



Whitehorse City Council

AGENDA

Council Meeting

on

Monday 22 September 2025 at 7:00 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 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the Council Meeting 08 September 2025

RECOMMENDATION

That the minutes of the Council Meeting 08 September 2025 be confirmed.

5 Urgent Business

6 Requests to Speak

7 Public Question Time

8 Petitions

8.1 Dog Related Matters at Morton Park

Council has received two petitions in relation to dogs at Morton Park, Blackburn.

PETITION #1

Received	April 2025
Original Petition (11 April)	117
Additional Signatories (14 April)	200
Total Petition Numbers	317
In Australia	315
Outside Australia	2
Within Victoria	315
Within Whitehorse	140
Duplicates	1
No identifying a suburb or postcode	2
Compliance with Petition Guidelines	Petition does not include signatures

The first petition was received in April 2025 and included 117 electronic signatures. The petition read:

"We, the undersigned residents of Victoria, respectfully request the Council to immediately reverse its recent decision to lock open the perimeter gates at Morton Park, Blackburn.

This decision, implemented without prior community consultation, directly compromises the safety, accessibility, and daily enjoyment of hundreds of regular park users, including dog owners and families.

Morton Park is a vital community hub, providing a secure and enclosed environment essential for safely exercising our dogs and supervising children. The unilateral decision to lock gates in an open position creates significant safety risks, particularly due to direct access to Central Road and the adjacent car park.

We request the Whitehorse City Council to:

Immediately reinstate the gates at Morton Park to their default closed position to ensure the continued safety of all park users.

Conduct a formal, transparent, and inclusive community consultation process involving park users, including dog owners, families, and sports groups, before making any further changes. As a community, we value our connections, our safety, and the shared enjoyment of Morton Park. We

believe Council decisions should be reflective of community needs and made in consultation with those directly impacted.

Thank you for addressing this urgent matter and for respecting the collective voice of your constituents.”

A further submission of additional signatures to the petition was received bringing the total number of signatures to 318.

Immediate action was undertaken on the receipt of the first petition.

PETITION #2

Received	August 2025
Original Petition	775
In Australia	705
Outside Australia	70
Within Victoria	690
Within Whitehorse	174
Duplicates	3
No identifying a suburb or postcode	16
Compliance with Petition Guidelines	Petition does not include signatures No full addresses, only Suburbs and Postcodes.

A second electronic petition was received in August 2025 and included 775 signatures with signatures from outside of Victoria and Australia.

The petition read:

“To the Mayor, Councillors, and Executive of Whitehorse City Council, We, the undersigned residents of Victoria, support the Council’s proposed initiative to lock open the perimeter gates of Morton Park West in Blackburn. We believe this action will help reduce the amount of maintenance and repair required to maintain a safe and consistent playing surface for sporting participants.

However, we also acknowledge the concerns of community members who use the oval to exercise their dogs, and understand that this initiative will impact their activities and raise concerns about dog safety.

To meet the needs of all users of Morton Park, we propose that the Council should as a matter of urgency, establish a purpose-built, fully fenced off-leash dog park in the large open space between the Morton Park Pavilion

and the railway path, or in another suitable location. Ideally, this area would be equipped with suitable lighting to allow unrestricted, extended after dark access for community members wishing to exercise their dogs off-leash. We recognise that such lighting may need to be a second stage of the project as funding becomes available.

Creating a designated dog exercise area would enable Morton Park West to be returned to its primary function as a sports oval. This would help ensure a safer and more consistent playing surface, free from hazards such as sand-filled holes and uncollected dog waste - both of which currently pose health and safety risks to cricketers and footballers.

We believe this solution would benefit all users of the Morton Park precinct by reducing conflict and promoting shared community use:

• For dog owners: *A dedicated off-leash space would allow a greater range of hours to exercise their dogs by avoiding clashes with training and match times on the western oval. It would also demonstrate that the needs of dog-walkers are being valued equally alongside those of dedicated sporting clubs in Whitehorse.*

• For sporting clubs: *More than 1,000 playing members across Blackburn football and cricket clubs would benefit from a safer, more reliable playing surface. Reducing the presence of holes and dog waste would significantly lower the risk of lower leg injuries and reduce the burden on volunteers who currently spend time filling holes and removing dog waste before games and training.*

We believe this proposal supports safety, fairness, and enjoyment for all users of Morton Park and will enhance the value of this important community asset.

Thank you for giving our views your consideration.”

A valid petition must:

- Be written (other than in pencil or erasable ink), typed or printed
- Contain a request for Council to take a course of action
- Include the full name, address and contact details of the head petitioner
- Be signed by at least 12 people and include the full name and address of each signatory
- Be signed by Victorian residents
- Only be signed once by each individual
- Not concern subject matter already answered

Both petitions did not comply with Council's Petition Guidelines above.

Under Council's Governance Rules 59.10 Council may admit and consider a petition which is not fully compliant subject to a resolution of Council to allow such consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the petitions and refers them to be considered as part of the future Morton Park Dog Park technical report for appropriate action and response;
2. Provides appropriate signage at sporting fields for dog owners to manage and clean up after their dogs; and
3. Notifies the Head Petitioners of the outcome of this resolution.

9 Notices of Motion**10 Council Reports**

10.1 Tender Evaluation (Contract 30643) - Plumbing Installation and Maintenance Services

Department Project Delivery and Assets
Director Infrastructure

Attachment

SUMMARY

This report considers tenders received for the Plumbing Installation and Maintenance Services Contract 30643 and recommends the acceptance of the tenders from DBS Plumbing, New Plumbing Solutions and Shield Plumbing & Drainage.

Following a public tender and the completion of a comprehensive evaluation and assessment process, three companies are recommended for appointment to form a preferred contractor panel.

The Tender Evaluation Report is provided in Confidential Attachment 1.

The contract is for a fixed five-year term with no extension options available.

The services delivered under this Contract will be charged to the relevant endorsed budgets which are primarily funded from the annual Operational and Capital Works budgets.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council accepts the tender and authorises the Chief Executive Officer or delegate to sign the formal Contract documents for Contract 30643 Plumbing Installation and Maintenance Services received from the following tenderers:
 - DBS Plumbing Services Pty Ltd (ABN 96 095 440 056), of 4 Newman Street Ringwood Victoria 3134;
 - New Plumbing Solutions Group Holdings Pty Ltd (ABN 54 672 685 228), of 3-4/177 Beavers Road Northcote Victoria 3070; and
 - Shield Plumbing and Drainage Pty Ltd (ABN 82 169 750 289), of U14/40-52 McArthurs Road Altona North Victoria 3025.
2. The contract is for a fixed five-year term with no extension options available.
3. Council endorses that the expenditure for Contract 30643 (Plumbing Installation and Maintenance Services) will be undertaken from the relevant Council endorsed budgets up to the value of \$6,445,967 exclusive GST (\$7,090,564 including GST) over the five-year Contract term.

10.1 (cont)

KEY MATTERS

The purpose of the contract is to establish a panel of suitably qualified and experienced suppliers to allow Council to provide efficient and effective Plumbing Maintenance and Installation services to all building related assets, parks and open spaces, car parks and public spaces.

It specifically aims to:

- Maintain defined and expected levels of building serviceability.
- Ensure occupant and user safety as required by the OHS Act.
- Minimise service disruption to asset users; and
- Satisfy Council's legislative and regulatory requirements as well as maintaining and complying with relevant Australian Standards and regulations. The range of services associated with the contract will include all reactive and programmed plumbing works and maintenance as well as new or upgraded installations on Council facilities, buildings and open spaces.

DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

This Contract is designed to deliver core Council services to maintain and improve its buildings. The Contract is designed to enable efficient and best value works procurement, often required at short notice. Failure to award this contract will impact Council's ability to deliver essential plumbing services required to maintain, repair, upgrade and support building facilities for the community.

The panel contract arrangement provides access to prequalified and known labour rates for Council works for reactive and planned works.

BACKGROUND

This tender was advertised in The Age and via Council's procurement portal and closed on 18 June 2025.

A total of eighteen tender submissions were received from the open market. The compliant tenders provided a competitive open market for Plumbing Installation and Maintenance services for evaluation.

The eighteen tenders were evaluated against the following criteria:

- Cost to Council
- Capability
- Credibility
- Local Content
- Social and Environmental Sustainability
- Occupational Health & Safety, Equal Opportunity, and Business Viability (Pass/Fail).

10.1 (cont)

The Tender Evaluation Panel assesses those recommended to be appointed to the panel will provide the best possible value outcome for Council and the Whitehorse community.

Pending Council approval, contract documentation will be prepared and executed.

Consultation

Council's Procurement team have been consulted extensively to ensure that the procurement is compliant with the Procurement Policy.

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council's Procurement Policy must seek to promote open and fair competition and provide value for money in procurement activities.

Extensive consultation has occurred across all relevant Council departments.

Funding for the maintenance works will be via the annual operating budget provisions. Project funding will be drawn directly from the adopted Capital Works Program budget. The panel contract will be managed by the Project Delivery and Assets Department.

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details

Strategic Alignment	<p>The service within this contract supports the following strategic direction by ensuring Council's facilities are fit for use and well maintained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 'Strategic Direction 2: Built' <p>The service within this contract also supports the following objectives within the above strategic direction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Objective 2.2 Community facilities and shared spaces are well used;- Objective 2.3 Sustainable planning and infrastructure to respond to population change.
Financial and Resource Implications	<p>The financial or resource implications arising from the recommendation is contained in this report and the Tender Report Confidential Attachment 1.</p>
Legislative and Risk Implications	<p>Failure to award this contract will impact Council's ability to deliver essential plumbing services required to maintain, repair, upgrade and support building facilities for the community.</p> <p>This contract will provide the necessary resources to undertake reactive and programmed plumbing</p>

10.1 (cont)

	maintenance, ensuring Council's buildings remain safe, operational and fit for purpose.
Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations	It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.
Community Engagement	No community engagement was required for this report.
Innovation and Continuous Improvement	There are no Innovation and Continuous Improvement matters arising from the recommendation contained in this report.
Collaboration	Collaboration was completed with various local councils regarding their experiences with recent similar contract submissions.
Conflict of Interest	<p>The <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> requires members of Council staff, and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council, to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.</p> <p>Relevant signed conflict of interest forms by all members of the evaluation panel are filed on Council's information management system.</p> <p>Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.</p>

ATTACHMENT

- 1 30643 - C07 Tender Report - Plumbing Installation and Maintenance Services - CONFIDENTIAL ATTACHMENT

Whitehorse City Council designates this attachment and the information contained in it as Confidential Information pursuant to Section 3 (1) g(ii) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. This ground applies because the matter concerns Tender Submissions

10.2 Tender Evaluation (Contract 30619) - Contingent Labour Recruitment Services

Department People and Culture
Director Corporate Services

Attachment

SUMMARY

This report considers tenders received for the Contingent Labour Recruitment Contract 30619. Contingent Labour Recruitment services are essential to ensure business continuity and delivery of community services by qualified and experienced contingent workers. Council has implemented strong workforce governance processes to reduce reliance on contingent labour and promote long-term sustainability.

This report recommends the appointment of the following contractors to a preferred supplier panel to undertake contingency labour recruitment services in the following categories:

1. Category 1 – General Recruitment – General Recruitment of Contingent Labour for all areas “other than Early Childhood”
2. Category 2 – Early Childhood – Specialised Recruitment of Contingent Labour for Early Childhood

Following a public tender and the completion of a comprehensive evaluation and assessment process, 11 companies are recommended for appointment to form a panel contract for provision of the above services.

This contract replaces the Procurement Australia Contract, which expires on 31 December 2025. The new proposed Whitehorse-specific panel of suppliers enables direct contract management under Council-specific terms and also secures improved rates for Council. The tender evaluation also prioritised contractors’ ability to meet the updated service specifications, focusing on safety and compliance, statutory adherence, and candidate pre-qualification.

The Tender Evaluation Report is provided in confidential attachment 1 ‘Contract 30619 Contingent Labour Tender Evaluation Report - Confidential Attachment’. The contract is for a three-year term with an option to extend for a further two years at Council’s discretion.

10.2 (cont)

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Accepts the tender for Contingent Labour Recruitment Services subject to successful outcome of the business viability assessment and negotiation of contract terms, received from the following tenderers:
 - Category 1 – General Recruitment – General Recruitment of Temporary Workforce for all areas “other than Early Childhood”:
 1. Unidex Consulting Pty Ltd (ABN 22 097 510 926), of Suite 3, Level 1, 29-33 Railway Road, Blackburn Victoria 3130, and
 2. Work Solutions (Melb) Pty Ltd (ABN 92 097 810 994), of 25 Golfwood Close, Dingley Village 3172, and
 3. Horner Recruitment Systems Pty Ltd (ABN 99 060 659 182), of Ground Floor, 232 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002, and
 4. Design & Build Recruitment Pty Ltd (49 905 620 696), of Level 48, 600 Bourke Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000, and
 5. Chandler Macleod Group Limited, (ABN 33 090 555 052), of 13/345 George Street Sydney NSW 2000, and
 6. IPA by Synergie Pty Ltd (ABN 22 674 660 685), of Suite 130, Level 1/33 Pirie St, Adelaide SA 5000, and
 7. PERSOKELLY Australia Pty Ltd (ABN 40 124 764 245)) / Programmed Skilled Workforce Pty Ltd (ABN 66 005 585 811) OF 47 Burswood Road, Burswood WA 6100, and
 8. Randstad Pty Limited (ABN 28 080 275 378), OF Level 9, 83 Clarence Street, Sydney 2000, and
 9. Drake Australia Pty Ltd (ABN 42004 939 771), of Suite B, Level 5, 1 Peters Ave, Mulgrave Victoria 3170, and
 10. Talenza VIC Pty Ltd (ABN 48 659 851 135), of Level 7/222 Exhibition St, Melbourne Victoria 3000
 - Category 2 – Early Childhood – Specialised Recruitment of Temporary Workforce for Early Childhood
 1. Randstad Pty Limited (ABN 28 080 275 378), of Level 9, 83 Clarence Street, Sydney 2000, and
 2. McArthur (VIC) Pty Ltd (ABN 75 008 186 383), of 570 Swan Street Burnley, Victoria 3121, and
 3. Unidex Consulting Pty Ltd (ABN 22 097 510 926), of Suite 3, Level 1, 29-33 Railway Road, Blackburn Victoria 3130

10.2 (cont)

- The recommended Contract is for a period of three years commencing 1 October 2025 with the option of a two-year extension at Council's discretion subject to performance.
2. Authorises the expenditure for Contract 30619 (Contingent Labour Recruitment Services) up to the value of \$8,887,645 (including GST) and up to \$15,162,719 (including GST) should the option to extend be exercised.
 3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer or delegate to execute the formal contract documents on behalf of the Council with the above-named tenderers, and to undertake all actions necessary to give effect to this resolution and to exercise the extension of two further years subject to a review of the Contractors performance and Council's business needs at the conclusion of the initial contract term

KEY MATTERS

Contingent Labour Recruitment services are essential to

- ensure business continuity,
- compliance with legislative requirements,
- the delivery of community services by providing qualified and experienced contingent workers across all Council operational areas.

This contract encompasses agency services for temporary labour under the following conditions:

1. **Essential Services Closure:** Positions critical to statutory service delivery, where absence would necessitate service closure.
2. **Essential Services Impact:** Positions directly affecting service delivery, where absence would result in public impact and reduced service.
3. **Non-Essential:** All other positions as defined and approved by Council.

Attachment 1 outlines typical contingent labour requirements by Directorate.

This contract replaces the Procurement Australia Contract "Recruitment, Training and Associated Services – 2312/0618," which covered permanent and temporary recruitment and training services. The current contract, expiring on 31 December 2025, will be succeeded by a Whitehorse-specific temporary recruitment panel.

Establishing a dedicated Council panel enables direct contract management, fosters stronger supplier relationships under Council-specific terms, and secures improved rates for the Council.

Tender evaluation prioritised contractors' ability to meet the updated service specifications, focusing on OH&S compliance, statutory adherence, candidate pre-qualification, and induction aligned with Council requirements.

10.2 (cont)

Category 2 demands specialized expertise to meet the Council's Early Childhood (Child Care Sector) service needs.

DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

Options to continue under the Procurement Australia Contract (scheduled for tender in October–November 2025) or to transition to a similar panel contract through the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) were evaluated.

However, these alternatives were not considered likely to deliver comparable financial benefits to Council as a standalone, focused agreement.

Failure to award this contract may jeopardise Council's service delivery by limiting access to suitably qualified contingent labour needed to backfill or supplement approved roles. Compliance with statutory requirements, particularly in the childcare sector, is mandatory.

The panel contract will grant Council access to prequalified providers with transparent pricing structures for the contract duration. Performance will be closely monitored through dedicated Contract Management Plans, including clearly defined KPIs.

BACKGROUND

Council employs contingent workers to cover unplanned staff departures, support major capital projects, and temporarily fill roles where required.

In recent years, Council has implemented workforce governance and management initiatives to reduce reliance on contingent labour and promote long-term sustainability. These include enhanced establishment policies, a framework regulating the number, type, and classification of approved positions, improved analytics and reporting, and an Essential Roles Matrix to ensure contingent workers are engaged only for business-critical needs.

Additionally, Council has invested in talent pipelines through traineeships and apprenticeships in areas such as Parks and Natural Environment and Early Learning Services. These programs address immediate workforce demands while developing future talent to reduce dependence on agency labour.

The ongoing implementation of these measures provides a strong foundation for managing the new contract effectively, enhancing governance, transparency, and financial sustainability.

The tender was advertised in *The Age* and on Council's procurement portal on 12 April 2025 for four and a half weeks, closing on 14 May 2025 at 3:00 p.m.

A total of 16 compliant submissions were received. One supplier requested to submit a late proposal after the tender closed, which Council declined in accordance with tender terms and conditions. Another submitted an alternate proposal; however, following internal review, it was deemed materially different from the publicly tendered scope and therefore non-

10.2 (cont)

compliant. Tenders were evaluated based on the following criteria and weightings:

Criteria	Weighting
Financial Offer	45%
Capability	30%
Credibility	15%
Local Content	5%
Social and Environmental Sustainability	5%
TOTAL	100%

In addition to the above Council has Compliance Criteria which are evaluated as either Pass or Fail. Any tenderer assessed to have failed to achieve the required standards in these compliance criteria are qualitatively failed and eliminated from further consideration.

Compliance criteria for this tender are:

- Ability to comply with the tender and contract requirements including statutory compliance (OH&S) and insurances; and
- Financial soundness and capacity of the tenderer to undertake the contract.

All tenderer submissions resulted in clarifications of a technical and financial nature and were progressed through a shortlisting stage to final selection. Best value realisation focussed on both price and performance reviews – see Attachment 1.

Consultation

Council's Procurement team have been consulted and provided oversight to ensure that the procurement is compliant with the Procurement Policy. In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council's Procurement Policy must seek to promote open and fair competition and provide value for money in procurement activities.

This procurement is in accordance with the policy requirements. Extensive consultation has occurred across all relevant Council departments.

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details

Strategic Alignment	<p>The service within this contract supports the following strategic directions</p> <p><i>Strategic Direction 5. Governance</i></p> <p>The service within this contract also supports the following objectives within the above strategic direction:</p> <p><i>Objective 5.2 Council delivers core services that are fit for purpose and good value</i></p>
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10.2 (cont)

	<i>Objective 5.4 A Council that is well governed, efficient and financially sustainable</i>
Financial and Resource Implications	<p>Council has implemented workforce governance and management initiatives to reduce reliance on contingent labour and promote long-term sustainability.</p> <p>Funding for the panel will be via the relevant annual budget provisions.</p> <p>The financial or resource implications arising from the recommendation is contained in this report and confidential attachment 1 Contract 30610 Contingent Labour Tender Evaluation Report - Confidential Attachment.</p>
Legislative and Risk Implications	<p>Failure to award this contract will impact Council's ability to provide the labour / workforce capacity necessary to support the delivery of services to the Community.</p> <p>The Contract will provide the necessary resources to undertake the delivery of Council services – incl. the mandatory requirements specific under the Child Services Act – critical to Council Early Childhood Services</p>
Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations	<p>The Contracts are structured in order to support the delivery of Council services to the community by way of provision of recruitment services consistent with the requirements of Council Equity & Gender Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities: A guide for Victorian public sector workers – Jan 2024 Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission and Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, and all relevant Child Safety and Wellbeing legislation.</p>
Community Engagement	<p>No community engagement was required for this report.</p>
Innovation and Continuous Improvement	<p>Council has reviewed the current contract use extensively and to ensure appropriate governance and oversight have implemented an Essential Roles Matrix to ensure contingent workers are engaged only for business-critical needs.</p> <p>Council has incorporated Key Performance Indicators in the contract requirements.</p>

10.2 (cont)

	Requirements for online invoice approvals and contingent labour supplier secure portals for reporting are incorporated in contracted services.
Collaboration	Utilisation of Procurement Australia and Municipal Association Victoria Collaborative Panels was considered however, a Council specific panel was deemed the preferred – see Attachment 1 for further information.
Conflict of Interest	<p>The <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> requires members of Council staff, and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council, to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.</p> <p>Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.</p>

ATTACHMENT

- 1 Contract 30619 Contingent Labour Tender Evaluation Report - Confidential Attachment

Whitehorse City Council designates this attachment and the information contained in it as Confidential Information pursuant to Section 3 (1) g(ii) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. This ground applies because the matter concerns tender details and evaluation

10.3 Memorandum of Understanding between Whitehorse City Council and Deakin University

Department Corporate Services
Director Corporate Services

Attachment

SUMMARY

This report seeks Council's endorsement of the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) document between Deakin University and Whitehorse City Council. The MOU formalises Council and Deakin's already strong collaboration and sets out shared aspirations over the next five years (2025 to 2030). It recognises the many crossover points between the work of Deakin and Council and provides a framework to strengthen these connections to deliver even greater outcomes for both the community, staff and students.

The MOU has been developed in close collaboration with Deakin University. It outlines collaboration opportunities across skills sharing, research and projects, social and community, arts and culture and sustainability. It also includes a section on Bennettswood Reserve, which is a precinct area with both Deakin and Council land ownership.

Deakin will also seek to formally endorse the MOU. After agreement from both parties, a signing occasion will take place with Mayor and Councillors and Deakin representatives.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorses the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Deakin University and Whitehorse City Council for 2025 to 2030.
2. Authorises the Whitehorse City Council CEO to make any amendments to the MOU, in consultation with Deakin University and by mutual agreement from both parties.
3. Holds a signing occasion for the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Deakin University and Whitehorse City Council.
4. Proceeds to implement the various activities outlined in the MOU.

KEY MATTERS

Both organisations share a commitment to improving outcomes in the areas of employment, education, training, community health and wellbeing, and advocacy. They are also committed to building strategic partnerships to help achieve these outcomes. By leveraging the operational strengths of each

10.3 (cont)

organisation, the combined impact of strategic collaboration is expected to create significant opportunities for the future.

During the Term of this MOU agreement, the parties will commit to meaningful engagement and opportunities for collaboration in relation to:

A Partnership for Innovation:

Skills sharing

- A formalised student internship program.
- Promotion of Council roles to Deakin students, encouraging them to apply for graduate, part-time and casual roles at Council.
- Introduction welcome sessions held by Council for Deakin international students.
- Invitations to Deakin to participate at key Council events and join Council committees.
- Exploration of a Council stall at O Week to connect with students
- Exploring opportunities for Council staff to engage in learning and development through Deakin University.

Research and project opportunities

- Joint advocacy, with Deakin where appropriate, working closely with Council's Advocacy team.
- Partnering on funding submissions and grant applications, where appropriate.
- Exploration of partnered community safety initiatives.
- Collaborating with students to support the review or renewal of policy documents, subject to Council's procurement policies and Deakin's procurement policies.

A Partnership for the Community:

Social and Community Benefit and Impact

- Work together to maximise the social and community benefits created through industry and community partnerships linked to Deakin University's campuses and presence in Whitehorse.
- Strengthen the positive impact of these partnerships on the City's economic wellbeing.
- Exploration of partnered community safety initiatives.

Arts and Culture

- Encourage shared library initiatives and promotion.
- Research and conservation of local history including the under-researched contribution of women artists at the Box Hill Artists Camp.
- Collaborative exhibitions or shared Arts collections for exhibitions.

10.3 (cont)

- Ongoing festival and event support.

A Partnership for the Environment:*Sustainability*

- Coordinating restoration activities around Gardiners Creek, particularly near Deakin's Burwood campus, including invasive species management, native planting, and biodiversity health.
- Inviting Deakin students to participate in urban forest initiatives, such as tree planting events and contributing to relevant strategy development.
- Investigating the challenges students face in reducing waste and increasing recycling both at home and in public spaces.
- Providing international students with education on reducing, reusing, repairing, donating and recycling, and how to actively participate in the circular economy.

Bennettswood Reserve

- Develop a plan that enhances and create a vibrant, sustainable community space that is well connected, offering diverse recreational amenities within an ecologically rich and inviting environment.
- Advocate for both clarity around the ownership of the land and external funding to support the delivery of the masterplan.

DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS**Option 1:**

This report recommends to endorse the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Deakin University and Whitehorse City Council, as well as hold a signing occasion for the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Deakin University and Whitehorse City Council. The MOU will create more opportunities for Whitehorse City Council to collaborate and enhance community outcomes. Once endorsed, Council Officers will proceed with implementing actions relating to the suggested activities outlined in the MOU.

Option 2:

Council has the option to not endorse the MOU. Not endorsing the MOU may weaken the collaboration that Council has with Deakin. It will lead to lesser outcomes around innovation, community and environment. It also means Council would not be implementing one of its actions in the Year 1 Integrated Council Plan.

10.3 (cont)

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details

Strategic Alignment	<p>The proposed Memorandum of Understanding between Deakin and Whitehorse Council has strong strategic alignment.</p> <p>It relates to the Council Plan Objective 3.3 Diverse education, employment and volunteering opportunities, and specifically the action 'Scope and initiate a Deakin Memorandum of Understanding to enhance collaboration and maximise opportunities for students and graduates.'</p>
Financial and Resource Implications	<p>The proposed activities outlined in the MOU can be scoped and initiated within current operating budget.</p> <p>Should any activities lead to the need for further resources, this will be put to Council for consideration.</p>
Legislative and Risk Implications	<p>There are no legal or risk implications with this report.</p>
Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations	<p>It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.</p>
Community Engagement	<p>No community engagement was required for this report, however Deakin University was consulted in the development of the MOU.</p>
Innovation and Continuous Improvement	<p>An MOU can lead to greater innovation and continuous improvement by tapping into the various areas of expertise which Deakin University has.</p> <p>This can be seen through increased skill-sharing, learning and development and data.</p>
Collaboration	<p>The purpose of the Deakin University MOU is to enhance collaboration with Whitehorse City Council.</p>
Conflict of Interest	<p>Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.</p>

ATTACHMENT

- 1 MOU Deakin and WCC - 2025 to 2030

10.4 Draft Community Grants and Discounts Policy 2025-2029

Department

Communities, Engagement and Intergrated Planning
Director Community Services

Attachment

SUMMARY

The Draft Community Grants and Discounts Policy 2025-2029 (the Draft Policy) provides a framework for the provision of Council-managed grants and discounts for community groups and organisations. The Community Grants and Discounts Program aims to provide financial support to community groups to deliver a range of supports for the local community and helps achieve positive outcomes for Whitehorse in an effective, efficient, equitable and ethical way.

The Draft Policy is presented for Council endorsement ahead of a second round of community engagement which will provide further opportunity for the community to provide feedback on the revised approach to the allocation and distribution of Community Grants.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the Draft Community Grants and Discounts Policy 2025 - 2029
2. Commences exhibition of the Draft Community Grants Policy 2025 - 2029 for community feedback from 23 September to 14 October 2025 (3 weeks).

KEY MATTERS

A review of the 2023 Community Grants Policy was undertaken including benchmarking, community engagement and a review of feedback from past program participants. The revised Draft Policy responds to community and applicant feedback, principles of community development, good governance and best practice in grant making.

It is proposed that following Council consideration a second phase of community engagement is undertaken through exhibition of the Draft Policy on 'Your Say Whitehorse' as well as other broad communication channels.

DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

The Draft Policy provides the following funding and discount streams for eligible community groups and organisations:

10.4 (cont)

Stream 1: Cash Grants

	6 Categories	Frequency
	A) Micro funds Funds <\$1,000 to be distributed on a more frequent basis outside of the annual Tiered grant round	Multiple times per year
Tier 1 (up to \$3,000)	B) Connection Grant: Fostering participation and local inclusion C) Innovation Grant: Initial support to activate promising initiatives	Annual
Tier 2 (\$3,001 - \$7,000)	D) Collaboration Grant: supporting growth, partnerships, and scaling to achieve positive outcomes of local community	Annual
Tier 3 (up to \$10,000)	E) Festival Grant: supporting community events with wide-scale reach F) Sustained Impact Grant: supporting successful initiatives for long-term benefit	3 years

Stream 2: Partnership Grants

	2 Categories	Frequency
Up to \$45,000 each year with rate cap annual indexation	A) Neighbourhood and Community House Partnership Grants These grants incorporate Council's financial support to houses and promote the achievement of aligned strategic goals. They are valid for a 3-year period.	3 years
Up to \$40,000 each year (\$120,000 max over 3 years)	B) Social and Wellbeing Partnership Grants These grants respond directly to the needs of the communities with a focus on the most vulnerable and socially disadvantaged population groups.	3 years

10.4 (cont)

Stream 3: Discounts

	2 categories	Frequency
Proportional discount on venue hire cost	A) Community Space Hire A proportional discount in relation to selected Council owned and operated venues. Determined within the available budget allocation.	Open all year
Subject to a limited number of vouchers each year	B) Tip Vouchers Tipping passes to dispose of waste through Council's Recycling and Waste Centre. Determined through demonstrated need and in line with existing recycling and waste manage practices.	3 years

Key changes from the Community Grants Policy 2023 and the Draft Community and Discounts Policy 2025-2029 include:

- Specifically referencing and distinguishing 'grants' and 'discounts' by including Discounts in the name of the Draft Policy.
- Reduction of grant categories from 12 to 6 for the Cash Grant Program to simplify, streamline and link more strongly to outcomes.
- More tailored eligibility and assessment criteria to respond to the complexity and value of the grant. For example, small 'Micro Funds' will see a simpler application compared to the other tiers that are a higher monetary value. This also includes the level of insurance required being appropriate to the risk to reduce unnecessary barriers for community groups.
- Additional information about prioritisation in the instance one or more applications receive equal assessment scores – such as new applicants, applicants that do not have access to other funding streams and applications that benefit a wider reach of people in the local community being given higher priority.
- Greater emphasis on accountability to ensure the money provided is going where it should be.
- Clearer connection to the Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029 and Community Vision 2040.

10.4 (cont)

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details

Strategic Alignment	<p>The Community Grants program directly enables community groups and organisations to deliver a variety of services and initiatives that directly align with the Whitehorse Community Vision 2040 and Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029.</p> <p>The administration of the Community Grants program aligns with Objective 5.4 <i>A Council that is well governed, efficient and financially sustainable.</i></p>
Financial and Resource Implications	The Draft Policy will guide the allocation and distribution of Community Grants and Discounts in accordance with Annual Budget parameters.
Legislative and Risk Implications	The Draft Policy has incorporated the 2022 Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) <i>Fraud Control Over Local Government Grants</i> Audit and associated recommendations.
Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations	It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.
Community Engagement	<p>The first round of community engagement was held between July and August 2025. 37 survey responses were received, and 9 community members attended a focus group to provide feedback. Consistent themes from this engagement were maximising outcomes of grant money, providing funding to where it is needed most in the community and making processes easier.</p> <p>In addition to this feedback, analysis was conducted based on the feedback received from applicants of the Community Grants for the past 3 years. Over 500 pieces of feedback was analysed and similar themes identified.</p>
Innovation and Continuous Improvement	While not specifically contained in the Draft Policy, the review of the Grants Program identified a range of improvements to be implemented as part of our commitment to continuous improvement. These will be outlined in the Grant Guidelines.

10.4 (cont)

Collaboration	No collaboration was required for this report. Benchmarking with nine other Victorian councils was conducted as part of developing this Draft Policy.
Conflict of Interest	The <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> requires members of Council staff, and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council, to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

ATTACHMENT

- 1 Draft Community Grants and Discounts Policy 2025-2029

10.5 Box Hill City Oval Management Options

Department

Leisure and Recreation Services

Director Community Services

Attachment

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to discuss and confirm the future management model for the redeveloped Box Hill City Oval. Following this decision detailed engagement and negotiation with relevant stakeholders will occur ahead of the execution of agreements.

The Box Hill City Oval precinct will be undergoing significant redevelopment including reconstruction of the sportsfield, cricket nets, delivery of new West Pavilion, refurbishment of South Pavilion and other precinct improvements to support enhanced community benefits.

The combined project budget is in the order of \$28 million, with significant contributions from all levels of Government. The project will commence in October 2025.

As a result of these redevelopment works, officers have assessed the most effective management model approach, designed to balance the need of the existing tenant sporting clubs and maximising diverse community access and usage of the facility and precinct.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorse Council Precinct Management Model Option One, as summarised in this report and as per the key terms outlined within the confidential attachment.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer or delegate to negotiate and execute the agreements on behalf of Whitehorse City Council.

KEY MATTERS

This report explores options for the future management of the facilities at Box Hill City Oval (BHCO) following their redevelopment. These options have been developed considering benchmarking, planning advice, current and future potential site usage and initial stakeholder engagement.

When developing and assessing options, the following principles have been considered:

1. *Community access and enjoyment*: The model will support the Council Plan by optimising utilisation and providing for more diverse community access.

10.5 (cont)

2. *Sustainability*: Financial arrangements with stakeholder clubs and the community will represent a reasonable contribution to Council's cost to maintain the facility.
3. *Facility access and benefit*: The management model will provide for a level of facility access and benefit for existing stakeholders that is not less than the current provision and is consistent with allocations across Whitehorse.

DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS**Box Hill City Oval and User Groups**

BHCO is situated on Crown Land in Box Hill and is managed by Whitehorse City Council. It is deemed a major sport and recreation facility and is an important site for cricket and Australian football in the area. It is the home venue of the Box Hill Hawks Football Club (BHHFC) and the Box Hill Cricket Club (BHCC).

The precinct is made up of:

- A sportsfield with a turf cricket wicket table (maintained by Council to highest AA classification)
- A bay of four synthetic cricket nets and similarly sized turf practice wickets
- The two-story Southern Pavilion, with dual social spaces, changerooms, other supporting amenities and an office space
- The Northern Pavilion, with social space, changerooms and other supporting amenities
- Other supporting buildings including canteen, home coaches' box, away coaches box/curator shed and toilet block

Box Hill Hawks Football Club and Winter Usage

- Established in 1936 and commenced at City Oval in 1938
- Compete in the Victorian Football League (VFL) in both the male and female competitions (the highest level of AFL competition in Whitehorse, deemed as professional). The VFL program is partnered with Hawthorn Football Club of the Australian Football League (AFL).
- Other elite pathway programs regularly utilise the site (e.g. Eastern Ranges Under 18 Talent League teams)

Box Hill Cricket Club

- Established in 1890 and based at the site since 1937. The club has three Women's Premier Cricket teams, the highest standard of female cricket in Victoria (and only club in Whitehorse at this level). The club also has a joint community level women's team shared with Blackburn Cricket Club

10.5 (cont)

- Field four men's teams in the Victorian Subdistrict Cricket Association
- Have two junior teams in the Cricket Southern Bayside Association, several representative teams, a Blasters foundation program as well as a partnership with East Box Hill Cricket Club hosting several junior teams.

Other User Groups

The venue supports several other users, including schools and holiday sporting programs.

Council also has a user agreement with Sports Education and Development Australia (SEDA) College for the use of the North Pavilion. SEDA College is an applied learning education provider partnering with sporting industry organisations to support students to attain sport and/or business diploma qualifications.

Site Redevelopment Overview

The precinct is subject to significant upgrades between now and 2027, primarily around the development of the new Western Pavilion, refurbishment of the Southern Pavilion, renewal of the oval surface and cricket nets and other wider precinct improvements. The overall budget for these projects is in the order of \$28 million + GST and is funded with contributions from Council, Federal and State Governments and AFL Victoria.

The project sets out to greatly uplift the status of BHCO as a premier sporting precinct for the Whitehorse community. The redevelopment is expected to support improved delivery of state/regional level sporting activities of BHHFC and BHCC, while ensuring that the wider community has increased opportunity to access this public asset. It is intended that the precinct will be highly utilised in the future by many different users for a variety of different purposes

Current Management Model

Box Hill Hawks Football Club

BHHFC currently have an exclusive use lease for both levels of the Southern Pavilion. This arrangement followed a 2009 project that extended the upper story through contributions from Council and other organisations (including BHHFC, Hawthorn Football Club and AFL Victoria). Through this arrangement the club can book the two multipurpose rooms on the upper level including a commercial kitchen and bar (year-round), for a variety of events and functions. On the lower level, the club has office space and a board room for its administrative requirements, with use of additional facilities for matchday and training activities (including warmup zone / gym, changeroom and amenities).

In addition to the lease, BHHFC annually apply for a seasonal licence which permits use of the Northern Pavilion and the sportsfield. BHHFC receive an exclusive use licence for designated times from 1 April to 31 August each

10.5 (cont)

year, plus use for any finals during the month of September. The club have access to the sportsfield each weekday from 4pm – 8pm for training, and all-day Saturday and Sunday for matches. The Northern Pavilion is used only on match days, to accommodate the away team change and the umpires rooms.

Box Hill Cricket Club

BHCC access the site in summer through the seasonal licence process for usage of the North Pavilion and the sportsfield. BHCC receive a licence from 1 October to 28 February each year plus use for any finals during the month of March.

Currently, the club have access to the sportsfield and cricket nets, Tuesday to Friday from 4pm – 8pm for training, and all-day Saturday and Sunday for matches. The Northern pavilion is used by the club to house changerooms for their teams, plus they use the small multipurpose room for post-match / training social activities. The multipurpose room is serviced by a bar and a small kitchen.

SEDA College

SEDA College have a bespoke user licence with Council. The agreement permits annual use of the Northern Pavilion and sportsfield during school terms to run their education program.

Casual Bookings

Outside of club and SEDA allocated times (generally weekdays before 4pm and after 8pm) the site is available for casual bookings. Bookings are coordinated by Council's Leisure and Recreation Services Department.

Bookable Spaces

Upon completion of the redevelopment project there will be an increased number of programmable spaces that can be accessed by stakeholder clubs and community. These include:

Western Pavilion

- 200sqm multipurpose room, serviced by a commercial kitchen and bar
 - Six flexible matchday/community meeting rooms (media, coaches boxes), designed to be used for small group meetings and activities
- Office space for administrative activities
- High performance gym/warmup activity area

Southern Pavilion

- 100sqm multipurpose room serviced by a small kitchen and bar area
- 200sqm multipurpose room serviced by a commercial kitchen and bar
- 100sqm community room / warm up zone with a kitchenette.

10.5 (cont)

Maximising Community Outcomes at BHCO

With significant investment in the BHCO facility, there is a strong, shared commitment from Council and stakeholders to ensure it evolves as a vibrant, high-performing community asset. The upgraded precinct is designed to support a broad range of users and activities, encouraging greater community engagement and more diverse utilisation of the space.

The facility will cater to a wide variety of user groups, including local not-for-profit organisations, community groups, and sporting clubs. It will host grassroots to elite sporting competitions, inclusive programming for people with disabilities, and community events that celebrate and connect the local area.

The facility will continue to support the ongoing needs of tenant home clubs, providing a professional environment for training, matches, functions, athlete development, and administration. This includes elite talent pathway programs and high-performance activities.

Educational institutions will benefit from tailored access to high-performance spaces such as the gym and multi-purpose rooms, supporting applied learning, regular school sport, and physical education programs for both secondary and tertiary students. In addition to its community and sporting focus, BHCO is positioned to host a range of activities, from business functions to private events, further enhancing its value as a flexible and inclusive community venue. This use aligns with the current operations of the Southern pavilion.

Stakeholder Engagement

Officers have held multiple discussions with BHHFC, BHCC and SEDA about their desired utilisation of the site post-redevelopment. These are outlined below and have been considered when developing the management options of this report.

BHHFC – seek a lease or similar arrangement in the new western facility comparable to their existing southern pavilion lease to support their high-performance program and have expressed a desire for an expansion of their community programming and event offerings.

BHCC – seek a seasonal licence arrangement in either pavilion equivalent to their current allocation ensuring that the club has a sense of ‘home’ like other seasonal clubs in Whitehorse (e.g. storage, appropriate spaces to show memorabilia). BHCC favour the use of the western pavilion, whilst also being open to utilising the southern pavilion.

SEDA - seek to return to the precinct post-redevelopment on broadly equivalent terms to their existing annual licence agreement

Precinct Management Considerations and Options

Once developed, the precinct's two significant buildings require a new management approach to maximise their value for stakeholders and to engage the wider community.

10.5 (cont)

Planning Considerations

Uses not carried out by or on behalf of Council and not deemed ancillary to the primary activity of the site (sporting) require planning approval. There is an existing 'place of assembly' planning permit related to the usage of the Southern Pavilion, particularly in relation to events and functions.

A planning consultant was commissioned to consider possible planning implications associated with proposed activities and indicated planning approval would be required for the following (but not limited to):

- Private functions (parties, weddings, conferences) require 'Place of Assembly' approvals
- Arrangements with tertiary or other education providers require 'Education Centre' approvals
- Medical centres, gym facilities or education services offered outside of a tenant club's core program (e.g. commercial 'high performance' consultations) require their own planning approval considerations

Benchmarking

While it is generally uncommon for facilities supporting high-level Australian football to be shared seasonally with high-level cricket, officers benchmarked a number of equivalent facilities (shared high-level sport on Crown land) when considering management options for this report (details provided in the confidential attachment).

It has been found that these arrangements generally replicate the current arrangement found at BHCO with a combination of leases supporting offices and function rooms primarily managed year-round by football clubs, as well as seasonal licences awarded for changerooms, and other facilities uses that support more typical matchday/training activities.

Box Hill City Oval - Management Model Options

The following three management model options are briefly summarised below and have been developed considering the factors above.

Please note that all options see the Box City Oval Precinct managed by Council in the best interests of the broader community, with different mechanisms and allocations considered in each option.

Additional detail regarding the specifics of each option, including key terms and financial considerations are included in the confidential attachment.

Option One: Council Management of Precinct

- Annual lease for BHHFC of the west pavilion (excluding majority of small meeting rooms)
- BHHFC seasonal licence of southern pavilion (changerooms & warm up zone only)
- BHCC seasonal licence of southern pavilion (100sqm function space as 'home', changerooms & warm up zone)

10.5 (cont)

- All other bookable spaces managed by Council

This option would see a multi-year lease offered to BHHFC for spaces within the new western pavilion (e.g. multi-purpose room, gym and office) with seasonal allocation for small meeting rooms, change rooms and oval. Council would manage the activation of the precinct through the lease, licences and community bookings (short and long term).

Benefits of this model include:

- Leverages BHHFC presence at the site and their dedicated staffing resources through an agreement that will be structured to encourage utilisation by the broader community.
- Is similar to current arrangements with increased club contributions and accountability for community access (in essence swapping existing arrangements from south to west pavilion)
- Reduces the financial risk to Council considering projected fixed lease returns
- BHHFC are well positioned to manage the gym to provide use and benefit to local clubs and school groups (non-commercial) and take on financial responsibility and liability for the equipment
- BHCC would be provided with seasonal tenancy in the south pavilion and could make the facility a home, while having access to the west pavilion 5 times per annum, without having to manage and activate the facility itself during summer
- Council would directly manage and allocate to the community the programmable space at both peak and off-peak times in the southern pavilion (200sqm function room) as well as the rest of the building outside of club use and the majority of the meeting rooms spaces in the west pavilion.

Risks of this model include:

- Approval for planning and Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (Crown) required for several proposed uses
- Realising the maximum amount of community outcomes from the west pavilion (200sqm space and gym) relies substantially upon the lease holder to drive utilisation, while managing their own competing priorities as a professional sporting organisation
- Lease management of a premier public asset reduces Council's direct influence of community outcomes, relying upon strong relationships and performance measures to ensure objectives are being met

Option Two: Council Management of Precinct

- Seasonal license of west and south pavilions (BHHFC in winter / BHCC in summer)
- All other bookable spaces managed by Council (when not seasonally allocated)

10.5 (cont)

This option would see both pavilions managed by Council with tenant clubs provided with seasonal licences in their competition seasons for the facility footprints required to support their activities (e.g. midweek training nights and weekend competition days).

Appropriate allocations would be made based on Club and facility requirements, considering all available spaces at the time. The allocations would be made seasonally with flexibility offered to increase their bookings as and when required, at the discretion of Council.

Council would manage all other times outside of the licenced hours. This could be managed yearly under Council's Sporting Facilities Guide or bespoke licences could be developed to support minor variations to typical terms upon negotiation.

Benefits of this model include:

- Council has direct control to influence community outcomes across the site, rather than relying upon others to enable these on Council's behalf
- Appropriate allocation of spaces based on needs will help ensure utilisation of spaces are maximised.
- BHCC get seasonal access to the new western pavilion as per their preference
- Increased Council resourcing to support this model may support improved capacity in Council's leisure facilities team and therefore provide for benefits for other Council facilities in time
- Shorter tenure of agreements (e.g. seasonal) provides flexibility for Council to amend its approach in future to best serve the community
- Approval process of planning and DEECA (Crown) not required for most uses as on behalf of Council (any education licence would need approval)

Risks of this model include:

- Council takes on risk related to programming, revenue generation and resourcing perspectives
- Opportunities limited due to the occupation of the site for sporting activities of tenant clubs in the vast majority of the peak booking times
- The provision of catering for the 200sqm space in the west will be compromised with the inability to a secure dedicated catering service for Council, BHHFC and BHCC seasonally. Multiple parties delivering catering is sub optimal and a single catering contract for all parties will increase costs for Clubs and limited their associated activities.
- Council takes on operations and liability for the gym, including managing the logistics of supporting a high performance tenants

10.5 (cont)

- Model is a significant variation to the existing arrangements at the site, and represents less access for BHHFC than is currently provided
- Short term agreements may also reduce long-term commitment to the site by stakeholders, as there are limited barriers to exit licence agreements

Option Three: Council Management of Precinct

- Seasonal licence of western pavilion (BHHFC in winter/BHCC in summer)
- Lease of south pavilion (BHHFC existing arrangement)
- All other bookable spaces managed by Council (when not seasonally allocated)

This option would see the continuation of the existing arrangement, in that a new lease would be negotiated with BHHFC for the southern pavilion top floor, with a formal arrangement also executed for the office space in the western pavilion (due to the relocation of required office infrastructure).

The remaining spaces of both buildings would revert to Council for management with seasonal licences awarded to both clubs in their respective competition seasons for the western pavilion (and the southern pavilion bottom floor changerooms and warmup as required).

Benefits of this model include:

- Council has direct control to influence community outcomes rather than relying upon others to enable these on Council's behalf
- Increased Council resourcing to support this model may support improved capacity in Council's leisure facilities team and therefore provide for benefits for other Council facilities in time
- While not BHHFC's stated preferred model, the club would continue to have autonomy over a space for their broader activities (through Southern Pavilion) and be no worse off than their current arrangement
- BHCC get seasonal access to the new western pavilion as per their preference
- Approval process of planning and DEECA (Crown) not required for most uses as on behalf of Council or covered by existing permit for southern pavilion (any education licence would need approval)

Risks of this model include:

- Council takes on risk from programming, revenue generation and resourcing perspectives with opportunities somewhat limited due to the occupation of the site for sporting activities of tenant clubs in the vast majority of the peak booking times
- Council takes on operations and liability for the gym, including managing the logistics of supporting a high performance tenant

10.5 (cont)

- Adds operational complexity across both buildings for BHHFC as the office space is in west and the primary operations of Club at times will be in south

Financial Comparison of Options

Additional detail relating to the financial outcomes for each option are included in the confidential attachment.

Recommendation

Following comparison of the proposed models against the stated principles, and consideration of benefits and risks, it is recommended that option one be endorsed as the preferred approach to managing BHCO.

This option provides a balanced and effective way to maximise the value of the site as a public asset, while still providing Council oversight and the ability to maximise community outcomes in partnership with the stakeholders of the site.

Key terms with BHHFC include incentivising broader community activation on site, and a lease management approach with agreed planning and ongoing engagement with Council as the precinct manager. This approach reduces the risks outlined above and increases the accountability of BHHFC to deliver community activation in line with Council and community expectation.

Additional detail relating to current fees and charges, benchmarking, key terms and financial impacts are included in the confidential attachment.

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details

Strategic Alignment	<p>Council Plan: Strategic Direction 1 - Community; Strategic Direction 2 - Built</p> <p>The activation of Box Hill City Oval and other sport and recreation facilities align closely with the strategic priorities of the Whitehorse Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029.</p> <p>The management of the site for increased community use supports the following objectives within the above strategic directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Objective 1.3: A healthy and active community- Objective 2.2: Well-used community facilities and shared spaces
Financial and Resource Implications	<p>Discussion of financial and resource implications of the different management model options is provided within the confidential attachment.</p>

10.5 (cont)

Legislative and Risk Implications	A summary of risk implications for each of the management model options is contained within this report.
Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations	<p>It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.</p> <p>A Gender Impact Assessment was completed as part of the planning for the precinct, with recommendations considered in the design of the projects.</p>
Community Engagement	No community engagement was required for this report.
Innovation and Continuous Improvement	There are a number of innovation matters contained within the report, as we seek to maximise the precinct for broad community benefit.
Collaboration	<p>Officers have engaged with numerous stakeholders regarding the Box Hill City Oval redevelopment project. External stakeholders include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box Hill Hawks Football Club • Box Hill Cricket Club • Victorian Government • Federal Government • AFL Victoria • Cricket Victoria <p>Specifically, around the management options, Officers have engaged with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box Hill Hawks Football Club • Box Hill Cricket Club • SEDA College
Conflict of Interest	<p>The <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> requires members of Council staff, and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council, to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.</p> <p>Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.</p>

10.5 (cont)

ATTACHMENT

- 1 BHCO Management Options - Confidential Attachment - Additional Information

Whitehorse City Council designates this attachment and the information contained in it as Confidential Information pursuant to Section 3 (1) (a) and g(ii) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. *This ground applies because the matter it concerns contains confidential business information*

10.6 Billabong Park Master Plan Endorsement

Department Leisure and Recreation Services
Director Community Services

Attachment

SUMMARY

This report seeks Council endorsement of the Master Plan for Billabong Park. The Master Plan sets a clear 15-year vision for improvements at Billabong Park, shaped by community feedback, technical investigation, and site-specific opportunities and constraints. The proposed improvements align with the recently endorsed Whitehorse Open Space Strategy 2025, ensuring Billabong Park contributes to the broader open space vision and strategic priorities for the municipality.

The Master Plan responds to extensive community engagement across two consultation phases conducted in 2024 and 2025. Feedback was received from a wide range of local residents, park users, and key user groups.

Key updates to the draft master plan were made in response to the feedback received from the second round of engagement including:

- Accessibility and Connectivity – delivered through upgraded path networks that improve movement within and beyond the site.
- Safety and Inclusion – enhanced via new lighting, passive surveillance opportunities, and recreation options that cater to a broad age range.
- Ecology and Sustainability – supported by tree planting, Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) measures, and protection of remnant vegetation.
- Unstructured Recreation – diversified through improved outdoor fitness equipment, seating, and other supporting amenities.
- Structured Sport Infrastructure – upgraded with improved sports field lighting and functional, female-friendly pavilion layouts.

The Master Plan, once endorsed by Council, will serve as a strategic guide to inform and prioritise future investments in these open spaces, provide a clear framework for future funding advocacy and support the timely, coordinated delivery of community-supported outcomes.

Endorsing the Master Plan for Billabong Park does not commit Whitehorse City Council to funding or delivering the recommended projects at this stage. Implementation will be considered through the annual budget process, alongside other Council priorities.

10.6 (cont)

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses the Draft Billabong Park Master Plan.

KEY MATTERS

Billabong Park is located in Vermont South within the municipal ward of Terrara. Covering approximately 5.9 hectares, the Park is classified as municipal open space in the Whitehorse Open Space Strategy 2025.

Billabong Park supports a range of structured sports, informal recreation, and nature-based activities. Collectively, the Master Plan aims to enhance accessibility, structured sport and passive recreation functions, safety, and identity of the park in response to changing community expectations and needs. The proposed improvements will help accommodate increased use, improve access for people of all ages and abilities, and create more inclusive and enjoyable environments for the local and wider Whitehorse community.

While Billabong Park is primarily serving as a retarding basin for Melbourne Water, the Park also offers two baseball diamonds, two recently upgraded play spaces, dog off-leash area and other informal recreation opportunities, such as walking and jogging. The reserve is home to the Forest Hill and Blackburn Baseball Clubs.

The Open Space Strategy 2025 recommends a very high priority upgrade to Billabong Park, for structured sporting and unstructured recreation use and facilities in context of forecast change. Note that the open space contributions are to fund the unstructured recreation facilities.

Key challenges identified through Round 1 Community and Stakeholder Engagement, along with finding from site investigation, include:

- Steep level changes and significant elevation between the top and bottom of the retarding basin, making safe and universal access difficult and path connection disjointed.
- Limited unstructured recreation facilities to cater for the broader community as the Municipal level open space.
- Open space uses including the baseball activities are periodically impacted by flood events, particularly during September to October.

Round 2 community and stakeholder engagement strongly underscored the need for improved path connections, enhanced accessibility, improved lighting, and a diverse range of facilities to better support the park's growing and varied user base. In addition, feedback was received regarding dog management, with concerns raised about conflicts occurring during general use, organised training, and competition. In response, Council will designate the site as a compliance hot spot for a six-month period, during which patrols will be undertaken to monitor conflicts and enforce appropriate dog owner behaviour.

10.6 (cont)

In summary, the Master Plan responds to the above key challenges by identifying projects prioritised over fifteen years and beyond. These projects will improve the experience of the local community users for both organised sport and informal activities.

DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

The final draft Master Plan for Billabong Park presents a comprehensive and site-responsive vision to guide public investment, community use, and long-term management over the next 15 years. It responds to the needs of the local community by enhancing path connections and accessibility, meeting growing demand for diverse social recreation opportunities, and supporting the preservation of green space and biodiversity values. They also improve the efficiency of the open space network by optimising and diversifying duplicated assets.

Drawing on detailed technical studies and extensive community engagement, the master plan sets out prioritised actions across three themes of enhancements including access and movement, recreation facilities and amenities and landscape and environmental character. Further details of the master plan recommended actions and cost estimate can be found in Attachment section - 1 Billabong Park - Final Draft Master Plan Report.

Key Recommendations

- **Access and Movement:** A 1km circuit path will be introduced, addressing significant topographical and flooding constraints. It includes an accessible path and staircase connecting the pavilion and the south baseball diamond, linking key destinations within Billabong Park and connecting to the broader street footpath network. This safe walking and jogging loop directly respond to community concerns about path connectivity and accessibility.
- **Recreation Facilities and Amenities:** The plan proposes replacing the existing small play space, currently limited to a single swing set, with fitness equipment when it reaches the end of its useful life in 15–20 years to diversify social recreation facilities. Sporting facilities will be enhanced through minor internal upgrades to the pavilion to provide female-friendly amenities, the addition of a terraced spectator area that makes use of the natural topography, and improved lighting as high or medium priority. As a longer-term action, converting the existing pavilion toilet for public access will be considered, subject to future growth in reserve use.
- **Landscape and Environmental Character:** The plan recommends increasing tree canopy cover from 14% to 23% through targeted tree planting, with a focus on native species to enhance biodiversity. It also proposes investigating Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) interventions, such as wetlands, rain gardens, and grass swales, to help mitigate flooding impacts, while providing environmental and educational benefits.

10.6 (cont)

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details

Strategic Alignment	<p>The Master Plan for Billabong Park will assist with delivering several themes of the Community Vision 2040 and the Strategic Directions of the Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 1 - Diverse and Inclusive Community • Theme 2 – Movement and Public Spaces • Theme 5 – Sustainable Climate and Environmental Care • Theme 6 – Whitehorse is an Empowered Collaborative Community • Theme 7 – Health and Wellbeing <p>Meanwhile, the final draft plan is affiliated with a wide range of Council policies and together they will be delivering the overarching vision and strategic directions as outlined above. The policies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whitehorse Open Space Strategy 2025 • Whitehorse Play Strategy 2011 / Play and Social Recreation Action Plan (in development) • Whitehorse Urban Forest Strategy 2021-2031 • Whitehorse Integrated Water Management Strategy 2022-2042 • Whitehorse Recreation Strategy 2015-2024 • Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025 • Whitehorse Climate Response Strategy 2023-2030
Financial and Resource Implications	<p>The Master Plan contains high, medium and low priority projects that if implemented will impact on Council's Capital and Recurrent budgets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High priority projects are proposed from years 1-5 (FY2025/26 - FY2029/30) • Medium priority projects are proposed from year 6-10 (FY2030/31 - FY2034/35) • Long term projects are proposed for from year 11-15 (FY2035/36 - FY2039/40). <p>Implementation is considered to commence in FY25/26, as the sports lighting upgrade has already been scheduled in the Capital Works Program in response to asset condition.</p>

10.6 (cont)

Delivery timeframes are contingent upon securing approvals from Melbourne Water and United Energy for the proposed lighting and power upgrades.

The indicative cost for all projects is estimated at \$2.46 million, inclusive of project management fees where applicable. Within this, the indicative cost for high-priority projects is estimated at \$1.24 million. Approximately \$0.61 million of this amount relates to the design and construction of path network upgrades, while \$0.74 million is attributed to the design and construction of recreation facilities and supporting amenities, including pavilion functional layout reviews and sports lighting upgrades. These cost estimates are preliminary and subject to further feasibility assessments and detailed design processes, which will refine and confirm the cost of each component.

In order to deliver on the Master Plan objectives and works, it is anticipated that all identified projects will require a combination of funding sources, including Council contributions from rates and open space and development reserves and other levels of government.

A proposed targeted funding mix is proposed to indicate the potential funding sources and the proposed percentage. The indicated percentage is developed based on the *Principles for Application of Financial Reserves for Capital Improvement Projects* which is adopted by Council as part of the *Council Budget FY24/25 (Table 1)*. All identified projects will be subject to availability of reserve balances and require a combination of funding sources.

Table 1: Recommended application of funding split for Reserve funded Capital improvement projects. Exact funding split will be assessed and applied for each individual project based on scope and alignment to the reserve principles. **Relevant project categories are highlighted in green.**

Project Type	Funding Split		
	Open Space Reserve	Development Reserve	Open Space Reserve
Open Space Acquisition	100%	Open Space Acquisition	100%
Open Space Improvements	100%	Open Space Improvements	100%
Open Space Planning	50%	Open Space Planning	50%

10.6 (cont)

	Major Project (Recreation)	0%	Major Project (Recreation)	0%
Legislative and Risk Implications	There are no legal or risk implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report.			
Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations	<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>			
Community Engagement	<p>Stakeholder and community engagement occurred during two different phases of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round 1 Community and Stakeholder Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – January – February 2024 – Purpose: Collected feedback on current uses and future aspirations for the Billabong Park. – Consultation Summary is included as part of the Draft Master Plan Report. • Round 2 Community and Stakeholder Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – February - March 2025 – Purpose: Collected feedback on presented Draft Master Plan and report for the park. – Consultation Summary is included as part of the Final Draft Master Plan Report. <p>The master plan has been informed by input from the Park's user groups, local residents, the broader Whitehorse community, Councillors, Council staff and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Community awareness of the surveys was achieved by a combination of letterbox drops to local residents, signs erected at Billabong Park key entries, and social media post during the survey periods.</p> <p>Consultation included two 1 on 1 meetings (external stakeholders), two stakeholder workshops (external), 'Your Say' surveys (community), and community drop-in sessions (residents).</p> <p>Council received a total of 331 survey responses through the 'Your Say' community engagement platform.</p>			

10.6 (cont)

	Further details regarding stakeholder and community engagement activities and outcomes are provided in the Engagement summary as part of the Masterplan Report.
Innovation and Continuous Improvement	There are no Innovation and Continuous Improvement matters arising from the recommendation contained in this report.
Collaboration	<p>The project manager of the Recreation and Open Space Development team have collaborated with Council officers in the below departments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Delivery and Assets • Parks and Natural Environment • Community Engagement • Communications, Advocacy and Investment • Leisure and Recreation Services <p>Collaboration has also been undertaken with Melbourne Water as part of the masterplan preparation and development process. A pre-design application was submitted for review of the proposed draft master plan. As the masterplan does not propose any significant new assets and is limited to minor renewal works, the proposal is consistent with Melbourne Water's requirements. On this basis, the preliminary concept is considered to satisfy relevant legislative obligations. Ongoing consultation with Melbourne Water will continue to ensure compliance with asset management requirements and statutory approvals as the identified implementation progresses.</p>
Conflict of Interest	<p>The <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> requires members of Council staff, and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council, to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.</p> <p>Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.</p>

ATTACHMENT

- 1 Billabong Park - Final Draft Master Plan Report

10.7 Emission Reduction Projects for Reallocated Carbon Offset Budget 2025/26

Department City Services
Director Infrastructure

SUMMARY

On 26 May 2025, Council resolved to reallocate funds from purchasing carbon offsets to direct emission reduction projects as part of the Climate Response Strategy 2023–2030 target to aspire for net zero corporate emissions.

The allocated funding for 2025/26, based on the calculated emissions from 2023/24, is \$240,000.

The proposed projects for 2025/26 are based on preliminary findings from the Gas to Electric Business Case (Action 5a of the Climate Response Plan 2023–2026). The Business Case identifies priority opportunities to transition Council sites from gas to electric systems, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve operational efficiency, and support long-term financial sustainability.

The proposed projects align with the Whitehorse Integrated Council Plan 2025–2029, particularly Strategic Direction 4: Natural – objective: an environmentally sustainable and climate resilient City.

It is recommended to commence gas-to-electric conversion projects in 2025/26 utilising the \$240,000 budget allocation as outlined in Table 1 and Table 2 below.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the proposed list of emission reduction projects for 2025/26 as outlined in Table 1 and Table 2 of this report.

KEY MATTERS

Background – Carbon Offsets and Carbon Neutrality

On 26 May 2025, Council considered a report on ‘Carbon Offsets and Carbon Neutrality’ and resolved that Council:

1. *Notes that this report is in response to the resolution on 3 February 2025 for Notice of Motion No 3.*
2. *Amends the Climate Response Strategy to:*
 - a. *Not purchase carbon offsets*

10.7 (cont)

- b. Replace the objective to be a Carbon Neutral Organisation under the Climate Active Scheme with 'Aspire towards a net-zero emission Organisation'*
- 3. Continues to monitor and report on Council's corporate greenhouse gas emissions following best practice, including scope 3 emissions (i.e. indirect greenhouse gas emissions throughout council's value chain that are not directly owned or controlled by the council).*
- 4. Annually allocates an amount of funding to projects to reduce Council's corporate greenhouse gas emissions (as outlined in Option 2 in this report), and local environment and biodiversity projects (as outlined in Option 3 in this report). This variable amount will apply the current year's prevailing market value of the carbon offset purchasing approach employed in 2022/2023 to the quantity of council's corporate greenhouse gas emissions of the current financial year.*
- 5. Assigns funds as described in 4 to specific projects subject to council authorisation through a report to council with consideration to business cases including opportunity costs.*

Points 2 and 3 have been implemented and point 4 will form part of Council's future budget considerations.

This report is in response to item 5, seeking Council to endorse specific projects for 2025/26 in lieu of purchasing carbon offsets.

Background – Council's Corporate Emissions

As presented in the 26 May 2025 Council Report, Council's reportable corporate emissions for 2023/24, including Scope 3 emissions, was 19,182 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂-e). This calculation was based on the Climate Active methodology, noting Council is no longer seeking certification under this program.

Using an estimated cost of carbon offsets, the Budget for 2025/26 was developed and includes \$240,000. As per the 26 May 2025 resolution, this amount is to provide for direct emission reduction, local environment and biodiversity projects.

In 2023/24, direct emissions (Scope 1 and 2) were attributed to natural gas (14.2%), electricity (12.3%) and fleet and plant fuel (6.6%). On 1 July 2024, Council transitioned to 100% renewable electricity via the Victorian Energy Collaboration which effectively eliminates emissions from electricity. Reducing natural gas use is now a key focus for Council moving towards the aspirational net zero target, supported by the Gas to Electric Business Case.

Action 5c of the Climate Response Plan 2023–2026, is to develop Council's Emission Reduction Plan in 2025/26. This project is underway and will present pathways to address Council's other corporate greenhouse emission sources, including through local environment and biodiversity projects.

10.7 (cont)

Gas to Electric Business Case Overview

Action 5a of the Climate Response Plan 2023–2026 is to develop a Gas to Electric Business Case. It provides a detailed assessment of Council's gas consuming sites with the key objectives to:

- Decarbonise by eliminating gas usage and reducing emissions.
- Improve energy efficiency through electrification and renewable energy integration.
- Deliver financial sustainability with cost-effective solutions and long-term savings.
- Maintain regulatory compliance with evolving energy requirements.

The scope of the Business Case includes:

- Assets: Mains gas-connected buildings.
- Retrofit and replacement: Gas systems replaced with electric alternatives via the asset renewal program.
- Energy supply: Integration of renewable electricity generation, including solar PV expansion where feasible.
- Phased delivery: Multi-year implementation to 2040 or sooner, aligned with annual Capital Works program reviews.

Gas to Electric Business Case Preliminary Findings

This report presents the proposed emission reduction projects for the 2025/26 financial year. The projects are based on preliminary findings from the Gas to Electric Business Case.

Projects have been selected and prioritised based on:

- Alignment with Council's strategic objectives and the end-of-life replacement of gas equipment.
- Estimated delivery of measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
- Readiness for delivery and operational feasibility.
- Ability to generate community and stakeholder benefits.
- Long term financial sustainability based on progressive phase out of natural gas.

Preliminary findings identify opportunities to electrify gas-fuelled sites for heating, hot water, and cooking. A bespoke gas to electric roadmap tool has been developed to guide project selections, with recommendations based on:

- Equipment age
- Maintenance and operational costs
- Energy costs (gas and electricity)

10.7 (cont)

- Capital costs, including infrastructure, solar PV and contingency

Aqualink Nunawading was excluded from the Business Case due to its age, where there is separate project considering options for this facility. Some sites, such as the Civic Centre are not immediately feasible and will be deferred for detailed design and managed through the long-term asset plan of this facility. There are significant complexities and cost associated with the transition from gas to electric for Aqualink Box Hill that will require further consideration also.

Initial findings include:

- Approximately \$27.9M capital cost projected to 2040 to fully electrify gas-consuming sites, including Aqualink Box Hill (\$5.8M) the Civic Centre (\$4.5M), and Box Hill Town Hall (\$1.5M). This includes contingency allowances and estimated project management fees.
- If all sites are converted to electric, the estimated net annual emissions will reduce from 1,577 tCO₂-e in 2026 to 62 tCO₂-e by 2040 (excluding refrigerants).
- Electrification should be prioritised by equipment nearing the end-of-life and if works are done on a site, to look at taking the whole site off gas.
- Higher short-term capital costs associated to electrification are offset by long-term savings from lower operational and maintenance costs.
- Further planning is required for sites with capacity constraints or complex heat pump installations.

The Business Case highlights the need to embed electrification in new builds and refurbishments. For example, the Box Hill City Oval, Vernon Reserve Pavilion, Mirrabooka Reserve Pavilion projects have all been designed to be fully electric.

Further consideration will be given to what funds should be allocated to replace gas appliances as standalone projects and what appliances will be replaced as part of the renewal of facilities.

Recommended Projects for 2025/26

Table 1 outlines the recommended and prioritised projects for 2025/26, including estimated capital cost, estimated emissions reduction, and cost-effectiveness over the life of the new electric equipment.

Allocated contingency allowances are based on individual site requirements including potential electrification infrastructure upgrade costs and excludes project management fees as this oversight is covered by existing operational resources.

10.7 (cont)

Table 1: Proposed projects to be designed and delivered in 2025/26.

No.	Site	Scope	Equipment Replaced	Net Project Costs excl. contingency	Net Annual Reduction (tCO ₂ -e)
1	Blackburn North Neighbourhood House	Full works	Gas heating & hot water	\$42,000	2.81
2	Burgess Family Centre	Full works	Gas heating & gas cooking	\$51,800	2.45
3	Parks Nursery & Horticultural Centre - Potting Shed	Full works	Gas heating plus preliminary investigation into hot water to heat the greenhouse	\$197,000 (\$185,000 allocated towards electrification infrastructure costs for the full site)	2.64 (26.4 if greenhouse is included)
TOTAL Project Cost only				\$290,800	
TOTAL Project Cost incl. contingency allowance				\$311,960	

Table 2: Projects to be designed in 2025/26 for budget estimation and future delivery.

No.	Site	Scope	Equipment Replaced	Design Cost	Net Annual Reduction (tCO ₂ -e)
4	Nunawading Community Hub*	Design only	Gas heating & hot water*	\$67,800	16.19
5	Sportlink Vermont South*	Design only	Gas hot water*	\$25,900	6.21
6	Kalang Park* Pavilion*	Design only	Gas heating & hot water*	\$55,000	2.25
TOTAL Design Cost				\$148,700	

* Gas cooking equipment is excluded from the project scope, as its replacement falls under the responsibility of the tenants. For assets where the cooking equipment is managed by the tenants, it will be replaced with electric alternatives at the end of its life.

DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS**Project Selection Process for Carbon Offset Funds**

For 2025/26, it is proposed to prioritise gas-to-electric conversion projects to support long-term net zero and climate response goals. With a \$240,000 allocation, this funding will allow commencing transitioning away from gas,

10.7 (cont)

focusing on deliverable projects while laying the foundation for a broader, methodical emissions reduction program.

Local environmental and biodiversity projects have not been included in the 2025/26 project list, as further investigation is required to undertake a robust comparative benefits analysis. Accordingly, priority has been allocated to projects supported by detailed analysis within the Gas to Electric Business Case.

Discussion of selected projects

As shown in Table 1 and 2 above, the recommended projects to commence in 2025/26 include:

1. Blackburn North Neighbourhood House

- Full works - Design and construct
- Replace gas heating and hot water
- Equipment is nearing end of life and there is an opportunity to remove the gas connection to this site.

2. Burgess Family Centre

- Full works - Design and construct
- Replace gas heating and hot water
- Equipment is nearing end of life and there is an opportunity to remove the gas connection to this site.

3. Parks Nursery & Horticultural Centre site

Potting Shed

- Full works – Design and construct
- Replace gas radiant heaters in the potting shed.
- Equipment is nearing end of life.
- The net capital cost includes the estimated \$185,000 electrification infrastructure cost required to fully electrify the site.

Greenhouse

- Preliminary investigation
- Replace boiler that heats the greenhouse to further evaluate electricity load requirements for the entire site.
- There is potential for significant emission reductions for this site, subject to design.

4. Nunawading Community Hub

- Design only
- Design for replacement of gas heating and hot water.

10.7 (cont)

- Despite building construction completed in 2020, there is potential for significant emission reductions for this site. Gas cooking is excluded, as its replacement is the responsibility of the tenants.

5. Sportlink Vermont South

- Design only
- Design for replacement of gas hot water.
- Equipment is nearing end of life and there is opportunity to eliminate most of the gas use. Gas cooking is excluded, as its replacement is the responsibility of the tenants.

6. Kalang Park Pavilion

- Design only
- Design for replacement of gas heating and hot water.
- Equipment is nearing end of life and there is opportunity to eliminate most of the gas use. Gas cooking is excluded, as its replacement is the responsibility of the tenant clubs.

The selected sites prioritise end-of-life equipment and deliver measurable, permanent reductions. Projects were assessed for emissions reduction, cost-effectiveness, readiness, community benefit, and feasibility. Internal stakeholders were engaged to confirm scope, timelines, and resource requirements.

Total net capital costs presented in Table 1 and 2 include contingency allowance, where required. Projects completed are subject to final spend and available budget as works are completed. The Nunawading Community Hub, Sportlink Vermont South and Kalang Park Pavilion are listed as potential projects based on this.

Benefits of this approach include:

- Permanent emissions reductions
- Avoids reactive asset replacement and ongoing gas costs
- Demonstrates tangible progress toward net zero
- Higher upfront costs are offset by lifetime savings and reduced maintenance.

Consideration of future projects

An Emissions Reduction Plan is being developed for Council operations. The Plan is to work towards reducing emissions including energy efficiency, electrification, renewable energy and fleet opportunities.

Future projects for 2026/27 will be informed by the design work listed in Table 2, and further development of the Business Cases and Emissions Reduction Plan to be considered by Council later in 2025/26.

10.7 (cont)

Options Analysis

Table 3 summarises the high-level options available for Council to consider.

Table 3: Key options for Council consideration.

Option Description	Key Consideration
Option 1 (recommended) - Endorse all proposed projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise direct emission reductions by implementing the proposed projects in Tables 1 and 2. • Support and commence gas to electric transition. • Aligns with 26 May 2025 Council resolution with full allocation and delivery of relocated carbon offset budget of \$240,000. • Any projects unable to be completed in 2025/26 will form the basis of the 2026/27 project list.
Option 2 – Endorse part of proposed projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and commence gas to electric transition by choosing a selection of projects from Table 1. • Delay progress towards strategy target and efficiencies with minimal commitment and momentum. • Reallocate unspent 2025/26 budget towards 2026/27 and/or future year's projects.
Option 3 – Hold and defer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not utilise allocated funds towards proposed projects from Table 1 and 2. • Hold \$240,000 allocated for 2025/26, and defer project selection decision to 2026/27 aligning with Council's Emission Reduction Plan currently in development.

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details

Strategic Alignment	<p>The proposed emission reduction projects directly align with the Whitehorse Integrated Council Plan 2025–2029:</p> <p>Strategic Direction 4 – Natural</p> <p>Objective – An environmentally sustainable and climate resilient City.</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take local action to address current and future climate challenges. • Plan for and deliver sustainable and climate-resilient infrastructure.
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10.7 (cont)

	<p>The projects and approach are consistent with the Climate Response Strategy targets of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 100% renewable electricity for Council operations by 2025. • Aspire to achieve net zero corporate emissions. • Aspire for net zero community emissions by 2040. <p>The Strategy contributes to Victoria's legislated net zero target by 2045 and Australia's commitment to net zero by 2050.</p>
Financial and Resource Implications	<p>\$240,000 is allocated towards direct emission reduction, local environment and biodiversity projects in the 2025/26 budget diverted from the cessation of purchasing carbon offsets.</p>
Legislative and Risk Implications	<p>The following legislative requirements are applicable to this Report:</p> <p>The <i>Victorian Climate Change Act 2017</i> requires local governments to consider climate change when undertaking this public health and wellbeing planning. The <i>Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008</i> requires local governments to have regard to climate change then preparing municipal public health and wellbeing plans.</p> <p>The <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> contains overarching principles that must be considered by councils, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 9(2)(b) Councils are required to give priority to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations. • Under 9(2)(c) Councils are required to promote the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including human centric and planning for climate change risks. • Under 9(2)(h) regional, state, and national plans and policies are to be taken into account during Council's strategic planning. <p>The proposed list of emission reduction projects align with Council's Strategic Risk 3 – 'Changes to climate impacting Council's ability to deliver services to the community and manage Council assets in a restricted financial environment'.</p>
Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations	<p>It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.</p>

10.7 (cont)

Community Engagement	No community engagement was required for this report.
Innovation and Continuous Improvement	Supports adoption of reliable technologies and best-practice sustainability initiatives, including full transition away from fossil fuels.
Collaboration	<p>No external collaboration was required for this report.</p> <p>Council has engaged WSP Australia Pty Ltd for the development of the Gas to Electric Business Case.</p>
Conflict of Interest	Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

10.8 Draft Mid-Rise Standards and New Canopy Tree Controls

Department

City Planning and Development

Director City Development

Attachment

SUMMARY

In September 2023, Amendment VC243 was gazetted into the Victoria Planning Provisions to further support the delivery of housing in Victoria. These changes included:

- Amending Clause 54 and 55 ('ResCode') to codify several residential development standards for single dwellings, townhouses and low-rise apartments;
- Removing the need for a planning permit for a single dwelling on a lot of 300 square metres;
- Expanding the Future Homes and Development Facilitation Program; and
- Introducing the provision of small second dwellings.

These changes were made following the announcements contained within *Victoria's Housing Statement: The decade ahead 2024-2034* (the 'Housing Statement'), which has identified, amongst other key issues, concern that the planning system has not delivered sufficient residential approvals to meet the demands of population growth pressures. In April 2025, the changes to Clause 55 (ResCode) were formally introduced into all planning schemes. These changes introduced new, 'deemed-to-comply' standards as the mechanism to assess all applications for more than one dwelling on a lot, for building heights up to 3 storeys.

The State Government has now (in August 2025) released a draft set of additional planning scheme provisions referred to as the 'Mid-rise Standards' for limited consultation. More recently (Monday 15 September 2025), the State Government has introduced into all Victorian Planning Schemes, a new clause in the Particular Provisions section titled Canopy Trees (Clause 52.37). This is a State-wide tree control and has as one of its purposes, to *'balance the retention of existing canopy trees and residential development to meet the housing needs of Victoria's growing population'*.

The purpose of this report is the following:

1. For Council to endorse the attached submission to the Department of Transport and Planning outlining concerns on the draft standards.
2. To inform Council of the new Canopy Trees provision within the planning scheme

10.8 (cont)

Mid Rise Standards

The Mid-Rise Standards propose to introduce deemed-to-comply standards for all multi-dwelling applications of 4 to 6 storeys in height across every residential zone throughout Victoria (excluding the Low Density Residential Zone).

The draft standards were sent to councils for a 6 week consultation period (from 24 August to 6 October).

Officers have significant concerns with the proposed standards and consider it necessary to provide a written submission that outlines these concerns.

These concerns relate to the following:

- further expansion of deemed-to-comply (code assesses) provisions to buildings of 4-6 storeys in height and subsequent degradation of neighbourhood character;
- the draft standards being applied to all residential zones, extending the ability to build higher density apartments where current planning provisions discourage or restricts such built form;
- Removal of third party appeal rights for buildings meeting the Standards;
- Lack of community engagement on the draft standards;
- Dilution of current and future strategic work intended to promote the right form of housing in the right areas.

Canopy Trees – Clause 52.37

Planning Scheme amendment VC289 was introduced into all Victorian Planning Schemes on 15 September 2025.

This provision is a state-wide control that applies canopy tree considerations through a series of permit triggers and exemptions for trees that meet the definition of a canopy tree’.

These provisions currently sit alongside the existing suite of controls that affect trees and landscape including Vegetation Protection Overlays and Significant Landscape Overlays.

Officers have concerns regarding the application of these new controls including how lopping and pruning is defined, how they interact with new ResCode landscape controls, and what this means for the long term retention of the SLO9.

10.8 (cont)

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorse the submission to the Department of Transport and Planning on the draft Mid-Rise Standards.
2. Sends the submission to the Premier of Victoria, The Minister for Planning, and Local State and Federal Members of Parliament.
3. Request that officers undertake further advocacy in support of its submission.
4. Request that officers advocate for improvements to Clause 52.37 Canopy Trees.

KEY MATTERS*Mid Rise Standards*

The release of the draft Mid-Rise Standards have been reviewed by officers in the context of the current planning provisions contained within the Whitehorse Planning Scheme, current strategic work and other State Government reform changes released over the past 12 months.

Officers support the provision of increased densities within the right locations within Whitehorse as a means of providing additional housing. This is a well established principle in Victorian planning, and has been established in Whitehorse through consistent strategic planning work. More recently, this support is consistent with the State Government Housing Statement that seeks to provide more housing in the right places, and most specifically around activity centres and close to public transport and other services.

Work currently being undertaken in Box Hill and Burwood on the SRL Precinct areas, in addition to Activity Centre Structure Planning for Mitcham, Nunawading and Blackburn, is in part about aligning State Government objectives with localised knowledge for the provision of additional housing capacity. General support for these objectives through this work recognises that this provides protection for those parts of the municipality that have landscape, cultural and environmental significance, and currently play a role in providing a different form of housing.

The release of the draft Mid-Rise Standards and the subsequent proposal to allow increased housing density and larger built form across all residential areas of the municipality raises significant concerns for a number of reasons.

The primary concern is the intended application of 'deemed-to-comply' provisions for buildings of 4-6 storeys in height, and that these provisions are intended to be opened across all residential zones leading to reduced residential amenity, loss of underlying intent of residential zones, removal of

10.8 (cont)

third party appeal rights and removal of the ability to achieve good planning outcomes.

Canopy Trees – Clause 52.37

Key elements of this new clause include:

- Canopy trees are only protected within front (within 6m of narrowest street frontage) and rear (4.5m) boundaries;
- A canopy tree is defined as being a minimum of 5m tall + 0.5m trunk circumference + 4m canopy diameter
- Exemptions include lopping and pruning of no more than 1/3 of foliage, no lopping of "the trunk"; no trying to reduce trees to be under the threshold/5m or canopy width/4m)
- Dead trees are not included as an exemption;
- VicSmart pathway;
- Decision guidelines that cover a range of considerations ;
- Extensive transitional provisions.

DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

The draft Mid-Rise Standards provide a set of codified standards in the same format as the recently introduced Clause 55 (ResCode) codification, whereby an application is 'deemed-to-comply' with the planning scheme if it meets all the provisions of that Clause. These draft Mid-Rise Standards seek to introduce the same assessment method (codification) for buildings of between 4-6 storeys across all residential zones, except the Low Density Residential Zone.

The current zone controls establish a hierarchy for the form of development and housing that is encouraged through the objectives of each of the residential zones. These zones have been informed through the Strategic work undertaken in 2014.

Under the current suite of zones, larger buildings and higher densities are directed to the Residential Growth Zone, increased densities that are responsive to neighbourhood character and close to services are directed through the General Residential Zone, with the Neighbourhood Residential Zone intended to reflect lower levels of development and at a scale that reflects the predominance of single and double storey dwellings.

By design, some of the most highly valued residential areas (and environmentally sensitive areas) within Whitehorse are zoned Neighbourhood Residential, and to a lesser extent parts of the General Residential Zone. Of significance is that the current Significant Landscape Overlay areas, with the exception of SLO9, cover much of the Neighbourhood Residential and some of the General Residential Zone areas, further highlighting their environmental and landscape value.

10.8 (cont)

Officers continue to support increased densities within activity centres and along major roads and transport routes, as evidenced through approvals and completed development.

Current and future Whitehorse Strategic Planning work is also directed to developing contemporary strategies on how to deliver on the objectives of Plan for Victoria and Victoria's Housing Statement. This includes Activity Centre Planning for Mitcham, Nunawading and Blackburn, and housing capacity analysis (Housing Strategy Review).

This work is one of many levers local government is using to deliver on the State Government objectives to provide additional housing.

Over the past 12 months, the extent of Planning Reform changes introduced by the State Government has been extensive. Changes to ResCode to introduce codification, changes to standards within those provisions, introduction of small second dwellings, relaxation of planning permit triggers for single dwellings; the list is long. Whilst there is a current crisis in housing affordability, the industry needs time to let the changes that have already been introduced come into effect (i.e. be built) and ensure which of these 'levers' effect change, and that this is occurring in the right way. Insufficient time has passed for State or Local Government to ascertain where the housing gains have occurred. At a localised level, Councils have not yet even been given the tools to develop housing capacity targets, so to continue to introduce even more change to planning controls will result in housing capacity analysis occurring in a vacuum.

Officers argue that the changes already released need time to work through to 'on-the-ground' outcomes and that it is likely that codification of 4-6 storey buildings within traditional suburban areas is not in fact needed. This submission, whilst outlining concerns with the proposed Mid Rise Standards, also provides alternate approaches and seeks the opportunity for Council to demonstrate how increased densities can be delivered without significant encroachment on sensitive residential areas.

Notwithstanding these strategic arguments, officers consider the protection of neighbourhood residential areas is critical, and as such have significant concerns about the form of higher density and inappropriate built form that could be permitted through all residential areas under the draft standards.

Officers will also provide a further detailed analysis of the draft standards to the Department of Transport and Planning.

10.8 (cont)

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details

Strategic Alignment	<p>This report and the recommendation relate to the following strategic priorities contained with the Council Plan:</p> <p>Strategic Direction 1 – Community</p> <p>Objective 1.3: A healthy and active community</p> <p>Strategic Direction 2 - Built</p> <p>Objective 2.3: Sustainable planning and infrastructure to respond to population change</p> <p>This is evidenced through the attached submission.</p>
Financial and Resource Implications	<p>There are no financial or resource implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report.</p>
Legislative and Risk Implications	<p>There are no legal or risk implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report.</p>
Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations	<p>It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.</p>
Community Engagement	<p>No community engagement was required for this report.</p>
Innovation and Continuous Improvement	<p>There are no Innovation and Continuous Improvement matters arising from the recommendation contained in this report.</p>
Collaboration	<p>No collaboration was required for this report.</p>
Conflict of Interest	<p>The <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> requires members of Council staff, and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council, to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.</p> <p>Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.</p>

ATTACHMENT

- 1 Mid Rise Code Submission

10.9 Procurement Policy 2025 - 2029

Department

Finance

Director Corporate Services

Attachment

SUMMARY

Under Sections 108 and 109 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), councils are required to adopt and maintain a Procurement Policy that governs the purchase of goods, services, and works. The Policy must incorporate the following key elements:

- Defined thresholds for competitive tendering;
- Criteria for evaluating value for money;
- A commitment to collaboration with other councils and public bodies
- Clear exemptions from standard procurement processes;
- A framework for initiating public tenders or expressions of interest (EOIs),
- Assurance that procurement practices are fair, transparent, and auditable.
- Responsible and defensible use of public funds

Importantly, the Act mandates that the Procurement Policy must be reviewed at least once every four years, in alignment with the Council term. This ensures the Policy remains current, effective, and responsive to evolving legislative and operational requirements.

Additionally, Section 9 of the Act outlines overarching governance principles, including the expectation that councils actively collaborate with other councils, governments, and public bodies.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the Procurement Policy 2025-2029

KEY MATTERS

Officers commenced a review of the Procurement Policy in July 2024, with the objective of adopting a revised policy by September 2025. The review process was designed to ensure alignment with legislative requirements, sector best practice, and regional collaboration priorities.

10.9 (cont)

The review included:

- **Benchmarking** against procurement policies and practices of other Local Government bodies;
- **Consultation** with key stakeholders, including sector, relevant Council staff involved in procurement, Executive Leadership, Councillors, and procurement subject matter experts;
- **Facilitated workshops** including an Executive Leadership session and targeted small group discussions/workshops with Councillors; and
- **Alignment** with the Eastern Region Group of Council's (ERG) and Local Government Best Practice Guidelines.

In addition to the above, Council at its meeting of 10 June 2025 resolved to:

- 1) Acknowledge that section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020* expressly provides for overarching principles that include the desire for Councils to collaborate with other Councils, Governments and Statutory bodies.
- 2) Endorse collaboration by the Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG) to:
 - i) amplify each Council's voice and impact,
 - ii) improve each Council's efficiency and effectiveness, and
 - iii) improve community access to infrastructure and services across the region.
- 3) Endorse ERG's four-year Plan and support the priority actions therein which include an emphasis on joint procurement and shared service provision across member Councils and in so doing:
 - i) commit to explore, develop and implement appropriate shared service provision with ERG partner Councils with short, medium and longer term objectives;
 - ii) explore options for innovation, entrepreneurship, direct service provision, partnered services with other agencies or outsourced service provision;
 - iii) establish appropriate governance arrangements to facilitate shared services outcomes; and
 - iv) assist in the development of a regional Shared Services best practice model as an exemplar for the local government sector more broadly.

DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

The proposed updates to Council's Procurement Policy are designed to enhance alignment with sector best practice, improve operational efficiency, and commitment to driving competitive tension across all procurement

10.9 (cont)

activities. Competitive tension created through fair, transparent, and open market engagement is a key mechanism for achieving value for money, promoting innovation, and ensuring the responsible use of public funds.

These changes also support stronger regional collaboration, governance, and flexible procurement practices that reflect Council's strategic priorities. These changes are summarised below:

- **Tender Threshold adjustment:** The threshold for public tendering is proposed to increase from \$250,000 to \$300,000. This change aligns Council with regional and metropolitan Council cohort and supports more effective collaboration;
- **Delegation update:** In line with the revised threshold, the delegation for Managers will be uplifted from \$250,000 to \$300,000. All other delegations remain unchanged under the current policy;
- **GST Treatment Clarification:** The revised Policy will adopt a GST exclusive approach to improve clarity and consistency in reporting and procurement documentation;
- **Evaluation Criteria:** While the evaluation criteria remain unchanged, mandatory weightings have been revised to allow greater flexibility in assessment. Under the revised policy:
 - Financial weighting has increased from a minimum of 30% to a required range of 40% to 80%. Where a financial weighting below 50% is applied, a sound business justification must be provided.
 - Capability weighting has been reduced from a minimum of 25% to 20%
 - All other criteria will remain unweighted unless otherwise determined.
 - These adjustments are designed to better align procurement activities with Council's strategic objectives, including value for money, financial sustainability and social procurement outcomes;
- **Value for Money Principle Enhancement:** The policy has been updated to reinforce Council's commitment to long-term financial sustainability. The revised wording emphasises the importance of driving competitive tension by ensuring fair and open competition across all procurement activities;
- In accordance with the feedback received, areas that have been strengthened in the policy include risk management (mandatory requirement to consider procurement risks as part of the procurement plan), local buy (requirement to include a local supplier – where possible for any invitation to quote up to \$300,000), social procurement (consideration of social procurement outcomes and social enterprises in the procurement process) and rules of engagement for existing panel contracts (requirement for a quotation processes for all panel contracts);

10.9 (cont)

- **Transparency and Reporting:** In response to an action arising from Council's Audit and Risk Committee and to strengthen reporting and oversight, contractor spend (including consultants) will be reported quarterly through internal contract pipeline briefings. Additionally, all contracts entered with a value exceeding \$500,000 will be disclosed in Council's Quarterly Performance Report to strengthen public transparency and accountability; and
- **Conflict of Interest Management:** The updated Procurement Policy and supporting manual reinforce commitment to integrity and transparency by strengthening requirements for conflict-of-interest declarations across all procurement activities.
- **Operational Manual:** Process related content including references to Best and Final Offer and additional approval requirements have transitioned to the Procurement Operation Manual. While not a public document, the manual serves as a comprehensive internal resource outlining procurement processes, procedures, expectations, templates and tools. It supports staff across all stages of procurement, from pre-planning and sourcing through to contract award, management and expiry;

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details

Strategic Alignment	<p>Council Plan Alignment</p> <p>5.1 An open, transparent, accountable and responsible Council</p> <p>5.2 A Council that delivers core services that are fit for purpose and good value</p> <p>5.4 A Council that is well governed, efficient and financially sustainable</p> <p>3.1 A thriving local economy - Provide support and enable partnership opportunities for businesses and business associations</p>
Financial and Resource Implications	There are no financial or resource implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report.
Legislative and Risk Implications	There are no legal or risk implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report.
Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations	It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.
Community Engagement	No community engagement was required for this report.

10.9 (cont)

Innovation and Continuous Improvement	There are no Innovation and Continuous Improvement matters arising from the recommendation contained in this report.
Collaboration	There was extensive consultation and collaboration with regional and metro Councils in the preparation of this policy to ensure alignment across the sector for effective future collaborative procurement and shared servicing opportunities.
Conflict of Interest	Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

ATTACHMENT

1 Procurement Policy 2025-2029

10.10 Audit and Risk Committee: Appointment of Independent Member

Department

Governance and Integrity

Executive Manager Corporate Services

Attachment

SUMMARY

Under Section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), the Audit and Risk Committee must consist of a majority of members who are not Councillors of the Council.

At Whitehorse City Council, in accordance with the *Audit and Risk Committee Charter* (the Charter), the Committee is comprised of five members, two Councillors and three independent members.

The current Councillor members are:

- Cr Daniel Griffiths (member since December 2024)
- Cr Peter Allan (member since December 2024)

The current independent members are:

- Ms Lisa Woolmer (Chair) – retiring September 2025 (member since September 2017)
- Mr Jonathan Kyvelidis – second term expiring August 2027 (member since March 2021)
- Ms Binda Gokhale – second term expiring August 2028 (member since September 2022)

The Council was formally advised of Ms Woolmer's resignation from the Committee on 14 July 2025, with her departure to take effect from 30 September 2025.

Ms Woolmer has served on the Committee since 1 September 2017, initially appointed for a three-year term and subsequently reappointed for two further three-year terms. While her current term was to conclude on 31 August 2026, her resignation comes one year ahead of schedule. Ms Woolmer has also held the role of the Committee Chair since September 2022, providing valuable leadership and guidance during her service.

To ensure ongoing compliance with the requirements of the Act and the Committee Charter, Council undertook a formal recruitment process to fill the vacancy. The position of independent member was advertised on Thursday, 17 July 2025, with applications closing on Sunday, 3 August 2025.

As part of the selection and interview process, Mr Kyvelidis (independent Committee member), Cr Griffiths (Councillor representative to the Committee) and Ms Vivien Ferlaino, Manager Governance and Integrity

10.10 (cont)

have participated in the shortlisting and interview process to support the appointment of a suitably qualified candidate.

Following the interview process, the candidate that was selected as the preferred candidate to join the Committee as an Independent Member is Mr Phillip Souter.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Appoint Mr Phillip Souter as the third independent member of Council's Audit and Risk Committee for a three-year term commencing 1 October 2025 to 30 September 2028, with performance-based option for extension for a further three-year term.
2. Thank outgoing independent member and Chair, Ms Lisa Woolmer, for her years of dedicated service to the Audit and Risk Committee (since 2017).

KEY MATTERS

Mr Souter is recommended as the best fit for the position available on the Committee.

Mr Souter holds a Bachelor of Computing, is a Certified Information Systems Security Professional and has completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors' Course. He brings over 22 years of experience in financial services and senior leadership with expertise in governance, risk, compliance, and cybersecurity.

Mr Souter has experience in guiding executive and board teams on strategy, resilience, and regulatory change and is highly regarded for his independent committee service and ability to engage stakeholders effectively. He is recognised for driving transformation, strengthening controls, and building organisational trust in complex and challenging environments.

DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

Under the terms of the Committee Charter, independent members will be appointed for an initial period not exceeding three years after which they will be eligible for extension or re-appointment, for a further three-year term after a formal review of their performance. The Charter does not preclude an end-of-term member from reapplying for the position.

Discussion and Options

Recruitment of a new member based on a skills and experience matrix assessment that identifies the particular blend of skills and experience required for the role was undertaken. The selection criteria was:

1. A strong understanding of risk and assurance, legislative and corporate governance, project management

10.10 (cont)

2. Previous experience serving on similar committees or boards for either government, private entity, or Not-For-Profit organisations.
3. Specific expertise in Information Technology and Cybersecurity
4. Graduate Membership of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (highly regarded)

At the close of applications on Sunday, 3 August 2025, Council received 74 applications which were provided to the interview panel consisting of Mr Kyvelidis, Cr Griffiths and Ms Ferlano. The applications received were of a very high standard from individuals with diverse backgrounds and a broad range of experience. Five short listed applicants were subsequently interviewed.

At interview, a ranking process was used to score each candidate on the published selection criteria. The panel considered Mr Souter to be the preferred candidate when assessed against all of the selection criteria.

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details

Strategic Alignment	<p>Governance, Strong governance will be achieved through transparent, accountable management and the efficient and financially sustainable delivery of valuable core services.</p> <p>The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) supports the strategic direction of Governance by providing independent oversight that strengthens accountability, transparency, and ethical decision-making. It plays a key role in reviewing governance frameworks, monitoring risk management and internal controls, and ensuring accurate financial and performance reporting. Through its assurance and advisory functions, the ARC promotes continuous improvement, supports executive accountability, and upholds strong leadership values aligned with legislative and organisational expectations.</p>
Financial and Resource Implications	<p>Remuneration for an independent member of the ARC as approved by Council in July 2025 is \$1,805 per meeting (for 5 meetings) or \$9,025 per annum.</p> <p>The recruitment process incurred costs of \$1,986 (including GST).</p> <p>There are no other financial or resource implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.</p>

10.10 (cont)

Legislative and Risk Implications	<p><i>Local Government Act 2020.</i></p> <p><i>ARC Charter</i></p> <p>Pursuant to Section 53 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>, Councils must establish an ARC and that committee must consist of a majority of members who are not Councillors of the Council and who collectively have expertise in financial management and risk; and experience in public sector management.</p> <p>There are no other legal or risk implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report.</p>
Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations	<p>It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.</p>
Community Engagement	<p>No community engagement was required for this report.</p>
Innovation and Continuous Improvement	<p>There are no Innovation and Continuous Improvement matters arising from the recommendation contained in this report.</p> <p>A debrief meeting with the Committee members have been held to discuss the recruitment process.</p>
Collaboration	<p>Recruitment process was conducted by an independent member and Councillor representative of the ARC, Manager Governance and Integrity and Coordinator Audit and Assurance.</p> <p>The ARC was also briefed on the recruitment process during the Committee meeting on 20 August 2025.</p>
Conflict of Interest	<p>All members of the recruitment panel and Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.</p>

10.10 (cont)

ATTACHMENT

- 1 Confidential Report - candidates interviewed for independent ARC member

Whitehorse City Council designates this attachment and the information contained in it as Confidential Information pursuant to Section 3 (1) (f) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. *This report contains person information for candidates interviewed for the role of independent member of the Audit and Risk Committee*

10.11 Statutory Planning Report August 2025

Department

City Planning and Development

Director City Development

Attachment

SUMMARY

At the 25 August 2025 Council Meeting, Council adopted a Motion which requires:

That Council:

...

2. Receives a noting report each month at Council Meetings on town planning applications lodged, dealt with under delegation by Council officers and under consideration by VCAT (or other authority i.e. State Planning Minister)

This report includes the following for noting by Council:

- Applications lodged (for the month)
- Applications determined under officer delegation (for the month)
- Matters currently under consideration by VCAT
- Other matters under consideration by the state government within Whitehorse

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Statutory Planning report for the month of August 2025.

KEY ISSUES

The report on state government decisions and referrals is a summary of all matters within Whitehorse in recent years. For future reports this will be for each month only. Officers note that there could be omissions in this report due to the way these matters are communicated with Council by the state government.

ATTACHMENT

- 1 Ministerial Permits
- 2 Open VCAT Planning Permit Applications
- 3 Planning Permit Delegated Decisions
- 4 Planning Permit Application Lodgements

10.12 Records of Informal Meetings of Councillors

Department Governance and Integrity
Director Corporate Services

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Records of Informal Meetings of Councillors.

Optional Briefing - Community Grants Policy Review, Neighbourhood and Community House Review – 03 September 2025 – 6.00pm to 8.15pm

Matter/s Discussed:	Councillors Present	Officers Present
Part 1: Community Grants Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insights obtained from stakeholder engagement Presenting the Draft Community Grants Policy for feedback Part 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation of current state assessment for NCH Review Presenting service review recommendations Presenting funding model recommendations Recap of upcoming decision dates in InfoCouncil 	Cr Andrew Davenport - Mayor Cr Prue Cutts - Deputy Mayor (online) Cr Peter Allan Cr Blair Barker (online) Cr Daniel Griffiths Cr Kirsten Langford Cr Kieran Simpson Cr Hayley Weller	L Letic Z Quinn S Rinaldi S Ferdowsi
Others Present: N/A		
Disclosures of Conflict of Interest: Nil		
Councillor /Officer attendance following disclosure: Nil		

10.12 (cont)

Pre Council Meeting Briefing – 08 September 2025 – 6.30pm to 6.51pm		
Matter/s Discussed:	Councillors Present	Officers Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Items on the Council Meeting Agenda 8 September 2025 	Cr Andrew Davenport (Mayor) Cr Cutts (Deputy Mayor) Cr Peter Allan Cr Blair Barker Cr Jarrod Gunn Cr Daniel Griffiths Cr Kirsten Langford Cr Jason Martin Cr Kieran Simpson Cr Ben Stennett Cr Hayley Weller	S McMillan S Cann S White L Letic J Green F Nolan A Ghastine V Ferlaino E Outlaw
Others Present: N/A		
Disclosures of Conflict of Interest: Nil		
Councillor /Officer attendance following disclosure: N/A		

Optional Briefing - Pavillion Development Policy – Thursday 11 September 2025 – 6.30-8.00pm		
Matter/s Discussed:	Councillors Present	Officers Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pavilion Development Policy 	Cr Andrew Davenport – Mayor Cr Prue Cutts - Deputy Mayor Cr Peter Allan Cr Blair Barker Cr Jarrod Gunn Cr Daniel Griffiths Cr Kirsten Langford Cr Kieran Simpson Cr Hayley Weller	L Letic T Gledhill L Morris K Chandler N Hirst C Paudel
Others Present: N/A		
Disclosures of Conflict of Interest: Nil		
Councillor /Officer attendance following disclosure: Nil		

10.12 (cont)

Optional Briefing Arts and Civic Collection Policy – 15 September 2025 - 5.00-6.00pm – Time

Matter/s Discussed:	Councillors Present	Officers Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts and Civic Collection Policy 	Cr Peter Allan Cr Jarrod Gunn Cr Daniel Griffiths Cr Kirsten Langford Cr Jason Martin	L Letic S Price
Others Present: N/A		
Disclosures of Conflict of Interest: Nil		
Councillor /Officer attendance following disclosure: Nil		

Councillor Briefing – 15 September 2025 – 6.30pm to 10.21pm

Matter/s Discussed:	Councillors Present	Officers Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOU with Deakin University Library Service Review – Governance model decision briefing Box Hill City Oval Management Model Lease & Licence Policy & Council Property Lease & Licence Pricing Policy Long Term Financial Plan Draft Council Meeting Agenda 	Cr Andrew Davenport (Mayor) Cr Cutts (Deputy Mayor) Cr Peter Allan Cr Blair Barker Cr Jarrod Gunn Cr Daniel Griffiths Cr Kirsten Langford Cr Jason Martin Cr Kieran Simpson Cr Hayley Weller Cr Ben Stennett	S Cann J Green F Nolan A Ghastine S White L Letic V Ferlaino E Outlaw A Luck L Morris C Clarke T Gledhill J Fitzgibbon C Bolitho
Others Present: Michael Mangos, Deakin University		
Disclosures of Conflict of Interest: Nil		
Councillor /Officer attendance following disclosure: Nil		

11 Councillor Delegate and Conference / Seminar Reports**11.1 Reports by Delegates and Reports on Conferences / Seminars Attendance**

Department Governance
Director Corporate Services

Verbal reports from Councillors appointed as delegates to community organisations/committees/groups and attendance at conferences and seminars related to Council Business.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the:

1. Reports from delegates, and;
2. Reports on conferences/seminars attendance.

12 Confidential Reports

13 Close Meeting