024	Strategic Management Plan Asset Audit Report	Information Report
December 2024	Strategic Risk Report – November 2024	Information Report
December 2024 (Special)	Riverlea Community Land Management Plan	Confidential Decision Report
February 2025	External Auditor Draft Audit Plan 2024/25	Decision Report

Meeting Date	Report Title	Report Type
February 2025	Mid-Year Review – End of Year Forecast	Decision Report
February 2025	Corporate Governance Committee Work Plan	Decision Report
February 2025	Content for Corporate Governance Committee Communique	Informal Discussion
February 2025	Chief Executive Officer Update	Confidential Information Report
February 2025	Long Term Financial Plan 2025/26	Confidential Informal Discussion
17 March 2025 (Special)	Prudential Report – CBD Strategy	Confidential Information Report
17 March 2025 (Special)	External Auditor Tender Process	Informal Discussion
1 April 2025	Corporate Governance Committee Work Plan	Decision Report
1 April 2025	Content for Corporate Governance Committee Communique	Informal Discussion
1 April 2025	Fraud and Corruption Control Policy	Decision Report
1 April 2025	2025 Confidential Orders Review	Decision Report
1 April 2025	2025/26 Draft Annual Business Plan and Long Term Financial Plan	Confidential Decision Report
1 April 2025	SAAS Audit Report	Information Report
1 April 2025	Payroll Project Scope Review Report	Information Report
6 May 2025	Corporate Governance Committee Work Plan	Decision Report
6 May 2025	Content for Corporate Governance Committee Communique	Informal Discussion

Meeting Date	Report Title	Report Type
6 May 2025	Audit Tender Evaluation Criteria	Informal Discussion
6 May 2025	Chief Executive Officer Update	Confidential Information Report
6 May 2025	Internal Audit Work Plan	Information Report
6 May 2025	Interim Audit Management Letter	Information Report
6 May 2025	Strategic Risk Report – April 2025	Information Report

Appendix 2 | 2024/25 Self-Assessment

Committee Members & Meetings

Question	Strongly disagree Below standard	Disagree Poor	Agree Good	Strongly agree Exceptional	Not Applicable this year
The Committee understands the Council's business sufficiently to enable the Committee to fulfil its responsibilities.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
The mix of skills on the Committee allows it to effectively perform its responsibilities.	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%
Committee members have maintained relevant skills/knowledge/experience and undertaken relevant training and development.	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	62.50%	12.50%
The Committee meets frequently enough to be effective.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Meetings have been conducted in accordance with the agenda issued and allow sufficient time to discuss complex, critical and confidential issues.	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	87.50%	0.00%
Meeting agenda and supporting papers are of sufficient clarity and quality to make informed decisions.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%

Question	Strongly disagree Below standard	Disagree Poor	Agree Good	Strongly agree Exceptional	Not Applicable this year
The Committee has received all information, presentations or explanations it considers necessary to fulfill its responsibilities.	0.00%	12.50%	0.00%	87.50%	0.00%
Meetings have been conducted to allow Committee members to raise any issue they believe relevant and allow for open, frank and robust discussion of all matters raised.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%

Committee Planning & Reporting

Question	Strongly disagree Below standard	Disagree Poor	Agree Good	Strongly agree Exceptional	Not Applicable this year
The Committee work plan sets out achievable priorities and objectives for the year with appropriate progress against the work plan being achieved.	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	87.50%	0.00%
Committee recommendations/decisions and agreed actions are monitored and have been implemented within agreed timeframes.	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
The Committee reported to Council after each meeting summarising the work of the Committee during the period preceding the meeting and the outcomes of the meeting.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%

External Audit

Question	Strongly disagree Below standard	Disagree Poor	Agree Good	Strongly agree Exceptional	Not Applicable this year
The Committee is satisfied that annual financial reports comply with applicable legislation and Australian accounting standards and are supported by appropriate management sign-off on financial statements.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
The Committee has reviewed the findings of the interim and annual audits with the external auditor.	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	87.50%	0.00%
The Committee has reviewed the external auditor's management letter and monitored the implementation of recommendations by management.	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%
The Committee has reviewed the external audit opinion, including whether appropriate action has been taken in response to audit recommendations and adjustments.	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	87.50%	0.00%
The Committee has considered contentious financial reporting matters in conjunction with management and external auditors.	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	75.00%	12.50%

Question	Strongly disagree Below standard	Disagree Poor	Agree Good	Strongly agree Exceptional	Not Applicable this year
The Committee has reviewed the processes in place to ensure financial information included in the annual report is consistent with the signed financial statements.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
The Committee has met with the external auditor on at least one occasion on a confidential basis, with a majority of Committee members present and no members/employees of the council present (other than council members who are members of the Committee).	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%

Internal Audit

Question	Strongly disagree Below standard	Disagree Poor	Agree Good	Strongly agree Exceptional	Not Applicable this year
The Committee has reviewed and approved the internal audit plan.	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	87.50%	0.00%
The Committee considers the internal audit resources were adequate for the completion of the internal audit program.	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%
The Committee has monitored the implementation of internal audit recommendations and obtained all information and/or explanations it considers relevant to the progress or implementation of audit recommendations.	0.00%	0.00%	37.50%	62.50%	0.00%

Question	Strongly disagree Below standard	Disagree Poor	Agree Good	Strongly agree Exceptional	Not Applicable this year
The Committee considers the audit reports provided as appropriate for the business needs of the Council and: a) The reports were structured, concise and constructive	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%
b) The recommendations provided were realistic and resulted in improvements to current procedures	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%
c) The conclusions reached were adequately supported by relevant evidence and reflected a realistic understanding of the area under review	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%
The Committee adequately understands and reviews the Council's risk management framework and whether an effective approach is being followed to manage major risks.	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%
The Committee adequately understands and reviews the Councils financial reporting requirements.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
The Committee reviews the effectiveness of the system for monitoring Council's compliance with relevant laws and regulations.	0.00%	12.50%	25.00%	62.50%	0.00%

Question	Strongly disagree Below standard	Disagree Poor	Agree Good	Strongly agree Exceptional	Not Applicable this year
The Committee understands and reviews management's systems and arrangements for maintaining effective internal controls.	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	87.50%	0.00%
The Committee has reviewed the annual report prepared by the CEO in relation to policies and processes adopted to evaluate and improve effectiveness of internal control practices/procedures.	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%

Other matters

Question	Strongly disagree Below standard	Disagree Poor	Agree Good	Strongly agree Exceptional	Not Applicable this year
The Committee reviewed and provided comment on any Prudential Management reports prepared in accordance with section 48 of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i> .	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	87.50%	0.00%
The Committee appropriately proposed and reviewed the exercise of powers under section 130A (Other Investigations) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i> .	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	25.00%	62.50%

Question	Strongly disagree Below standard	Disagree Poor	Agree Good	Strongly agree Exceptional	Not Applicable this year
The Committee reviewed and provided feedback on relevant policies and procedures.	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	87.50%	0.00%
The Committee understands and reviews Council's strategic management plans including the Annual Business Plan, and review and provide recommendations on the sustainability of Council's financial performance considering Council's financial indicators.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%

