



Merri-bek City Council

Minutes of the Council Meeting

Held at the Council Chamber, Merri-bek Civic Centre,
90 Bell Street, Coburg
on Wednesday 6 December 2023

The Mayor opened the meeting at 7.06 pm and stated the Council meeting is being held on the traditional country of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people and acknowledged them as Traditional Owners. The Mayor paid respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging, and the Elders from other communities who may be here today.

Present	Time In	Time Out
Cr Adam Pulford, Mayor	7.06 pm	10.12 pm
Cr Lambros Tapinos, Deputy Mayor	7.20 pm	10.12 pm
Cr Angelica Panopoulos	7.06 pm	10.12 pm
Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan	7.06 pm	8.37 pm
Cr Helen Davidson	Absent	
Cr Helen Pavlidis	7.06 pm	8.55 pm
Cr James Conlan	7.06 pm	10.12 pm
Cr Mark Riley	7.06 pm	10.12 pm
Cr Monica Harte	7.06 pm	10.12 pm
Cr Oscar Yildiz JP	Leave of absence	
Cr Sue Bolton	7.08 pm	10.12 pm

OFFICERS

Chief Executive Officer – Cathy Henderson
Director Business Transformation – Sue Vujcevic
Director City Infrastructure – Anita Curnow
Director Community – Eamonn Fennessy
Director Place and Environment – Joseph Tabacco
Manager Governance and Strategy – Yvonne Callanan
Unit Manager Governance – Troy Delia

APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Resolution

Cr Harte moved, Cr Riley seconded -

That Council grants Cr Yildiz a leave of absence for the period 20 November 2023 to 31 March 2024 inclusive.

Carried

DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

MINUTE CONFIRMATION

Resolution

Cr Conlan moved, Cr Panopoulos seconded -

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 8 November 2023 and the Council Meeting – Mayoral Election held on 15 November 2023 be confirmed.

Carried

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS

Cr Riley provided a report to Council on his recent trip to Timor Leste. Cr Riley advised that he was honoured to return to Timor Leste as part of the contingent from Hume City Council and Merri-bek City Council, and spent a week there meeting government officials, local government representatives, and many of the community groups that the Friends of Aileu relationship is establish with.

Cr Riley noted it was an important trip for the contingent to go back after four years and see how much progress is continuing on with the small investments that are made in Timor, which is one of the poorest countries in the world and one of the newest nations in our region. After 20+ years of partnership, it was great to be able to go back and meet people again and see the progress they're making. whether that's with regard to food production, developing their community education and other work they do there, including water initiatives, energy initiatives, gardening and food production. It was great to see the advancements, especially given there was a major cyclone 2 and half years ago that was largely attributed to climate change and which really impacted Timor Leste and Aileu as well.

Cr Riley thanked the officers who support the program and keep it going, as well as the community from Australia who support the work.

Cr Riley highlighted that the Timor Cup will be played in the City of Hume in late December and January and encouraged those who are interested in soccer to get along and check it out, in addition to many other things happening to support Friends of Aileu and encouraged people to keep up-to-date via Council's website.

PETITIONS

Nil.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Public Question Time commenced at 7.17 pm.

A summary of questions and the response provided, and items for which community statements were made is provided below.

Report 7.8 Merri-Bek Affordable Housing - New Memorandum of Understanding

1 statement was received. Kerry O'Neill, Board Chair Merri-bek Affordable Housing made the following statement:

Merri-bek Affordable Housing Ltd is a creation of Merri-bek Council as an independent, but strongly aligned agent, for fostering the growth of affordable housing in the city of Merri-bek. We believe that housing is a fundamental right and underpinning to community wellbeing and strong local economies.

MAH comprises a Board of 7 directors, all of whom are voluntary, who bring experience in governance, urban policy and planning, design, development, commerce, law and risk to our purpose.

Our role is to broker affordable housing leveraging Council and other land; and using that land to create and capture value for Council and Merri-bek.

We understand our shared purpose with you is to contribute to ensuring the city of Merri-bek has inclusive, vibrant, affordable, and sustainable neighbourhoods and communities. We know that the places we value most to live are: - where people can afford to live, close to work, businesses and services; to their families, friends and networks - and, where homes are affordable and comfortable to live in because they are well designed and energy efficient, close to open space and natural environments We achieve this shared purpose through a strong, collaborative and transparent partnership. We also know that whilst land contribution can provide a valuable incentive for social and affordable housing, on its own it is not enough, to achieve affordable housing projects, particularly in light of current cost increases. We need partners and funding or investment.

Despite Covid and given the process of setting up MAH, we have been able to initiate our first project of 38 units of affordable housing close to jobs, services, transport, in partnership with a registered affordable housing provider. Final execution of the funding agreement is imminent and we hope that Council, MAH and our delivery and funding partners will be able to make the public announcement shortly.

We think that the environment is arguably better than it has been for some time to achieve our shared purpose, with the Federal Government's Housing Accord and the establishment of Housing Australia, along with state government programs; and the emergence of innovative, for purpose developers in the housing market.

Where we are able, we will:

- Advocate strongly for government to invest in social housing on government, Council and other land
- Explore how Council land – a valuable community asset can be leveraged to build better, more inclusive neighbourhoods and activity centres and more affordable housing for local workers, drawing on government and other sources of funding
- Use our knowledge and sector relationships to encourage for purpose and innovative developers to include affordable housing in their developments

We are looking forward to this next phase of our partnership with Council, as described in the MOU before you this evening; and to working with you to grow affordable housing in the municipality, and also to build a strong and viable Merri-bek Affordable Housing.

7.20 pm Cr Tapinos entered the meeting.

Report 7.19 Proposed Councillor Contact With Lobbyists Developers and Submitters Policy

1 question was received by Marion Attwater.

This question related to the policy proposing to include objectors and submitters to planning permit applications and planning scheme amendments in a register, and the publishing of names of individuals in that register on the Council's website, and raised concerns of potentially breaching the privacy of some individuals by disclosing personal information without first obtaining proper informed consent and asked if a privacy impact assessment was conducted for the proposed policy?

At the request of the Mayor, Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic responded:

Thank you, Marion, for your question.

Whilst the register will detail specific interactions between Councillors, developers, lobbyists and submitters, the information contained in the public version of the register will not disclose any personal information relating to individuals.

7.28 pm Cr Carli Hannan left the meeting.

Report 7.20 Review of Councillor Support, Expenses and Resources Policy

Two questions were received for this item.

Question 1

Marion Attwater raised that this report does not mention the 2020 Local Government Inspectorate report on Councillor expenses, which recommended quarterly reporting to Council, a practice adopted by other Councils like Darebin and Moonee Valley. Ms Attwater noted that the revised policy makes minimal changes to reporting requirements and both the revised policy and the Audit and Risk Committee's charter overlook section 40(2) of the Local Government Act, which requires Councils to provide reimbursement details to the Audit and Risk Committee.

The question asked was can the Council please improve the standard of the Council expenses policy by amending the reporting requirements so that councillor expenses (and delegated committee expenses) are tabled at a Council meeting in addition to being published on the Council internet site, and can Council advise how much has been spent on the Councillor induction training and group training programs for this term of the Council?

At the request of the Mayor, Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic responded:

Thank you, Marion, for your question.

A change is not required to the policy as you suggest.

In compliance with the Local Government Act, Council must provide details of all reimbursements to the Audit and Risk Committee, and therefore the Policy need not duplicate this legislative obligation.

Additionally, in line with section 54 of the Local Government Act, the Audit and Risk Committee is required to adopt an annual work program. Notably, the reporting of Council expenses is scheduled each year to be presented to the Committee on a biannual basis.

Under the Local Government Act 2020, there is no mandatory requirement for Councillor expenses to be tabled at a Council meeting. Nonetheless, Council has proactively embraced a Policy that goes beyond statutory obligations. This Policy mandates the regular reporting of expenses to the community on a quarterly basis, with the information readily accessible through Council's website. Therefore, you can view how much has been spent on Councillor training through this approach.

With regard to that part of your question relating to the specific cost of Councillor Induction training and group training, I will take that on notice.

Question 2:

On behalf of Dino Albano, Marion Attwater raised a question relating to Councillor expenses during the Council meeting on 12 July 2023, and although it was taken on notice, had only received a response last week. Since then, Mr Albano has communicated with the designated Council officer and all Councillors, seeking information on the number of pending reports from Councillors who participated in approved activities either interstate or overseas, and asked if he has to wait another 4 and a half months to receive an answer to that question?

At the request of the Mayor, Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic responded:

Thank you, Marion, for your question on behalf of Mr Dino Albano.

I understand that Mr Albano wrote to the nominated council officer and also Councillors recently in late November with the question. I also understand that a response to that question has been provided recently by the nominated Council officer.

7.31 pm Cr Carli Hannan returned to the meeting.

Report 7.22 Councillor appointments to portfolios, internal committees, advisory committees, reference groups and other external bodies

One question was received, Marion Attwater presented the questions on behalf of Dino Albano.

This question related to the financial and resources implications section of the report, which does not provide an actual cost of the Committees and asked if Council could provide details of the costs of the external committees that are listed in the report, including membership fees or otherwise, and the human resource implications for operating advisory committees and reference groups?

The Mayor responded:

Thank you Dino, you had two parts to that question, the first one is for detailed financial information, which was taken on notice.

At the request of the Mayor, Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic responded to the second part of the question:

For that part of your question that relates to the human resource implications for operating advisory committees and reference groups, I can advise that yes, Council does provide staffing support to committees.

Thank you, Marion.

Non-agenda items: Questions and Statements

Question 1

Brent Houghton, Principal, Coburg High School asked a question relating to speed limits on reducing Pentridge Boulevard and Stockade Avenue to 40 km/h zones. Having witnessed two bike crashes at these intersections this year, resulting in students being hospitalised, the Mr Houghton appreciates past improvements but urges further action, noting the proximity of schools and a key activity center, the current speed limits are counterintuitive, especially considering ongoing collaboration with the Department of Transport and Planning. Additionally, the curved nature of Pentridge Boulevard and recent accidents underscore the need for slower speeds. For Stockade Avenue, Mr Houghton emphasises existing traffic calming measures and the appropriateness of a 40 km/h limit and highlights the low cost of speed limit reductions and asked Council to align with their commitment to reduced speeds near schools and activity Centers, specifically in their upcoming Stage 3 40 km/h local roads project.

At the request of the Mayor, Director City Infrastructure, Anita Curnow responded:

While all speed limits are under the jurisdiction of the state government and require approval from the Department of Transport and Planning, Merri-bek City Council is very active in our advocacy for safer speed limits. For example, this is how our speed limit reduction program on local roads was eventually approved after several years of research and advocacy.

Council has been discussing options for safety improvements along Pentridge Boulevard and Stockade Avenue with the Department of Transport and Planning in recent months to address some of the safety issues you have referred to, particularly those issues at the intersection of Pentridge and Stockade.

As part of our efforts to advocate for improvements to this corridor, we recently conducted an independent road safety assessment which supports our recommendation for a controlled right turn as well as pedestrian and cyclist phasing priority at the intersection. This recommendation is currently with the Department for review.

In regards to the speed limit along each route, recent data indicates an average vehicle speed of just under 35kph for Stockade Avenue. We don't have recent data from for Pentridge Boulevard since signal upgrades and development has occurred, however we do expect average speeds to be higher along this street compared to Stockade Avenue.

We will gather new data when the school year commences in February. In the meantime, I would be happy to meet with you to discuss school access and safety issues that may help us inform any advocacy around speed limits to the state government in this precinct and address any other issues and opportunities for improving safety and accessibility for Coburg High School.

7.36 pm Cr Riley left the meeting.

7.36 pm Cr Riley returned to the meeting.

7.37 pm Cr Riley left the meeting.

7.42 pm Cr Carli Hannan left the meeting.

Public Question Time concluded at 7.42 pm.

COUNCIL REPORTS

7.1 DRAFT OPEN SPACE STRATEGY - ENDORSEMENT FOR CONSULTATION

Executive Summary

Council has drafted a new Open Space Strategy and Action Plan which will inform how we plan, deliver, and maintain open space in Merri-bek.

To inform the development of the draft strategy, Officers have reviewed the existing strategy and undertaken comprehensive community consultation. Detailed technical analysis has also been undertaken in partnership with Mesh Planning leading to an Open Space Background Technical Report, which provides the strategic evidence base that underpins the future direction of open space projects including land acquisition.

The draft strategy builds on the success of the 2012 – 2022 strategy and Merri-bek's A Park Close to Home Framework. It recognises that during the last ten years there have been significant changes to the population and composition of the Merri-bek community and how open space is used, as well as an acceleration of impacts from climate change and loss of biodiversity.

The draft strategy includes a new vision for open space, objectives for open space management and specific directions to guide decision making. It addresses matters resolved by Council to be referred to the Open Space Strategy in recent years.

The draft strategy also provides strategic support for a review of the Public Open Space Contributions pursuant to the Merri-bek Planning Scheme in the years 2024 - 2026. The draft Action Plan provides specific actions designed to achieve the directions and vision of the strategy. The strategy and action plan are also accompanied by a 20 year open space project list that highlights the pressures on our open space assets and will help inform Council's future capital works program.

The next phase of the project is to share these documents with the community and to seek feedback ahead of Council adopting a final version of the strategy in early 2024.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the draft Open Space Strategy (Attachment 1) and associated Action Plan (Attachment 2) for public exhibition for 5 weeks from Tuesday 16 January until Tuesday 20 February 2024.
2. Endorses the draft Open Space Background Technical Report (Attachment 3) prepared by Mesh Planning, for public exhibition for 5 weeks from Tuesday 16 January until Tuesday 20 February 2024.
3. Endorses the draft Open Space Projects List (Attachment 4), for public exhibition for 5 weeks from Tuesday 16 January until Tuesday 20 February 2024.
4. Notes the Community Engagement Report (Attachment 5) detailing the methodology and findings of community engagement as part of the development of the draft Open Space Strategy.
5. Appoints Councillor _____ as Chair, and Councillors _____ and _____ to a Committee to hear any submitters requesting to be heard in support of their written submission in relation to the draft Open Space Strategy on Monday 19 February 2024 at 6pm, at the Coburg Civic Centre.
6. Receives a further report (expected to be the April 2024 Council Meeting) with a final version of the Open Space Strategy and associated Action Plan with the report summarising what feedback was received and how it has influenced the final Open Space Strategy.

Resolution

Cr Tapinos moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Endorses the draft Open Space Strategy (Attachment 1) and associated Action Plan (Attachment 2) for public exhibition for 5 weeks from Tuesday 16 January until Tuesday 20 February 2024**
- 2. Endorses the draft Open Space Background Technical Report (Attachment 3) prepared by Mesh Planning, for public exhibition for 5 weeks from Tuesday 16 January until Tuesday 20 February 2024**
- 3. Endorses the draft Open Space Projects List (Attachment 4), for public exhibition for 5 weeks from Tuesday 16 January until Tuesday 20 February 2024**
- 4. Notes the Community Engagement Report (Attachment 5) detailing the methodology and findings of community engagement as part of the development of the draft Open Space Strategy.**
- 5. Notes that all documents will be made available to the public on Conversations Merri-bek from Monday 11 December 2023, ahead of the formal consultation commencing in January 2024.**
- 6. Appoints Councillor Pulford, Mayor as Chair and Councillors Riley, Pavlidis and Harte to a Committee to hear any submitters requesting to be heard in support of their written submission in relation to the draft Open Space Strategy on Monday 19 February 2024 at 6pm, at the Coburg Civic Centre.**
- 7. Receives a further report (expected to be the April 2024 Council Meeting) with a final version of the Open Space Strategy and associated Action Plan with the report summarising what feedback was received and how it has influenced the final Open Space Strategy.**

Carried

7.2 FOOD SYSTEM STRATEGY

Executive Summary

Council is a leader in the growing and evolving Food System policy area and has built momentum, capacity, knowledge, relationships and networks through the community-led actions of the Food System Strategy 2020-2024. The importance of healthy, accessible, affordable local food systems for food security and community resilience is recognised in the Human Rights Policy 2016-2026 and Climate Risk Strategy and action plan 2023-2025.

The State government have also recognised that healthier food systems support healthier people and help combat the impacts of climate change. The VicHealth Strategy 2023-33 recommends taking a food system approach. At its September 2023 meeting Council resolved to review the Food System Strategy 2020-2024 in line with the VicHealth strategy and 'Building better food systems for healthier communities' Local Government core module.

An investment of \$390,000 in a further three years of a refreshed Food System Strategy is required to capitalise on the progress of the last three years, and to build community resilience in the face of challenges such as growing inequality and the food related impacts of climate change. To support the next phase of the Food System Strategy, targeted internal and external stakeholder and community engagement is proposed in early 2024 to understand needs and priorities.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the outcomes of the Food System Strategy 2020-2024 detailed in this report.
2. Notes the need for further community engagement to develop the next Food System Strategy and action plan for 2024–2027, in line with the VicHealth Strategy 2023-33.
3. Receives a future report on the outcomes and recommendations of the community engagement.
4. Refers the cost to fund a further three years of the strategy (\$130,000 per year, total funding \$390,000) to the 2024/2025 budget process for consideration.

Resolution

Cr Panopoulos moved, Cr Tapinos seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the outcomes of the Food System Strategy 2020-2024 detailed in this report.**
2. **Notes the need for further community engagement to develop the next Food System Strategy and action plan for 2024–2027, in line with the VicHealth Strategy 2023-33.**
3. **Receives a future report on the outcomes and recommendations of the community engagement.**
4. **Refers the cost to fund a further three years of the strategy (\$130,000 per year, total funding \$390,000) to the 2024/2025 budget process for consideration.**

Carried

7.3 WAT DJERRING ANIMAL FACILITY - REVIEW OF FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION

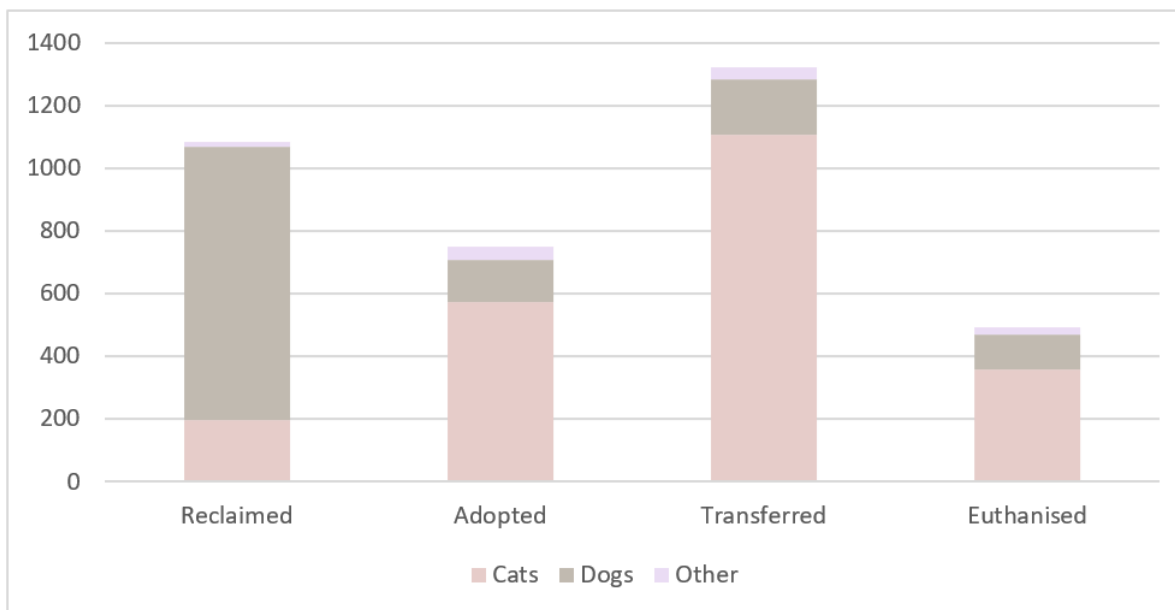
Executive Summary

The wat djerring Animal Facility has been operated by the City of Whittlesea providing animal pound services for the municipalities of Whittlesea, Merri-bek and Darebin since 16 October 2022. Council awarded the contract for the provision of Merri-bek's pound services to the City of Whittlesea at the 12 October 2022 meeting.

It is a requirement of the contract that an annual review be conducted. This report provides an overview of the operations of the Facility for the first year of operations for the period 16 October 2022 to 15 October 2023 whilst also addressing a previous Council resolution requesting data on the number of cats brought into the Facility.

In summary, for the first year of operation, some 4,294 animals, 942 of them from Merri-bek, were cared for in the wat djerring animal facility. The number of cats, dogs and other animals reclaimed, direct adopted, transferred to rescue groups and euthanised is shown in the figure below.

Figure 1: wat djerring Animal Facility animal outcomes (16 Oct 2022 – 15 Oct 2023)



Through incremental change to the services provided, direct adoptions from the facility have been able to occur, increasing through the year. The City of Whittlesea has adjusted the model to introduce the direct adoption service in response to Merri-bek City Council’s resolution of October 2022.

As far as the data allows estimation of this, it appears that 93 per cent of cats brought into the facility are unowned, and 42 per cent of cats brought in are kittens.

The financial model relied upon in the establishment of the City of Whittlesea operation of the Facility assumed that all animals would be transferred to rescue groups. The higher costs associated with providing direct adoptions, additional veterinary services to allow animals being transferred to be desexed first, cost escalations applying to pet food and higher hourly rates applying to Council-employed staff compared to rates of the previous not-for-profit provider, have meant that the costs of operation have been and will continue to be higher than anticipated. These costs have been covered by quarterly adjustments in operational funding and will be built into the budget for future years. Whittlesea is looking at ways of reducing costs including a new contract for pet food.

Merri-bek’s contribution to the overall operations has been 25.67 per cent of the total cost, and while the overall cost will increase in actual terms, Merri-bek’s contribution will reduce proportionately, as Merri-bek’s share of animals has dropped to 22.4 per cent, with the final annual adjustment to be confirmed in early 2024.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the overview of the wat djerring Animal Facility for the first year of operation (16 October 2022 to 15 October 2023).
2. Notes that the pound operating costs for the year were higher than anticipated and Merri-bek’s proportion of the net overspend is \$70,593, and that these funds will be addressed as part of the Quarter 2 financial review.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Conlan seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the overview of the wat djerring Animal Facility for the first year of operation (16 October 2022 to 15 October 2023).**
2. **Notes that the pound operating costs for the year were higher than anticipated and Merri-bek's proportion of the net overspend is \$70,593, and that these funds will be addressed as part of the Quarter 2 financial review.**

Carried

7.4 DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2021-2025 - ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Executive Summary

At the 10 November 2021 Council meeting, Council adopted the Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2021-2025 which outlines council services, programs and policies established to address the administration of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

Key themes addressed in the DAMP are responsible pet ownership, dog attacks, overpopulation of cats, registration, protection from nuisance, management of dangerous and restricted dogs, review of Council services and training for Authorised Officers.

One of the objectives in the DAMP is the promotion of cat containment. Council considered but did not support the implementation of a cat curfew at the 7 December 2022 meeting. Council resolved instead to focus on the over-population of cats, particularly un-owned and semi-owned cats through education programs and desexing.

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a progress report and evaluation of the DAMP Year 2 objectives and actions, and to report back on the resolution of the 7 December 2022 Council meeting.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025 Year Two - Annual review at Attachment 1.
2. Supports the continuation of existing programs and strategies to address cat overpopulation through desexing and community education campaigns.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Conlan seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025 Year Two - Annual review at Attachment 1.**
2. **Supports the continuation of existing programs and strategies to address cat overpopulation through desexing and community education campaigns.**

Carried

8.01 pm Cr Pavlidis left the meeting.

7.5 SUPPORT FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES

Executive Summary

This report is in response to Notice of Motion 8.2 Support for Neighbourhood Houses received at the Council meeting held 13 September 2023. At this meeting Council resolved to receive a report on options for Council to provide additional public liability insurance to neighbourhood houses for room hire to community groups.

There are seven independent neighbourhood houses within Merri-bek. They offer educational, social, recreational and support programs for people of all backgrounds, ages and cultures. Neighbourhood Houses also offer venue hire to unincorporated groups or individuals for the purpose of meetings, training, art and craft and birthday parties.

Unincorporated groups or individuals usually do not hold Public Liability Insurance and consequently, local community groups have become hesitant or unwilling to utilise Neighbourhood House facilities for their needs or are hiring a room or hall for an event without the adequate insurance cover.

Council's Insurance broker has been successful in negotiating an extension of Council's Community Liability Policy which will ensure unincorporated groups or individuals will be covered for public liability incidents when hiring rooms from Neighbourhood Houses, however there are specific conditions and an additional premium allocated to the Council. These conditions include approval processes through the Council for uninsured hirers, compliance with Council's hiring terms, single-day events with restrictions, exclusion of alcohol, and other safety and legal requirements. The Council will provide guidance to Neighbourhood Houses on how these conditions will be applied. The impact to budget is and additional \$3,500 per year.

Officer Recommendation

That Council approves the extension of Council's Community Liability Policy to provide cover for uninsured unincorporated hirers and individuals when hiring rooms from Neighbourhood Houses, providing protection in the event of public liability incidents.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Panopoulos seconded -

That Council approves the extension of Council's Community Liability Policy to provide cover for uninsured unincorporated hirers and individuals when hiring rooms from Neighbourhood Houses, providing protection in the event of public liability incidents.

Carried

7.6 CENTRAL COBURG AFFORDABLE HOUSING HUB - RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION

Executive Summary

This report responds to a Council resolution seeking a report outlining options for securing the delivery of public and affordable housing leveraging existing Council landholdings in Central Coburg.

The report confirms the growing need for social and affordable housing in Merri-bek, particularly in Coburg which is seen as an ideal place for it. Given the advantageous planning scheme settings, the scale of Council's landholdings that it wishes to redevelop, and emerging innovative models of affordable housing delivery, there are good opportunities for Council to achieve affordable housing outcomes in Central Coburg. However, it will be important to develop a clear, shared vision of the outcomes sought with the community and key stakeholders.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the 'Social and Affordable Housing in Central Coburg Scoping Report' at Attachment 1 to this report, and in particular the following key findings:
 - a) There is a growing need for social and affordable housing in Merri-bek, particularly in Coburg.
 - b) Coburg is seen as an ideal place for social and affordable housing.
 - c) The current planning settings allow for a significant amount of new housing to be built in Central Coburg. The Coburg Structure plan will be reviewed in coming years, allowing opportunity for planning settings to align with Council's vision for redevelopment of its landholdings in Central Coburg that have been identified for revitalisation.
 - d) For its land that Council wishes to redevelop, the form, model of delivery and quantum of affordable housing that can feasibly be delivered will need to be considered in the broader context of the development and partnership proposition that Council will determine in the coming years. State and Federal funding opportunities are likely to be limited, relative to the scale of the revitalisation project, and will require the involvement of other funding partners.
 - e) Council should develop a set of objectives it wants to achieve by providing social and affordable housing in Central Coburg. These objectives should be designed to allow Council flexibility in adopting a range of approaches and development models to achieve them. These objectives should be informed by updated research on housing need in Merri-bek. Objectives relating to excellence in built form, ESD, public realm and accessibility can also be set.
2. Notes that the current large scale engagement program 'The Coburg Conversation' is gathering feedback from the community on what is most important to consider in relation to new housing that could be delivered in central Coburg, including social and affordable housing.

Resolution

Cr Panopoulos moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the 'Social and Affordable Housing in Central Coburg Scoping Report' at Attachment 1 to this report, and in particular the following key findings:**
 - a) **There is a growing need for social and affordable housing in Merri-bek, particularly in Coburg.**
 - b) **Coburg is seen as an ideal place for social and affordable housing.**
 - c) **The current planning settings allow for a significant amount of new housing to be built in Central Coburg. The Coburg Structure plan will be reviewed in coming years, allowing opportunity for planning settings to align with Council's vision for redevelopment of its landholdings in Central Coburg that have been identified for revitalisation.**
 - d) **For its land that Council wishes to redevelop, the form, model of delivery and quantum of affordable housing that can feasibly be delivered will need to be considered in the broader context of the development and partnership proposition that Council will determine in the coming years. State and Federal funding opportunities are likely to be limited, relative to the scale of the revitalisation project, and will require the involvement of other funding partners.**
 - e) **Council should develop a set of objectives it wants to achieve by providing social and affordable housing in Central Coburg. These objectives should be designed to allow Council flexibility in adopting a range of approaches and development models to achieve them. These objectives should be informed by updated research on housing need in Merri-bek. Objectives relating to excellence in built form, ESD, public realm and accessibility can also be set.**
2. **Notes that the current large scale engagement program 'The Coburg Conversation' is gathering feedback from the community on what is most important to consider in relation to new housing that could be delivered in central Coburg, including social and affordable housing.**
3. **Notes that the report to Council in early 2024 about the outcomes of 'The Coburg Conversation' will outline next steps for the revitalisation of Central Coburg, including a timeframe for the setting of objectives for the revitalisation project.**
4. **Future documents and reports about proposals for a Central Coburg Affordable Housing Hub specify the definition of affordable housing being used (including the income category being targeted) and whether the affordable housing will be affordable in perpetuity.**

In addition, affordable housing projects in the Central Coburg Activity Centre prioritise social housing over other forms of affordable housing which may be aimed at people on higher incomes.

8.04 pm *Cr Pavlidis returned to the meeting.*

8.05 pm *Cr Pavlidis left the meeting.*

Carried

7.7 OUTCOME OF INVESTIGATION INTO QUANTIFYING HOUSING NEED IN MERRI-BEK

Executive Summary

To more effectively quantify how much land is available for residential development and better understand and analyse how many of the permits issued by Council progress to construction and completion, further data is required.

An investigation into the different data options available and resources and costs required has been undertaken. This investigation included considering options for how the data collected could be efficiently accessed by a digital portal accessible to the public.

This report recommends that Council purchase data and provide a resource to undertake detailed data collection over a 12-month trial period to set up a residential monitoring framework and online portal. Collection of this data will also assist deliver on a planning scheme review action for ongoing monitoring and tracking of residential development in the municipality.

It is also recommended that Council also advocates to the Victorian Building Authority for access to the datasets that are collected as part of the Building Activity Management System which could save future costs in the purchase of this data by an external consultancy.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Refers an allocation of \$49,180 to the second quarter budget review that will enable, for a twelve month trial period, a data subscription and an officer resource to extract metrics from plans and validate the data for public usage (\$16,405 in the 2023/24 financial year and \$32,775 in the 2024/25 financial year).
2. During the 12 month trial period, incorporates the statistics from the datasets into an online portal on the Merri-bek webpage.
3. Receives a report following the 12 month trial period which will make recommendations about whether to continue to resource and fund the collection of construction data.
4. Advocates to the Victorian Building Authority to share data collected from their Building Activity Management System (BAMS) to assist councils in monitoring residential development activity in their municipalities.

Resolution

Cr Conlan moved, Cr Panopoulos seconded -

That Council:

1. **Refers an allocation of \$49,180 to the second quarter budget review that will enable, for a twelve month trial period, a data subscription and an officer resource to extract metrics from plans and validate the data for public usage (\$16,405 in the 2023/24 financial year and \$32,775 in the 2024/25 financial year).**
2. **During the 12 month trial period, incorporates the statistics from the datasets into an online portal on the Merri-bek webpage.**
3. **Receives a report following the 12 month trial period which will make recommendations about whether to continue to resource and fund the collection of construction data.**

4. **Advocates to the Victorian Building Authority to share data collected from their Building Activity Management System (BAMS) to assist councils in monitoring residential development activity in their municipalities.**

Carried

8.15 pm Cr Pavlidis returned to the meeting.

7.8 MERRI-BEK AFFORDABLE HOUSING - NEW MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Executive Summary

Merri-bek Affordable Housing (MAH) is a Council-initiated charitable company to develop and add to affordable housing stock within the municipality. MAH is bound by a constitution that was endorsed by Council in 2017 which provides for Council to nominate three directors to its board. In addition, Council entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with MAH in 2020 to set out the nature of the relationship between MAH and Council and each organisation's responsibilities. This MOU also acknowledged the funding that Council provided to MAH for its establishment period from 2019 to 2023.

The MOU came to an end in June 2023 and it is recommended that a new MOU be entered into to reaffirm the reasons that Council established MAH and provide an opportunity to confirm a common vision to provide affordable housing to benefit the Merri-bek City Council region.

A new MOU has been drafted and Council's endorsement of the draft is sought. The new MOU does not commit Council to provide any further financial support to MAH and requires MAH to continue to provide an annual activity plan.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the Memorandum of Understanding at Attachment 1 to this report, between Council and Merri-bek Affordable Housing Ltd.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on Council's behalf.
3. Notes that Merri-bek Affordable Housing's activities will be monitored by the Director Place and Environment through approval of an annual activity plan.

Resolution

Cr Panopoulos moved, Cr Harte seconded -

That Council:

1. **Endorses the Memorandum of Understanding at Attachment 1 to this report, between Council and Merri-bek Affordable Housing Ltd contingent on the correction of drafting error in Clause 7.1 which changes "item 2" to "item 1" so that it states: "Council agrees to provide at its cost the resources set out in item 1 of the Schedule for use by MAH in the provision of the Services".**
2. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on Council's behalf.**
3. **Notes that Merri-bek Affordable Housing's activities will be monitored by the Director Place and Environment through approval of an annual activity plan.**

4. **Notes that the Memorandum of Understanding obligates Merri-bek Affordable Housing Ltd to provide half-yearly and annual reports outlining outcomes achieved and that Council officers ensure Councillors are briefed on Merri-bek Affordable Housing Limited's activities and achievements at least twice yearly.**

8.16 pm *Cr Pavlidis left the meeting.*

8.16 pm *Cr Pavlidis returned to the meeting.*

Carried

7.9 PARKING MANAGEMENT POLICY

Executive Summary

Council's Parking Management Policy (PMP), which sets out consistent processes and guidelines for managing public parking resources through restrictions and permits, was first adopted in 2011. Since then, it has been revised in 2015, 2018 and 2019.

Council endorsed a draft of a revised PMP in April 2021 for community and stakeholder engagement. Changes proposed from the 2019 PMP included formalising some temporary policies such as expanded concession discounts, additional delegation to officers to decide small-scale parking restriction changes and additional guidelines on the appeals section of the policy. Council also resolved to consult with the community on the prospect of making the first resident permit for each household free.

Engagement did not occur until October 2023, due to competing priorities as well as to align with the new Transport Strategy being developed by Council. During this time, some additional proposed changes to the PMP were identified by officers. These additional proposed changes were included in consultation and were clearly identified separately from the changes endorsed for consultation by Council on the Conversations Merri-bek online engagement platform.

Engagement occurred between 20 October and 13 November 2023 via the Conversations Merri-bek platform and option for people to provide in-person feedback via Council service desks. Additionally, internal engagement was undertaken with key Council units.

Engagement feedback was analysed and informed finalisation of the revised PMP which is proposed for Council adoption. Key themes from feedback are detailed in this report, but were not all within the scope of this policy review. Minor changes to the Draft PMP are proposed in response to community and internal feedback, as well as a review of information on Council's website to ensure the community can clearly undertake the parking options available to them.

A majority of responses from community members supported retaining the current fee for resident parking permits, including a majority of people aged 65 year or over and people with disabilities. It is proposed to retain the current fee, including regular annual increases as is usual practice. (The 2023/24 annual parking permit fee for the first permit is \$46.80, or \$23.40 with concession discount.)

It is proposed that Council adopt the PMP attached to this report but authorise officers to make further policy-neutral changes to improve legibility and accessibility of the document in the near future. It is proposed that the revised PMP come into effect on 1 April 2024 to allow time for implementation of changes and training of relevant Council staff.

This report also details the results of surveys undertaken at two mixed use developments in Brunswick with zero off-street parking. These results suggested that some residents of these buildings do own cars that are parked on-street nearby, but that car ownership rates may reduce as residents settle at these locations and are in any case lower than other apartment households in Brunswick, and much lower than households in Brunswick or Merri-bek in general.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Adopts the revised Parking Management Policy at Attachment 1, to come into effect on 1 April 2024, including continuing to charge a fee for resident parking permits.
2. Authorises the Director City Infrastructure to approve further changes to this document to improve legibility and accessibility, provided the changes do not alter its policy or delegation intent.
3. Notes the results of travel surveys undertaken at two apartment buildings in Brunswick with zero off-street parking.

Resolution

Cr Panopoulos moved, Cr Conlan seconded -

That Council:

1. **Adopts the revised Parking Management Policy at Attachment 1, to come into effect on 1 April 2024, including continuing to charge a fee for resident parking permits.**
2. **Authorises the Director City Infrastructure to approve further changes to this document to improve legibility and accessibility, provided the changes do not alter its policy or delegation intent.**
3. **Notes the results of travel surveys undertaken at two apartment buildings in Brunswick with zero off-street parking.**

8.22 pm Cr Carli Hannan returned to the meeting.

Carried on the casting vote of the Mayor

Cr Panopoulos called for a division.

For	Against	Abstained
Cr Pulford	Cr Pavlidis	Cr Bolton
Cr Panopoulos		Cr Harte
Cr Conlan		Cr Tapinos
Cr Carli Hannan		
Total For (4)	Total Against (1)	Total Abstained (3)

7.10 NAMING THE PARK AT 41-43 SERVICE STREET COBURG - VOTING POLL RESULTS

Executive Summary

Council purchased land, located at 41-43 Service Steet, Coburg, shown in Attachment 1, on 16 April 2020 to create a new park. This area had been identified as an open space gap area under Council's Park Close to Home Framework. Council has created a new park at this site and this report proposes to name the new park following a community voting poll.

A public consultation was undertaken to seek naming suggestions for the new park between 16 August 2023 to 15 September 2023. From this consultation, Council received 11 naming submissions. The naming submissions were assessed in accordance with the Naming Rules and Council's Naming Policy preference criteria. Two names were shortlisted to be included in a voting poll to name the park.

At its meeting on 18 October 2023, item 7.8, Council resolved to establish a voting poll with the following two names for the park Kirrip biik and Dalang.

A voting poll is part of the naming process to ensure a chosen name will have community support, in accordance the Naming Rules.

Public notice for the voting poll was given on Council's Conversations Merri-bek website for 32 days from 20 October 2023 until 20 November 2023. Votes were received via Council's Conversations Merri-bek website, email and post. The results from the voting process for the park were: 45 total votes, with the preferred name being Kirrip biik Park with 34 votes, being 76 per cent of votes. These results can be seen in Attachment 2.

The official opening of the new park at 41-43 Service Street, Coburg, to celebrate the completed works and the new name of the park, has been scheduled to occur after the 6 December 2023 Council meeting, upon Council's endorsement of the name of the park.

It is recommended that Council endorses the name Kirrip biik Park, meaning 'friend place' in Woi Wurrung language, reflecting the outcome of community support in the voting poll.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Having invited the community to vote for the name for the new park at 41-43 Service Street, Coburg, endorses the name 'Kirrip biik Park' for the new park name.
2. Authorises the Director of Place and Environment to do all things required to formalise the name above with Geographic Names Victoria.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Panopoulos seconded -

That Council:

1. **Having invited the community to vote for the name for the new park at 41-43 Service Street, Coburg, endorses the name 'Kirrip biik Park' for the new park name.**
2. **Authorises the Director of Place and Environment to do all things required to formalise the name above with Geographic Names Victoria.**

8.35 pm Cr Riley returned to the meeting.

Carried

7.11 STORMWATER MAPPING - CONSULTATION RESPONSE AND AMENDMENT C196

Executive Summary

In 2021, after initial landowner consultation, the Stormwater Map for Council's local drainage catchments was designated under the *Building Regulations* 2018. The map showed locations where 1 in 100 year stormwater overland flows will affect land.

The initial 2021 map was reviewed and updated to consider new information, guidelines, and specifications. This resulted in the preparation of the 2023 Amended Stormwater Map. Affected landowners were consulted about this map in September and October 2023, before the final map was prepared. This gave an opportunity to answer questions and check the map.

The 2023 Final Stormwater Map has been designated for use under the Building Regulations 2018. Council can now request the Minister for Planning's authorisation to start a planning scheme amendment process to introduce the 2023 map into the Merri-bek Planning Scheme.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the 2023 Amended Stormwater Map in Attachment 1 that has been designated under the Building Regulations 2018.
2. Endorses the *Merri-bek City Council Creating the Local Drainage Authority's Stormwater Map Technical Report* as shown in Attachment 1. This report outlines the rationale and evidence which underpins the proposed planning scheme changes.
3. Using its powers as a Planning Authority under ss 8A and 8B of the *Planning and Environment 1987*, seeks authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare Merri-bek Planning Scheme Amendment C196 as shown in Attachments 4, 5, and 6 to this report.
4. Following receipt of the Minister's authorisation, exhibits the Amendment in accordance with Section 19 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and as outlined in the Consultation section of this report.
5. Using its powers as a Planning Authority under s 23(1) of the *Planning and Environment 1987*, requests that the Minister for Planning appoint an independent Panel to consider submissions to Merri-bek Planning Scheme Amendment C196.
6. Authorises the Director Place and Environment to:
 - a) Make changes to the Amendment based on conditions imposed in any authorisation granted by the Minister for Planning and make minor changes.
 - b) Refer any late submissions to the Independent Panel.
 - c) Give direction on issues that arise during the Panel hearing in response to expert evidence and submissions if required, so long as any further changes are generally in accordance with *Merri-bek City Council Creating the Local Drainage Authority's Stormwater Map Technical Report*.

Resolution

Cr Conlan moved, Cr Harte seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the 2023 Amended Stormwater Map in Attachment 1 that has been designated under the Building Regulations 2018.**
2. **Endorses the Merri-bek City Council Creating the Local Drainage Authority's Stormwater Map Technical Report as shown in Attachment 1. This report outlines the rationale and evidence which underpins the proposed planning scheme changes.**
3. **Using its powers as a Planning Authority under ss 8A and 8B of the Planning and Environment 1987, seeks authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare Merri-bek Planning Scheme Amendment C196 as shown in Attachments 4, 5, and 6 to this report.**
4. **Following receipt of the Minister's authorisation, exhibits the Amendment in accordance with Section 19 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and as outlined in the Consultation section of this report.**

5. **Using its powers as a Planning Authority under s 23(1) of the Planning and Environment 1987, requests that the Minister for Planning appoint an independent Panel to consider submissions to Merri-bek Planning Scheme Amendment C196.**
6. **Authorises the Director Place and Environment to:**
 - a) **Make changes to the Amendment based on conditions imposed in any authorisation granted by the Minister for Planning and make minor changes.**
 - b) **Refer any late submissions to the Independent Panel.**
 - c) **Give direction on issues that arise during the Panel hearing in response to expert evidence and submissions if required, so long as any further changes are generally in accordance with Merri-bek City Council Creating the Local Drainage Authority's Stormwater Map Technical Report.**

8.38 pm Cr Carl Hannan left the meeting.

Carried

7.12 GLENROY COMMUNITY HUB CAFE - UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS

Executive Summary

On 8 March 2023, Council was updated on the outcome of an EOI process to secure a social enterprise operator for the café outlet in Bridget Shortell Reserve at the Glenroy Community Hub (Hub) precinct. At the meeting, Council endorsed Kevin Heinze Grow as the preferred operator, offering a 3 x 3-year lease, at a peppercorn rent.

However, in April 2023 officers received notification from Kevin Heinze Grow that it was no longer able to proceed with the café proposal and were withdrawing from the process.

Consequently, Council officers approached the second shortlisted submitter to determine their level of interest. In June 2023, they confirmed that they could no longer pursue the café opportunity.

This report provides an update to Council on the unsuccessful attempts to date to secure a social enterprise operator for the Hub's café outlet. It additionally seeks Council's endorsement to undertake a new EOI process to secure an operator to manage the Hub's café outlet. It is recommended that a new EOI process will be open to all potential operators including for-profit commercial businesses, social enterprises and not-for-profits.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes that the Expression of Interest (EOI) process conducted in October / November 2022 to secure a social enterprise to manage and operate the café outlet at the Glenroy Community Hub was not successful.
2. Endorses an EOI process, open to all potential operators including for-profit commercial businesses, social enterprises and not-for-profits to secure an operator to manage the Glenroy Community Hub café outlet.
3. Endorses higher weighted selection criteria apply to EOI applicants that meet the social enterprise and/or not-for-profit eligibility.
4. Endorses a peppercorn lease if the successful proponent meets the social enterprise and/or not-for-profit eligibility.

5. Receives a further report on the outcome of the EOI process with recommendations for next steps to appoint a suitable operator.

Resolution

Cr Harte moved, Cr Riley seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes that the Expression of Interest (EOI) process conducted in October / November 2022 to secure a social enterprise to manage and operate the café outlet at the Glenroy Community Hub was not successful.**
2. **Endorses an EOI process, open to all potential operators including for-profit commercial businesses, social enterprises and not-for-profits to secure an operator to manage the Glenroy Community Hub café outlet.**
3. **Endorses higher weighted selection criteria apply to EOI applicants that meet the social enterprise and/or not-for-profit eligibility.**
4. **Endorses a peppercorn lease if the successful proponent meets the social enterprise and/or not-for-profit eligibility.**
5. **Receives a further report on the outcome of the EOI process with recommendations for next steps to appoint a suitable operator.**

Carried

7.13 PROPOSED EOI FOR FORMER COBURG STATION BUILDING AT 135A BELL STREET, COBURG

Executive Summary

The original nineteenth century Coburg station building is now vacant and unused, after a new Coburg station building was constructed as part of the elevated rail structure delivered under the Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project.

Council commenced a lease of the original Coburg station building on 12 October 2023 from the asset owner Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM), with the intention of subleasing the building to a tenant to activate the building and surrounding site and provide wider community benefits to the local community.

An Expression of Interest (EOI) process is proposed to secure a suitable tenant, with the brief proposed to specify a 3x3 year lease.

The station building is in a prominent location for the activity centre, sitting at the point of arrival for visitors to Coburg, and linking the renewed station precinct with the wider central precinct, via Coburg Courtyard and Schoolhouse Studios.

Criteria for evaluation of EOI proposals will measure proponents' capacity to manage the building and to activate the building and its surrounds, as well as wider social benefits consistent with the vision to create vibrant spaces and places in Merri-bek, as part of the Council Plan 2021-25.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Endorses a public Expression of Interest process to procure a tenant for the former Coburg Train Station, 135A Bell Street, Coburg.**

2. Includes criteria in the Expression of Interest process to test respondents' capacity to manage and maintain the building and surrounding outdoor areas; the spread and number of hours and days the building would be utilised; the diversity of people who would be invited into the space; and their capacity to deliver additional social, cultural or environmental benefits.

Resolution

Cr Riley moved, Cr Conlan seconded -

That Council:

1. **Endorses a public Expression of Interest process to procure a tenant for the former Coburg Train Station, 135A Bell Street, Coburg.**
2. **Includes criteria in the Expression of Interest process to test respondents' capacity to manage and maintain the building and surrounding outdoor areas; the spread and number of hours and days the building would be utilised; the diversity of people who would be invited into the space; and their capacity to deliver additional social, cultural or environmental benefits.**

Carried

7.14 REVIEW OF RAILWAY PLACE, COBURG FOLLOWING THE LEVEL CROSSING REMOVAL PROJECT COMPLETION

Executive Summary

Railway Place is a local street that runs parallel to the Upfield rail reserve between Munro Street and Reynard Street, Coburg.

Following community advocacy, on 9 December 2020, it was resolved by Merri-bek Councillors that Council:

1. Requests the Level Crossing Removal Project to immediately release the design plans for the reinstatement of Railway Place, Coburg.
2. Organises an onsite meeting with residents in Railway Place, Coburg to update the long-standing plan to reconstruct Railway Place and resolve issues of pedestrian safety and parking, including a timeline.
3. Receives a report with recommendations to bring forward works to improve footpath and pedestrian safety, parking and traffic flow in Railway Place, Coburg. In addition, the report should consider whether the road should be widened to enable these issues to be resolved and whether additional measures are required to make it safer for cyclists and pedestrians to cross Railway Place into Sargood Street and Baxter Street to access Sydney Road.

The Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP) works are now completed. These have brought many improvements to the area which include:

- Road resurfacing and speed hump reconstruction on Railway Place
- Native shrubs in new garden beds on the western side of Railway Place
- A new pedestrian path under the rail bridge
- A new cycle path under the rail bridge
- Seating areas and exercise equipment under the rail bridge
- Direct access to the new areas under the rail bridge via paths to Railway Place near Sargood and Baxter streets.

A circular letter was sent to all owners and occupiers of properties in and around Railway Place on 24 October 2023. The letter provided details of the 2020 Notice of Motion, the street improvements resulting from the LXR project, site observations, speed and volume surveys and the limitations to widen the existing footpath or road carriageway. In the letter, it was stated that given the recent improvements to the area, Council officers are not proposing any changes to Railway Place at present.

Residents were then given an opportunity to contact Council officers directly if they had concerns or wished to discuss the matter in detail.

Council officers received one phone call from a resident who requested that the existing accessible parking bay opposite 17 Railway Place be widened into the vegetation area to allow passengers with disabilities to enter and exit a vehicle more easily. It is recommended that Council approve the development of a compliant shared area adjacent to the existing accessible parking bay by reconstructing the bluestone kerb and removing a section of vegetation. As the western half of the shared area would encroach into land owned by VicTrack, Council officers would be required to seek their permission to undertake the works.

Beyond opportunities to improve the existing accessible parking bay, Council officers note that Railway Place is generally operating well, and no changes to the width of the road or footpath are proposed at this time.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes that Railway Place is generally operating well following completion of the Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project, and no changes to the width of the road or footpath are proposed at this time.
2. Approves the development and construction of a compliant shared area adjacent to the existing accessible parking bay opposite 17 Railway Place to improve access to accessible parking on the street, subject to VicTrack approval.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Panopoulos seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes that Railway Place is generally operating well following completion of the Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project, and no changes to the width of the road or footpath are proposed at this time.**
2. **Approves the development and construction of a compliant shared area adjacent to the existing accessible parking bay opposite 17 Railway Place to improve access to accessible parking on the street, subject to VicTrack approval.**

Carried

7.15 ALLOCATION AND USE OF SPORTING FACILITIES, GROUNDS AND PAVILIONS POLICY

Executive Summary

Council's Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy provides a framework for the annual and seasonal allocation of sporting grounds and pavilions to clubs through a tenancy agreement.

Annual and seasonal (Winter) allocations open in January, close in February, and are reported to the March Council Meeting for consideration annually. At the 9 March 2022 Council meeting, Council endorsed the proposed allocations and requested that a review of the existing policy be undertaken in 2022.

In August 2022, the Victorian State Government released the 'Fair Access Policy Roadmap' which includes requirements all Councils must adhere to in order to be eligible to receive grant funding. At its 14 September 2022 Council also resolved to review its policies regarding trans and gender diverse inclusion, anti-discrimination, and diversity and inclusion. These recent decisions and other factors have been considered in a review of the Allocations and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy (the Policy).

At the 12 October 2022 Council Meeting, Council approved the release of a discussion paper on the allocation policy for stakeholder engagement. The discussion paper provided key points of consideration to ensure Council continues to meet obligations across various policy drivers and provides suggested policy conditions to be incorporated into a new policy.

Throughout November 2022 Council Officers engaged with sports club executives, members, State Sporting Associations, residents and Council committees and reference groups. Consultation highlighted the diversity in the community between club members and residents. Residents are sending a clear message that clubs need to value and work with the community and viewed many of the proposed policy conditions as non-negotiables for clubs to have the right to use facilities, whilst club members are not wanting Council to burden already overworked volunteers.

A further round of targeted engagement with Sporting Clubs occurred between June and early August 2023. Conversations Merri-bek remained open during this period for feedback.

In acknowledging the time, effort and resources required of volunteers and feedback from clubs, the Policy has been simplified and revised to focus on four policy objectives:

- Promoting healthy and safe local environments.
- Encouraging inclusivity of all people.
- Championing gender equity and development pathways.
- Demonstrating good governance.

The final Policy focuses on more subsidies to encourage thriving and flourishing club culture and environments.

The Draft policy remained on Conversations Merri-bek for public exhibition which was extended.

Following an extensive engagement period over the last 12 months, there are no changes from the Draft policy that was presented to Council in September 2023.

Residents continue to send clear messages that clubs need to value and work with the community particularly their neighbours. Council will continue to work with clubs to connect, partner and support community cohesion.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy provided as Attachment 1 to this report, to take effect from 1 March 2024.
2. Thanks sports clubs, state sporting associations, residents and others involved for their participation in developing the Policy.

Resolution

Cr Tapinos moved, Cr Riley seconded -

That Council:

1. **Endorses the Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy provided as Attachment 1 to this report, to take effect from 1 March 2024.**
2. **Thanks sports clubs, state sporting associations, residents and others involved for their participation in developing the Policy.**

Carried

7.16 DRAFT LEASE AND LICENCE POLICY

Executive Summary

Council is the owner of an extensive property portfolio providing a range of Council owned land and buildings for the recreational, cultural, educational and social benefit of the Merri-bek community.

In May 2022, an internal audit of Council's Leases and Licences was finalised. One of the audit recommendations was to review and update the policy framework to manage leases and licences to ensure their currency and applicability. The due date for this is December 2023.

The draft Lease and Licence Policy (2023) is intended to replace the existing Lease Principles Policy (2001) and Property Leasing Policy (2003) and aims to ensure the implementation of a contemporary and efficient approach, whilst upholding our commitment to supporting community-based organisations.

Community engagement on the draft Lease and Licence Policy ran for a period of four weeks, from 19 October to 16 November 2023 with tenants receiving direct correspondence regarding the specifics of the initiative. More general consultation was undertaken on Conversations Merri-bek including exhibition of the revised policy for the broader community. Three phone calls and three email responses from tenants were received during this period.

This report outlines feedback and submissions received, subsequent changes made to the policy and presents a final Lease and Licence Policy for adoption.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Adopts the Lease and Licence Policy (2023) provided as Attachment 1 to this report.
2. Revokes the Lease Principles Policy (2001) and the Property Leasing Policy (2003).

Resolution

Cr Riley moved, Cr Panopoulos seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Adopts the Lease and Licence Policy (2023) provided as Attachment 1 to this report.**
- 2. Revokes the Lease Principles Policy (2001) and the Property Leasing Policy (2003).**

Carried

7.17 2023/24 FIRST QUARTER FINANCIAL REPORT

The First Quarter Financial Report gives an overview of Council's performance through delivery of the budget. It compares the actual revenue and expenditure with the budgeted revenue and expenditure year to date (YTD) and assesses the financial performance in the first quarter to determine a forecast outcome for 30 June 2024.

A detailed financial review was undertaken across the organisation at the end of September 2023 to form the 2023/24 First Quarter Financial Review (Q1 Forecast). This process provided Council the opportunity to review its YTD performance and reallocate available financial resources to maximise the delivery on its strategic objectives. The results of this review are included in this report as the Q1 Forecast.

For the three months ended 30 September 2023, Council has achieved an operating surplus result of \$151.9 million which is \$7.0 million (5%) more than the YTD budget of \$144.9 million. The operating surplus (or deficit) contains both cash and non-cash expenditure and revenue, so it does not convert to available cash for Council.

Council's forecast adjusted underlying surplus of \$22.6 million is \$1.6 million more than the adopted budget of \$21.0 million. This result is important as it measures Council's ability to generate a surplus in the ordinary course of business – excluding non-recurrent capital grants, non-monetary asset contributions, and other contributions to fund capital expenditure from net results.

An unrestricted result of \$0.02 million has been forecast from the surplus primarily due to \$2.5 million of rates funded capital projects being brought forward into 2023/24.

Currently the Q1 forecast is forecasting an increase in the adjusted underlying surplus which suggests an improvement in the operating position.

Council has spent \$11.3 million on capital expenditure as at the end of September which is \$1.0 million (9%) less than the YTD budget of \$12.3 million, with \$111.9 million (91%) of the full year budget remaining.

After a detailed review of the capital works program, there is a forecast increase of \$1.1 million from the adopted budget of \$123.2 million to \$124.3 million. This is due to \$4.2 million of additional capital carry forwards from 2022/23, 18 projects requiring additional funding of \$4.1 million and \$2.5 million of projects brought forward from future years. These increases are partially offset by \$7.5 million of carry forwards into 2024/25 and \$2.2 million of savings.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. Notes the 2023/24 First Quarter Financial Report for the period ending 30 September 2023, including operating performance and capital performance.**
- 2. Notes the status of the capital works program for 2023/24.**

3. Notes the increase to the full-year forecast for operating income of \$3.4 million and the increase to operating expenditure of \$1.7 million arising from the 2023/24 First Quarter Financial Review.
4. Endorses the full-year capital expenditure forecast of \$124.3 million, arising from the 2023/24 First Quarter Financial Review.
5. Carries forward the following capital project funding to the 2024/25 Capital Works Program:
 - Fawkner Leisure Centre Redevelopment - \$2,576,743
 - Brunswick Early Years Hub - \$2,500,000
 - Oak Park Kindergarten - \$600,000
 - Sportsfield Stormwater Reuse – Municipal Wide - \$500,000
 - Sewell Reserve, Glenroy - \$423,050
 - Brunswick Velodrome – Community Pump Track - \$400,000
 - Parks and Reserve Flooding Rectification - \$250,000
 - Esslemont Reserve, Pascoe Vale - \$145,000
 - Tate Reserve, Pascoe Vale - \$30,000
 - Evans Reserve, Fawkner - \$22,500.
6. Brings forward the following capital project funding to the 2023/24 Capital Works Program:
 - Rayner Reserve – Cricket & Soccer - \$550,000
 - Shore Reserve – Football & Cricket - \$300,000
 - Lorne Street Kindergarten – Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) - \$250,000
 - Temple Park – Public Toilet Renewal - \$200,000
 - Dunstan Reserve Childcare - \$200,000
 - Snell Grove, Oak Park – Public Toilet - \$180,000
 - Rayner Reserve – New Public Toilet - \$150,000
 - Fawkner Community Hall – CB Smith Reserve - \$150,000
 - McBryde St Reserve (Moomba Park) – Pavilion Gender Inclusive Facilities - \$100,000
 - McBryde St Reserve (Moomba Park) – Social Room Amenities & Kitchen - \$100,000
 - Brearley Reserve – Public Toilet - \$50,000.
7. Notes the allocation of \$40,000 to fund a heritage and technical report on the Gillon Oval grandstand.
8. Notes the allocation of \$250,000 to fund the lights program at Raeburn Reserve, bringing forward the commencement of the project to the 2023/24 Capital Works Program and allocate \$150,000 to complete the project in 2024/25.

Resolution

Cr Riley moved, Cr Conlan seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Notes the 2023/24 First Quarter Financial Report for the period ending 30 September 2023, including operating performance and capital performance.**
- 2. Notes the status of the capital works program for 2023/24.**
- 3. Notes the increase to the full-year forecast for operating income of \$3.4 million and the increase to operating expenditure of \$1.7 million arising from the 2023/24 First Quarter Financial Review.**
- 4. Endorses the full-year capital expenditure forecast of \$124.3 million, arising from the 2023/24 First Quarter Financial Review.**
- 5. Carries forward the following capital project funding to the 2024/25 Capital Works Program:**
 - Fawkner Leisure Centre Redevelopment - \$2,576,743**
 - Brunswick Early Years Hub - \$2,500,000**
 - Oak Park Kindergarten - \$600,000**
 - Sportsfield Stormwater Reuse – Municipal Wide - \$500,000**
 - Sewell Reserve, Glenroy - \$423,050**
 - Brunswick Velodrome – Community Pump Track - \$400,000**
 - Parks and Reserve Flooding Rectification - \$250,000**
 - Esslemont Reserve, Pascoe Vale - \$145,000**
 - Tate Reserve, Pascoe Vale - \$30,000**
 - Evans Reserve, Fawkner - \$22,500.**
- 6. Brings forward the following capital project funding to the 2023/24 Capital Works Program:**
 - Rayner Reserve – Cricket & Soccer - \$550,000**
 - Shore Reserve – Football & Cricket - \$300,000**
 - Lorne Street Kindergarten – Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) - \$250,000**
 - Temple Park – Public Toilet Renewal - \$200,000**
 - Dunstan Reserve Childcare - \$200,000**
 - Snell Grove, Oak Park – Public Toilet - \$180,000**
 - Rayner Reserve – New Public Toilet - \$150,000**
 - Fawkner Community Hall – CB Smith Reserve - \$150,000**
 - McBryde St Reserve (Moomba Park) – Pavilion Gender Inclusive Facilities - \$100,000**
 - McBryde St Reserve (Moomba Park) – Social Room Amenities & Kitchen - \$100,000**
 - Brearley Reserve – Public Toilet - \$50,000.**
- 7. Notes the allocation of \$40,000 to fund a heritage and technical report on the Gillon Oval grandstand.**

8. **Notes the allocation of \$250,000 to fund the lights program at Raeburn Reserve, bringing forward the commencement of the project to the 2023/24 Capital Works Program and allocate \$150,000 to complete the project in 2024/25.**

8.55 pm Cr Pavlidis left the meeting.

Carried

7.18 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2023

This report presents the Financial Management Report for the financial year to date period ending 31 October 2023.

A detailed financial review was undertaken across the organisation at the end of September 2023. The results of this review are included in this report as the Full Year Revised Forecast. The detailed first quarter financial review is being presented separately to the December Council meeting.

The October Income Statement shows the Council surplus is \$2.4 million less than the year-to-date revised forecast as a result of higher overall expenditure. These differences are considered largely permanent in nature.

Council has spent \$18.1 million on capital expenditure, which is tracking below the year-to-date (YTD) forecast of \$22.2 million, with \$107.5 million budget remaining.

Officer Recommendation

That Council notes the Financial Management Report for the period ended 31 October 2023, at Attachment 1 to this report.

Resolution

Cr Riley moved, Cr Tapinos seconded -

That Council notes the Financial Management Report for the period ended 31 October 2023, at Attachment 1 to this report.

Carried

7.19 PROPOSED COUNCILLOR CONTACT WITH LOBBYISTS DEVELOPERS AND SUBMITTERS POLICY

Executive Summary

In 2021, Council initiated a trial public registry for Councillor meetings with developers, operating on an opt-in basis. The trial, concluding in July 2023, had limited disclosures, prompting the Council to extend it while maintaining the opt-in system.

Simultaneously, the Council resolved to formulate a policy for Councillor interaction with developers and lobbyists. The significance of the Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission's (IBAC's) Operation Sandon, delivered in July 2023, highlighted improper influence, leading to recommendations for enhanced donation and lobbying regulations.

In response to Council resolutions and prompted by Operation Sandon, a comprehensive policy titled 'Councillor Interaction with Lobbyists, Developers and Submitters' has been prepared for Council consideration for adoption.

Drawing on research and guidance from the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in New South Wales, the policy aims to strike a balance by defining expectations for Councillor conduct, ensuring adherence to legal and ethical norms, minimising risks in planning application assessments and establishing transparent reporting mechanisms for community accessibility.

Importantly, the policy does not prohibit Councillor engagement but provides provisions for effective and transparent oversight of interactions with lobbyists, developers, and submitters.

Officer Recommendation

That Council adopts the Councillor Interaction with Lobbyists, Developers and Submitters Policy.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Harte seconded -

That the report be deferred to the February 2024 Council Meeting.

Carried

7.20 REVIEW OF COUNCILLOR SUPPORT, EXPENSES AND RESOURCES POLICY

Executive Summary

At its meeting held 12 August 2020, Council adopted the Council Support, Expense and Resources Policy, which establishes the necessary provision of resources and support for Councillors to effectively fulfill their duties as elected representatives.

The policy outlines the level of support provided to Councillors, approval processes for resources and support, and guidelines for expenses, including travel, the reimbursement of reasonable childcare costs and expenses for Councillors acting as carers, promoting inclusivity and support.

The revised policy largely maintains existing provisions and incorporates minor grammatical amendments throughout, organises related provisions into dedicated sections for enhanced readability, and updates the Council's name and Council officer titles. Other proposed changes to the policy are summarised below:

- New inclusion to address Councillor requests non Merri-bek software applications, and a clause for the return of non-consumable IT equipment at the end of a Council term.
- The exclusion of promotion on North West FM for Ward meetings.
- Streamlined the policy by consolidating and renaming the 'Advanced Approval to Travel' section for increased clarity, simplification and to reduce duplication. Additionally, created standalone sections for existing 'exceptions to requiring pre-approval for interstate travel' and 'unofficial overseas travel' to enhance organisation and declutter the policy.
- Consolidation of provisions for improved readability, including updated content for accommodation arrangements, meal reimbursement guidelines, and considerations for passports and visas.
- A recommendation to increase the price cap for paid ticketed community events to a minimum of \$150, to align with prevailing costs.

- A recommendation to increase the reimbursement limit for childcare to \$23.23, considering industry standards and the national minimum wage.
- Removal of the requirement for Council members to furnish travel information on the 'Interstate/Overseas Travel Report form,' streamlining reporting procedures.

This review and adaptation of the Council Support, Expense and Resources Policy demonstrates Council's commitment to responsible governance, transparency, and the well-being of its elected representatives. The proposed changes aim to align the policy with current practices, industry standards, and legal requirements, ensuring efficient resource allocation and adherence to the principles of public accountability.

It is therefore recommended that Council adopts the revised Councillor Support, Expenses and Resources Policy as provided in **Attachment 1**.

Officer Recommendation

That Council adopts the revised Councillor Support, Expenses and Resources Policy as provided in Attachment 1.

Resolution

Cr Tapinos moved, Cr Riley seconded -

That Council adopts the revised Councillor Support, Expenses and Resources Policy as provided in Attachment 1 with the following amendment:

Attendance by a Councillor's spouse/partner is considered to be necessary or appropriate to support the business or representational needs of Council (for example for the purpose of child care or other care needs).

Carried unanimously

7.21 REVIEW OF RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

Executive Summary

Council has continued to advance its risk management initiatives, integrating them into organisational practices and culture.

The Risk Management Policy (the Policy), provided at **Attachment 1** to this report, outlines Council's commitment to risk management, aligning with principles that govern and guide risk management practices across the organisation. The Policy, alongside the Enterprise Risk Management Framework, applies to all Council activities and services and extends to all staff, contractors, and stakeholders.

The Policy, last updated and endorsed by Council in August 2020, remains effective with minor amendments to remove information duplicated within the Enterprise Risk Management Framework.

Officer Recommendation

That Council adopts the Risk Management Policy, at Attachment 1 to this report.

Resolution

Cr Riley moved, Cr Conlan seconded -

That Council adopts the Risk Management Policy, at Attachment 1 to this report.

Carried

7.22 COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENTS TO PORTFOLIOS, INTERNAL COMMITTEES, ADVISORY COMMITTEES, REFERENCE GROUPS AND OTHER EXTERNAL BODIES

Executive Summary

Each year, Council reviews Councillor appointments to the roles of 'Councillor Responsible For...' and to Council convened networks, internal, advisory and external committees, and networks and external boards who have sought a Council representative for the Mayoral year.

This report seeks appointments of those roles and representatives for the 2023/2024 Mayoral Year.

This report also seeks to extend the operation the Coburg Revitalisation Oversight Committee until 26 October 2024 and adjusts the Terms of Reference to reflect the extension.

If required, Council may resolve to change the appointments during the year.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Extends the operation of the Coburg Revitalisation Oversight Committee until 26 October 2024 and updates the Terms of Reference accordingly.
2. Appoints Portfolio Councillors, known as 'Councillors Responsible For...', for the 2023/2024 Mayoral year as follows:

Arts and Culture	Cr
Climate and Nature	Cr
Early Years	Cr
Economic Development	Cr
Human Rights	Cr
Multiculturalism	Cr
Older Persons	Cr
Sport and Recreation	Cr
Transport and Getting Around	Cr
Urban Planning	Cr
Women	Cr
Young People	Cr
3. Appoints Councillors to internal, advisory, network and external committees for the 2023/2024 Mayoral year as follows:
 - a) Internal Committees

Audit and Risk Committee	Cr
	Cr
	Cr
CEO Employment and Remuneration Matters Committee	All Councillors
Coburg Revitalisation Oversight Committee	Mayor (Chair)
	Cr
	Cr

		Cr	
		Cr	to fill any vacancies that arise
	Saxon Street Oversight Committee		Mayor and South Ward Councillors
	Glenroy Advisory Group		North-West Ward Councillors
	Brunswick Advisory Group		South Ward Councillors
	Coburg Advisory Group		North-East Ward Councillors
	Merri-bek Community Recognition Committee (Merri-bek Awards)	Cr	
		Cr	
		Cr	
b)	Advisory Committees		
	Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee	Cr	
	Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee	Cr	
	Human Rights and Inclusion Advisory Committee	Cr	
		Cr	
	First Nations Advisory Committee	Cr (co-chair)	
	Merri-bek Arts Advisory Committee	Cr	
c)	Reference Groups		
	Affordable Housing Reference Group	Cr	
	Age-Friendly (Older People) Reference Group	Cr	
	Disability Reference Group	Cr	
	Gender equality Reference Group	Cr	
	Heritage and Local History Reference Group	Cr	
	LGBTIQ+ Reference Group	Cr	
d)	External Committees		
	Friends of Aileu Community Committee	Cr	
	Merri Creek Management Committee	Cr	
		Cr	(substitute)
	Metropolitan Transport Forum	Cr	
		Cr	
	Municipal Association of Victoria (Representative)	Cr	
		Cr	(substitute)
	Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA) Executive	Cr	
	Northern Councils Alliance	Mayor; and	
		Cr	(substitute)

Resolution

Cr Panopoulos moved, Cr Conlan seconded -

That Council:

1. Extends the operation of the Coburg Revitalisation Oversight Committee until 26 October 2024 and updates the Terms of Reference accordingly.
2. Appoints Portfolio Councillors, known as 'Councillors Responsible For...', for the 2023/2024 Mayoral year as follows:

Arts and Culture	Cr Tapinos Cr Pavlidis Cr Harte
Climate and Nature	Cr Panopoulos
Early Years	Cr Carli Hannan
Economic Development	Cr Panopoulos Cr Tapinos
Human Rights	Cr Pulford
Multiculturalism	Cr Riley
Older Persons	Cr Pavlidis Cr Harte
Sport and Recreation	Cr Pavlidis Cr Davidson
Transport and Getting Around	Cr Pulford
Urban Planning	Cr Tapinos Cr Panopoulos
Women	Cr Pavlidis Cr Davidson
Young People	Cr Panopoulos

3. Appoints Councillors to internal, advisory, network and external committees for the 2023/2024 Mayoral year as follows:

a) Internal Committees	
Audit and Risk Committee	Cr Pulford Cr Harte Cr Tapinos
CEO Employment and Remuneration Matters Committee	All Councillors
Coburg Revitalisation Oversight Committee	Mayor (Chair), Cr Pulford Cr Pavlidis Cr Carli Hannan Cr Panopoulos Cr Bolton
Saxon Street Oversight Committee	Mayor and South Ward Councillors
Glenroy Advisory Group	North-West Ward Councillors
Brunswick Advisory Group	South Ward Councillors
Coburg Advisory Group	North-East Ward Councillors

	Merri-bek Community Recognition Committee (Merri-bek Awards)	Cr Pulford Cr Tapinos Cr Pavlidis
b)	Advisory Committees	
	Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee	Cr Pulford
	Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee	Cr Riley
	Human Rights and Inclusion Advisory Committee	Cr Riley
	First Nations Advisory Committee	Cr Bolton (Co-Chair) Cr Pulford (Co-Chair) Cr Conlan (Co-Chair)
	Merri-bek Arts Advisory Committee	Cr Pavlidis Cr Harte
c)	Reference Groups	
	Affordable Housing Reference Group	Cr Panopoulos Cr Harte
	Age-Friendly (Older People) Reference Group	Cr Pavlidis Cr Harte
	Disability Reference Group	Cr Bolton
	Gender equality Reference Group	Cr Riley
	Heritage and Local History Reference Group	Cr Tapinos
	LGBTIQA+ Reference Group	Cr Pulford Cr Conlan
d)	External Committees	
	Friends of Aileu Community Committee	Cr Pulford
	Merri Creek Management Committee	Cr Panopoulos Cr Pulford (substitute)
	Metropolitan Transport Forum	Cr Riley
	Municipal Association of Victoria (Representative)	Cr Pulford Cr Pavlidis (substitute)
	Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action Executive	Cr Riley Cr Conlan (substitute)
	Northern Councils Alliance	Mayor; and Cr Bolton (substitute)

Carried

7.23 GOVERNANCE REPORT - DECEMBER 2023 - CYCLICAL REPORT

Executive Summary

The Governance report is prepared as a monthly standing report to Council which provides a single reporting platform for a range of statutory compliance, transparency, and governance related matters.

This Governance report includes:

- A summary of the minutes of the Coburg Advisory Group held 30 October 2023 and Brunswick Advisory Group held 14 November 2023.
- Records of Meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the records.
- Responses to Public Question Time items taken on notice at 12 July and 8 November 2023 Council meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the responses.
- An overview of the of the Inner North Community Foundation, who is an independent community foundation in Melbourne's Inner North that supports over 300 community groups across 30 suburbs, and seeking Council's endorsement of the proposed process to facilitate the appointment of a new Council-nominated member.
- A recommendation to adopt the Public Interest Disclosures (Whistleblowers) Policy, as reviewed.
- The Merri-bek Affordable Action Plan Annual Report for noting.
- A recommendation to adopt the draft Asset Management Policy 2023 following the conclusion of Council-endorsed public exhibition during which no submissions were received.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the summary of minutes from Advisory Committees to Council, at Attachment 1 to this report:
 - a) Coburg Advisory Group held 30 October 2023.
 - b) Brunswick Advisory Group held 14 November 2023.
2. Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 2 to this report.
3. Notes responses to questions taken on notice during Public Question Time at the 12 July and 8 November 2023 Council meetings, at Attachment 3 to this report.
4. Endorses the procedure for filling one position among Council-nominated members on the Inner North Community Foundation (INCF), including that the Inner North Community Foundation commence a public recruitment process for a Council-nominated member (noting that advertising will commence in March 2024, with the aim of securing a preferred applicant by the end of March or April 2024), and:
 - a) Seek that the Chief Executive Officer make necessary arrangements with Inner North Community Foundation, for the preferred candidate to meet with the CEO, Mayor, and Deputy Mayor as a final step; and
 - b) Prepare a report for the May 2024 Council meeting, to make a recommendation for Council's endorsement of the preferred candidate for appointment as a Council-nominated member on the Inner North Community Foundation board (to replace the current temporary arrangement).

5. Adopts the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowers) Policy at Attachment 4 to this report.
6. Notes the Merri-bek Affordable Housing Action Plan Annual Report 2023 at Attachment 5 to this report.
7. Adopts the Asset Management Policy at Attachment 6 to this report, subject to final edits to improve presentation and clarity.

Resolution

Cr Panopoulos moved, Cr Riley seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the summary of minutes from Advisory Committees to Council, at Attachment 1 to this report:**
 - a) **Coburg Advisory Group held 30 October 2023.**
 - b) **Brunswick Advisory Group held 14 November 2023.**
2. **Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 2 to this report.**
3. **Notes responses to questions taken on notice during Public Question Time at the 12 July and 8 November 2023 Council meetings, at Attachment 3 to this report.**
4. **Endorses the procedure for filling one position among Council-nominated members on the Inner North Community Foundation (INCF), including that the Inner North Community Foundation commence a public recruitment process for a Council-nominated member (noting that advertising will commence in March 2024, with the aim of securing a preferred applicant by the end of March or April 2024), and:**
 - a) **Seek that the Chief Executive Officer make necessary arrangements with Inner North Community Foundation, for the preferred candidate to meet with the CEO, Mayor, and Deputy Mayor as a final step; and**
 - b) **Prepare a report for the May 2024 Council meeting, to make a recommendation for Council's endorsement of the preferred candidate for appointment as a Council-nominated member on the Inner North Community Foundation board (to replace the current temporary arrangement).**
5. **Adopts the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowers) Policy at Attachment 4 to this report.**
6. **Notes the Merri-bek Affordable Housing Action Plan Annual Report 2023 at Attachment 5 to this report.**
7. **Adopts the Asset Management Policy at Attachment 6 to this report, subject to final edits to improve presentation and clarity.**

Carried unanimously

7.24 CONTRACTS AWARDED AND DELEGATED TO DISESTABLISHED COUNCIL POSITIONS

Executive Summary

Merri-bek City Council awarded contracts and authorised delegated officer positions to exercise contract extension options or vary the contracts. However, some of those positions such as Director Corporate Services, Director Planning and Economic Development, Director Community Development, Executive Manager Finance have since been disestablished.

The following table shows the affected contracts and positions.

No.	Contract	Delegated to disestablished position
1	Managed Network Infrastructure and Services Contract	Director Corporate Services
2	New Finance, Payroll and HR Systems	Director Corporate Services
3	Provision of Supply and Installation of Outdoor Christmas and Other Decorations	Director Planning and Economic Development
4	Provision of Cloud Infrastructure Services	Director Corporate Services
5	Provision of Valuation Services	Executive Manager Finance
6	Contract 776T Food Supply and Packaging Services	Director Community Development

Approval is now required to authorise the Chief Executive Officer to exercise the options to extend contracts or vary contracts as they become due.

Council approval will lead to procurement efficiencies and ensure timeliness of contract renewals and variations execution.

Officer Recommendation

That Council authorises the Chief Executive Officer to exercise the options to extend or vary contracts that were awarded under *Local Government Act 1989* and delegated to positions, which have since been disestablished. The contract variations and extensions will be in accordance with the provisions within the contract terms and conditions established under the Council resolutions that awarded the contract.

Resolution

Cr Riley moved, Cr Harte seconded -

That Council authorises the Chief Executive Officer to exercise the options to extend or vary contracts that were awarded under Local Government Act 1989 and delegated to positions, which have since been disestablished. The contract variations and extensions will be in accordance with the provisions within the contract terms and conditions established under the Council resolutions that awarded the contract.

Carried

7.25 CONTRACT AWARD: RFT-2023-505 ROAD RECONSTRUCTION - CARLISLE STREET, COBURG (DARLINGTON GROVE TO NICHOLSON STREET)

Executive Summary

Road reconstruction works at Carlisle Street, Coburg between Darlington Grove and Nicholson Street was identified in the 2023-2024 Capital Works Program within the Roads and Carparks Program. The works involve construction of underground drainage pipes and associated pits, reconstruction of existing kerb and channel, vehicle crossings, new asphalt road surface, tree planting, solar lights, and associated shared-use elements.

During the tender evaluation process the first preferred tenderer and the second preferred tenderer were shortlisted. They were requested to re-confirm their ability to meet the works program project completion date 30 June 2024. The first preferred tenderer indicated they could not meet the deadline, and Tender Evaluation team re-scored the works program criteria which had minimal impact on the overall scores. It is recommended the second preferred tenderer (GP Bluestone Pty Ltd) be selected to deliver the project.

GP Bluestone Pty Ltd has previously undertaken similar projects for Merri-bek City Council with very good results, and for other councils. They have worked with Merri-bek with very good performance and quality. Their construction program is for a 14-week duration, with early start and early completion. Their program of works favours our 23 weeks to complete this project within the 2023/2024 financial year.

The tender complies with section 109(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - a) Make a formal offer to GP Bluestone Pty Ltd, ACN 604 987 519 (**Contractor**) to award to the Contractor contract RFT-2023-505 for the Road Reconstruction Works – Carlisle Street, Coburg between Darlington Grove and Nicholson Street (**Contract**) on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution for the lump sum of \$832,885.00 (excluding GST) plus provisional sum of \$75,920.00 (excluding GST), totalling \$908,805.00 (excluding GST).
 - b) Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that:
 - i. the terms specified in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council; and
 - ii. other than terms referred to in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer;
2. Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Resolution:
 - a) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the Contract and any required documentation for the Contract; and
 - b) Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.

Resolution

Cr Conlan moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:**
 - a) Make a formal offer to GP Bluestone Pty Ltd, ACN 604 987 519 (Contractor) to award to the Contractor contract RFT-2023-505 for the Road Reconstruction Works – Carlisle Street, Coburg between Darlington Grove and Nicholson Street (Contract) on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution for the lump sum of \$832,885.00 (excluding GST) plus provisional sum of \$75,920.00 (excluding GST), totalling \$908,805.00 (excluding GST).**
 - b) Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that:**
 - i. the terms specified in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council; and**
 - ii. other than terms referred to in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer;**
- 2. Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Resolution:**
 - a) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the Contract and any required documentation for the Contract; and**
 - b) Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.**

Carried unanimously

NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil.

NOTICES OF RESCISSION

Nil.

FORESHADOWED ITEMS

Nil.

URGENT BUSINESS REPORTS

Nil.

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

Resolution

Cr Tapinos moved, Cr Riley seconded –

That, in accordance with section 66(2) of the Local Government Act 2020, this Council meeting be closed to the public to consider this report:

- **12.1 Strategic Land Acquisition Open Space because it relates to private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.**

Carried

The Council meeting closed to the public at 9.28 pm.

OPENING THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

Resolution

Cr Riley moved, Cr Conlan seconded –

That the Council meeting be opened to the public.

Carried

The Council meeting opened to the public at 10.12 pm.

The Council meeting closed at 10.12 pm.

Confirmed

**Cr Adam Pulford
Mayor**