

Working with the CEO and Staff

Understanding roles and relationships

To achieve the best results for the community, a local government needs a strong team of councillors and management. While councillors determine policy directions for the municipality, they also need to rely on advice from the organisation.

Management's role is to provide relevant and timely information to the elected council. Councillors evaluate alternative options and assess the impact of decisions before deciding what it considers to be in the community's best interest. The organisation then implements the policy directions that have been decided on by council.

The process and relationship are interactive, with each having distinct roles and functions. Understanding these differences will influence the degree to which a trusting and professional working relationship can be established between council and management.

The importance of trust and mutual respect within the council team and between council and senior management cannot be underestimated. There needs to be a shared commitment to the goals of the council by both councillors and senior management.

The role of the chief executive officer as defined in the *Local Government Act* is to:

- Establish and maintain an appropriate organisational structure for the council
- Ensure that the decisions of the council are implemented without undue delay
- Manage Council's day-to-day operations in accordance with the council plan
- Provide timely advice to Council
- Appoint, direct, manage and dismiss staff.

It is the council's responsibility to appoint the CEO, negotiate contractual obligations and manage and review their performance.

Management accountability is a fundamental responsibility of the elected council. When council has decided on its direction, strategy and policies, it delegates authority to the CEO for implementing these decisions and managing day-to-day operations.

In order to assess the performance of the CEO, the elected council determines systems for monitoring performance. This can be managed by specifying performance goals, key performance indicators and evaluation methods in the CEO's contract of employment. The CEO's performance is reviewed regularly and contracts of employment are signed for three or five year duration.