WHITEHORSE
CITY COUNCIL

# Whitehorse City Council

# AGENDA

## Council Meeting

on

**Monday 8 December 2025 at 7:00 PM**

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

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Members:** | Cr Kirsten Langford | Mayor |
| | Cr Kieran Simpson | Deputy Mayor |
| | Cr Peter Allan | |
| | Cr Blair Barker | |
| | Cr Prue Cutts | |
| | Cr Andrew Davenport | |
| | Cr Daniel Griffiths | |
| | Cr Jarrod Gunn | |
| | Cr Jason Martin | |
| | 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 24 November 2025

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the minutes of the Council Meeting 24 November 2025 be:

a) amended for item 10.1 - 121 Burwood Highway, Burwood resolution to reflect the correct application number WH/2024/970.

b) confirmed.

## 5 Urgent Business

## 6 Requests to Speak

## 7 Public Question Time

## 8 Petitions

## 9 Notices of Motion

### 9.1 Notice of Motion - Childcare in Box Hill

That Council seek an Officers report on the implications of establishing a Council run Early Childhood Education and Care Service in Box Hill.

### 9.2 Notice of Motion - Heritage Review

That Council receives a report in February 2026 advising on the timing and resourcing required to complete a review of Priority A and Priority B places from the City of Whitehorse Post 1945 Heritage Study and the City of Whitehorse Heritage Review 2012.

## 10 Council Reports

## 10.1 Draft Fenced Dog Park Technical Report Endorsement for Community Consultation

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| **Department** | Leisure and Recreation Services<br>Director Community Services |

Attachment

### SUMMARY

This report presents the Draft Fenced Dog Park Technical Report (The **Draft Technical Report**) for Council endorsement to proceed to community and stakeholder engagement.

The Draft Technical Report consolidates research, benchmarking, community engagement outcomes, and subject matter experts' insights to establish an evidence base for planning, designing, and managing fenced dog parks in the City of Whitehorse.

Whitehorse currently has over 12,000 registered dogs (with actual numbers likely higher) and 32 off-leash areas, but no dedicated fully fenced dog parks. Past engagement findings show strong support for dog parks from dog owners but mixed community views on past proposed sites highlight the need for careful site selection, design and education. The report identifies benefits of fenced dog parks for dog and community wellbeing, alongside associated risks including equity of open space use, environmental impact, and potential management challenges.

The Draft Technical Report recommends provision of three large-scale fenced dog parks (over 3,000m²) with two as a medium-term action (2-5 years) and the third as a longer-term action (5-10 years). This is supported by comprehensive site selection criteria, design standards, and operational guidelines. The report also recommends an interim review of off-leash designations at identified conflict off leash sites in conjunction with the planning and delivery of dedicated fenced dog parks, subject to community consultation.

Once endorsed for community consultation, the Draft Technical Report will be released for public consultation, inviting feedback from residents and relevant stakeholders to help shape the final version for Council consideration in 2026.

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses the Draft Fenced Dog Park Technical Report for the purpose of community and stakeholder engagement.

### KEY MATTERS

This Draft Fenced Dog Park Technical Report responds to an action from the Whitehorse Open Space Strategy 2025 to prepare Dog Park Guidelines. For

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the purpose of this report, a fenced dog park is defined as designated and dedicated, fully enclosed section within a park or public space for dog guardians to legally exercise, play and socialise with their dogs off-leash in a secure environment.

Councils have a legislative responsibility for managing domestic animals under the *Victorian Domestic Animals Act 1994*. This Act sets out requirements for the registration, control, and management of dogs within municipalities, with councils tasked with balancing community safety, responsible pet ownership, and the provision of suitable facilities.

Whitehorse currently has over 12,000 registered dogs, though the actual number is likely considerably higher as many dogs remain unregistered. The Whitehorse Open Space Strategy identifies dog walking as one of the most popular reasons the community uses open space, supporting health and wellbeing by promoting physical activity and providing opportunities for social interaction. However, conflicts between dog owners and other users have become more frequent, particularly when dogs are exercised off-leash. Reported issues include damage to sports fields, personal safety concerns, impacts on cyclists, environmental damage, and problems with waste management.

The City of Whitehorse currently has 32 parks and reserves providing off-leash areas across the municipality. Several sports fields in Whitehorse permit off-leash activity when organised sporting events are not scheduled. This shared use arrangement has led to ongoing conflicts between dog walkers and sporting clubs, particularly at a few sites which are maintained to higher standards for competition use. Issues include damage to playing surfaces from dog digging, uneven wear, urine damage, and faecal contamination creating safety concerns for players. Council has attempted various management measures, such as keeping gates open to make sports fields less enclosed and encourage more active supervision, but these initiatives have been met with community resistance.

There are currently no dedicated fenced dog parks in Whitehorse. Whilst there is growing demand for dedicated fenced dog parks, previous proposals (East Burwood Reserve Masterplan and Simpson Park) have faced community opposition and were unable to be delivered due to concerns about potential conflicts with existing park uses, environmental impacts, and perceived health and safety issues. A temporary dog park is proposed in Box Hill as part of the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) open space compensation and additional fenced dog parks may be considered within open space master plans currently being prepared by Council, pending the outcomes of this report and subsequent public consultation.

The Draft Technical Report consolidates multiple evidence sources to inform recommendations for the future planning, design, and management of fenced dog parks. The report draws on:

- Analysis of Whitehorse’s existing strategic documents, demographics, dog ownership trends, and existing off-leash areas;

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- Review of academic research examining the benefits, risks, and design considerations for dog parks;
- Benchmarking strategic documents from comparable councils in metropolitan Melbourne and interstate.
- Case studies of dog parks across Australia and internationally.
- Community engagement outcomes from previous consultations, including the Managing Dogs in Parks and Reserves project, Domestic Animal Management Plan engagement, proposed dog parks at Simpson Park and the East Burwood Reserve Masterplan, customer service requests and complaints, and community petitions.
- Insights from internal workshops held in September 2025 with officers from Community Laws, Leisure and Recreation Services, Parks and Natural Environment, and Project Delivery and Assets.

The draft report provides the comprehensive framework for the future provision of fenced dog parks in Whitehorse. It includes research and background investigation; issues and opportunities; dog park provision; site selection criteria; design standards for small-scale (<3000 sqm) and large scale (>3000 sq.m) dog parks and the indicative capital and operating costs.

**DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS**

The Draft Technical Report presents a set of recommendations to guide planning, design, and management/ maintenance of fenced dog parks. The key recommendations and considerations are outlined below:

1. Council should provide dedicated fenced dog parks:

   Whitehorse's population is growing and shifting toward medium to high-density living. As more residents occupy apartments and townhouses with limited private outdoor areas, reliance on public parks for dog exercise will increase. This trend is likely to heighten conflicts between dog owners and other park users. Previous community engagement has shown strong support for dedicated fenced dog parks in Whitehorse.

   Fenced dog parks can deliver a range of benefits, including:

   - Supporting social interaction among dogs and their owners.
   - Providing a controlled environment for dogs in training or requiring structured activity.
   - Enabling elderly residents and people with disabilities or limited mobility to exercise their dogs safely.
   - Allowing dogs to be off-leash in busy parks or near activities that are not compatible with dogs.
   - Ensuring people who prefer not to interact with dogs can still enjoy other park areas.

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- To help ease the pressure of dog off leash activities at the shared use sports fields.

It is therefore recommended that Council provide dedicated fenced dog parks in response to population growth, increasing housing density, and demonstrated community interest. Doing so will help realise the benefits of safe, inclusive spaces for dogs and their owners, while easing pressure on shared-use parks and sports fields.

The Draft Technical Report also recognises potential risks associated with fenced dog parks and outlines measures to manage or minimise them:

- Dedicating section of park to a single user group may reduce availability for others, so the number and distribution of fenced dog parks should be carefully planned.
- Fenced dog parks may attract users with limited control over their dogs, creating safety concerns. Adequate operational resourcing, increased patrols by the Community Laws team, ongoing education programs, and clear behavioural signage can help address these issues.
- Past proposals have faced concerns regarding noise, waste, health risks, traffic, conflicts with existing park uses, environmental concerns which can be minimised through evidence-based site selection process, appropriate buffers, fencing, and design controls.

2. Council should provide three large-scale dog parks

While there are no established industry standards for dog park provision, some considerations used to determine the appropriate level of provision include:

- As mentioned in risk above, Whitehorse has limited open space and fencing off a part of parks for one use needs should be carefully planned in terms of number and distribution.
- The dog parks should be planned as a part of a wider network of off leash facilities (fenced and unfenced)
- They are specialised facilities, so most people are expected to access the facility via car. Scenario testing suggested 2-3 facilities will facilitate 3-5 km catchment to cater for the whole municipality.
- Benchmarking with neighbouring councils shows typical provision of 1-2 fenced dog parks, with some additional dog parks in planning. Past challenges in delivering dog parks highlight need for realistic provision targets

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3. The proposed site for future dog parks should be guided by site selection guidelines outlined in the Draft Technical Report.

   The Draft Technical Report presents site selection guidelines developed through assessment of evidence related to dog park planning, and consideration of community sentiments.

   ***Proposed approach for site selection:***

   A mapping exercise will be undertaken to identify areas of Whitehorse with limited access to fenced or unfenced off leash facilities. This will support a balanced distribution of dog facilities across the municipality and help prioritise central locations that serve the greatest number of residents.

   Further considerations include:

   - Identifying areas where a fenced dog park may relieve pressure on sports fields currently used for off leash activity.
   - Considering regional and municipal parks that can support multiple activities without restricting existing uses.
   - Prioritising underutilised or decommissioned land to avoid displacement of current users.

   Each potential site will be evaluated against site assessment criteria in the Table 1 below to determine overall suitability. Sites will fall into one of three categories:

   - Already suitable: Meets most criteria with minimal modification required.
   - Not ideal and may need further work: May require design changes, added infrastructure or minor mitigation works, which may have financial implications.
   - Not suitable and unlikely to be feasible: Contains significant constraints that are not practical or cost effective to resolve and should not progress further.

Community and stakeholder engagement is recommended to build understanding and support for the site selection guidelines before identifying preferred sites.

Table 1: Site assessment criteria

| Element | Criteria |
|---|---|
| **Existing uses and values** | Assess potential impacts of a dog park on existing use and values and whether these can be managed through design and management. |

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|---|---|
| **Site qualities** | Relatively flat in topography<br>Good drainage<br>Not subject to frequent or severe flooding |
| **Accessibility** | Clearly defined and safe to access<br>Footpath network |
| **Visibility** | Visible and easy to locate and access<br>Opportunity for passive surveillance |
| **Shade** | Existing trees or shade structures, or potential to provide |
| **Infrastructure** | Existing water connection or potential to provide a new connection<br>Existing toilets to be shared with other park users |
| **Parking** | Existing off-street parking or potential to provide |
| **Adjacent activities/uses** | Compatibility with other park activities (cycling trails, BBQ/picnic areas or playground)<br>Treatment to minimise potential conflict (fencing, landscaping, buffers) |
| **Environmental buffers** | Sufficient space to buffers from biodiversity corridors, fauna habitats, areas with endangered species, significant wetlands, and other high-value habitats.<br>Indicative buffers, should be assessed case by case basis<br>• Low-value habitats: 10–50 m buffer,<br>• High-value habitats: 50–100 m (or larger) buffer recommended. Avoid siting a dog park unless impacts can be avoided or very carefully mitigated |
| **Residential buffers** | Prioritise sites that do not directly border to residences.<br>Treatment to minimise actual or perceived impact where required (fencing, landscaping, buffers) |

4. The design of the proposed dog parks should be guided by the design standards outlined in the draft report.

   Evidence suggest that the preferred size for a dog park is over 3,000 m². Parks smaller than this carry a higher risk of overcrowding, surface degradation, and reduced user satisfaction.

   However, small-scale dog parks (<3000 sq.m) can be appropriate in specific contexts, particularly in high-density areas where open space is limited, in busy parks, on unconventional sites such as rooftops, or on underutilised small parcels of land. These smaller facilities can help address localised dog issues and mitigate conflicts with other park users.

   Designing small-scale dog parks requires careful consideration to minimise overcrowding and surface wear. It is important that other nearby off-leash areas exist to distribute use and avoid excessive

10.1 (cont)

concentration of dogs in one location. Smaller sites typically involve higher management and operational costs and should be planned to serve a local catchment and short stay visits rather than functioning as a destination.

Reviews of other dog parks indicate that larger facilities often include separate areas to support different types of use. Best practice recommends providing two distinct zones within a dog park: an active zone for energetic play and social interaction, and a quiet zone for nervous, older, or recovering dogs. This is a well-loved feature among the community, as it allows for safer and more enjoyable use. Some dog parks also divide areas by dog size, with sections for large dogs and small dogs within a dog park. Small-scale dog parks generally cannot accommodate these separate zones due to limited space.

It is recommended that large-scale dog parks be prioritised for delivery, while small-scale dog parks should only be considered when there is a clear need and no suitable alternative.

The Draft Technical Report establishes guidelines for two types of dog parks: large-scale dog parks (greater than 3,000 m²) and small-scale dog parks (less than 3,000 m²). These classifications refer to the size of the park itself, rather than the size or breed of dogs. Summary of design standards are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of design standards for small-scale and large-scale dog park

| Criteria | Large-scale Dog Park | Small-scale Dog Park |
|---|---|---|
| Size | >3000 Sq. m | < 3000 Sq. m |
| Catchment size | Functions as a 'destination' facility; travel by car; Designed for longer stay | Local catchment; walking distance; Designed for short stay |
| Shape | Rounded/ moderately linear | Rounded/ moderately linear |
| Fence/ Entry point | 1.2 m; Double gate with hardstand, min 3.5m wide | 1.2 m; Double gate with hardstand, min 3.5m wide |
| Surface | Grass and Gravel | Gravel |
| Separate area for small and less confident dog | 20% of total area for dog park recommended for dog parks >4,500 sq.m | N/A |
| **Vegetation** | Trees with small areas of garden bed to perimeter | Trees |

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| **Amenities** | • Accessible loop path<br>• Rocks/logs<br>• Seating and shelter<br>• Lighting (on demand/ sensor)<br>• Signage- behavioural and etiquette signage<br>• Drinking fountain with dog bowl<br>• Bins with bag dispenser | • Rocks/logs<br>• Seating and shelter<br>• Signage- behavioural and etiquette signage<br>• Drinking fountain with dog bowl<br>• Bins with bag dispenser |
| **Car parking** | Provided nearby to support easy and safe loading/ unloading | N/A |
| **Additional/ optional features** | • Agility equipment<br>• Irrigation<br>• Digging areas<br>• Composting dog waste bins<br>• Dog wash station<br>• Splash pad | • Accessible loop path<br>• Lighting (on demand/ sensor)<br>• Grass/ Garden bed- if space allows<br>• Agility equipment<br>• Irrigation<br>• Digging areas<br>• Composting dog waste bins |

5. Council should consider maintenance and operational requirements of dog park.

   The Draft Technical Report notes that well-designed infrastructure alone does not ensure a successful dog park. Council must consider costs of maintaining dog park facilities and the operational resources required to support responsible dog use, monitor compliance, and manage community expectations.

   Under Council's community laws, dogs may only be off-leash if under effective control. Feedback from the community and Council officers indicates that some dog guardians may not adequately supervise their dogs, which can lead to issues such as toileting, digging, or aggressive behaviour. Managing these risks will require increased operational resourcing, including active patrolling and monitoring of the sites.

   The Draft Technical Report also highlights the importance of education, events, programs, and community-led management initiatives. Council currently delivers activities such as community stalls, 'Pups in Parks,' school visits, and partnerships with trainers to promote responsible dog ownership. The report recommends continuing and expanding these initiatives, potentially with incentive programs.

   Fenced dog parks are expected to experience high levels of use, and the community will expect safe, clean, and functional spaces. High usage

10.1 (cont)

leads to significant wear and tear of surfaces and amenities. Proactive maintenance is essential to ensure safety, usability, and longevity, and will require dedicated operational budgets beyond standard park maintenance allocations.

6. Sports fields being used for dog off leash activities.

The report notes the current issues at some of the sports fields being used for dog off leash activities. The Draft Technical Report recognises that the establishment of dedicated dog parks alone will not resolve the ongoing conflicts between off-leash dog exercise and sporting activities on shared-use sports fields. The Draft Technical Report therefore includes recommendations beyond the provision of dedicated dog parks to address these conflicts. These include:

- In the short term, undertake an interim review of off-leash designations at identified key conflict sites, in conjunction with the planning and delivery of the dedicated fenced dog park, and subject to community consultation.
- In the medium term, undertake a full review of dog off-leash designation to identify further opportunities to reduce reliance on sports fields and to address gaps in off-leash area provision.
- The report proposes a set of principles to guide future review for the off-leash areas on sports fields.
- Management measures should be applied to support safe and responsible use of off leash sports fields, which may include partially enclosing sports fields where appropriate, and installing signage or other site-specific controls to manage user behaviour. Ongoing monitoring of site use, surface condition, and observed dog and owner behaviour should inform future management decisions and adjustments.

**Options considered:**

**Option 1: Endorse Draft Fenced Dog Park Technical Report for community and stakeholder engagement in early 2026 (Recommended)**

The Draft Technical Report consolidates community feedback, benchmarking across comparable councils, academic research, and strategic analysis into a comprehensive framework that provides evidence-based recommendations, site selection criteria, design standards, and management guidelines for fenced dog parks in Whitehorse.

The Draft Technical Report recommends provision of three large-scale fenced dog parks (over 3,000m²) staged over 10 years. This level of service would respond to community demand, enhances these spaces, and mirrors provision in several neighbouring municipalities. The Draft Technical Report also recommends an interim review of off-leash designations at identified conflict hot spots in conjunction with dog park delivery, recognising that

10.1 (cont)

dedicated fenced facilities alone will not resolve ongoing conflicts between dog walkers and sports field users.

This approach to community engagement allows consultation on the strategic framework and guidelines first, followed by engagement on preferred sites once identified. This enables community input to shape both the criteria and specific implementation decisions.

Fenced dog parks are associated with increased capital expenditures as noted in the financial implication below. However, delivery is proposed to be spreads across multiple budget cycles, and there are opportunities exist to offset costs through external funding.

There are health and safety risks associated with fully fenced sites, arising from unsupervised dogs and children, overcrowding, and lack of effective control. Therefore, this option should be considered in the context of additional operating resource requirements for maintenance, compliance monitoring, and education programs outlined in the Financial and resource implication section.

**Option 2: Do Not Proceed with Fenced Dog Parks - Maintain Status Quo (Not Recommended)**

The current situation continues with 32 off-leash areas across the municipality and ongoing shared use of sports fields for off-leash dog activity, with no changes to current service provision or management approaches.

Maintaining the status quo fails to address demonstrated community demand evidenced through petitions, customer service requests, and engagement responses showing strong support from dog owners for safe, secure enclosed facilities. As Whitehorse's population grows and urban density increases, demand for dog facilities will intensify as more residents live in apartments with limited private outdoor space and rely on public parks for dog exercise.

The absence of fenced dog parks creates a widening service gap compared to neighbouring municipalities. Manningham, Maroondah, Knox, and Boroondara all currently provide 1-2 fenced dog parks, with several councils recently opening new facilities through state government funding and others in planning stages. This gap creates perceptions of inequitable service provision and reputational risk for Council, particularly as Whitehorse has a comparable or larger population and dog ownership numbers than several councils providing such facilities.

Without dedicated fenced dog parks, community dissatisfaction will persist, conflicts on sports fields will continue and likely escalate, ongoing resource demands for managing complaints and conflicts will remain, and opportunities to access external funding will be missed. The community will also forego recognised benefits of fenced dog parks including safe environments for off-leash exercise, socialisation opportunities, and accessible facilities for elderly people and those with disabilities. Therefore, this option is not recommended.

10.1 (cont)

**Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details**

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| **Strategic Alignment** | This recommendation aligns with the Whitehorse City Council Integrated Council Plan 2021-2025:<br><br>Community - Supports community health, wellbeing, and social connection through opportunities for physical activity and recreation. Dog parks facilitate social interactions among dog owners and provide accessible facilities for elderly residents and people with disabilities.<br><br>Built - Delivers quality public infrastructure that meets community needs and enhances liveability, addressing service gaps through well-planned, contemporary recreational facilities aligned with neighbouring municipalities.<br><br>Natural - Incorporates environmental protection through site selection criteria requiring buffers from sensitive habitats, excluding environmentally significant areas, and applying sustainable design approaches.<br><br>Governance - Demonstrates evidence-based, strategic decision-making with transparent community engagement, implements actions from the Whitehorse Open Space Strategy 2025 and Domestic Animal Management Plan.<br><br>It implements the action from Whitehorse Open Space Strategy 2025 to develop the dog park guidelines<br><br>It supports the Recreation Strategy 2015-2024 by recognising dog exercise as an important unstructured recreation activity that contributes to health and wellbeing, encouraging residents to incorporate physical activity into daily routines.<br><br>The proposal implements specific actions of the Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029 by pairing new park provision with education programs, clear signage, compliance monitoring, and strategic location to reduce strain on sports fields while promoting responsible pet ownership |
| **Financial and Resource Implications** | Council's existing dog off-leash areas are maintained and monitored within existing resource allocations.<br><br>**Capital costs** |

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| | The capital costs for the proposed future potential dog parks are unfunded and will be considered during annual Council budget reviews.<br><br>Site specific capital costing will depend on the size of the dog park, existing site condition, and availability of existing services and inclusion of amenities in the dog park. The construction costs (per dog park) are estimated at around $750,000 for large-scale dog park (5000sq.m) and approximately $360,000 for smaller-scale dog park (2000 sq.m).<br><br>These figures are preliminary and exclude design services, project management, site acquisition, community consultation and price escalation.<br><br>The report identifies opportunities to reduce or offset costs through partnerships, external funding and innovation.<br><br>**Operating costs**<br><br>Fenced dog parks are expected to experience high levels of use, and the community will expect safe, clean, and functional spaces. Annual maintenance cost is expected to be around $24,000 per dog park.<br><br>Fenced dog parks require regular patrols to ensure safety, compliance, and responsible use, as well as community engagement through initiatives such as Pups in the Park events. Community expectation is that Council will have a visible presence in these facilities to manage conflicts.<br><br>An additional part time staff resource (8 hours a week) would be required for Community Laws team to undertake patrols/enforcement and to ensure a visible presence across three proposed fenced dog parks, including weekends and after business hours where dog parks have the most volume of users.<br><br>Pups in Parks and similar dog behaviour initiatives for specific fenced dog parks will be $3,500 annually. This cost include the qualified behaviouralist, materials and officer time. |
| **Legislative and Risk Implications** | The *Victorian Domestic Animals Act 1994* sets out requirements for registration, control, and management of dogs within municipalities, with local councils responsible for balancing community |

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| | safety, responsible pet ownership, and provision of suitable facilities. Under Council's community laws, dogs may only be off-leash if under effective control. The report aligns with Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan and legislative obligations.<br><br>The Domestic Animals Act 1994 requires councils to prepare domestic animal management plans and allows councils to make local laws and orders relating to domestic animals. The Council Order outlines responsibilities for dog owners, including requirements for behaviour and control in public spaces such as dog off-leash areas and dog parks.<br><br>The *Local Government Act 2020* also gives authorised officers the powers needed to administer and enforce relevant legislation. |
| **Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations** | The Draft Fenced Dog Park Technical Report has been assessed against the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, Gender Equality Act 2020, Child Safe Standards,* and Council's Access and Inclusion principles.<br><br>The proposal enhances several human rights. Fenced dog parks improve the Right to Equality by providing safer, more accessible spaces for older adults, people with disabilities, women and girls, and families who may feel unsafe around uncontrolled dogs in shared areas. They support the Protection of Families and Children by reducing interactions between off-leash dogs and children in general play spaces, consistent with Child Safe Standards. The parks also enhance the Right to Participate in Public Life, offering inclusive recreational opportunities for dog owners and non-dog owners alike, and improve the Freedom of Movement of other park users by separating dog activity areas from shared recreation spaces.<br><br>The proposal supports gender equity by improving perceptions of safety, particularly for women and gender-diverse community members, and embeds universal design principles that strengthen disability access.<br><br>The report does not identify any material limitations to human rights. Minor, temporary impacts from construction or changes to open space allocation are considered reasonable and proportionate. |

10.1 (cont)

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| **Community Engagement** | The Draft Technical Report draws on insights from previous relevant community engagement outcomes, including:<br>• Managing Dogs in Parks and Reserves project<br>• Domestic Animal Management Plan<br>• Proposed dog park at Simpson Park<br>• Customer service requests and complaints<br>• Multiple community petitions<br>• Site-specific feedback on East Burwood Reserve Masterplan, Eley Park, Morton Park, Mahoney's Park, and Box Hill Gardens.<br>It is recommended that the Draft Technical Report be released for community and stakeholder engagement. This engagement is scheduled for early 2026 and will include a range of activities to gather insights, such as a Yoursay survey, targeted stakeholder consultation, and pop-up sessions and will help shape the final report.<br>Following the completion of engagement, the revised report will be presented to Council for endorsement. |
| **Innovation and Continuous Improvement** | The Draft Technical Report adopts an evidence-based approach, drawing on research, benchmarking, and past community feedback to guide future facility development.<br>The report promotes education programs, and operational improvements to reduce user conflict. It explores alternative delivery and maintenance options, such as partnerships and underutilised spaces, sustainable waste management (long drop dog toilet), engaging signage, and ongoing monitoring of use. |
| **Collaboration** | Comprehensive internal collaboration was undertaken throughout the development of the Draft Technical Report including Community Laws, Leisure and Recreation Services, Parks and Natural Environment, and Project Delivery and Assets.<br>This cross-departmental collaboration throughout all stages of report development ensured the |

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| | recommendations reflect operational realities, consider diverse perspectives, address practical implementation challenges, and integrate knowledge from teams responsible for future delivery and management.<br><br>The report also analysed approaches from neighbouring municipalities (Manningham, Maroondah, Knox, Monash, Boroondara) and reviewed strategies from councils interstate and nationally, learning from their experiences with site selection, design standards, and management approaches. |
| **Conflict of Interest** | The *Local Government Act 2020* 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.<br><br>Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter. |

**ATTACHMENT**

1 Draft Fenced Dog Park Technical Report
2 Draft Fenced Dog Park Technical Report Appendices

## 10.2 Draft Indoor Sports Plan Endorsement for Community Consultation Round 2

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| **Department** | Leisure and Recreation Services<br>Director Community Services |

Attachment

### SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the Draft Indoor Sports Plan (ISP) and to proceed with the second round of community and stakeholder engagement in early 2026.

The ISP provides a long-term strategic framework to guide future investment, partnerships, and facility development to meet the municipality's growing indoor sport demand over the next 20 years. It draws on extensive evidence, including demographic and participation data, facility condition audits, and engagement with over 900 community respondents, 29 clubs,19 schools and relevant peak bodies; to identify priority facility needs and delivery pathways.

The ISP highlights a shortfall of compliant indoor courts, particularly for basketball, badminton, table tennis, and gymnastics by 2046, with current occupancy rates exceeding 80 percent across Council and non-Council venues.

Key recommendations include:

1. Adopting a strategic investment approach that prioritises optimising the use of existing facilities, followed by supporting and partnering with schools and private providers, and lastly, developing new Council-built facilities;
2. Endorsing a Strategic Partnership Framework to guide collaboration with non-Council providers; and
3. Adopting a Strategic Roadmap for Council-owned facilities, including the regional table tennis centre, new gymnastics facility, and future options for the Slater Reserve Stadium.

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the Draft Indoor Sports Plan to proceed with community and stakeholder consultation in early 2026.

### KEY MATTERS

Council commissioned Otium Planning Group to prepare the Indoor Sports Plan (ISP) - a sport-focused, evidence-based, whole-of-network approach to indoor sport provision. The Plan supports the recently endorsed Integrated Council Plan 2025-29 and will also inform the Community Infrastructure Plan.

A Council briefing (21 July 2025) provided the comprehensive state of play for major and emerging indoor sports in Whitehorse, including mapping of Council

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and non-Council facilities, facilities in neighbouring Local Government Areas, benchmarking case studies, demand pressures, and the need for a municipal framework to guide partnerships and future development.

The Draft ISP outlines a planning framework comprising facility classification, strategic approach, partnership framework, and a roadmap for Council-managed facilities. It has undergone extensive internal review, incorporating subject matter expertise from strategic planning, leisure management, club liaison, project delivery, and facility maintenance, as well as feedback from key external partners.

Please note that the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) population projections and recently adopted Victoria's Housing Statements are excluded from the population forecast. The Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA)-related demand has been addressed through the Precinct Structure Plan panel hearing process, informed by expert witness demand analysis and recommendations.

Updated population data for Whitehorse, incorporating SRLA and Housing Targets, may become available in early 2026. This updated dataset will then be used to inform revisions to the Draft ISP where appropriate.

**DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS**

**Key Findings and Insights**

- The ISP identifies significant capacity shortfalls in the provision of indoor courts across Whitehorse, projected to increase with population growth and participation trends.
- A partnership-based funding strategy is essential, as several projects have regional significance and cannot be delivered solely by Council.
- The Strategic Road Map provides a sequencing framework based on readiness, demand, partnership potential, and advocacy alignment.
- High-value regional facilities such as the Nunawading Basketball Centre and regional Table Tennis Centre will require co-investment from Federal and State governments and sporting associations.
- Review cycles every two years will ensure emerging community needs, industry trends, and funding opportunities are incorporated into ongoing implementation priorities.

**Factors to be Considered in Decision-Making**

When forming an opinion or making decisions regarding the ISP implementation, Council should consider:

- **Strategic Alignment:** Consistency with Council's Plan, Open Space Strategy, Community Infrastructure Plan, and Sport and Recreation Strategy.
- **Funding Feasibility:** Availability and timing of external grants, advocacy opportunities, and Council's long-term financial capacity.

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- **Partnership Potential:** Collaboration opportunities with the Department of Education, universities, private schools, sporting associations, and neighbouring councils.
- **Community Impact:** Accessibility, equity of provision across precincts, and minimising user displacement.
- **Operational Sustainability:** Lifecycle cost, staffing, and programming efficiencies derived from larger, multi-purpose facilities.
- **Site Constraints and Risks:** Land availability, parking capacity, open space implications, and potential community sensitivities (traffic, noise, safety).

**Implementation Approach**

Implementation of the ISP will require a combination of capital and non-capital commitments over a 15-year horizon. The preferred approach is a phased delivery of key facility redevelopments, supported by:

- Optimising programming and utilisation of existing facilities,
- Strengthening strategic partnerships, and
- Advocating for external funding opportunities for partnership opportunities and improving Council managed facilities.

1. Optimising the use of existing facilities

Council should prioritise optimising the use of existing facilities by redistributing and maximising indoor sports allocations across the network of both Council-owned and non-Council facilities.

Examples of potential actions include:

- Introducing new programs, such as a pickleball competition at Sportlink, within available time slots not currently used by netball, basketball, volleyball or futsal.
- Leveraging opportunities that may arise from future developments, such as potential additional courts at the Nunawading Basketball Centre, to enable greater flexibility of use across the network (e.g. freeing up Sportlink for more netball use).
- Exploring non-traditional or underutilised spaces to expand opportunities for indoor sports programming (e.g. rooftop for semi-enclosed space, outdoor futsal courts to supplement the indoor activities).
- Applying the Fair Access Policy principles in the planning, design and allocation of indoor sports facilities.
- Allocating adequate Council resources to pursue and manage partnership opportunities with non-Council facility providers.

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2. Strategic Partnership Framework

In line with the strategic investment approach, Council should prioritise partnerships and collaborative opportunities with schools and private providers following the optimisation of existing facility use.

The Strategic Partnerships Framework (Section 6 of the ISP) provides guiding principles for how the City of Whitehorse will engage in partnerships that expand community access to indoor sports facilities. The framework ensures transparent, equitable, and value-driven collaboration between Council and external partners to deliver facilities aligned with Council's strategic objectives and community needs.

The Framework supports strategic partnership with non-Council providers in new or upgraded indoor sports facilities where shared use and community benefit can be demonstrated. It promotes a consistent approach for prioritising projects, assessing partnership proposals, and determining Council's level of investment.

Key Considerations include:

- The Framework applies to indoor sports identified in the Whitehorse Indoor Sports Plan, including basketball, netball, badminton, gymnastics, table tennis, volleyball, futsal, martial arts, and emerging sports.
- Partnerships may include agreements with schools, universities, private operators, neighbouring councils, State and Federal Governments, and sporting associations.
- Council's position in negotiations emphasises transparency, shared vision, mutual accountability, and measurable community outcomes.
- Key mechanisms include Memoranda of Understanding, Community Joint Use Agreements, and commercial or lease arrangements depending on partner type and opportunity.
- Currently identified priority partnership opportunities are captured in Table 1.

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Table 1. Priority Partnerships.

| Key Partner | Targeted Outcome | Partnership Approach |
|---|---|---|
| Box Hill Senior Secondary College | Proposal to provide three new courts | • Community Joint Use Agreements<br>• Joint funding advocacy to State and Federal Government |
| Koonung Secondary College | Proposal to provide three new courts | • Community Joint Use Agreements<br>• Joint funding advocacy to State and Federal Government |
| Forest Hill College | Proposal to provide four new courts | • Community Joint Use Agreements<br>• Joint funding advocacy to State and Federal Government |
| Kerrimuir Primary School | Proposal to provide one new court | • Community Joint Use Agreements |
| Presbyterian Ladies College | Proposal to provide three new courts and gymnastics hall | • Planning permit support to facilitate community access<br>• Lease/license agreement |
| Forest Hill Chase Shopping Centre | Proposal to provide three new courts | • Planning permit support to facilitate community access<br>• Lease/license agreement |
| Box Hill Private Table Tennis Facility | Proposal to provide a new twelve-table facility | • Planning permit support to facilitate community access<br>• Lease/license agreement |
| Blackburn Calisthenics College | Proposal to provide a new dance studio | Planning permit support to facilitate community access |
| Boroondara / Monash City Council | Proposal to provide a regional table tennis facility | Partner in planning process |

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3. Improving Council-managed facilities

While the preferred approach focuses on progressing short-term priorities such as the Nunawading Basketball Centre and Walker Park Gymnastics Facility, a range of options have been identified for major sites to ensure flexibility and informed decision-making as circumstances evolve. Options for key facilities include:

- **Nunawading Gymnastics and Sports Complex**
  - *Option 1:* Redevelop the existing Walker Park facility as a district gymnastics centre.
  - *Option 2:* Relocate to an alternative location (e.g. an industrial site).
- **New Regional Table Tennis Centre**
  - *Option 1: Extend AQBH to include the regional table tennis centre.*
  - *Option 2: Purchase / Lease an industrial site in Burwood area in partnership with a neighbouring municipality.*
  - *Option 3: Re-purpose Slater Reserve Stadium and upgrade front of house area as the regional table tennis centre potentially in partnership with Manningham City Council.*
- **Aqualink Box Hill (AQBH)**
  - *Option 1: Extend the stadium to include a regional table tennis facility.*
  - *Option 2: Extend the stadium with two additional multi-purpose indoor courts as a long-term action to accommodate SRL populations.*
- **Slater Reserve Stadium**
  - *Option 1: Undertake repairs to maintain operations.*
  - *Option 2: Redevelop the existing two-court facility on a like-for-like basis when the facility reaches end of life.*
  - *Option 3: Transition the Blackburn Vikings Basketball Association to AQBH and decommission Slater Reserve.*
  - *Option 4: Transition Vikings to AQBH and repurpose Slater Reserve as a regional table tennis centre.*

These options are outlined within the Strategic Road Map (Section 5.6) and Options Analysis (Section 5.7) of the ISP.

The non-capital initiatives include the review of Council's business structure and resourcing to strengthen pursuit of partnership opportunities with the Department of Education, universities, private schools, commercial operators, and neighbouring Councils, as outlined in Table 52 (Partnership Approach) of the ISP.

A comparative analysis of the options highlights the following key considerations:

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Table 2. Option Evaluations.

| Facility/Option | Short-Term Impact | Long-Term Impact | Indicative Cost (excl. escalation) | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Nunawading Gymnastics (Opt 1) – Redevelop at Walker Park** | Supports continuity of club operations at current location; may require temporary displacement during redevelopment. | Strengthens the existing sports hub and supports long-term community use. | $10M | Preferred by club; higher capital cost but strong community interest. |
| **Nunawading Gymnastics (Opt 2) – Relocate to alternate site** | Club would be displaced from their historical home base, potentially away from membership catchment; may provide better design flexibility. | Potential for higher occupancy costs.<br>Lower capital cost but uncertain long-term sustainability. | $70K feasibility; further costs subject to site selection. | Feasibility not yet tested with the gymnastic club. |
| **Aqualink Box Hill (Opt 1) – Table tennis centre** | Delivers regional table tennis facility; maximises shared infrastructure. | Increased parking pressure and open space loss. | $18–22M | Aligns with regional sports provision priorities. |
| **Aqualink Box Hill (Opt 2) – 2 multi-sport courts** | Expands multi-sport capacity; consistent with existing use. | Improves financial sustainability by operating a 5-court facility; loss of public tennis courts | $20–25M | Long-term option; depends on future demand and site constraints. |
| **Slater Reserve (Opt 1) – Necessary repairs** | Maintains operations in the short term. | Extends functional life but not sustainable beyond 10–15 years. | $100–150K | Interim maintenance measure only. |

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| **Slater Reserve (Opt 2) – Replace like for like at end of life** | Rebuilds existing provision. | Retains local access but limited scalability and higher operational cost per user. | $25–30M | Viable if Council maintains two-court model. |
| **Slater Reserve (Opt 3) – Transition & Decommission** | Enables network consolidation; temporary transition cost. | Increases network efficiency; reduces local impacts. | $500K–1M + $20–25M for AQBH expansion | Improves long-term viability and network cohesion. |
| **Slater Reserve (Opt 4) – Transition & Repurpose for table tennis** | Supports table tennis provision; maintains site use. | May face resident concerns over access, traffic and noise. | $3–6M | Moderate cost; requires further feasibility testing. |

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**Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details**

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| **Strategic Alignment** | Community, We aim to foster a connected, inclusive, safe and active community where everyone feels a sense of belonging.<br><br>The Whitehorse Indoor Sports Plan has been informed by a comprehensive review of relevant strategic documents, including City of Whitehorse strategies and masterplans, State Government policies, and peak sporting body plans. A detailed analysis is included in Appendix 4 – Strategic Review.<br><br>*Alignment with the Whitehorse Community Vision 2040*<br><br>The Plan aligns closely with Theme Seven: Health and Wellbeing, which emphasises enabling an active, healthy and socially connected community. With 66% of Whitehorse residents not achieving sufficient physical activity, improving indoor sports provision directly responds to this priority.<br><br>Alignment with the Council Plan 2025–2029 and Supporting Strategies<br><br>The Indoor Sports Plan delivers on several key strategic directions of the Council Plan:<br>• Community (Strategic Direction 1)<br>– *Objective 1.3 – A healthy and active community*<br>– Commitment to supporting active living, promoting community health, and increasing participation in sport and recreation<br>– Measures relating to participation levels, satisfaction with facilities, and health outcomes<br>• Built Environment (Strategic Direction 2)<br>– *Objective 2.2 – Well-used community facilities and shared spaces*<br>– Planning for suitable, accessible and multifunctional recreation facilities<br><br>The Plan also aligns with the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2025–26, which highlights active living as a key health promotion strategy. |

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| | *Integration with Council's Broader Strategic Framework*<br><br>The Indoor Sports Plan will guide future planning and investment in indoor sport and recreation, and will inform:<br><br>• the Whitehorse Recreation Strategy review<br>• the Long-Term Financial Plan<br>• the Asset Plan<br>• the Four-Year Budget and Capital Works Program<br>• the Revenue and Rating Plan, Workforce Plan, and Community Engagement Policy<br><br>The Plan builds on the Whitehorse Indoor Sports Feasibility Study (2020) and connects high-level strategic goals with site-specific masterplans and feasibility studies.<br><br>*Alignment with State Government Policy*<br><br>Local Government is required to provide equitable access to community sporting infrastructure under State and Federal legislation. The Indoor Sports Plan aligns with:<br><br>• the Fair Access Policy Roadmap, guiding equitable access for women and girls<br>• the Melbourne East Regional Sport and Recreation Strategy (MERSRS) Fair Access Policy, endorsed by Council<br><br>*Peak Sporting Bodies and Regional Context*<br><br>Peak sporting bodies (basketball, netball, badminton, table tennis and others) have identified a need for additional indoor court access to support participation pathways and program delivery. State Facilities Plans for key sports also identify a significant indoor court shortfall in the Eastern Metropolitan Region.<br><br>Recent regional facilities, such as Mullum Mullum Stadium, Maroondah Nets and the State Basketball and Gymnastics Centre, support Whitehorse residents, but do not resolve the local shortfall.<br><br>The strategic review confirms:<br><br>1. Strong strategic support for improving indoor sports provision; |

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| | 2. Local Government obligations to ensure equitable access; and<br>3. Clear demand from peak bodies for more indoor court access.<br>These factors collectively reinforce the need for the Whitehorse Indoor Sports Plan to guide future provision, investment and decision-making. |
| **Financial and Resource Implications** | Implementation of the Whitehorse Indoor Sports Plan (ISP) will require a combination of capital and non-capital commitments over a 15-year horizon. The scale of proposed redevelopments, optimisation initiatives and investigations will have significant implications for both current and future budgets.<br>*Capital Financial Implications*<br>The ISP identifies several major capital projects to be delivered in a staged manner.<br>Some of these capital projects will require consideration for inclusion in future Capital Works Programs and long-term financial planning. Several are unfunded or partially funded and will rely on external funding, partnership contributions, or staged delivery to remain financially feasible.<br>*Operational and Maintenance Implications*<br>New and expanded indoor sports facilities will likely impose increased operational and lifecycle maintenance costs.<br>These recurrent impacts will be quantified in future business cases and operating models before any capital commitment is finalised.<br>*Non-Capital Resourcing Requirements*<br>The ISP identifies several non-capital initiatives that will require officer time and, potentially, additional staffing resources:<br>• Strengthened partnership management with schools, universities, commercial operators and neighbouring councils<br>• Coordinating new Joint Use Agreements and lease/licence arrangements<br>• Developing allocation frameworks in line with Fair Access Policy principles |

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| | • Optimising use of Council and non-Council facilities through enhanced programming, scheduling and negotiation<br>• Supporting investigations into semi-enclosed, rooftop or alternative indoor activity spaces<br><br>As partnership activity expands, a review of Council's internal business structure and resources may be required to adequately manage negotiations, agreements, and ongoing relationship management.<br><br>*External Funding and Partnerships*<br><br>Many ISP priorities depend on successful advocacy and collaboration with funding bodies and partners. The Strategic Partnerships Framework identifies opportunities across multiple school and private venues that may reduce Council's capital burden through co-investment or shared operating models. These opportunities will be explored on a case-by-case basis and will require further financial evaluation before commitments are made. |
| **Legislative and Risk Implications** | *Legislative Context*<br><br>The preparation of the Whitehorse Indoor Sports Plan (ISP) aligns with Council's obligations under several key pieces of legislation and policy frameworks:<br><br>• *Local Government Act 2020* – requires Council to plan strategically for the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipality, including the provision of equitable and accessible community infrastructure.<br>• *Gender Equality Act 2020* – mandates fair and inclusive access to Council services and facilities, directly supporting implementation of the Fair Access Policy Roadmap, endorsed by Council through the Melbourne East Regional Sport and Recreation Strategy.<br>• *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* – require Council to ensure indoor sports facilities and program delivery support equitable access for all community members.<br>• *Planning and Environment Act 1987* – guides long-term land use planning and informs the |

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| | feasibility and siting considerations for future indoor sports infrastructure.<br>• Workplace Health and Safety legislation – applies to the safe operation, maintenance, and staffing of new or expanded indoor recreation facilities.<br>The ISP provides Council with an evidence-based strategic framework to meet these statutory responsibilities and to plan responsibly for future indoor sports infrastructure and service provision.<br>*Implications if Council Does Not Proceed*<br>If Council does not resolve to adopt or continue implementing the ISP:<br>• Strategic misalignment may occur between future indoor sports needs and Council's capital planning, potentially resulting in under-provision of indoor sports facilities.<br>• Increasing unmet demand for indoor courts and specialist facilities (e.g. gymnastics, table tennis) may lead to heightened community dissatisfaction and limited participation opportunities.<br>• Reduced access and inequity may emerge, particularly for women, girls and people with disability, conflicting with Fair Access Policy requirements and potentially exposing Council to future compliance risks.<br>• Lost opportunities for partnerships with schools, universities and private providers could increase Council's capital burden.<br>• Funding disadvantages may occur, as external grant bodies typically require clear evidence of strategic planning.<br>*Risk Assessment*<br>A risk assessment has been undertaken with reference to Council's Risk Management Framework. Key risks associated with implementing the ISP recommendations include:<br>• Financial Risk (High): Major capital projects has significant cost implications. Without staged planning and external funding, there is |

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| | potential pressure on Council's long-term financial sustainability.<br>• Reputational Risk (Medium–High): Failure to address known facility shortfalls or to provide equitable access may lead to criticism from sporting clubs, peak bodies and the wider community.<br>• Operational Risk (Medium): Increased facility demands may exceed current staffing capacity, requiring resourcing adjustments.<br>• Partnership Risk (Medium): Reliance on external partners (schools, private operators, neighbouring councils) introduces uncertainties regarding timelines, funding contributions and access conditions.<br>• Community Risk (Medium): Indoor facility shortages may limit opportunities for physical activity, impacting community wellbeing.<br>• Asset and Compliance Risk (Medium): Ageing facilities without investment (e.g. Slater Reserve) may fail to meet contemporary standards, increasing maintenance costs and safety risks.<br>Mitigation measures include staged implementation, business case development, structured partnership agreements, Fair Access policy application, continuous monitoring of facility utilisation, and early engagement with Finance on funding implications. |
| **Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations** | The Whitehorse Indoor Sports Plan (ISP) contributes to obligations related to *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, *Gender Equality Act 2020*, *Child Safe Standards*, and *the Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The ISP strengthens equitable and inclusive access to indoor sports facilities and programs across the municipality.<br>No material limitations on human rights have been identified. Temporary impacts, such as access disruption during redevelopment or the reallocation of facilities, will be managed through clear communication and equitable transition planning at the appropriate time. |
| **Community Engagement** | Whitehorse residents and key indoor sports stakeholders had the opportunity to provide input to |

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| | help shape the Whitehorse Indoor Sports Plan. The engagement was conducted in August 2024:<br>• Community survey of the Whitehorse community - 928 respondents.<br>• Survey of local sporting clubs and associations - 29 respondents to the survey.<br>• Survey of local schools - 19 respondents to the survey.<br>• Interviews with relevant State Sporting Associations (SSAs).<br>• Interviews with a targeted local sporting club and association. The clubs and associations chosen include those that are key tenants or managers of facilities and competitions.<br>• Internal Council Officer discussions.<br>Refer to Appendix 8, Community and Stakeholder Engagement Findings Paper, for a detailed analysis of engagement results.<br>Pending Council approval, Round 2 community and stakeholder consultation is proposed for Feb/Mar 2026, supported by a communications package coordinated through Communications & Engagement. The consultation will test priorities, partnership principles, and investment sequencing before preparing the Final Plan for adoption around July / August 2026. |
| **Innovation and Continuous Improvement** | The Whitehorse Indoor Sports Plan (ISP) drives several innovation and continuous improvement outcomes for Council's long-term planning, facility management, and community service delivery.<br>The ISP introduces a network-based planning approach for indoor sports, shifting from single-facility decision-making to a coordinated municipal system. This represents a significant improvement in how Council prioritises investment, allocates use, and responds to emerging demand.<br>The Plan also strengthens data-driven decision-making, recommending annual monitoring of participation, utilisation and facility performance. This new evidence-based monitoring framework will support continuous improvement in programming, allocation processes and future capital planning. |

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| | The ISP embeds Fair Access Policy principles, ensuring that facility planning and scheduling are more equitable, transparent and inclusive, improving customer experience, particularly for women, girls and under-represented groups.<br><br>The recommended Strategic Partnerships Framework introduces a more structured method for engaging with schools, universities, private providers and neighbouring councils. This approach encourages innovative shared-use models, improves community access to non-Council facilities, and reduces duplication of infrastructure investment.<br><br>In addition, the ISP proposes exploring non-traditional indoor activity spaces, such as rooftop semi-enclosed courts and outdoor futsal courts, demonstrating innovation in how Council may expand capacity within existing land constraints.<br><br>Overall, the ISP promotes more innovative, coordinated and efficient service delivery, improving outcomes for customers while strengthening Council's internal planning processes. |
| **Collaboration** | The development of the ISP involved extensive collaboration with a wide range of partners, stakeholders and sector experts to ensure the Plan reflects community needs, industry standards and regional opportunities.<br><br>*Neighbouring Councils and Regional Partners*<br><br>Engagement with Manningham, Maroondah, Boroondara and Monash City Councils provided insight into regional indoor sport trends, recent facility developments, and opportunities for shared investment, particularly in relation to regional table tennis provision and cross-boundary participation patterns.<br><br>*State Government and Statutory Bodies*<br><br>Officers reviewed the State Government policies and strategic directions to identify funding opportunities, alignment with statewide participation priorities, and potential joint-use partnerships with government schools. This collaboration helped shape the Strategic Partnerships Framework contained in the ISP.<br><br>*Peak Sporting Bodies* |

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| | Badminton Victoria, Basketball Victoria, Table Tennis Victoria, Gymnastics Victoria, Netball Victoria, Volleyball Victoria and the Football Federation Victoria provided technical guidance on facility standards, participation forecasts, competition requirements and future growth trends. These insights informed the options analysis and demand projections.<br><br>*Schools, Universities and Private Providers*<br><br>Collaboration with Box Hill Senior Secondary College, Koonung Secondary College, Forest Hill College, PLC and Deakin University supported the exploration of shared-use or co-investment models. Market scan and engagement with private facility operators and commercial venues enabled assessment of viable partnership and access arrangements.<br><br>*Local Sporting Clubs and Community Groups*<br><br>Consultation with local clubs, volunteers and community organisations contributed detailed operational insights, participation challenges and preferences for future facility design. This partnership strengthened the evidence base behind the Plan's recommendations.<br><br>*Internal Council Departments*<br><br>Cross-department collaboration occurred with Active Communities, Leisure Facilities, Planning, Sustainability, Capital Works, Major Projects, Facility Maintenance, Asset Management, and Advocacy to ensure technical, financial and operational alignment. |
| **Conflict of Interest** | No conflicts of interest, whether direct, indirect or perceived, have been identified in relation to the preparation of the Whitehorse Indoor Sports Plan or the recommendations contained in this report. |

## ATTACHMENT

1 Draft Indoor Sports Plan
2 Draft Indoor Sports Plan Appendices

## 10.3 Mahoneys Reserve Draft Masterplan Council Report

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| **Department** | Leisure and Recreation Services<br>Director Community Services |

Attachment

**SUMMARY**

This report seeks Council endorsement of the Draft Mahoney's Reserve Master Plan (the Draft Master Plan) to proceed to Round 2 community and stakeholder engagement.

The Draft Master Plan establishes a long-term vision to guide future investment and improvements at Mahoney's Reserve, Forest Hill, one of the municipality's significant multi-use open spaces. It outlines a strategic direction that balances the needs of structured sport, informal recreation, environmental enhancement, and the long-term provision of indoor sport within the broader Whitehorse network.

The Draft Master Plan responds to extensive background studies, site analysis, and detailed stakeholder engagement between 2023 and 2025. It proposes a coordinated approach to sports field upgrades, dog-walking management, play space renewal, pavilion redevelopment, and improved circulation and access. The plan also considers the future of the existing indoor sports hall and its user groups in alignment with the emerging Whitehorse Indoor Sports Plan and the Table Tennis Facility Feasibility Study currently underway.

The Draft Master Plan is consistent with Council's strategic frameworks, including the Whitehorse Open Space Strategy, Recreation Strategy, and long-term indoor sports facility directions. It prioritises accessibility, safety, environmental sustainability, and efficient use of land and community assets.

Subject to Council endorsement, the Draft Master Plan will be released for public consultation in early 2026, allowing residents, sporting clubs, indoor user groups, and broader stakeholders to provide feedback that will inform the final master plan for Council consideration later in 2026.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Endorses the Draft Master Plan to proceed to Round 2 community and stakeholder consultation in January-February 2026;
2. Reaffirms its commitment to finalising the Table Tennis Feasibility Study and to advocating to the State Government for partnership funding to progress a regional table tennis facility, contingent on the Study's findings.

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3. Approves bringing forward $117,273 from project C1250078 (2026/2027 allocation) to undertake early works to upgrade power to the site and relocate the irrigation controller.

**KEY MATTERS**

**Draft Master Plan**

Mahoney's Reserve is a municipal-level open space located in Forest Hill, that supports both structured and unstructured recreation activities.

Structured activities include soccer, cricket, indoor badminton, table tennis, carpet bowls, and Scouts, while unstructured uses include dog walking, children's play, and passive recreation.

The reserve also contains an ephemeral wetland with potential for stormwater harvesting to support future sports field irrigation.

The Draft Master Plan proposes a balanced outcome that optimises recreation and community services over the long term, addressing population growth, densification, and increasing user conflicts. Key recommendations include:

- Updating the dog off-leash designation by making the Bob Saker Oval dog-prohibited and partially fencing the southern mid-oval to enhance shared use for sports and dog walking.
- Relocating and renewing the play space to a more central location, establishing it as a Neighbourhood level play space.
- Relocating cricket practice nets to improve safety and functionality.

**Pavilion Development Options**

Planning for the new Northern Pavilion has identified four potential development options:

- Option 1 - (Recommended) Develop a new centralised pavilion for cricket and soccer, with the relocation of indoor hall user groups (table tennis, badminton, carpet bowls) to existing or future Council indoor leisure centres, such as Aqualink Box Hill or Sportlink.
- Option 2 - Develop a new centralised pavilion for cricket and soccer that includes an indoor hall space integrated within the design.
- Option 3 - Develop a new centralised pavilion for cricket and soccer, while retaining the existing hall as a separate building, upgraded to meet current compliance standards.
- Option 4 - Do nothing, continue maintaining the existing pavilions (North and South) in their current state.

The officer-recommended option (Option 1) represents a strategic direction that would enable a more efficient and contemporary use of the precinct. This approach involves supporting a transition of existing indoor user groups to an alternate venue through tailored assistance and coordination, to ensure continuity and minimal disruption to community activities.

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## DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

Mahoney's Reserve is a municipal-level open space located in Forest Hill. The site encompasses the Bob Saker Oval, main soccer pitch, south-mid oval, and south-west oval, along with two existing pavilions and one scout hall. The precinct is currently home to the Nunawading City Football Club, Nunawading Cricket Club, Hall User Groups and the 1st Tally Ho Scouts. The reserve also includes cricket practice nets and car parking areas, which are largely constrained by existing vegetation. Surrounding open-space parkland and an existing play space contribute to the site's landscape character. The Bob Saker Oval is particularly well-used by dog walkers.




Figure 1. Existing Site Conditions

### Flood Modelling

Flood modelling identifies an overland stormwater corridor (refer to Figure 2: Overland Flow Path) traversing Mahoney's Reserve. The existing Northern Pavilion and Hall are partially located within this flood overlay, creating significant constraints for future redevelopment. This presents the following development implications:

- New development or major refurbishment within this corridor requires a design response to this and may trigger planning referrals and assessments under relevant flood overlay controls.
- The new pavilion is proposed to be relocated and elevated. Significant refurbishment works would likely require elevation or relocation to comply with the flood modelling.
- Pathways and public access routes must be designed to ensure safe movement during rainfall events.

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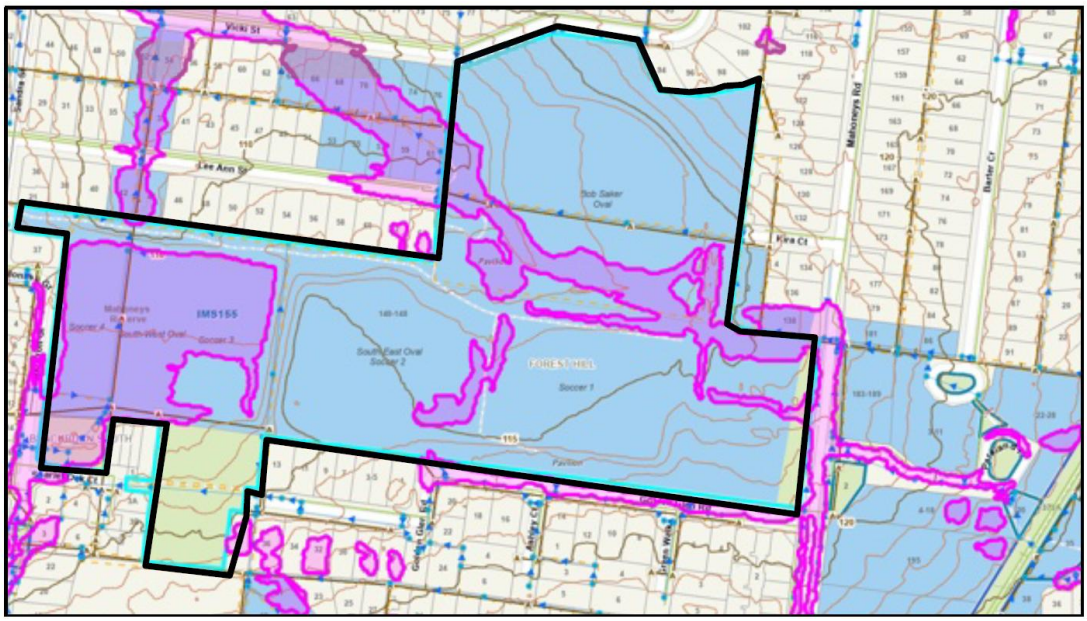



Figure 2. Overland Flow Path

**Site Background and Investigation**

The background site study and investigation identified:

- There are two vehicle entries into the reserve: the primary entry is off Mahoney's Road, and the secondary entry is off Lee Ann Street. There are estimated 138 sealed car parks, plus the Scout Hall gravel car park with an estimated 8 spaces. Within the reserve the path network throughout the reserve is limited.
- The Bob Saker Oval is a Class A oval (Whitehorse oval classification framework) and is used for senior and junior cricket. The Main Soccer Pitch is a Class AA soccer pitch and is currently used exclusively for training and matches by the soccer club's National Premier League (NPL) teams. The South Mid Oval is a Class B oval used for senior and junior cricket and soccer. The South West Oval is a Class C oval used for senior and junior cricket, and for junior soccer matches and soccer training for all ages during the summer pre-season period.
- The play space is classified as 'Neighbourhood' level. Council's recent play space audit assessed its overall condition and functionality as 'Poor'. Its location adjacent to Vicki Street is not considered the optimal site in the reserve, and it restricts use by those children attending the reserve who are siblings of soccer and cricket players.
- There is one externally accessed public toilet in the reserve that is located within the ground floor of the Northern Pavilion.
- The landscape character of Mahoney's Reserve is of open grassed playing fields set within a strong unifying canopy of native and indigenous trees. This tree canopy is visually the most prominent element of the landscape, creating a framework within which each sports field, building or car park appears as a distinct defined space. The protection and enhancement of the tree population is therefore essential to the character of the reserve. There is also an area of remnant trees in

10.3 (cont)

the south western corner of the site, which has been enhanced by planting of indigenous ground level species to create a ‘bushland’ space.

**Master Plan Key Recommendations**

1. Proposal for relocated and upgraded play

   To match the potential and scale of the site, the existing playground will be removed and replaced with a new Neighbourhood Play space in a larger, more central location within the reserve.

   Modern play equipment for multiple age groups to retain various age groups within the reserve. BBQ, picnic, and seating areas. Shade structures (natural/built) and accessible pathways. Outdoor fitness equipment and social recreation will encourage intergenerational activity.

   The new precinct will form a family recreation hub, improving accessibility for families attending sporting events and offering a welcoming space for social and unstructured play.

   It also responds to Council’s Play and Social Recreation Action Plan (in development), which identifies Mahoney’s Reserve as a priority for upgrade due to poor condition, limited accessibility and underutilisation.

2. Proposal for dog walking activity

   Conflict exists between the use of sports ovals for off-leash dog exercise and the maintenance of a safe, high-quality playing surface for organised sport. It is recommended to restore Bob Saker Oval as a premier sports field; the master plan recommends that all dog exercise (both on and off-leash) be transitioned from the oval to the South Mid and South West Ovals.

   To provide a viable alternative for the large dog-walking community, the plan proposes to:

   - Partially enclose the South Mid Oval, with a 1.2m high boundary fence installed to create a shared-use alternative, the final extent of enclosure will be confirmed following community consultation. This oval is designated for lower-level cricket and soccer, lessening the potential impact of surface degradation.
   - Moving the dog off leash area exclusively to the lower pitch was also considered as an alternative, however, this is likely to create parking and accessibility issues; therefore, the mid oval option is preferred.
   - Improving the South West Oval: The existing bollard fence along Ashcroft Grove will be replaced with a low-height chain-mesh fence.

3. Retaining and targeted improvements to the 1st Tally Ho Scout Hall

   The masterplan recommends retaining the 1st Tally Ho Scout Hall and working collaboratively with Scouts Australia to pursue targeted improvements that enhance safety, accessibility, and functionality for current and future users. Under the lease arrangement, Scouts Australia is responsible for capital renewal of the facility, and Council will advocate for

10.3 (cont)

improvements where appropriate to ensure alignment with the broader reserve interface improvements subject to funding availability.

This is supported by evidence gathered through Council's broader community infrastructure plan (in development), which identifies the hall's strong utilisation, strategic location within the reserve, and its role in servicing the wider catchment of surrounding Scout groups.

The proposed improvements would include, replacement of flooring, installing heating and cooling, providing accessible entry access to the building, undertaking waterproofing of the main store area beneath the hall, and sealing of the adjacent carpark.

4. Proposed improvements to carparking and vehicle circulation

   The new central pavilion will be located partly on the existing central car park, resulting in the loss of approximately 40 car spaces. To compensate, the master plan proposes the construction of a new offset car park accommodating around 40-44 spaces as shown on the reserve masterplan.

   The pavilion must sit above the 1:100-year flood level, about 300 mm higher than the current car park surface. Locating the pavilion on part of the carpark minimises earthworks and integrates directly with pedestrian routes to the Bob Saker Oval and the main soccer pitch.

   Further to this, the master plan recommends opening up the vehicle access through Kira Court to allow through traffic access into the reserve with consultation with residents. This will improve vehicle circulation and reduce congestion at the main Ashcroft Grove entry, providing a "kiss and drop" arrangement.

5. Enhanced Pedestrian Circulation Network

   The master plan proposes a connected and accessible pedestrian network linking key areas of the reserve. A new perimeter path will create a continuous walking and running loop around the ovals, connecting to the new central pavilion, car parks, and spectator areas.

   Upgraded DDA-compliant paths from Ashcroft Grove, Mahoney's Road, and Lee Ann Street will improve access, supported by pedestrian lighting and wayfinding.

   These upgrades enhance safety, accessibility, and connectivity throughout the reserve and link with the broader Box Hill to Burwood Trail active transport network.

6. Proposal to increase tree canopy cover and vegetation

   The master plan prioritises the enhancement and expansion of tree canopy as a defining feature of Mahoney's Reserve. New tree planting will strengthen the existing native and indigenous framework, improving shade, biodiversity, and the visual cohesion of the reserve's open spaces.

   Supplementary canopy tree planting along ovals, paths, and car parks to improve shade and comfort for users, across the reserve (approx. 50 new trees).

10.3 (cont)

Strengthening planting density in the northeast corner to better screen adjacent properties and enhance the park's green edge.

Ongoing management of the bushland park and wetland to protect remnant vegetation and improve water quality outcomes, including replanting with indigenous aquatic and riparian vegetation. Rehabilitation of wetland edges and removal of invasive species. Possible improvements to stormwater inflows and sediment control.

Renew and enhance the existing wetland for stormwater management and biodiversity.

7. Pavilion Redevelopment, Options

One of the key recommendations of the Draft Master plan concerns the redevelopment approach for the Northern Pavilion. This is a unique circumstance, as the existing facility includes a single badminton-sized indoor sports hall situated within a major public open space in a predominantly residential area.

Concurrent with the Mahoney's Reserve Master Plan, the Whitehorse Indoor Sports Plan is being developed. While this plan is still in progress, its emerging directions support a consolidated approach to indoor sports facility development, rather than maintaining isolated single-court facilities such as the Northern Pavilion Hall. In line with this direction, and to support the ongoing continuity of the hall user groups and their growth and sustainability, the following will be explored explore:

- Increased access to badminton and table tennis facilities at Sportlink.
- The development of a dedicated table tennis facility in Whitehorse, currently under investigation through the Whitehorse Table Tennis Facility Feasibility Study.

Beyond indoor sports network considerations, Mahoney's Reserve continues to experience increasing pressure from competing uses, including off-leash dog activities, sporting events, and limited car parking capacity. To support the long-term functionality of the reserve, relocating indoor sports uses to a more strategic and consolidated location has been identified as an appropriate approach.

However, the current indoor sports hall is well utilised by 12 user groups engaged in badminton, table tennis, and carpet bowls. These groups represent a multicultural and demographic, for whom the facility provides an important avenue for recreation and social connection. The potential discontinuation of indoor sports activities at Mahoney's Reserve, even with satisfactory alternative venues offered, may therefore create a sense of community displacement.

To inform decision-making, four development options have been prepared, each considering functionality, user experience, accessibility, cost, and alignment with the future directions of the Whitehorse Indoor Sports Plan and the Table Tennis Feasibility Study. Detail and breakdown of scope,

10.3 (cont)

inclusions, and cost assumptions are provided in Appendix – Pavilion Development Options.

Table 1. Pavilion Development Options.

| Option | Description | Implications | Indicative Cost (ex GST) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. New Central Pavilion + Indoor Sports Relocated | Construct a new central pavilion for outdoor sports and consolidate indoor sports at existing and future indoor venues, such as Sportlink. Considered temporary if a regional table tennis facility is delivered. | Optimised network efficiency; minor Sportlink upgrades to support transition. Not the preferred option of Hall user groups. | ~$14.8 M |
| 2. New Centralised Pavilion (Including Hall and Indoor Sports) | Construct an integrated central pavilion incorporating football, cricket, and indoor recreation spaces. | New multi-use pavilion; hall (409.3 m² additional area); specialist flooring and sports lighting; storage and seating included. Increases external funding requirement. Not aligned with future indoor sports provision and does not meet the requirements of a regional Table Tennis facility. | ~$17.2 M |
| 3. New Central Pavilion + Partial Retention of North Pavilion | Seeking to combine the new central pavilion with a partial refurbishment of the existing hall. | This would seek to retain the existing hall structure; significant DDA and amenity upgrades, compliance upgrade works, flood overlay would challenge the feasibility. Impacts to centralised playspace and the centralised pavilion functionality. | ~$16.1 M |

10.3 (cont)

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| 4. Retain North Pavilion and Hall | Maintain existing facilities with essential maintenance only. Facilities remain non-compliant and unable to support future growth. | Retains status quo; accessibility limitations; high maintenance liabilities; sighting within flood overlay.<br>This would not meet the functional requirements of many of the stakeholders as the facility has a number or non-compliance.<br>The facility does not provide provision for growth for indoor sports which is at capacity. | Ongoing maintenance commitments to multiple existing assets. Does not meet functional requirements.<br>Renewal costs for key building elements are expected to rise significantly from FY2030-31, with full replacement likely required by FY2035 due to the age, condition, and non-compliance of the existing pavilion. |

**Alternate Venue and User Group Fees and Charges**

Should redevelopment of the Northern pavilion occur, and indoor groups are relocated due to the delivery of the project, Sportlink has been identified as a suitable venue to accommodate table tennis, badminton and carpet bowls activities, with pricing aligned to the endorsed community hire framework. Council proposes to work with existing indoor user groups at Mahoney's Reserve to support them through a coordinated transition process.

Sportlink is a modern, multi-use indoor sports centre that provides a suitable and sustainable long-term location for both recreational and competition-level activities. The venue is already well-established within the municipality's indoor sports network and offers the flexibility to accommodate badminton, table tennis, and other social recreation programs in line with community demand.

The facility includes a range of contemporary amenities such as accessible change facilities, community and meeting rooms, spectator seating, and shared-use storage, making it well aligned with current standards for inclusive and flexible sport and recreation facilities. Its co-location with existing parking, lighting, and circulation infrastructure supports safe and convenient access for participants and visitors.

Sportlink's operational model allows for shared-use programming across multiple user groups and age demographics, enabling efficient scheduling, casual hire opportunities, and social connection. The venue's design and management approach reflect Council's direction to maximise community

10.3 (cont)

access to existing facilities while reducing duplication of smaller, single-purpose spaces.

The indoor user group pricing structure has been assessed as part of the broader analysis of potential alternate venues. While indicative at this stage, modelling suggests there are pricing options that are considered fair, reasonable, and aligned with community expectations.

In the longer term, and currently being assessed for feasibility, the development of a dedicated Regional Table Tennis Facility would provide a purpose-built venue designed to meet the sport's regional needs and secure a sustainable long-term home for table tennis participation in Whitehorse.

The feasibility study is likely to provide the evidence supporting the need for a regional facility which would complement existing community-based venues, such as Sportlink, which will continue to serve as a well-suited location for recreational and social participation.

**Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details**

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| **Strategic Alignment** | Built, We aspire to develop safe, accessible, and attractive public spaces and infrastructure that meet community needs and adapt to growth.<br><br>The Master plan is strongly aligned with the following Council Plans and Strategies:<br><br>• Whitehorse Council Plan 2021-2025<br>• Whitehorse Recreation Strategy 2015-2024<br>• Whitehorse Open Space Strategy (2025)<br>• Whitehorse Urban Forest Strategy 2021-2031<br>• Whitehorse Pavilion Development Policy (2019)<br>• Whitehorse Health & Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025<br>• Whitehorse Indoor Sports Plan and the Table Tennis Facility Feasibility Study currently in development.<br><br>The Draft Master Plan provides a coordinated, long-term response to the future needs of a growing and diversifying community. It delivers improved sports facilities, enhanced open space, upgraded play spaces, and strengthened walking and cycling connections outcomes that directly support the Council Plan, Health & Wellbeing Plan and Open Space Strategy.<br><br>The Plan also aligns with Council's strategic direction for indoor sports by consolidating standalone facilities into a modernised network, |

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>supported by the Draft Indoor Sports Plan and the Table Tennis Feasibility Study. The pavilion redevelopment, increased tree canopy, and accessible path network further support Council's environmental, inclusion, and asset renewal objectives. This ensures that Mahoney's Reserve remains a resilient, well-connected, and multifunctional municipal open space into the future.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Financial and Resource Implications</td><td>Included within the master plan background study report is an identified implementation plan and costs supported by an Opinion of Probable Costs, with a total value of $18.12 M (ex GST) - which includes allowances for Project Management (20%), Contingencies (10%), and 3% p.a. escalation. A copy of the implementation plan is also attached.<br><br>The master plan focuses on a range of areas including Access and Movement, Sporting Facilities, Recreation Facilities, Open Space and Environment with the summary of costs as shown below of the next 15 years:<br><br>
<table>
<tr><th>Area of Focus</th><th>Total Value</th></tr>
<tr><td>Access and movement</td><td>$935,000</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sporting Facilities</td><td>$14,710,000</td></tr>
<tr><td>Recreation Facilities</td><td>$1,705,000</td></tr>
<tr><td>Open Space and Environment</td><td>$770,000</td></tr>
</table>
<br>
<table>
<tr><th>Priority</th><th>Value</th><th>Year</th></tr>
<tr><td>High Priority</td><td>$12,970,000</td><td>2025/26 - 2032/33</td></tr>
<tr><td>Medium Priority</td><td>$3,740,000</td><td>2033/34 - 2037/38</td></tr>
<tr><td>Low Priority</td><td>$1,410,000</td><td>2038/39 - onwards</td></tr>
</table>
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10.3 (cont)

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| | **Advocacy Program Pavilion Funding:**<br>Unique within this project is one of the key projects, is a future identified project and listed within the current advocacy program.<br>• Total project $14.6 M<br>• Council has a maximum contribution of $6.4M<br>• External funding required $8.2M (including State/Federal partnerships)<br>**Financial Benefits:**<br>• Consolidates two ageing pavilions into one fit-for-purpose facility, reducing maintenance and lifecycle costs.<br>• Delivers lighting, power, and accessibility upgrades improving energy efficiency and operational safety to Bob Saker, Mid and lower pitches.<br>• Enhances social and recreational outcomes, supporting inclusive community use and long-term participation growth. |
| **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** | Engagement was undertaken with a large number of user groups, including hall users, sporting clubs, and community organisations.<br>Consultation methods included in-person meetings, phone interviews, and surveys.<br>**Round 1 Engagement (2023–2024)**<br>• 17 Nov 2023 - 21 Jan 2024: Online community survey via Have Your Say<br>• Dec 2023 & Jan 2024: Community pop-up sessions at Mahoney's Reserve<br>• March 2024: Meetings with hall user groups, sporting clubs, Scouts and Council staff workshops |

10.3 (cont)

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| | **Round 2 Engagement (2024–2025)**<br>• July 2024: Ward Councillor briefing on emerging directions<br>• Nov-Dec 2024: PWG and PCG meetings to review preliminary concepts<br>• March-July 2025: Meetings with hall users, Scouts, and sporting clubs to gather detailed operational and spatial requirements<br>• Apr-May 2025: Targeted user group survey<br>• 25 Sept 2025: Review of pavilion concept with sporting clubs<br>Across both rounds, feedback focused on improving accessibility, circulation, play space, lighting, sporting infrastructure, and the long-term planning of facilities within the reserve. This engagement has informed the Draft Master Plan now presented for Council consideration.<br>Feedback collected through this engagement has directly informed the Draft Master Plan and the development of pavilion options for Council consideration.<br>Refer to masterplan report, Stakeholder Engagement for detailed summary. |
| **Innovation and Continuous Improvement** | There are no Innovation and Continuous Improvement matters arising from the recommendation contained in this report. |
| **Collaboration** | The Project Manager of the Recreation and Open Space Development team have collaborated with Council officers in the below departments:<br>• Project Delivery and Assets<br>• Parks and Natural Environment<br>• Community Engagement<br>• Communications, Advocacy and Investment<br>• City Services<br>• Leisure and Recreation Services |
| **Conflict of Interest** | Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter. |

10.3 (cont)

**ATTACHMENT**

1 Mahoneys Reserve - Master Plan
2 Mahoneys Reserve - Study Report
3 Appendix - Pavilion Development Options
4 Mahoney's Reserve - Cost Plan

## 10.4 Wurundjeri Walk Master Plan

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| **Department** | Leisure and Recreation Services<br>Director Community Services |

Attachment

### SUMMARY

This report seeks Council endorsement of the Wurundjeri Walk Master Plan (the Master Plan). The Master Plan sets a clear 15-year vision for improvements at Wurundjeri Walk, 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 Wurundjeri Walk 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 reserve user groups, residents, the broader Whitehorse community, council staff, and key stakeholders.

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 Wurundjeri Walk does not commit Whitehorse City Council to funding or the delivery of the recommended projects at this stage. Implementation will be considered through the annual budget process, alongside other Council priorities.

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses the Wurundjeri Walk Master Plan.

### KEY MATTERS

The Wurundjeri Walk Master Plan includes Mirrabooka, Orchard Grove, Fulton, and Hurter-Finch Reserves. The adjoining reserves are running east-west, forming a significant linear reserve of 25 hectares known as the Wurundjeri Walk. The site is in Blackburn South within the Eley Ward. In Whitehorse Open Space Strategy (WOSS) 2025, Mirrabooka and Orchard Grove Reserve are classified as Municipal open space, and Fulton Reserve is a Neighbourhood open space.

This master plan project is highly complex due to concurrent projects including:

- A Joint Use Agreement (JUA) between Council and Department of Education (DoE) at Mirrabooka Reserve which has been endorsed, and
- Mirrabooka Reserve Pavilion Redevelopment

10.4 (cont)

The Open Space Strategy 2025 recommends as a very high priority to prepare and implement a landscape master plan for Wurundjeri Walk, to plan for the structured sporting facilities along with a diverse range of unstructured recreation facilities including consideration of a circuit path network, improving the picnic/BBQ facilities/public toilet facilities adjacent to the play space and ongoing revegetation of the waterway.

The proposed masterplan responds to key challenges identified through Round 1 Community and Stakeholder Engagement, along with findings from the site investigation, including:

- **Amenity** - The reserve requires additional amenities such as drinking fountains, and bins. Passive surveillance is limited at certain sections of the Reserve, impacting the overall comfort and usability of the space.
- **Access and Movement** - Poor legibility and wayfinding make navigation difficult, particularly at key entrances. Conflicts occur between pedestrians, cyclists, sports users, and vehicles, worsened by limited parking during simultaneous events. Footpath connections are inconsistent, with uneven surfaces and accessibility gaps along Fulton Road and within the reserve.
- **Environment** - Overuse and poor subsurface conditions on the sports fields impact maintenance and limit usability. Erosion, weeds, and sediment build-up in the wetland require attention. Future population growth will increase pressure on the reserve's natural and recreational assets.
- **People and Culture** - Shared use between the school and community causes tension during school hours. High usage creates ongoing maintenance challenges. Seasonal issues like swooping birds also affect the sense of safety and comfort for park users.

The second round of community and stakeholder engagement reflected broad community support for the draft masterplan's proposed improvements, ranging from upgraded sporting facilities and new amenities to enhanced accessibility, planting, and interpretive signage, ensuring the park continues to meet the needs of its diverse and growing user base.

In summary, the Master Plan responds to these key challenges by setting out a staged program of projects over the next fifteen years and beyond, designed to enhance community experiences and ensure that long-term environmental outcomes are balanced with recreation and social objectives.

## DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

The final Wurundjeri Walk Master Plan presents a comprehensive and site-responsive vision to guide investments, community use, and long-term management over the next 15 years.

Drawing on detailed technical studies and extensive community engagement, the master plan sets out prioritised actions across four categories of enhancements including Amenity, Access and Movement, Environment, and People and Culture. Further details of the master plan recommended actions can be found in Attachment 2 Wurundjeri Walk - Master Plan Report.

10.4 (cont)

Table 1 summarises the key proposals outlined in the master plan, the main feedback received during Round 2 of community engagement, and the key updates made in response to that feedback.

Please refer to Attachment 2 Master Plan Report Appendix Engagement Report for further information.

Table 1. Key proposal, feedback, and updates

| Key Proposal | Key Feedback | Key Updates |
|---|---|---|
| Amenity | | |
| • Upgrading sporting facilities in Mirrabooka reserve<br>• Renewal Indra Road Playground.<br>• Enhancing the Wurundjeri Wetland lookout.<br>• Adding benches at Fulton Road Reserves.<br>• Installing BBQ in Orchard Grove Playground and fitness equipment along the secondary path north of Orchard Grove Reserve. | • Preference for a centralised fitness equipment node rather than a distributed fitness loop.<br>• Requests for bins, and public toilets near Orchard Grove Playground.<br>• Support for concrete pads to improve accessibility and year-round use, with caution regarding potential drainage impacts. | • The proposed fitness equipment loop has been consolidated into a dedicated node within Orchard Grove Playground, creating a central fitness hub while minimising impacts on neighbouring residences.<br>• Aligning with WOSS 2025, and following consultation with internal subject matter experts, the project recommends the inclusion of additional facilities, bins, and a public toilet, to support longer visits at Orchard Grove Playground as a neighbourhood-level play and social recreation space. This is particularly important as access to the Mirrabooka Reserve Pavilion toilet will be restricted once the Orchard Grove Primary School fence is installed. |
| Access and Movement | | |
| • New ramps and crossings along Indra and Fulton Road | • Concerns that expanded parking could attract littering | • The proposed Orchard Grove Reserve secondary path will be relocated |

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| • A secondary gravel path at Orchard Grove Reserve<br>• A small boardwalk near Bungalook Nursery<br>• Concrete pads at key elements including bench<br>• Drinking fountains, and shelters<br>• Solar lighting at Hurter Finch Reserve<br>• Renewal of gravel paths, formalised car parks at Wurundjeri Wetland and Fulton Road<br>• Removal/cultivation of Orchard Grove furrows. | and misuse of facilities.<br>• Advocacy for a dog off-leash area within the Mirrabooka Wurundjeri Walk precinct.<br>• Path placement close to residential fences raising privacy, noise, litter, and anti-social behaviour concerns.<br>• Strong support for retaining the Orchard Grove furrows as part of the site's agricultural history. | 50 metres away from the adjacent residential properties, ensuring a wide setback from residential back fences to protect privacy. Concrete pads will be installed only for key elements such as drinking fountains, benches, and shelters, while the main path remains gravel to maintain the reserve's natural character. The furrows within Orchard Grove Reserve will be retained to preserve the site's agricultural history. An interpretive signage is recommended to acknowledge this feature and provide the educational experience to the community. |
| Environment | | |
| • New canopy and ornamental exotic tree plantings<br>• Regeneration of indigenous understorey vegetation.<br>• Native buffer zones around sports fields to provide visual screening and strengthen the reserve's bushland character.<br>• Protect and expand the existing tree canopy, increasing cover from approximately 42% to 57%, thereby improving shade provision and | • Opposition to ornamental trees in Orchard Grove Reserve, which do not align with the reserve's conservation character.<br>• Maintaining openness and avoiding excessive shading; planting behind fences may reduce visibility into the park, and dense vegetation could encourage anti-social behaviour. | • Planting proposals have been revised: planting along residential back fences has been removed, additional understorey planting is now proposed around existing trees, and exotic ornamental tree planting west of Orchard Grove Playground has been removed to retain the site's native and indigenous character. |

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| contributing to urban cooling. | | |
| People and Culture | | |
| • Build awareness of Wurundjeri Walk's cultural and historical values.<br>• indigenous planting and interpretive signage at two sites,<br>• an upgraded Jenner Street Community Notice Board | • Supportive on interpretive signage, Indigenous planting, and Clear, well-placed way finding signages at entry points and key junctions. | • N/A |

**Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details**

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| **Strategic Alignment** | The Master Plan will assist with delivering several themes of the Community Vision 2040 and the Strategic Directions of the Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029 including:<br>• Theme 1 - Diverse and Inclusive Community<br>• Theme 2 – Movement and Public Spaces<br>• Theme 5 – Sustainable Climate and Environmental Care<br>• Theme 6 – Whitehorse is an Empowered Collaborative Community<br>• Theme 7 – Health and Wellbeing<br>Meanwhile, The Master 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:<br>• Whitehorse Open Space Strategy 2025<br>• Whitehorse Play Strategy 2011 / Play and Social Recreation Action Plan (in development)<br>• Whitehorse Urban Forest Strategy 2021-2031<br>• Whitehorse Integrated Water Management Strategy 2022-2042<br>• Whitehorse Recreation Strategy 2015-2024<br>• Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025<br>• Whitehorse Climate Response Strategy 2023-2030 |

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| **Financial and Resource Implications** | The Master Plan contains high, medium and low priority projects that if implemented will impact on Council's Capital and Recurrent budgets.<br>• High priority projects are proposed from years 1-5 (FY2026/27 - FY2031/32) – **Total cost of $8,021,866 including JUA projects.**<br>• Medium priority projects are proposed from year 6-10 (FY2032/33 - FY2035/36) – **Total cost of $855,451**<br>• Long term projects are proposed for from year 11-15 (FY2037/38 - FY2040/41) – **Total cost of $982,375**<br>• Ongoing Actions projects are proposed for from year 11-15 (FY2026/27 - FY2040/41) – **Total cost of $63,595**<br>Implementation is considered to commence in FY26/27, as the sports lighting upgrade has already been scheduled in the Capital Works Program in response to asset condition.<br>Delivery timeframes are contingent upon securing approvals from Melbourne Water and United Energy for the proposed lighting and power upgrades.<br>The indicative cost for all projects is estimated at **$9.9 million**, inclusive of project management fees where applicable. Within this, the indicative cost for high-priority projects is estimated at $8 million. Including secondary footpath in Orchard Grove Reserve, accessible ramps, wayfinding signages, and additional tree planting. 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.<br>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.<br>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 FY25/26 (Table 2).* All identified projects will be subject to availability of reserve balances and require a combination of funding sources.<br>Table 2. 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. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <table><tr><th rowspan="2">Project Type</th><th colspan="3">Funding Split</th></tr><tr><th>Open Space Reserve</th><th>Development Reserve</th><th>Rates / External Funding</th></tr><tr><td>Open Space Acquisition</td><td>100%</td><td>0%</td><td>0%</td></tr><tr><td>Open Space Improvements</td><td>100%</td><td>0%</td><td>0%</td></tr><tr><td>Open Space Planning</td><td>50%</td><td>0%</td><td>50%</td></tr><tr><td>Major Project (Recreation)</td><td>25%</td><td>50%</td><td>25%</td></tr><tr><td>Recreation Infrastructure Project</td><td>25%</td><td>25%</td><td>50%</td></tr></table> |
| **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** | In developing this report to Council, the subject matter has been considered in accordance with the requirements of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.<br><br>It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues. |
| **Community Engagement** | Stakeholder and community engagement occurred during two different phases of the project:<br>• Round 1 Community and Stakeholder Engagement 18 March 2024 and 6 May 2024.<br>• Purpose: Collected feedback on current uses and future aspirations for Wurundjeri Walk.<br>• Round 2 Community and Stakeholder Engagement 11 June - 15 July 2025.<br>• Purpose: Collected feedback on presented Draft Master Plan and Report.<br>Engagement Summary for both rounds is included as part of the Draft Master Plan Report appendix.<br><br>The master plan has been informed by input from the Park's reserve user groups, residents, the broader Whitehorse community, council staff, and key stakeholders. |

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| | Community awareness of the surveys was achieved by a combination of letterbox drops to residents, signs erected at key entries, and social media post during the survey periods.<br><br>Council received a total of 318 and 321 survey responses through the Your Say community engagement platform for Round 1 and Round 2, respectively.<br><br>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** | The project manager from the Recreation and Open Space Development team has collaborated with Council officers in the below departments:<br>• Project Delivery and Assets<br>• Parks and Natural Environment<br>• Community Engagement<br>• Communications, Advocacy and Investment<br>• Leisure and Recreation Services<br><br>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. |
| **Conflict of Interest** | The *Local Government Act 2020* 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.<br><br>Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter. |

10.4 (cont)

**ATTACHMENT**

1 Wurundjeri Walk Master Plan
2 Wurundjeri Walk Master Plan Report
3 Wurundjeri Walk Master Plan 15 Year Action Plan

## 10.5 Waste Management Strategy - 5-Year Action Plan - Changes to Kerbside Bin Services

| | |
|---|---|
| **Department** | City Services<br>Director Infrastructure |

Attachment

**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to present the Waste Management Strategy 5-Year Action Plan (the Action Plan) (2025-2028) for adoption. The Action Plan includes changes to the kerbside bin collection services.

The Household Kerbside Transition Community Consultation Report October 2025 is provided as Attachment 1. The Kerbside Bin Services Transition Plan – Discussion, Options and Analysis is provided as Attachment 2 and the Waste Management Strategy 5-Year Action Plan (2025-2028) is provided as Attachment 3.

A key element of the Action Plan is Council's kerbside transition plan to a four-bin service. State legislation requires Council to provide a four-bin service including a food organics and garden organics (FOGO) service and a separate glass recycling service to all households by 1 July 2027, as well as the existing garbage and recycling bins. While the introduction of a four-bin service is mandated, Council can determine bin sizes, collection frequencies, and the implementation of supporting measures that best meet local community needs.

Whitehorse, along with 34 other councils, has been actively advocating to the State Government seeking removal of the requirement to implement a glass recycling service. Plans are also being developed to meet the legislative requirements and ensure compliance with the legislation by 1 July 2027 if the advocacy is unsuccessful in achieving a change.

Council's current kerbside waste and recycling bin services include:

- 80-litre garbage bin, collected weekly;
- 240-litre recycling bin, collected fortnightly; and
- FOGO bins and additional or larger bins are optional.

Extensive community engagement on the Waste Management Strategy, including bin collection service options, was undertaken between August and September 2025 to:

- Inform and educate the community on the State Government's legislative requirements to provide a four-bin kerbside service to all households by 1 July 2027.
- Seek feedback from the community on the future frequency of collection of bin services, including two options:

10.5 (cont)

  - Option 1 – Garbage bin collected weekly. FOGO and recycling bins collected fortnightly. Glass bin every 4 weeks
  - Option 2 – FOGO bin collected weekly. Garbage and recycling bins collected fortnightly. Glass bin every 4 weeks.

- Seek feedback on the proposed approach to shared FOGO and glass bin arrangements at apartments, townhouses and units.

Based on the feedback received:

Option 1 had majority support demonstrated through the community engagement. It is noted that for those respondents to the community consultation that participated in focus groups, those people with initial concerns about a fortnightly garbage collection moved to accept a fortnightly garbage collection with a weekly FOGO collection provided suitable larger or additional garbage bin options were available.

Option 2 diverts more waste from landfill, therefore lowering the overall cost and providing the best environmental outcome, and is consistent with the majority of neighbouring councils. It was largely accepted by the respondents to the consultation (44%) and as noted above, support increased if suitable larger or additional garbage bin options were available with suitable assistance for households with nappies or medical needs.

For either option, the service change is to commence from 1 July 2027 to comply with the legislative requirements.

These service changes require the purchase and delivery of bins, additional short term resources to manage and implement the change, community education and information and changed service delivery costs.

A decision on changes to the kerbside service is sought by Council now, allowing 18 months to procure the bins, plan resources and then implement the service change. There will be another gateway decision for providing a kerbside glass recycling service with a future report for the purchase of the glass bins, planned for March or April 2026. Up to this decision, Council can continue to advocate to the State Government to oppose the introduction of a glass bin.

The community consultation feedback on other elements of the Waste Management Strategy 5-Year Action Plan (2025-2028) was largely supportive of the 5-Year Action Plan and it has been updated to reflect the feedback received.

It is recommended that Council adopt the introduction of the bin collection services described in Option 2, with larger bin options and assistance for nappies and medical needs, considers the service change resourcing and implementation costs as part of the 2026/27 Budget and adopts the Waste Management Strategy 5-Year Action Plan (2025-2028) as shown in Attachment 3.

10.5 (cont)

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Adopts Option 2 for kerbside bin services, which includes changing to a fortnightly garbage service, retaining the fortnightly mixed recycling service, and changing to a mandatory food organics and garden organics (FOGO) service for all households collected weekly, plus the introduction of a glass recycling service collected every four weeks with the service change commencing from 1 July 2027;
2. Considers the service change resourcing and implementation costs associated with implementing the required kerbside bin collection changes as part of the 2026/27 Budget;
3. Notes that there will be another gateway decision for providing a kerbside glass recycling service with a future report for the purchase of the glass bins, planned for March or April 2026 allowing Council to continue to advocate to the State Government to oppose the introduction of a glass bin;
4. Adopts the Waste Management Strategy 5-Year Action Plan (2025-2028) as shown in Attachment 3.

## KEY MATTERS

### Background

Council's Waste Management Strategy 2018-2028 included an Action Plan 2018-2023. A new Action Plan 2025-2028 has been developed in consultation with the community. The resultant Household Kerbside Transition Community Consultation Report October 2025 is provided as Attachment 1.

The Kerbside Bin Services Transition Plan – Discussion, Options and Analysis is provided as Attachment 2.

The Waste Management Strategy 5-Year Action Plan (2025-2028) is provided as Attachment 3.

A key action of the Action Plan includes Council's kerbside transition plan to a four-bin service to comply with legislative requirements to provide a mandatory food organics and garden organics (FOGO) service and a separate glass recycling service to all households by 1 July 2027. While the introduction of a four-bin service is mandated, Council can determine bin sizes, collection frequencies, and the implementation of supporting measures that best meet local community needs.

The Action Plan is to help deliver Council's strategic objectives, including:

- Delivering on the Integrated Council Plan (2025–2029) commitment to build an environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient city, and to responsibly manage waste.
- Achieving the Waste Management Strategy (2018–2028) target of 80% diversion from landfill by 2028.

10.5 (cont)

- Supporting the Climate Response Strategy (2023–2030) goal to aspire to net zero community emissions by 2040.

Council's current kerbside waste and recycling service is:

- 80-litre garbage bin, collected weekly
- 240-litre recycling bin, collected fortnightly
- Optional FOGO bins and additional or larger bins at an additional cost.

**Legislation and glass recycling services**

Kerbside bin changes are required to comply with State Government's Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021. The State is yet to finalise the draft *Household Waste and Recycling Service Standards* (Service Standards) to be made under the Act, which details how councils must deliver household waste and recycling services including glass recycling services.

This was originally expected to be finalised in April 2025.

While Council has shown it support for standardisation and reform to address long-standing challenges in the waste and recycling sector, there is acknowledgment of alternative approaches that can achieve the desired outcomes more cost effectively and environmentally efficiently. Council has been involved in advocacy to the State Government objecting to the requirement to implement a glass recycling service. Concurrently, plans are being developed to meet the legislative requirements and ensure compliance by 1 July 2027 should the advocacy result in no change.

Council has participated in the following advocacy efforts on glass services:

- 20 December 2024 - Council signed letter to the Minister for Environment with 14 other councils requesting reconsideration of the kerbside glass only recycling service.
- June 2025 – Council formally adopted an approach to advocate to the State Government to repeal the introduction of mandatory, glass bin.
- 24 July 2025 – Council's Deputy Mayor and Director Infrastructure met with the Environment Minister's advisor.
- 7 August 2025 – Council's Director Infrastructure met with Local MP Richard Welsh.
- 13 October 2025 – Council resolution to object to the glass recycling bin with further actions to write to the Minister for Environment and local MPs outlining Council's objection and seeking services be reconsidered.
- Council officers continue to be part of an advocacy group with 34 councils. Councils are working with Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) to compare the glass recycling service cost modelling and key financial discrepancies.

10.5 (cont)

**Community Engagement**

Community engagement was undertaken between August and September 2025 to:

- Inform and educate the community on the State Government's legislative requirements to provide a four-bin kerbside service to all households by 1 July 2027.
- Seek feedback from the community on the frequency of collection of bin services, including two options:
- Option 1 – Garbage bin collected weekly. FOGO and recycling bins collected fortnightly. Glass bin every 4 weeks
- Option 2 – FOGO bin collected weekly. Garbage and recycling bins collected fortnightly. Glass bin every 4 weeks.
- Seek feedback on the proposed approach to shared FOGO and glass bin arrangements at apartments, townhouses and units.
- Seek feedback on the draft 5-Year Action Plan (2025-2028)

To encourage maximum participation, the community engagement promotion included:

- Flyer in Rate Notice (reach of approximately 65,200 households);
- Mail out letters to randomly selected properties, evenly distributed across our dwelling profiles of multi-unit dwellings (MUDs) and single-unit dwellings (SUDs), with an emphasis on reaching renters (reach of approximately 10,000 households); and
- Promotion on social media channels, The Loop, Down to Business, Positive Aging, Aqualink, What's Happening, Your Say and Whitehorse News eNewsletter and printed edition, Manningham-Whitehorse library's social media channels and many community group channels (including U3A) (reach of approximately 11.500 households).

A report on the community engagement is provided in Attachment 1, titled '*Household Kerbside Transition Community Consultation Report October 2025*'.

Table 1 - Various methods of engagement were undertaken, including:

| Type of event | Totals |
|---|---|
| Online survey including manual entry of those who submitted written submission.<br><br>The number of survey responses significantly exceeds the industry standard. This provides 95% confidence level that the results accurately reflect the attitudes of the population, based on a 1.5% margin for error. | 5,535 |

10.5 (cont)

| | |
|---|---|
| 9 pop up events including Moon Festival, Farmers Market and shopping centres | 1,134 |
| 6 focus groups including households with medical needs, nappies and living in multi-unit developments (MUDs) | 102 |
| Online information session | 18 |
| Total participants | 6,789 |

A summary of feedback received from the community includes:

- 56% of survey respondents indicated they could not manage fortnightly garbage collections. Of these, 67% indicated they could adapt if they had larger or additional bins.
- 62% preferred fortnightly FOGO, reflecting confidence in the current service. Those who preferred weekly FOGO valued convenience, reduced odours, and environmental benefits. In the focus groups where the issues could be discussed in more detail, between 72% and 100% of participants supported weekly FOGO and fortnightly garbage.
- Households with high waste needs are least able to manage fortnightly garbage, requiring larger bins or exemptions. Currently there are exemptions for medical needs that may need to be expanded if the service changes to fortnightly garbage. Exemptions include providing additional or larger bins at no charge for a period of time.
- Logistics of managing shared bins or space for storing additional bins in the property and on the naturestrip for collection was a significant concern.
- Among residents in units, townhouses, or apartments, 71% were supportive or neutral about sharing a glass bin, while only 31% favoured sharing a FOGO bin. 47% opposed shared FOGO bins, citing concerns about cleanliness, odours, and practicality.

## DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

A decision on changes to the kerbside service is sought by Council now, allowing 18 months to procure and deliver the bins, plan resources and then implement the service change.

A discussion is provided below on:

- Kerbside bin transition plan options;
- Glass advocacy; and
- 5-Year Action Plan (2025-2028).

### Kerbside Bin Services Transition Plan Options

Details of discussion and analysis on the kerbside bin transition plan options are provided in Attachment 2, including financial and resource considerations. It includes the two options that were presented for community engagement:

10.5 (cont)

- Option 1 – Garbage bin collected weekly. FOGO and recycling bins collected fortnightly. Glass bin every 4 weeks
- Option 2 – FOGO bin collected weekly. Garbage and recycling bins collected fortnightly. Glass bin every 4 weeks.

A further option could be considered, which is to implement Option 1 and later implement Option 2. The timing could be determined subject to further review and could be from 1 July 2029, which is 2 years later than the first change.

**Frequency of Glass Bin Collection**

For both options, it is recommended that the frequency of the glass bin collection is every 4 weeks. The metropolitan councils that have already introduced the Glass bin service provide collection frequencies of:

- Yarra City Council – glass bin every 2 weeks (started July 2020)
- Merribek City Council – glass bin every 4 weeks (started July 2023)
- Whittlesea City Council – glass bin every 4 weeks (started October 2022)
- Hobsons Bay City Council – glass bin every 4 weeks (started February 2020)

Part of considerations for providing this service frequency is convenience for users. A 4-weekly cycle is considered something that can be managed by residents and presents the easiest way for Council to inform and educate the community about when to present bins and keep bin weights safe and manageable. It is likely that glass generation may fluctuate for some households, increasing in the summer months, and the 4-weekly service will ensure that households have enough capacity.

**Glass Advocacy**

Council can continue to advocate to the State Government to oppose the introduction of a glass bin. Concurrently, plans need to be made to comply with the current deadline of 1 July 2027 to introduce this service should the advocacy be unsuccessful.

It is proposed Council continues to be involved in the cross-council glass advocacy group seeking the State Government to:

- Delete the mandatory implementation of the glass only bin service.
- Release the State Government’s business case to support the rationale and benefits of the glass service.
- Expand the Container Deposit Scheme to include wine and spirit bottles and harmonise with other states and territories.
- If the glass bin service is to be implemented, increase funding support to reflect the true cost of implementation. Modelling indicates Council would face $4 million for implementation and then ongoing cost for the service. Current State Government funding is estimated to cover approximately 10% of this amount.

10.5 (cont)

If Council was not to comply with the glass recycling service, issues may include cost penalties, legislation and reputational risks as summarised below:

Table 2- Issues from non-compliance of glass services

| Issue | Council comments |
|---|---|
| Cost Penalties | Actual costs are uncertain, and potential liabilities are unknown. Legal advice varies from:<br>• Possible financial exposure of around $95,000 to $250,000 and more likely as a one-off cost.<br>• $250,000 is calculated from $197.59 per day and will ordinarily increase by indexation annually. Advice is that it is unlikely there will be an application for each day that the service is not delivered. |
| Legislation | For the State Government to remove the requirement to provide a glass only service would require a change in legislation.<br>• Approximately 35% of Victorian councils have introduced a glass recycling service.<br>• The State Government communications on the glass recycling service is focused on 'non-compliance'.<br>• The draft Service Standards outline that glass must be separated from the commingled recycling stream and will be considered 'contamination'.<br>• Council does not currently pay contamination penalties as part of its recycling processing contract, however it may be a cost variable with future contracts. |
| Reputation Risk | Non-compliance with the Act poses a reputational risk to Council. This includes:<br>• Council's reputation as a competent and compliant local authority could be questioned by both the public and government agencies<br>• Non-compliance could attract unfavorable media coverage, highlighting perceived mismanagement or neglect.<br>• The State Government may withhold grants, funding, or other forms of support, citing non-compliance.<br>• Difficulties rebuilding community confidence in future waste or sustainability initiatives. |

**5-Year Action Plan (2025-2028)**

Overall feedback on the draft 5-Year Action Pan was positive and supportive, with strong support for initiatives that minimise waste to landfill, expand recycling opportunities, and promote a circular economy and community partnerships.

10.5 (cont)

There was a desire for practical, well-communicated actions and for Council to lead by example. The table below lists feedback provided on the draft 5-Year Action Pan and where this has been included in the draft Plan.

A copy of the updated draft 5-Year Action Plan is provided as Attachment 3.

Table 3 – Community feedback and action plan adjustments and inclusions

| Community Feedback | Relevant Action | Council commentary |
|---|---|---|
| Promote circular economy | Action 2: Work with our partners to increase resource recovery and promote circular economy initiatives. | Feedback is captured in the Action Plan |
| Kerbside transition and 4-bin waste services | Action 4: Implement the Victorian Government four-bin household waste and recycling system. | Feedback is captured in the Action Plan |
| Review and improve public litter bins | Action 7: Review and improve our network of public litter bins and develop material to support their best use. | Action 7 updated to include the Container Deposit Scheme |
| Stronger enforcement and compliance on illegal dumping | Action 22: Focus on prevention and overall reduction of dumped rubbish and further target those illegally dumping | Feedback is captured in the Action Plan |
| Support and education around composting | Action 6: Support schools, community groups and businesses to compost on site and provide education on the environmental benefits | Feedback is captured in the Action Plan |
| Education and communication | Action 1, Action 3, Action 4, Action 5, Action 6, Action 7, Action 8, Action 12, Action 13, Action 14, Action 20, Action 22, Action 23. | Education for different audiences and targeted areas covered off in many Actions |
| Plastic and Soft Plastics Recycling | Action 1 and Action 15 | Action 1 and 15 updated to include the reference to soft plastic packaging |
| Compliance and Contamination | Action 8: Review our bin inspection, education and rewards program to improve resource recovery and reduce contamination | Bin compliance is outlined by Community Local Law<br>Education is captured in the Action Plan |

10.5 (cont)

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| Measuring Success | Provide external facing measures. | The internal action plan includes the success measures to make the action measurable within the timeframe specified. |

**Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details**

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|---|---|
| **Strategic Alignment** | Natural - Objective 4.2 An environmentally sustainable and climate resilient City - Objective 4.3 A Council that responsibly and sustainably manages waste.<br>The Action Plan is to help deliver Council's strategic objectives including:<br>• Achieving the Waste Management Strategy (2018–2028) target of 80% diversion from landfill by 2028.<br>• Supporting the Climate Response Strategy (2023–2030) goal to aspire to net zero community emissions by 2040. |
| **Financial and Resource Implications** | Option 1 is the most expensive option in the long term, with more waste going to landfill, including more food that could be recycled.<br>Option 2 is the lowest cost option with the best environmental outcome. Landfilling and future advanced waste processing is the highest cost disposal. It maximises the opportunity of turning food waste into compost and is around 40% cheaper than sending it to landfill or a future advanced waste facility.<br>A further option to stage the changes would be more expensive than just implementing Option 2, with additional funding and resources required for the changes associated with Option 1 and then changes with Option 2.<br>All options require resources to implement the change, including:<br>• Purchasing additional bins – approximately 55,000 glass bins and 10,000 FOGO bins. Option 2 would require additional 120 litre and 240 litre garbage bins to provide additional capacity for some households with a change to fortnightly collections.<br>• Project officers and customer service officers to manage bin changeovers.<br>• Education and promotion materials.<br>The cost of providing waste and recycling services is fully recovered through the Waste Service Charge. |

10.5 (cont)

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|---|---|
| **Legislative and Risk Implications** | Kerbside bin changes are required to comply with State Government's *Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021*. The State is yet to finalise the draft Household Waste and Recycling Service Standards to be made under the Act, which details how councils must deliver household waste and recycling services including glass recycling services. This was originally expected to be finalised in April 2025. |
| **Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations** | In developing this report to Council, the subject matter has been considered in accordance with the requirements of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*. |
| **Community Engagement** | Community engagement was undertaken between August and September 2025. Details are provided in the report and Attachment 1. |
| **Innovation and Continuous Improvement** | Innovation and continuous improvement have been considered through the evaluation of the options. |
| **Collaboration** | Council continues to collaborate with other Victorian councils on waste and recycling services, including involvement in the cross-council glass advocacy group. |
| **Conflict of Interest** | Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter. |

**ATTACHMENT**

1 Kerbside Transition Community Engagement Report
2 Kerbside Transition Discussion Options Analysis
3 Waste Strategy Five-Year Action Plan 2025-2028

## 10.6 Tender Evaluation Report - Contract 30592 Bulk Fuel, Fuel Card Services and Oils, Lubricants and Vehicles Cares Products

| | |
|---|---|
| **Department** | City Services<br>Director Infrastructure |

Attachment

### SUMMARY

Council has an ongoing requirement to purchase fuel, oils, lubricants, and vehicles care products for its fleet of vehicles, plant, and equipment.

The purpose of this report is to consider the contract term for Contract 30592, Bulk Fuel, Fuel Card Services and Oils, Lubricants and Vehicles Care Products.

The Chief Executive Officer under authorisation from the Council Meeting on 16 December 2024, accepted tenders for Contract 30592 for a period up to 30 June 2026 for an amount to not exceed $1.5 million including GST for the following suppliers:

- Contract 30592/1 using the direct offer for Fuel Card Services with BP Australia Pty Ltd.
- Using the Preferred Supplier Head Agreement (PSHA) from the National Procurement Network Contract NPN1.17-2 for Bulk Fuel, Fuel Card Services and Oils, Lubricants and Vehicles Care Products for:
  - Contract 30592/2 Bulk Fuel with Ampol Australia Petroleum Pty Ltd; and
  - Contract 30592/3 Lubricants and Vehicles Care Products with Castrol Australia Pty Ltd.

The purpose of this report is to recommend Council extend the approval for these three suppliers under Contract 30592 to 30 April 2028. The total estimated expenditure under Contract 30592 depends on the global price of oil and other petroleum-based products. Based on current prices and demand, a high-end estimate of the total estimated expenditure is $3,600,000 including GST.

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approves the extension of Contract 30592/1 using the direct offer received from BP Australia Pty Ltd (ABN 53 004 085 616), trading as BP, of 360 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne VIC, for a period up to 30 April 2028;

10.6 (cont)

2. Approves the extension of Contract 30592 utilising the National Procurement Network Contract NPN1.17-2 for Bulk Fuel, Fuel Card Services and Oils, Lubricants and Vehicles Care Products - Preferred Supplier Head Agreement (PSHA), up to 30 April 2028, for the following suppliers:

   Bulk Fuel:

   Contract 30592/2 with Ampol Australia Petroleum Pty Ltd (ABN 17 000 032 128), trading as Ampol, of Level 24, 2 Market Street, Sydney NSW.

   Oils, Lubricants and Vehicles Care Products:

   Contract 30592/3 with Castrol Australia Pty Ltd (ABN 87 008 459 407), trading as Castrol, of 132 McCredie Road, Guilford NSW;

3. Notes the total estimated expenditure under Contract 30592 depends on the global price of oil and other petroleum-based products. Based on current prices and demand, a high estimate of the total estimated expenditure is $3,600,000 including GST.

**KEY MATTERS**

Council has an ongoing requirement to purchase fuel, oils, lubricants and vehicle care products for its fleet of vehicles, plant and equipment. The exact number of the fleet varies from time to time depending on operational needs for the delivery of services to the community.

The price of fuel and petroleum products are subject to the global market. Council is a very small customer in the fuel, oils, and lubricants market, and consequently has limited ability to influence the cost. There is an opportunity for discounts for some products utilising joint procurement.

Council was part of a National Procurement Network (NPN) contract through MAV Procurement NPN1.17 (Council Contract 30062) for Bulk Fuel, Fuel Card Services and Oils, Lubricants and Vehicles Care Products. This contract expired on 31 January 2025, and temporary arrangements have been in place to allow the services under the Contract to continue until a new contract is in place.

Considering the uncertain timing of the new contract, and the products are a low-risk operational purchase, on 16 December 2024 Council resolved to authorise the Chief Executive Officer to accept tenders and enter into agreements for an initial period:

The negotiation by NPN with suppliers did not conclude as planned on 1 February 2025 and continued until 5 May 2025 and Council was advised of the agreement on 20 June 2025.

The Chief Executive Officer under authorisation from Council, accepted tenders for Contract 30592 for a period up to 30 June 2026 for an amount to not exceed $1.5 million including GST for the following suppliers:

10.6 (cont)

- Contract 30592/1 using the direct offer for Fuel Card Services with BP Australia Pty Ltd effective from 14 July 2025.
- Using the Preferred Supplier Head Agreement (PSHA) from the National Procurement Network Contract NPN1.17-2 for Bulk Fuel, Fuel Card Services and Oils, Lubricants and Vehicles Care Products for:
  - Contract 30592/2 Bulk Fuel with Ampol Australia Petroleum Pty Ltd effective from 14 July 2025; and
  - Contract 30592/3 Lubricants and Vehicles Care Products with Castrol Australia Pty Ltd effective from 8 August 2025.

**DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS**

The direct offer from BP is for a period up to 30 April 2028. The offers under NPN1.17-2 are for a term up to 10 years commencing 1 February 2025. Council is under no obligation to use any amounts under these contracts and can opt out use other suppliers if better offers are received.

It is recommended that Council extend the approval for these three suppliers under Contract 30592 to 30 April 2028, to coincide with the term of the direct offer from BP.

Beyond this term, Council will have options including:

- Seek new direct offer from BP.
- Negotiate and extend the NPN contract with Ampol and Castrol or other suppliers on the panel.
- Consider any other options that will provide best value for Council.

Refer to Tender Report – Confidential Attachment.

**Consultation**

Council's Procurement team has been consulted to ensure that the procurement provides best value, is in accordance with the Procurement Policy and probity maters have been appropriately considered.

**Financial and Resource Considerations**

Council can opt out with any of the suppliers throughout the duration of the contract if another more suitable arrangement can be sourced. There is no obligation to use any supplier or to spend any amounts under the contract.

The total estimated expenditure under Contract 30592 depends on the global price of oil and petroleum-based products. Based on current prices and demand, a high-end estimate of the total estimated expenditure is $3,600,000 including GST.

The costs incurred under this contract will be charged to the relevant recurrent budgets.

10.6 (cont)

**Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details**

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|---|---|
| **Strategic Alignment** | The products purchased under this contract enable services to be delivered across Council. |
| **Financial and Resource Implications** | The total estimated expenditure under Contract 30592 depends on the global price of oil and petroleum-based products. Based on current prices and demand, a high-end estimate of the total estimated expenditure is $3,600,000 including GST. |
| **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. |
| **Innovation and Continuous Improvement** | There are no Innovation and Continuous Improvement matters arising from the recommendation contained in this report.<br>Passenger fleet numbers continue to decline. |
| **Collaboration** | The opportunities to collaborate through joint procurement were investigated during this tender evaluation. The current multi agency contract through the NPN provides the best option at this time. |
| **Conflict of Interest** | Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter. |

**ATTACHMENT**

1 30592 - Confidential Attachment - Fuel Cards and Bulk Fuel

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

## 10.7 Audit and Risk Committee - Annual Performance Evaluation

| | |
|---|---|
| **Department** | Governance and Integrity<br>Director Corporate Services |


**SUMMARY**

The *Local Government Act 2020* (Act) requires Council to:

1. to establish an Audit and Risk Committee,
2. to approve an Audit and Risk Committee Charter to specify the functions and responsibilities of the Committee,
3. undertake an annual assessment of its performance against the Audit and Risk Committee Charter and provide the results to Council through the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Council's Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) operates under a Charter adopted by Council. Meetings are conducted in accordance with an annual Work Plan, which outlines timing of reports in accordance with the committee's responsibilities as per the Charter.

This report outlines Council's compliance of section 54(4) of the *Act* requiring an annual assessment of the performance of the committee. The assessment was undertaken by survey of all ARC members. The survey was structured in two parts – 'Part A: Measuring Effectiveness' and 'Part B: Performance against Key Charter Responsibilities.'

Survey responses were discussed at the November 2025 ARC meeting.

The survey findings concluded the ARC is 'more than adequate' in meeting the requirements of its Charter, with minor improvement actions noted to maintain a contemporary approach.

The outcomes of the annual performance evaluation are provided to Council in this report.


**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council note the Audit and Risk Committee's Annual Performance Evaluation.

**KEY MATTERS**

In relation to Part A: Measuring Effectiveness:

- Respondents rated the effectiveness of the ARC in areas such as diversity of skills and experience, committee meetings, communication between members, relationship with management, reporting to Council,

10.7 (cont)

and past areas of improvement. There were 14 areas of focus with each rated on a scale from 1 (very little effectiveness) to 5 (fully effective).

- The total score was 62.4 out of 70.0 i.e. 89%, slightly higher than previous year.
- The ARC's diversity of skills and experience received a score of 5.0 out of 5.0, while its relationship with management was rated 4.8 out of 5.0, making them the highest rated areas reflecting strong overall effectiveness in these aspects.
- Last year's improvement initiative to reintroduce the ARC Chair's annual presentation at a Councillor Briefing received a rating of 4.2 out of 5.0. The Committee has agreed to continue this as an annual event, and the survey feedback indicates that this improvement has been effectively addressed.
- Significant improvements were observed in the ratings for the verbal CEO updates, which increased from 3.8 to 4.6, and for the end-of-meeting debrief sessions, which rose from 3.4 to 4.2. The ARC acknowledges good coverage of issues and opportunity for questions.
- All areas were rated 4.0 or higher, indicating strong overall effectiveness. The only area which received a rating of 4.0 out of 5.0 was the effectiveness of Committee meetings, with sufficient time spent on significant or emerging issues. The rating compared to previous year improved from 3.8 to 4.0, reflecting positive feedback on the introduction of timed agendas, which have supported smoother meeting flow and timely completion of items.

In relation to Part B: Performance against Key Charter Responsibilities:

- The ARC noted full compliance with the key Charter responsibilities.
- The ARC rated its overall performance and effectiveness as 5 out of 6, similar to 2024, indicating a level of performance of 'more than adequate'.

Further details about the findings and opportunities for improvement, are presented below.

**DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS**

The survey was structured in two parts as set out above. Survey results are summarised below:

**Results of Part A: Measuring Effectiveness**

| Area of Assessment | Average rating (out of 5) | |
|---|---|---|
| | 2024/25 | 2023/24 |
| 1. Diversity of skills and experience | 5.0 | 4.8 |
| 2. Advice of emerging issues | 4.2 | 4.0 |

10.7 (cont)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3. Information received from management | 4.4 | 4.2 |
| 4. Alignment of Annual Work Plan with Charter | 4.6 | 5.0 |
| 5. Committee meetings | 4.0 | 3.8 |
| 6. Communication between members | 4.6 | 5.0 |
| 7. Relationship with management | 4.8 | 4.4 |
| 8. Appropriately informed between meetings | 4.2 | 4.2 |
| 9. Scrutiny of audit plans and reports | 4.4 | 4.4 |
| 10. Challenging of auditors | 4.6 | 4.6 |
| 11. Clear and transparent communication with auditors | 4.6 | 4.2 |
| 12. Verbal CEO update | 4.6 | 3.8 |
| 13. End-of-meeting debrief | 4.2 | 3.4 |
| 14. Past areas for improvement actioned | 4.2 | 4.2 |
| **Total** | **62.4 / 70.0 or 89%** | **60.0 / 70.0 or 86%** |

**Results of Part B: Performance against Key Charter Responsibilities (including Overall Performance)**

| Key Charter Requirements | Compliant Yes/No |
|---|---|
| 1. Monitor Compliance of Council Policies and Procedures | Yes |
| 2. Monitor Council Financial and Performance Reporting | Yes |
| 3. Monitor and Provide Advice on Risk Management, Fraud Prevention Systems and Controls | Yes |
| 4. Oversee Internal and External Audit Functions | Yes |
| 5. Organisation Update | Yes |
| 6. Meetings | Yes |
| 7. Reporting to Council | Yes |
| 8. Committee Member Regulatory Obligations | Yes |

Members rated the ARC's overall performance across Parts A and B of the survey as follows:

| Less than Adequate | | Adequate | | More than Adequate | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | ✓ | |

10.7 (cont)

**Review of Past Areas of Improvement**

Last year, the ARC identified one improvement opportunity to reintroduce the ARC Chair's annual presentation at a Councillor Briefing. This was successfully implemented, with the presentation delivered at a briefing held on 5 May 2025. The Committee has agreed to continue this as an annual event, and the survey feedback indicates that this improvement has been effectively addressed.

**Key Strengths**

The key strengths identified in 2024/25 include:

- Diverse skills and experience – the ARC benefits from a wide range of expertise among both independent and Councillor members, including business, internal and external audit, advisory roles, and experience across public and private sectors. This diversity enhances the ARC's capability and effectiveness, with members expressing confidence in the current mix of skills, particularly following the appointment of the new independent member with expertise in information technology and cybersecurity. The Council was advised of this on 22 September 2025.
- Structured and transparent Work Plan - the Annual Work Plan provides a clear and structured framework for guiding the ARC's agenda, ensuring alignment with the ARC Charter while allowing flexibility to adjust priorities. It demonstrates transparency in how responsibilities are addressed across the year, with effective oversight of its implementation and review.
- Collaborative and engaged environment - the ARC maintains an open, respectful, and collaborative culture, encouraging active contribution from all members. Constructive dialogue occurs during meetings, complemented by appropriate engagement and communication between meetings to support informed decision-making.
- Proactive identification of emerging issues – through regular CEO updates, strong relationships with management, and engagement across the sector, ARC members are well positioned to identify and advise on emerging issues, enabling Council to proactively respond to future challenges. Members report consistently positive and collaborative engagement.
- Rigorous audit oversight – the ARC thoroughly reviews audit activities including plans, reports, and findings in close collaboration with auditors and management. This fosters an engaged and challenging environment, with members contributing insights from their diverse professional backgrounds. Constructive challenge is demonstrated at all stages of the audit process, with active debate encouraged to clarify and resolve outstanding issues.

**Key Improvement Opportunities and Actions**

ARC members valuable insights in their survey responses, drawing on sector trends and broader professional experience.

10.7 (cont)

In the 2024/25 survey, as all areas received positive ratings, no new areas were identified as requiring improvement. The effectiveness of Committee meetings in ensuring appropriate time is allocated across agenda items, including key and emerging issues, continues to be an area for ongoing monitoring. Notably, improvement has been observed compared to the previous year, with the introduction of a timed agenda contributing to smoother meeting flow and more consistent completion of items within allocated timeframes.

To further enhance meeting efficiency and Committee capability, several improvement opportunities were identified, including separating Risk Deep Dive Reports from the broader risk management report, submitting key questions in advance, enhancing year-to-date financial reporting, and sharing learnings during debriefs.

**Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Strategic Alignment** | Governance, Strong governance will be achieved through transparent, accountable management and the efficient and financially sustainable delivery of valuable core services.<br><br>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.<br><br>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. |
| **Financial and Resource Implications** | There are no financial or resource implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report. |
| **Legislative and Risk Implications** | The Annual Performance Evaluation report has been prepared in compliance with the *Local Government Act 2020* s54(4).<br><br>There are no other legal or risk implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report. |
| **Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations** | It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues. |

10.7 (cont)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Community Engagement** | No community engagement was required for this report. |
| **Innovation and Continuous Improvement** | Key improvement opportunities and actions are the basis of a self-assessment to continuously improve the operation of the ARC as outlined in the report. |
| **Collaboration** | The Annual Performance Evaluation report was prepared in consultation with ARC members. |
| **Conflict of Interest** | Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter. |

## 10.8 Amendment to Councillor Appointments - Environment and Sustainability Advisory Committee

| | |
|---|---|
| **Department** | Governance and Integrity |
| | Director Corporate Services |

### SUMMARY

Council resolved its appointments to Committees, Organisations and Community Bodies, including Advisory Committees, on 24 November 2025.

Councillors appointed to the Environment and Sustainability Advisory Committee have expressed interest in amending the appointments to change the positions held.

The proposed change would swap the appointed Chair (Cr Stennett) and Substitute Councillor (Cr Simpson) to Cr Simpson as Chair and Cr Stennett as substitute.

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council appoint Cr Kieran Simpson as Chair and Cr Ben Stennett as Substitute Councillor for the Environment and Sustainability Advisory Committee Council for the 2025/26 term.

### KEY MATTERS

Council previously appointed representatives to the Environment and Sustainability Advisory Committee at the meeting on 24 November 2025.

Cr Ben Stennett was appointed as Chair of the Advisory Committee and Cr Kieran Simpson; Deputy Mayor was appointed Substitute.

Since the appointments, a request has been made to swap the Chair and Substitute Councillor roles.

The proposed change does not impact the quorum or operation of the Committee.

### DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

At the request of the appointed Councillors, it's considered that amending the appointments will align roles with their capacity and preferences and support effective committee functioning and leadership continuity.

There were no other Councillor nominations for this committee other than Cr Stennett and Cr Simpson and therefore a re-nomination process is not proposed.

10.8 (cont)

**Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Strategic Alignment** | Governance, Strong governance will be achieved through transparent, accountable management and the efficient and financially sustainable delivery of valuable core services.<br><br>This report reflects commitment to strategic direction 1, by meeting the Committee requirements set by *Local Government Act 2020 and Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020 (regulation 7(1) (a) and (b)).* |
| **Financial and Resource Implications** | There are no financial or resource implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report. |
| **Legislative and Risk Implications** | The amendment aligns with Council's obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)* to ensure good governance, responsive decision-making, and effective representation on committees. |
| **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** | No collaboration was required for this report. |
| **Conflict of Interest** | The *Local Government Act 2020* 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.<br><br>Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter. |

## 10.9 Records of Informal Meetings of Councillors

| | |
|---|---|
| **Department** | Governance and Integrity<br>Director Corporate Services |

**RECOMMENDATION**

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

| **Pre Council Meeting Briefing – 24 November 2025 – 6.30pm – 6.38pm** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Matter/s Discussed:**<br>• 24 November 2025 Council Meeting Agenda | **Councillors Present** | **Officers Present** |
| | Cr Kirsten Langford Mayor | S McMillan |
| | Cr Kieran Simpson Deputy Mayor | S White<br>L Letic |
| | Cr Peter Allan | J Green |
| | Cr Blair Barker | S Cann |
| | Cr Prue Cutts | V Ferlaino |
| | Cr Andrew Davenport | S Candeland |
| | Cr Daniel Griffiths | A Wintle |
| | Cr Jarrod Gunn | |
| | Cr Jason Martin | |
| | Cr Ben Stennett | |
| | Cr Hayley Weller | |
| **Others Present:** N/A | | |
| **Disclosures of Conflict of Interest:** Nil | | |
| **Councillor /Officer attendance following disclosure:** Nil | | |

10.9 (cont)

| **Councillor Briefing – 1 December 2025 – 6.30pm – 9.30pm** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Matter/s Discussed:**<br>• Whitehorse Housing Strategy Review: State of Play report (phase 1)<br>• Activity Centres Program – Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham Built Form Scenario Modelling<br>• Lease & Licence Policy & Council Property Lease and Licence Pricing Policy<br>• Council Meeting Agenda 8 December 2025 | **Councillors Present**<br>Cr Kirsten Langford Mayor<br>Cr Kieran Simpson Deputy Mayor<br>Cr Peter Allan<br>Cr Blair Barker<br>Cr Prue Cutts<br>Cr Andrew Davenport<br>Cr Daniel Griffiths (Online)<br>Cr Jarrod Gunn<br>Cr Jason Martin<br>Cr Ben Stennett<br>Cr Hayley Weller | **Officers Present**<br>S McMillan<br>L Letic<br>S Cann<br>J Green<br>A Ghastine<br>V Ferlaino<br>S White<br>S Candeland<br>J Fitzgibbon<br>K Marriot<br>A Egan<br>J Hansen<br>M Farokhi<br>D Pascolo |
| **Others Present:** Stephen Rowley & Emily Hobbs (SGS Economics and Planning), Alastair Campbell (Hansen Partnership) | | |
| **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 and Integrity |
| | Director Corporate Services |

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the:

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

## 12 Confidential Reports

## 13 Close Meeting