

DRAFT COUNCIL PLAN, ASSET PLAN, LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN – RELEASE FOR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Report Author: Corporate Planning and Performance Coordinator

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

SUMMARY

This report seeks Council to endorse the final community engagement consultation phase on the:

- Draft Yarra Ranges Council Plan 2025-2029 (the Council Plan – Attachment One)
- Draft Yarra Ranges Asset Plan 2025-2025 (Asset Plan – Attachment Two)
- Draft Yarra Ranges Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2035 (LTFP – Attachment Three).

All councils have obligations under the Local Government Act 2020 to produce a Council Plan, Asset Plan and LTFP every four years.

The Council Plan sets out the medium-term direction for Council and must be aligned to the long-term Community Vision under the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) requirements.

The Asset Plan includes information about maintenance, renewal, acquisition, expansion, upgrade, disposal and decommissioning in relation to each class of infrastructure asset under the control of the Council.

The LTFP demonstrates Council's financial sustainability to fund the aspirations of the Community Vision, the Council Plan and support the Asset Plan. This LTFP has been prepared in compliance with the Act, and the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions Financial Plan Better Practice Guide and Model.

These three plans have been developed following an extensive 15-month community engagement process, and collaboration between Councillors, local communities and other relevant stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the Draft Yarra Ranges Council Plan 2025-2029 (Attachment One), Draft Yarra Ranges Asset Plan 2025-2035 (Attachment Two) and Draft Yarra Ranges Long Term Financial Plan (Attachment Three) for public exhibition from 9 July 2025 to 10 August 2025.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The current Council Plan 2021-2025 (including Community Vision 2036) was adopted at the Council Meeting on 26 October 2021.

DISCUSSION

Council Plan

The Council Plan is Council's overarching strategic plan. It outlines what Council aims to achieve over the next four years.

The Council Plan represents a vision for the future of Yarra Ranges and how Council can best support local communities over the next four years. It responds directly to the Yarra Ranges Community Vision 2036, shaped by the views of the community. The Council Plan is the result of both broad and deliberative engagement with a cross-section of the community.

Asset Plan

The Asset Plan includes information about maintenance, renewal, acquisition, expansion, upgrade, disposal and decommissioning in relation to each class of infrastructure asset under the control of the Council, with a scope of 10 years.

In 2022 Local Government Victoria (LGV) issued a guide for councils to assist with the development of their Asset Plans of which the Yarra Ranges Asset Plan complies with. The guide is intended for foundational asset planning, as opposed to best practice asset planning.

LTFP

The LTFP provides the context through which the objectives of the Council Plan can be funded to achieve the Community Vision.

The LTFP includes financial statements outlining the financial resources required to give effect to the Council Plan and Asset Plan and contains information about the decisions and assumptions that underpin the forecasts in the statements.

Community Vision 2036

Yarra Ranges Council's Community Vision 2036 articulates the future aspirations for local communities and the municipality.

Yarra Ranges Council's Community Vision 2036. Whether you live here or visit, you will see how much we care for Country, how inclusive and connected our communities are, and how balanced growth makes this the best place in the world

Strategic Objectives.

The Council Plan includes updates to the four strategic objectives (diagram one below) which have been developed in response to community feedback, communities' priorities, the big issues facing Council, Councillor feedback and align to the current Community Vision.

Together with the Community Vision and Council's Commitment the strategic objectives deliver on Council's vision. This is further strengthened by Council's Commitment that ensures that the way Council work's underpins all strategic objectives.



Diagram One. Strategic Objectives

All activities completed by Council over the coming four years will contribute to one or more of the strategic objectives. Each strategic objective has: Priorities Areas, Lead and Supporting Strategies, Council Services and a list of Indicators to measure how Yarra Ranges is performing in key areas.

The Council Plan also includes a four-year Action Plan which details the high-level initiatives, or projects, that Council will deliver annually against the strategic

objectives. Council will share regular progress updates against these initiatives with the community, as well as a detailed annual report.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The costs of preparing and exhibiting all three plans are funded from operating budget allocations.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

Diagram Two, below (also in the Council Plan) shows how the Council Plan, Asset Plan, LTFP and other Council plans fit together. Informed by evidence, State and Federal Government legislation and policy, community engagement and continuous improvement, these plans guide the delivery of all Council strategies, services and actions to help achieve the Community Vision.

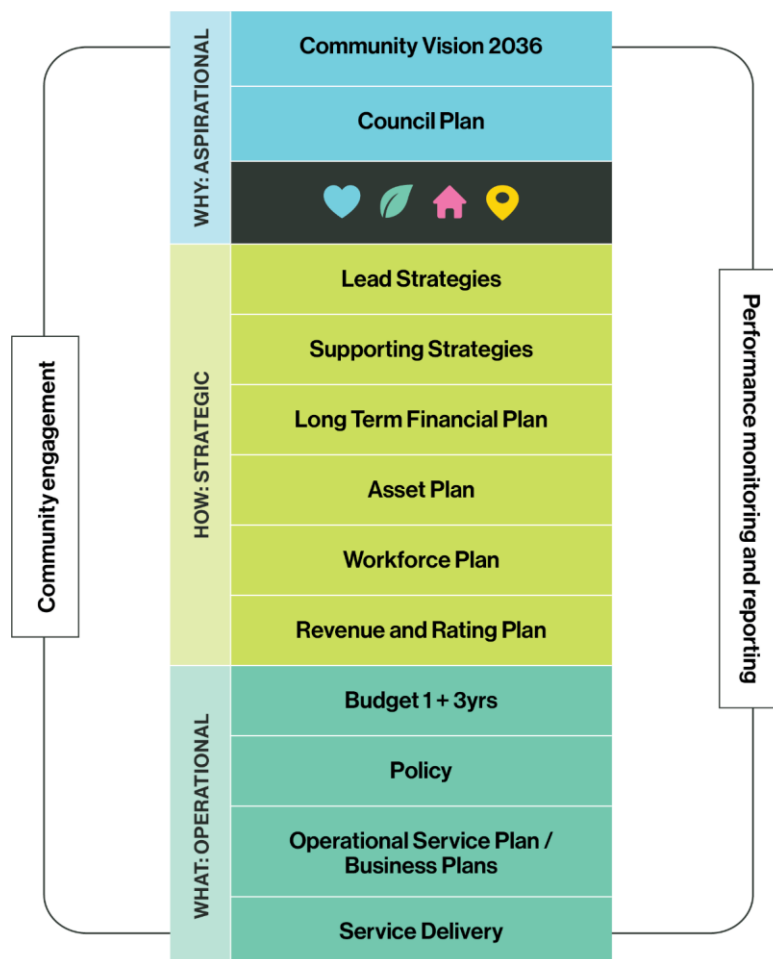


Diagram Two. Planning Framework

RELEVANT LAW

The Act mandates that councils develop and maintain several key strategic documents to ensure effective governance and planning, including.

- Section 90 of the Act requires the development of a Council Plan that should align with the community's vision and priorities.
- Section 91 of the Act requires Council's to develop a Long-term Financial Plan, spanning a minimum of 10 years, providing a financial roadmap to support the council's strategic objectives and ensure financial sustainability.
- Section 92 of the Act states that Council must also develop, adopt and keep in force an Asset Plan in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices. It must include information about maintenance, renewal, acquisition, expansion, upgrade, disposal and decommissioning in relation to each class of infrastructure asset under the control of the Council, with a scope of at least 10 financial years.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Council's financial sustainability is informed by the indicators set by the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO). These indicators comprise of both short term and longer-term measures and have been considered in the development of the LTFP and Council Plan.

The Council Plan will have a range of Economic, Social and Environmental implications.

Economic Implications

The Council Plan identifies the following priority area to focus on supporting Prosperous Communities and Vibrant Economy: Local industry and producers, Local business, Balanced tourism, and Local jobs.

Social Implications

The Council Plan sets the strategic objectives of Healthy and Connected Communities. In addressing this objective, it identifies the following priorities areas: Community connections and resilience, Access to local services, Inclusive and safe, Healthy through life stages

Environmental Implications

In relation to the sustainability of the environment, the Council Plan sets the strategic objective to 'Protect and Enhance the Natural Environment'. It identifies the following priorities areas to focus on including Local biodiversity, Energy, climate and disaster resilience, Water management and Circular economy.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Over 15 months of community engagement has informed the content and priorities of the Council Plan, Asset Plan and LTFP. These plans have been developed through extensive engagement with our community, and collaboration between Councillors and other relevant stakeholders over an extended period. During this time Council received direct feedback from over 1,250 people and informed over 6000 community members in the development of the plan.

This included in person engagement at roadshows, community summits, and online engagement through the online shaping pages. The feedback received, was used to inform the Deliberative Engagement process where a selected diverse range of participants were able to discuss and respond to key challenges.

Council Officers then returned to community with a summary of these insights and delved deeper with key local groups.

Through these conversations with the community the following priorities were identified which informed the development of the plans:

- Keeping community informed and engaged
- Planning for the future
- Looking after our roads, local area & townships
- Supporting the local economy
- Impact of extreme weather
- Looking after the natural environment
- Include everyone in community life

Deliberative Panel

As stated, Section 90 of the Act 'A Council must develop or review the Council Plan in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices.' In July and August 2024, a panel of 40 local community members deliberated over three weekends on key challenges Council are facing in relation to the development of all three plans.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The success of the community engagement program and development of the three plans has been supported by collaboration across Council's and Council's partner agencies. Council officers, Councillors and Council CEO's from across the Eastern Region have meet to discuss shared community priorities and opportunities for partnership.

The Council Plan identifies the importance of collaboration stating that 'It is important for Council to work together with other levels of government, industry partners and communities to achieve the best outcomes.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The following steps have been taken to mitigate risk associated with the development and implementation of the Council Plan, Asset Plan and LTFP.

- Adequate community engagement and consultation ensures alignment with community needs.
- Developing the Council Plan alongside the annual budget, revenue and rating plan, LTFP, Asset plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan ensures realistic objectives.
- Noting any future changes to operating conditions will require and review of the risk profile particularly with regard to the Asset Plan and LTFP.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

1. Draft Yarra Ranges Council Plan 2025-2029
2. Draft Yarra Ranges Council Asset Plan 2025-2035
3. Draft Yarra Ranges Council Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2035