



Shadowing council

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A NEW, self-proclaimed "shadow council" was officially launched in Melville on April 1.

Lead advocate Gavin Waugh initiated the "community governance oversight group" based on the state and federal idea of shadow cabinets and believes it will promote transparency, accountability, and good governance in local government.

Initially operating under the local Residents and Ratepayers association, Mr Waugh says the shadow council will be a "new wagon" for successful community governance.



- Shadow council lead advocate Gavin Waugh.

"It's been a good response and we're getting very close to launching public meetings to get people to come together," Mr Waugh said.

City of Melville mayor Katie Mair confirmed the council's awareness of the shadow council, receiving a petition submitted by Mr Waugh and 46 other residents at the September council meeting last year.

The petition submitted by Mr Waugh sought to reform the Council's Policy and Legislation Committee to include independent voluntary community representation or form a voluntary community focus group.

Ms Mair said there were already established measures such as the City's Stakeholder Engagement Policy to ensure "transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement," in community engagement.

The Melville Shadow Council's first foray was a "public briefing" press release which examined the appointment of former state regulator Mustafa Yildiz to a senior executive role at the City of Melville.

In early 2023 when he was employed by the local government department, Mr Yildiz issued warnings to the City of Melville around behaviour management and transparency, requiring the City to develop a plan addressing governance concerns.

Now appointed as director of legal, risk and governance at Melville, the shadow council said there were "several risks" now that Mr Yildiz was in charge of addressing his own reforms.

Mr Waugh said he didn't want to cast aspersions on Mr Yildiz's character or integrity, but instead "highlight the vulnerabilities", of WA's local government integrity framework.

Mr Waugh said the media release would be "one step along the road" to providing awareness of the Melville shadow council and its support of the community.

The shadow council as well as Mr Waugh's petition are on the agenda for the Ordinary Meeting of Council this Tuesday.

by TOM NEWSON