Governance Reflection

A quick self-check for staying at the right level in meetings

Direction vs. Instructions

- Are we deciding what needs to be done – or are we telling staff how to do it?
- Are we setting direction, or giving instructions?
- Is this Council's role, or staff's role?

Oversight does not require doing the work.

Governance vs. Operations

- Is this a governance question or an operational one?
- Does Council need to decide this – or simply be satisfied that it's being managed properly?
- Am I clarifying expectations, or redesigning the work?

Council sets outcomes and boundaries. Staff determine how to execute within that direction.

Public Interest Anchor

- How does this decision serve the public interest?
- What risk to the public are we trying to manage or prevent?
- Are we drifting towards convenience or familiarity instead of the mandate?

Council's ultimate responsibility is to protect the public interest.

Expertise Check

- Is my expertise helping Council set direction – or pushing us into execution?
- Am I comparing this to personal experience or our mandate and risk tolerance?
- Would this be better handled by staff or advisors?

Expertise is valuable – but it must be applied at the governance level.

Silence and Participation

- Is the discussion clear and complete – or is something unresolved?
- Would a brief comment help clarify alignment or concern?
- If I don't speak, will others understand my perspective?

Occasional silence is fine. Consistent silence limits collective judgement.

Agenda Reality Check

- Is this item on the agenda as information, discussion or decision?
- Are we treating it at the level intended?
- Do we need to pause and clarify the purpose before continuing?

A clear agenda supports a clear meeting.

This guide supports Council's shared responsibility for fairness, clarity and accountability.

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