

AGENDA

MEETING OF THE HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL

To be held on
22 February 2021
At 5.30pm

In the
Council Chamber, Civic Centre
18 Roberts Avenue, HORSHAM

DUE TO COVID-19 PUBLIC ATTENDANCE IS NOT PERMITTED
THE COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE ACCESSIBLE ONLINE TO THE PUBLIC AND WILL BE LIVE STREAMED ON THE
HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL WEBSITE www.hrcc.vic.gov.au



Horsham Rural City
Council urban rural balance

**COUNCILLORS are respectfully requested to attend the Council Meeting
of the Horsham Rural City Council to be held on 22 February 2021
in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Horsham at 5.30pm**

The meeting will be closed to the public due to COVID-19 but will be broadcast live on the Council website at www.hrcc.vic.gov.au

Order of Business

PRESENT

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

1. PRAYER

Almighty God, we pledge ourselves to work in harmony for, the social, cultural and economic well-being of our Rural City. Help us to be wise in our deliberations and fair in our actions, so that prosperity and happiness shall be the lot of our people. AMEN

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY STATEMENT

The Horsham Rural City Council acknowledges the five Traditional Owner groups of this land; the Wotjobaluk, Wergaia, Jupagalk, Jaadwa and Jadawadjali people. We recognise the important and ongoing place that all Indigenous people hold in our community.

We pay our respects to the Elders, both past and present, and commit to working together in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect for the benefit of the broader community and future generations.

3. OPENING AND WELCOME

Welcome to distinguished guests or persons in the public gallery. The public are advised that the Council meeting will be recorded to maintain an audio archive.

4. APOLOGIES

5. LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS

6. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Recommendation

That the minutes emanating from the Council Meeting of the Horsham Rural City Council held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Horsham at 5.30pm on 27 January 2021 be adopted.

7. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest

A Councillor who has declared a conflict of interest, must leave the meeting and remain outside the room while the matter is being considered, or any vote is taken.

Members of Staff

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, officers or people engaged under contract to the Council providing a report or advice to Council must disclose any conflicts of interests in the matter, including the type of interest.

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SUNIL BHALLA
Chief Executive Officer

9. OFFICERS REPORTS

9.1 PARTNERSHIP OPTIONS EXPLORATION: WIMMERA HEALTH CARE GROUP AND BALLARAT HEALTH SERVICES

Author's Name:	Kevin O'Brien	Director:	Kevin O'Brien
Author's Title:	Director Communities & Place	Directorate:	Communities & Place
Department:	Not Applicable	File Number:	F19/A15/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Submission Letter: Wimmera Health Care Group/Ballarat Health Services Partnership Proposal (**Appendix "9.1A"**)

Purpose

To make a submission outlining concerns/issues in relation to the proposed merger option being explored by Wimmera Health Care Group and Ballarat Health Services.

Summary

- Background information in relation to the current partnership options being explored
- Issues/concerns in relation to the proposal
- Community engagement undertake to understand the communities' views

Recommendation

That Council make a written submission (refer to **Appendix "9.1A"**) to Wimmera Health Care Group and Ballarat Health Services outlining its concerns in relation to the proposed merger option being explored by Wimmera Health Care Group and Ballarat Health Services.

REPORT

Background

Wimmera Health Care Group (WHCG) and Ballarat Health Services (BHS) are exploring partnership options, including a possible voluntary amalgamation.

WHCG and BHS are of the view that this will enhance the delivery of services and create better health outcomes for local people across the Wimmera region. Community consultation is underway. They have outlined benefits of the project including: better health outcomes for people across the region; greater access to clinical health care locally; strengthened capacity and expansion of services; greater workforce opportunities, training and development; enhanced models of care and effective health services for the future.

Currently there is an assessment being undertaken in relation to workforce, financial, service delivery and governance impacts of any partnership. Each Board will then make a decision in relation to their individual health service. WHCG and BHS have stated that any partnership options being explored would focus on enhancing service delivery. There would be no loss of services.

Wimmera Health Care Group has stated that currently, Horsham residents travel outside of the region for approximately 2,200 episodes of care each year, 450 more than 5 years ago. For the Wimmera region, almost 4,000 episodes of care happen outside the region each year. If Wimmera residents could have the same proportion of their hospital care delivered within the region as happens in other nearby regions, 1,300 fewer patients would have to travel to get the healthcare they need (4 per day).^{*} However, attracting and retaining health care professionals is becoming increasingly difficult, with gaps in a few critical clinical

Discussion

There are concerns in relation to the partnership options being explored by WHCG with BHS. The voluntary amalgamation would potentially erode provision of clinical and allied health services in Horsham and the Wimmera region.

As an alternative is there a possibility WHCG could strengthen its delivery of services and create better health outcomes through other governance arrangements such as strengthening the role of Wimmera Southern Mallee Health Alliance or exploring other governance models in this region? Council could jointly lobbying State and Federal Governments to support the WHCG to deliver the services required.

It is of concern that WHCG has not been able to gain the necessary funding and professional staff to deliver the services required for a regional population over 60,000. A key question it raises is has there been a dedicated/coordinated effort to lobby for additional funds?

There is a concern that with a merger a similar outcome may occur as to what happened for instance when Federation University management/decision making was centralized in Ballarat. The professionals that were to come to Horsham to conduct the University courses offered did not eventuate. The number of courses have since reduced and the view is that the needs of region have not adequately been met.

The documentation provided by WHCG, promises an increase in services delivered in Horsham by Ballarat based staff. It is questionable what would happen to the delivery of these services when the staff refused to drive to Horsham or there were staff shortages in Ballarat and we were told that there are no guarantees. If that is the case, the promise of increased services delivered in Horsham is baseless.

Horsham is one of the 10 regional cities in Victoria. Not only due to its population being over 15,000 but also the broader community it supports beyond the Horsham municipality. There is a fear that by merging with Ballarat, the needs of the Wimmera region will be lost in Board discussions due to Ballarat being a regional city of more than six times the population of Horsham and is experiencing significant growth and would also have other priorities.

Anecdotally Horsham is experiencing growth beyond historic population projections due to COVID-19 with more people moving into the regions. It may also experience further growth through a number of economic development opportunities to occur in the next few years in particular mining. Horsham has an ageing population profile and one of the reasons people retire to Horsham is the facilities it currently has in relation to health services provision. The cancer centre is a great example of what can be done locally to meet the needs of the region.

What would the broader economic impact be to Horsham? Would procurement of goods and services also be centralised to Ballarat? It is also of concern that there will be staff losses as a result of the merger. What will be the approach to recruiting staff required for the service?

There could also be a greater impact to the wider community/region if all management and senior management was relocated to Ballarat. The loss of development opportunities for staff here but also if management relocate their partner which takes more people away from the region and workforce. If the relocation impacts on families and for example there would be children who leave our schools as well.

Options to Consider

1. Support the partnership options put explored by WHCG/Ballarat Health Services
2. Provide feedback on the proposal including outlining issues of concern raised by the community

Sustainability Implications

Any change to the current service delivery model of WHCG could have significant social/economic implications on the municipality and the broader community. Will it lead to better health outcomes and access to service/professionals? This has not been clearly articulated in the information that has been communicated to this point.

Community Engagement

Council has been briefed on the proposal by WHCG Board Chair and CEO. Councillors have attended sessions held in relation to the proposal. Councillors have received feedback from a number of community members in relation to concerns regarding the proposed merger. These concerns are included in the proposed submission letter.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The current circumstances that Wimmera Health Care Group finds itself in has necessitated exploring alternative models. WHCG argues this will enable more innovation and improve current services delivered.

Collaboration

A meeting has been held recently with other Councils in the region who would be also impacted by the merger of WHCG and Ballarat Health Services. Discussions have occurred with health agencies in the region to gain an understanding of their views in relation to this matter.

Financial Implications

Nil

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Nil

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2020-2024 Council Plan

- Advocacy: Improved education and health outcomes for the community
- Advocacy: Attracting services: Medical, aged care, early years, etc.

2017-2021 Health and Wellbeing Plan

2019-2021 Early Years Plan

2018 Youth Strategy

2019-2023 Age Friendly Communities Implementation Plan

Risk Implications

There are potentially significant risks to the health and wellbeing of the community in relation to the merger proposal. WHCG has put forward that there will be benefits to the region through increased access to professionals resulting in better quality services. There is also the potential economic impact on the municipality as a result of the merger.

Conclusion

The partnership options being explored including the potential merger of WHCG and BHS has merits in relation to improved delivery of health services to the region. However the concern is that overall the Wimmera will be worse off as it will lose its ability to meet its specific needs as a result of a merger with BHS. Discussions need to occur with State Government and with other health agencies to determine the best model to achieve better health outcomes for the Wimmera rather than going down the merger path which is one of the options that has been proposed.

9.2 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT – SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2020

Author's Name:	Faith Hardman	Director:	Graeme Harrison
Author's Title:	Corporate Planner	Directorate:	Corporate Services
Department:	Governance and Information	File Number:	F18/A10/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Quarterly Performance Report – September to December 2020 (**Appendix “9.2A”**)

Purpose

To receive and note the Quarterly Performance Report for the three months to 31 December 2020.

Summary

- This is the second Quarterly Performance Report of the financial year 2021 and is part of the continual improvement process of reporting back to Council and the community.
- The Quarterly Performance Report brings together into a single, easy to read document, a range of reports including:
 - Quarterly Budget Report
 - Council Plan Goals and Actions
 - Local Government Performance Framework Indicators
 - The tracking of any major initiatives
 - Councillor Expenses
 - Audit & Risk Committee minutes
- It reports all items over a consistent quarterly reporting timeline.

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the Quarterly Performance Report for the three months to 31 December 2020.

REPORT

Background

Council's operations are large and complex, with over 80 different broad service delivery areas from road maintenance and construction, waste collection, parks, building and planning, to early years, visual and performing arts. This diversity in services creates challenges in many facets of Council's operations, which then create challenges in reporting on these to Council and the broader community.

The Local Government Act 2020 at section 97 requires that as soon as practicable after the end of each quarter of the financial year, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a quarterly budget report is presented to the Council at a Council meeting which is open to the public. The Quarterly Performance Report encapsulates a quarterly budget report, Council Plan Goals and Actions, the tracking of any major initiatives, Council Expenses and Audit & Risk Committee minutes for the relevant quarter.

Council has in place a Financial and Performance Reporting Framework that provides some guidance on Council's reporting processes. These guidelines state the following:

"Councillors take ultimate responsibility for the performance of Council and are accountable to the ratepayers and community of the municipality. As Councillors are not involved in the day-to-day operations of the Council, they rely on policies, procedures and internal controls to provide assurance about the information reported to them and in turn reported to the community and other stakeholders."

The provision of relevant information on a regular basis is an important part of that internal control process and is necessary for the various levels of Council to carry out their responsibilities and obligations to the community in the management of Council business.

Central to Council's Financial and Performance Reporting Framework, are the following objectives:

- Council is committed to providing accurate, correct and quality information to the Community around its performance.
- Council is committed to providing high quality relevant internal and external reporting, in a timely manner.
- Council is committed to providing regular targeted reporting to Management, its Audit and Risk Committee, Council and the Community.
- Council is committed to sound governance through the alignment of performance reporting with its strategic direction.
- Performance reporting is not just a compliance exercise but is integral to better understanding of how Council is performing in its delivery of key strategies and operations from the Council Plan.

Discussion

As a part of the continual improvement process, this report takes the approach of reporting back to Council and the community on these key strategic items, in what is hopefully a clear and concise manner that is readable and informative.

The report contains the following sections:

1. CEO Overview
2. Council Plan Actions and Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF)
3. Customer Service Targets
4. Business Improvements
5. Capital Works
6. Councillor Expenses
7. Audit and Risk
8. Quarterly budget report

The COVID-19 Pandemic has had a significant impact on Council operations, with number of facilities again closed and services ceased during the quarter. Services have commenced reopening but with limitations as dictated by State and Federal Government Directives on social distancing, masking and gathering of numbers.

The format for this reporting has been evolving over time and may include additional sections, but essentially will be mindful of the need to be relevant, reliable, comparable and understandable. This report provides Local Government Performance Reporting data for the first and second quarters as available, noting that there are some instances where data isn't available.

Options to Consider

Not applicable

Sustainability Implications

Not applicable save and except included reporting on council's environmental and sustainability goals.

Community Engagement

The Quarterly Performance Report has been developed by the Governance Team, in consultation with the Executive Management Team and Departmental Managers. It has been reviewed at a Council Briefing Meeting.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The Quarterly Performance Reports intention is to continuously improve communication and engagement with the community through effective and succinct reporting on key strategic items, in a clear and concise manner that is readable and informative.

Collaboration

Not applicable

Financial Implications

This report is prepared using existing staff resources.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2020-2024 Council Plan

Goal 4 – Governance and Business Excellence

Four-Year Priority 4.1 – Continuously improve communication and engagement with the community through effective consultation

Risk Implications

Provision of good quality, regular reporting of financial and non-financial information to the community mitigates against the risk of poor financial governance and possible financial mismanagement. The Municipal Association of Victoria's Good Governance Guide states "the Council is ultimately accountable for the financial management...it should not have a hands-on role... but it needs to ensure that it has sufficient information to be satisfied that finances are in order and that the budgetary and financial planning goals are being met".

Conclusion

The Quarterly Performance Report will provide a regular and succinct quarterly report for Council and the community to assess how Council is performing financially and against its key objectives.

9.3 ZERO CARBON PLAN AND CLIMATE CHANGE PLEDGE

Author's Name:	Jared Hammond	Director:	John Martin
Author's Title:	Co-ordinator Waste and Sustainability	Directorate:	Infrastructure
Department:	Infrastructure	File Number:	F17/A11/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Appendices

Zero Net Emissions Action Plan (**Appendix “9.3A”**)

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory (**Appendix “9.3B”**)

Purpose

To adopt the Zero Net Emissions Action Plan.

Summary

The 2020-2024 Council Plan cites Council’s ongoing commitment to reduce its carbon footprint and lead through example with energy efficiency initiatives. This Zero Net Emissions Action Plan has been prepared to achieve this goal.

Ironbark Sustainability was appointed to develop a plan related to Council’s greenhouse emissions, to:

- Establish a target that it would commit to, and
- Establish a pathway to achieve that target.

This was achieved by first establishing a baseline carbon footprint, by way of a greenhouse gas emissions inventory. This inventory captured emissions from a multitude of sources, such as those from electricity, gas and transport.

This baseline carbon emissions footprint was then reviewed against a “science derived target”; a target that represents a scaled proportion of world emissions, as relevant to Horsham Rural City Council. From this, the required reduction in emissions was established.

With further review of Council emission sources, opportunities for reduction of carbon emissions were identified and business cases for each significant opportunity were developed.

Recommendations

That Council:

1. Commit to a “*Science derived emissions target*” as its target for greenhouse emissions, and to reduce carbon emissions by 3.5% (221 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) per year until 2050 representing a total reduction of 100% over that time.
2. Adopt the Zero Net Emissions Action Plan to achieve that target.

REPORT

Background

The Council Plan identifies a commitment to continually reduce its carbon footprint, but without a defined approach for doing so.

Whilst Council has committed to various sustainability initiatives in recent times, such as the Local Government Energy Saver Program and various solar installations, these projects have been delivered in the absence of long term objectives or context. The Zero Net Emissions Action Plan aims to give context to these project types, and ensure that they are delivered in accordance with long term Council goals.

Discussion

Development of the Zero Net Emissions Plan identified the following objectives that Council might aim to achieve:

- Demonstrate leadership to the community in emissions reductions and climate change management
- Pursue opportunities that are evidence-based and potentially innovative or unique to Horsham
- Implement projects that demonstrate cost-savings and good value to Council
- Follow the emissions reduction hierarchy
- Participate in collaborative efforts for emissions reduction initiatives with regional council groups, State Government and other key stakeholders where strategic alignment, efficiency or an opportunity to play a leadership role is demonstrated

These objectives are to be achieved by way of three key items:

- Establishment of a baseline Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory
- Commitment to a target for the reduction in emissions
- Implementation of an emissions reduction action plan

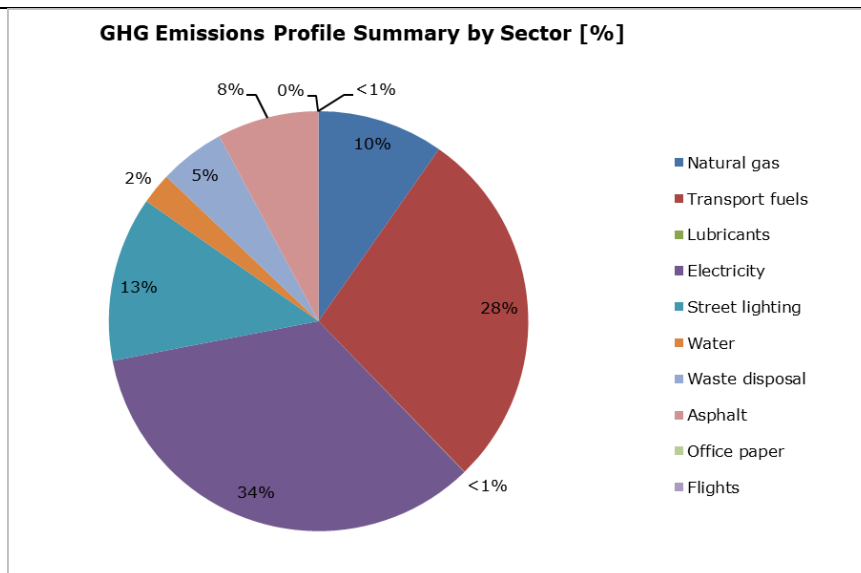
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory:

The majority of Council's measured emissions come from electricity consumption (34%), which includes Council's own corporate electricity consumption, as well as consumption by community and commercial organisations utilising Council-owned assets.

The second most significant emissions source is Council operated transport fuels, which account for 28% of total emissions. This figure covers emissions from diesel, petrol, and LPG consumed by Council's fleet of vehicles and plant, with 20% of the total emissions profile generated by diesel fleet vehicles.

Electricity consumption from public street lighting is the third most significant emissions source and makes up 13% of emissions.

This is followed by natural gas from buildings (10%) and emissions from road making materials (8%). Emissions from Council's own waste disposal (5%) and water (2%) are relatively minor, while the contribution of emissions from all other sources is negligible.



Note that emissions from the Dooen Landfill site have been excluded from the inventory total and the figure above. Emissions from landfill will instead be addressed in a separate waste strategy, as a reduction in these requires community-wide action, i.e. not just Council itself. If they were to be included, emissions from landfill would account for 14,411 tCO₂-e, or 70% of the inventory.

Science derived emissions target:

Based on HRCC’s corporate inventory for the year 2018-19, a science-derived target (SDT) has been developed which maps an emissions reduction trajectory to zero emissions by 2050. The target has been calculated in alignment with Australia’s national carbon budget and is supported by international climate science.

At the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) Paris Conference in 2015, the Australian Government signed an international agreement between 195 countries to keep any temperature rise “well below 2°C”, and to drive efforts to keep warming below 1.5°C higher than pre-industrial levels. This Paris Agreement, entered into force on 4 November 2016, explicitly recognises and engages local and sub-national governments and their critical role in supporting the transformation, including setting goals and strategies aligned with the science.

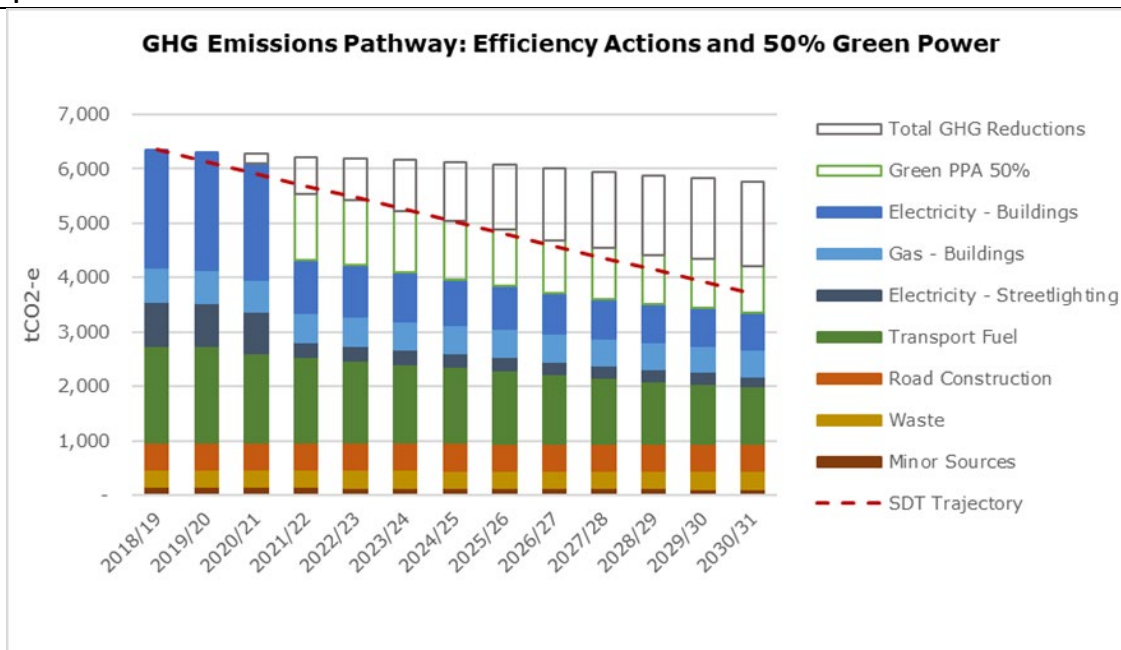
In becoming a signatory to the Paris Agreement, Australia has a limited, established carbon budget within which to operate in order to meet its commitment to remaining within 2°C of warming on pre-industrial levels. The development of a science-derived target for a council or organisation enables us to understand the scale of action that is required to stay within this budget.

An emissions reduction target for an organisation, entity or community is considered “science-derived” or “science-based” when it is aligned with the broader emissions reduction required to keep global temperature increase below 2°C compared to preindustrial temperatures, as described in the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The targets to be adopted in the Action Plan are reflective of all of the above.

Action Plan:

The Zero Net Emissions Action Plan outlines emissions reduction actions to be implemented over the period to 2030-31. These actions will enable HRCC to meet the interim target of 42% reductions against the 2018-19 baseline by 2030-31 and set Council on a trajectory to achieve zero net emissions by 2050 if not sooner.



A cost benefit analysis has been carried out to explore the opportunity presented by different emissions reduction actions across Council’s operations. The analysis calculated the estimated capital costs, cost savings and emissions savings for each action, as well as assessing each action based on the objectives of the plan as outlined above.

The actions identified in this plan and associated business cases are summarised as follows:

Action Area	Impact (t CO ₂ e/year)	Cost	NPV Savings over Lifetime	Net
Energy efficiency for buildings and facilities	753	\$909,000	\$2,768,000	\$1,859,000
Low emissions vehicle fleet	531	\$3,203,000	\$1,907,000	-\$1,296,000
Solar for buildings and facilities	298	\$390,000	\$467,000	\$77,000
Energy efficiency for public lighting	213	\$860,000	\$458,000	-\$402,000
TOTAL	1795	\$5,362,000	\$5,600,000	\$238,000

Detailed project planning will be required to scope individual projects within this action plan. This scoping will build upon the preliminary information included in **Appendix “9.3B”** to the Zero Net Emissions Plan.

Beyond 2031:

To continue the trajectory towards zero emissions beyond the dates in the current iteration of the action plan, further periodic revisions of the action plan will need to occur, and it is suggested by the plan that this review occurs every five years.

It is likely that at some point, a detailed investigation into the purchase of carbon offsets will be required. This is due to the probability that Council will not ever be able to completely remove all contributing elements to carbon emissions, and thus necessitating the purchase of offsets to balance these residual emissions.

Carbon offsets fall at the bottom of the emissions reduction hierarchy and have not been incorporated into Council's GHG reduction pathway for the life-cycle of this Plan. This is because Council is able to remain within the science-derived target trajectory through energy efficiency actions and purchased renewables. At such a time where Council pursues a zero net emissions target or a carbon neutral target, which will be required by 2040 according to the science-derived target, it is likely that carbon offset purchases will be required to cover all remaining emissions.

When offsetting carbon emissions there are a number of options available. The most obvious and common way to offset emissions is to purchase offsets through a certified provider. These offsets vary greatly in price and in quality, but there are a number of reputable providers. This is the only way to offset emissions that is allowed under Climate Active, the Australian Government's carbon neutrality certification program.

Council may choose to purchase Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs), international Verified Carbon Offsets (VCUs) or a combination of both. At the time of preparing this report, the latest spot price published by the Clean Energy Regulator for ACCUs was \$16.90/tCO₂e.

Many councils have a preference for purchasing Australian offsets due to perceived superior quality and because there is greater knowledge of the regulation surrounding the production of these offsets. However, VCUs can typically be purchased at a much cheaper rate than ACCUs and are also subject to regulation and approval. The price for international offsets can vary greatly, but at the time of preparing this report, Australian councils had secured offsets for prices varying from \$2/tCO₂e - \$3.50/tCO₂e.

Offsets should be considered the final option for emissions abatement, following energy conservation, energy efficiency, onsite renewables and purchased renewables, in line with the emissions reduction hierarchy.

Options to Consider

Council is not compelled to commit to a reduction at this time, nor the implementation of the Zero Net Emissions Action Plan.

Council could also potentially commit to a more significant carbon reduction target that exceeds that discussed above. Whilst this would yield further positive environmental benefit, doing so would come at a higher financial cost.

Subsequent Councils will have the opportunity to review the targets as part of the proposed five-year reviews of the Action Plan.

Sustainability Implications

The Zero Net Emissions Plan is a direct response to Council's commitment to sound environmental practice, as per the Council Plan 2020-2024.

Community Engagement

Community engagement has not been undertaken at this stage, principally due to the focus on corporate emissions for the first iteration of the Zero Carbon Action Plan.

The option to pursue a higher target could be explored during preparation of the Community Vision in the new Council term.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Prior to commencement of the Greenhouse Gas Inventory component of this project, Council did not have robust data collection platforms in place to capture greenhouse emissions data from all relevant sources. Throughout the development of the Greenhouse Gas Inventory, a tool to assist in reporting greenhouse gas emissions (and the results of reduction actions) was been developed.

It is anticipated that in the first few years of capturing data to report our greenhouse gas emissions, further improvements will be made to internal data collection and management systems to streamline this process.

As improvements are made to the data collection aspect of reporting greenhouse gas emissions, improvements can and will be made that will also assist in the ongoing management of our greenhouse gas impact.

Additionally, the planned period of revision for the Zero Net Emissions Action Plan allows for new techniques to be investigated and potentially implemented, with the aim being to continually advance our carbon reduction approach.

Collaboration

Development of the Zero Net Emissions Action Plan required consultation and collaboration with many internal departments of Council.

Information collected to establish the baseline greenhouse gas emissions inventory sought information from the following Council units:

- Waste and Sustainability
- Waste Operations
- Asset Management
- Fleet
- Buildings and Facilities
- Finance
- Operations
- People and Culture

Financial Implications

The actions identified in the plan are intended to deliver a return on investment, which in effect enables the investments to be self-funded. Seed funding for these investments is sourced from Council's sustainability reserve.

Some components of the action plan, e.g. low emissions vehicles, are not by themselves self-funding, however other factors require Council to pursue this approach. For example, it is likely that the production of internal combustion / diesel engines will be significantly reducing by around 2030, with some countries already announcing a ban on these by that year. With a large vehicle fleet, a gradual investment in electric vehicles will enable a phased-in approach which will limit the impact of a requirement for a spike in capital expenditure in a particular year.

Should Council alternatively choose to completely reduce emissions to zero solely by way of purchasing offsets, based on current pricing for (ACCU) offsets and the current Horsham Rural City Council emissions profiles, this would represent a cost to Council of \$104,140 per annum ongoing.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

National:

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the leading authority on current climate change scientific knowledge, has developed long-term emission scenarios which show a range of potential emissions trajectories and impacts based on highly detailed and rigorous modelling. These scenarios indicate the maximum total emissions allowable to limit the increase in global average temperatures to 2°C, which is considered the threshold for avoiding dangerous climate change.

This budget has then been scaled to Australia by the Australian Government's Climate Change Authority (CCA).

The 2018-19 GHG inventory presented in Section 3.2 is used to connect the activities of HRCC to the national carbon budget developed by the CCA through apportioning the national budget.

State:

The Victorian State Government's *Climate Change Act 2017* sets a strong, clear pathway for Victoria by legislating a target of net zero emissions by 2050 and provides a clear signal to all sectors of the Victorian economy for sustained and significant actions to reduce emissions.

The Act also contains provisions for Councils to submit a voluntary Council Pledge to recognise the substantial efforts of local governments towards this shared objective.

The Act specifies that a Council Pledge must describe Council actions over the 2021-2025 period, that are reasonably expected to reduce emissions caused or otherwise influenced by Council, and where possible include reasonable estimates resulting emissions reductions.

Commitment to the emissions reduction target and adoption of the Zero Net Emissions Action Plan as proposed by this report will enable such a pledge to be considered by Council at a later date.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2020-2024 Council Plan (P34) - Look to reduce Council's carbon footprint and lead through example with energy efficiency initiatives

- 3.4 - Deliver works to develop and maintain Council's physical assets for long term sustainability, amenity and safety
- 5.1 - Promote sustainability by encouraging sound environmental practice
 - 5.1.01 - Investigate opportunities for the use of renewable energy for Council facilities including solar panels where feasible on Council buildings and facilities
 - 5.1.02 - Review Council's Environment Sustainability Strategy and lead the community in environmentally sustainable practices to improve management of our natural environment
 - 5.1.03 - Develop a Climate Change Response Strategy for Council operations.
 - 5.1.05 - Establish a sustainability reserve for the ongoing funding of sustainability related projects

Further, the *Local Government Act 2020* includes the following in section 9:

9 (2) The following are the overarching governance principles—

...

(b) priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;

(c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted; ..."

Risk Implications

The following key risks have been identified:

- that further scoping will show less benefit than predicted, requiring further work or investment to offset carbon emissions
- that Council will experience diminishing returns as projects with high returns on investment are initially implemented.

These risks are to be mitigated by periodic revisions of the action plan every five years, and detailed investigations into the option of purchasing Carbon Offsets.

Conclusion

The Zero Net Emissions Action Plan presents a means for Council to reduce its carbon footprint to zero by 2050.

9.4 COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Author's Name:	Diana McDonald	Director:	Graeme Harrison
Author's Title:	Governance Co-ordinator	Directorate:	Corporate Services
Department:	Governance and Information	File Number:	F019/A15/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

“Draft” Councillor Code of Conduct (**Appendix “9.4A”**)

Purpose

To adopt the revised Councillor Code of Conduct.

Summary

- Council must review and adopt the Councillor Code of Conduct within four months of the General Election, making the review date for this year 24 February 2021.
- The Councillor Code of Conduct must include the standards of conduct expected to be observed by Councillors.
- Council can review or amend the Councillor Code of Conduct at any time.
- The revised Councillor Code of Conduct has been developed in-conjunction with Councillors, using the Wyndham City Council version which was developed by Maddocks Lawyers.

Recommendation

That Council adopt the revised Councillor Code of Conduct (**Appendix “9.4A”**).

REPORT

Background

Council is required to approve a Councillor Code of Conduct that incorporate the requirements under the new *Local Government Act 2020* including the overarching governance principles and Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020. The regulations address the governance and integrity components of the *Local Government Act 2020* which commenced operation on 24 October 2020.

Section 139 (2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (LGAct 2020), states:

The purpose of the Councillor Code of Conduct is to include the standards of conduct expected to be observed by Councillors in the course of performing their duties and functions as Councillors, including prohibiting discrimination, harassment (Including sexual harassment) and vilification.

Section 139 (4) LGAct 2020 requires Council to have adopted a revised code of conduct within a period of four months following a general election ie by 24 February 2021. A Council may review or amend the Councillor Code of Conduct at any other time, but it must be by a formal resolution of Council.

To be compliant with the new *Local Government Act 2020* Council's Councillor Code of Conduct:

- Must include the Standards of Conduct expected to be observed by Councillors, as prescribed by the *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020* (Regulations); and
- Must include any provisions prescribed by the Regulations; and
- Must include provisions addressing any matters prescribed by the Regulations; and
- May include any other matters which the Council considers appropriate, other than any other Standards of Conduct

Discussion

It is important for Councillors to be aware of how the standards of conduct fit within the overall Councillor Conduct framework, as a breach of the standards of conduct will constitute misconduct and be subject to sanctioning by an arbiter. It is therefore critical for all Councillors to be familiar with the standards of conduct and the distinction between the standards and the rest of the Councillor Code of Conduct.

Councillors have discussed the draft Code of Conduct at a number of briefings and all feedback received was considered and the final version was developed.

Financial Implications

There have been legal fees associated with the use of the Maddocks lawyers template and the review of councils changes. The total cost was \$1,822.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2020-2024 Council Plan - Goal 4 – Governance and Business Excellence

Conclusion

The revised Councillor Code of Conduct is to guide the way in which councillors behave and interact and is a core document for the good governance of Council.

9.5 COUNCILLOR AND STAFF INTERACTION POLICY

Author's Name:	Diana McDonald / Susan SurrIDGE	Director:	Graeme Harrison
Author's Title:	Co-ordinator Governance / Co-ordinator Community Relations & Advocacy	Directorate:	Corporate Services
Department:	Governance and Information	File Number:	F14/A04/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Draft Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy (**Appendix "9.5A"**)

Purpose

To adopt the Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy.

Summary

- This policy supports the Councillor Code of Conduct and the Staff Code of Conduct and provides clear guidance as to appropriate and effective interaction between Councillors and staff.
- This policy seeks to ensure that Councillors understand their responsibilities under the Act and do not improperly direct or influence Council staff and to ensure that Council is efficient and effective, with high standards of governance and transparency.
- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is required to have in place policies, practises and protocols that support arrangements for interactions between members of Council Staff and Councillors

Recommendation

That Council adopt the Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy.

REPORT

Background

There is currently no policy guiding Councillors and staff on what comprises appropriate interactions in the performance of their respective duties for Council.

Council's Governance Team and the Community Relations and Advocacy Team has developed the draft Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy, and as part of this process, has benchmarked the policy with other Councils to ensure best practice and current standards.

It is a requirement of the CEO to have policies such as this in place, it is not a requirement that they be adopted by Council but it is appropriate and good governance practise that they are.

Discussion

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and support for Councillors and Council Staff in the performance of their duties. It complements the Councillor and Staff Codes of Conduct and supports compliance with the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) section 124 Directing a member of Council staff and Section 46 (3)(1)(b)(c) Managing interactions between members of Council staff and Councillors.

The new policy details the objectives of appropriate Councillor and staff interaction and provides principles to be adhered to in the following areas:

- Allowable interaction
- Improper or undue influence
- Communication channels
- Councillor requests for the community
- Councillor requests for advice or information
- Responses to Councillors
- Personal interaction
- Verbal requests for information
- Contact contradictory to this policy

Options to Consider

The policy could be an Administrative Policy and adopted by the Executive.

Sustainability Implications

Nil

Consultation / Community Engagement

The draft policy has been developed by the Governance Team and Community Relations and Advocacy Team, in consultation with the Executive Management Team (EMT). As this policy relates to Councillors and Staff only, there is no requirement for community engagement in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* or the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.

The draft policy was discussed with the previous Council at the Councillor briefing held on 7 September 2020 and was put to Council at the 28 September 2020 Council Meeting, where Council at the time resolved "*That Council refer the draft Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy to the new incoming Council*".

The draft policy was reviewed by the current councillors at the Council Briefing held on 1 February 2021.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The draft Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy is in-line with Council's continuous improvement for communications and clearly outlines appropriate Councillor and Staff interaction options and principles.

Collaboration

Not applicable

Financial Implications

This policy has been developed using existing staff resources.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

Councillor Code of Conduct

Staff Code of Conduct

2020-2024 Council Plan

Risk Implications

Reputational risk and OH&S risk of inappropriate Councillor and staff interaction if there is no Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy.

Conclusion

This policy supports the Councillor Code of Conduct and the Staff Code of Conduct and provides clear guidance as to appropriate and effective interaction between Councillors and staff.

9.6 DRAFT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Author's Name:	Martin Bride	Director:	Graeme Harrison
Author's Title:	Community Facilitator	Directorate:	Corporate Services
Department:	Governance and Information	File Number:	F06/A13/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Draft Community Engagement Policy (**Appendix "9.6A"**)

Engagement Report (**Appendix "9.6B"**)

All Submissions (**Appendix "9.6C"**)

Purpose

To adopt a revised Community Engagement Policy in line with the requirements of the new *Local Government Act 2020*.

Summary

- The *Local Government Act 2020* (The Act) has specific requirements relating to community engagement and the content of Council's Engagement Policy, for these requirements to be met Council's current Community Engagement Policy required updating.
- Under Section 55 (3) of the Act a Council must adopt the first community engagement policy on or before 1 March 2021.
- The Act requires Council to engage with the community on the Community Engagement Policy.
- At the Council meeting on 14 December 2020 Council resolved to "Seek community feedback and comments on the Draft Community Engagement Policy until close of business 23 January 2021."
- That engagement was focussed on the Commitments and Principles and was at the Consult and Involve level on the IAP2 spectrum
- 9 individual submissions were received with 40 separate issues capture, 5 changes have been reflected in the draft policy, and 7 related items will be referred on for further discussion within council

Recommendation

That Council adopt the revised Community Engagement Policy (**Appendix "9.6A"**).

REPORT

Background

Council currently has a Community Engagement policy in place which was adopted in June 2015.

The Act Section 55 (2) requires that:

A community engagement policy must -

- (a) be developed in consultation with the municipal community; and*
- (b) give effect to the community engagement principles; and*
- (c) be capable of being applied to the making of the Council's local laws; and*
- (d) be capable of being applied in relation to the Council's budget and policy development; and*
- (e) describe the type and form of community engagement proposed, having regard to the significance and complexity of the matter and the level of resourcing required; and*
- (f) specify a process for informing the municipal community of the outcome of the community engagement; and*
- (g) include deliberative engagement practices which must include and address any matters prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this paragraph and be capable of being applied to the development of the Community Vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan and*
- (h) include any other matters prescribed by the regulations.*

The Act Section 56 also defines the Community Engagement Principles as follows:

- (a) a community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope;*
- (b) participants in community engagement must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation;*
- (c) participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement;*
- (d) participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement;*
- (e) participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making.*

The existing policy has been reviewed to take in to account the new Act requirements and to reflect the recommendation of an externally facilitated 'health check', conducted in March 2019, and the Victorian Auditor General's report, Public Participation and Community Engagement: Local Government Sector.

Discussion

The policy was available to the community for comment from 15 December 2020 to Monday 25 January 2021. Feedback options were provided in writing by mail or email or by completing an online form. Nine submissions were received. Forty individual suggestions or comments were made, some about the policy, some more generally about engagement and some about past engagements and unrelated matters.

The submissions are summarised in the Engagement Report **Appendix "9.6B"**, and clearly display, "What we heard", "What we will do" and the "Consideration given" to each of the issues raised. Some of the comments and suggestions were unrelated to the policy so have not been considered further in this report. Others may provide useful information to Councillors so have been referred for other discussion within Council. **Appendix "9.6C"** contains the complete submissions.

Five changes have been made in response to the 9 submissions and one further change as a result of further Councillor input.

Council has in place a detailed Community Engagement procedure and a range of other tools that provide council officers with guidance on how to implement the Community Engagement Policy. This procedure and related tools will need to be reviewed post the adoption of this policy to ensure alignment.

Options to Consider

Nil

Sustainability Implications

Nil

Community Engagement

This report relates to the community engagement already undertaken. No further engagement is planned for this policy.

Letters will be provided back to the submitters where contact details have been made available, thanking them for their input together with a copy of the Engagement Report which details Council's responses to all submissions.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not applicable

Collaboration

Not applicable

Financial Implications

The adoption of the policy has no direct financial implications however individual project budgets will continue to need to include allocations for community engagement activities.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Local Government Act Part 3 Division 1 Section 55&56

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

The organisational values of Accountability and Integrity are directly linked to the reasons we engage and should guide our practice when engaging.

The Council Plan 2020-2024 includes the guiding principles "Consult, engage and work transparently with the community" and "Provide information to the community in a variety of formats using plain language where possible".

Council has in place a detailed Community Engagement procedure and a range of other tools that provide officers with guidance on how to implement the Community Engagement Policy.

Risk Implications

The failure to adopt a Community Engagement Policy that is compliant with the requirements of The Act would put Council in breach of The Act. Though not the primary purpose of the policy update an effective Community Engagement Policy, that is properly implemented, should reduce the risk of poorly designed projects and lessen reputational risk.

Conclusion

It is essential that Council adopt a Community Engagement Policy that is compliant with The Act and that we engage with the community about the content of that Policy. We have engaged with the community on the policy and made changes in response, the policy is now ready for consideration by Council for adoption.

9.7 COMMITTEE STRUCTURE REVIEW

Author's Name:	Susan Surrige	Director:	Graeme Harrison
Author's Title:	Co-ordinator Community Relations and Advocacy	Directorate:	Corporate Services
Department:	Governance and Information	File Number:	F06/A12/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

List of Current Committee (**Appendix "9.7A"**)

Draft Project Plan (**Appendix "9.7B"**)

Draft Engagement Plan (**Appendix "9.7C"**)

Purpose

To receive and note the background information on the proposed review of Council's Committee Structure, including details of current Committees, and an initial Project Plan and Engagement Plan to undertake the review.

Summary

This report presents an outline of the proposed review of Committee Structures.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receive and note the proposed review of its Committee Structure.
2. Note that the Committees will continue to meet while the review is being undertaken, and also note that some Committees will meet without Councillor representation.

REPORT

Background

Horsham Rural City Council currently has 42 Committees plus a further 18 that are external to council but have council involvement, **Appendix "9.7A"**.

These committees relate to an extremely broad range of activities including:

- Statutory committees
- Management and maintenance of council facilities/assets
- Strategic community engagement
- Event organisation
- Joint use governance
- External committees that Council participates in

Key points to note about the current committee structure:

- Work was undertaken several years ago to review all of Council's Special Committees (Under Section 86 of the Local Government Act 1989). This resulted in 32 Special Committees being restructured to become Advisory Committees and a more streamlined public halls committee structure with just one Special committee for all halls
- Under the new Local Government Act, there are now only 2 formal types of committees.
 - Community Asset committees for the purpose of managing a community asset and,
 - Delegated committees where specific powers of Council are delegated to the committee
- The new Local Government Act is silent on the establishment of Advisory Committees but Council may also choose to use such committees to provide advice and feedback on specific one-off matters or on any ongoing matter for council
- Some of our committees relate to specific projects and some have been in existence for a very long time
- Community engagement on specific strategic decisions will often involve short term, project specific reference groups with representatives of key stakeholders e.g. planning strategies, parking strategy, City to River implementation
- The new Council term and the new *Local Government Act 2020* represent an opportune time to review all Council committees.

Discussion

The objective of review, is to make Council's committee structure as effective and efficient as possible, providing appropriate community and business engagement as per IAP2 principles, and improving community engagement.

Changes recommended as part of this review must:

- be compliant with the new *Local Government Act 2020*
- maintain or improve engagement with our community
- create efficiencies
- reflect industry best practice
- be consistent in approach across Council

The draft Project Plan, **Appendix "9.7B"**, steps out the review process and activities to be undertaken
The Project Plan key steps are as follows:

1. Review the activity of each committee for the past 2 years, including membership, number of meetings, attendance, and resolutions/actions.
2. Undertake a benchmarking review with other like councils, to determine best practice contemporary committee structure in local government.
3. Review and finalise the Engagement Plan.
4. Undertake direct consultation with each committee, including initial discussions, member survey and follow-up consultation.
5. Development of a proposed Committee Structure which may include a range of options:
 - identify those committees that are now essentially Community Asset Committees
 - identify whether any should become Delegated Committees
 - dissolve some committees – that are no longer relevant or effective, or have ceased operations
 - appoint a designated council contact person,
 - review each committees need for councilor membership
 - combine suitable committees together
 - retain certain committees
 - update the terms of reference for all committees
6. Match each of current committees to a proposed structure
7. Consult and engage with all key stakeholders on the proposed committee structure
8. Implement (following Council approval)

The review process has been designed to take place between February 1 and June 30th 2021, with implementation to commence in the new financial year, following any final approval of Council.

This review will be undertaken by the Governance and Community Relations and Advocacy team with specialist support as required.

Options to Consider

Nil

Sustainability Implications

Nil

Community Engagement

Committees are by their very nature a part of the engagement processes that Council utilises with the community. The review of Council's Committee structure will require community engagement consistent with IAP2 Consult/Involve level. An initial Engagement Plan has been developed, **Appendix "9.7C"**, and this will continue to be developed as the project is undertaken.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

This is a continuous improvement process that seeks to modernise Council's formal Committees and align them to the appropriate structures as per the new *Local Government Act 2020*, whilst ensuring effective strategic advice is provided to Council to assist in their governance and decision making.

Collaboration

This review will be undertaken through engagement and collaboration with the current committee members who are largely all external to council.

Financial Implications

Additional assistance is being provided by Michael McCarthy (formerly of Southern Grampians Shire Council) at a cost of approximately \$6,000, this cost will be met from the CEO Contingency provided in the 2020-22 Budget.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2020-2024 Council Plan

Goal 4 – Governance and Business Excellence

4.1 Continuously improve communication and engagement with the community through effective consultation

Risk Implications

There is reputational risk to Council relating to the engagement process through this Committee review, with this risk mitigated through ensuring that an effective Community Engagement Plan is put in place.

Conclusion

The Committee Review will seek to improve the effectiveness of Councils Committees and improve community engagement more broadly with all of the community.

9.8 INVESTMENT ATTRACTION AND GROWTH REPORT

Author's Name:	Fiona Gormann	Director:	Kevin O'Brien
Author's Title:	Manager Investment Attraction and Growth	Directorate:	Communities and Place
Department:	Communities and Place	File Number:	F15/A06/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Nil

Purpose

To receive and note the Investment Attraction and Growth Report for December 2020.

Summary

The Investment Attraction and Growth Report provides a summary of investment attraction and growth activities in the municipality during the reporting period.

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the Investment Attraction and Growth Report for December 2020.

REPORT

Background

An Investment Attraction and Growth report is tabled monthly at the Ordinary Meeting of Council.

Discussion

The work undertaken across Investment Attraction and Growth includes Strategic Planning, Statutory Planning, Building Services, Visitor Services, Business, Tourism and Events.

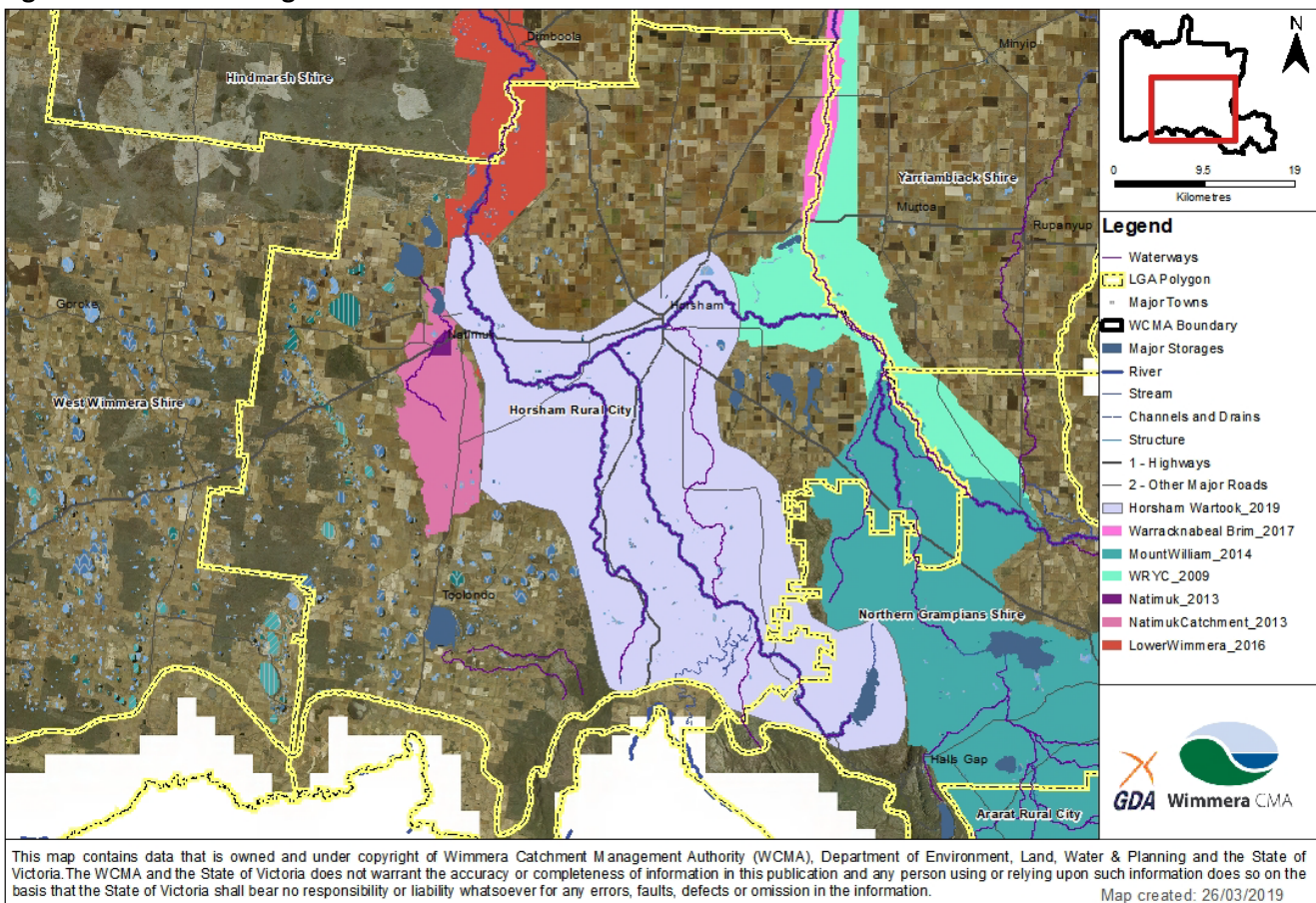
STRATEGIC PLANNING

Flood Management

Goal 5 (Natural and Built Environments), reference number 5.2.07 of the Council Plan 2018-2022 requires Council to *amend the Planning Scheme to implement the recommendations from flood investigations*.

The Strategic Planning Unit has been working with a GIS consultant, the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority (CMA) and the Departments of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) in updating Horsham’s flood mapping data. Mapping data from five flood investigations prepared by the CMA have been combined and identify areas where the Flood Overlay (FO) and Land Subject to Inundation (LSIO) should apply across the municipality.

Figure 1 – Flood Investigations extent



These overlays are planning controls on development of land in both urban and rural environments under Victoria’s planning system. Their key purpose is to:

- minimise the effects of overland flows and flooding on new buildings; and
- ensure new developments do not adversely affect existing properties

The FO will be applied to areas where in a 1% AEP (Annual Exceedance Probability) flood event also known as a 1 in 100 storm event whereby the area becomes an active floodway where the water becomes deep or the flow is fast. The FO provides transparency over what forms of development are likely to be inappropriate because of the high flood risk. The LSIO will be applied where the water is of a lower risk (pooling rather than flowing) but floodwaters extensively submerge land.

The Strategic Planning Unit will next prepare for a Planning Scheme Amendment to the Horsham Planning Scheme. The amendment will:

- amend the current planning scheme maps to reflect the updated flood mapping data;
- update the FO and LSIO provisions to meet the requirements of the *Ministerial Direction on Form and Content of Planning Scheme*; and
- Amend the Municipal Planning Strategy (formerly the Municipal Strategic Statement) and local policies under the Planning Policy Frameworks to ensure policy context, objectives, strategies and policy guidelines clearly articulate flood risk management.

Advertising for a Strategic Planning Officer

Currently we are advertising for a Strategic Planning Officer. This is a newly created position for an experienced or newly qualified planning professional to assist with the roll out of multiple strategic planning projects and planning scheme amendments that are of a high priority.

STATUTORY PLANNING

Planning Applications Determined

Below are the number of Planning Permits issued for the month of December 2020 and a comparison with the same period last year.

Type	2020		2019	
	No.	*Value \$	No.	*Value \$
Miscellaneous Domestic	7	\$2,020,570	6	\$483,343
Industrial/Commercial	7	\$1,539,600	2	\$2,000,480
Subdivisions	6 (9 lots)	-	-	-
Other	1	-	-	-
Total	21	\$3,560,170	9	\$2,483,823

(*Please note: Not all applications have a \$ figure)

Total number of planning permits issued in the Horsham Rural City Council area from 1 January to 31 December 2020 is 110 compared to 132 in 2019.

Planning permits issued for subdivision have created 52 new lots from 1 January to 31 December 2020 compared to 72 in 2019

BUILDING SERVICES

Building Permits Issued

Below are the number of building permits issued for the month of December 2020 and a comparison with the same period last year.

Permits issued by Horsham Rural City Council for this Municipality

Type	DEC 2020		DEC 2019	
	No.	Value \$	No.	Value \$
Dwellings	-	-	-	-
Alterations to Dwellings	-	-	-	-
Dwelling resitting's	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Domestic (Carports, Garages etc.)	7	\$100,645	5	\$366,436
Removal/Demolish	1	2,500	1	\$29,850
Industrial/Commercial	1	6,773	2	\$14,360
Signs	-	-	-	-
Total	9	\$109,918	5	\$410,646

Permits issued by other Private Building Surveyors for this Municipality or by Government Departments

Type	DEC 2020		DEC 2019	
	No.	Value \$	No.	Value \$
Dwellings	4	\$142,531	5	\$1,990,270
Alterations to Dwellings	2	\$95,736	-	-
Dwelling resitting's	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Domestic (Carports, Garages etc.)	5	\$201,233	4	\$165,700
Removal/Demolish	1	\$300,000	-	-
Industrial/Commercial	3	642,000	2	\$198,718
Signs	-	-	-	-
Sub Total	15	\$2,701,500	18	\$2,354,688

A total of 74 Building Permits have been issued by Horsham Rural City Council at a total value of \$4,685,116 from 1 January to 31 December 2020 compared to 86 Building Permits at a total value of \$2,796,111 in 2019.

Private Building Surveyors have issued 193 Building Permits at a total value of \$42,836,895 from 1 January to 31 December 2020 compared to 182 at a total value of \$51,377,668 in 2019.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND EVENTS

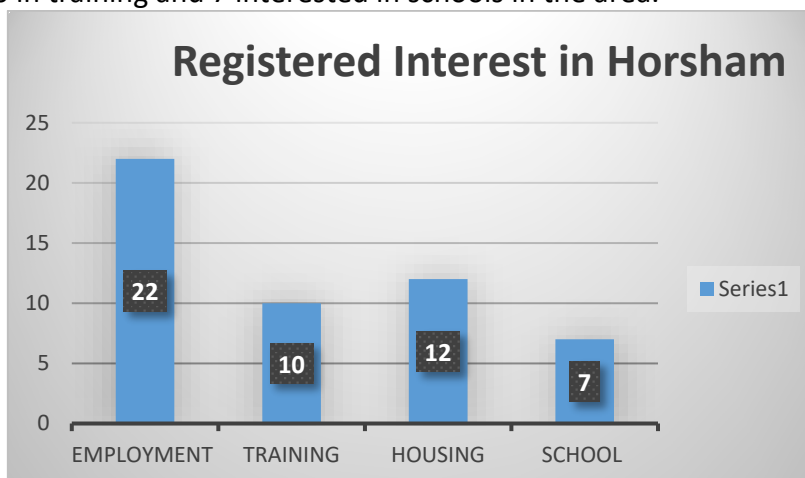
Business Support

Since the launch of our new "Live the Grampians Way" marketing campaign on the 1st December 2020, the program has continued to deliver great results through December and January. Below is a snapshot of performance to date across Horsham and the four local government areas.

December 2020

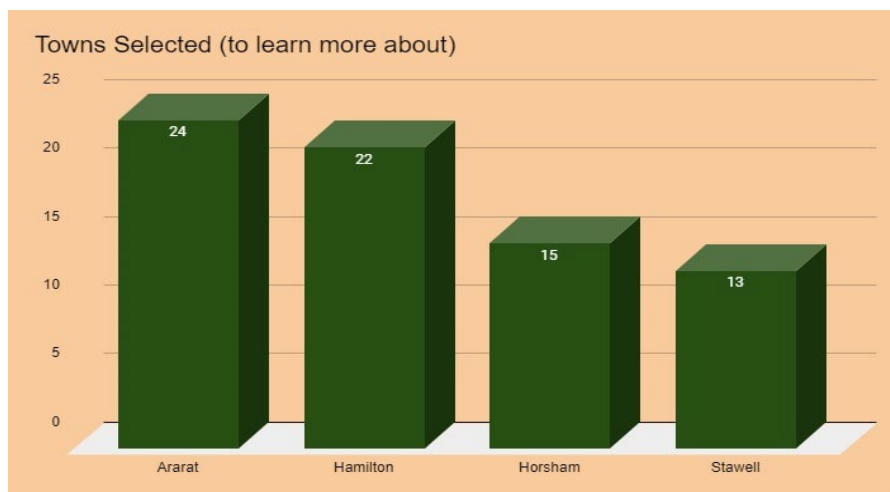
Horsham

There were 25 people who registered on the Horsham page with 22 indicating they were interested in a job, 12 in housing, 10 in training and 7 interested in schools in the area.



The Four Local Government Areas

- 39 people registered their interest in moving - which is a great early response (26 of these registered their Skill)
- 4,775 people were attracted to the campaign website (86% from the digital advertising).
- Pages Views - Ararat had the highest amount of views (besides the home page)



Commencing in February 2021 the Business Support team will be administrating the rollout of two new grant streams being Business Fronts and Health and Wellbeing. The Business Fronts grant program is about renewing the fronts of business across our municipality. This can be the replacement of blinds, signage and potential landscaping of entrances to businesses. The Health and Wellbeing program has been designed to support the strengthening of business and community response to health and wellbeing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council’s Outdoor Dining Footpath Trading Permanent Infrastructure program will call for proposals from hospitality establishments across the municipality. This is indented to provide for a vibrant community whilst increasing outdoor dining spaces.

Direct business engagement

	December 2020	YTD
General business	21	179
New or expanding business	3	33
Event organisers	4	39
Total	28	251

COVID-19 Business Contact YTD

Specific industries	No.
Retail	153
Industry (building and construction and other industries)	55
Accommodation	86
Health Services	21
Beauty	19
Service Industry	68
Foods	35
Hospitality	69
Events - approximately	64
Total	570

Location:	No.
Wartook Valley (including Mt Zero, Laharum, Wartook and Brimpaen)	27
Horsham	481
Natimuk	19
Dooen	3
Haven and Surrounds	17
Dadswells Bridge	19

Note: Businesses may have been contacted more than once to assist with changes in restrictions impacting on certain industries more than others.

Our Business Development team have been collecting data in regards to vacant businesses within the Central Activity District, the results are listed below. There were 18 vacant shops at the end of October 2020 in the Horsham CAD compared to 21 at the end of January 2021.

Street	31 October 2020	31 January 2021
Firebrace	10	8
Roberts Place	4	4
Pynsent	2	4
McLachlan	1	1
Wilson	1	4
	18	21

Commencing in January 2021 Australian Business Data will be used to provide information to further inform the business section of this report.

Tourism

The Business Support Team concentrated their efforts on the accommodation sector during December. Primarily this was to support the Grampians Tourism led visiting friends and relatives (VFR), Host with the Most campaign. A breakdown of the VFR digital activity is detailed below and was accompanied by radio and press advertisements.

The operator click-out activity is a great way to measure the effect of the VFR campaign, especially when compared to the same time frame of the previous year. The site has more than doubled the number of web conversions from this time last year and have seen good month on month growth as well. The month on month growth is a good indicator of the traction of the campaign.

1 month into the campaign:

Landing page views:

- 3,945 total landing page views (almost double our goal of 2,000 p/m)
- 1:48 average time on site

Impressions/engagement:

An impression is counted each time the ad is shown on a search result page or other site on the Google Network. Each time the ad appears on Google or the Google Network, it's counted as one impression.

- 101,217 impressions from social
- 88,267 impressions from google
- 28,316 engagements (goal of 15,000 p/m)
- 189,479 total impressions (goal of 150,000 p/m)

Sign-ups:

- 92 total sign-ups
- 32 invites
- 60 host sign-ups

Operator click outs month on month:

15 Oct - 14 Nov 2020: 2,422 click outs

15 Nov-14 Dec 2020: 3,259 click outs

34.5% Increase

Operator click outs compared to this time period last year:

15 Nov - 14 Dec 2020: 3,259

15 Nov - 14 Dec 2019: 1,490

118.7% Increase

The following table summarises visitors for December 2020 compared to December 2019. There were 430 visitors to Visitor Services during December.

Month	Walk ins	Local	Melbourne	Other VIC	Interstate	Overseas
December 2019:	<u>1284</u>	<u>235</u>	<u>281</u>	<u>216</u>	<u>383</u>	<u>169</u>
December 2020:	<u>430</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>112</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>

Visitors were choosing Horsham as a destination with increased visitation particularly from Boxing Day which saw Horsham booked out. The traditional Christmas rush for produce and hampers brought in many locals and resulted in sales of \$13,957 for December. Visitor Services worked in conjunction with Wimmera Development Association to promote and sell 110 hampers as part of the very successful "Taste of the Wimmera" campaign to showcase local producers.

Initial observations would suggest that the Pynsent Street entrance creates a balance of flow through the facility and the majority of people enter via Pynsent Street, as it is the closest entry point to the Central Activity District and available parking. This gives opportunity to upsell local produce, area attractions, Horsham Regional Art Gallery exhibitions and upcoming performances at Horsham Town Hall. The location of public amenities inside Horsham Town Hall has allowed for incidental engagement of both day trippers and visitors to our Central Activity District.

Events

The lead up to the Christmas and New Year holiday break has seen an increase interest in what there is to do in and around Horsham. This is reflected in the continued increase in the visitation to the www.visithorsham.com.au website as shown in the table below.

	December		YTD
Notice of intention to hold an event application	4		21
Visitor Information visits	430		937
Visithorsham.com web visits	5212		19,481

The State Government recently released the Events Framework to guide COVID-19 safe event planning. Markets are deemed a retail experience and sits outside this framework. Other events will have more requirements based on the complexity of the proposed event.

Sustainability Implications

The report provides overview development and business activity across the region with no direct sustainability implications.

Community Engagement

Report has been prepared in consultation with range of agencies and will be made publicly available to Business Horsham, WDA and on HRCC website.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The report provides overview of activity and assists with continuous improvement.

Collaboration

The report has been prepared in collaboration with council officers across Planning, Building and Business and Tourism Support.

Financial Implications

The Business and Community Support package will deliver projects that make up Councils direct financial contribution of \$484,000.

Further projects will be developed to support businesses through the Local Council's Outdoor Eating and Entertaining program for \$500,000. These funds need to be fully expended by 30 June 2021.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

The report aligns with 2020-2024 Council Plan - Goal 2 – Sustaining the Economy

Conclusion

The activities undertaken by the Investment Attraction and Growth Department are designed to support a broad sector of those who live here, do business here and visit here. The highlight for the Investment Attraction and Growth Department in December was the sale of 110 hampers through our newly relocated Visitor Services, in partnership with Wimmera Development Association and our local food and wine producers.

9.9 HORSHAM SOUTH STRUCTURE PLAN

Author's Name:	Stephanie Harder	Director:	Kevin O'Brien
Author's Title:	Coordinator Strategic Planning	Directorate:	Communities and Place
Department:	Communities and Place	File Number:	F24/A1/000006

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Horsham South Emerging Development Scenario – March 2020 (**Appendix "9.9A"**)

Horsham South Emerging Option Discussion Paper for Stakeholder Engagement – March 2020 (**Appendix "9.9B"**)

Horsham South Emerging Option Community Engagement Outcomes Report – December 2020 (**Appendix "9.9C"**)

Horsham South Emerging Option Webinar Series Summary Report – December 2020 (**Appendix "9.9D"**)

Purpose

To receive and note an update on Round 2 of Community Consultation on the *Horsham South Emerging Option Discussion Paper* and proceed with Phase 4 of the Horsham South Structure Plan.

Summary

On 14 April 2020 Council publically released the *Horsham South Emerging Option Discussion Paper* and carried out Round 2 of Stakeholder Engagement up until 19 September 2020. This round of consultation is Phase 3 of the Horsham South Structure Plan.

This *Discussion Paper* summarises the feedback provided by the community and stakeholders on the *Key Strategic Directions Discussion Paper for Community Engagement* (November 2019). It is a precursor to the preparation of a formal Structure Plan and identifies a general direction for planned growth, highlighting key issues to be addressed through a series of actions under each Strategic Growth Direction and illustrated plans. These actions relate to urban form, interface between land uses, transport network community facilities and services.

Council worked with planning consultants, Mesh, in analysing and summarising the feedback received from stakeholders and has prepared responses to the issues raised and insight provided. This has been captured in two summary reports; the *Community Engagement Outcomes Report* and *Webinar Series Summary Report*, and concludes Phase 3. Council is ready to commence Phase 4 which is to draft a structure plan for Horsham South.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receive and note the *Horsham South Emerging Option Webinar Summary*, and make it publically available.
2. Continue with the preparation of the Horsham South Structure Plan - Phase 4.

REPORT

Background

In 2018, Council identified the need for a structure plan for Horsham South. The study area, broadly extending south of the Wimmera River and through Haven, has been the natural progression of Horsham township’s growth. Development to date has been of a relatively ad hoc nature resulting in land use conflict and design and infrastructure issues. There has been limited strategic planning to guide the location of land use and urban form, delivery of infrastructure and utilities, distribution of social and community facilities, definition of preferred urban character and protection of culturally sensitive places.

A Structure Plan is a planning tool that provides a ‘blueprint’ for how localised development and physical environment within a defined area will occur beyond the 20-year horizon. For Horsham South a structure plan is needed to ensure that the area develops in a coordinated way. The Structure Plan will be used to guide the assessment of planning permit applications and amendments to the Horsham Planning Scheme.

Together with Mesh, Council has prepared a series of reports and discussion papers to inform the structure planning process. To date, Council has prepared and publically consulted on the following reports:

- *Horsham South Issues and Opportunities Background Report, October 2019*
- *Horsham South Key Strategic Directions Paper for Community Engagement, November 2019*
- *Horsham South Emerging Option Discussion Paper for Stakeholder Engagement, March 2020*

In April 2020 Council released the Discussion Paper for stakeholder feedback. A Vision Statement, five Strategic Directions and an Emerging Development Scenario form *the Horsham South Emerging Option Discussion Paper*. The *Discussion Paper* also summarises key messages heard during Round 1 of Community Consultation (18 November 2019 -13 December 2019).



FIGURE 1 VISION STATEMENT FOR HORSHAM SOUTH

The following Strategic Directions were refined following Round 1 of community engagement:

- Direction 1: Coordinated growth that respects the existing character of the area.
- Direction 2: Appropriate interfaces between land uses.
- Direction 3: Interconnected transport networks that are continuous, safe and efficient.
- Direction 4: Accessible social and community facilities.
- Direction 5: Efficient use of existing and new services (water, sewer & drainage)

Actions have been assigned to each Strategic Direction. Actions bring attention to issues that require consideration and resolution through the structure planning process. The Emerging Development Scenario is an overarching plan that illustrates the long term vision and preliminary spatial structure for Horsham South. See **Appendix “9.9A”**.

Based on the work that has been undertaken to date, Horsham South is anticipated to accommodate 970 future residential allotments, approximately 2,000 future residents, at full development. Anticipated lot yields will be refined during the course of the next phase of the Structure Plan’s preparation.

Council received community feedback through written submissions, feedback forms, an online forum and public webinars. 23 written submissions were received in response to the discussion paper and 50 participants attended the public webinar series via Zoom across three days.

Prior to the release of the *Horsham South Emerging Option Discussion Paper*, Council was briefed 10 February 2020 and 10 March 2020. The first briefing provided a summary of the feedback received on the *Horsham South Key Strategic Directions Paper for Community Engagement*. The second briefing provided an overview on the emerging development scenario included in the *Horsham South Emerging Option Discussion Paper*.

Council has concluded Phase 3 of Horsham South Structure Plan through the finalisation of two engagement reports; *Community Engagement Outcomes Report* and *Webinar Series Summary Report*, which summarise written and verbal responses. Feedback collated in the two summary reports will be used to inform the structure planning process (Phase 4).

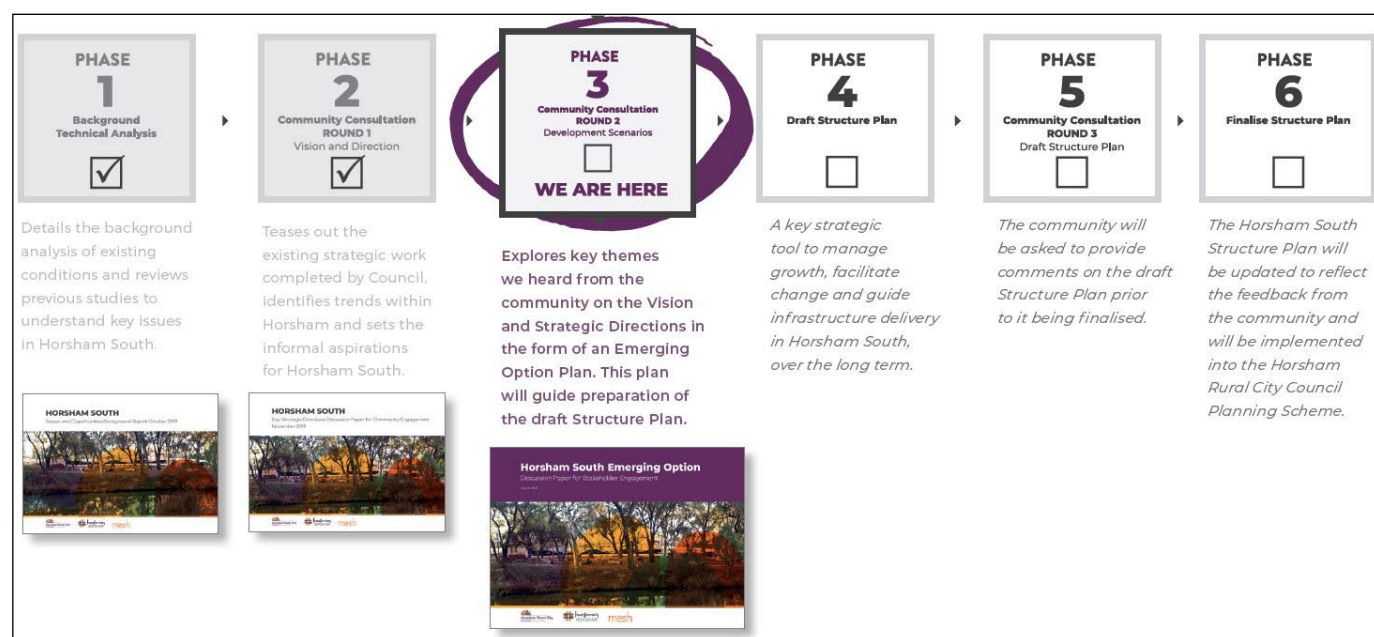
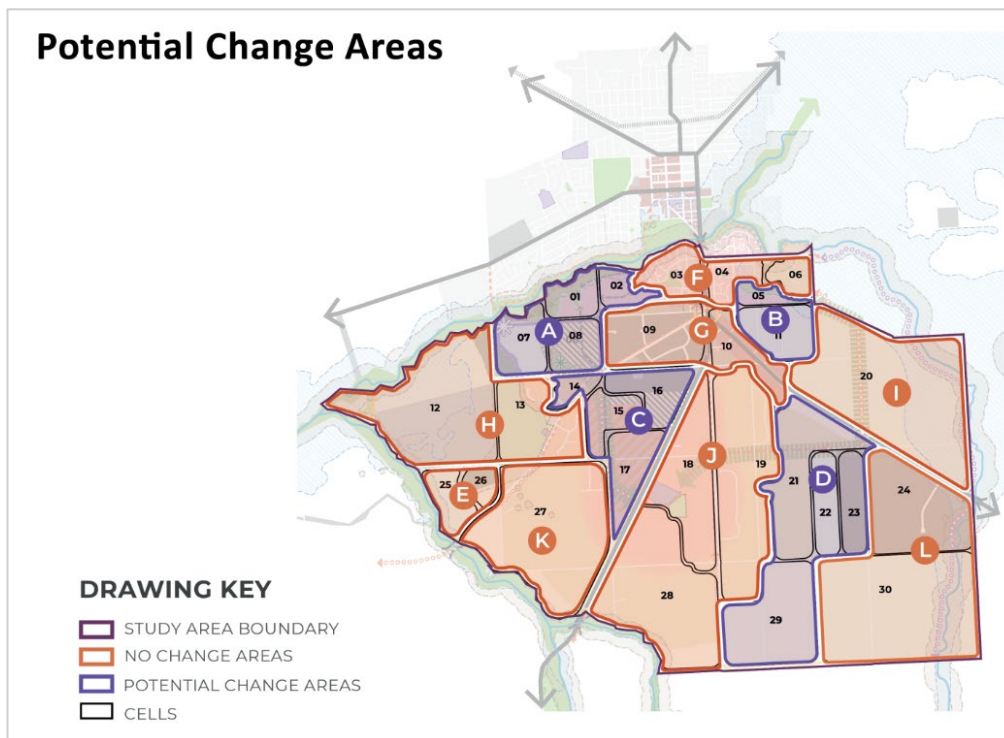


FIGURE 2 HORSHAM SOUTH PROJECT TIMELINE

Discussion

Public webinars were held 7 September 2020, 9 September 2020 and 10 September 2020. Webinar 1 and Webinar 2 were targeted to land owners within Potential Change Areas A & C and Potential Change Areas B & D respectively. Webinar 3 was open to all interested community members. Each webinar comprised a general discussion on the Emerging Vision, refined Strategic Directions and the Emerging Development Scenario. Feedback was recorded and confirmed by participants using a digital workspace tool called MURAL.



The public webinar series was a very successful online platform in obtaining community feedback in addition to exploring concerns and providing clarification on certain aspects of the Emerging Development Scenario to land owners directly.

A summary report has been prepared specifically for the public webinars series. Council has made a strong commitment to deliver a genuine and thorough engagement process as well as project transparency and community trust in regards to the preparation of the Horsham South Structure Plan. Further written clarification has been provided to Council's responses to offer more certainty and information to questions and comments put forward by participants. Clear and direct community feedback provided through engagement has informed how the Emerging Option has evolved.

Two recurring themes were evident during this round of engagement. Submitters and webinar participants sought clarification on a future single bridge crossing of the Wimmera River for non-heavy vehicles and there were mixed views on the existing amount of land zoned for industrial use, whereby stakeholder believed there was either an excessive or insufficient amount.

The **Horsham Urban Transport Plan** will be the underpinning document in informing decisions for future road infrastructure at a local level, including additional road crossing of the Wimmera River. Input will be sought from the Registered Aboriginal Party, Barengi Gadjin Land Council, to ensure that Council minimises impact (e.g. infrastructure locations and alignments) to culturally sensitive places within the Structure Plan area. Safety improvements in response to heavy vehicle movements, for example along Golf Course Road, will be addressed as part of the Structure Plan, however, any discussions on a future heavy vehicle routes will be directed and led by Regional Roads Victoria.

An Economic Development Study will be undertaken to understand the current industrial land provision and location with the Structure Plan area, explore consolidating existing industrial land in Horsham South in response to a low level of take up and relocation of heavier industries to the Western Intermodal Freight Terminal (WIFT), allowing the opportunity for industry with heavy vehicle movements to relocate from problematic areas, such as Golf Course Road.

Council is ready to commence Phase 4 which is to draft a Structure Plan for Horsham South. This involves determining how the precinct can be delivered in response to the vision and unique character, site opportunities and constraints and key issues and implications derived from background technical reports. Technical background reports build a strong understanding of the precinct's context and is crucial to building a robust and effective structure plan.

These reports will provide a basis for making a strategic assessment of competing land use issues and for determining decisions on how these issue can be resolved through the structure planning process in the best interest of current and future residents and workers.

Together with the vision, strategic directions and background reports, an urban structure can be established. The urban structure provides the skeleton for arranging land uses, identifying opportunities for efficient use of land and resources for connecting the precinct to surrounding areas. Phase 4 will see many key decisions about precinct design, based on sound background reports and detailed discussions with stakeholders and the community.

Options to Consider

1. Receive and note the *Horsham South Emerging Option Webinar Summary*, to be made publically available and continue with the preparation of the Horsham South Structure Plan - Phase 4.
2. Do not receive and note the *Horsham South Emerging Option Webinar Summary*, to be made publically available.
3. Do not continue with the preparation of the Horsham South Structure Plan - Phase 4.

Sustainability Implications

Horsham South has been experiencing unplanned and uncoordinated development. As a result this has placed pressure on services and infrastructure, created land use conflicts and affected the character of the area. The Structure Plan will implement an environmentally sustainable planning framework for Horsham South and will nominate land for community and transport infrastructure.

Community Engagement

Council has made a strong commitment as part of preparing the Horsham South Emerging Option Discussion Paper to deliver a genuine and thorough engagement process. This included using the results of earlier engagement activities undertaken in the study area and incorporating ideas already identified by the community.

Public consultation will continue to occur at key milestones throughout the structure planning process and Council will endeavour to work with the community in resolving issues that arise and make appropriate changes to the structure plan.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The Structure Plan clearly demonstrates Council's commitment to innovation and continual improvement through the development of the Structure Plan's Six Phases which provides an ongoing commitment to engage the community until the project delivery.

The Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) has released the Draft Structure Planning Guidelines for Melbourne's Greenfield Areas. Council will apply targets provided in the draft Guidelines where suitable. Council will continue to provide input and work with the VPA in its preparation of future guidelines for the peri-urban and regional Victorian context. Council will also collaborate with government agencies to ensure best practice opportunities are investigated and integrated into the design of the structure plan.

Collaboration

Targeted stakeholder engagement is currently being undertaken with stakeholders such as Council officers, technical experts, government departments and agencies to identify issues, opportunities and emerging principles.

Financial Implications

Funds for the costs to be incurred for the preparation of the Structure Plan have been allocated within the Strategic Planning budget as part of budget preparation for the 2021-22 financial year.

Implementation of the final South Horsham Structure Plan will have significant long term financial implications. These will need to be prioritised and taken into account in future budget deliberations and decision-making.

Technical advice and findings provided by qualified consultants is essential to inform the Structure Plan, particularly to satisfy stakeholder and government department requirements, and therefore are critical to be included in the 2021-2022 Financial Year's budget. Technical reports will provide the relevant evidence underpinning the proposed urban form design and planning and infrastructure requirements detailed in the Structure Plan. This will be critical at a Panel Hearing where the strategic merit and outcomes sought via the Structure Plan will be under consideration. Background reports identified include land contamination, economic development, ecological investigations, Aboriginal cultural heritage, infrastructure analysis and bushfire threat and management.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

- Council Plan 2020-2024 prepared by HRCC 2020
- Horsham Economic Development Strategy 2017-2021, Strategy Report, prepared for HRCC by Urban Enterprises, February 2018
- Wimmera River Corridor Plan, prepared for HRCC and the VPA - Draft, January 2018
- Horsham Framework for Managing Growth, October 2013, Prepared for HRCC by Meinhardt Infrastructure & Environment Pty Ltd
- Urban Development Program, 2011, Regional Industrial Report Rural City of Horsham, prepared for Department of Planning and Community Development
- Urban Development Program, 2011, Regional Residential Report Rural City of Horsham, prepared for Department of Planning and Community Development
- Analysis of Industrial Land, prepared for HRCC by RPD Group and Parsons Brinckerhoff Australia Pty Limited, 2004
- Open Space Strategy 2019
- Social Infrastructure Framework 2020
- Municipal Bicycle and Shared Path Plan 2012 by Driscoll Engineering
- SGS Economics - Growing Jobs in Regional Victoria April 2018 by RDV
- Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Growth Plan
- Community Engagement Policy, C04/095

Risk Implications

Not applicable

Human Rights Implications

The rights protected in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 were considered in preparing this report and it's determined that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues

Conclusion

Council has concluded Phase 3 of the Horsham South Structure Plan and is ready to commence Phase 4.

A report has been prepared that compiles questions and responses provided by Council and Mesh during community consultation.

9.10 COMMUNICATIONS POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Author's Name:	Susan SurrIDGE	Director:	Graeme Harrison
Author's Title:	Co-ordinator Community Relations and Advocacy	Directorate:	Corporate Services
Department:	Governance and Information	File Number:	F14/A04/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Revised Communications Policy (**Appendix "9.10A"**)

Draft Communications Plan (**Appendix "9.10B"**)

Purpose

To adopt the revised Communications Policy and receive and note the annual Communications Plan for Horsham Rural City Council.

Summary

- The Communications Policy outlines the principles of effective communications for Council that apply to Councillors, staff, contractors, consultants and volunteers.
- The existing policy has not been updated since 2005.
- The Communications Plan provides key messaging and an action plan detailing the various ways in which Council communicates and actions to support effective communications.
- The Communications Plan will be reviewed annually.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Adopt the revised Communications Policy.
2. Receive and note the annual Communications Plan.

REPORT

Background

The current Communications Policy was adopted in 2005 and has not been reviewed since that time. The revised policy reflects current information and best practice, and has been completed in Council's new policy template.

This policy is supported by a new Communications Plan which guides Council's communications processes.

Discussion

Clear, transparent internal and external communications are essential for maintaining a positive identity and achieving the best possible outcomes for the community. The revised Communications Policy provides clear principles and a strong framework for all future Council communications.

The draft Communications Plan provides guidance on how Council effectively communicates in a range of areas including:

- Media and public relations
- Internal communications
- External communications
- Issue/crisis management
- Corporate branding
- Community engagement
- Website and electronic communication
- Advertising and marketing
- Social media

The Communications Plan will be reviewed annually.

Financial Implications

Revision of the Communications Policy and drafting of a Communications Plan have been conducted by Council Officers within existing staff resources and budget. All communication activities that incur a financial cost are expected to be allowed for within individual budget allocations.

Links to Council Plans, Strategies, Policies

2020-2024 Council Plan

Goal 4 – Governance and Business Excellence

Excel in communication, consultation, governance, leadership and responsible use of resources

Consultation/Communication

The draft Communications Policy and Communications Plan have been developed by the Community Relations and Advocacy Team, in consultation with the Executive Leadership Team, and all feedback has been considered in its development. As this policy relates to Councillors, staff, volunteers, consultants and contractors, there is no requirement for community engagement in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* or the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.

The draft Communications Policy and Communications Plan was presented to Councillors at the Council Briefing held on 7 September 2020 and feedback has been considered in the development of these documents.

Risk Implications

Reputational risk of failure to provide good communication principles and guidelines.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable

Human Rights Implications

This report complies with the rights listed in the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

Conclusion

The Communications Policy and Communications Plan support the Councillors, Council staff, volunteers, contractors and consultants to provide clear, effective and transparent communications.

9.11 COUNCILLOR MEDIA POLICY

Author's Name:	Susan SurrIDGE	Director:	Graeme Harrison
Author's Title:	Co-ordinator Community Relations & Advocacy	Directorate:	Corporate Services
Department:	Governance and Information	File Number:	F14/A04/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Draft Councillor Media Policy (**Appendix "9.11A"**)

Purpose

To adopt the Councillor Media Policy.

Summary

- This policy is in addition to the responsibilities of Councillors under the Councillor Code of Conduct.
- The guiding principles outlined in the policy provide an effective framework that should govern all Councillor's interactions with external media (including social media).
- The policy also details the consequences (under the *Local Government Act 2020*) of breaches of these principles.

Recommendation

That Council adopt the Councillor Media Policy (**Appendix "9.11A"**).

REPORT

Background

Council's Governance Team and Community Relations and Advocacy Team have undertaken a review of Council policy relating to internal and external communications. The aim of this review was to ensure that Horsham Rural City Council has a comprehensive suite of documents that guide the way Councillors and staff interact and communicate within Council and with the wider community.

As part of this review, Council sought to benchmark our communication documentation with other Councils to ensure best practice and current standards.

Council does not currently have a policy guiding Councillors on what comprises good governance concerning interactions with the media (including social media), relating to Council decisions and their role as Councillors.

Discussion

In 2019, Council adopted a Social Media Policy for Council staff. At that time, it was evident that a similar document was needed to provide Councillors with more guidance around media obligations.

This new Councillor Media Policy should be read in conjunction with Section 2.6 (Media Obligations) of the current Councillor Code of Conduct. The purpose of this policy is to provide the Horsham Rural City Council and individual Councillors with guidance as to what comprises good governance concerning:

- All interactions with Media
- All interactions with Social Media.

This policy sets out Guidelines to assist Councillors to exercise respectful behaviours in relation to Council decisions, the different views of other Councillors and the work of Council staff.

The policy sets out Principles in the following key areas:

- *Local Government Act 2020* obligations
- Confidential information
- Respecting decisions and roles of Council
- Respecting other Councillors and Council Staff
- No surprises
- Leadership and Integrity
- Effective communication between community and Council
- Particular issues relating to social media
- Particular issues relating to general media
- Consequences of breach of Principles (sanctions and penalties under the *Local Government Act 2020*).

Financial Implications

Nil

Links To Council Plans, Strategies, Policies

2020-2024 Council Plan

Goal 4 – Governance and Business Excellence

Councillor Code of Conduct

Consultation/Communication

The draft Councillor Media Policy has been developed by the Governance Team and the Community Relations and Advocacy Team, in consultation with the Executive Management Team. As this policy relates to Councillors only, there is no requirement for community engagement in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* or the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.

The draft was distributed to the previous Council for feedback at the Councillor briefing held on 7 September 2020 and all feedback was considered in its development.

Risk Implications

Reputational risk of failure to provide good governance principles in relation to Councillor interaction with the media.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable

Human Rights Implications

It is not the intent of this policy to curtail any individual human right to Freedom of Expression, but to acknowledge that all human rights come with responsibilities and must be exercised in a way that respects the human rights of others (*Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*) and that Councillors must comply with legal obligations in the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Councillor Code of Conduct.

Conclusion

This policy supports the Councillor Code of Conduct in conveying to Councillors the principles of good governance in relation to external interactions with media, specific guidance on appropriate behaviour and consequences of breaches of the Code of Conduct and *Local Government Act 2020*.

9.12 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S OPERATIONAL REPORT

Author's Name:	Sunil Bhalla	Director:	Not applicable
Author's Title:	Chief Executive Officer	Directorate:	Not applicable
Department:	Chief Executive Officer	File Number:	F06/A01/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

Yes No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Nil

Purpose

To receive and note the Chief Executive Officer's Operational Report for January and February 2021.

Summary

The Chief Executive Officer's Operational Report highlights issues and outcomes affecting the organisation's performance and matters which may not be subject of Council reports or briefings.

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the Chief Executive Officer's Operational Report for January and February 2021.

REPORT

Background

At the 24 June 2019 Council meeting, it was resolved that the Chief Executive Officer provide an operational report to Council.

Discussion

Key items of interest for the report period are summarised below.

A. Advocacy/Funding Announcements

Stuart Grimley MP, Member for Western Victoria: The CEO and Mayor met virtually with Stuart Grimley on Wednesday 27 January 2021 and discussed the impact of Covid 19 on the region and Council's priorities for the upcoming state budget

Wimmera Development Association: The regional CEO group met with Executive Director of Wimmera Development Association on 9 February 2021 and discussed the Regional Innovation Project implementation, Regional Housing Study, job growth outlook for region, Covid recovery plan, Regional Migration Strategy, BBRF proposals and Regional Infrastructure priorities.

Regional Cities Victoria (RCV): The Mayor and CEO attended a Regional Cities Victoria meeting on 18 February 2021 via zoom. Discussions included RCV's advocacy priorities leading into federal and state elections and an update from the Chair on the recent meetings with the Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Local Government.

B. Community Engagement

Wimmera Southern Mallee COVID-19 Regional Economic Recovery Committee: The CEO attended the meeting on 27 January 2021 and discussed the draft economic recovery plan.

C. Projects and Events

Australia Day: The Horsham Rural City Council hosted a livestreamed Australia Day event at the Horsham Town Hall Theatre on 26 January. A Citizenship Ceremony was conducted at the Australia Day ceremony for Vic Tan and Moyosore Kolapo. The Citizen of the Year award went to Colin Puls, Young Citizen of the Year award went to Bart Turgoose and the Community Event of the Year was awarded to 60 Years of Wimmera Rock which was accepted by Robbie Millar on behalf of Lynton Brown who was behind the camera at the Australia Day ceremony.

Playground Summer Holiday Fun: Every Wednesday over January the Kalkee Road Hub supported playgroup team offered fun programs to engage families with children aged 0 to 6. Programs included pizza making, sensory play and loose parts play.

D. Staff Matters

Organisational Culture Study: We have partnered with UniSA for an All Staff organisational culture study, as part of a 3 year research project. This approach is a little different to previous surveys, because we are targeting the culture of the organisation – the overall work experience. The results will help us understand at a deeper level, more about the type of culture we have and how this relates to the overall mood of our organisation.

Options to Consider

Not applicable

Sustainability Implications

Not applicable

Community Engagement

Not applicable

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not applicable

Collaboration

Not applicable

Financial Implications

Not applicable

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2020-2024 Council Plan

Goal 4 – Governance and Business Excellence

Risk Implications

Not applicable

Conclusion

That Council receive and note the Chief Executive Officer's Operational Report for January and February 2021.

10. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cr Robyn Gulline, Mayor

- 27 January 2021 – Stuart Grimley via Zoom with CEO
- 28 January 2021 – ABC Wimmera radio interview with Andrew Kelso
- 29 January 2021 – Triple H radio interview with Di Trotter
- 29 January 2021 – Catherine Morley, WHCG CEO
- 29 January 2021 – Regional Mayors meeting re health services in the Wimmera
- 8 February 2021 – Aboriginal Advisory Committee
- 10 February 2021 – Australians in Retirement, Wimmera Branch AGM
- 11 February 2021 – ABC Wimmera radio interview with Rebekah Lowe
- 11 February 2021 – Anne Webster re WHCG/BHS merger

Cr David Bowe

- 28 January 2021- Infrastructure Victoria, addressing social disadvantage in regional Victoria workshop (Virtual via zoom)
- 1 February 2021 – Council Briefing meeting (Council Chambers)
- 2 February 2021 - Infrastructure Victoria, supporting competitive economic advantages in regional Victoria workshop (Virtual via zoom)
- 4 February 2021 - Infrastructure Victoria, Connecting Victorians through Transport workshop (Virtual via zoom)
- 8 February 2021 – Council Briefing meeting (Council Chambers)
- 11 February 2021 - Wimmera Southern Mallee Councils Introduction to the Regional Approach meeting at Warracknabeal
- 12 February 2021 – Horsham Regional Library Corporation board meeting at Edenhope
- 15 February 2021 – Council Briefing meeting (Virtual via zoom)

Cr Claudia Haenel

- 4 February 2021 – Connecting Victorians through transport workshop - zoom meeting:
 - discussion across the state from stakeholders on public transport
 - voiced our Horsham rural city's community concerns about our lack of rail services
- 5 February 2021 – Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Transport Group – zoom meeting:
 - Pedestrian bridge planning proceeding
 - Alternative Truck Route planning remains a priority
 - Agrilinks Upgrade Program, \$450,000
 - Laser data for sealed road condition assessments, changes our approach to road reconstruction.
 - with a Western Rail project to be discussed
- 9 February 2021 – MAV & DELWP Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) Roadmap – zoom meeting:
 - opportunity for all councils to share information with the DELWP team working on the Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) Roadmap.

- 11 February 2021 - Wimmera Southern Mallee Councils Introduction to the Regional Approach – Yarriambiack Shire council offices, Warracknabeal:
 - Local Government Australia spoke of role of councillors with respect to governance in their roles
 - Regional Roads Victoria committed \$100,000 for community consultation on heavy vehicle truck options to get trucks out of Horsham with highest priority on safety, now that Western highway is officially the most dangerous major road in Victoria, with 27 deaths in the last 5 years.
 - Grampians Central West waste recovery group is exploring how we reduce our waste, especially landfill, with the introduction of glass and organic recycling bins also Wimmera Development Association on housing options and Emergency management; how we deal with modern emergencies.

I would like to thank all those community members who have reached out to me since the board of the Wimmera Health Care Group made public their intentions to merge services in partnership Ballarat Health Services. I want you all to know your voices have been heard and your council is advocating for our hospital medical services and our region's biggest employer to remain in local hands. We will fight to keep operations in Horsham and avoid at all costs a centralisation to Ballarat of health services, by recommending a merger of Wimmera Southern Mallee Health Alliance hospitals for our region. Thank you again.

11. URGENT BUSINESS

12. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

13. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

13.1 INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS – RECORD OF MEETINGS

Council Briefing Meeting held on 1, 8 & 15 February 2021

Refer to **Appendix “13.1A”**

13.2 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

Nil

13.3 INWARD CORRESPONDENCE

Nil

13.4 COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

- Horsham Tidy Towns Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 19 January 2021
- Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Transport Group Meeting held on Friday 5 February 2021

Refer to **Appendix “13.4A”**

Recommendation

That Council receive and note agenda items:

- 13.1 Informal Meetings of Councillors – Record of Meetings
- 13.2 Sealing of Documents
- 13.3 Inward Correspondence
- 13.4 Council Committee Minutes.

14. NOTICE OF MOTION

14.1 NOTICE OF MOTION NO 183

Given by Cr Di Bell

TAKE NOTICE that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council meeting of the Horsham Rural City Council to be held at the Civic Centre, Roberts Avenue, Horsham, on Monday 22 February 2021.

“That a report be provided to Council and the community by 28 February re details of any considerations for relocation of the Drought Proofing Tanks and Wotonga Basin watering system on the Riverfront”.

Rationale

This report to include details of options being considered to remove or relocate, all or part of this important watering system, which may alter:

- any part of the final “concept plan” recommendations for Stage 1 which was supported by the Stage 1 City to River Community Reference Group
- any part of the concept plan presented to the community for final feedback during community engagement for Stage 1 City to River.

Report to also include any options re the tanks which may affect the concept plan for Stage 2 being the City Oval/Sawyer Park Precinct.

Refer to **Appendix “14.1A”** for copy of Notice of Motion.

Cr Di Bell

CIVIC CENTRE
HORSHAM 3400
16.2.21

14.2 NOTICE OF MOTION NO 184

Given by Cr Di Bell

TAKE NOTICE that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council meeting of the Horsham Rural City Council to be held at the Civic Centre, Roberts Avenue, Horsham, on Monday 22 February 2021.

“That all work, including application for grants for the Hamilton Street Bridge, be suspended immediately.”

Rationale

This project has not been endorsed by Council, and I do not believe that the current level of community support gives this project priority over other projects which have the potential to give greater net community benefit at this time.

I believe future work to assess the priority and value of this project should be reviewed by Council following the completion of the Community Vision and Council Plan.”

Refer to **Appendix “14.2A”** for copy of Notice of Motion.

Cr Di Bell

CIVIC CENTRE
HORSHAM 3400
16.2.21

14.3 NOTICE OF MOTION NO 185

Given by Cr Ian Ross

TAKE NOTICE that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council meeting of the Horsham Rural City Council to be held at the Civic Centre, Roberts Avenue, Horsham, on Monday 22 February 2021.

“That community committees be reconvened and continue operating until the Committee Review and all results and recommendations of the review are endorsed by Council.”

Rationale

Community committees have ceased without Council approval, therefore it is important that we have sound governance and processes to ensure that Council has a good working relationship with our community committees that builds trust.

Committee Charters or Terms of Reference have not been revoked or amended. Sound governance dictates that they should continue until Council resolves otherwise.

Refer to **Appendix “14.3A”** for copy of Notice of Motion.

Cr Ian Ross

CIVIC CENTRE
HORSHAM 3400
16.2.21

14.4 NOTICE OF MOTION NO 186

Given by Cr Claudia Haenel

TAKE NOTICE that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council meeting of the Horsham Rural City Council to be held at the Civic Centre, Roberts Avenue, Horsham, on Monday 22 February 2021.

“I wish to move that Council do not continue with any more funding allocations toward any future refurbishment of the Horsham Town Hall.

Rationale

1. The Horsham Town Hall was one of the city’s biggest investments in time, revenue and resources. At a recent briefing there was notification of a possible further significant outlay for a new dancefloor.
2. Since its opening, due to shortfalls in budgeting/finances, there has been continual need for completions of works on this facility, which were factored in and should have been completed in the initial build phase. Air-conditioning, sound and now a proposed new dancefloor, in additional financial outlay that has taken financial precedence over other smaller and just as worthy community initiatives. If the roof for the regional livestock exchange can be completed in time and under budget, the community has a right to know, in a rate capped fiscal environment, why there is continual funding needed over and above the initial build spend, while other arts initiatives miss out. I understand that council maintains its assets but this is a new building, with modifications and upgrades that should have been completed at the new build phase.
3. A solution to the ongoing financial needs of the Horsham Town Hall maybe some fund raising efforts that every other arts initiative must do to ensure funds. This would free up the opportunity to share hard to find, valuable arts funding around the community.

Refer to **Appendix “14.4A”** for copy of Notice of Motion.

Cr Claudia Haenel

CIVIC CENTRE
HORSHAM 3400
16.2.21