13 REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

13.1 Determine membership: Performance Review Committee and Southern Regional Planning Panel

CSP Objective: Outcome 5.2: Governance is transparent and builds trust

CSP Strategy: 5.2.1 Build strong relationships and ensure our partners and community share the responsibilities and benefits of putting plans into practice.

Delivery Program: 5.2.1.2 Support good governance through systems and processes for legislative compliance.

Summary

At the 15 September 2026 Council meeting it was resolved as part of Minute 26/241OC that the Chief Executive Officer bring a further report to Council with the nomination of the Chief Executive Officer's Performance Review Committee member.

At the same meeting Minute 26/240OC determined Councillor Warren and Councillor Larkins as members of the Southern Regional Planning Panel however the Panel only allows membership of one councillor, apart from the Mayor.

Financial implication

Nil.

Risk implication

There is a legislative requirement for one member of the Performance Review Committee to be selected by the Chief Executive Officer. There is also a requirement for the Southern Regional Planning Panel to consist of only one delegate councillor and two councillors were appointed at the September meeting.

Policy

Local Government Act 1993

Office of Local Government Guidelines for the appointment and oversight of General Managers 2022.

Consultation (internal)

Nil.

Communication/Community engagement

The members of the Performance Review Committee and the Southern Regional Planning Panel will be published on the Council website.

Attachments
Nil

Enclosures
Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Note that Councillor Brown be appointed to the Performance Review Committee as the Chief Executive Officer's nomination.
2. Determine the membership of the Southern Regional Planning Panel as –
   - Mayor, Councillor McDonald
   - 1 Councillor being Councillor Warren OR Councillor Larkins
   - CEO or delegate, being Director Strategies and Communities
   - Alternate being Bronwyn Seiden

Performance Review Committee

The Office of Local Government Guidelines for the appointment and oversight of General Managers 2022 states that "*Performance Review panels should comprise of the mayor, the deputy mayor, another councillor nominated by council and a councillor nominated by the general manager*."

At the 15 September 2026 ordinary meeting of Council it was determined that Councillor McDonald (as Mayor), Councillor Larkins (as Deputy Mayor) and Councillor Warren (as nominated by Councillors) be appointed to the Performance Review Committee.

The Chief Executive Officer sought some time to assess her selection for the Councillor to be nominated by the CEO and it was resolved to bring a further report to Council. The Chief Executive Officer nominates Councillor Brown.

Southern Regional Planning Panel

Planning Panels, such as the Southern Regional Planning Panel, have the following functions:

- to determine regionally significant development applications and undertake rezoning reviews of planning proposals.
- determining Crown development applications,
- determining modification applications for regionally significant development,
- determining development application reviews,
- determining Site Compatibility Certificates,
- undertaking independent reviews for specific Local Aboriginal Land Council lands,
- advising the Minister or the Secretary upon request, and
- preparing planning proposals if they are directed to be a planning proposal authority.

Section 2.13 of the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979* (the EP&A Act*)* outlines that Council can nominate two (2) members to be on the Panel. The other three (3) members of the Panel are appointed by the Minister.

Both the EP&A Act and the 'Sydney District and Regional Planning Panels Operational Procedures' stress that Council nominated members must have expertise in one or more of the following areas: planning, heritage, architecture, the environment, urban design, land economics, traffic and transport, law, engineering, or tourism.

The Procedures suggest that Council consider appointing a minimum of four (4) alternate members.

At the September 2026 Ordinary Council Meeting Councillors Warren and Larkins were resolved as members of the Southern Regional Planning Panel. Councillors must determine which of these two councillors will join the Mayor, Councillor McDonald in being on the Southern Regional Planning Panel.

13.2 Ordinary meeting schedule for 2027

CSP Objective: Outcome 4.1 Public funds and assets are managed strategically, transparently and efficiently.

CSP Strategy: 4.1.3 Council delivers local government functions and sustainable services that meet community expectations, with regular service reviews per Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements.

Delivery Program: 4.1.3.1 Maintain compliance with all relevant legislation and requirements, including the Office of Local Government risk management and framework, the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee and internal audit operation.

Summary

This report seeks Council's endorsement for the scheduling of the 2027 Ordinary Council meetings.

Financial implication

Costs associated with staffing and overtime for meeting coordination are included in the annual budget.

Risk implication

The risk of not determining dates in advance is lack of adequate communication with the community to allow public access to council business. Determining dates also assists staff with future planning for associated meetings.

Policy

Local Government Act 1993 Section 365

Council's Code of Meeting Practice

Consultation (Internal)

N/A

Communication/Community Engagement

The dates of Council meetings are published on Council's website and advertised through normal media platforms.

Attachments
Nil

Enclosures
Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council set the 2027 dates for Ordinary Council meetings, with meetings commencing at 5pm, as follows:

Tuesday 16 February

Tuesday 16 March

Tuesday 20 April
Tuesday 18 May
Tuesday 15 June
Tuesday 20 July
Tuesday 17 August
Tuesday 21 September
Tuesday 19 October
Tuesday 16 November
Tuesday 21 December

Background

Traditionally, Ordinary Council meetings have been scheduled for the third Tuesday of each month, commencing at 5pm.

In 2027 the third Tuesday of the month falls on the following dates:

- 19 January
- 16 February
- 16 March
- 20 April
- 18 May
- 15 June
- 20 July
- 17 August
- 21 September
- 19 October
- 16 November
- 21 December

January meeting

It is not recommended to hold a January meeting in 2027. January is the school holidays and many staff and councillors take this time as annual leave. It can therefore be difficult to prepare agendas and hold meetings during this time.

The 2026 December meeting is scheduled for 15 December 2026, and the February 2027 meeting is scheduled for 16 February. There are 9 weeks between the December 2026 and the February 2027 meeting. The February meeting could be moved forward to the second Tuesday of the month, being the 9th, should the Councillors wish to reduce the time between meetings.

It is also noted that Council may call an extraordinary Council meeting in the first week of February 2027 to consider any Special Rate Variation application that is due to IPART on 8 February 2026. Council have written to IPART seeking a three-week extension to align with the ordinary meeting scheduled for the third Tuesday of the month, being 16 February to allow Council time to meet and consider any application.

School holidays

Councillors may also want to consider re-scheduling meetings that fall during school holidays. In 2027 the April meeting falls within school holidays (12 April to 23 April 2027). The December meeting is scheduled for the day that school holidays commence and is also the week leading up to Christmas. Councillors may wish to consider moving the December meeting from 21 to 14 December 2027.

Mid-year break

In considering the annual meeting schedule, Councillors may wish to explore a break from meetings in July, recognising that the May and June meeting cycles typically involve a significant volume of important reports, budget-related matters and strategic decisions associated with the end of the financial year.

Conference conflicts

It is good practice to ensure that ordinary Council meetings do not fall on the same dates as the Local Government NSW annual conference and the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly so that Councillor attendance is not impacted.

Local Government NSW have advised that the 2027 conference is scheduled for 24-26 November and therefore will not clash.

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) aims to schedule the National General Assembly (NGA) during a Parliamentary sitting week. As Parliamentary sitting dates are typically not confirmed until later in the year, the NGA dates for 2027 have not yet been finalised. Proposed date options are:

1. 14 to 18 June 2027 (preferred option)
2. 31 May to 4 June 2027
3. 21 to 25 June 2027.

The third Tuesday of June 2027 falls on 15 June, which would coincide with ALGA's preferred NGA dates. Should Council wish to avoid a potential clash, the June Council meeting could be rescheduled to either 8 June or 29 June 2027, neither of which conflicts with any of the currently proposed NGA date options.

Alternatively, Council may retain the third Tuesday and reconsider the June meeting schedule once ALGA has confirmed the NGA dates.

13.3 Post exhibition adoption: Community Engagement Strategy

CSP Objective: Outcome 4.2: Our governance is transparent and trusted, supported by the right structures, technology and processes to effectively serve the community.

CSP Strategy: 4.2.3 Engage with the community in a timely and meaningful way to help inform decision making and clearly demonstrate how the community input shapes outcomes.

Delivery Program: 4.2.3.1 Continue to implement Council's Community Engagement Strategy incorporating the Community Participation Plan, in accordance with the Local Government Act and NSW Department of Planning (DPE) requirements. Continue to develop and implement community engagement program, including staff training and schedule of activities.

Summary

This report seeks Council's adoption of the Community Engagement Strategy 2026-28 (CES).

The CES sets out how Kiama Municipal Council will engage with its community to inform decision-making and support meaningful participation in Council's plans, policies, programs, services and projects. Prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993, the Strategy forms part of Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework and provides an organisation-wide approach to community engagement. It aims to strengthen transparency, improve decision-making, build community trust and ensure engagement practices are meaningful, consistent and inclusive.

Financial implication

The update was identified in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan and Budget for 2026/27 and prepared by staff within the operational budget.

Risk implication

Not adopting the CES poses governance and compliance risks to Council, including not meeting Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) requirements to review and update the Strategy following the election of a new Council.

Policy

The Community Engagement Strategy has been prepared in accordance with the Delivery Program and Operational Plan (item 4.2.3.1 and 4.2.3.2).

Consultation (internal)

Internal consultation was undertaken with:

- Strategic Planning Coordinator and Planning Reform Officer.
- Manager Property and Commercial.
- Manager Tourism and Events.
- Organisational Reform Team.

- Community Development Manager and Officer (Aboriginal).

Communication/Community engagement

The draft Community Engagement Strategy was publicly exhibited and promoted through a range of communication and engagement activities, including a dedicated Your Say Kiama project page.

During the exhibition period:

- 102 visits were recorded on the Your Say Kiama project page.
- More than 70 community members participated in pop-up activities.
- Seven submissions were received, reviewed and considered.

Full details of the engagement activities undertaken and the feedback received are provided in the Public Exhibition Engagement Report (Enclosure 1).

Attachments
Nil

Enclosures

1 Public Exhibition Engagement Report - Community Engagement Strategy 2026-28⇨

2 Community Engagement Strategy 2026 -28⇨

3 NSW Statewide Community Participation Plan (CPP) 2026 - NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure⇨

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Note the Public Exhibition Engagement Report.
2. Adopt the Community Engagement Strategy 2026-28.
3. Notify those who made submissions that the Community Engagement Strategy has been adopted.
4. Publish the Community Engagement Strategy 2026-28 on Council's website.
5. Commence implementing the actions in the Strategy.
6. Note that the Kiama Community Participation Plan 2019 has been superseded by the NSW Statewide Community Participation Plan.

Background

Community engagement and Local Government

Community engagement is how Council works with the community to share information, seek feedback and involve the community in decisions that affect them.

Under the NSW Office of Local Government's Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP&R) framework, each council is required to create a strategy for how they will engage the community. This strategy must:

- Be based on the social justice principles of access, equity, participation and rights.
- Identify relevant stakeholder groups in the community.
- Outline the methods that the council will use to engage each of these groups.
- Allow sufficient time to effectively undertake the engagement.

Community engagement is governed, deliberate and evidence based. Its purpose is to inform Council decision-making, not to negotiate outcomes or replace other Council processes.

Existing Community Engagement Strategy

In 2024, Council undertook a comprehensive update of the Community Engagement Strategy, its first major update since 2016. The revised Strategy drew on extensive engagement with the community, former Councillors and staff and was adopted in June 2024, providing a practical framework to support meaningful and measurable community engagement.

Why update the Strategy now?

Under the IP&R framework, Community Engagement Strategies are typically reviewed within three months of a local government election. Because the current Strategy was adopted shortly before the 2024 election and a future review was expected to incorporate the Community Participation Plan (CPP), Council deferred the review.

In September 2026, the NSW Government adopted the NSW Statewide CPP, which replaces Council's CPP and establishes consistent statutory consultation requirements for planning and development matters across NSW.

This targeted update ensures the CES aligns with the NSW Statewide CPP and clearly explains how the two documents relate. The updated Strategy also provides additional information on how Council will engage with and notify the community and stakeholders on planning and development matters.

This update also establishes an appropriate future review cycle under the IP&R framework, with the next comprehensive review scheduled following the 2028 local government election.

Community Engagement Strategy 2026-28

The CES sets out how Kiama Municipal Council will engage with its community to inform decision-making and support meaningful participation in Council's plans, policies, programs, services and projects. It aims to strengthen transparency, improve decision-making, build community trust and ensure engagement practices are meaningful, consistent and inclusive.

The Strategy is guided by five principles: open and honest, proactive, genuine, inclusive and accessible, and accountable. It adopts four levels of engagement, adapted from the IAP2 Spectrum: inform, consult, involve and collaborate, and follows a continuous engagement cycle of design, plan, deliver and closing the loop.

The Strategy recognises Kiama's ageing and changing population, distinct towns and villages, seasonal population and challenges associated with trust and engagement fatigue. It commits Council to using a mix of accessible digital, face-to-face and place-based engagement methods, while making additional efforts to include under-represented communities.

Priority actions focus on:

- Promoting equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Meeting community where they are.
- Building staff and councillor capacity.
- Clearly closing the loop on how feedback influences decisions.

Implementation will be supported through defined organisational responsibilities, practical tools and training, ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement.

The draft Strategy was publicly exhibited from 22 June to 26 July 2026.

Public exhibition findings

What we heard

Key themes raised through submissions, community pop-ups and internal stakeholder consultation included:

- Ensuring engagement genuinely influences Council decisions through early engagement, clear decision-making parameters and stronger closing the loop practices.
- Broadening participation, particularly among under-represented groups and people who do not typically engage with Council.
- Exploring innovative and accessible engagement methods, including digital tools.
- Strengthening internal capability, coordination and governance arrangements.
- Clarifying the relationship between the CES, the NSW Statewide Community Participation Plan and other statutory related engagement.
- Providing clearer processes for managing community submissions and representations made through Councillors during exhibition periods.

Feedback broadly supported the Strategy's direction while also identifying opportunities for improvement.

Outcomes

Community and stakeholder feedback informed several amendments to strengthen the final Strategy, including:

- Clarifying planning and development engagement by expanding content on the NSW Statewide Community Participation Plan and its relationship to the CES, including how Council engages on planning and development matters.
- Investigating voluntary demographic data collection to better understand who participates in engagement activities and identify gaps in representation.

- Strengthening community pop-ups by considering community availability and involving subject matter experts where appropriate.
- Extending community engagement training to Councillors to support best-practice engagement, recordkeeping and management of community representations during exhibition periods, consistent with the *Procedures for Councillor and Staff Interaction*.
- Clearly defining the role of consultants when they support community engagement activities, including expectations for following Council processes and record management practices.
- Improving internal consultation and project management alignment through enhancements to the Community Engagement Toolkit.
- Reinstating the Community Engagement Working Group to support implementation, coordination and continuous improvement.
- Improving visibility of supporting documents through a new appendix identifying key legislation, policies and procedures.

Overall, feedback reinforced the Strategy's strategic direction and existing commitments. Where no amendments were required, feedback will inform the strategy implementation, including action prioritisation, Toolkit development and future engagement initiatives.

A detailed summary of feedback, staff responses and resulting amendments is provided in the Public Exhibition Engagement Report (Enclosure 1).

Expected outcomes of the Strategy

Adoption of the Community Engagement Strategy 2026-28 will deliver governance, organisational and community benefits, including:

- A clear framework for community engagement aligned with the NSW Statewide CPP, the IP&R framework and relevant statutory obligations.
- Clear guidance, tools and governance arrangements that support meaningful and consistent practices across the organisation.
- Greater transparency and community trust by clearly outlining how people can participate and how community feedback informs decisions.
- More inclusive participation through a stronger focus on equity, diversity and accessibility, helping ensure a broader range of community voices are heard.

The CES will support a culture of meaningful engagement and strengthen the community's role in informing Council decision-making over the next two years.

13.4 Post exhibition adoption: Committees Framework Policy

CSP Objective: Outcome 4.2: Our governance is transparent and trusted, supported by the right structures, technology and processes to effectively serve the community.

CSP Strategy: 4.2.2 Communicate transparently to inform, build trust and respect.

Delivery Program: 4.2.2.4 Effectively communicate the projects, plans, actions and outcomes of Council (and relevant government departments) to inform our community in a timely and accessible way.

Summary

Following the public exhibition of the draft Committees Framework Policy and minor amendments arising from the submission received, the Policy is now presented to Councillors for adoption.

Financial implication

Nil.

Risk implication

Updating the policy demonstrates Council's response to internal audit recommendations and a commitment to good governance practices and community engagement.

Policy

Council Policy Framework

Consultation (internal)

Governance

Communication/Community engagement

The draft policy was on exhibition for 28 days and one submission was received.

Attachments
Nil

Enclosures

1 Engagement Report - Committees Framework Policy⇨

2 Committees Framework Policy for adoption⇨

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receive and note the Committees Framework Policy Public Exhibition Engagement Report.
2. Adopt the Committees Framework Policy.

3. Notify those who made submissions on the Committees Framework Policy of Council's decision.

4. Publish the Committees Framework Policy on the Council website.

Background

At its September 2026 Ordinary Meeting, Council resolved to place the draft Committees Framework Policy on public exhibition for a period of 28 days. Council also resolved that, should any submissions received during the exhibition period result in proposed amendments to the Policy, the revised Policy would be reported back to Council for consideration and adoption.

The draft Committees Framework Policy was placed on public exhibition from 28 September to 26 October 2026. One submission was received and matters raised are outlined in the enclosed Exhibition Engagement Report. The submission related mostly to alignment of committees to the Community Strategic Plan and updates to the terms of reference templates. An explanation of amendments made to the policy is provided in the Exhibition Engagement Report.

It is recommended that Council adopt the Committees Framework Policy.

13.5 2025-26 Annual Report

CSP Objective: Outcome 4.2: Our governance is transparent and trusted, supported by the right structures, technology and processes to effectively serve the community.

CSP Strategy: 4.2.2 Communicate transparently to inform, build trust and respect.

Delivery Program: 4.2.2.4 Effectively communicate the projects, plans, actions and outcomes of Council (and relevant government departments) to inform our community in a timely and accessible way.

Summary

This Annual Report provides a comprehensive overview of Council's performance, achievements, and progress during the 2025-2026 financial year, reporting on the delivery of actions and outcomes outlined in the 2022-2026 Delivery Program and the 2025-2026 Operational Plan. Prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993* and *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*, the Annual Report must be submitted by 30 November each year and serves as a key accountability mechanism between Council and the community.

Financial implication

The annual Operational Plan, which forms the basis of this report, is developed in conjunction with the annual Budget process to ensure the effective alignment of Council's priorities, activities, and financial resources

Risk implication

This report details achievement of Council in implementing the Delivery Program through the 2025-256 Operational Plan. Council are required to produce and publish their Annual Report by 30 November each year.

Policy

Local Government Act 1993

Consultation (internal)

Contributions from across all Council directorates were instrumental in the development of the Annual Report, Council staff use an internal reporting tool to reporting against the Delivery Program and Operational Plan, as well as written updates outlining key achievements and outcomes.

Communication/Community engagement

While the Annual Report is not required to undergo community engagement or public exhibition, it provides an important overview of Council's progress, achievements, and performance for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026, ensuring accountability and transparency to the community.

Attachments
Nil

Enclosures

1 2025-26 Annual Report FINAL DRAFT⇨

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses the 2025-26 Annual Report for publication by 30 November 2026, as required by section 428 of the *Local Government Act 1993.*

Background

The Annual Report is a key accountability document between Council and the community, providing a transparent overview of Council's performance and achievements throughout the reporting period. A primary focus of the report is Council's delivery of the commitments outlined in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan, as these are plans for which Council has direct responsibility.

In addition, the Annual Report includes information required under the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*. These prescribed reporting requirements support transparency and accountability by providing the community with information that assists in understanding Council's performance, both as an organisation delivering services and infrastructure, and as a leader within the community.

The 2025-2026 financial year presented significant challenges, with ongoing cost escalations, increasing service delivery expectations, and continuing pressures on finances. Despite these challenges, Council remained committed to delivering the actions and outcomes outlined in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

The key achievements outlined in the 2025-26 Annual Report include:

- Council adopted the long-awaited Local Housing Strategy in July, and it was endorsed by the NSW Government, giving Kiama a well-considered, practical plan for guiding future housing decisions.
- Council's success in lobbying the state government to remove the covenant on five lots at Glenbrook Drive led to those lots being sold October 2025.
- The NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure approved the rezoning of the Kiama Depot site from industrial to residential, paving the way for the Shoalhaven Street Precinct to deliver more than 350 residences.
- Council completed our NSW Top Tourism Town hat-trick, earning entry into the state's Hall of Fame in the process.
- The derelict nursing home at Havilah Place was demolished, giving Council flexibility for future use of the site as we also explore options for the adjacent Blue Haven Terralong retirement village.
- Unfortunately, Council had to cancel the annual New Year's Eve fireworks the 2025-26 financial year. Council has put in place a pathway for the event to return this 31 December 2026.
- The Finance & Major Projects Advisory Committee kicked off in November, bringing together the expertise and energy of community members, Councillors and senior Council staff.

- Council installed permanent active warning signs along two notoriously hazardous roads – Jamberoo Mountain Road and Swamp Road, while also continuing the Betterment Project to upgrade Foxground Road, Jamberoo Mountain Road and Wallaby Hill Road.
- The murals at the Terralong Street underbridge were completed.
- Council successfully launched our new online rates payment portal.
- Council came to the rescue to replace Kiama's jazz festival with the Sounds of Jazz and Blues Weekend in March.
- Council switched to fortnightly yellow-lid recycling waste collection.
- Council installed new signs for local towns honouring our rich Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- Kiama was chosen as one of two sites statewide for a rock fishing safety trial using AI video surveillance.
- Council hosted the NSW Government's Community Cabinet at The Pavilion.
- The upgraded of drainage and facilities at Gerry Emery Reserve and Athol Noble Oval was completed.