



WHITEHORSE
CITY COUNCIL

Whitehorse City Council

AGENDA

Special Council Meeting

on

Monday 16 June 2025 at 6:30 PM

**To be held in the
Council Chamber
Nunawading Civic Centre**

Members: Cr Andrew Davenport Mayor
Cr Prue Cutts Deputy Mayor
Cr Peter Allan
Cr Blair Barker
Cr Daniel Griffiths
Cr Jarrod Gunn
Cr Kirsten Langford
Cr Jason Martin
Cr Kieran Simpson
Cr Ben Stennett
Cr Hayley Weller

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AGENDA

1 Welcome

Prayer for Council

We give thanks, O God, for the Men and Women of the past whose generous devotion to the common good has been the making of our City.

Grant that our own generation may build worthily on the foundations they have laid.

Direct our minds that all we plan and determine, is for the wellbeing of our City.

Amen.

Acknowledgement of Country

Whitehorse City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land we are meeting on and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from communities who may be present today.

2 Apologies

3 Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

4 Requests to Speak

5 Public Question Time

6 Council Reports

6.1 Adoption of Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029, 2025/26 Budget and Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029

Department Communities, Engagement and Integrated Planning
Director Corporate Services

Attachment

SUMMARY

The *Local Government Act 2020* ('the Act') requires Council to take an integrated approach to planning and reporting under a principles-based approach. The principles-based legislation is designed to support Council with an adaptive response based on the local needs of the community; social, economic, environmental and cultural context; and the capacity of Council.

As part of Council's integrated approach to planning, the following key strategic documents have been prepared:

1. Integrated Council Plan for 2025-2029 (incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan), along with associated 2025/26 Council Plan Action Plan and 2025/26 Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan Action Plan
2. 2025/26 Budget
3. Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029

These documents have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. They have been informed by the Community Vision 2040 and have been developed in accordance with the broad and deliberative engagement requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Council's Community Engagement Policy.

This is the first Budget and Council Plan of the new Council term, Council officers acknowledge the time and consideration that Councillors have given throughout the process, including their focus on the priorities and initiatives to be included. Their involvement and deliberation have been integral in shaping documents that align with the aspirations and needs of our community.

Community engagement was conducted as part of Shaping Whitehorse - Council's community engagement process designed to inform the development of its 2025-2029 key strategic planning documents including the Community Vision, Integrated Council Plan (including the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan), Financial Plan, Asset Plan and Budget.

Shaping Whitehorse involved both broad and deliberative community engagement and was an important legislative input in the review and development of Council's strategic documents.

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As the final stage of the engagement process, the community was invited to provide feedback on the Proposed 2025/26 Budget and the Revenue and Rating Plan 2025–2029 from 29 April to 13 May 2025. Feedback could be submitted online via the YourSay Whitehorse platform or in hardcopy at the Civic Centre in Nunawading. The proposed documents were made available through the YourSay Whitehorse website, with printed copies also accessible at Council’s Customer Service Centres and Libraries.

As part of the community feedback process, Council received 36 items of feedback via Council’s YourSay platform. An additional item was received via email after the consultation had closed, totaling 37 items of Community feedback.

Council officers collated feedback from the community engagement process, which was then considered by Councillors in late May 2025. A summary of the community engagement feedback and officer’s comments is attached to this report, and will also be published as an update to the Shaping Whitehorse YourSay webpage.

As a result, the following changes to the final 2025/26 Budget include:

- \$150,000 allocation for the development of an Integrated Transport Strategy (including walking and cycling) to guide Council in delivering advocacy, programs and services;
- Allocation of \$50,000 for the completion of a technical and feasibility study on options for a dog park within the municipality.

The final 2025/26 Budget also includes an updated 2025/26 allocation per the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission, the impact of which was additional grant revenue of approximately \$290,000.

Rate Valuation figures used in this 2025/26 budget report are final certified valuations provided by the Valuer General’s office.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Having:

- a) Considered all community feedback during the consultation period April/May 2025;
- b) Considered officer comments (Attachment 6), now adopts the Proposed Budget 2025/26 (Attachment 4) in accordance with Section 94 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and as defined by the *Local Government (Finance and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.
- c) Considered officer comments (Attachment 6), adopts the Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029 (Attachment 5) in accordance with Section 93 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

2. Adopts the Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029 (Attachment 1) and its associated 2025/26 Action Plans (Attachments 2 and 3).

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3. Declares the rates and charges for the 2025/26 rating year commencing 1 July 2025 and ending 30 June 2026 as detailed in the 2025/26 Budget - Section 6.2.1(a)-(l) (Attachment 4) in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989.
4. Declares the rate equivalent amounts for “Cultural and Recreational Land properties” in accordance with Section 4 of the Cultural and Recreational Lands Act 1963 (CRLA) as detailed in the 2025/26 Budget.
5. Allow the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate to make any necessary administrative or minor editorial amendments as required to the Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029, 2025/26 Budget or Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029, and to finalise and make the approved documents publicly available.
6. Thank the community members who participated in the Shaping Whitehorse community engagement process undertaken to inform the 2025-2029 key strategic planning documents, including the Integrated Council Plan and Budget.

KEY MATTERS**Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029**

For the first time, Whitehorse City Council integrated the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) with the Council Plan, which will now be known as the Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029. Approval for this integration was granted by the Department of Health on 24 April 2025. Integrating these plans serves to highlight health and wellbeing priorities, elevates Council’s partnership work and streamlines planning and reporting processes.

Integration of the two Plans is primarily within the strategic hierarchy of the Integrated Council Plan, with separate annual Action Plans being developed each year to remain flexible to opportunities and changes for the Whitehorse community over the coming Council term.

Council Plan

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* (Section 90), Councils must prepare and adopt a Council Plan by 30 October in the year after a general election, for a period of at least the next four financial years, and in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices.

Preparation of the Integrated Council Plan has been in accordance with the strategic planning principles of the Act (Section 89) which require:

- An integrated approach to planning, monitoring and reporting;
- Addressing the Community Vision;
- Taking into account the resources needed for effective implementation;

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- Identifying and addressing the risks to effective implementation; and
- Providing for ongoing monitoring of progress and regular review.

The Council Plan must be developed using deliberative engagement processes as per Section 90(1).

The presentation of this document is in plain format, with Officers progressing with the final designed layout post-Council adoption.

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

The 2025-2029 period marks Council's eighth Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP). It represents Council's long-term commitment and endeavor to improve the health and wellbeing of the municipality in partnership with the community and with key State and local organisations.

In preparing a health and wellbeing plan every four years, the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* requires a Council's MPHWP to:

- Be consistent with the Council Plan and the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS).
- Specify measures to prevent family violence and respond to the needs of victims of family violence in the local community. (Section 26 (2)(ba).
- Have regard to climate change (Section 17 of the Climate Change Act).
- Consider the focus areas and priorities of the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019–2023.

The MPHWP components of the Integrated Council Plan were developed through:

- Analysis of the current and projected health and wellbeing challenges for the Whitehorse population [Health and Wellbeing Profile 2024]
- The insights and recommendations arising from the Shaping Whitehorse community engagement
- The priorities of Council's health and wellbeing partner organisations
- The directions of national, state policies relating to health and wellbeing

Annual Action Plans

Annual Action Plans will be developed each year of the Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029 to maintain flexibility to respond to changes in the operating environment and community needs. The 2025/26 Action Plans for both the Council Plan and the MPHWP have been developed in alignment with the 2025/26 Budget and contribute to the achievement of Objectives and Strategies of the Integrated Council Plan. Actions are prioritised using multiple sources of information including the Shaping Whitehorse community engagement.

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The 2025/26 Action Plans have been developed in accordance with Council's responsibilities under the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, the *Climate Change Act 2017*, the *Disability Act 2006* and the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*.

Monitoring and reporting

Council follows the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework set out by the Victorian State Government as its preferred approach to planning and reporting.

To facilitate transparency and accountability, the actions listed in the Council Plan and MPHWP annual Action Plans will be reported back to the community on a quarterly basis via the Whitehorse Quarterly Performance Report (QPR). Strategic Indicators will be reported in the Quarter 2 QPR and in the Annual Report. The QPR is made available on Council's website after being presented to Council for each quarter of the financial year.

To support the development and evaluation of the MPHWP Action Plan, Council has established a MPHWP Steering Committee that will meet 2-3 times per year to guide the implementation of collaborative health and wellbeing initiatives for Whitehorse listed in the MPHWP Action Plan. Membership includes Council Officers and organisations that partner with Council to implement the MPHWP.

Budget 2025/26

The 2025/26 Budget is mandated by legislation and regulation and the document has been developed with reference to the Local Government Model Budget format, which is prepared by Local Government Victoria each year. Hence Whitehorse City Council's Budget meets all legislative requirements.

The 2025/26 Budget has been prepared with reference to Council's Financial Plan, which is aimed at creating a sustainable fiscal environment to enable Council to continue to provide the community with high quality services and infrastructure into the medium and long term.

Council's rate rise for 2025/26 will be consistent with the Victorian Government rate cap at 3.0% in line with advice from the Essential Services Commission.

Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029

The Revenue and Rating Plan is an important part of Council's integrated planning framework, all of which is created to achieve our vision in the Community Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to determine the most appropriate and affordable revenue and rating approach, which in conjunction with other income sources, will adequately finance the objectives in the Council Plan.

In particular, the Plan will set out the decisions Council has made in relation to rating options available to it under the *Local Government Act 2020* to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of rates across property owners. It will also set out the principles for fee and charge setting and include other

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revenue items to ensure Council's commitment to responsible financial management is achieved, while at the same time continuing to provide high quality, accessible services to the community.

DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS**Shaping Whitehorse community engagement**

From March to August 2024, Council undertook an extensive community engagement process under the branding 'Shaping Whitehorse'. Engagement areas within the Shaping Whitehorse scope included:

1. Whitehorse 2040 Community Vision check in
 - a. 74% of respondents indicated the Vision still aligned with their aspirations for the future and didn't need to change.
2. Council Plan
3. Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
4. Budget
5. Financial Plan
6. Asset Plan

As per Council's Community Engagement Policy and the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council undertook engagement by way of:

1. Broad engagement
 - Community pop-ups, workshops, information sessions, paper and online surveys
2. Deliberative panel
 - Consisting of 38 community members representing the demographics of Whitehorse, the Panel examined the broad community feedback and other key inputs via a series of workshops. The Panel met for 15 hours over 4 sessions with additional work undertaken by panel members to help inform them of the key issues. The panel made a series of recommendations for the priorities for Council to focus on over the next four years.

The following five (5) Strategic Directions provided the framework for Shaping Whitehorse engagement and Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029, and have enabled Council to set the roadmap for the next four years:

- Strategic Direction 1 – Community
- Strategic Direction 2 - Built
- Strategic Direction 3 - Economy
- Strategic Direction 4 – Natural
- Strategic Direction 5 – Governance

Within each of these Strategic Directions, Council has specified:

- Objectives – Council's goals for the next 4 years

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- Strategies – Council’s approach for how progress will be made towards achieving the Objectives
- Strategic Indicators – how Council measures progress toward achieving the Objectives

Early engagement meant Council could identify important themes and make informed decisions throughout the planning and development process for the key strategic documents.

Details of the key activities funded within the 2025/26 Budget, that align with the themes identified via the Shaping Whitehorse community engagement process, is contained within the 2025/26 Budget (Attachment 4).

As the final stage of the engagement process, the community was invited to provide feedback on the Proposed 2025/26 Budget and the Revenue and Rating Plan 2025–2029 from 29 April to 13 May 2025. Feedback could be submitted online via the YourSay Whitehorse platform or in hardcopy at the Civic Centre in Nunawading. The proposed documents were made available through the YourSay Whitehorse website, with printed copies also accessible at Council’s Customer Service Centres and Libraries.

As part of the community feedback process, Council received 36 items of feedback via Council’s YourSay platform. An additional item was received via email after the consultation had closed totalling 37 items of community feedback.

Council officers collated feedback from the community engagement process, which was then considered by Councillors in late May 2025. A summary of the community engagement feedback and officer’s comments is attached to this report (Attachment 6) and will also be published as an update to the Shaping Whitehorse YourSay webpage.

As a result of the community engagement process conducted in April / May 2025 on the Proposed 2025/26 Budget, the following changes have been incorporated in the final 2025/26 Budget:

- Inclusion of \$150,000 for the development of an Integrated Transport Strategy (including walking and cycling) to guide Council in delivering advocacy, programs and services.
- Allocation of \$50,000 for the completion of a technical and feasibility study on options for a dog park within the municipality.

2025/26 BUDGET

Background

The 2025/26 Budget has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Sections 94 and 96 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and is in line with the Victorian Government’s rate cap for 2025/26.

The 2025/26 Budget is a four-year plan that outlines the financial and non-financial resources that Council requires to achieve the strategic objectives described in the Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029. It has been prepared with reference to Council’s Financial Plan, which is aimed at creating a sustainable fiscal environment to enable Council to continue to provide the

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community with high quality services and infrastructure into the medium and long term. The Financial Plan is currently being finalised to meet legislative requirements by 31 October 2025.

The 2025/26 Budget includes detailed budgeted financial statements (income statement, balance sheet, cash flow statement, capital works) and accompanying notes, detailed listing of the capital works program, other matters required under the *Local Government Act 1989 & 2020* and regulations relating to Rates and Charges, and the Schedule of Fees and Charges.

Discussion and Options

The 2025/26 Budget demonstrates our ongoing commitment to responsible financial and resource management, while meeting the evolving needs and aspirations of our community. It was developed in a challenging economic environment with cost of living and inflationary pressures impacting Council as well as our community.

The operational surplus for 2025/26 is predicted to be \$20.14 million. The result is based on revenue of \$253 million and expenses of \$233 million.

When non-cash items such as depreciation, amortisation and doubtful debts are excluded, underlying expenditure growth for 2025/26 is projected to be 3.07% (underlying revenue 3.62%) compared to the 2024/25 Full Year Forecast.

This result reflects a combination of factors including revenue growth items, alongside cost pressures exceeding the rate cap. Key drivers of these increase costs include the Victorian Government waste levy increase of 27.9%, WorkCover premium, compulsory superannuation increases and Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) banding movement adjustments as detailed in the 2025/26 Budget.

While there are ongoing financial pressures and rising cost drivers, Council has actively sought to manage resources responsibly and identify operational efficiencies, including through its continuous improvement program.

Further detail is provided in the 2025/26 Budget document Section 6 Analysis of Income Statement.

A further \$53 million is proposed to be spent on capital works, including \$2.6 million on projects carried forward and funded from 2024/25.

The operational budget outlines the services and initiatives that Council plans to deliver in 2025/26 and the funding and resources required. It also includes continued investment in Council's transformation program.

A projected rate increase of 3.0% per cent in line with the Victorian Government's Fair Go Rates System will help fund the extensive Capital Works Program and ensures ongoing delivery of Council's high-quality services and programs.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BUDGET

The key components of the 2025/26 Budget are highlighted in the following.

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Operational Budget

The operational budget provides \$187 million for the delivery of services to the community including:

- \$26.35 million Kerbside and Public Waste Services;
- \$16.79 million Parks and Natural Environment (maintenance of sports fields, parks and gardens);
- \$15.41 million Leisure and Recreation Services;
- \$12.73 million Health and Family Services;
- \$12.14 million City Services (maintenance of footpaths, drains and roads, sustainability and depot operations);
- \$11.34 million Whitehorse Recycling and Waste Centre (waste transfer station);
- \$10.33 million Community Safety (community laws, parking, school crossings and emergency management);
- \$9.71 million City Planning and Development;
- \$8.78 million Arts and Cultural Services;
- \$6.21 million Libraries;
- \$6.12 million Engineering;
- \$5.38 million Project Delivery and Assets;
- \$2.16 million Community Engagement and Development;
- \$1.24 million Investment and Economic Development;
- \$1.07 million Positive Ageing;
- \$0.51 million Major Projects; and
- \$0.35 million Advocacy

Capital Works Program

The \$53 million Capital Works Program includes:

- \$20.78 million for land, buildings and building improvements;
- \$7.06 million for plant and equipment;
- \$7.50 million for roads, bridges and off-street car parks;
- \$6.48 million for recreational, leisure and community facilities;
- \$5.17 million for footpaths and cycleways;
- \$3.74 million for parks, open space and streetscapes; and
- \$2.39 million for drainage improvements.

Key highlights of the 2025/26 Capital Works Program include \$8.00 million for the commencement of construction for Box Hill City Oval major redevelopment, \$6.32 million in pavilion upgrades, and \$3.40 million for the Box Hill City Oval sports field ground renewal.

FEES AND CHARGES

Fees and charges have been reviewed with consideration of several influencing factors including full costs, market comparison and an emphasis on accessibility, equity and social justice considerations. The 2025/26 Fees and Charges will achieve a budgeted income of 9.1% higher than the 2024/25 forecast, primarily due to:

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- Increased user fee income at Leisure Facilities, reflecting a combination of increased fees and demand across the facilities and growth related to new class offerings.
- Increased tipping fees at the Recycling and Waste Centre compared to the 2024/25 forecast, with fee rates reflecting the higher cost of waste disposal driven by an increase in the waste (landfill) levy in 2025-26 from the current rate of \$132.76 per tonne to \$169.79 per tonne.
- Continued growth in utilisation at The Round, as the facility enters year three of operation;

A number of fees and charges are set by other levels of government regulation (statutory) and are not subject to discretionary change by Council. Statutory fees will be changed by Council when advised of a change by the relevant authorities. These are clearly identified in the schedule of fees and charges.

KEY PRESSURES AND CHALLENGES

In preparing the 2025/26 Budget, a number of external and internal influences have been taken into consideration because they are likely to impact significantly on the services delivered by Council in the Budget period. These include:

External influences

- The average rates will increase by 3.00% in 2025/26, in line with the cap set by the Victorian State Government - Fair Go Rates System.
- Inflation remains high in the short term however is forecast to ease by 2025/26. This is due to a reduction in global price pressures and a stabilisation of domestic economic conditions, helping bring inflation back toward more normal levels. However, construction materials, insurances, fuel and other costs continue to increase significantly faster than the rate cap, further compounding the financial challenges faced by Council. These factors make it challenging to maintain the quality of services and infrastructure that our community relies on.
- The recent global market volatility driven by rising U.S. tariffs and broader trade tensions continues to create economic uncertainty. These international uncertainties can have local impacts and potentially add to already rising costs for materials and services and project costs. The instability in the market may impact investment returns and fluctuations in superannuation liabilities that are sensitive to market performance. Council is actively monitoring global economic trends and financial market developments. However, the recent volatility makes it increasingly difficult to predict the broader economic environment.
- Two Victorian Government Big Build Projects taking place in Whitehorse – the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) and North East Link (NEL) – represent both challenges and opportunities. The SRL, including planned stations in Burwood and Box Hill, along with the NEL, once up and running, would

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create employment, business and community hubs that benefit a swathe of Melbourne's east region.

However, these developments come with certain risks. These projects will largely be delivered beyond direct control of Council. However wide-ranging impacts need to be considered and managed by Council, with the most significant being provision of open space within the city, and population densification.

- The cost of providing waste and recycling services continues to rise due to increases in the Victorian Government's waste levy and the growing amount of waste and recyclables collected in the community. In 2025/26, the waste levy will rise from \$132.76 to \$169.79 per tonne - a 27.9% increase. Despite this, the overall waste service charge for kerbside and public waste will increase by only 0.9% in 2025/26. This modest increase reflects a higher allocation to waste service costs in the 2024/25 budget than was ultimately required. The difference has been incorporated into the 2025/26 charge, helping to ease the impact on ratepayers.
- From 1 July 2025, the State Government will replace the Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) with the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF). As with the FSPL, the ESVF will be collected by Council on behalf of the State Government under the *Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012*. The variable rate for general residential properties in 2025/26 is expected to nearly double - from 8.7 cents to 17.3 cents per \$1,000 of capital improved value. It is important to note that Council is not raising any additional revenue from the levy; it is merely acting as a collection agency on behalf of the State Government and is mandated to be shown separate on rate notices.
- Supplementary rates are additional rates received after the budget is adopted each year, for the part of the year when a property value increases in value (e.g., due to improvements made or change in land class), or new residents become assessable. Supplementary rates income is based on historical and forecast data and is set at anticipated levels.
- Council's ability to generate earnings on cash and investments is expected to reduce compared to 2024/25, with an average interest rate on investments of 4.1% assumed for the upcoming financial year.
- The 2025/26 Budget reflects an estimated increase in WorkCover premium. Changes in the insurance market, including fluctuations in premiums, availability of coverage, and insurer profitability, are placing upward pressure on WorkCover costs.
- Cost shifting by other levels of government. Cost shifting occurs where local government provides a service to the community on behalf of the Victorian or Federal Governments. Over time, the funds received by Council do not increase in line with real cost increases, resulting in a further reliance on internally generated revenue to meet service delivery

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expectations. Examples of services that are subject to cost shifting include school crossing supervision and library services.

- Changing demographics as a result of an ageing and increasingly culturally diverse population has resulted in the need for Council to develop facilities that are accessible and adaptable to intergenerational, diverse and multicultural community users.
- Community expectations that Council will respond to environmental sustainability by planning for the effects of climate change, education and awareness of the benefits of trees and natural bushland and supporting the community in protecting and enhancing our natural assets and open spaces.
- Impact from market competition, particularly in relation to other childcare centres and leisure facilities in the local region.

Internal influences

- Employee costs are largely driven by Council's Enterprise Agreement which expires July 2025. A new consolidated agreement is currently in progress and under negotiation. The 2025/26 Budget allows for an increase in line with the 2025/26 rate cap.
- The compulsory Superannuation Guarantee Scheme (SGC) will increase from 11.50% to 12.00%.
- Council has an ongoing obligation to fund any investment shortfalls in the Defined Benefits Scheme. The last call on local government was in the 2012/2013 financial year. The amount and timing of any liability is dependent on the global investment market. At present, the actuarial ratios are currently at levels that additional calls are not required. Council officers continue to monitor regularly.
- Council's transformation process in 2025/26 builds on previous years of effort. It includes continued focus on review, planning and continuous improvement in service delivery, the continuation of Council's Technology Transformation Program (with an enhanced focus on customer experience improvements through technology changes), improvement in the utilisation and management of Council's property portfolio, and a continued commercial focus within the procurement of goods and services and contract management.

REVENUE AND RATING PLAN 2025-2029

Background

The *Local Government Act 2020* states that councils must adopt a Revenue and Rating Plan by the next 30 June after a general election for a period of at least the next 4 financial years. Council adopted the first Revenue and Rating Plan under the Act 2020 in June 2021 and a revised Plan for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2027 to reflect the separation of waste charges from general rates. This Plan reflects a review and update in

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accordance with legislative requirements and covers the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2029.

The purpose of the Plan is to determine the most appropriate and affordable revenue and rating approach, which in conjunction with other income sources, will adequately finance the objectives in the Council Plan.

In particular, the Plan will set out the decisions Council has made in relation to rating options available to it under the Local Government Act 2020 to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of rates across property owners. It will also set out the principles for fee and charge setting and include other revenue items to ensure Council's commitment to responsible financial management is achieved, while at the same time continuing to provide high quality, accessible services to the community.

Discussion and Options

It is recommended the following rating principles remain in place:

- A general rate is applied to all properties and continue with a uniform rate
- Continues not to apply a differential rating structure
- Not levying a municipal charge
- Continue to apply the Waste Service Charge based on cost recovery of the waste function
- Not offering any Council concessions
- Not offering any incentives for prompt payment.
- Continue to apply special rate and special charge provisions of the LGA for Special Charge Scheme for Infrastructure Projects, Special Rate and Special Charge Schemes in Commercial Centres
- Council will declare rate equivalent amounts calculated by having regard to the services provided to eligible Cultural and Recreational Lands properties and the benefit to the community derived from them, at the times and in the manner prescribed by the CRLA. Currently there are 32 properties.

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details

<p>Strategic Alignment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029: Strategic Direction 5 Governance • <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> • <i>Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008</i> • <i>Climate Change Act 2017</i> • <i>Disability Act 2006</i> • <i>Family Violence Protection Act 2008</i> • <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i>
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<p>Financial and Resource Implications</p>	<p>The 2025/26 Budget incorporates the Operating Budget, Capital Works Program, and details the financial and non-financial resources required to deliver on Year 1 of the Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029.</p>
<p>Legislative and Risk Implications</p>	<p>It is a legislative requirement under the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>, that:</p> <p>S90 (1) A Council must prepare and adopt a Council Plan for a period of at least the next 4 financial years after a general election in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices.</p> <p>S93 A Council must prepare and adopt a Revenue and Rating Plan by the next 30 June after a general election for a period of at least the next 4 financial years.</p> <p>S94 (1) A Council must prepare and adopt a budget for each financial year and the subsequent 3 financial years by -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) 30 June each year; or (b) any other date fixed by the Minister by notice published in the Government Gazette. <p>The 2025/26 Budget (plus three subsequent financial years) has been prepared in accordance with both the requirements of Sections 94 and 96 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> and the <i>Local Government Planning and Reporting Regulations 2020</i>.</p> <p>There are no legal or risk implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report.</p>
<p>Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations</p>	<p>In developing this report to Council, the subject matter has been considered in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006</i>.</p> <p>It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.</p> <p>Fees and Charges have been reviewed in line with Council's Gender Equity responsibilities and where necessary, a Gender Impact Assessment has been undertaken by relevant officers during development.</p> <p>The Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029 has been developed in line with Council's Gender Equity</p>

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	responsibilities and has conducted a Gender Impact Assessment to support its development.
Community Engagement	Significant community engagement has been undertaken in line with the deliberative engagement requirements under the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> , as outlined in this report.
Innovation and Continuous Improvement	<p>The Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029 incorporates two new innovations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The integration of the MPHWP with the Council Plan for the first time to better align these two important plans; and 2. The implementation of annual action plans to support a more dynamic approach to planning and delivering the Integrated Council Plan. <p>The 2025/26 Budget includes continued investment in Council's transformation program, building on previous years of effort. It includes continued focus on review, planning and continuous improvement in service delivery, the continuation of Council's Technology Transformation Program (with an enhanced focus on customer experience improvements through technology changes), improvement in the utilisation and management of Council's property portfolio, and a continued commercial focus within the procurement of goods and services and contract management.</p>
Collaboration	<p>The Integrated Council Plan and the 2025/26 Budget (which includes the development of operating and capital budgets for the 2025/26 financial year), have been developed over a series of briefings with Councillors and each Council department.</p> <p>Collaboration with Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing service providers occurred through the development of the Integrated Council Plan and the associated MPHWP Action Plan. Collaboration also extends to the creation of the MPHWP Partner Steering Committee to monitor the implementation of the Plan.</p>
Conflict of Interest	Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

10.1 (cont)

ATTACHMENT

- 1 DRAFT Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029
- 2 Council Plan Action Plan 2025-26 DRAFT
- 3 MPHWP Action Plan 2025-26 DRAFT
- 4 2025/26 Budget
- 5 Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029
- 6 2025/26 Shaping Whitehorse Community Feedback

7 Close Meeting