



Notice is given that a Meeting of Council will be held on:

Date: Tuesday, 26 March 2024
Time: 3.00pm
Location: Loddon Shire Council Chambers, Wedderburn

AGENDA

Council Meeting

Order Of Business

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OPENING COMMENT

This meeting is being recorded and audio streamed via the Council website and Facebook.

1 OPENING AFFIRMATION

“We, the Councillors of the Loddon Shire, declare that we will carry out our duties in the best interests of the community, and through collective leadership will maintain the highest standards of good governance.”

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

“The Loddon Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are gathered and pays its respects to their Elders both past and present.”

3 APOLOGIES**4 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

5 PREVIOUS MINUTES**5.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

File Number: FOL/19/45615
Author: Lisa Clue, Manager Governance
Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council confirm the Minutes of the following meetings as previously circulated to Councillors:

1. Council Briefing of 27 February 2024
2. Council Meeting of 27 February 2024
3. Council Forum of 12 March 2024.

REPORT

This report seeks Council confirmation of Minutes from the February 2024 Council Briefing and Council Meeting, and the March 2024 Council Forum as previously circulated to Councillors.

6 COUNCIL AUSPICED MEETINGS**6.1 RECORD OF COUNCIL AUSPICED MEETINGS**

File Number: 02/01/001
Author: Lisa Clue, Manager Governance
Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council confirm records of the following as detailed within this report:

1. Council Briefing 27 February 2024
2. Council Forum 12 March 2024.

Rule 35 of Council's Governance Rules requires a record of meetings conducted under the auspices of Council to be presented to the next available scheduled Council meeting for confirmation that must include:

- a) a record of which Councillors and officers attended the meeting;
- b) a summary of the matters considered in the meeting; and
- c) a record of any conflicts of interest disclosed by Councillors and officers and any Councillors or officers that left the meeting whilst a matter that their conflict of interest related to was being discussed.

Section 3 of the Governance Rules defines meetings conducted under the auspices of Council to mean a meeting of the kind described in section 131(1) of the Local Government Act 2020 and includes a meeting which:

- a) is schedule or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of Council or briefing Councillors;
- b) is attended by a majority of Councillors;
- c) is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
- d) is not a Council meeting or delegated committee meeting.

This report seeks confirmation of the following Council auspiced meetings as detailed within this report:

1. Council Briefing 27 February 2024
2. Council Forum 12 March 2024.

| | |
|--|---|
| Meeting details | Briefing |
| Date | 27 February 2024 |
| Councillor Attendees | Cr Holt (Mayor) Cr Beattie Cr Jungwirth Cr Murphy Cr Straub |
| Staff/ Stakeholder representatives | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer 2. Wendy Gladman, Director Community Wellbeing 3. Steven Phillips, Director Operations 4. Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate 5. Lisa Clue, Governance Manager 6. David Price, Manager Community Services and Janine Lakey, Community Compliance Officer – Tidy Properties – Item 1 below 7. Deanne Caserta, Manager Financial Services – Items 3 and 4 below |
| Item(s) discussed. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Services Quarterly Progress Reports 2. Local Government Reform Consultation 3. Budget Update – February 2024 4. Quarterly Finance Reports 5. General Business: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracted works update • Sale of Council land – update • Flood repairs • RCCC Project update |
| Conflict of Interest Disclosures – Councillor/ officer making disclosure | Nil |
| Councillor/officer left room | n/a |

| | |
|--|---|
| Meeting details | Forum |
| Date | 12 March 2024 |
| Councillor Attendees | Cr Holt (Mayor) Cr Beattie Cr Jungwirth Cr Murphy |
| Staff/ Stakeholder representatives | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer 2. Wendy Gladman, Director Community Wellbeing 3. Steven Phillips, Director Operations 4. Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate 5. Lisa Clue, Governance Manager <p>Chris Rowlands, NBN Local – Item 1 below</p> <p>David Stretch, Manager Tourism and Economic Development – Items 1, 2 and 4 below</p> <p>Louise Johnston, Statutory Planning Coordinator and Carolyn Stephenson, Senior Strategic Planner – Item 2 below</p> <p>Susan Fayad, World Heritage and Regional Development Lead, City of Ballarat, Trevor Budge, Strategic Projects Officer – World Heritage, City of Greater Bendigo and Lana Epshteyn, Communications, World Heritage, City of Ballarat – Item 3 below</p> <p>Bradd Worrell, Tourism and Marketing Coordinator – Item 4 below</p> <p>Rosanna Lacorcica and Sam McGee, Transmission Company Victoria and Geoff Caine, Loddon Mallee VicGrid – Item 5 below</p> <p>Sue Bennett, Yarrawalla Community Planning Committee – Item 6 below</p> <p>Alycia O’Sullivan, Kindergarten Coordinator and Lisa McCoy, Local Logic Place – Item 7 below</p> |
| Item(s) discussed. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NBN Update and Presentation 2. Unlocking Loddon’s Growth Potential – Action Plan 3. Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid – Project Update 4. Destination Management Plan Presentation 5. VNI West Project Update 6. Yarrawalla Community Plan 2023 – 2032 – Presentation 7. The State of Loddon’s Children and Young People Report 2023 8. Draft Small Towns Strategy 9. Strategic Risk Review 10. Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy Review 11. Public Interest Disclosure Policy Review 12. 2024 National General Assembly 13. General Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inglewood land sale |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Conflict of Interest Disclosures – Councillor/officer making disclosure | Nil |
| Councillor/officer left room | n/a |

7 REVIEW OF ACTIONS**7.1 REVIEW OF ACTIONS**

File Number: 02/01/002

Author: Lisa Clue, Manager Governance

Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: 1. Resolutions acted upon since the February 2024 Council Meeting

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note resolutions acted upon since the February 2024 Council meeting as attached to this report.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this report, or involved in the subject matter of the report.

REPORT

A document containing the status of actions from Council meeting resolutions is attached to this Agenda report.

There were no outstanding actions from Council meeting resolutions prior to February 2024.

All actions from February 2024 Council meeting resolutions have been completed.

Resolutions acted upon since the February 2024 Council Meeting

| Meeting | Officer/Director | Section | Subject |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------------|---|
| Council 27/02/2024 | Caserta, Deanne Stedman, Michelle | Decision Reports | Review of the Related Party Disclosures Policy v4 |
| RESOLUTION 2024/27 | | | |
| Moved: Cr Wendy Murphy | | | |
| Seconded: Cr Neil Beattie | | | |
| That Council adopts the Related Party Disclosures Policy v4. | | | |
| CARRIED | | | |
| 04 Mar 2024 3:06pm Caserta, Deanne - Completion | | | |
| Policy finalised and published to website | | | |

| Meeting | Officer/Director | Section | Subject |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Council 27/02/2024 | Colls, Renae Fitzgerald, Lincoln | Motion | Motion |
| RESOLUTION 2024/38 | | | |
| Moved: Cr Dan Straub | | | |
| Seconded: Cr Neil Beattie | | | |
| That Loddon Shire Council makes a submission to the Ward Boundary Review in favour of the Preliminary Report that we received. | | | |
| CARRIED | | | |
| 04 Mar 2024 4:23pm Colls, Renae - Completion | | | |
| Administration have submitted documentation to the VEC Ward Boundary Review in support of the Preliminary Report. | | | |

Resolutions acted upon since the February 2024 Council Meeting

| Meeting | Officer/Director | Section | Subject |
|---|--------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Council 27/02/2024 | Caserta, Deanne Stedman, Michelle | Decision Reports | Review of the Borrowing Policy v2 |
| <p>RESOLUTION 2024/26</p> <p>Moved: Cr Dan Straub Seconded: Cr Neil Beattie</p> <p>That Council adopts the Borrowing Policy v2.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CARRIED</p> <p>04 Mar 2024 3:06pm Caserta, Deanne - Completion Policy finalised and published to website</p> | | | |

| Meeting | Officer/Director | Section | Subject |
|--|---------------------------------|------------------|---|
| Council 27/02/2024 | Clue, Lisa Stedman, Michelle | Decision Reports | Appointment of Audit and Risk Committee Chair |
| <p>RESOLUTION 2024/24</p> <p>Moved: Cr Dan Straub Seconded: Cr Neil Beattie</p> <p>That Council, on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee, appoint Rodney Poxon as Chairperson of the Loddon Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee for the period 29 February 2024 to 28 February 2025.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CARRIED</p> <p>12 Mar 2024 11:47am Clue, Lisa - Completion Rod Poxon has been advised in writing of the Council resolution. Relevant Council officers have also been advised.</p> | | | |

Resolutions acted upon since the February 2024 Council Meeting

| Meeting | Officer/Director | Section | Subject |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------------|--|
| Council 27/02/2024 | Caserta, Deanne Stedman, Michelle | Decision Reports | Finance Report for the quarter ending 31 December 2023 |
| RESOLUTION 2024/25 | | | |
| Moved: Cr Linda Jungwirth | | | |
| Seconded: Cr Wendy Murphy | | | |
| That Council | | | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. receives and notes 'Finance Report for the quarter ending 31 December 2023' 2. approves budget revisions included in the report for internal reporting purposes only 3. approves the supplementary valuations of rateable and non-rateable properties in respect of the 2023/24 financial year, as returned by the Shire Valuer, LG Valuations Pty Ltd, and endorses them being incorporated into the Register of Rateable and Non Rateable Properties and Rate Book for 2023/24 4. approves the alteration of future reports to remove Appendix 7: Caravan Park Income and Expenditure. | | | |
| | | | CARRIED |
| 04 Mar 2024 3:06pm Caserta, Deanne - Completion | | | |
| Report presented for information | | | |

8 MAYORAL REPORT**8.1 MAYORAL REPORT**

File Number: 02/01/001
Author: Lisa Clue, Manager Governance
Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Mayoral Report.

REPORT

Mayor Holt will present a verbal report at the meeting.

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Loddon Campaspe Councils | |
| | |
| Municipal Association of Victoria | |
| | |
| Murray River Group of Councils | |
| | |
| Rural Councils Victoria | |
| | |
| Audit and Risk Committee | |
| | |
| Section 65 Community Asset Committees: | |
| Donaldson Park | |
| Hard Hill Tourist Reserve | |
| Wedderburn Community Centre | |
| Wedderburn Engine Park and Market Square Reserve | |
| Wedderburn Mechanics and Literary Institute Hall | |
| | |
| Other Council activities | |
| Date | Activity |
| | |

9 COUNCILLORS' REPORT

9.1 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

File Number: 02/01/001
Author: Lisa Clue, Manager Governance
Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Councillors' reports.

REPORT

Each Councillor will present a verbal report at the meeting.

Cr Beattie

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Rail Freight Alliance | |
| | |
| Section 65 Community Asset Committees: | |
| Boort Aerodrome | |
| Boort Memorial Hall | |
| Boort Park | |
| Korong Vale Mechanics Hall | |
| Korong Vale Sports Centre | |
| Little Lake Boort | |
| Yando Public Hall | |
| | |
| Other Council activities | |
| Date | Activity |
| | |
| | |

Cr Straub

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| North Central Local Learning and Employment Network | |
| | |
| Section 65 Community Asset Committees: | |
| East Loddon Community Centre | |
| Pyramid Hill Memorial Hall | |
| | |
| Other Council activities | |
| Date | Activity |
| | |
| | |

Cr Jungwirth

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Australia Day Committee | |
| | |
| Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance | |
| | |
| Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee | |
| | |
| North Central Goldfields Regional Library | |
| | |
| Other Council activities | |
| Date | Activity |
| | |
| | |

Cr Murphy

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Calder Highway Improvement Committee | |
| | |
| Local Government Women’s Charter | |
| | |
| Healthy Minds Network | |
| | |
| Section 65 Community Asset Committees: | |
| Campbells Forest Hall | |
| Inglewood Community Sports Centre | |
| Inglewood Community Elderly Persons Units | |
| Inglewood Town Hall Hub | |
| | |
| Other Council activities | |
| Date | Activity |
| | |
| | |

10 DECISION REPORTS**10.1 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE REMUNERATION REPORT**

File Number: FOL/20/612
Author: Deanne Caserta, Manager Financial Services
Authoriser: Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate
Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. increases the quarterly remuneration paid to independent members of the Audit and Risk Committee to \$570.00, effective the quarter commencing 1 May 2024
2. maintains payment of an extra quarter remuneration to the Chair during a one year term
3. maintains a travel reimbursement for independent members of the Audit and Risk Committee, paid at the rate that Councillors are reimbursed for travel.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this report, or involved in the subject matter of the report.

BACKGROUND

Loddon Shire Council established an Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) pursuant to Section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act). The ARC supports Council in discharging its oversight responsibilities related to financial and performance reporting, risk management, fraud prevention systems and control, maintenance of a sound internal control environment, assurance activities including internal and external audit, and Council's performance with regard to compliance with its policies and legislative and regulatory requirements. It acts in this capacity by monitoring, reviewing, endorsing and advising on matters as set out in the ARC Charter.

Remuneration is paid to each Independent Committee Member under Section 53(6) of the Act. Councillor Committee Members are not remunerated for their time on the ARC.

Council was provided with an ARC remuneration report at the Council Meeting held on 28 March 2023, where Council resolved to:

- increase the quarterly remuneration paid to independent members of the Audit Committee to \$545, effective the quarter commencing 1 May 2023;
- maintain payment of an extra quarter remuneration to the Chair during a one year term; and
- maintain a travel reimbursement for independent members of the Audit Committee, paid at the rate that Councillors are reimbursed for travel.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The Consumer Price Index for *All Groups – Melbourne for December Quarter to December Quarter* seasonally adjusted, is used annually to determine increases to ARC members' remuneration. The indexation was sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics for December 2022 to December 2023, and the increase is 4.1%.

Application of 4.1% to the ARC's current remuneration of \$545.00 per quarter calculates to \$567.35 per quarter. This report recommends that this amount be rounded up to \$570.00 per quarter.

Last year's report confirmed Council's commitment of an extra quarterly payment to the Chair during a one-year term. This payment recognises the additional responsibility held by the Chair. It also confirmed a travel reimbursement to be paid to independent members at the same rate as the Councillors' travel reimbursement.

COST/BENEFITS

There is a small financial cost to Council resulting from this report that can be accommodated within Council's budget.

RISK ANALYSIS

Council increases the likelihood of recruiting and retaining skilled ARC members by ensuring that remuneration is reviewed on a regular basis.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Nil

10.2 PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE POLICY (VERSION 2)

File Number: 18/01/001
Author: Lisa Clue, Manager Governance
Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer
Attachments: 1. Public Interest Disclosure Policy (Version 2)

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Public Interest Disclosure Policy (Version 2).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this report, or involved in the subject matter of the report.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

The Protected (Public Interest) Disclosure Policy (Version 1) was adopted by Council at its meeting held 25 June 2019.

Councillors were briefed on the review of this policy at the March Forum.

BACKGROUND

On 1 January 2020 the *Protected Disclosure Act 2012* became the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* (the Act), as a result the Protected (Public Interest) Disclosure Policy (Version 1) has become the Public Interest Disclosure Policy (Version 2).

The Act encourages and facilitates disclosing improper conduct by public bodies or public sector employees, and protects those who make disclosures. Section 58 of the Act requires that an entity that may receive disclosures made in accordance with the Act must establish procedures to facilitate the making of those disclosures, and for the handling of those disclosures – and where appropriate, the notification of those disclosures to an appropriate entity under the Act.

Council's Strategic Policy and Procedure Framework requires the Public Interest Disclosure Policy (the policy) to be considered and adopted by Council.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The policy, which has undergone a scheduled review, is attached to this Agenda report for the consideration of Council.

No recommendations from internal audits or integrity agency reviews were relevant to, or required to be considered during review of the policy. As such the proposed changes to the policy are minimal, and are summarised as:

- Administrative/formatting – a number of minor administrative and formatting changes and corrections have been made throughout the policy
- Metadata – updated legislation and procedure references
- Definitions – for clarity, now includes the definition of improper conduct and detrimental action, as defined in the Act
- How to make a disclosure – removal of the fax number
- For more information – reflecting current disclosure coordinator position.

As required by the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Analysis has been conducted on the policy, assessing the effects that the policy may have on people of different genders. No negative impact on any gender was identified during that assessment.

A current version of the policy is maintained on Council's website.

A review of the supporting Public Interest Disclosure Procedure will commence in coming weeks.

COST/BENEFITS

There are no direct costs associated with the review/adoption of this policy. The benefit of adopting the policy is the setting of clear expectations in the management of public interest disclosures.

RISK ANALYSIS

Maintaining a Public Interest Disclosure Policy supports legislative compliance and minimises risk associated with receipt and management of disclosures.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Staff within the Corporate directorate, including the Public Interest Disclosure Coordinator, have been involved in the review of this policy.



PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE POLICY

| | |
|--|--|
| DOCUMENT TYPE: | Council policy |
| DOCUMENT STATUS: | Under review |
| POLICY OWNER POSITION: | Director Corporate |
| INTERNAL COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT: | Not applicable |
| APPROVED BY: | Council |
| DATE ADOPTED: | |
| VERSION NUMBER: | 2 |
| REVIEW DATE: | |
| DATE RESCINDED: | |
| RELATED STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS, POLICIES OR PROCEDURES: | Public Interest Disclosure Procedure Councillor Code of Conduct Staff Code of Conduct Privacy Policy |
| RELATED LEGISLATION: | Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012 (Vic) Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011 (Vic) Integrity and Accountability Legislation Amendment (Public Interest Disclosures, Oversight and Independence) Act 2019 (Vic) |
| EVIDENCE OF APPROVAL: | |

Signed by Chief Executive Officer

FILE LOCATION: K:\EXECUTIVE\Strategies policies and
procedures\Policies – adopted PDF and Word\POL
Public Interest Disclosure Policy v2.docx

Policy documents are amended from time to time, therefore you should not rely on a printed copy being the current version. Please consult the policies on the Loddon Shire website (Council Policies) or Intranet (Organisational Policies) to ensure that the version you are using is up to date.

This document is available in alternative formats (e.g. larger font) if requested.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Loddon Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land comprising the Loddon Shire Council area. Council would like to pay respect to their Elders both past and present.



PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE POLICY

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to encourage and facilitate the making of disclosures of improper conduct by public officers and public bodies, including the Council, its staff, volunteers, contractors and Councillors.

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors and Councillors of Loddon Shire Council. Any member of the public may refer to this policy when considering or making a public interest disclosure.

3 POLICY

Council is committed to the aims and objectives of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012 (the Act). It recognises the value of transparency and accountability in its administrative and management practices, and supports the making of disclosures that reveal improper conduct.

It does not tolerate improper conduct by the organisation, its staff, volunteers, contractors or Councillors, nor the taking of reprisals against those who come forward to disclose such conduct.

4 WHAT CAN PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURES BE MADE ABOUT

Public Interest Disclosures (disclosures) may be made about “improper conduct” on the part of a public body or its staff, volunteers, contractors, and Councillors where the public body is a Council.

Disclosures may also be made about “detrimental action” taken (or suspected may be taken) in reprisal against a person in connection with a disclosure made about improper conduct.

The conduct or action being disclosed may have taken place, still be occurring, or is believed will occur or be engaged in.

If the Council believes a disclosure may be a public interest disclosure made in accordance with the Act, it will take appropriate action as set out in legislation and Council’s Public Interest Disclosure Procedure.



PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE POLICY

5 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED

| Term | As defined in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012 |
|------------------------------|---|
| Improper conduct (section 4) | <p>(1) For the purposes of this Act, improper conduct means—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) corrupt conduct; or (b) conduct of a public officer or public body engaged in by the public officer or public body in their capacity as a public officer or a public body that constitutes— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a criminal offence; or (ii) serious professional misconduct; or (iii) dishonest performance of public functions; or (iv) an intentional or reckless breach of public trust; or (v) an intentional or reckless misuse of information or material acquired in the course of the performance of the functions of the public officer or public body; or (vi) a substantial mismanagement of public resources; or (vii) a substantial risk to the health or safety of one or more persons; or (viii) a substantial risk to the environment; or (c) conduct of any person that— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) adversely affects the honest performance by a public officer or public body of their functions as a public officer or public body; or (ii) is intended to adversely affect the effective performance or exercise by a public officer or public body of the functions or powers of the public officer or public body and results in the person, or an associate of the person, obtaining— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) a licence, permit, approval, authority or other entitlement under any Act or subordinate instrument; or (B) an appointment to a statutory office or as a member of the board of any public body under any Act or subordinate instrument; or (C) a financial benefit or real or personal property; or (D) any other direct or indirect monetary or proprietary gain— <p style="margin-left: 40px;">that the person or associate would not have otherwise obtained; or</p> |



PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE POLICY

| Term | As defined in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012 |
|--|---|
| | <p>(d) conduct of any person that could constitute a conspiracy or attempt to engage in any of the conduct referred to in paragraph (a), (b) or (c).</p> <p>(2) Despite subsection (1), conduct that is trivial does not constitute improper conduct for the purposes of this Act.</p> |
| <p>Detrimental action (section 43)</p> | <p>(1) For the purposes of this Act and subject to subsections (2) and (3), a person takes detrimental action against another person in reprisal for a public interest disclosure if—</p> <p>(a) the person takes or threatens to take detrimental action against the other person because, or in the belief that—</p> <p>(i) the other person or anyone else has made, or intends to make, the disclosure; or</p> <p>(ii) the other person or anyone else has cooperated, or intends to cooperate, with an investigation of the disclosure; or</p> <p>(b) for either of those reasons, the person incites or permits someone else to take or threaten to take detrimental action against the other person.</p> |

6 WHO CAN MAKE A DISCLOSURE

Any individual natural person (e.g. not an organisation or company) may make a disclosure under the Act. The individual could be a person within the organisation, or any member of the public externally. Individuals may also make a joint disclosure.

Disclosures may be made in a number of ways set out in the Act, including anonymously, in writing or verbally. You need not identify the person or body about whom the disclosure is made in order to make a disclosure under the Act.

7 HOW TO MAKE A DISCLOSURE

As required under the Act, Council has established a procedure to facilitate and encourage the making of disclosures under the Act, and how Council handles any such disclosures received by it (refer to the Public Interest Disclosure Procedure). Council’s Public Interest Disclosure Procedure is available at <http://www.loddon.vic.gov.au/About-us/Our-Council/Governance/Protected-disclosure> or by inspection during normal office hours of Council at 37-41 High Street, Wedderburn VIC 3518.

Council’s Public Interest Disclosure Procedure contains detailed information about who can receive disclosures, for example, Council, IBAC and the Ombudsman, and how you can go about making such disclosures to us or to those bodies.



PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE POLICY

If you are not able to access an online copy or would like a copy sent to you, please contact us by any of the methods below so we can provide you a copy of our Public Interest Disclosure Procedure.

| | |
|-----------|--|
| By post | 41 High Street, Wedderburn VIC 3518 or PO Box 21, Wedderburn VIC 3518 |
| Telephone | (03) 5494 1200 |
| Email | pdc@loddon.vic.gov.au |

8 CONFIDENTIALITY

Council takes its obligations under the Act seriously. This includes the requirement to protect the identity of the discloser and the matters disclosed by a discloser. Maintaining confidentiality in relation to public interest disclosure matters is crucial, among other things, in ensuring reprisals are not made against a discloser.

It is a criminal offence under the Act to disclose information connected with a disclosure made in accordance with the Act, including the identity of the discloser. The penalties for breaching confidentiality obligations include financial penalties and imprisonment.

9 FOR MORE INFORMATION

Council has appointed the Director Corporate, as its Public Interest Disclosure Coordinator to handle enquiries about its obligations under the Act. You may contact the Public Interest Disclosure Coordinator if you wish to obtain further information about Council's policy or procedure, or if you wish to arrange a confidential meeting to discuss any matters of concern.

The contact details of the Public Interest Disclosure Coordinator are:

Michelle Stedman
Director Corporate and Public Interest Disclosure Coordinator
Loddon Shire Council
PO Box 21, Wedderburn VIC 3518

Telephone: (03) 5494 1200
Email: pdc@loddon.vic.gov.au

You can also find out more information about our general complaints handling process from <http://www.loddon.vic.gov.au/About-us/Complaints> or by contacting us by:

Phone: (03) 5494 1200
Email: loddon@loddon.vic.gov.au
Post: Loddon Shire Council, PO Box 21, Wedderburn VIC 3518



PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE POLICY

10 STATEMENTS

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act.

Loddon Shire Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and staff. The Council will formally involve elected Health and Safety Representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.

A Gender Impact Assessment of this policy has been undertaken with no negative gendered impacts identified.

11 REVIEW

The Director Corporate will review this policy for any necessary amendments no later than 4 years after adoption of this current version.

10.3 ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY (VERSION 5)**File Number:****Author:** Lisa Clue, Manager Governance**Authoriser:** Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate**Attachments:** 1. Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy (version 5)**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council adopts the Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy (version 5).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this report, or involved in the subject matter of the report.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

The Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy (Version 4) was adopted by Council on 25 June 2019.

In October 2022 Council received the findings of the internal audit report 'Review of Fraud and Corruption Control Framework'. This report was endorsed by Council's Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) in November 2022 and contained recommendations in relation to Council's Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy.

Councillors were briefed on the review of this policy at the March Forum.

BACKGROUND

The Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy (Version 4) has recently been reviewed.

The reviewed policy was presented to the ARC at its February 2024 meeting where it was endorsed with slight wording changes reflecting Committee discussion.

Council's Strategic Policy and Procedure Framework requires the Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy (the policy) to be considered and adopted by Council.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The recent review of the policy considered recommendations from the 2022 internal audit regarding 'Review of Fraud and Corruption Control Framework' referred to earlier in this report.

Finding No. 1 within the report was to review and update Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy to ensure alignment with the new AS8001:2021 standards.

A number of recommended policy enhancements were referenced in the report findings relating to foundations for the fraud and corruption control system; preventing fraud and corruption; responding to fraud and corruption events; and investigation of a detected fraud or corruption event. These recommendations are being considered for incorporation into a Fraud and Corruption Control Plan, currently being developed.

Proposed amendments to the policy:

Metadata:

- Additional documents relevant to the policy have been added.

Scope:

- 'Customers' have been removed, 'Community Asset Committees' have been added.

Policy:

- Wording has been simplified
- Reference to the Australian Standard has been included as a best practice approach, ie prevention, detection and response, and consistent with the recently developed Fraud and Corruption Event Register.
- Responsibilities have been removed from the policy and will be included in the Fraud Control Plan, currently being developed.

Reporting Obligations:

- Wording has been simplified and focused on what will happen should it be required.

Definitions:

- Definitions have been added for clarity, including examples of both fraud and corruption.

Gendered terminology:

- Following a Gender Impact Assessment (required under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*), gendered terminology was corrected throughout the policy.

The ARC considered the reviewed policy at its February meeting, discussing Council's role in seeking to minimise the likelihood of fraud and corruption activity, fraud detection, and investigation; and connection to conflict of interest disclosures.

The ARC endorsed the reviewed policy with slight wording changes that reflected the discussion.

The policy, including wording changes requested by the ARC is attached to this report for the consideration of Council.

COST/BENEFITS

There are no direct costs associated with the review/adoption of this policy. The benefit of adopting the policy is the enhancement of Council's fraud prevention systems and controls.

RISK ANALYSIS

Maintaining an Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy seeks to mitigate a range of potential sources of fraud risk across Council.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Council's ARC has considered the proposed changes to the policy and endorsed the policy ahead of its presentation to Council.



ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY

| | |
|--|---|
| DOCUMENT TYPE: | Council policy |
| DOCUMENT STATUS: | Under Review |
| POLICY OWNER POSITION: | Director Corporate |
| INTERNAL COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT: | Audit and Risk Committee |
| APPROVED BY: | Council |
| DATE ADOPTED: | |
| VERSION NUMBER: | 5 |
| REVIEW DATE: | |
| DATE RESCINDED: | |
| RELATED STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS, POLICIES OR PROCEDURES: | Enterprise Bargaining Agreement section Prevention and Settlement of Disputes Staff and Contractors Code of Conduct Councillor Code of Conduct Protected Disclosure (Public Interest) Disclosure Policy Risk Management Policy Procurement Policy Councillor Gift Policy Community Asset Committee Policy Fraud and Corruption Event Register |
| RELATED LEGISLATION: | Local Government Act 2020 Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2011 Protected Disclosure Act 2012 Department of Health and Human Services Fraud and Corruption Framework, (section 4.4.2 Reporting of suspected fraud by funded agencies) November 2016 |
| FILE LOCATION: | K:\EXECUTIVE\Strategies policies and procedures\Policies - adopted PDF and Word\POL Antifraud and corruption policy v4.docx |
| EVIDENCE OF APPROVAL: | |

Policy documents are amended from time to time, therefore you should not rely on a printed copy being the current version. Please consult the Loddon Shire website to ensure that the version you are using is up to date.

This document is available in alternative formats (e.g. larger font) if requested.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Loddon Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land comprising the Loddon Shire Council area. Council would like to pay respect to their Elders both past and present.



ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish Loddon Shire Council's position in preventing fraud and corruption, and to demonstrate that Council is committed to the prevention, detection, and response of any such occurrences.

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to Councillors, staff, volunteers, suppliers, contractors, Audit and Risk Committee members and Community Asset Committees members.

3 POLICY

Council will not tolerate fraud in any form and will implement controls to prevent the likelihood of fraud and corruption occurring.

To support this position Council will implement a fraud and corruption prevention framework in accordance with Australian Standard *AS8001-2021 Fraud and Corruption Control* as a best practice approach to managing prevention of fraud and corruption.

The fraud and corruption framework will apply the prevention, detection and response approach, as per AS8001-2021, to underpin prevention of fraud and corruption and to create an environment that supports:

- ensuring that Councillors, staff and volunteers are educated about fraud prevention and detection
- promoting ethical and honest behaviour of Councillors, staff and volunteers
- expecting Councillors, staff and volunteers to report instances of fraud when they become aware of it
- handling matters relating to fraud in the strictest confidence
- ensuring that Councillors, staff and volunteers have the qualifications that they assert they have
- promoting the principles of good corporate governance
- communicating Council's intention to:
 - o suspend or dismiss anyone involved in fraudulent or corrupt activity
 - o report fraudulent or corrupt activity to Victoria Police, or other external parties as required
 - o prosecute parties found to be involved in fraudulent or corrupt behaviour
 - o pursue recovery of any financial loss due to fraudulent or corrupt behaviour.

Council will:

- implement internal controls that seek to minimise the opportunity for fraudulent or corrupt activity and detect fraud as soon as possible after it occurs
- work closely with the internal auditors and the Audit and Risk Committee to ensure internal controls are tested
- investigate fraud related incidents, relevant to the particular circumstances, which may include referral to Victoria Police and/or mandatory reporting
- maintain a record of conflict of interest disclosures in accordance with the Councillor and Staff Codes of Conduct.



ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY

4 CONFIDENTIALITY AND FAIR TREATMENT

The highest degree of confidentiality will be applied to reporting and investigating fraud. Confidentiality of those who report fraud is guaranteed, and the reputation of those accused will be subject to the highest level of protection until a definite decision is reached. There are significant penalties under the Protected Disclosure Act 2012 for breach of confidentiality, to protect those who report fraudulent activity.

In order to avoid damaging the reputations of innocent persons initially suspected of wrongful conduct, and to protect the Council from potential civil liability, the results of the audits or investigations will be disclosed or discussed only with those persons who require knowledge of each such investigation in the proper performance of their office or function.

Where appropriate, Council will seek legal advice to ensure that appropriate documentation of the facts has been achieved in order to permit:

- appropriate personnel action
- protection of innocent persons
- appropriate civil or criminal actions
- documentation of claims against Council's insurers
- preservation of the integrity of any criminal investigation and prosecution
- avoidance of any unnecessary litigation.

Council will treat reported cases of suspected fraud with seriousness and confidentiality at all times. Employees who make complaints will not be victimised or disadvantaged. The person against whom the complaint is made will be treated with procedural fairness.

Any person who feels they have been victimised as part of this process has recourse to Council's dispute resolution processes, and to the Protected (Public Interest) Disclosure Procedure.

5 OBLIGATIONS OF REPORTING FRAUD AND/OR CORRUPTION BY FUNDED ORGANISATIONS OR PORTFOLIO AGENCIES

5.1 IBAC

From 1 December 2016, heads of departments and Council CEOs (among other 'Relevant Principal Officers') must notify IBAC of any matter which they suspect on reasonable grounds that corrupt conduct has occurred or is occurring.

The obligation to report suspected corrupt conduct rests with the Relevant Principal Officer. This obligation cannot be delegated. Where another person is acting as the Relevant Principal Officer, the obligation applies to that person and vicariously the organisation.

The Relevant Principal Officer must notify IBAC of all instances of suspected corrupt conduct occurring in their own organisation, and suspected corrupt conduct occurring in other organisations where it is connected with the Relevant Principal Officer's duties, functions and exercise of powers.

There is no legislative obligation for Relevant Principal Officers to search out corrupt conduct, only to report it when suspected.



ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY

The Chief Executive Officer will use IBAC's *Directions* for making mandatory notifications of suspected corruption to assess whether there is a requirement to report. If so, IBAC's *Mandatory Notification Form* for Relevant Principal Officers will be completed by the Chief Executive Officer and submitted to IBAC.¹

As per Section 4 of this policy, confidentiality and procedural fairness will receive the highest priority.

5.2 Funded Organisations or Portfolio Agencies

Some funding agencies, as a requirement of funding provided to organisations, require notification to the relevant Government department of any notification of suspected fraud or corruption within or concerning Council.

Any knowledge of suspected fraud or corruption related to funding will be notified as a priority to the relevant funding department.

As per Section 4 of this policy, confidentiality and procedural fairness will receive the highest priority.

6 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED

| Term | Definition |
|-------|---|
| Fraud | <p>As per the Australian Standard on Fraud and Corruption control (AS8001):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dishonest activity causing actual or potential financial loss to any person or entity including theft of moneys or other property by employees or persons external to the entity and where deception is used at the time, immediately before or immediately following the activity. This also includes the deliberate falsification, concealment, destruction or use of falsified documentation used or intended for use for a normal business purpose or the improper use of information or position for personal financial benefit. The theft of property belonging to an entity by a person or persons internal to the entity but where deception is not used is also considered 'fraud' for the purposes of this Standard. |

¹ <https://www.ibac.vic.gov.au/reporting-corruption/notifications>

- Directions*: set out the types of matters that must be notified and the form, content and method of notifications.
- Frequently Asked Questions* provide further guidance.
- Mandatory notification form*: to be used by Relevant Principal Officers when making notifications. Use additional [Part B](#) and [Part C](#) forms if required.



ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY

| Term | Definition |
|------------------------|--|
| Examples of fraud | <p>Examples of fraud which occur in Australian business and therefore fall within the intended scope of the Standard are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theft of plant and equipment by employees. • Theft of inventory by employees. • False invoicing (involving a staff member of the entity or a person external to the entity creating a fictitious invoice claiming payment for goods or services not delivered or exaggerating the value of goods delivered or services provided). • Theft of funds other than by way of false invoicing. • Theft of cash usually involving some form of concealment. • Accounts receivable fraud (misappropriation or misdirection of remittances received by an entity from a debtor). • Credit card fraud involving unauthorised use of a credit card or credit card number issued to another person or the use of stolen or fraudulently generated credit card numbers by merchants. • Theft of intellectual property or other confidential information. □ • Financial reporting fraud (falsification of the entity’s financial statements with a view to obtaining some form of improper financial benefit). • Release or use of misleading or inaccurate information for the purposes of deceiving, misleading, or to hide wrongdoing. • Misuse of position by senior executives or Councillor in order to gain some form of financial advantage. |
| Corruption | <p>As per the Australian Standard on Fraud and Corruption control (AS8001):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dishonest activity in which a Councillor, executive, manager, employee or contractor of an entity acts contrary to the interests of the entity and abuses their position of trust in order to achieve some personal gain or advantage for their self or for another person or entity. • The concept of ‘corruption’ within this standard can also involve corrupt conduct by the entity, or a person purporting to act on behalf of and in the interests of the entity, in order to secure some form of improper advantage for the entity either directly or indirectly. |
| Examples of corruption | <p>Examples of corruption to which Australian entities are subject and which are therefore within the intended scope of a corruption control program contemplated by this Standard include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment or receipt of secret commissions (bribes), which may be paid in money or in some other form of value to the receiver and may relate to a specific decision or action by the receiver generally. • Release of confidential information for other than a proper business purpose in exchange for some form of non-financial benefit or advantage accruing to the employee releasing the information. • Collusive tendering (the act of multiple tenderers for a particular contact colluding in preparation of their bids). • Payment or solicitation of donations for an improper political purpose. • Serious conflict of interest involving a Councillor or senior executive of an entity or other entity acting in their own self-interest rather than the interests of the entity to which they have been appointed (failing to |



ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY

| Term | Definition |
|-----------------|---|
| | <p>declare to a Board an interest in a transaction the entity is about to enter into or excessive payment of remuneration to Councillors and senior executives).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious nepotism (favouritism towards relatives) or cronyism (favouritism towards friends or colleagues) where the appointee is inadequately qualified to perform the role to which they have been appointed. • Manipulation of the procurement process by favouring one tenderer over others or selectively providing information to some tenders. This frequently involves allowing tenders to resubmit a 'non-complying' tender after being provided with the details of other bids. • Gifts or entertainment intended to achieve a specific or general commercial outcome in the short or long-term – an essential element rendering conduct of this type corrupt would be that it is in breach of the entity's values, behavioural code or gifts policy or that was done without the appropriate transparency within one or more of the entities affected. Bribing officials in order to secure a contract for the supply of goods or services. |
| Corrupt conduct | <p>For the purposes of the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011 corrupt conduct means conduct—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) of any person that adversely affects the honest performance by a public officer or public body of their, or its functions as a public officer or public body; or (b) of a public officer or public body that constitutes or involves the dishonest performance of their, or its functions as a public officer or public body; or (c) of a public officer or public body that constitutes or involves knowingly or recklessly breaching public trust; or (d) of a public officer or a public body that involves the misuse of information or material acquired in the course of the performance of their, or its functions as a public officer or public body, whether or not for the benefit of the public officer or public body or any other person; or (da) of a person (the first person) intended to adversely affect the effective performance or exercise by a public officer or public body of the functions or powers of the public officer or public body and result in the first person or an associate of the first person obtaining— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a licence, permit, approval, authority or other entitlement under any Act or subordinate instrument; or (ii) an appointment to a statutory office or as a member of the board of any public body under any Act or subordinate instrument; or (iii) a financial benefit or real or personal property; or (iv) any other direct or indirect monetary or proprietary gain— that they would not have otherwise obtained; or |



ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY

| Term | Definition |
|--------------------------------|---|
| | (e) that could constitute a conspiracy or an attempt to engage in any conduct referred to in paragraph (a), (b), (c), (d) or (da)— being conduct that would constitute a relevant offence. |
| Procedural fairness | <p>Natural justice (procedural fairness) is a legal requirement that applies to administrative decision-making. It imposes a code of procedure to ensure that decision-making is fair and reasonable.</p> <p>Whether a decision complies with natural justice depends not on whether the decision itself was fair and reasonable, but on whether a fair and proper procedure was followed in making the decision.²</p> |
| Suspects on reasonable grounds | Means there is a real possibility of corrupt conduct. 'Suspicion' is something less than belief, but requires more than idle speculation. It must be based on facts and circumstances that would be sufficient to make a reasonable person suspect corrupt conduct had occurred or was occurring. However, proof is not necessary, nor is it required that an individual or individuals be identified. |

7 STATEMENTS

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act.

Loddon Shire Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Council will formally involve employee Health and Safety Representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.

A Gender Impact Assessment of this policy has been undertaken with no negative gendered impacts identified.

8 REVIEW

The Director Corporate will review this policy for any necessary amendments no later than 3 years after adoption of this current version.

² <https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/About/Our-accountability/Code-of-Conduct>, Accessed 01/11/2019

10.4 STRATEGIC RISK REPORT**File Number:****Author:** Lisa Clue, Manager Governance**Authoriser:** Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate**Attachments:** 1. Strategic Risk Report - March 2024**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council approve the Strategic Risk Report – March 2024.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this report, or involved in the subject matter of the report.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council most recently approved the Strategic Risk Report in May 2022.

Councillors commenced a review of the strategic risks at the July 2023 Forum and were briefed on the progress of the strategic risk review and Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) discussion at the March 2024 Forum.

BACKGROUND

The Victorian Government established the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) in 2014 to ensure that all Councils are measuring and reporting on their performance in a consistent way. The LGPRF includes an indicator specifically relating to reporting on strategic risks to Council's operations, their likelihood and consequences of occurring and risk minimisation strategies. The requirement to report on strategic risks is also documented within Council's Risk Management Framework.

This report seeks Council approval of the Strategic Risk Report – March 2024.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Council experiences many different types of risks that usually can be divided into two categories; operational risks and strategic risks.

Generally operational risks are those which would impact achievement of the current objectives or strategy and they are managed within the organisation. Project risks are a form of operational risk. Whereas strategic risks are those risks that may require a change in current strategy and are managed by the Council.

The most recent review of the strategic risks commenced at the Council Forum in July 2023 when additional current control measures were identified for risks #32, #80 and #182, and the description of risk #186 was redeveloped, and its controls updated.

A report incorporating the above was presented to Council's Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) at its August 2023 meeting. The Committee discussed each strategic risk detailed in the report and requested:

1. Each risk be aligned to the relevant Council Plan objective(s).
2. Risk #32 be reworked to clarify elements of financial sustainability and its relationship with both government and Council policy.
3. Risk #56 be expanded to include impacts of vacant staff positions on Council services more broadly (in addition to volunteers and volunteer delivered services).
4. Risk #80 be further clarified, and expanded to relate to more than just wetter and drier soils.
5. Risk #186 to be further developed to reflect the range of current risks to Council's business continuity, for example disruption to supply chain, recruitment challenges etc.

A report incorporating the above was presented to the ARC at its February 2024 meeting. The Committee further discussed each reviewed risk and resolved to endorse the reviewed strategic risks for presentation to Council with the following amendments:

1. Risk #32 – change the risk category from 'Government Policy' to 'Financial Sustainability'
2. Review of risk categories to ensure they both align with the Risk Framework, and support relevant reporting requirements.

As risk categories are not provided for in the Risk Management Framework, and do not currently inform reporting, they have been removed from the Strategic Risk Report.

The Strategic Risk Report – March 2024 includes the Strategic Risk Register (with inherent and residual risk levels) and the controls in place to reduce or mitigate each risk and the effectiveness of those controls.

COST/BENEFITS

The benefit of developing the Strategic Risk Report is an awareness across the organisation of the external environment that may impact Council's ability to achieve its strategic objectives.

It is not anticipated that any costs will be incurred as a result of the Strategic Risk Report. The identification of strategic risks may work however to mitigate financial risks through early identification and development of appropriate controls.

RISK ANALYSIS

This report assesses the strategic risks that may impact Council achieving its strategic objectives outlined in the Council Plan 2021-2025. It also addresses Local Government Performance Reporting Framework obligations.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

A report incorporating the above was presented to the ARC at its February 2024 meeting. The Committee discussed each reviewed risk and resolved to endorse the reviewed strategic risks for presentation to Council with amendments described earlier in this report.

LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL

STRATEGIC RISK REPORT – March 2024



DOCUMENT INFORMATION

| | |
|--|--|
| DOCUMENT TYPE: | Strategic document |
| DOCUMENT STATUS: | Draft |
| POLICY OWNER POSITION: | Director Corporate |
| INTERNAL COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT: APPROVED BY: | Audit and Risk Committee Council |
| DATE ADOPTED: | Click here to enter date of approval |
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| REVIEW DATE: | Click here to enter a date. |
| DATE RESCINDED: | Click here to enter a date. |
| RELATED STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS, POLICIES OR PROCEDURES: | Click here to enter text. |
| RELATED LEGISLATION: | Click here to enter text. |
| EVIDENCE OF APPROVAL: | |

Signed by Chief Executive Officer

FILE LOCATION:

Strategic documents are amended from time to time, therefore you should not rely on a printed copy being the current version. Please consult the Loddon Shire website to ensure that the version you are using is up to date.

This document is available in alternative formats (e.g. larger font) if requested.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Loddon Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land comprising the Loddon Shire Council area. Council would like to pay respect to their Elders both past and present.

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1 PURPOSE

The Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014 (Regulations) require Council to comply with annual reporting requirements. Part of the requirements are the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF). The indicators within LGPRF are reported Council's Annual Report.

Section 12 (Governance and management checklist) of the Regulations states:

For the purposes of 131(3)(a)(ii) of the Act—

- a) *the prescribed governance and management checklist is set out in column 1 of Schedule 1;*
- b) *the prescribed form of the results of Council's assessment against the prescribed governance and management checklist is set out in column 2 of Schedule 1.*

Item 19 of the Governance and Management Checklist in Schedule 1 is the requirement for risk reporting which includes “*six-month reports of strategic risks to Council's operations, their likelihood and consequences of occurring and risk minimisation strategies*” under LGPRF.

2 BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

It is not anticipated that additional budget will be required to implement the actions in this plan.

3 RISK ANALYSIS

This report has been developed to assess the strategic risks that Council faces in achieving its strategic objectives documented in the Council Plan 2021-2025.

4 STRATEGIC VERSUS OPERATIONAL RISKS

Council experiences many different types of risks, and generally, they can be divided into two categories; operational risks or strategic risks.

Generally operational risks are those which would impact achievement of the current objectives or strategy and they are managed within the organisation. Whereas strategic risks are those risks that may require a change in current strategy and they are managed by the Council.

A list of strategic risks have been identified as relating to delivery of the strategic objectives of Council, and form the Strategic Risk Register which forms part of this report.

5 IDENTIFICATION OF STRATEGIC RISKS

The review of Council's strategic risks has been undertaken during sessions with Councillors and the Audit and Risk Committee.

It is acknowledged that there will be varying views about this assessment, particularly around the risks included on the register and the assessment of the inherent and residual risks. They are quite subjective, and opinions will vary as to how reflective they are of the current state.

Each aspect of the Strategic Risk Register can and will be refined during each review and additional strategic risks can be considered.

6 ASSESSMENT OF RISKS

In accordance with LGPRF, Council is required to assess its strategic risks every six months, including their likelihood and consequences of occurring and risk minimisation strategies.

The likelihood and consequences are identified in the Risk Management Policy. Appendix A is the Consequence Table, Appendix B is the Likelihood Table, and Appendix C is the Risk Matrix.

6.1 Inherent and Residual Risks

The first level of assessment of each of the strategic risks is inherent risk; the second level of assessment is residual risk. Inherent risk is commonly defined as “the risk without considering internal controls” or alternatively “a raw risk that has no mitigation factors or treatments applied to it.”

Residual risk on the other hand is commonly defined as “the level of risk remaining after controls have been applied.” Therefore, the difference between inherent risk and residual risk is the controls that are in place to reduce or mitigate the risk.

6.2 Controls

As the residual risk will be determined by the effectiveness of the controls in place, they are rated as Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, or Non-Existent, as per below:

| CONTROL EFFECTIVENESS | DESCRIPTION | COLOR |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Excellent controls | Negligible control gaps. Controls treat the root causes of the risks. Controls eliminate the risk. All controls are well designed for the risk. Many lines of defence. Critical controls are quality assured. | Excellent controls |
| Good controls | There are a few control gaps. A few controls rely on procedural compliance. Several lines of defence. Most controls are well designed for the risk. Risk to health and safety is reduced as far as is reasonably practicable. | Good controls |
| Fair controls | There are some control gaps. Some controls rely on procedural compliance. A few lines of defence. Risk to health and safety is likely to be reduced as far as is reasonably practicable | Fair controls |
| Poor controls | There are many control gaps. Most controls rely on procedural compliance. Single line of defence. Risk to health and safety may not be reduced as far as is reasonably practicable | Poor controls |
| Non-existent controls | No effective controls are in place. Risk to health and safety is not reduced as far as is reasonably practicable | Non-existent controls |

They are also grouped as Preventive, which are controls that are designed to prevent a risk from occurring; Detective, which are controls that detect risks from occurring or while they are in motion; and Reactive, which are controls that are put in place after a risk occurs to reduce the impact.

7 FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTROLS

Where a control is identified as less than Excellent, effort will be required to improve the quality of the control environment. New controls can also be identified to focus effort on risk mitigation.

It should be noted that for some strategic risks, even the best controls may not mitigate the overall impact. e.g. A one-in-100 year flood will always cause significant damage regardless of how many effective controls are in place.

8 REVIEW

In accordance with LGPRF, Council is required to assess its strategic risks every six months. Where possible and appropriate, this document will be reviewed on a six-monthly cycle, aligned with timeframes identified in risk management documents and the Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

Regular review will provide opportunity to assess the current external context to identify any new or emerging strategic risks. It will also enable strategic opportunities to be included as they are identified.

9 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

| Risk ID | Risk Description | Inherent Risk Level | Residual Risk Level |
|---------|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| 32 | Council's heavy reliance on recurrent grants and rating income, and Council's limited ability to raise additional revenue, may result in loss of services to the community and Council being financially unsustainable over time. | Medium | Low |
| 56 | An ageing and changing demographic within Loddon Shire communities may lead to a shortfall in volunteers in the community and impact on Council's ability to deliver services currently provided by volunteers. | High | Medium |
| 80 | The increase and severity of climate events such as heat, flood, and storm, may lead to a change in the operations of Council to accommodate wetter and drier soils and the impact they have on infrastructure and building assets. | High | Medium |
| 182 | The extensive use of information technology to provide contemporary and efficient business practices may result in Council's systems being infiltrated by cyber criminals resulting in loss of data or being locked out of Council's core systems. | High | High |
| 186 | A disaster or disruptive event may result in interruption or change to Council's operations and project delivery. | Very High | Very High |
| 231 | A change to social, economic, or geopolitical landscape may affect the availability of human resources, contractors or supplies and lead to a disruption or change to Council's services or planned project delivery. | High | Medium |

10 CONTROLS

The following controls have been applied to each of the six strategic risks identified, which has impacted the inherent risk by reducing it in four of the five risks.

10.1 Risk 32

Council’s heavy reliance on recurrent grants and rating income, and Council’s limited ability to raise additional revenue, may result in loss of services to the community and Council being financially unsustainable over time.

10.1.1 Control measures and effectiveness

| Control Measure | Type | Control Measure Description and Effectiveness |
|---------------------------------|------------|--|
| Departmental Strategic Document | Preventive | Council has developed a Financial Plan that covers 10 years and incorporates all expected income and expenditure. Effectiveness: Good |
| Monitoring progress | Detective | Council’s officers monitor their financial results monthly. Effectiveness: Excellent |
| Monitoring progress | Detective | The Audit and Risk Committee and Council review the financial report quarterly. Effectiveness: Excellent |
| Monitoring progress | Detective | The Financial Statements are subject to external audit. Effectiveness: Excellent |
| Departmental Strategic Document | Preventive | Asset management plans are developed for infrastructure assets. Effectiveness: Fair [As required, Asset Management Plan financial data will be considered during annual review of the Financial Plan.] |
| Departmental Strategic Document | Preventive | Actions contained in strategic plans are costed across the life of the plan. Effectiveness: Good |
| Departmental Strategic Document | Preventive | Use of reserves to fund future major projects, purchases and works. Effectiveness: Excellent |
| Departmental Strategic Document | Preventive | Council has a robust process for ensuring accurate reporting to the Victorian Grants Commission. Effectiveness: Excellent |
| Work Instructions | Preventive | Council has the option to apply for a variation to the rate cap as a way of raising additional income. Effectiveness: Poor [Council will need to finalise service plan reviews to support an application for variation to the rate cap.] |
| Work Instructions | Preventive | Council has developed a Service Review Plan 2023-2027 to outline the priority areas for review. Effectiveness: Fair [Under the current Service Reviews Plan, service reviews will be undertaken progressively to 2027.] |
| Work Instructions | Preventive | Council has developed a Revenue and Rating Plan to determine the most appropriate and affordable revenue and rating approach for Loddon Shire Council which in conjunction with other income sources will adequately finance the objectives in the Council Plan. Effectiveness: Excellent |

10.2 Risk 56

An ageing and changing demographic within Loddon Shire communities may lead to a shortfall in volunteers in the community and impact on Council's ability to deliver services currently provided by volunteers.

10.2.1 Control measures and effectiveness

| Control Measure | Type | Control Measure Description and Effectiveness |
|---------------------------------|-------------|---|
| Corporate Policies | Preventive | The Community Support Policy documents Council's commitment to supporting volunteers and volunteer groups in providing services to the community. Effectiveness: Not assessed |
| Networking | Preventive | Promote volunteering to young people through school networks. Effectiveness: Poor [Promotion of volunteering within schools has not yet commenced.] |
| Networking | Preventive | Provide young volunteers with mentors to grow and develop their skills in volunteering roles. Effectiveness: Poor [The youth volunteer mentoring program has not yet commenced.] |
| Communication | Preventive | Target communication through schools and other relevant groups re the benefits of, and opportunities for young people to volunteer within Loddon. Effectiveness: Not assessed |
| Corporate Policies | Preventive | Promotion and recruitment of volunteers in line with strategic direction 1 of the Volunteer Strategy. Effectiveness: Good |
| Corporate Policies | Preventive | Support and develop Council and community volunteers and volunteering in the community in line with strategic direction 2 of the Volunteer Strategy. Effectiveness: Good |
| Corporate Policies | Preventive | Recognise, celebrate and value volunteers in line with strategic direction 3 of the Volunteer Strategy. Effectiveness: Good |
| Corporate Policies | Preventive | Partner and collaborate to create a strong culture toward volunteering in line with strategic direction 4 of the Volunteer Strategy. Effectiveness: Excellent |
| Networking | Preventive | Diversity and inclusion in volunteering. Effectiveness: Good |
| Departmental Strategic Document | Preventive | Council has undertaken the Re-Engaging Volunteers in Rural Towns Project resulting in 4 clear directions. Effectiveness: Good |
| Communication | Preventive | Implementation of Volunteer Strategy for recruitment of new and support of existing volunteers. Effectiveness: Excellent |

10.3 Risk 80

The increase and severity of climate events such as heat, flood, and storm, may lead to a change in the operations of Council to accommodate wetter and drier soils and the impact they have on infrastructure and building assets.

10.3.1 Control measures and effectiveness

| Control Measure | Type | Control Measure Description and Effectiveness |
|---------------------------------|------------|--|
| Innovation | Preventive | Exploration of alternate products or work methods across the range of Council infrastructure types. Effectiveness: Excellent |
| Innovation | Preventive | Drought proof playing surfaces and community facilities with water saving initiatives. Effectiveness: Excellent |
| Innovation | Preventive | Implementation of innovative design into planning of new or renewal of infrastructure that assists with climate change risk mitigation. Effectiveness: Good |
| Networking | Preventive | Keep abreast of climate change impacts from subject matter experts. Effectiveness: Good |
| Innovation | Preventive | Completion of the South West Loddon pipeline project. Effectiveness: Excellent |
| Departmental Strategic Document | Preventive | Flood studies are being undertaken for Wedderburn and Korong Vale. Effectiveness: Fair [Flood studies are still being developed.] |
| Departmental Procedures | Corrective | Maintain current condition records for Council infrastructure assets should funding or insurance cover be sought for reinstatement. Effectiveness: Good |

10.4 Risk 182

The extensive use of information technology to provide contemporary and efficient business practices may result in Council's systems being infiltrated by cyber criminals resulting in loss of data or being locked out of Council's core systems.

10.4.1 Control measures and effectiveness

| Control Measure | Type | Control Measure Description and Effectiveness |
|---------------------------------|------------|--|
| Departmental Strategic Document | Preventive | Council is subject to the Victorian Protective Data Security Standards which were developed to help manage public sector information across all security areas. Effectiveness: Excellent |
| Software | Preventive | We have procured and implemented a Darktrace Device, which detects, monitors and alerts us of any abnormal or unexpected network activity. We have implemented CrowdStrike as a prevention software (additional antivirus software). Alerts are reported to IT for triage and investigation. Effectiveness: Excellent |
| Software | Preventive | We are also pricing a SIEM (Security Incident and Event Management) solution as well as the implementation of an outsourced SOC (Security Operations Centre) for 24/7 monitoring and response to cyber security related incidents, given our IT capability does not extend to 24/7. Effectiveness: Excellent |

| Control Measure | Type | Control Measure Description and Effectiveness |
|-----------------------|------------|---|
| Training – Competency | Preventive | Councillor and staff training program regarding cybercrime and phishing emails. Effectiveness: Poor [Training program is on the Intranet but is not part of the core suite of compulsory training programs.] |
| Communication | Preventive | Alert emails are provided to registered users from the IT Department when a known threat is identified. Effectiveness: Fair [This alerts current threats to those who are logged on at the time. Others may miss the email.] |
| Software | Preventive | Multi-factor authentication has been implemented for remote access to the network. Effectiveness: Excellent |

10.5 Risk 186

A disaster or disruptive event may result in interruption or change to Council’s operations and project delivery.

10.5.1 Control measures and effectiveness

| Control Measure | Type | Control Measure Description and Effectiveness |
|--------------------|------------|---|
| Corporate Policies | Preventive | Business continuity management policy and framework. Effectiveness: Fair [To be effective, business impact analysis and scenario testing is required.] |
| Corporate Policies | Preventive | Business continuity management plan. Effectiveness: Fair [To be effective, business impact analysis and scenario testing is required.] |
| Networking | Preventive | Awareness and planning for predicted environmental or climate related risks. Effectiveness: Fair [Maintain relationship with MEMPC to ensure Council is aware of new/emerging risks to Business Continuity.] |

10.6 Risk 231

A change to social, economic, or geopolitical landscape may affect the availability of human resources, contractors or supplies and lead to a disruption or change to Council’s services or planned project delivery.

10.6.1 Control measures and effectiveness

| Control Measure | Type | Control Measure Description and Effectiveness |
|--------------------|------------|--|
| Corporate Policies | Preventive | Various staff retention strategies have been developed to retain staff. e.g. flexible working options, enterprise agreement, carpooling program, training and development opportunities. Effectiveness: Excellent |
| Corporate Policies | Preventive | Various staff recruitment strategies are being implemented. e.g. Grow our own program encouraging traineeships, broader marketing of Council and local government as a career option, connecting with the local learning network and school network to develop relationships and promote Council. Effectiveness: Good |

| Control Measure | Type | Control Measure Description and Effectiveness |
|--------------------|------------|---|
| Work Instructions | Preventive | The civil design program provides designs for projects in advance of budget years to allow flexibility should the program require change. Effectiveness: Fair [The design program is effective, but limited in the number of designs ready to be taken off the shelf if required.] |
| Work Instructions | Preventive | The rolling works program documents projects to be delivered over a number of years providing the ability for the program to be amended if needed. Effectiveness: Excellent |
| Work Instructions | Preventive | Council advertises tenders on an e-portal that provides opportunity for better reach to contractors. Effectiveness: Fair [The e-tender portal is only as effective as the availability of contractors to undertake the advertised works.] |
| Networking | Preventive | Participate in collaborative tendering opportunities to increase buying power and economies of scale. Effectiveness: Fair [Collaborative tendering has not been explored as much as it could be.] |
| Corporate Policies | Preventive | Due diligence undertaken-tenderers identify possible hold ups and price increases, incorporate liquidated damages clause, identify practical completion dates and start and finish dates for projects, identify risks with provision of supplies, understand tenderers" financial capacity. Effectiveness: Fair [There is opportunity for improving due diligence processes.] |
| Corporate Policies | Preventive | Risk assessments undertaken prior to release of tender documents. Effectiveness: Non-existent controls [There is opportunity for implementing a risk assessment process.] |
| Work Instructions | Preventive | For suppliers of key products, build relationships with key account staff, and any new key account staff as they enter the business to build collaborative and open relationships, and understand whether new supplier options should be explored. Effectiveness: Poor [There is opportunity to identify key suppliers and implement this process.] |
| Work Instructions | Preventive | Where there is potential for supply disruption (such as import restrictions on vehicles) seek and engage alternate suppliers and/or brands, increase order volumes and stock levels, and improve forward planning for required products. Effectiveness: There is opportunity to forward plan for key purchases in the next budget year to protect project delivery and purchasing requirements.] |
| Work Instructions | Preventive | Implement quality assurance checks for products to ensure they maintain standard, and if not raise issues with suppliers and if needed source other potential suppliers. Effectiveness: Fair [Quality assurance is adhoc at present and could be implemented more systematically.] |

11 INFORMATION REPORTS**11.1 UNLOCKING LODDON'S GROWTH POTENTIAL - ACTION PLAN****File Number:****Author:** David Stretch, Manager Tourism and Economic Development**Authoriser:** Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer**Attachments:** Nil**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. notes the key findings and recommendations of “Unlocking Loddon’s Residential Growth Potential” report; and
2. endorses the action plan outlined in Table 1 of this report.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this report, or involved in the subject matter of the report.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

During 2023 Councillors participated in discussions at Council Forum relating to Loddon Shire’s plan for population growth and residential housing needs and potential development opportunities.

The Villawood Properties “Unlocking Loddon’s Residential Growth Potential” report was tabled and discussed at the November 2023 Council Forum. At that forum Council was advised that an action plan to deliver the report recommendations would be provided to them at a later forum.

An action plan detailing priority work and activity to respond to report recommendations was presented to Council at the March 2024 Council Forum.

BACKGROUND

In 2022, Council received a grant from the Victorian Planning Authority to review the supply of vacant residential land in key towns in the Loddon Shire and assess the suitability of this land for residential development, identify why this land is not being developed and recommend strategies to assist to unlock this land.

Villawood Properties was engaged by Council to undertake this assessment. Villawood Properties is an experienced residential development company that operates in regional Australia.

The forms of residential development the project sought to facilitate includes construction of a dwelling on a single vacant residential lot, two lot subdivisions of established residential lots, through to multi lot subdivisions of greenfield sites.

This project resulted in a report titled “Unlocking Loddon’s Residential Growth Potential - An independent review of the viability and attractiveness of residential development within Loddon Shire”.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The report confirmed that Loddon Shire is attractive for residential development in terms of affordability, lifestyle and amenity. It further confirmed that there is a suitable supply of land for residential development in the subject towns.

It identified that the reason that more residential zoned land is not being developed is not related to land supply, but is due to affordability and feasibility of development.

The four fundamental reasons why land in the subject towns is not being developed, based on Villawood’s assessment, are:

1. The financial feasibility of projects.
2. The cost of infrastructure delivery and the limitation of the existing service infrastructure in some locations.
3. Difficulty in obtaining development finance.
4. Low volume building opportunities and increased remote location building costs.

The report included nine recommendations to assist to unlock land for residential development.

1. Construction standards

Consider a review of current construction standards to match to existing town and streetscape characteristics and amend the Infrastructure Design Manual (IDM) as necessary.

2. Council sites

Develop Council owned sites that have existing constructed road frontage and are either fully or partially serviced.

3. Sufficient Future Land & Consult Service Providers

Effectively plan for sufficient land supply with the service providers to meet the needs of the market and provide certainty to the industry and the community on the prioritisation and timing for the investment in trunk infrastructure to support development.

4. Subdivision facilitation

Facilitate joint servicing and land subdivision coordination for neighbouring landowners.

5. Information sessions

Run information sessions for potential inexperienced developers.

6. Funding Options

Investigate alternative funding options to provide trunk infrastructure and regional government grants to support land development.

7. Prospective Subdivision Summary Sheets Information and Engage with the Community

Provide information on the subdivision process to interested parties and run development information sessions. Invite the community to participate in their housing needs via Council launching their vision for future residential development.

8. Grants Information

Provide information on the various Home Buying Grants and assist with the application process as the available information on the internet can be confusing and difficult to find.

9. Sell the Story

Engage suitably experienced marketing consultants to leverage and drive planned development to bring everyone in on the ‘good news story’ via multiple marketing platforms.

These recommendations have been consolidated and prioritised to form the following action plan.

Table 1:

| Priority | Rec. no. | Theme | Action | Comments | Who | When |
|----------|----------|------------|--|--|--|--------------------|
| High | 6 | Investment | Investigate State and Federal grants to support Council development, and apply (or encourage application by other parties) for relevant grants as appropriate. | The State and Federal Government have grants available to support housing development (including key worker housing and trunk infrastructure). | Lead: CEO Support: Economic development Strategic planning | From December 2023 |

| | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|---------------------------|---|--|--|--------------------|
| High | 9 | Information and promotion | Undertake market research into residential demand opportunities and develop marketing material. | <p>The aim of this task is to develop an understanding of the types of households that Council should be targeting for new housing development to maximize the likelihood of new development resulting in new residents, and develop a marketing strategy based on this information.</p> <p>An understanding of who, their housing needs and capacity to pay must form the basis of Council strategies in relation to direct investment in housing development.</p> | <p>Lead: Economic development</p> <p>Support: Strategic Planning</p> | From February 2024 |
| High | 5, 7, 8 | Information and promotion | Conduct a Housing Expo | <p>The Villawood report includes a number of recommendations related to providing information to the community to facilitate development.</p> <p>It is proposed to conduct a housing expo to deliver these recommendations in a coordinated manner. This expo can also implement the some of the marketing strategies developed in Action 2.</p> <p>The scope of the expo will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for the creation of smaller lots within the Township Zone (“unlock capital in your backyard”) and opportunities for smaller homes or second homes (“granny flats”). • The subdivision process. • Home buyer and builder government grants. • Affordable housing forms. • Promotion of the Loddon lifestyle. | <p>Lead: Joint - Strategic planning / Economic development</p> | September 2024 |
| Medium | 2 | Investment | Develop a costings and options paper for residential development opportunities that could be undertaken by Council. | <p>Direct investment in residential development by Council provides an opportunity to address supply issues (including timing and price).</p> <p>The aim of the costings and options paper is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify publicly owned sites within the existing urban footprint of the subject towns with potential for residential development. • Identify options for this land that may facilitate residential development. This may include site disposal into the residential market, upgrading Council infrastructure in the vicinity of the site and then site disposal, subdivision of the site and provision of titled land to the market, or provision of house and land packages. Opportunities for key workers housing should be reviewed as a part of this assessment. • Develop indicative costings for the options and a set of recommendations regarding the identified sites. | <p>Lead: Joint - Strategic planning</p> <p>Economic development</p> <p>Major projects</p> | June 2024 |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|------|--------------------|---|--|--------------------|---------------|
| | | | | This assessment will support Council to make a decision about active participation in residential development. Recommendations of this action would be informed by an understanding of the market demand identified in Action 2. | | |
| Low | 3 | Policy development | Precinct planning – Bridgewater and Inglewood | Detailed planning across these two towns to identify the location and structure of key growth areas and their residential yield would provide a clear direction for infrastructure investment decisions by key agencies (including Council and Coliban Water). | Strategic planning | June 2025 |
| | 1, 4 | Policy development | Infrastructure Design Manual variation policy | A policy to define circumstances where Council might support infrastructure requirements of a lower standard than required by the IDM would provide for consistent application of variation considerations and enable lower cost development. | Strategic planning | December 2025 |

COST/BENEFITS

These actions will cost Council in terms of staff time commitment, as well as through funding external advice.

The actions identified will be facilitated by staff within existing resources. External specialist expertise will be retained where required within existing budget allocations, or will be budgeted for as required and considered alongside all other competing priorities.

The benefit of facilitating residential development will be maximising the potential of the subject towns to attract and accommodate new residents. Previous research by Remplan presented to Council has demonstrated the significant economic benefit of new residents through expenditure and job creation.

This benefit supports Council's investment into residential development in key locations.

RISK ANALYSIS

Council's Risk Appetite Statement (adopted January 2024) articulates that Council has a *High appetite* for pursuing activities that promote economic and social sustainability of our communities. Pursuing this action plan is considered to be within the risk threshold of Council and is therefore appropriate within the context of Council's adopted strategic goals.

The risk of not implementing the plan is that our potential to attract new residents is not realised.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Villawood undertook targeted consultation as a part of the Unlocking Loddon report. A number of the actions will involve community engagement.

CONCLUSION

This action plan provides the opportunity to respond to the findings of the Unlocking Loddon report in a coordinated manner that reflects the priorities of Council.

12 COMPLIANCE REPORTS

Nil

13 URGENT BUSINESS

In accordance with Council's Governance Rules, Clause 53 provides that at a scheduled or special meeting of Council, business that is not included in the agenda notice must only be considered if no more than one Councillor is absent and the Council resolves that the matter is urgent.

Despite this requirement, a matter that is not included in the agenda notice must not be considered at a Council meeting if it will:

- (a) directly and significantly affect the exercise of a person's rights;
- (b) alter the Council Plan or the budget; or
- (c) commit the Council to expenditure exceeding \$20,000.

14 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Nil

NEXT MEETING

The next Meeting of Council will be held on 23 April 2024 at Wedderburn commencing at 3.00pm.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at .

Confirmed this.....day of..... 2024