



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

MINUTES

Council Meeting

**MINUTES OF LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEDDERBURN
ON TUESDAY, 26 MARCH 2024 AT 3.00PM**

PRESENT: Cr Gavan Holt (Mayor), Cr Dan Straub, Cr Neil Beattie, Cr Linda Jungwirth and Cr Wendy Murphy

IN ATTENDANCE: Lincoln Fitzgerald (Chief Executive Officer), Wendy Gladman (Director Community Wellbeing), Steven Phillips (Director Operations), Michelle Stedman (Director Corporate) and Lisa Clue (Manager Governance)

1 OPENING AFFIRMATION

The Mayor read the Opening Affirmation.

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Chief Executive Officer read the Acknowledgement of Country.

3 APOLOGIES

Nil

4 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Nil

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.

RESOLUTION 2024/39**Moved:** Cr Dan Straub**Seconded:** Cr Wendy Murphy

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.

CARRIED

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	Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer Wendy Gladman, Director Community Wellbeing Steven Phillips, Director Operations Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate Lisa Clue, Governance Manager David Price, Manager Community Services and Janine Lakey, Community Compliance Officer – Tidy Properties – Item 1 below 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	Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer Wendy Gladman, Director Community Wellbeing Steven Phillips, Director Operations Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate Lisa Clue, Governance Manager Chris Rowlands, NBN Local – Item 1 below David Stretch, Manager Tourism and Economic Development – Items 1, 2 and 4 below Louise Johnston, Statutory Planning Coordinator and Carolyn Stephenson, Senior Strategic Planner – Item 2 below 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 Bradd Worrell, Tourism and Marketing Coordinator – Item 4 below Rosanna Lacorcica and Sam McGee, Transmission Company Victoria and Geoff Caine, Loddon Mallee VicGrid – Item 5 below Sue Bennett, Yarrawalla Community Planning Committee – Item 6 below Alycia O’Sullivan, Kindergarten Coordinator and Lisa McCoy, Local Logic Place – Item 7 below
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

RESOLUTION 2024/40

Moved: Cr Linda Jungwirth

Seconded: Cr Neil Beattie

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

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

CARRIED

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.

RESOLUTION 2024/41**Moved: Cr Wendy Murphy****Seconded: Cr Linda Jungwirth**

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

CARRIED

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 presented a verbal report at the meeting.

Murray River Group of Councils	
07/03/2024 - Meeting – Kerang	
Rural Councils Victoria	
05/03/2024 – Forum – Parliament House, Melbourne	
Other Council activities	
Date	Activity
01/03/2024	Presentation of Volunteer Service Awards – Newbridge
02/03/2024	Wedderburn Korong Vale RSL Sub-branch - 'War Veterans from Wedderburn' Book Launch
05/03/2024	Information and exchange session with Ministers Horne and Tierney – Parliament House, Melbourne
08/03/2024	Meeting with Minister Symes and North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA) re Risk and Resilience funding to conduct flood studies in the Loddon Shire - Newbridge
10/03/2024	Wedderburn Detector Jamboree 2024, Prize Presentation - Wedderburn
12/03/2024	March Council Forum - Wedderburn

RESOLUTION 2024/42

Moved: Cr Dan Straub

Seconded: Cr Neil Beattie

That Council receive and note the Mayoral Report.

CARRIED

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 presented a verbal report at the meeting:

Cr Murphy

Calder Highway Improvement Committee	
15/03/2024 - Meeting - Online	
Other Council activities	
Date	Activity
29/02/2024	Inglewood Development & Tourism Committee, meeting
12/03/2024	March Council Forum - Wedderburn
14/03/2024	Active Leadership in Active Travel, Information Session - Online
18/03/2024	Economic Development Essentials for Elected Members, Training Workshop - Online
20/03/2024	Meeting with Director Community Wellbeing re the Draft Small Towns Strategy - Online
26/03/2024	Councillor only time, March Council Briefing and Council Meeting - Wedderburn

Cr Beattie

Section 65 Community Asset Committees:	
22/03/2024 - Boort Park, meeting	
Other Council activities	
Date	Activity
03/03/2024	Boort Trotting Cup
07/03/2024	Meeting with Council officer re Lake Boort Precinct Plan - Wedderburn
12/03/2024	March Council Forum – Wedderburn
14/03/2024	Meetings with Boort Tennis Club, Boort Tourism & Development and Boort Croquet Club re Lake Boort Precinct Plan
26/03/2024	March Council Briefing and Council Meeting

Cr Straub

Council activities	
Date	Activity
04/03/2024	North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA), Draft Rural Drainage Plan discussion – Huntly
	Serpentine & District Community Planning Committee, meeting
08/03/2024	Pyramid Hill College – presentation to 2024 school leaders and presentation of Australia Day competition certificates
14/03/2024	Calivil Bowling Club Social Night supported by the Healthy Loddon Campaspe Healthy Sports Clubs Project
18/03/2024	Economic Development Essentials for Elected Members, Training Workshop - Online
20/03/2024	Pyramid Hill Progress Association, meeting

Cr Jungwirth

Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance	
14/03/2024	Advocacy Committee, meeting
Other Council activities	
Date	Activity
27/02/2024	February Council Briefing and Meeting
28/02/2024	RMIT – Meeting re support for Disaster Ready Fund application
02/03/2024	Run to Newbridge event
07/03/2024	MAV Understanding Council Finances Session 2 – Financial Plan
12/03/2024	March Council Forum - Wedderburn
19/03/2024	Ward Boundary Review, Public Hearing - Online
23/03/2024	Eddington Sprints

RESOLUTION 2024/43

Moved: Cr Wendy Murphy

Seconded: Cr Dan Straub

That Council receive and note the Councillors' reports.

CARRIED

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

RESOLUTION 2024/44

Moved: Cr Neil Beattie

Seconded: Cr Linda Jungwirth

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.

CARRIED

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.

RESOLUTION 2024/45

Moved: Cr Wendy Murphy

Seconded: Cr Linda Jungwirth

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

CARRIED

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.

RESOLUTION 2024/46

Moved: Cr Linda Jungwirth

Seconded: Cr Neil Beattie

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

CARRIED

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.

RESOLUTION 2024/47

Moved: Cr Dan Straub
Seconded: Cr Wendy Murphy

That Council approve the Strategic Risk Report – March 2024.

CARRIED

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). 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.

RESOLUTION 2024/48

Moved: Cr Linda Jungwirth

Seconded: Cr Dan Straub

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.

CARRIED

12 COMPLIANCE REPORTS

Nil

13 URGENT BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 2024/49

Moved: Cr Dan Straub

Seconded: Cr Neil Beattie

That the following item be treated as urgent business:

- 1. Appointment of members to the Boort Park Community Asset Committee.

CARRIED

RESOLUTION 2024/50

Moved: Cr Dan Straub

Seconded: Cr Neil Beattie

That Council appoint the following members to the Boort Park Community Asset Committee:

- Garry Zanker and Alistar Knight (Boort Cricket Club)
- Gordie Parker and Craig Scott (Boort Football Club)
- Kelly Henderson and Sharon Pickering (Boort Hockey Club)
- Ray Stoman and Tim Byrne (Boort Trotting Club)
- Tom Bleicher (Boort Secondary College)
- Marjorie Potter and Madeleine Scott (Boort Agricultural and Pastoral Society)
- Stacey Streader and Tracey Bird (Boort Netball Club)
- Jacqui Verley and John Nelson (Community Members)

CARRIED

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 3.43pm.

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

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CHAIRPERSON