



Ararat Rural City

MINUTES

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 30 January 2024

To be held in the Council Chambers, Shire Offices
(Livestreamed)

Commencing at 6.00pm

Council:

Cr Bob Sanders (Mayor)

Cr Gwenda Allgood

Cr Jo Armstrong

Cr Rob Armstrong

Cr Peter Beales

Cr Henry Burridge

Cr Bill Waterston



Ararat Rural City

A recording of this meeting is being made for the purpose of verifying the accuracy of the minutes of the Council Meeting.

The recording is being streamed live via Facebook, to improve transparency between council and the community and give more people the opportunity to view what decisions are being made. You do not require a Facebook account to watch the live broadcast, simply enter www.facebook.com/araratruralcitycouncil into your address bar.

Recordings of Council Meetings (excluding closed sessions) are made available on Council's website.

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SECTION 1 – PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 LIVE STREAMING

Council is keen to engage with members of the community and live streams the formal Council Meetings to make them accessible. The stream is available to view on Council's Facebook page from 6pm and on Council's website following the Council Meeting.

1.2 TRADITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/OPENING PRAYER/COUNCILLORS PLEDGE

Traditional acknowledgement – CR WATERSTON

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, and pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

Opening Prayer- CR BEALES

Almighty God, we humbly ask you to help us, as elected Councillors of the Ararat Rural City Council. Guide our deliberations. Prosper what is your will for us, to your honour and glory and for the welfare and benefit of the people whom we serve in the Ararat Rural City.

Councillors Pledge – CR R ARMSTRONG

We will faithfully and impartially carry out and exercise the functions, powers, authorities and discretions invested in us under the *Local Government Act 2020* and any other Act to the best of our skill and judgement.

1.3 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

1.4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 28 November 2023 be confirmed.

MOVED CR J ARMSTRONG

SECONDED CR BEALES

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 28 November 2023 be confirmed.

CARRIED 4927/24

1.5 DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A Councillor who has a conflict of interest in a matter being considered at a *Council meeting* at which he or she:

- 1 is present must disclose that conflict of interest by explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those present at the *Council meeting* immediately before the matter is considered; or
- 2 intends to be present must disclose that conflict of interest by providing to the *Chief Executive Officer* before the *Council meeting* commences a written notice:
 - (a) advising of the conflict of interest;
 - (b) explaining the nature of the conflict of interest; and
 - (c) detailing, if the nature of the conflict of interest involves a Councillor's relationship with or a gift from another person, the:
 - name of the other person;
 - nature of the relationship with that other person or the date of receipt, value and type of gift received from the other person; and
 - nature of that other person's interest in the matter,and then immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting announcing to those present that he or she has a conflict of interest and that a written notice has been given to the *Chief Executive Officer* under this sub-Rule.

The Councillor must, in either event, leave the *Council meeting* immediately after giving the explanation or making the announcement (as the case may be) and not return to the meeting until after the matter has been disposed of.

There were no Declaration of Conflict of Interest received.

SECTION 2 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

2.1 PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

- 1 Unless *Council* determines to consider it as an item of urgent business, no motion (other than a motion to receive the same) may be made on any petition, joint letter, memorial or other like application until the next *Council meeting* after that at which it has been presented.
- 2 It is incumbent on every Councillor presenting a petition or joint letter to acquaint himself or herself with the contents of that petition or joint letter, and to ascertain that it does not contain language disrespectful to *Council*.
- 3 Every Councillor presenting a petition or joint letter to *Council* must:
 - write or otherwise record his or her name at the beginning of the petition or joint letter; and
 - confine himself or herself to a statement of the persons from whom it comes, the number of signatories to it, the material matters expressed in it and the text of the prayer or request.
- 4 Every petition or joint letter presented to *Council* must be in *writing* (other than pencil), typing or printing, contain the request of the petitioners or signatories and be signed by at least 12 people.
- 5 Every petition or joint letter must be signed by the persons whose names are appended to it by their names or marks, and, except in cases of incapacity or sickness, by no one else and the address of every petitioner or signatory must be clearly stated.
- 6 Any signature appearing on a page which does not bear the text of the whole of the petition or request may not be considered by *Council*.
- 7 Every page of a petition or joint letter must be a single page of paper and not be posted, stapled, pinned or otherwise affixed or attached to any piece of paper other than another page of the petition or joint letter.
- 8 If a petition, joint letter, memorial or other like application relates to an operational matter, *Council* must refer it to the *Chief Executive Officer* for consideration.

There were no Petitions or Joint Letters received.

SECTION 3 – REPORTS REQUIRING COUNCIL DECISION

3.1 FAIR ACCESS ACTION PLAN

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 13272

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report recommends that Council adopt the Fair Access Action Plan, which lists a number of actions that both Council and clubs will work towards, in order to achieve the principles outlined in the Fair Access Policy.

The Action Plan ultimately seeks to address known barriers that are experienced by women and girls within our municipality, in accessing and using community sports infrastructure and recreation reserve facilities.

The scope of the Fair Access Action Plan is a detailed document that outlines specific, measurable and timely goals in line with each the Fair Access principles.

DISCUSSION

This project has been initiated in response to the Victorian Government Office of Women and Girls - 2022, **Fair Access Policy Roadmap**.

Fair, inclusive and safe places to connect, participate and exercise are a basic human right.

We will use the following Victorian Government's Fair Access Principles to guide the development of our Fair Access Policy and Action Plan:

1. Community sports infrastructure and environments are genuinely welcome, safe and inclusive
2. Women and girls can fully participate in all aspects of community sport and active recreation, including as a player, coach, administrator, official, volunteer and spectator
3. Women and girls will have equitable access to and use of community sport infrastructure:
 - a) Of the highest quality available and most convenient
 - b) At the best and most popular competition and training times and locations
 - c) To support existing and new participation opportunities, and a variety of sport and recreation activities
4. Women and girls should be equitably represented in leadership and governance roles
5. Encourage and support all user groups who access and use community sport and recreation infrastructure to understand, adopt and implement gender equitable access and use policies
6. Prioritise use and support to all user groups who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to gender equitable access and use of community sport and recreation infrastructure

The development of a Fair Access Action Plan is not legally mandatory but will be required to be in place for Council to secure funding from the Victorian Government for sport and recreation infrastructure.

To ensure that our sport and recreation infrastructure is maintained and developed to an appropriate standard, securing external funding is critical and as such we are developing the Fair Access Policy and Action Plan to comply with this requirement.

Image: Fair Access Principles



For Ararat Rural City Council, the Fair Access Action Plan applies to the following community sports infrastructure/facilities:

	Facility	Location
1	Alexandra Oval Community Centre	Waratah Avenue, Ararat
2	Gordon Street Recreation Reserve	Gordon St, Ararat
3	Ararat Fitness Centre	61-73 High St, Ararat
4	Moyston Recreation Reserve	Moyston- Great Western Road, Moyston
5	Willaura Recreation Reserve	Delacombe Way, Willaura
6	Pomonal Recreation Reserve	Ararat-Halls Gap Road, Pomonal
7	Tatyoan Recreation Reserve	Tatyoan Road, Tatyoan
8	Mininera Recreation Reserve	Mac Street, Mininera
9	Elmhurst Recreation Reserve	Green Street, Elmhurst
10	Lake Bolac Recreation Reserve	Lake Bolac Complex Road, Lake Bolac
11	Buangor Recreation Reserve	Main Street, Buangor

Implementation

Council acknowledges that the requirement to have a gender equitable access and use policy and action plan (or equivalent) in place, and the ability to demonstrate progress against that policy and action plan (or equivalent), will form part of the eligibility criteria for Victorian Government funding programs relating to community sports infrastructure from 1 July 2024.

At this point in time, it only includes Victorian Government funding programs, it does not include grant programs through other sporting bodies such as VicHealth.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The key financial drivers align strongly with the thrust of the Council Plan 2021-2025, particularly the following:

- 4 Developing and Maintaining Key Enabling Infrastructure**
We will ensure that we plan, fund, and develop new infrastructure in ways that delivers strong public value. Existing infrastructure will be managed, renewed, and maintained to ensure that it continues to serve identified public needs.
- 5 Enhancing Community Life**
We will work with the communities of Ararat Rural City to maintain social cohesion, support community activity and cultural life, and enhance safety.
- 5.3 Partner with community groups, not-for-profits, and traditional owner organisations to develop Ararat Rural City as a more inclusive and diverse community.

Budget Implications

There are no budget implications.

Policy/Relevant Law

The Fair Access Policy has been introduced as a mandatory requirement by State Government, as part of these clubs, councils and organisations are required to implement an action plan to achieve the policy principles.

Council policies include:

- Gender Equality Act 2020
- Local Government Act 2020
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2011-2025 (Ararat Rural City Council)
- Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2026 (Ararat Rural City Council)
- Seasonal User Agreement Alexandra Oval - Ararat Rats Football Netball Club
- Seasonal User Agreement Alexandra Oval - Ararat Eagles Football Netball Club
- Gymnastics Club Ararat Fitness Centre Agreement
- Ararat Basketball Association Ararat Fitness Centre Agreement
- Grampians Cricket Association

Sustainability Implications

There are no environmental sustainability implications.

Risk Assessment

The implementation of the Fair Access Plan mitigates the risk of not being eligible for Victorian State Government funding as of 1 July 2024.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Council will consider the Fair Access Plan when reviewing policies, planning, maintenance, and capital works on community sports infrastructure which is managed by Council, to ensure that ongoing improvements in this area are implemented.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

The Policy has been reviewed by the following council officers: Contracts & Procurement Lead, Recreation Engagement Coordinator and Human Resources Business Partner, all of which work closely in this space.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Fair Access Action Plan dated January 2024.

**MOVED CR WATERSTON
SECONDED CR BEALES**

That Council adopts the Fair Access Action Plan dated January 2024

CARRIED 4928/24

ATTACHMENTS

A copy of the Fair Access Action Plan is provided as Attachment 3.1



Principle	Objective	Action	Due date	Indicator of success	Action Officer	Officer update
1. Community sports infrastructure and environments are genuinely welcoming, safe and inclusive	Provide education to clubs on ways they can create a welcoming, inclusive, and safe club.	Arrange for an organisation such as Sports Central to conduct Fair Access training and provide education to all local sporting clubs within our municipality.	Medium term	Representatives from each sporting club in the municipality will have completed Fair Access training.		
	Ensuring safer and more inclusive infrastructure to improve the training and playing experience for women and girls (including change rooms, bathrooms and amenities, sports lighting, car parks, pathways etc.)	Ensure completion of a GIA for all new or upcoming renewals of any master plans, policies, strategies etc.	Short-Medium term	GIA's will be completed for all new policies, services, infrastructure. These will all be kept together to show a clear record of the planning that has gone into creating a more inclusive environment.		
2. Women and girls can fully participate in all aspects of community sport and active recreation, including as a player, coach, administrator, official, volunteer and spectator	Subsidise fees for local sporting clubs whose administration (non-playing) staff is made up of at least 40% women.	Explore option of working towards gendered targets for club committees. Inform sporting clubs that those with approximately 40% women/girls in administration roles will receive subsidise fees	Medium term	Clubs are able to provide a list of all the positions within their organisations, and have listed the names of the individuals who occupy those roles. If this is greater than 40% women/girls, they will receive subsidised fees.		
	Breakdown gender stereotypes. Encourage both men and women to take on roles outside of those traditionally associated with their gender	Encourage clubs through making direct contact and information sessions - to promote/advertise roles using gender neutral language or state that vacant positions are open to all individuals.	Medium term	This will be evident in clubs and community groups advertisements and through the increased number of women participating in local community sport.		
3. Womens and girls will have equitable access to and use of community sport infrastructure	Aim to invest in programs, events, and community groups that attract equal access of diverse users (e.g events that promote gender equality)	Review and update Community Grants criteria for sporting clubs and community groups to incorporate fair access requirements.	Long term	Councils Community Support & Events Grants guidelines will be updated to include key selection criteria to meet fair access and gender equality principles.		
	Increase the use of Council owned facilities, by prioritising groups that are predominantly female based	Communicate to clubs and community groups that events, sporting activities and bookings that are women/girl dominate, which take place on Council owned facilities will have equitable access. Build strong relationships with female dominated community groups and clubs to ensure that they continue to feel comfortable using these spaces	Short term	See increased hire/use of Council owned facilities. Have formed strong relationships with female dominated community groups.		
	Promote training and mentorship for women and girls to learn about leadership	Send emails and promote opportunities to community groups on leadership training. Encourage groups to apply for grants for training funding. Continually share upskilling opportunities through networks as they arise	Short term	Women in leadership and governance roles will be increased amongst sporting clubs and community groups within our municipality.		

4. Women and girls should be equitably represented in leadership and governance roles	Continually share upskilling opportunities through networks as they arise	Offer some kind of gender equity, bystander, GIA, or equality training each year for staff.	Medium term	Staff have the opportunity to undertake gender equality or related training annually.	
	Use non-specific gendered language on their social media channels, in advertisements, policies etc.	Encourage clubs and community groups to use non-specific gendered language in all their advertising and communication through role modelling this in Council's own communication	Long term	Non-specific gendered language will be visible on the clubs social media, in advertisements (in local papers), in their policies etc.	
	Review Seasonal User Agreements and incorporate Fair Access practices and principles where applicable	Review all Councils Seasonal User Agreements to ensure that the language and objectives align with the Fair Access practices and principles	Long term	Seasonal User Agreements will be reviewed, altered and in place/adopted by January 2025.	
5. Encourage and support all user groups who access and use community sport infrastructure to understand, adopt and implement gender equitable access and use practices.	Pricing structures reviewed and priority given to support clubs with female specific programs. E.g Female football clubs	Council to review pricing structures for those that are placing a strong focus on supporting and encouraging women within our municipality	Long term	Review price structure on a case-by-case basis	
	Promote sporting and community groups that are making/embedding changes in the gender equity space.	Work with community groups and sporting clubs to promote the work they are doing.	Medium term	Produce joint media releases on the work clubs are doing in this space. Promote the clubs on our social media and in local newspapers.	
	6. Prioritise access, use and support to all user groups who demonstrate an on-going commitment to gender equitable access and use of allocated community sport infrastructure.				

3.2 WESTERN BULLDOGS YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM MEMBERSHIP

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 13274

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to determine the viability of Councils membership in the Western Bulldogs Youth Leadership Program (WBYP) in 2024.

Council has contributed to the WBYP since 2017. Renewal of membership to the program is due in January 2024, therefore, Council needs to determine whether this program is of benefit to the young people of Ararat Rural City.

DISCUSSION

Ararat Rural City Council first began their membership with the WBYP in 2017, with an initial contribution of \$12,000, and the program commenced with 8 students. The program aims to provide young people with hands-on opportunities to build capacities in leadership, teamwork, communication, goal setting and resilience, along with contributing and growing as leaders in our community.

There has been some interest in the program of the past 6 years, The program in 2023 had 16 participants. The cost of the program has gradually increased since 2017, with a contribution by Council in 2023 of \$25,000.

The program has only engaged a relatively small number of young people each year and there is a sense that the quality of facilitation has varied during the period of Council's involvement with WBYP. There is also a sense that the program was easier to access for urban young people rather than those rurally based.

This is not to suggest that the program has not been of benefit to the young people involved. A number of them have demonstrated leadership in our community and feedback has been that they have generally appreciated the opportunity to engage with the WBYP.

It is recommended that Council seek a program that is more carefully curated to the needs of young people in Ararat Rural City, engages with a broader demographic and builds a range of skills focussed on employment, key life transitions and community engagement.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

5 Enhancing Community Life

We will work the communities of Ararat Rural City to maintain social cohesion, support community activity and cultural life, and enhance safety.

5.3 Partner with community groups, not-for-profits, and traditional owner organisations to develop Ararat Rural City as a more inclusive and diverse community.

Budget Implications

There are no significant budget implications of this recommendation. Withdrawing from the program will allow Council to invest resources into a more locally focussed young people's program.

Policy/Legal/Statutory

N/A.

Risk Assessment

None identified.

Stakeholder Consultation and Communication

The recommendation was based on feedback from people engaged in the program.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1 Council discontinue participation in the Western Bulldogs Youth leadership program, commencing in 2024*
- 2 The CEO bring a recommendation to the February 2024 Council meeting for an alternate young people's program for 2024.*

MOVED CR J ARMSTRONG

SECONDED CR WATERSTON

That:

- 1 Council discontinue participation in the Western Bulldogs Youth leadership program, commencing in 2024**
- 2 The CEO bring a recommendation to the February 2024 Council meeting for an alternate young people's program for 2024.**

CARRIED 4929/24

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments in relation to this item.

3.3 ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL 2024/2025 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO's OFFICE
REFERENCE: 13299

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council will shortly be commencing development of the 2024/2025 Budget for adoption prior to 30 June 2024. The 2024/2025 Budget will be developed consistent with the key financial drivers adopted at the July 2023 Council Meeting.

The Budget will be developed and go through a process of community engagement consistent with the requirements of Sections 94 and 96 of the Local Government Act 2020. A development and community engagement plan for the 2024/2025 Budget are presented for endorsement by Council.

DISCUSSION

Section 94 of the Local Government 2020 requires that Council adopt a budget for 2024/2025 by 30 June 2024. In order to achieve this outcome Council needs to develop a draft budget for 2024/2025 and undertake community consultation around the budget prior to adoption.

Budget Development

It is proposed that Council begin developing the 2024/2025 Budget in February 2024 for adoption by Council at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on Tuesday 25 June 2024.

The preliminary draft budget will be developed by Council staff during February and March 2024 for presentation to Council in April 2024. In the first Council Briefing in March 2024, Councillors will consider new initiatives or projects for inclusion in the 2024/2025 budget.

The 2024/2025 Budget will be developed based on the Key Financial Drivers adopted by Council at the July 2023 Council Meeting. These Key Drivers are:

Rating

Maintenance of the "pie model" to provide some form of long-term rating equity and reduce rate shock across rating sectors based on annual valuation fluctuations.

Debt

Debt is only used to fund strategic infrastructure outcomes with an emphasis on intergenerational equity

Asset Preservation

Maintain the asset renewal and upgrade ratio to at least 110% of depreciation

Surplus budgets

Maintain cash and operating surpluses in each financial year

Managing expenditure

Managing expenditure is a key driver of financial sustainability at Ararat Rural City Council

Rate rises

Rate rises will be kept to a minimum based on seeking organisational efficiency. These efficiencies will be returned to the ratepayer as a dividend through lower rate rises or rate cuts. ***The 2024/2025 Budget will be developed on the basis of delivering a 0% rate rise.***

Service standards

Expenditure savings and ratepayer dividends will not come at the price of lower service standards.

The timeframe for development of the 2024/2025 Budget is summarized in the table below:

Activity	Timeframe
Budget development by Council staff	February – March 2024
Consideration of new initiatives or projects by Council	5 March 2024
Presentation of 2024/2025 Budget to Council	9 & 16 April 2024
Public release of Budget	19 April 2024
Closure of public submissions	17 May 2024
Consider any matters or submissions as required at the May 2025 Council Meeting	28 May 2024
Adopt 2024/2025 Budget	25 June 2024

Community Engagement

Section 96 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that Council undertake community engagement around its budget in a form that is consistent with its Community Engagement Policy.

It is recommended that Council endorse a plan for community engagement around the 2024/2025 budget. This will include several mechanisms of engagement including:

- use of Engage Ararat
- distribution of plain language budget summaries across the municipality
- face to face “town hall” meetings
- social media posts to encourage community engagement
- summaries be placed in local newspapers
- mainstream media engagement around major 2024/2025 Budget initiatives

The process is designed to ensure maximum engagement with key geographic locations and communities of interest across the municipality. Residents and ratepayers will be encouraged to engage with the budget process and to make submission on matters of interest or concern

Engagement Activity	Timeframe
Posting of Council's 2024/2025 Budget on Engage Ararat	By 5:00pm on Friday 19 April 2024
Development of a one-page summary of key budget deliverables – available at a number of sites across the municipality	Friday 19 April 2024
"Town Hall" meetings in the following communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ararat • Elmhurst • Tatyoon • Moyston • Lake Bolac • Pomonal • Willaura 	Between Monday 29 April– Friday 10 May 2024
Promotion of key budget elements across mainstream and social media	Ongoing during the budget period

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

Council's Budget is a key strategic document that resources delivery of the Council Plan. In particular the Budget 2024/2025 relates to the following:

6 Strong and Effective Governance

We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at the centre through effective financial management; well measured risk management; and implementation of effective community engagement practices.

6.1 Deliver responsible budget outcomes, linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation and rating fairness.

Budget Implications

As this item relates to the development of the 2024/2025 Budget it has no direct or significant budget implications for the 2023/2024 Budget. The 2024/2025 budget will be framed around the key financial drivers adopted by Council at the July 2023 Council Meeting.

Policy/Relevant Law

Sections 94 and 96 of the Local Government Act 2020 (LGA 2020) requires that Council prepare and adopt a budget for each financial year and the subsequent three financial years by 30 June each year. Section 96 requires that Council undertake community engagement around its budget in a form that is consistent with its Community Engagement Policy

Sustainability Implications

N/A

Risk Assessment

The most significant risk to be managed is to ensure that the 2024/2025 Budget aligns with community expectation and Council's key strategies outlined in the Council Plan 2021-2025.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

N/A

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

This agenda item relates directly to a process of community engagement around the development of the 2024/2025 Budget.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *Endorse the timeframe for development and adoption of the Budget 2024/2025.*

Activity	Timeframe
Budget development by Council staff	February – March 2024
Consideration of new initiatives or projects by Council	5 March 2024
Presentation of 2024/2025 Budget to Council	9 & 16 April 2024
Public release of Budget	19 April 2024
Closure of public submissions	17 May 2024
Consider any matters or submissions as required at the May 2025 Council Meeting	28 May 2024
Adopt 2024/2025 Budget	25 June 2024

2. *Endorse the community engagement plan relating to the 2024/2025 Budget.*

Engagement Activity	Timeframe
Posting of Council's 2024/2025 Budget on Engage Ararat	By 5:00pm on Friday 19 April 2024
Development of a one-page summary of key budget deliverables – available at a number of sites across the municipality	Friday 19 April 2024
"Town Hall" meetings in the following communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ararat • Elmhurst • Tatyoon • Moyston • Lake Bolac • Pomonal • Willaura 	Between Monday 29 April– Friday 10 May 2024
Promotion of key budget elements across mainstream and social media	Ongoing during the budget period

**MOVED CR BEALES
SECONDED CR BURRIDGE**

That Council:

1. **Endorse the timeframe for development and adoption of the Budget 2024/2025.**

Activity	Timeframe
Budget development by Council staff	February – March 2024
Consideration of new initiatives or projects by Council	5 March 2024
Presentation of 2024/2025 Budget to Council	9 & 16 April 2024
Public release of Budget	19 April 2024
Closure of public submissions	17 May 2024

Consider any matters or submissions as required at the May 2025 Council Meeting	28 May 2024
Adopt 2024/2025 Budget	25 June 2024

2. Endorse the community engagement plan relating to the 2024/2025 Budget.

Engagement Activity	Timeframe
Posting of Council's 2024/2025 Budget on Engage Ararat	By 5:00pm on Friday 19 April 2024
Development of a one-page summary of key budget deliverables – available at a number of sites across the municipality	Friday 19 April 2024
"Town Hall" meetings in the following communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ararat • Elmhurst • Tatyoon • Moyston • Lake Bolac • Pomonal • Willaura 	Between Monday 29 April– Friday 10 May 2024
Promotion of key budget elements across mainstream and social media	Ongoing during the budget period

CARRIED 4930/24

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments relating to this item.

3.4 PITCH MUSIC FESTIVAL 2024 – TOWAWAY ZONES

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 13641

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to request endorsement from Council to establish tow-away zones adjacent to the Pitch Music Festival site.

Council will work in conjunction with Pitch Music Festival (Sound Event Group), and a contractor to install and manage the installation, enforcement and removal of vehicles.

DISCUSSION

Pitch Music Festival, in conjunction with Council and VicRoads have established a tow-away zone to mitigate risks from the parking of vehicles in the road reserves adjacent to the festival site.

The risks include the following:

- Vehicles being parked over dry grass and other vegetation creating an extreme fire hazard
- Vehicles pulling over on side roads causing traffic hazards
- Restricting the carriageway width on road reserve which require unobstructed travel for the time of the festival
- Risk of pedestrian accidents while passengers are disembarking from a vehicle located along the highway
- Vehicles being used as camp sites during the time of the festival

Council officers and festival organisers believe that undertaking this action will improve safety and reduce risk to the community, road users and festival attendees during the time of the Pitch Music Festival. Having the authority to undertake the enforcement and removal vehicles within an area of the festival provides some rigour to the process, and immediately eliminate a risk once it has been identified.

Further work will be undertaken to finalise the event contractor installation and, a reasonable cost recovery process which sees no cost to Council will need to be established.

The locations of the proposed tow away zones are as follows:

- Moyston Dunkeld Road from White Cockatoo Road north of the Pitch Site (the patron entry is at the intersection of Moyston Dunkeld Road and Regulating Basin Road), south to Mafeking Road
- Andrews Lane from Moyston Willaura Road to Muirhead Road
- Regulating Basin Road from Moyston Dunkeld Road to past Muirhead Road
- Mafeking Road from Moyston Dunkeld Road to Muirhead Road
- Muirhead Road from Andrews Lane to Regulating Basin Road

These locations are outlined on the map which is provided as Attachment 3.4

It is proposed that:

- Pitch Music Festival event organisers (Sound Event Group) in conjunction with Council, establish an appropriate impound area at the Council depot – as long as the vehicles are kept safe.
- The release fees will comply with Road Management Act 2004 Schedule 4 clause 5(2A). It must reflect the reasonable costs of impoundment, including overhead and indirect costs.
- If a contractor is undertaking the towing, then any cost recovery fee received by the council is received as an agent for the towing company and can be paid to them. It would be best if the fee charged to the customer is the fee charged by the contractor, with the council not keeping any excess.
- Council authorised officers will negotiate this payment process with event organisers. This fee charged also needs to reflect the cost associated with all aspects of management and release of impounded vehicles.
- The formal notification requirement for the tow away will be published in the Government Gazette. This cost and the cost of appropriate signage will be required to be met by the event organisers.
- Council officers will arrange the application through VicRoads to receive the appropriate authorities to establish and enforce the tow-away zones for the length of the festival.
- If Council were to install the signage, they would remain permanent signs, as the festival has a planning permit to allow them to host the festival on that site for the foreseeable future. These signs would not be applicable/enforced when the festival has concluded for that year.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The key financial drivers align strongly with the thrust of the Council Plan 2021-2025, particularly the following:

5 Enhancing Community Life

We will work with the communities of Ararat Rural City to maintain social cohesion, support community activity and cultural life, and enhance safety.

5.3 Partner with community groups, not-for-profits, and traditional owner organisations to develop Ararat Rural City as a more inclusive and diverse community.

6.2 Ensure appropriate risk management is applied to Council and organisational decisions. Councils internal function is applied to areas of perceived risk.

Budget Implications

There are no budget implications

Policy/Legal/Statutory

Road Management Act 2004

Neighbourhood Amenity Local Law 2022

Risk Assessment

If vehicles are allowed to park on the road reserves adjacent to the festival site, they are likely to pose a significant fire risk to the festival itself and to surrounding residents and townships. Enforcing the tow away zones mitigate the risk to the best of Councils ability.

Stakeholder Consultation and Communication

This was discussed with the community at the Community Consultation session which was held on 19 April 2023 at the Moyston Recreation Reserve.

Consultation with VicRoads has also been undertaken to ensure that the appropriate processes have been followed.

The Chief Executive Officer discussed this topic with Councillors at the Tuesday 23 January Council Briefing.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Endorse the application process to gain delegation from VicRoads to establish the tow-away zone in the locality of the Pitch Music Festival for the duration of the festival each year going forward; and*
- 2. Endorses the Chief Executive Officer's actions to authorise council officers on behalf of the Pitch Music Festival event organisers to implement an appropriate process to apply fees associated with the management and enforcement of the tow-away zone for the duration of the festival.*

**MOVED CR J ARMSTRONG
SECONDED CR ALLGOOD**

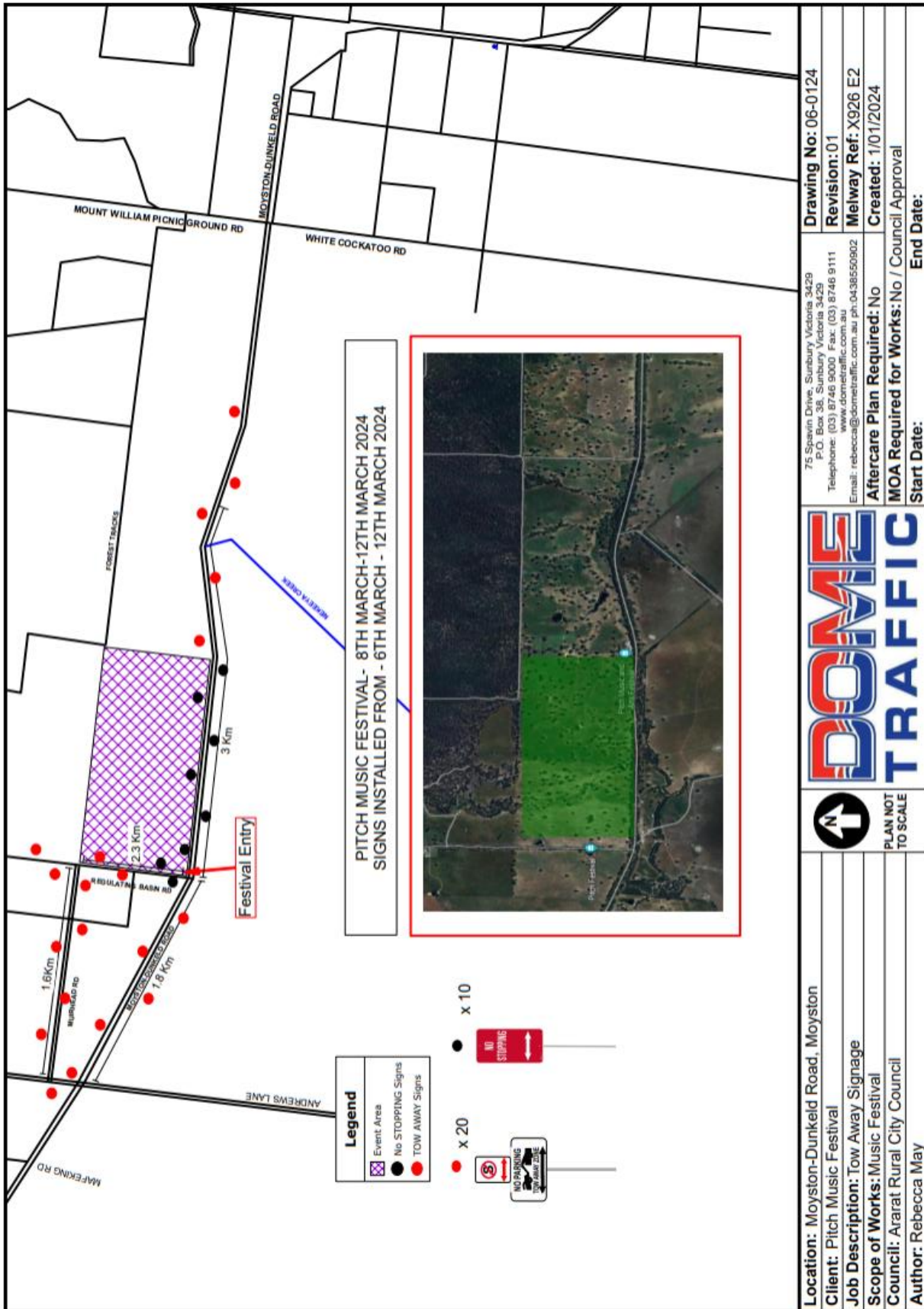
That Council:

- 1. Endorse the application process to gain delegation from VicRoads to establish the tow-away zone in the locality of the Pitch Music Festival for the duration of the festival each year going forward; and**
- 2. Endorses the Chief Executive Officer's actions to authorise council officers on behalf of the Pitch Music Festival event organisers to implement an appropriate process to apply fees associated with the management and enforcement of the tow-away zone for the duration of the festival.**

CARRIED 4931/24

ATTACHMENTS

A copy of the proposed tow-away zone map has been provided as Attachment 3.4



75 Spawin Drive, Sunbury Victoria 3429 P.O. Box 38, Sunbury Victoria 3429 Telephone: (03) 8746 9000 Fax: (03) 8746 9111 www.dometraffic.com.au Email: rebecca@dometraffic.com.au ph: 04-98550902	Drawing No: 06-0124 Revision: 01 Melway Ref: X926 E2 Created: 1/01/2024
Aftercare Plan Required: No MOA Required for Works: No / Council Approval Start Date: _____ End Date: _____	
DOME TRAFFIC	
 PLAN NOT TO SCALE	

3.5 PUBLIC OPEN SPACE CONTRIBUTION POLICY

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: MANAGER DEVELOPMENT & REGULATION
DEPARTMENT: DEVELOPMENT & REGULATION
REFERENCE: 13645

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ararat Planning Scheme has a provision for the collection of open space contributions under Clause 53.01 for subdivisions that create more than two lots. The contribution is to be used in the vicinity of the area being subdivided for the purpose of either creating or improving open space areas.

The contribution is regarded as necessary for this purpose but can have some negative impacts in promoting smaller lot subdivisions. To provide a balance for collecting the contribution and encouraging smaller lot subdivisions Council officers have put together an informal open space contribution policy.

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Council to adopt the Public Open Space Contribution Policy.

DISCUSSION

Clause 53.01 provides a mechanism for the collection of open space contributions. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on when the contribution is to be collected and the amount to be collected dependent on the zone and the number of lots.

The Council plan seeks to increase residential lots by 600 by June 2025. The collection of open space can limit applicants with smaller lot subdivisions. The policy balances the need to create and maintain open space while encouraging smaller lot subdivisions.

The policy provides clear guidance on how the funds are collected and how the funds should be used and who is responsible for each action throughout the collection process.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The key financial drivers align strongly with the thrust of the Council Plan 2021-2025, particularly the following:

1 Growing our place

We will create the settings to support growth across our municipality through an improved planning scheme, actively pursuing new housing options and exploring models for in-migration.

1.1 Develop a new planning scheme for Ararat Rural City that is clear in its intention, supports growth and builds confidence and certainty around land use.

4 Developing and maintaining key enabling infrastructure

We will ensure that we plan, fund, and develop new infrastructure in ways that delivers strong public value. Existing infrastructure will be managed, renewed, and maintained to ensure that it continues to serve identified public needs.

- 4.3 Deliver infrastructure outcomes that support economic growth, promote community wellbeing and safety, and align with Council's financial sustainability.
- 6 **Strong and effective governance**
We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at the centre through effective financial management; we will measure risk management; and implementation of effective community engagement practices.
- 6.1 Deliver responsible budget outcomes, linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation, and rating fairness.

Budget Implications

There are minor implications to the budget with less open space contributions collected. However, this is balance by the need to encourage smaller lot subdivisions to mee the Council Plan's measure of success.

Policy/Legal/Statutory

Clause 53.01 (Public Open Space Contributions and Subdivision) of the Ararat Planning Scheme provides for the collection of open space contributions. Previous to this policy all residential subdivisions were charged a 5% contribution.

Risk Assessment

The approval of the Public Open Space Contribution Policy will reduce the risk of Council not meeting its Council plan objectives.

Stakeholder Consultation and Communication

The Public Open Space Contribution Policy will become a public document for all stakeholders to view.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. *Council considers the contents of this report and endorse the Public Open Space Contribution*

**MOVED CR BURRIDGE
SECONDED CR BEALES**

That:

1. **Council considers the contents of this report and endorse the Public Open Space Contribution**

CARRIED 4932/24

ATTACHMENTS

A copy of the Public Open Space Contribution Policy January 2024 has been provided as attachment 3.5



Public Open Space Contribution Policy

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Category Type: (Policy/Procedure)
Type: (Administrative/Council)
Responsible Officer: (Manager Development & Regulation)

Last Reviewed: (mm/yyyy)
Date Approved: (dd/mm/yyyy)
Review Date: (mm/yyyy)

Revision No:

Stakeholder Engagement:
CEO

Public Open Space Contribution Policy



Ararat Rural City

INTENT

The purpose of this policy is to:

- a) Provide a framework for managing the collection and spending of Public Open Space Contributions in a transparent, equitable and accountable way;
- b) Provide guidance for the determination of how Public Open Space contributions are received, that is, in the form of a monetary contribution or by providing land;
- c) Ensure the provision of Public Open Spaces contribute to enhancing the lives of community and visitors within Ararat Rural City; and
- d) Ensure the collection of Public Open Space Contributions does not limit development opportunities.

BACKGROUND

Council's Planning Department perform a statutory function under the *Planning & Environment Act 1987* to consider planning permit applications to subdivide land. Clause 53.01, Public open space contributions and subdivision, of the Ararat Planning Scheme, is a state-wide planning provision.

The *Subdivision Act 1988* specifies when Public Open Space Contributions (POS) are applied, and how these funds are managed in accordance with the Act.

Council has a statutory obligation under the *Subdivision Act 1988* and the P&EA 1987, to ensure that POS contributions are used for the improvement of existing or creation of new POS.

POS Contributions provide an important source of revenue to fund new land acquired for the purpose of POS and capital improvement of existing POS required for supporting the needs of existing population, population growth and changing demographics over time.

Ararat Rural City currently receive POS contributions, however, require a formal policy to provide guidance for the location of any monetary funds collected or if the provision of land is appropriate in place of monies.

Pursuant to Clause 53.01, the provision of a POS contribution must be made to the Council in an amount specified in the schedule to the clause in the form of a percentage of land or land value, or otherwise under Section 18 of the *Subdivision Act 1988*. Council does not currently use the Schedule to Clause 53.01, so Section 18 of the *Subdivision Act 1988* applies. This sets out that:

A Council acting as a responsible authority or a referral authority under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 may require the applicant who proposes to create any additional separately disposable parcel of land by a plan of subdivision to—

- a) set aside on the plan, for public open space, in a location satisfactory to the Council, a percentage of all of the land in the subdivision intended to be used for residential, industrial or commercial purposes, being a percentage set by the Council not exceeding 5 per cent; or
- b) pay or agree to pay to the Council a percentage of the site value of all of the land in the subdivision intended to be used for residential, industrial or commercial purposes, being a percentage set by the Council not exceeding 5 per cent; or
- c) do a combination of (a) and (b) so that the total of the percentages required under (a) and (b) does not exceed 5 per cent of the site value of all the land in the subdivision.

Noting the following exemptions apply under Clause 53.01-1

A subdivision is exempt from a public open space requirement specified in this scheme if:

- *It is one of the following classes of subdivision:*
 - *Class 1: The subdivision of a building used for residential purposes provided each lot contains part of the building. The building must have been constructed or used for residential purposes*

Public Open Space Contribution Policy



Ararat Rural City

immediately before 30 October 1989 or a planning permit must have been issued for the building to be constructed or used for residential purposes immediately before that date.

- *Class 2: The subdivision of a commercial or industrial building provided each lot contains part of the building.*
- *It is for the purpose of excising land to be transferred to a public authority, council or a Minister for a utility installation.*
- *It subdivides land into two lots and the council considers it unlikely that each lot will be further subdivided.*

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All land zoned Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ), Mixed Use Zone, (MUZ), Township Zone (TZ), General Residential Zone (GRZ), Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ), Industrial Zones (INZ), Commercial Zone (CZ) and Rural Living Zone (RLZ) for subdivision of land within the Ararat municipality, and
- The sale of existing Public Open Space owned by the Council.

The following rates apply for all land subdivided outlined within the Scope:

Zone	Number of lots	Contribution	Condition
Low Density Residential & Rural Living	3 or more	2%	None
Mixed Use & Township	3 lots	2%	Residential use
Mixed Use & Township	4 lots	3%	Residential use
Mixed Use & Township	5 lots	4%	Residential use
Mixed Use & Township	More than 5 lots	5%	Residential use
General Residential & Neighbourhood Residential	3 lots	2%	None
General Residential & Neighbourhood Residential	4 lots	3%	None
General Residential & Neighbourhood Residential	5 lots	4%	None
General Residential & Neighbourhood Residential	More than 5 lots	5%	None
Industrial & Commercial	Any	0%	
All	Any	0%	Affordable housing projects at the discretion of the CEO

Council can seek to include these rates (or other variations) in the planning scheme via a planning scheme amendment at Clause 53.01 via the inclusion of a Schedule.

Money received from the sale of existing public open space land by Council must be allocated for the use of improving existing Public Open Space or the creation of new Public Open Space.

POLICY

Council will:

- Ensure that the collection of POS contributions and the spending of POS contributions adheres to the principles of this policy;
- Ensure that land set aside within a plan of subdivision provides for public open space that is not encumbered by the installation of utility services which will inhibit the use of the public open space or detract from the amenity of the public open space.
- Utilise the funds for strategic land purchases and Open Space projects that increase the participation of residents and visitors of a public open space as priorities;
- Utilise the funds for projects which have a clear relationship with the POS contributions and associated development by allocating funding for either:
 - Projects situated in the same township as the Contributions were made; or

Public Open Space Contribution Policy



Ararat Rural City

- Projects that provide for a Regional public open space, provided that a link can be clearly demonstrated between the allocation of funds and the source of contributions;
- Utilise the funds for new or enhanced Public Open Spaces, excluding maintenance and other operational expenditure.

Collection of monetary funds:

- Any funds collected as a result of payment for a subdivision to achieve Statement of Compliance (SoC) must be deposited within the POS account allocated by the Finance unit.
- The township where the subdivision occurred must be recorded against the contribution collected.
- All funds associated with the sale of any Public Open Space must be deposited into the POS account with the township name recorded from where the sale of land occurred.

Withdrawal of funds:

Allocation of funds (expenditure) from the Public Open Space Reserve is via the Capital Works program in the Council Budget or via a Council resolution; or

Any proposal which is not included within the Capital Works program which proposes to use the public open space funds must be presented to the CEO outlining the following items for consideration:

- A Project Plan (Including any feasibility study, concept plan, detailed designs etc)
- Details confirming that the project plan complies with the provisions of this policy and the *Subdivision Act 1988*.
- Funds to recover associated project costs can be withdrawn from the POS account providing that the project complies with this policy. This can include projects that are due diligence requirements, such as an environmental risk assessment, however, priority should be given for costs incurred in delivery.

Responsibilities:

Finance Unit responsibilities:

- Provide an annual report to Statutory Planning and outlining contributions made by township, the balance, and any use of the POS account.
- Ensure that any withdrawal from the POS account complies with this policy.
- Ensure that any monies collected are assigned to the correct township where subdivisions occurred.
- Provide details of income and expenditure of the POS Reserve to Council for inclusion in the Annual Report.

Statutory Planning responsibilities:

- Apply and collect the Contribution Rate as stated in this policy.

Asset Department responsibility:

- Consideration of utilising the Public Open Space Reserve for funding components of the Capital Works program which align with the requirements of the *Subdivision Act 1988* and this policy.

DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Public Open Space	Public Open Space – as per the <i>Subdivision Act 1988</i> , <i>land set aside in a plan or land in a plan zoned or reserved under the planning scheme-</i>

Public Open Space Contribution Policy



Ararat Rural City

	<p>(a) for public recreation or public resort; or (b) as parklands; or (c) for similar purposes.</p>
Affordable housing	<p>As per the meaning given by Section 3AA of the Planning & Environment Act 1987: Affordable housing is housing including social housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of any of the following-</p> <p>(a) very low-income households. (b) low-income households. (c) moderate income households.</p>
	•
SoC	Statement of Compliance
Social housing	<p>As per the meaning given by Section 4(1) of the Housing Act 1983: Social housing means the following housing (other than under the Victorian Affordable Housing Programs)-</p> <p>(a) public housing. (b) housing owned controlled or managed by a participating registered agency.</p>
Public housing	<p>As per the meaning given by Section 4(1) of the Housing Act 1983: Public housing means non-profit housing in the public sector, other than under the Victorian Affordable Housing Programs.</p>
Registered agency	<p>As per the meaning given by Section 4(1) of the Housing Act 1983: Registered agency means a registered housing association or a registered housing provider.</p>

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name of a Federal or State department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council.

REFERENCES/RELATED DOCUMENTS

SECTION 4 – INFORMATION REPORTS

4.1 COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANTS REPORT NOVEMBER 2023

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE

REFERENCE: 13275

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council received 14 applications for the November 2023 round of Community Support Grants. An assessment panel comprising of two community members and the Chief Executive Officer assessed the applications and agreed to fund 12 of the applications, majority to the full requested amount. Two of the rejected applications were due to the following reasons:

1. Event being cancelled due to poor weather, no longer required funding; and
2. The organisation not meeting grant guidelines – as it was not a local community organisation.

DISCUSSION

Community organisations are required to provide matching funding based on cash or in-kind contributions to support their project or event. Infrastructure projects are not included in the new funding guidelines.

Council received 14 applications for the November 2023 round of Community Support Grants. An assessment panel comprising of two community members and the Chief Executive Officer assessed the applications and agreed to fund 12 of the applications, majority to the full requested amount.

The successful grants were as follows:

Community Organisation	Purpose	Amount
Ararat & District 8 Ball Association	Event support – 2024 Country Cup	\$ 5000
Ararat Bowling Club	Removal and installation of new ramp	\$ 3000
Ararat Neighbourhood House	Event support- Harmony Day 2024	\$ 5000
Ararat VRI Bowling Club	Update equipment	\$ 2500
Ararat Y's Menettes Club	Event support – Carols by Candlelight	\$ 4000
Bazz Music	Event support – Expand the Sounds 2024	\$ 2800
Lake Bolac Music Club	Installation of new lighting at the Lake Bolac Hall	\$ 3000
Mount Cole Equestrian Assoc.	Purchasing of new jumps & equipment	\$ 5000
Stawell Soccer Club	Purchasing of new uniforms	\$ 3000
Willaura Healthcare Auxiliary	Willaura Healthcare Outdoor Market	\$ 3000
Willaura & District Community Development Group	Development of community website	\$ 1500
Willaura Kindergarten	Upgrade of playground equipment	\$ 3000
Total Funding		\$40, 800

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

5 Enhancing Community Life

We will work with the communities of Ararat Rural City to maintain social cohesion, support community activity and cultural life, and enhance safety.

Budget Implications

The grants were all made within existing budgetary allocations.

Policy/Legal/Statutory

Community & Event Support Grants Guidelines

Risk Assessment

Risks have been assessed and understood by the grants committee. No unmanaged risks identified at this time.

Stakeholder Consultation and Communication

The outcome of each grant was made in conjunction between the two external panel members and the Chief Executive Officer.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive the Council Community Support Grants report for the November 2023 funding round.

MOVED CR BEALES

SECONDED CR BURRIDGE

That Council receive the Council Community Support Grants report for the November 2023 funding round.

CARRIED 4933/24

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments related to this item

4.2 2023/2024 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM – JANUARY 2024

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT: CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 13646

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council adopted its 2023/2024 Capital Works Program as a key element of the 2023/2024 Budget. The 2023/24 budget has a strong focus on infrastructure with a \$9.5 million investment in capital works.

Major works including the following:

- Stage one of Mount William Road construction, urban gravel to seal road upgrades, and maintaining and repairing rural and urban roads and drainage

DISCUSSION

Council's 2023/2024 Capital Works Program continues to be substantially different to previous years, the program does not have a number of major road and bridge construction and will continue to undertake a "small targeted" capital works program.

The emphasis for 2023/2024 is on renewal and updating Council assets, undertaking a larger number of smaller projects of lower value to avoid the impacts of price volatility in the market. Using this approach will also provide opportunities to leverage in-house capability, support local employment and engagement of local contractors.

The capital works program has had an emphasis on the following areas:

- An enhanced road reseal program.
- Improvement to urban drainage.
- Upgrades to the footpath network.
- A major urban road gravel to seal program.
- Commencement of Mt William Road Reconstruction works.

The capital work budget is currently 42% spent to 17 January 2024. This result sees our Capital Works Budget tracking at the expected monthly rate with end of month invoices still to be provided and two pay runs to be allocated to the program. This has taken a whole team effort to achieve this result. The half of the year of the 2023/2024 financial year has seen significant works in road resheeting with 76% of the available budget being expended and the small property capital projects having expended 65% with completion of the playgrounds project and the official opening occurring in December 2023. During the summer months works will be focused on the urban gravel to seal program and the commencement of stage one of the Mount William Road construction.

	Budget	Committed/ Contracted	Complete	Notes
PROPERTY -CAPITAL	\$400,000			
Property Capital		\$7,758	\$261,100	These works are made up of a series of smaller projects. Projects include upgrade of the town hall square lighting and power, Willaura Memorial Hall Kitchen installation, bluestone works at the Alexandra Gardens Fernery, and painting and new windows for the Warrak Hall.
Alexandra Oval Resurfacing	\$200,000		\$140,128	
Ararat Fitness Centre Stage 1	\$950,000		\$29,222	
				Seeding of the Alexandra Oval is complete – users have been advised that they will be able to commence training from 1 April 2024.
				Work has been halted on this project with other recreational options to be explored.
TOTAL PROPERTY		\$7,758	\$433,357	
PLANT & EQUIPMENT	\$40,000			
Plant and Vehicles			\$289,365	Includes three new passenger vehicles, a new mower and new survey equipment. Quarter 2 Bookstock payment is due to be made. Payment made in July was amended to 22/23 FY.
Book stock - Library Book Replacement			\$6,860	
TOTAL PLANT & EQUIPMENT			\$296,224	
Gravel Road Sheeting & Gravel Road Widening	\$2,800,000	\$13,923	\$2,124,159	The 23/24 Resheeting and Road Widening program has commenced well. Works are expected to slow over the summer months. These works will continue over the financial year.
Reseal Program	\$1,000,000	\$56,796	\$477,694	Design works are complete for Rhymney Rd, the feature survey has been received for Buangor Ben Nevis Rd, design has commenced. Road reseal program commenced in September 2023, the full extent of this year's program is expected to be complete before Christmas. Line Marking is expected to commence in February 2024.
Mt William Road	\$1,000,000	\$97,740		Documentation is being prepared for the first section of Mt William Road Reconstruction. Stone has been ordered for works. Works are to commence in February 2024.

Urban Road Gravel to Seal	\$2,200,000	\$91,467.96	\$13,860	Feature surveys have been completed and design works have commenced for roads nominated in this year's program. Ironbark Lane has commenced. Plans are currently being reviewed and authorised.
Major Patching	\$200,000		\$50,264.34	Major patching works are currently being allocated to contractors for works to commence. Additional asphaltting works have been completed at the Deneys Carpark in conjunction with works in High Street.
Footpath Renewal Program	\$400,000	\$101,062	\$190,316	Works have been completed on the George Road Pedestrian Refuge adjacent to the Ararat West Primary School, a new footpath in Main Street, Willaura adjacent to the railway station back to Delacombe Way, and new footpath in Albert Street, Ararat. The award of works for footpath in McGibbony Street, Ararat and Warranooke Street, Willaura have commenced work. The final capital footpath contracts are currently out to tender in Ford Street, Ararat and Walkerville/Wileman Street, Willaura. Footpath connections and condition assessments are being completed inhouse.
Urban Drainage Works	\$750,000		\$256,084	Works have been completed in in Golf Links Road, Ararat. Works in Thompson and Kneale Street, Ararat are currently being undertaken, with underground boring works complete.
TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE		\$360,989	\$3,128,988	
TOTAL CAPITAL WORKS		\$368,748	\$3,858,570	

There are also recreation facilities projects that were funded in the 2021/2022 budget that have extended beyond the single financial year. The committed expenditure includes contracts entered for construction of various elements of the projects. The table below provides a summary of these projects:

Capital Work Element	Committed expenditure	% complete	Notes
Gordon St Recreation Reserve	\$4,505,8131	91%	The project is running on time and very close to budget. The pavilion work is almost at completion with the sewer connection being undertaken and fascia lighting being finished. The alterations to the fields are being completed inhouse.
Buangor Recreation Reserve Kitchen Extension	\$53,590	20%	Project halted due to huge variations in construction pricing. The project has been out to the market and came in with a significant price difference between the cost plan

			and the pricing received from the tenderers. This project will be withdrawn – funding opportunities will be looked into with the community.
Lake Bolac Golf Club Kitchen	\$179,864	91%	Works are being undertaken by Build Forth, from Ballarat, this project is complete.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The key financial drivers align strongly with the thrust of the Council Plan 2021-2025, particularly the following:

- 4 Developing and maintain key enabling infrastructure**
We will ensure that we plan, fund and develop new infrastructure in ways that delivers strong public value. Existing infrastructure will be management, renewed, and maintained to ensure that it continues to serve identified public needs.
- 4.1** Ensure that asset development and renewal during the planning period matches that identified in Council’s Asset Plan 2021-2031.
- 4.2** Work directly with asset users to manage and develop new and existing assets.
- 4.3** Deliver infrastructure outcomes that support economic growth, promote community wellbeing and safety and align with Council’s financial sustainability.
- 6 Strong and effective governance**
We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at the centre through effective financial management; well measured risk management; and implementation of effective community engagement practices.
- 6.1** Deliver responsible budget outcomes, linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation, and rating fairness.

Budget Implications

The 2023/2024 Capital Works Program represents a significant element of Council’s 2023/2024 Budget. In the current civil construction market, it is essential that Council manages capital works expenditure carefully to ensure budget outcomes are met.

Policy/Legal/Statutory

The 2023/2024 Capital Works Program complies with the program funded in the 2023/2024 Budget.

Risk Assessment

The 2023/2024 Capital Works Program was developed as a mitigation of the financial risks associated with market volatility currently being experienced in the civil and building construction sectors.

Stakeholder Consultation and Communication

The 2023/2024 Capital Works Program has been developed as an element of the 2023/2024 Budget. There was extensive community engagement undertaken prior to adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this information report.

**MOVED CR J ARMSTRONG
SECONDED CR R ARMSTRONG**

That Council receive this information report.

CARRIED 4934/24

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments related to this item

SECTION 5- COMMITTEE MINUTES/REPORTS

5.1 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING

AUTHOR'S TITLE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 11734

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report contains the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 05 December 2023.

DISCUSSION

Minutes of Audit and Risk Committee meetings are provided to Council at the first available opportunity after clearance by the Audit and Risk Committee Chairperson. The report contains the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on 05 December 2023.

Council Committees	Councillor representative	Current meeting (as presented)	Next scheduled meeting/s
Audit and Risk Committee	Cr Jo Armstrong	05 December 2023	05 March 2024
Audit and Risk Committee	Cr Bob Sanders	05 December 2023	05 March 2024

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The report supports the strategic objective of the Council Plan 2021-2025:
6 Strong and Effective Governance

Budget Implications

No budget impact for the receiving of minutes.

Policy/Legal/Statutory

Section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020* states that Council must establish an Audit and Risk Committee.

Section 6.1 of the *Audit and Risk Committee Charter* states that minutes of Committee meetings will be provided to Council at the first available opportunity after clearance by the Committee Chairperson following each Committee meeting.

Risk Assessment

Council needs to be aware of issues raised in the minutes.

Stakeholder Consultation and Communication

Audit and Risk Committee members.
Councillor representation on Council Committees.
Chief Executive Officer and relevant Council officers.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Risk Committee Meetings minutes of 05 December 2023 be received.

**MOVED CR BURRIDGE
SECONDED CR J ARMSTRONG**

That the Audit and Risk Committee Meetings minutes of 05 December 2023 be received.

CARRIED 4935/24

ATTACHMENTS

The Audit and Risk Committee minutes as listed above are provided as Attachment 5.1.



MINUTES

Audit and Risk Committee

Tuesday 05 December 2023

Location: Mayors Room,
59 Vincent St, Ararat

Commenced at 1:00 pm

Audit and Risk Committee:

Cr Bob Sanders (Mayor)
Cr Jo Armstrong
Ms Jessica Adler
Mr Robert Tommasini
Mr Ryan Schischka

In attendance:

Dr Tim Harrison
Mr Bradley Ead
Ms Karissa Hogan
Mrs Chandra Willmott
Ms Josie Frawley

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SECTION 1 – PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 APOLOGIES

There are no apologies.

1.2 DECLARATION OF DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Disclosure of Interests are to be made immediately prior to any relevant item being discussed.

1.3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

**MOVED ROBERT TOMMASINI
SECONDED JESSICA ADLER**

That the Minutes of the Internal Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on 05 September 2023 were received.

CARRIED

SECTION 2- CEO UPDATE

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2.1 CEO UPDATE – **CONFIDENTIAL**

The CEO's report will be provided verbally to the Audit & Risk Committee members, as agreed upon at the September 2023 meeting.

Note: The CEO's report is to now be provided as a written report – to ensure we are able to track progress and can refer back to it for future meetings.

Fraud & Corruption section to be included in each CEO's update report moving forward.

RECOMMENDATION

That the CEO's report be received.

OUTCOME

That the CEO's report was received.

NOTED

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments in relation to this item.

SECTION 3- FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORTING

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3.1 REVIEW THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

3.1 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The financial statements and performance indicators have been prepared for the period ended 30 September 2023.

Based on the information provided by responsible officers and managers Council's overall financial performance is in line with budget.

This report was presented to the 28 November 2023 Council Meeting.

DISCUSSION

Council must establish and maintain a budgeting and reporting framework that is consistent with the principles of sound financial management.

Key Financial information:

Income Statement (Attachment 1)

The Income Statement measures how well Council has performed from an operating nature. It reports revenues and expenditure from the activities and functions undertaken, with the net effect being a surplus or deficit. Capital expenditure is excluded from this statement, as it is reflected in the Balance Sheet.

Attachment 1 shows that Council generated \$18.699 million in revenue and \$8.756 million in expenses to 30 September 2023. This has resulted in an operating surplus of \$9.943 million for the three months ended 30 September 2023.

Income

Rates and charges account for 63% of the total budgeted income for 2023/24. Rates and charges are recognised when the rates have been raised, not when the income has been received. An amount of \$17.333 million has been recognised as income for the three months ended 30 September 2023.

User fees account for 5% of the total budgeted income for 2023/24 and \$0.517 million has been received to 30 September 2023. The majority of this relates to transfer station fees, fitness centre income and commercial waste management charges.

Recurrent Operating Grants total \$0.351 million to 30 September 2023, including \$0.050 million from the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission for general purpose grants and \$0.032 million for the local roads grants.

Non-recurrent Operating Grants total \$0.248 million to 30 September 2023. Council has been successful in obtaining several grants that had not been budgeted for, as detailed in the table below. The amounts shown as unearned income will be treated as income in future accounting periods once the performance obligations of the grant have been met.

	Budget 2022/23 \$'000	Income 2022/23 \$'000	Unearned Income \$'000
Non-Recurrent Operating Grants			

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New Arrivals Settlement Program	-	44	-
Pilot Coordination Grampians Workforce	-	50	-
Ararat Housing Transition	-	-	300
Digital Twin Victoria	-	-	954
Free Public WiFi Services	-	-	1,149
Rural Roads Support Program	-	-	56
Supported Playgroups	63	16	-
Power our Future!! Tatyoon Recreation Reserve	-	20	-
Natural Disaster Relief	-	24	-
Planning & Data Development	-	93	-
Other Minor Grants (under \$30,000)	6	1	20
	69	248	2,479

Non-recurrent Capital Grants have not been received in the three months to 30 September 2023, as detailed in the table below. The amounts shown as unearned income will be treated as income in future accounting periods once the performance obligations of the grant have been met.

	Budget 2022/23 \$'000	Income 2022/23 \$'000	Unearned Income \$'000
Non-Recurrent Capital Grants			
Ararat East Development Zone Trunk Infrastructure Project	-	-	419
Ararat Regional Playgrounds All Abilities Redevelopment	-	-	922
	0	0	1,341

Note

It is important to note the following:

1. The Grants Operating (recurrent) figure in the Original Budget was \$7.677 million and in the Current Budget is recorded as \$0.191 million, as \$7.426 million was paid to Council in 2022/23 by the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission (VLGGC) for the 2023/24 financial year. Council has still received the expected VLGGC income, to be spent in 2023/24, however it will be reported over two financial years. Council also received \$0.060 million funding in advance for the Municipal Emergency Response Plan which has also been adjusted in the current budget.
2. Unearned revenue received in prior years has been adjusted between the Original Budget and Current Budget with an additional \$2.593 million for Grants Operating (non-recurrent), \$0.056 million for Grants Capital (recurrent) and \$0.419 million for Grants Capital (non-recurrent) included in the Current Budget on the assumption that each of the grant projects will be completed during the 2023/24 financial year.
3. These changes in the budget, plus the note reported under expenses, create a change in the reported surplus position from a projected surplus of \$1.296 million to a deficit of \$6.812 million for 2023/24. The year-end variance is a deficit of \$0.107 million when the actual year to date expenses are compared to the year to date budget.

Expenses

Employee Costs account for approximately 41% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2023/24. For the three months ended 30 September 2023 Council has incurred \$2.809 million in employee costs.

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Materials and Services account for approximately 29% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2023/24. For the three months ended 30 September 2023, Council has incurred \$3.492 million in materials and services costs. There are a number of projects, including those carried forward from 2022/23 that are expected to be completed before the end of the financial year.

Note

It is important to note the following:

There has been an increase in expenditure on materials and services from \$8.035 million in the Original Budget to \$11.555 million in the Current Budget for 2023/24. This has resulted from a carry forward amount of \$3.520 million from the 2022/23 financial year surplus and unspent grant funds which will be used for additional activity in 2023/24. Additionally, there has been an increase of \$0.170 million in employee costs from \$11.134 million in the Original Budget to \$11,304 million in the Current Budget with some grant-funded projects requiring additional staffing to meet the requirements of the grant.

Balance Sheet (Attachment 2)

The Balance Sheet is one of the main financial statements and reports Council's assets, liabilities and equity at a given date, in this case 30 September 2023. Comparative figures have been provided as at 30 June 2023.

Council's current assets have increased by \$9.980 million from \$24.057 million as at 30 June 2023 to \$34.037 million as at 30 September 2023. Cash and cash equivalents have decreased by \$5.398 million from \$11.457 million to \$6.059 million, as \$8.000 million has been transferred to a term deposit with a six-month maturity period and is now classified as a financial asset. Trade and other receivables have increased by \$15.364 million from \$4.509 million as at 30 September 2022 to \$19.873 million as at 30 September 2023.

Total liabilities have increased from \$8.596 million in 2022/23 to \$9.407 million in 2023/24. Trade and other payables have decreased by \$0.218 million and trust funds and deposits have increased by \$0.256 million. Unearned income/revenue increased by \$0.808 million, and includes grants received by Council, where in accordance with accounting standards they are held as a liability until grant-related performance obligations have been met.

Statement of Cash Flows (Attachment 3)

The Statement of Cash Flows shows how changes in the Statement of Financial Position and Income Statement affect Cash and Cash Equivalents, and breaks down the analysis to operating activities, investing activities and financing activities.

The Cash and Cash Equivalents at the beginning of the financial year of \$11.457 million have decreased by \$5.445 million to \$6.012 million as at 30 September 2023. However, part of the decrease is due to \$8.000 million being transferred to a term deposit which is now classified as a financial asset, and no longer included in cash and cash equivalents.

Net cash of \$2.238 million was used in operating activities, \$3.132 million was used in investing activities, and \$0.075 million was used in financing activities.

Investing activities includes payments for property, plant and equipment, and infrastructure.

Financial Performance Indicators (Attachment 4)

The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework requires Councils to report various performance indicators at the end of each financial year.

A full list of financial performance indicators is included in Attachment 4.

Indicator	30/6/2023	30/9/2023
<i>Working capital</i>	322%	411%

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<p><i>Measure - Current assets compared to current liabilities.</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework 100% to 400% Indicator of the broad objective that sufficient working capital is available to pay bills as and when they fall due. High or increasing level of working capital suggests an improvement in liquidity</p>		
<p>Loans and borrowings <i>Measure - Loans and borrowings compared to rates.</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 0% to 70% Indicator of the broad objective that the level of interest-bearing loans and borrowings should be appropriate to the size and nature of a council’s activities. Low or decreasing level of loans and borrowings suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations</p>	7.07%	6.85%
<p>Indebtedness <i>Measure - Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 2% to 70% Indicator of the broad objective that the level of long-term liabilities should be appropriate to the size and nature of a Council’s activities. Low or decreasing level of long-term liabilities suggests an improvement in the capacity to meet long term obligations</p>	5.47%	6.19%
<p>Rates concentration <i>Measure - Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 30% to 80% Indicator of the broad objective that revenue should be generated from a range of sources. High or increasing range of revenue sources suggests an improvement in stability</p>	51.46%	92.70%
<p>Expenditure level <i>Measure - Expenses per property assessment</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework \$2,000 to \$10,000 Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of expenditure suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency</p>	\$4,616	\$1,191
<p>Indicator - Revenue level <i>Measure - Average residential rate per residential property assessment</i> Expected values in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework - \$700 to \$2,000 Indicator of the broad objective that resources should be used efficiently in the delivery of services. Low or decreasing level of rates suggests an improvement in organisational efficiency</p>	\$2,006	\$2,005
<p>Indicator – Percentage of total rates collected The internal audit conducted in 2019 on Rates Revenue and Rate Debtor Management found no routine or regular reporting of large and long outstanding rates debtors. The outstanding Rates Debtors is reported in the Annual Financial report. As at 30 September 2023 the outstanding Rates Debtors totalled \$16.649 million compared to \$1.955 million as at 30 June 2023, an increase of \$14.694 million. In</p>	90.2%	14.9%

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percentage terms 14.9% of the rates raised have been collected at 30 September 2023 compared to 13.8% up to 30 September 2022. Outstanding rates are currently charged 10% interest. Council issues approximately 7,900 rate notices. In 2023/24 there are 2,640 assessments paying by instalments compared with 2,843 assessments in 2022/23.		
Indicator – Asset Renewal & Upgrade <i>Measure - Asset renewal & Upgrade compared to depreciation</i> Expected range in accordance with the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – 40% to 130% Assessment of whether council assets are being renewed or upgraded as planned. It compares the rate of spending on existing assets through renewing, restoring, replacing or upgrading existing assets with depreciation. Ratios higher than 1.0 indicate there is a lesser risk of insufficient spending on Council’s asset base.	90.93%	103.49%

The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework provides “Expected ranges” for each indicator. The framework has been developed to consider results at the end of the financial year so some results during the year are outside the expected range due to the timing of receipts and payments.

Explanations are provided in Attachment 4 for those indicators that are outside the “expected ranges”.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

6 Strong and Effective Governance

We will work hard to build models of governance that place delivering public value at the centre through effective financial management; well measured risk management; and implementation of effective community engagement practices

6.1 Deliver responsible budget outcomes, linked to strategy, that deliver value, innovation, and rating fairness

Budget Implications

Council’s financial performance is in line with expectations. Council’s cash position was expected to reduce in the first quarter to pay for the outstanding accounts at year end.

Policy/Relevant Law

Section 97 – Quarterly Budget Report of the Local Government Act 2020 states:

- 1 As soon as practicable after the end of each quarter of the financial year, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a quarterly budget report is presented to the Council at a Council meeting which is open to the public.
- 2 A quarterly budget report must include—
 - (a) a comparison of the actual and budgeted results to date; and
 - (b) an explanation of any material variations; and
 - (c) any other matters prescribed by the regulations.
- 3 In addition, the second quarterly report of a financial year must include a statement by the Chief Executive Officer as to whether a revised budget is, or may be, required.

Sustainability Implications

This report does not raise any sustainability implications.

Risk Assessment

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Council is required to establish and maintain a budgeting and reporting framework that is consistent with the principles of sound management and this report assists Council in meeting that requirement.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The content of the Quarterly report is continually reviewed to ensure meaningful data is provided.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

Council's financial performance reports are published quarterly.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators for the period ended 30 September 2023 be received

OUTCOME

That the Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Financial Performance Indicators for the period ended 30 September 2023 was received.

NOTED

ATTACHMENTS

The Draft Financial Statements and Draft Performance Statements are included as Attachment 3.1

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SECTION 4 – INTERNAL CONTROLS

4.1 REVIEW THE ADEQUACY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF KEY POLICIES, SYSTEMS AND CONTROLS FOR PROVIDING A SOUND INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

4.1.1 COUNCIL POLICY REVIEW UPDATE

OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

BACKGROUND

Council policies are reviewed on an ongoing policy and procedure review process.

This report outlines the several Administrative and Council policies which have been reviewed.

DISCUSSION

Council has committed to reviewing policies through a review process to ensure that all Council policies meet legislative requirements and established internal processes

All Council policies are accessible to Councillors, Audit and Risk Committee and staff through Council's website.

The table below provides a list of the policies that are overdue for review. These policies will be review and out for consultation between the December 2023 Audit & Risk Committee meeting and the March 2024 meeting. and will be reviewed since September 2022, noting the main changes made to the documents.

Copies of the policies listed below can be provided to you via email, in order for you to add your contributions.

Administrative/ Council	Policy Title	Last Reviewed and Adopted	Next review
Council	Asset Management Policy	15 February 2011	January 2025
Council	Council espescne and Support Policy	21 July 2020	July 2022
Council	Election Period 2020 Policy	25 August 2020	October 2023
Council	Faud and Corruption Policy	16 March 2021	February 2023
Council	Risk Management Policy	28 February 2022	June 2023
Administration	Occupational Health and Safety Policy	19 January 2021	November 2022
Administration	Risk Management Framework	28 June 2022	June 2023
Administration	Vehicle Policy	14 September 2021	September 2023

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RECOMMENDATION

That the Council Policy Review Update be received.

OUTCOME

That the Council Policy Review Update be received.

NOTED

ATTACHMENTS

Copy of the policy register is provided as Attachment 4.1.1

Note: Fraud & Corruption Plan & Policy will be reviewed in August 2024 – during the internal audit

Action: Business Continuity Plan to be presented to the March 2024 Audit & Risk Committee meeting

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4.2 PRESENTATION OF POWER BI- COUNCIL DASHBOARD

The Councillor Dashboard was presented by Melanie Roberts – Organisational Transformation.

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SECTION 5- RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 REVIEW COUNCIL’S RISK PROFILE AND THE CHANGES OCCURRING IN THE PROFILE

5.1.1 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER REVIEW AND RISK REGISTER PROGRAM UPDATE

BACKGROUND

Council’s Strategic Risk Register is reviewed by the Chief Executive Officer on a regular basis and is presented to the Audit and Risk Committee.

DISCUSSION

The Chief Executive Officer ensures that strategic risks are identified and assessed, treatment options are prioritized and implemented, actions are assigned, and performance is monitored and reviewed.

A revised Strategic Risk Register was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee on the 1 March 2022 which identified review dates for each of the risk identified in the Strategic Risk Register that was going to be conducted over a 12-month period. Due to a change in personnel in the Risk Management role and the development of a new Risk Management program these reviews were not conducted as scheduled and have revised the review dates as:

February 2024	Fraud and Corruption; Cyber Attack	July 2024	Legislative Compliance
March 2024	Asset Management	August 2024	Business Continuity
April 2024	Workforce planning	September 2024	Procurement; and Emergency Management
May 2024	Waste Management; and Occupational Health and Safety	October 2024	Financial Sustainability
June 2024	IT Infrastructure	November 2024	Strategic Leadership and Advocacy
July 2024	Governance	December 2024	Climate Change; and Records Management

The new Risk Program is still being developed. A first prototype was developed and trialed to understand the workings and issues identified are currently being worked on including the reporting capabilities. This program is being designed through Microsoft Power Apps and the reporting through Power BI.

Once the Risk Program is operational, the Governance and Risk Lead will work with Service owners to review the operational risks and set ongoing review dates. The below table outlines the timeframe for each of these reviews to take place over the next 6 months and training for key service providers in using the system.

Month	Service Area
February	Local Laws, Municipal Building Services, Planning, Environmental Health, Environmental Management and Sustainability
March	Depot, Waste management, Contracts and Procurement, Finance, Property Rates and Valuation,
April	Design and Project Management, Information Technology, Asset Management, Records Management, Graphic Information Systems,
May	Maternal & Child Health, Occupational Health and Safety, Library Service, Events, Human Resource, Customer Services

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June	Art Gallery / TAMA, Sport and recreation, Tourism, Town Hall, Media and Communications, Economic Development
July	Risk Management, Governance, Emergency Management, Insurance Management

RECOMMENDATION

That the Strategic Risk Review and Update Report be received.

OUTCOME

That the Strategic Risk Review and Update Report was received.

NOTED

ATTACHMENTS

The Strategic Risk Register is provided as Attachment 5.1.1

Risk, Incident and OHS System.

Council is developing a risk, incident and OH&S system, utilising mature technology platforms within Microsoft M365.

The solution will comprise of three key fundamental design pillars.

- Risk and Incident data entry interface - Using Microsoft Power Apps the platform will be available for all council employees to use on both PC and mobile platforms allowing staff on the go to identify log and submit risks and incidents including capturing images.
- Risk and Incident reporting interface - Using Microsoft Power Bi the reporting dashboard will facilitate reporting to occur at all levels facilitating drill down mechanics for a more granular view of specific risks right up to rolled up visualisations and metrics across risk and incident categories.
- Risk and Incident workflow and automation mechanics - Using Microsoft Power Automate the sophistication of how risks and incidents are processed including elements such as alerting services, approvals, notifications are all programmed and processed using rules that ensure alignment to council policy and risk framework.

The data captured by the system will all be hosted within Councils Microsoft Azure Data Lake ensuring legislative compliance to onshore data requirements and proven security around information that has the potential to contain personal information. Council will continue development of the system in 2022 with expected system release in early 2023.



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SECTION 6- FRAUD PREVENTION

Nil.

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SECTION 7- INTERNAL AUDIT

7.1 MONITOR ACTION BY MANAGEMENT ON INTERNAL AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1.1 INTERNAL AUDIT- AUDIT REVIEW OUTCOMES UPDATE

BACKGROUND

Council appointed AFS & Associates from Bendigo as Council's Internal Auditors. Council has reviewed the recommendations made by the Internal Auditor in relation to the internal audit reviews and these are presented as an attachment to this report.

DISCUSSION

An Audit Review Outcomes Action Plan was developed to capture the recommendations highlighted in the various internal audits conducted by AFS.

The Audit Review Outcome Action Plan lists the recommendations and subsequent outcomes and projected completion dates.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Review Outcomes Update report be received.

OUTCOME

The Audit Review Outcomes Update report was received.

NOTED

ATTACHMENTS

The Audit Review Outcomes Update report is included as Attachment 7.1.1.

Note: Spreadsheet to be circulated with the agenda to allow enough time for the committee to review the actions.

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7.2 STRATEGIC INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRAM STATUS UPDATE

BACKGROUND

AFS & Associates (AFS) are Council's Internal Auditors. This report outlines the audit program that AFS has undertaken over the past three years.

DISCUSSION

AFS & Associates have provided the current status of the Internal Audit Program.

The Review of forward Internal Audit Program was marked complete as of November 2023.

The recommendations that have been accepted by management, from all the recently complete audits. Recommendations from the following audits will be presented at the March 2024 Audit & Risk Committee meeting:

- Procurement
- Review of forward Internal Audit Program
- Services Performance – measuring, reporting, and monitoring

RECOMMENDATION

The Strategic Internal Audit Program Status Update report be received.

OUTCOME

The Strategic Internal Audit Program Status Update report was received.

NOTED

ATTACHMENTS

The Strategic Internal Audit Program Status Update report is provided as Attachment 7.2

Action: Brad Ead to circulate the Procurement Audit report to committee members

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7.3 INTERNAL AUDIT – MATERNAL HEALTH & CHILD CARE

BACKGROUND

AFS & Associates are Council's Internal Auditors and have recently conducted an audit on Ararat Rural City Council's Maternal Health & Child Care department.

DISCUSSION

The objective of the review was to ensure risks are identified surrounding this function and internal controls are established and applied to appropriately prevent adverse events or respond to them to minimise any associated consequences.

The audit concluded there were 4 areas of strength and 5 areas rated as minor risks. The definition of a minor risk is low likelihood and/or consequence – attention within 12 months.

Not all recommendations suggested to management have been agreed to, of the 12 recommendations, 8 were agreed to. An update on the progress of the agreed to action items will be provided at the March 2024 Audit & Risk Committee meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Maternal Health & Child Care report be received.

OUTCOME

That the Maternal Health & Child Care report was received.

NOTED

ATTACHMENTS

The AFS & Associates Audit of the Maternal Health & Child Care report is provided as Attachment 7.3.

Action: Include recommendations from the Maternal Health & Child Care Audit report into the action's spreadsheet. Items that were not agreed to do not have to be included in the spreadsheet.

Ensure that wording such as "as above" and "finding tool" in recommendations is clarified throughout the spreadsheet.

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7.4 INTERNAL AUDIT- PERFORMANCE SELF ASSESSMENT

BACKGROUND

Council appointed AFS & Associates from Bendigo as Council's Internal Auditors. The self-assessment survey was distributed to Audit & Risk Committee members in October 2023.

DISCUSSION

The self-assessment was distributed to the four members of the Audit & Risk Committee, all four members responded. The aim of this assessment was to self-assess the Committee's performance against ARCC Audit & Risk Committee Charter.

The overall average response score from Audit & Risk Committee members on a scale of 1 to 6 was 5.08, comparing to 2021: 5.12. Based upon the lowest scores in the survey and comments for improvement for Audit & Risk Committee members, suggestions for improvement exist around the Audit & Risk Committee reviewing the following:

- Q9 – overseeing risk areas and controls through the Fraud Control Plan or equivalent and any fraud awareness programmes (4.25)
- Q6 – reviewing and monitoring the Council's Risk Management Framework and risk profile, including risk appetite statements as set by Council (4.50)
- Q7 – determining the level and suitability of the Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Planning (4.50)
- Q10 – keeping up to date with any actual or suspected instances of fraud and corruption (4.75)
- Q18 – reviewing Council's approach to compliance, including review of any reported non-compliances (4.75)
- Q19 – reviewing processes for monitoring compliance with Council's Employee Code of Conduct by employees and contractors (4.50)
- Q22 – monitoring and evaluating ARC performance (4.75)

RECOMMENDATION

That the AFS & Associates November 2023 Self-Assessment report be received.

OUTCOME

That the AFS & Associates November 2023 Self-Assessment report be received.

NOTED

ATTACHMENTS

2023 Audit & Risk Committee Self-Assessment Survey results report is provided as 7.4.

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SECTION 8- EXTERNAL AUDIT

8.1. QUARTERLY REVIEW VICTORIAN AUDITOR GENERAL'S OFFICE (VAGO) REPORTS TO ASSESS THE IMPACTS ON COUNCIL

Nil.

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8.2 EXTERNAL AUDIT – PROTECTIVE DATA SECURITY PLAN INSIGHTS REPORT - ARARAT RURAL CITY COUNCIL

BACKGROUND

The Protective Data Security Plan Insights report was distributed to Council in June 2023. The report provides insights drawn from the 2022 PDSP submissions. It compares data from the 2020 submissions that were made by Council.

DISCUSSION

Please find attached Ararat Rural City Council's 2022 Protective Data Security Plan (PDSP) Insights Report.

This report reflects the organisation's two most recent PDSP submissions with a comparative analysis of the average response across the Whole of Victorian Government and sectors (where applicable).

To develop your PDSP Insights Report, the Information Security Unit (ISU) conducted quantitative and qualitative analysis of all submissions.

This report provides an opportunity for broader discussion across the organisation (including any relevant third parties – such as the Audit & Risk Committee) on the status of your information security.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Protective Data Security Plan Insights Report be received.

OUTCOME

That the Protective Data Security Plan Insights Report was received.

NOTED

ATTACHMENTS

The Protective Data Security Plan Insights report is provided as Attachment 8.2.

Action: IT Audit presented to the March 2024 Audit & Risk Committee meeting.
Report to identify high risk areas of IT.



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SECTION 9- COMPLIANCE

Nil

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SECTION 10- GENERAL BUSINESS

10.1 INDUSTRY UPDATE- RECENT REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

BACKGROUND

AFS & Associates (AFS) are Council's Internal Auditors. AFS have provided an Industry Update report to be included in the agenda. The Industry Update report lists recent reports and publications that may be of interest to Ararat Rural City Council.

DISCUSSION

The Industry Update report lists 16 recent articles and reports, covering a range of different topics from sources such as: IBAC, IIA, and VAGO etc.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Industry Update report be received.

OUTCOME

That the Industry Update report was received.

NOTED

ATTACHMENTS

The Industry Update report is provided as Attachment 10.1.

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SECTION 11 – FUTURE MEETINGS

11.1 FUTURE MEETING DATES

Future meetings of the Audit and Risk Committee are scheduled as follows:

- Tuesday 5 March 2024 1pm
- Tuesday 4 June 2024 1pm
- Tuesday 3 September 2024 1pm
- Tuesday 3 December 2024 1pm

Action: Send meeting invitations to the Audit & Committee members for the above meeting dates

Final Management Letter – recommendation that was disagreed to, is to be included in the spreadsheet

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SECTION 12- NEXT MEETING/CHARTER ITEMS

December 2023		
Ref. from Charter		
5.6	Review the appropriateness of the format and content of periodic management financial reports and performance statements	3.1
5.7	Review the adequacy and effectiveness of key policies, systems and controls for providing a sound internal control environment*	4.1
5.8	Determine whether systems and controls are reviewed regularly and updated where required*	Nil
5.9	Annual review of significant changes to key systems and consider impact of changes on Councils risk profile	5.1.1
5.14	Review Council's risk profile and the changes occurring in the profile	5.1.1
5.23	Quarterly report to review progress on delivery of annual internal audit plan	7.2
5.24	Quarterly review and approve proposed scopes in the annual internal audit plan	7.2
5.25	Review reports on internal audit reviews, including recommendations for improvement arising from those reviews	7.3
5.27	Monitor action by management on internal audit findings and recommendations	7.1
5.33	Quarterly review to ensure that managements responses to any external audit findings are acted upon in a timely manner	7.1.1
5.34	Quarterly review Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) reports to assess the impacts on Council	Nil
5.35	Consider the findings and recommendations of any relevant performance audits undertaken by VAGO and monitor Council's responses to them	Nil
7	Annual performance evaluation	7.4

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NEXT MEETING- MARCH 2024

March 2024	
Ref. from Charter	
5.10	Annual review to ensure that a program is in place to test compliance with systems and controls
5.11	Assess whether the control environment is consistent with Council's Governance Principles
5.14	Review Council's risk profile and the changes occurring in the profile
5.17	Review the approach to business continuity planning framework
5.18	Annually review Council's Fraud Prevention policies and controls, including the Fraud Control Plan and fraud awareness programs
5.21	Review the Internal Audit Charter regularly
5.22	Review and approve the strategic internal audit plan, the annual internal audit plan
5.23	Quarterly report to review progress on delivery of annual internal audit plan
5.24	Quarterly review and approve proposed scopes in the annual internal audit plan
5.25	Review reports on internal audit reviews, including recommendations for improvement arising from those reviews
5.27	Monitor action by management on internal audit findings and recommendations
5.31	Annually review and approve the external audit scope and plan proposed by the external auditor
5.33	Quarterly review to ensure that managements responses to any external audit findings are acted upon in a timely manner
5.34	Quarterly review Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) reports to assess the impacts on Council
5.37	Review the systems and processes implemented by Council to monitor compliance with legislation and regulations. Management to report any instances of non-compliance

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5.38	Annually review the processes for communicating Council's Employee Code of Conduct to employees and contractors and for monitoring compliance with the Code
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Action: Include presentation of risk register at the March 2024 Audit & Risk Committee meeting

The meeting closed at 2:47pm.

SECTION 6– INFORMAL MEETINGS

6.1 INFORMAL MEETINGS

AUTHOR'S TITLE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DEPARTMENT CEO'S OFFICE
REFERENCE: 13039074

OFFICER'S DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Officers providing advice to Council must disclose any conflict of interest.

No person involved in the preparation of this report has a conflict of interest requiring disclosure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Governance Rules state that if there is a meeting of Councillors that:

- 1 is scheduled or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of *Council* or briefing Councillors;
- 2 is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
- 3 is not a *Council meeting*, *Delegated Committee meeting* or *Community Asset Committee meeting*, the *Chief Executive Officer* must ensure that a summary of the matters discussed at the meeting are:
 - a) tabled at the next convenient *Council meeting*; and
 - b) recorded in the minutes of that *Council meeting*.

DISCUSSION

As a requirement of the Governance Rules, a summary of matters discussed at the Council Briefings held since the last Council Meeting are presented to Council and will be recorded in the minutes.

INFORMAL MEETINGS
Council Briefing held on 23 January 2024

Issues discussed at the briefing:

- Fair Access Action Plan
- Western Bulldogs Youth Leadership Program Membership
- 2024/2025 Budget development and engagement process
- Community Support Grant
- Landfill and transfer station management
- Pitch festival Tow Away Zone
- Council Election 2024 update
- Council communication strategy / plan
- Building and planning monthly report
- Open Space Policy
- Council Watch "petition"

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Alignment to Council Plan Strategic Objectives

The report supports the strategic objective of the Council Plan 2021-2025:

- 6.3** Continuously improve Council's community engagement process and practices in line with deliberative engagement practices, while acknowledging the need for a range of different techniques to ensure effective engagement.

Financial

There are no financial impacts for the receiving of Informal Meetings of Councillors.

Policy/Relevant Law

Reporting of Informal Meetings is in line with the requirements of the Governance Rules.

Risk Assessment

Following the requirements of the Governance Rules will ensure that Council meets its legislative requirements.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Engagement

A summary of matters discussed at the Council Briefings are presented for community information.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Informal Meetings of Councillors Report be received.

MOVED CR R ARMSTRONG

SECONDED CR ALLGOOD

That the Informal Meetings of Councillors Report be received.

CARRIED 4936/24

ATTACHMENTS

The Summary of Council Briefings are provided as Attachment 6.1.

Councillor Briefing

Date: Tuesday 23 January 2024
Commencement: 5.00 pm
Location: Council Chamber, Shire Offices

Present

Councillors: Cr Gwenda Allgood
Cr Jo Armstrong
Cr Rob Armstrong
Cr Peter Beales
Cr Henry Burridge
Cr Bob Sanders
Cr Bill Waterston

Officers: CEO, Dr Tim Harrison

Apologies:

Disclosure of Conflict of Interests

Disclosure of Interests are to be made immediately prior to any relevant item being discussed
(*Local Government Act 2020 - Section 131 and Chapter 5, Section 6 of the Governance Rules*).

Matters Considered:

1	Mayor's roundup
2	Fair Access Action Plan adoption
3	Western Bulldogs Youth Leadership Program Membership
4	2024/2025 Budget development and engagement process
5	Community Support Grant outcomes
6	Confidential items policy
7	Landfill and transfer station management
8	Pitch Festival Tow Away Zone
9	Council communication strategy / plan
10	Council Election 2024 update
11	Building and planning reports
12	Panel supply contracts
13	Open Space Policy
14	Council Watch "petition"

Dr Tim Harrison

SECTION 7 – NOTICES OF MOTION

A notice of motion must be in writing signed by a Councillor and be lodged with or sent to the *Chief Executive Officer* no later than 12.00pm (noon) and at least six (6) days prior to the Council Meeting to allow sufficient time for the *Chief Executive Officer* to include the *notice of motion* in agenda papers for a *Council meeting*.

There were no Notice of Motion items received

SECTION 8 – URGENT BUSINESS

Items cannot be admitted as urgent business other than by resolution of *Council* and only then if it:

- 1 relates to or arises out of a matter which has arisen since distribution of the *agenda*; and
- 2 cannot safely or conveniently be deferred until the next *Council meeting*.

There were no Urgent Business items received

SECTION 9 – CLOSE SESSION (CONFIDENTIAL)

In accordance with section 66(2)(a), 3(1) *Confidential Information* (a) of the Local Government Act 2020, the following agenda items are listed for consideration in the confidential section:

- Item 9.1 – Contract No. P-01 – PANEL SUPPLY CONTRACT – PROVISION OF TRADE SERVICES: PAINTING, ELECTRICAL & PLUMBING
- Item 9.2 – Contract No. P-03 – PANEL SUPPLY CONTRACT – PLANT & EQUIPMENT HIRE

6.33PM CLOSURE OF COUNCIL MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

The Open Council Meeting will now be closed, but members of the public are welcome to rejoin the Council Meeting following the recommencement of the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the meeting be closed to members of the public pursuant to section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 to consider confidential reports.

**MOVED CR BEALES
SECONDED CR R ARMSTRONG**

That the meeting be closed to members of the public pursuant to section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 to consider confidential reports.

CARREID 4937/24

6.36PM OPEN COUNCIL MEETING RECOMMENCEMENT

RECOMMENDATION

That the Open Council Meeting recommence.

**MOVED CR BEALES
SECONDED CR J ARMSTRONG**

That the Open Council Meeting recommence.

CARRIED 4940/24

Gallery invited to return to Council Chamber.

LIFTING OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLOSED SESSION RESOLUTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

That the confidentiality of the report and decision in relation to 9.1 and 9.2 not be lifted on adoption of the motion.

**MOVED CR BEALES
SECONDED CR R ARMSTRONG**

That the confidentiality of the report and decision in relation to 9.1 and 9.2 not be lifted on adoption of the motion.

CARREID 4941/24

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT PAGES 8038 – 8109 INCLUDING PAGES 650 – 657 OF THE CLOSED SESSION ARE CONFIRMED AND ARE A TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD.

MAYOR – CR BOB SANDERS

Meeting Closed at 6.37pm.