



Strategic Policy

2016/17 Debt Policy

Corporate Plan reference:	5. A public sector leader 5.2 A financially sustainable organisation
Endorsed by Council on:	Reference Number:
Manager responsible for policy:	Director Corporate Services, Corporate Services Department

Policy purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the sound management of council's existing and future debt.

Policy outcome

The policy will provide clear guidance for staff in the management of council's debt portfolio and maintenance of appropriate debt and debt service levels.

Policy scope

This policy applies to all Councillors and council staff and extends to all borrowing activities of council and any controlled entities.

Policy statement

New borrowings will only be made to fund capital expenditure, for a period less than or equal to the estimated useful life of the asset(s) and for no more than 20 years.

New borrowings will be undertaken in accordance with the Queensland Treasury Corporation Guidelines, the *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982* and Section 192 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

Borrowing Purposes

- Council will not utilise loan funding to finance operating activities or recurrent expenditure.
- Council undertakes full analysis of all funding options as outlined in the Long Term Financial Forecast, including a forward program of capital works, to determine loan funding requirements.
- Council recognises that infrastructure demands placed upon council can often only be met through borrowings, but will always be mindful of the additional cost incurred by the community when assets are acquired through borrowings which increases the cost of providing capital infrastructure.
- Council will endeavour to fund all capital renewal projects from operating cash flows and borrow only for new or upgrade capital projects, having regard to sound financial management principles and giving consideration to inter-generational equity for the funding of long term infrastructure projects.

- Where capital expenditure is deferred from one year to the next, the drawdown of approved loan funds will be reviewed to minimise interest expenses.
- Borrowings for infrastructure that provides a return on assets will take priority over borrowing for other assets.

Debt Term

Where capital projects are financed through borrowings, council will repay the loans within a term not exceeding the life of those assets, and over a term that optimises cash flow efficiency. Loans undertaken for core Sunshine Coast capital investment are planned to be repaid within a twelve (12) year period. From 2015/16, loans undertaken for Region Making projects (the loan period has been increased to a term of 20 years.

- Council currently re-balances the portfolio back to a 12-year term following each transaction and with any draw down of new loan funds.
- If surplus funds become available, and where it is advantageous to council, one-off loan repayments will be made to reduce the term of existing loans.
- In an environment of fluctuating interest rates, and where there is a distinct economic advantage to council, consideration will be given to renegotiating any outstanding loans to obtain the best long-term benefit to council.

Repayment Ability

Council will maintain close scrutiny of debt levels to ensure that relative sustainability indicators will not exceed target parameters recommended by Queensland Treasury Corporation and *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

Borrowing Sources

Council will raise all external borrowings at the most competitive rates available and from sources available as defined by legislation. Consideration will be given to provision of loans to business units from surplus cash reserves held by council by way on an internal loan.

Proposed Borrowings

Proposed Borrowings planned for the current financial year and the next nine financial years are outlined in Appendix A, in accordance with Section 192 *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

Internal Loans

The provision and approval of an internal loan will depend on the availability of surplus funds at the time of application and the capacity of the business unit or operational activity to repay the loan.

- All applications for internal loans will be made by reference to the Finance Branch for consideration in accordance with the Long Term Financial Forecast.
- The term of the loan will be appropriate to the life of the asset being financed.
- In all cases, where business units are subject to the provisions of the National Competition Policy, the cost to the business unit will be no less than what would apply to an equivalent private sector business. The interest rate will be the sum of:
 - (a) the equivalent QTC borrowing rate for the proposed term;
 - (b) the QTC administration charge; and
 - (c) an additional margin above the QTC borrowing rate.
- The interest rate applicable to internal loans relating to operational activities of council will be the actual borrowing cost from QTC including administrative charges.

Council may, upon reasonable notice being given, require repayment of part or all of the balance of the loan at any time, which would require the business unit to convert the outstanding balance of the loan to an external facility.

- Provision for the repayment of the loan will be included in the annual budget for the business unit.

Guiding principles

The purpose of establishing this policy is to:

- Provide a comprehensive view of council's long term debt position and the capacity to fund infrastructure growth for the Region;
- Increase awareness of issues concerning debt management;
- Enhance the understanding between Councillors, community groups and council staff by documenting policies and guidelines;
- Demonstrate to government and lending institutions that council has a disciplined approach to borrowing.

Roles and responsibilities

Pursuant to Section 192 *Local Government Regulation 2012*, council must prepare a debt policy each year that states the new borrowings planned for the current financial year and the next nine financial years.

The Finance Branch will review the cash flow requirements prior to loan proceeds being drawn down to minimise interest expenses.

Measurement of success

Financial sustainability indicators remain within target ranges and the provision of necessary infrastructure is not constrained through the lack of capital funding.

Details of outstanding loans will be reported annually in council's Financial Statements and Annual Report.

Definitions

Business unit – A business activity within council structure subject to the application of full cost pricing principles as defined under the National Competition Policy.

Inter-generational equity – This relates to the fairness of the distribution of the costs and benefits of a policy when costs and benefits are borne by different generations. (i.e. The principle whereby those who derive a direct benefit from the service or infrastructure provided actually pay for that service).

QTC – Queensland Treasury Corporation.

Maroochydore City Centre – Maroochydore City Centre was declared by the state government as a Priority Development Area (PDA) on 19 July 2013, at the request of council to renew the region by supporting economic development, providing such needed infrastructure and creating a new central business district for the Sunshine Coast.

Related policies and legislation

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Local Government Regulation 2012*
- *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982*
- *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Regulation 2007*

Version control:

Version	Reason/ Trigger	Change (Y/N)	Endorsed/ Reviewed by	Date
1.0	Adopted			2 June 2015
1.1	Annual Review	Y		19 February 2016
	Endorsement		Council	16 June 2016

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Appendix A

Schedule of proposed external borrowings:

	2016/17 \$000	2017/18 \$000	2018/19 \$000	2019/20 \$000	2020/21 \$000	2021/22 \$000	2022/23 \$000	2023/24 \$000	2024/25 \$000	2024/25 \$000
Total SCC Proposed Borrowings	61,036	75,356	91,887	196,772	43,373	10,798	12,498	26,205	29,047	17,350
SCC + Business Units	15,740	14,612	9,688	10,999	5,066	7,136	5,704	10,052	8,615	8,350
Maroochydore City Centre Project	13,906	10,574	12,787	18,920	3,590	3,662	6,794	16,153	20,432	9,000
Palmview Development	6,500									
Sunshine Coast Airport Runway Project	24,890	50,170	69,412	166,853	34,717					
Capital works projects as outlined in the adopted budget schedule										

Note that council operates a central treasury model and as such does not generally provide debt funding for specific projects or assets but rather uses debt funding to finance council's balance sheet, with the exception being for strategic projects.

4.1.4 REVENUE POLICY 2016/17

File No:	Budget Development
Author:	Manager Finance Corporate Services Department
Appendices:	App A - 2016/17 Revenue Policy197

PURPOSE

A local government must review its Revenue Policy annually and in sufficient time to allow an annual budget that is consistent with the Revenue Policy to be adopted for the next financial year.

Section 169(2)(c) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* requires that council include in the budget a Revenue Policy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A local government must review its Revenue Policy annually and in sufficient time to allow an annual budget that is consistent with the revenue policy to be adopted for the next financial year. The 2016/17 Revenue Policy (**Appendix A**) per Section 193 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* sets out the principles used by council for:

- a) levying rates and charges;
- b) granting concessions for rates and charges;
- c) recovering overdue rates and charges; and
- d) cost-recovery methods.

When adopting the annual budget, council sets rates and charges at a level that will provide for both current and future community requirements and grant concessions for pensioners to assist property owners to remain in their own home. Council also provides concessions to charity organisations and community and sporting groups as they contribute to the health and well-being of the community.

The Revenue Policy also provides council guidance with principals of equity, transparency and flexibility when acting to recover overdue rates and charges.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- (a) receive and note the report titled “2016/17 Revenue Policy 2016/17” and**
- (b) adopt the 2016/2017 Revenue Policy (Appendix A).**

FINANCE AND RESOURCING

The framework does not place any financial and resourcing obligations on council, but provides the principles for revenue raising for the 2016/17 budget.

CORPORATE PLAN

Corporate Plan Theme: *A public sector leader*

Emerging Priority: 5.2 - A financially sustainable organisation

Strategy: 5.2.2 - Ensure council's finances are well managed and systems are in place to analyse performance, generate revenue, reduce costs and manage contracts

CONSULTATION

Internal Consultation

Internal consultation was conducted within the Corporate Services Department.

External Consultation

No external consultation was required for this report.

Community Engagement

No community engagement was required for this report.

PROPOSAL

As part of the annual budget, council is required to adopt a Revenue Policy which states the guidelines that may be used for preparing the local government's Revenue Statement, including the principles used by council in:

a) levying of rates and charges:

Council will set the rates and charges at a level to provide for both current and future community requirements. This includes general rates, special & separate rates and charges and other charges.

Council continues to issue half yearly rates notices and promotes by various means of communication to ratepayers the issue date of rate notices and the early payment discount date. Council offers a wide number of payment options and in certain circumstance allows flexible payment arrangements to ratepayers with financial difficulties.

b) granting concessions for rates and charges:

Council may grant a concession for pensioners, charitable organisations, community groups and sporting associations. Also a concession may be granted for economic development, per the provisions of the Sunshine Coast Investment Incentive Scheme.

c) recovering overdue rates and charges:

To reduce the overall rate burden on ratepayers, council is guided by principles of equity, treating all ratepayers in similar circumstances in a similar manner with regards to their capacity to pay; making clear the obligations of the ratepayer; and allowing flexibility for short-term payment arrangements.

The reference to capacity to pay only refers to the recovery of overdue rates and charges.

d) cost-recovery methods:

All fees and charges will be set with reference to full cost pricing and cost recovery fees will be charged up to a maximum of full cost. Commercial charges will be at commercial rates.

Council acknowledges the community benefit associated with not-for-profit organisations conducting activities on the Sunshine Coast, and therefore all not-for-profit organisations are exempt from cost recovery fees for applications to conduct activities requiring an approval on public and private land within the region.

A local government must review its Revenue Policy annually and in sufficient time to allow an annual budget that is consistent with the revenue policy to be adopted for the next financial year.

Legal

Section 169(2)(c) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* requires that council include in the budget a Revenue Policy.

Section 193 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* details what must be included in the Revenue Policy.

Policy

The Revenue Policy states the guidelines that may be used in preparing the Revenue Statement. There have been no changes to the existing policy.

Risk

No risks have been identified in relation to this report.

Previous Council Resolution

The Revenue Policy for 2015/16 was adopted by council under resolution SM15/13 at the meeting held 1 June 2015.

That Council:

- (a) receive and note the report titled "**Revenue Policy 2015/2016**"; and
- (b) adopt the 2015/2016 Revenue Policy (Appendix A).

Related Documentation

The Revenue Statement must form part of the annual budget.

Critical Dates

A local government must review its Revenue Policy annually and in sufficient time to allow an annual budget that is consistent with the Revenue Policy to be adopted for the next financial year.

Implementation

The Revenue Policy sets out the principles for the making and levying of rates and charges for the 2016/17 financial year.



Strategic Policy	
2016/17 Revenue Policy	
Corporate Plan reference:	5. A public sector leader 5.2 - A financially sustainable organisation
Endorsed by Council on:	9 June 2016 Reference Number:
Manager responsible for policy:	Director Corporate Services, Corporate Services Department

Policy purpose

The purpose of this Revenue Policy is to set out the principles used by Council for:

- levying rates and charges;
- granting concessions for rates and charges;
- recovering overdue rates and charges; and
- cost-recovery methods.

Policy outcome

The Revenue Policy will be applied by Council in the development of the annual budget for the 2016/17 financial year.

Policy scope

The Revenue Policy applies to all areas identified in Section 193 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

Policy statement

The Levying of Rates and Charges

Council levies rates and charges to fund the provision of valuable services to our community. When adopting its annual budget Council will set rates and charges at a level that will provide for both current and future community requirements. Council will apply the principle of transparency in making rates and charges.

1. General Rates

General Rate revenue provides essential whole of community services not funded through subsidies, grants, contributions or donations received from other entities, or not provided for by other levies or charges. Council will consider all full cost recovery options before calculating the general rate.

Council is required to raise an amount of revenue it sees as being appropriate to maintain assets and provide services to the region as a whole. In deciding how that revenue is

raised, Council has formed the opinion that a differential general rating scheme, based primarily on land use, provides the most equitable basis for the distribution of the general rate burden.

The rateable value for each property is the basis for determining the amount of the general rate levied. Council recognises that significant valuation fluctuations may have an adverse effect on pensioners. Council has implemented a Deferment of General Rates Policy to provide eligible pensioners with the opportunity to apply for a deferment of general rates.

2. Special and Separate Rates and Charges

Where appropriate Council will fund certain services, facilities or activities by means of separate or special rates or charges.

In accordance with Section 94 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* Council will levy special rates and charges on certain properties that are considered to be specially benefited by the provision of a specific service, facility or activity.

Special rates are based on the rateable value of the land and special charges are a flat charge per property, where this is considered to provide a more equitable basis for the sharing of the cost.

In accordance with Section 103 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* Council will levy a separate rate or charge on all rateable land in the region to fund a particular service, facility or activity where Council believes that the service, facility or activity is a key in achieving council's vision to be Australia's most sustainable region - vibrant, green, diverse.

3. Other Charges

In general, Council will be guided by the principle of user pays in making all other charges.

The Levying of Rates and Charges

In levying rates and charges, Council will apply the principles of:

- consistency, by scheduling the issue of rate notices on a half yearly basis;
- communication, by advising ratepayers about rate notice issue dates and discount dates;
- clarity, by providing meaningful information on rate notices to enable ratepayers to clearly understand their responsibilities; and
- flexibility, by providing payment arrangements to ratepayers in financial difficulty, along with a wide array of payment options.

In making and levying rates and charges, Council will be guided by the principles of:

- equitable distribution of the general rates burden as broadly as possible;
- transparency in the making and levying of rates;
- flexibility, to take account of changes in the local economy;
- clarity in terms of responsibilities (council's and ratepayers') in regard to the rating process;
- National Competition Policy legislation where applicable; and
- having in place a rating regime that is efficient to administer.

The Purpose of and Granting of Concessions for rates and charges

Under Chapter 14, Part 10, section 121 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* Council may grant a concession. The concession may only be of the following types;

- a rebate of all or part of the rates or charges;
- an agreement to defer payment of the rates and charges;
- an agreement to accept a transfer of unencumbered land in full or part payment of rates.

In accordance with Section 120(1)(a) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, Council has determined that eligible pensioners who are property owners are entitled to receive concessions on rates and various other services that Council provides to the community. The purpose of the concessions for pensioners are to assist pensioner property owners to remain in their own home by reducing the financial impact of rates and charges.

In accordance with Section 120(1)(b) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* other charitable organisations, community groups, and sporting associations may also be entitled to concessions. The purpose of these concessions is to encourage and support charitable organisations, community groups, and sporting associations as they contribute to the health and well-being of the community and the social cohesion of the region.

In accordance with Section 120(1)(d) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* concessions may be granted if the concession will encourage the economic development of all or part of the local government area. In accordance with the provisions of the Sunshine Coast Investment Incentive Scheme an approved business or enterprise may be entitled to a concession in the form of a deferment of general rates for such period as Council may determine from time to time.

In exercising these concession powers Council will be guided by the principles of:

- transparency, by making clear the requirements necessary to receive concessions; and
- communication, by raising the awareness of target groups that may qualify for these concessions; and
- equity, by ensuring that all applicants of the same type receive the same concession.

The Recovery of Rates and Charges

Council will exercise its rate recovery powers pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 4 Part 12 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* in order to reduce the overall rate burden on ratepayers, and will be guided by the principles of:

- equity, by treating all ratepayers in similar circumstances in the same manner and by having regard to their capacity to pay;
- transparency, by making clear the obligations of ratepayers and the processes used by Council in assisting them to meet their financial obligations; and
- flexibility, by accommodating ratepayers' needs through short-term payment arrangements.

Cost Recovery Fees

All fees and charges will be set with reference to full cost pricing. Cost recovery fees will be charged up to a maximum of full cost. Commercial charges will be at commercial rates. Council acknowledges the community benefit associated with not-for-profit organisations conducting activities on the Sunshine Coast, and therefore all not-for-profit organisations are exempt from cost recovery fees for applications to conduct activities requiring an approval on public and private land within the region.

New Development Costs

Developer contributions for infrastructure are determined each year in accordance with the philosophy that a developer should pay reasonable and relevant contributions towards the capital cost of the provision of infrastructure to meet past and future augmentation costs associated with this new development, subject to State Government requirements. Infrastructure agreements are negotiated outcomes between Council and the developer.

Guiding principles

Council is required to prepare and adopt a Revenue Policy in accordance with Section 193 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*. The Revenue Policy must be reviewed annually and in sufficient time to allow an annual budget that is consistent with the Revenue Policy to be adopted for the next financial year.

Accordingly, the principles contained within the Revenue Policy are applied in the determination of the Revenue Statement, rates, fees and charges.

Roles and responsibilities

All council staff are bound by the principles outlined in this policy in determining the level of rates, fees and charges, and in the application of concessions relating to those rates, fees and charges.

Measurement of success

Financial sustainability indicators remain within target ranges and Council maintains a strong financial position through adequate and equitable revenue streams.

Definitions

All words within this policy have the meaning assigned under the Dictionary from the schedule contained within the *Local Government Regulation 2012*

Related policies and legislation

Local Government Act 2009

Local Government Regulation 2012

Version control:

Version	Reason/ Trigger	Change (Y/N)	Endorsed/ Reviewed by	Date
1.0	Created	N	Special Statutory Budget Meeting	02/06/2014
1.1	Annual Review	Y	Manager Finance	20/05/2016
1.1	Endorsement	N	Council	09/06/2016

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