

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE COUNCIL

**Council Meeting Agenda
Tuesday 9 June 2026**

To be held in Council Chambers
5 Market Place, Hamilton at 5:30pm



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1 Membership

Councillors

Cr Dennis Heslin, Mayor
Cr Afton Barber
Cr Adam Campbell
Cr Helen Henry
Cr Jayne Manning
Cr Katrina Rainsford
Cr Tam Ramsay-Grounds

Officers

Mr Tony Doyle, Chief Executive Officer
Mr Darren Barber, Director People and Performance
Mr Rory Neeson, Director Wellbeing, Planning and Regulation
Ms Marg Scanlon, Director Infrastructure and Sustainability
Mrs Karly Herring, Governance Coordinator

2 Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

The Mayor, Cr Heslin will read the acknowledgement of country:

“Our meeting is being held on the traditional lands of the Gunditjmara, Djap Wurrung, Jardwadjali and Buandig people.

I would like to pay my respects to their Elders, past and present and the Elders from other communities who may be here today.”

Please note: All Council meetings will be audio recorded, and may be livestreamed to Council’s social media platform, with the exception of matters identified as confidential items in the Agenda.

By participating in open Council meetings, individuals consent to the use and disclosure of the information they share at the meeting (including any personal and/or sensitive information).

Other than an official Council recording, no video or audio recording of proceedings of Council Meetings will be allowed without the permission of Council.

3 Prayer

Cr Campbell will lead the meeting in a prayer.

“Almighty God grant to this Council, wisdom, understanding and sincerity of purpose for the good governance of this Shire.”

4 Apologies

5 Confirmation of Minutes

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 12 May 2026 be confirmed as a correct record of business transacted.

6 Declaration of Interest

7 Leave of Absence

There are no requests for a leave of absence on tonight's agenda.

8 Questions on Notice

Questions from the public must be submitted prior to the commencement of Council Meetings.

All questions must be submitted through completion of the Public Question Time form and be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer at 111 Brown Street, Hamilton. All questions must be received by no later than 5pm on the Monday before the Council Meeting.

Questions must:

1. Not pre-empt debate on any matter listed on the agenda of the Council Meeting at which the question is asked.
2. Not refer to matters designated as confidential under the *Local Government Act 2020*.
3. Be clear and unambiguous and not contain argument on the subject.
4. Not be derogatory, defamatory or embarrassing to any Councillor, member of staff, ratepayer or member of the public, nor relate to a matter beyond the power of Council.

If the member of the public is in attendance at the Council Meeting the Mayor will read the question aloud and provide a response. If a question cannot be answered at the meeting, a written response will be prepared and forwarded to the person raising the question.

Residents do not need to attend the meeting for a question to be answered. If they do not attend the meeting a written response will be provided.

There are no Questions on Notice listed on the agenda.

9 Public Deputations

Requests to make a Public Deputation to Council must be submitted prior to the commencement of the Council Meeting.

Anyone wishing to make a deputation to Council must complete the Request to Make a Deputation form and forward it to the Chief Executive Officer at 111 Brown Street, Hamilton by no later than 5pm on the Monday before the Council Meeting.

Speaking time is limited to 3 minutes per person. Organisations may be represented at the deputation to Council by not more than 4 representatives. The names of the representatives to attend must be advised in writing to the Chief Executive Officer and 1 of the representatives to attend must be nominated as the principal spokesperson for the deputation.

Deputations wishing to make a written submission to the Council must provide a copy either electronically or hard copy of the submission to the Chief Executive Officer prior to the Council Meeting. One copy will be made available to the local media representative, if requested.

All members of the public addressing the Council must extend due courtesy and respect to the Council and the processes under which it operates. If a member of the public fails to do this the Chairperson can remove them from the Meeting. All members of the public must also comply with Council's Governance Rules in relation to meeting procedures and public participation at meetings.

There are no Public Deputations listed on tonight's agenda.

10 Petitions

10.1 Petition - Lakes Edge - Outline Development Plan Feedback

A petition has been received requesting that Council consider feedback provided on the Lakes Edge Outline Development Plan.

Attachment:

Nil.

RECOMMENDATION

That the petition be received by Council and Officers provide a report back to Council.

10.2 Petition - Lakes Edge - Outline Development Plan Feedback

A further petition has been received requesting that Council consider the Lakes Edge Outline Development Plan.

Attachment:

Nil.

RECOMMENDATION

That the petition be received by Council and Officers provide a report back to Council.

11 Informal Meetings of Councillors

The Southern Grampians Shire Council Governance Rules require that records of Informal Meetings of Councillors that meet the following criteria:

If there is a meeting of Councillors that:

- a. took place for the purpose of discussing the business of Council or briefing Councillors;
- b. is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
- c. is not a Council meeting, Delegated Committee meeting or Community Asset Committee meeting;

be tabled at the next convenient Council meeting and recorded in the minutes of that Council meeting.

An Informal Meeting of Councillors record was kept for:

- Briefing Session – 12 May 2026
- Briefing Session – 26 May 2026
- Briefing Session – 2 June 2026

This agenda was prepared on 28 May 2026. Any Informal Meeting of Councillors between that date and the date of tonight's Meeting will appear in the agenda for the next Council Meeting.

Informal Meeting of Councillors

ASSEMBLY DETAILS	
Title:	Briefing Session - 12 May 2026
Date:	12 May 2026
Location:	MJ Hynes Auditorum
Councillors in Attendance:	Cr Barber Cr Campbell Cr Henry Cr Heslin Cr Manning Cr Rainsford Cr Ramsay-Grounds
Council Staff in Attendance:	Tony Doyle, Chief Executive Officer

The Informal Meeting commenced at 4:00PM

MATTERS CONSIDERED		CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED
1	Council Meeting Items	Nil
2	Councillor and CEO Meeting	Nil

The Informal Meeting concluded at 5:00PM.

Informal Meeting of Councillors

ASSEMBLY DETAILS	
Title:	Briefing Session - 26 May 2026
Date:	26 May 2026
Location:	MJ Hynes Auditorium
Councillors in Attendance:	Cr Barber Cr Campbell Cr Henry Cr Heslin Cr Manning Cr Rainsford
Council Staff in Attendance:	Tony Doyle, Chief Executive Officer Darren Barber, Director People and Performance Marg Scanlon, Director Infrastructure and Sustainability Rory Neeson, Director Wellbeing, Planning and Regulation Susannah Milne, Manager Community Wellbeing Karly Herring, Governance Coordinator Tania Quinn, Governance Coordinator Aaron Smith, Manager Assets

The Informal Meeting commenced at 1:30PM.

MATTERS CONSIDERED		CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED
1	PAC Service Review	Nil
2	Councillor Expense Policy Review	Nil
3	Councillor Gift Policy Review	Nil
4	Mandatory Councillor Training 2026 Program	Nil
5	Annual Plan – Quarterly Reporting	Nil
6	Hamilton Moves	Nil

The Informal Meeting concluded at 4:00PM.

Informal Meeting of Councillors

ASSEMBLY DETAILS	
Title:	Briefing Session - 2 June 2026
Date:	2 June 2026
Location:	MJ Hynes Auditorium
Councillors in Attendance:	Cr Campbell Cr Henry Cr Heslin Cr Manning Cr Rainsford
Council Staff in Attendance:	Tony Doyle, Chief Executive Officer Darren Barber, Director People and Performance Marg Scanlon, Director Infrastructure and Sustainability Rory Neeson, Director Wellbeing, Planning and Regulation Nick Templeton, Head of Finance

The Informal Meeting commenced at 11.40AM.

MATTERS CONSIDERED		CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED
1	ARC Chair Report	Nil
2	Final Budget, LTFP, and Pricing Register – Community Feedback	Nil
3	CBD Streetscape	Nil
4	Hamilton Library and Community Hub – Concept Plans	Nil
5	Country Universities (SW Tafe) Site Visit	

The Informal Meeting concluded at 4:30PM.

12 Management Reports

12.1 Adopt Budget, Long-Term Financial Plan, and Pricing Register

Directorate:	People and Performance
Report Approver:	Darren Barber, Director People and Performance
Report Author:	Nick Templeton, Head of Finance
Attachment(s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. DRAFT Budget 26-27 for adoption [12.1.1 - 54 pages]2. DRAFT LTFP 2026 For Adoption [12.1.2 - 41 pages]3. 2026-27 Pricing Register - For adoption [12.1.3 - 51 pages]

Executive Summary

Southern Grampians Shire Council is pleased to present the 2026–2027 Budget, which delivers on the Council Plan and aligns with the long-term community vision. This Budget and the accompanying Long-Term Financial Plan (2026–2036) have been developed through extensive community engagement and a strong financial framework.

Since providing the documents for public feedback there has been one change to the capital works schedule, with an addition of \$250k for the renewal of public toilets in Cavendish.

Council has undertaken extensive community consultation with the 2026/2027 budget, including availability for public input and feedback for a total of 77 days. This included an invitation to share ideas and complete submissions for the budget from 7 November 2025 until 9 January 2026 with an additional invitation for public comment on the draft 2026/2027 Budget, 2026/2027 Pricing Register and 2026 – 2036 Long Term Financial Plan from 14 May until 27 May 2026.

For the initial submission period from November to January Council received 23 community submissions along with 11 Councillor submissions. In addition there was 13 items of feedback during May, with the majority of the feedback referring to submissions that had been provided in the November to January period.

Council's focus remains on operational efficiency and cost reduction so we can continue investing in community infrastructure and services. This approach has supported three consecutive years of record capital program delivery, including upgrades to buildings, roads, playgrounds, and sporting facilities.

Each year Council prepares the annual Budget and Long-Term Financial Plan with the key goal of enabling the Council Vision while maintaining fiscal responsibility with an operating surplus achieved for eight of the ten years. The focus on financial sustainability has resulted in the underlying result becoming a surplus from 2033/2034 onwards.

The operating expenditure for the ten years of the Long-Term Financial Plan shows a well contained increase in costs of 15% across the ten year period. The concentration on limiting expenditure growth is vital to the ongoing sustainability and results on an average annual increase in expenditure of 1.5%. The improvement in the underlying operating result over the ten years is a direct result of the restriction in expenditure over the longer term.

For 2026–2027, Council proposes a 2.75% rate increase, consistent with the rate cap set by the Minister, and lower than last year's 3.00%. The rate cap continues to sit below CPI, widening the gap between Council's ability to raise revenue and rising costs. This makes efficiency essential to maintaining services, delivering major intergenerational projects, and meeting core obligations such as road maintenance.

A key change to this year's budget is removal of the 2% early-payment discount. Council has thought deeply about the impact of this decision in the current climate; however, it is no longer sustainable under rate capping. Pensioner concessions remain unaffected.

This report presents the key documents presented for Council for adoption. The documents are:

- Draft Annual Operating Budget 2026/2027
- Draft Long Term Financial Plan Statements 2026/2036 (LTFP)
- Draft Pricing Register 2026/2027

After consideration by Council, the documents have been made available to the public who have been invited to provide feedback on the documents. Following the period of being available for public comment, the documents are to be presented for adoption at the 9 June 2026 Council Meeting, thereby complying with the legislative requirement to have the annual budget adopted by 30 June each year.

The draft 2026/2027 Budget has been developed within the overall planning framework, which guides Council in identifying community needs, aspirations and projects over the medium to long term. The key document for the future direction is the Council Plan, which informs the Long-Term Financial Plan.

The short-term objectives, strategies, initiatives, activities, and resource requirements are identified in the Annual Budget. The Long-Term Financial Plan aligns with the 2026/2027 Budget and includes information and modelling in line with Council's longer-term aspirations. The Pricing Register complements the Budget and provides the basis upon which the fees and charges revenue has been developed.

Council has completed significant work in reducing operational costs over the last five budget years. This commitment to efficiency ensures that Council is in a strong financial position with a surplus forecast for eight of the ten years in the Long-Term Financial Plan.

The 2026/2027 Income Statement shows a surplus result of \$5.792m which includes sale of surplus properties along with capital grants relating to the three major projects being Hamilton Streetscape, Hamilton Art Gallery and the Community Hub. Importantly, the efforts to contain costs allows Council to deliver these key major projects to the community and project no debt owing at the completion of the ten-year Long Term Financial Plan. The important key performance indicators such as available cash, indebtedness and expenditure levels are positive throughout the term of the ten-year plan.

Council has an ongoing commitment to asset renewal with an average annual renewal expenditure of \$12.173m throughout the Long-Term Financial Plan.

Discussion

The Draft Budget for 2026/2027 has been prepared under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the Local Government Victoria Model Budget, associated regulations and relevant International and Australian Accounting Standards.

The budget document contains:

- Mayor's Introduction
- Explanation of the various linked documents in the planning framework
- Financial Statements and accompanying notes
- Detailed lists of capital works; and
- Performance indicators.

The Budget attached to this report has been developed through a process of consultation and review with Council and Council Officers and has taken into consideration feedback following community engagement.

Setting the Council Budget continues to be a challenging task, aligning community expectations, rising construction and operating costs, and constrained revenue raising ability.

Despite these difficulties, the Budget demonstrates the ability to fund major projects of regional significance, the renewal of existing assets, and the continued delivery of services to the community.

Council will continue to focus on partnerships and collaboration both with providers locally and regionally with neighbouring Councils, to review service models, increase efficiencies, and drive down costs whilst continuing to explore other revenue streams.

To fund the extensive program of both operational and capital works, Council has proposed rates to increase by 2.75% (rate cap has been set by the Minister for Local Government at 2.75%).

It is also proposing to borrow \$5m to fund some of the expenditure on intergenerational assets.

2026/2027 Draft Budget

Operating Budget

The Operating Budget forecasts an operating surplus of \$5.792 million. This includes \$26.264m from Rates and charges (see further details below), \$21.261m from government grants, \$7.361m in fees and charges, \$524k in statutory fees, \$3.300m in gains on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment and \$2.902m in other revenue.

A high proportion of operational expenditure is employee costs of \$20.691m. Council continues to be a major employer in the region, employing effective fulltime equivalent of 226

people to deliver Council services which is a minor decrease compared to 232 for the 2025/2026 Budget.

Other expenses include materials and services of \$12.853m, borrowing costs (interest) of \$399k, and other of \$6.075m. Depreciation of \$15.799m is not a cash expense but is the allocation of utilisation of previously acquired assets and has increased from the 2025/2026 budget due to increased asset values.

Capital Works Budget

Capital works of \$17.513m are proposed for 2026/2027 noting this does not include any prior year projects that will carry forward into this year. These works are being funded by grants of \$9.810m, sale of assets \$3.300m, and loans of \$5m.

Much of this work is the renewal of existing assets (\$13.149m). The renewal works includes \$5.767m of road renewal works and \$0.977 of upgrades. The roads program has been prepared on the basis that fuel prices will exceed \$3 per litre for diesel and costs of road making materials will be increased by a similar proportion. Should the cost of materials (including fuel) be below the levels allowed for in the budget, Council will be in a position to complete additional planned road works such as the renewal of Thompson Street in Hamilton.

In 2026/2027, Council has allocated funding towards its major projects to deliver on the vision for the Hamilton CBD. The redevelopment of the Hamilton CBD streetscape will progress, with \$2.5m of grant funding anticipated to contribute to the commencement of construction following detailed design. Detailed design of the new Hamilton Art Gallery and Community and Government Hub (library, digital hub and office) are to be completed in 2026/27 with \$2.5m of expenditure allocated for design of the Art Gallery.

New proposed projects have been subject to a business case process that were presented to Council Briefing on 7 April 2026. These projects are made up of capital and operational items with some of the projects shown below along with others identified by Council staff during the budget process with input from community groups and ratepayers:

- HILAC court 1 renewal
- Youth space building upgrade
- Upgrade of PAC auditorium sound system
- Mitchell Park Athletics renewal
- Outdoor swimming pools annual renewal
- Lonsdale Street popup park
- Lake Hamilton Spillway

The budget document also includes projections of capital expenses, sub-totalled by asset type, for the following three years of the financial Plan, and a full list of the 98 specific capital works items for 2026/2027 can be found in the Budget.

Included in the Budget and Long-Term Financial Plan are three multiyear projects:

- CBD Revitalisation – Upgrade of the CBD streetscape is planned to be completed over seven years and funded partially by loans and potential grant funds.

- Community Hub – New building construction to be undertaken over two years incorporating Library, Cinema, digital Hub, municipal offices and office space for local organisations. Total project cost of \$34m with grant funding expected of \$17m with \$9m funded through loan funding and \$8m through Council contribution have focused on financial sustainability.
- Art Gallery – Construction of new Hamilton Gallery planned for completion in 2032 with Council contribution of \$10m to the \$50m construction cost and external contributions and grants of \$40m.

Community Engagement

This year, Council undertook community engagement between November 2025 and January 2026 inviting submissions from the community about where they felt Council should prioritise its spending within the context of the Council Plan 2025-2029.

Business cases were prepared for these submitted projects that were either capital or operational in nature. These were subjected to an assessment process by Council officers before being presented to Council in April.

The draft 2026/27 Budget, 2026/27 Pricing Register and the 2026/2036 Long Term Financial Plan documents were presented to Council at the May 2026 meeting and subsequently released for a second period of community feedback for 14 days.

Council received feedback from 13 ratepayers which includes:

- Positive feedback for inclusion of works at Mitchell Park Athletics and HILAC Court 1,
- Disappointment regarding the lack of funding for the curators shed at Melville Oval,
- Suggestion to invite tender responses for tourism proposals to the value of the current membership cost for Grampians Tourism,
- Disappointed no funding to complete Hamilton Wetlands or the Hamilton to Coleraine Rail Trail,
- Note that revenue from parking meters is not specifically shown and what the costs of maintaining them is,
- Two items requesting to fix faulty netball lights at Silvester Oval,
- Concern relating to removal of 2% rates discount for up-front payment and the impact on cash flow,
- Request for further consideration of funding for the Hamilton-Coleraine Rail Trail that was previously submitted as a budget submission. An additional two items of feedback were received related to identifying that there is no specific budget allocation for the Hamilton-Coleraine Rail Trail,
- General commentary on the documents including an assessment as a self-congratulating document and public have no control over obligations, wages and debt. Request to know what budget submissions were received and the outcome of each along with clear statement of large project spending, breakdown of costs and consequences if funding is not forthcoming. Request to know how Council will support growth and community health in smaller towns along with identifying spending in those towns.

Cash Management

The Statement of Cash Flows demonstrates how Council will fund its operations, capital investment and financing activities.

Council will generate a cash surplus of \$19.403m from operations which will go towards funding the \$17.513m of capital works. Council also proposes to sell assets which are no longer required for service delivery \$3.300m.

There are new borrowings proposed for 2026/2027 of \$5m to fund significant intergenerational capital works projects, most notably relating to the Community Hub building, the CBD Streetscape and the new Hamilton Art Gallery. Council will repay \$2.706m of principal and \$399k of interest against prior years borrowing. The Long-Term Financial Plan identifies that throughout the duration of the plan, the peak (highest) debt level is \$17.000m in 2031/32 which is funding sourced for intergenerational projects. Importantly over the ten years the debt at the end of the Long-Term Financial Plan is anticipated to be zero with funds loaned during this period expected to be fully repaid during the term of the Long-Term Financial Plan.

Council anticipates holding \$12.994 million cash and investments at 30 June 2027.

Rates, Charges and Valuations information

General rates and municipal charges are levied in accordance with Council's Revenue and Rating Plan.

The municipal charge will increase from \$227 to \$233 (this is a 2.64% increase). There are 9,749 properties bringing the total collected to be \$2,271,517 which is approximately 10% of rate revenue.

Council accepts applications for exemptions from the requirements to pay the Municipal Charge under the provisions of Section 159 of the Local Government Act 1989 throughout the year.

The municipal waste charge will increase from \$430 to \$472 (9.7%) for all improved residential properties in the Hamilton, Balmoral, Branxholme, Byaduk, Byaduk North, Cavendish, Coleraine, Dunkeld, Glenthompson, Peshurst and Tarrington urban areas and "refuse collection areas" for the collection and disposal of refuse, recycling and FOGO.

The increase on 2025/2026 service charge reflects the rising costs to Council to dispose of waste and in particular the increasing fuel costs passed onto Council from the contractor. Council charges are below the charges imposed by the majority of neighbouring Councils including Moyne, Northern Grampians and Warrnambool.

The kerbside collection services will again only be provided to commercial and industrial properties within the Shire on request.

Council's Rating Policy is as below:

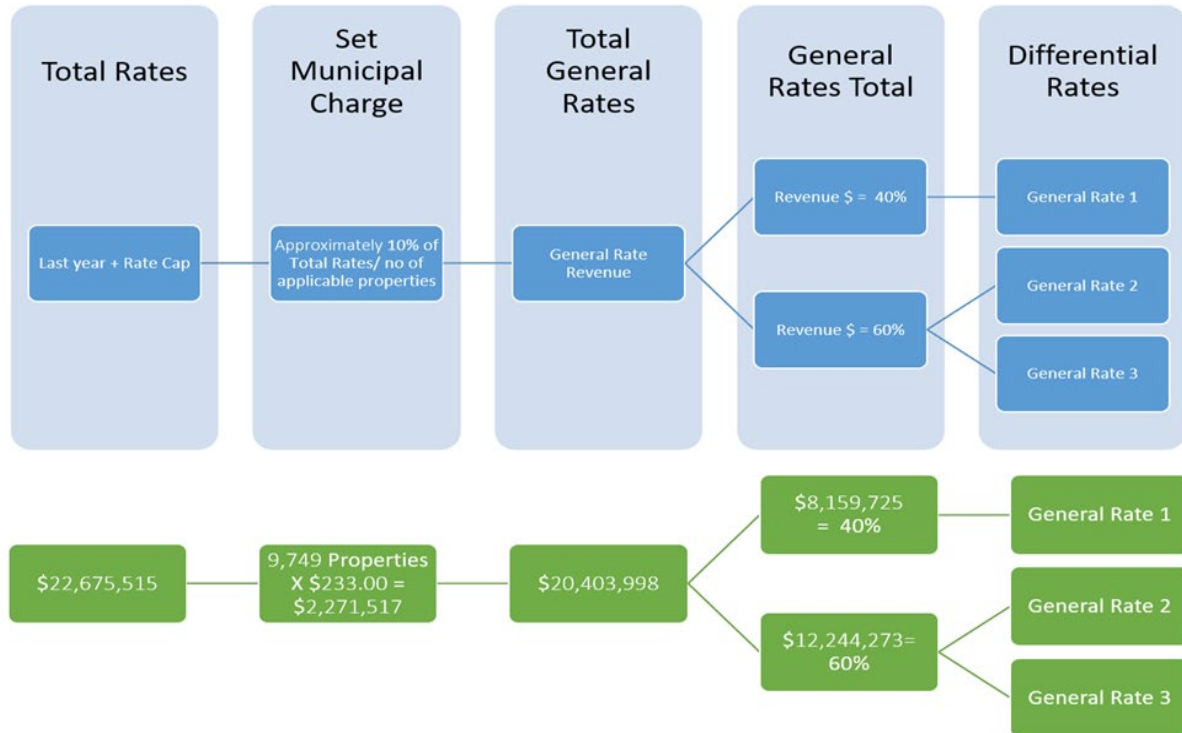


Table 1 - The Rate in the \$ for each type of class of Land is as below:

Type or class of land	2025/26 cents/\$CIV	2026/27 cents/\$CIV	Change
General rate 1 for rateable residential properties	0.003366	0.003284	-2.44%
General rate 1 for rateable rural properties	0.003366	0.003284	-2.44%
General rate 1 for rateable industrial properties	0.003366	0.003284	-2.44%
General rate 1 for rateable commercial properties	0.003366	0.003284	-2.44%
General rate 2 for rateable rural N/S properties	0.001889	0.002010	6.41%
General rate 3 for residential rural properties	0.001889	0.002010	6.41%
General rate 3 for rural properties	0.001889	0.002010	6.41%
General rate 3 for industrial rural properties	0.001889	0.002010	6.41%
General rate 3 for commercial rural properties	0.001889	0.002010	6.41%

Table 2 - The Valuations for each type of class of land:

Type or class of land	2025/26 \$'000	2026/27 \$'000	Change \$'000	%
Residential	2,623,198	2,743,450	120,252	4.58%
Rural	5,660,629	5,453,753	(206,876)	-3.65%
Industrial	103,164	112,916	9,752	9.45%
Commercial	250,708	266,250	15,542	6.20%
Total value of land	8,637,699	8,576,369	(61,330)	-0.71%

Table 3 - The result of multiplying the valuation by the rate in the \$:

Type or class of land	2025/26	2026/27	Change	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	%
General Rate 1	7,923	8,160	237	2.99%
General Rate 2	356	384	28	7.76%
General Rate 3	11,514	11,860	346	3.01%
Total amount to be raised by general rates	19,793	20,404	611	3.09%

Table 4 - Total amount of Rates and Charges to be levied.

	2025/26	2026/27	Change	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	%
General Rates	19,793	20,404	611	3.09%
Municipal Charges	2,203	2,272	69	3.14%
Waste Charges	2,910	3,217	307	10.56%
Total Rates and charges	24,906	25,893	987	3.96%

There are 6,474 properties in the Southern Grampians Shire where municipal waste charge is applicable, along with 304 elective services and this creates a total rate revenue of \$3,217,493.

Council has previously offered an incentive for prompt payment, a discount of two per cent where all four instalments of rates and charges declared for the current year (less the discount) are paid on or before the first instalment date, excluding any arrears of rates and charges outstanding from previous years.

Council have decided to discontinue the 2% prompt payment incentive for the 2026/2027 year and instead encourage ratepayers under financial strain to apply for hardship provisions. In the current climate and with such significant change to the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund Levy, the focus for Council is assisting ratepayers that are experiencing financial duress.

Payment of rates can be by four instalments made on or before the due dates, which are anticipated to be as per below, however dates are subject to change:

Instalment 1 – 30 September 2026

Instalment 2 – 30 November 2026

Instalment 3 – 28 February 2027

Instalment 4 – 31 May 2027

Interest at the rate prescribed by Section 172(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020* be payable in respect of any rates and charges which are not paid by the dates fixed pursuant to Section 167(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Ratepayers can apply for hardship provisions under the Financial Relief and Hardship Policy including:

- Alternative Payment Arrangements / Payment Plan
- Deferral of rates and charges
- Waiver of interest and legal charges
- Waiver of rates and charges.

Long-Term Financial Plan

The 2026/2027 Budget (or Financial Plan) contains projections for the 2026/2027 year and the following three years.

The Long-Term Financial Plan projects a further seven years, after the Financial Plan, taking the total projected figures to a ten-year timeframe.

Council has decided that as it prepares each annual iteration of the Financial Plan (Annual Budget), it will also amend the Long-Term Financial Plan.

This means that the two documents will mirror one another for the first four years, however each year the Long-Term Financial Plan will also incorporate any new information regarding longer term matters such as forward capital works, outcomes of masterplans or strategies and the latest inflation or escalation data.

The LTFP has been drafted with the following assumptions:

Revenue

- The Rate Cap is anticipated to be 3.0% for the 2027/2028 year and then indexed at 2.5% for the remainder of the ten-year plan.
- Fees & Charges are indexed at 3.5% for 2027/2028 and 2028/2029 and 5.0% from 2029/2030 onwards.
- Statutory Fees are indexed at 3.5% for 2027/2028 and then indexed at 2.5% for the remainder of the ten-year plan.
- Operating Grants:
 - R2R increasing in line with Federal Governments commitment.
 - Financial Assistant Grants indexing at 2%.
 - Conservative outlook on capital grants with no non-recurrent grants included with the exception of major projects.

Costs

- Employee Costs: Capped at 1% rise for 2027/2028 and 2028/2029 and then indexed at 2.0% for the remainder of the ten-year plan.
- Materials Costs: Capped at 1.5% rise for 2027/2028 and 2028/2029 and then indexed at 2.0% for the remainder of the ten-year plan.
- Other Expenses: Capped at 1.5% rise for 2027/2028 and 2028/2029 and then indexed at 2.0% for the remainder of the ten-year plan.

Other Highlights

- New Hamilton Gallery design funded.
- Design for the Community Hub funded.
- Accumulated cash surpluses over the ten years.
- No debt at the end of the ten-year period.

The Draft Capital Works programs have also been loaded into the Plan, including Asset Renewals, Major Projects and Business Cases.

Pricing Register

The \$7.367m of fees and charges is supported by the 2026/2027 Pricing Register. This document provides a comprehensive list of all fees and charges levied by Council. It also includes a classification system and pricing principle for each of these charges. These charges have increased by an average of 3.5%, however the pricing basis and principle are taken into consideration for each individual fee and charge. (It should be noted that some of these fees and charges are set by other levels of government and simply passed on by Council).

Financial and Resource Implications

Council is required to implement the principles of sound financial management detailed in Section 136 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Council Plan, Community Vision, Strategies and Policies

Social and Community - We will promote a healthy community by ensuring people are safe, active and connected.

- 1.1 Partner with community, agencies and other levels of government to ensure our community facilities and services are welcoming, safe, accessible and inclusive so people can live healthy, resilient lives.
- 1.2 Facilitate and encourage opportunities for people to participate in community and civic life

Leadership and Governance - We will demonstrate strong leadership and sound financial management through transparent decision-making, clear communication and meaningful engagement that builds community trust.

- 5.1 Improve effective governance and public accountability
- 5.2 Communicate clearly about Council decisions, projects and services to increase awareness, confidence and trust in the community.
- 5.3 Ensure balanced and responsible financial decision making meets long-term financial sustainability
- 5.4 Provide the community a strong voice through meaningful and accessible engagement
- 5.5 Advocate for community priorities

Legislation

The 2026/2027 Budget includes the key activities and initiatives to be funded that will contribute to achieving the strategic objectives specified in the Council Plan 2025-2029.

The Council Plan identifies that we will connect the Council Plan Pillars to deliver real outcomes for the community. The Pillars are:

- Social and Community
- Business, Economy and Tourism
- Community Infrastructure and Assets

- Environment
- Leadership and Governance

The 2026/2027 Budget aligns closely with the strategic objectives of the Council Plan 2025-2029.

Gender Equality Act 2020

There are no direct implications to the *Gender Equality Act 2020* in preparing the 2026/2027 Capital Budget and LTFP, however, Council casts a strong gender lens across all of its operations, programs and projects throughout the year and the budget allows for provisions that support gender equality initiatives.

Risk Management

In developing the Draft Budget, Council considers relevant financial risks to ensure it can achieve its Council Plan objectives within a longer term prudent financial framework.

Climate Change, Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

The Annual Budget provides the funding for the Council to undertake its social, economic and environmental initiatives outlined in the Council Plan 2025-2029.

Community Engagement, Communication and Consultation

Council engaged with the community in relation to the preparation of the 2026/2027 Annual Budget and associated documents commencing in November 2025.

This upfront engagement reflects the intent of earlier and more effective community involvement before the draft budget is prepared, as is the intent of the *Local Government Act 2020* and is in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.

This earlier engagement process has allowed Council to be better informed of resident's priorities prior to the development of the budget. We conducted a short survey about the Budget and Long-Term Financial Plan which aligned with the community providing their submissions regarding the budget.

We conducted a short survey about the Budget and Long-Term Financial Plan which aligned with the community providing their submissions regarding the budget. Feedback for both closed on 9 January 2026 and 23 community submissions were received.

Councillors provided 11 submissions and Council staff submitted 43 business cases with the officer submissions incorporating strategic Council priorities from previous Council decisions along with opportunities to gain efficiencies and continued data collection. The officer submissions also incorporated feedback through community consultation and feedback with reference to the Council Plan and other strategic plans.

This process provided us with valuable information prior to the budget cycle.

Those community members who wanted to speak to their submissions, which was nine in total, presented to Council on 3 February 2026.

Council also undertook community engagement in May 2026 with feedback on the budget invited and 13 respondents provided feedback.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

Darren Barber, Director People and Performance
Nick Templeton, Head of Finance

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

Budget recommendations:

1. Adopts the Budget 2026-2027 attached to this recommendation in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) and relevant regulations.
2. Acknowledge the community's contribution to the Budget consultation process and acknowledge the people and organisations who provided written feedback by thanking them in writing individually.

Declaring rates and charges recommendations:

3. Declares an amount of \$25.893M which Council intends to raise by General Rates and Annual Service Charges for the period 1 July 2026 – 30 June 2027 calculated as follows:
 - a) General Rates \$22.676M; and
 - b) Annual Service charges \$3.217M.
4. Declares the Rates and Charges as detailed in Council's Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029 as required under section 94(2)(i) of the Act and section 161(2) of the *Local Government Act 1989* in line with Tables 1 to 4 of this Report.
5. Notes that the Budget utilises final valuations from the Valuer-General.

Other recommendations:

6. Adopts the 2026 - 2027 Pricing Register.
7. Adopts the 2026 - 2036 Long-Term Financial Plan.
8. Note that Council Officers will communicate to ratepayers in respect to the removal of the 2% early-payment discount through Council's normal communication streams including social media and in addition via rates notices.

12.2 CBD Streetscape - Endorsement of Concept Plan for Package 1

- Directorate:** Infrastructure and Sustainability
Wellbeing, Planning and Regulation
- Report Approver:** Bill Scott (Manager Project Management Office), Rory Neeson (Director Wellbeing, Planning and Regulation)
- Report Author:** Rejoice De Vera, Senior Project Manager
- Attachment(s):**
1. Hamilton CBD Central Gray St Concept Design Report v 7.2 [12.2.1 - 56 pages]
 2. Consolidated Feedback CBD Streetscape Revitalisation - May 2026 [12.2.2 - 20 pages]

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Councillors with an update on the outcomes and key themes arising from recent community consultation undertaken for the CBD Streetscape project. The consultation process engaged a range of stakeholders, including community members, local businesses, and relevant advisory groups, and has provided valuable input into the future direction of the project.

This report includes a summary of the feedback received, highlighting the key themes, issues, and opportunities identified through the consultation process which have been reviewed and incorporated into updates to the proposed design. These changes aim to better respond to community feedback and improve the overall design outcome.

An updated Concept Design Report has now been prepared and is provided for consideration and adoption to enable progression to the functional and detailed design phase of the project.

Discussion

Following the endorsement to release the updated CBD Streetscape Package 1 – Central Gray Street Concept Design Report at the Council Briefing held on 28 April 2026, community and stakeholder consultation was undertaken between 30 April and 22 May 2026.

The community consultation sought feedback on the updated concept designs through a series of targeted questions addressing design preferences, opportunities for improvement, tree species selection, and any additional comments or concerns.

Summary of Community Consultation Feedback

What do you like about the new concept designs?

Feedback generally reflected positive sentiment toward the modern streetscape design, improved footpaths, increased greenery, enhanced accessibility, and a more welcoming CBD environment. Some respondents also valued the incorporation of local character and materiality. Concerns were also raised by some participants in relation to parking availability, maintenance requirements, and tree removal.

What could we do to improve these designs?

Key suggestions for improvement included increasing parking provision, particularly accessible parking; improving footpath durability; addressing drainage and safety concerns; reviewing tree selection for suitability and maintenance outcomes; and enhancing traffic flow, lighting, and long-term maintenance considerations.

Are you happy with the proposed tree species selected?

Responses were mixed, with a significant proportion of respondents indicating they were unsure. While some supported the proposed species selection, others did not support it, reflecting a range of views across the community.

If you selected no, do you have a preferred tree species?

Alternative suggestions included smaller canopy or evergreen species, additional native plantings, and specific species such as *Quercus robur* 'Fastigiata'. Some respondents indicated a preference for removing trees altogether, while others deferred to Council's arboricultural expertise.

Have we missed anything?

Additional feedback highlighted concerns relating to parking and business impacts, drainage performance, footpath conditions, traffic and pedestrian safety, lighting, and ongoing maintenance. Opportunities were also identified for improved community amenities, event activation spaces, signage, and addressing antisocial behaviour.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Further comments reiterated concerns regarding parking availability, construction impacts on businesses, tree removal, and accessibility. Additional suggestions included public art integration, youth-focused facilities, improved cleanliness, stronger cultural interpretation, and enhanced community engagement.

Project Advisory Group (PAG) Feedback

A Project Advisory Group (PAG) member also provided supportive feedback on the draft concept design, noting that they were impressed with the level of development compared to the original proposal. The PAG member indicated general support for the concept, with the following observations:

- Retention of greening within roundabouts should be prioritised, as it contributes cumulatively to the overall streetscape character and green effect.
- Further opportunities for green infrastructure, including vertical greening and trellis systems against existing buildings where feasible, should be explored.
- Support was expressed for the nominated tree species selection, noting that the increased diversity is appropriate and enhances visual interest. The mix of deciduous and evergreen species was also supported for its ability to provide seasonal benefits, including summer shade and winter solar access.

Community Drop-in Sessions

Council officers facilitated two CBD Streetscape community drop-in sessions on 19 May 2026 to further engage with the business owners and community on the proposed concept design.

Feedback from these sessions reflected similar themes, including concerns regarding shelter structures, tree species selection, and potential disruption to business operations during

construction. Participants expressed a preference for increased use of native and indigenous plant species, alongside consideration of additional deciduous trees to provide seasonal shading benefits.

Further comments included preferences regarding species mix and tree quantity, removal of Queensland *Brush Box* trees and *Native Frangiapani* and consideration to include the following tree proposal from community consultation, and check it's suitability Lime Tree (*Tillia*), *Pyrus Chanticleer* (Pear Tree Ornamental), *Acer* (Maples), *Quercus robur* 'Fastigiata'.

The Noticeboard and Sheep artwork at the Commonwealth Bank corner have been identified and will be reflected within the design plans to ensure their inclusion within the overall streetscape concept. The final location(s) of these elements will be determined by Council during the detailed design stage, allowing flexibility to respond to site conditions and contextual requirements.

Additional matters raised included the need for increased bicycle parking, improved recycling infrastructure, careful placement of trees to maintain visibility at intersections and roundabouts, and provision of temporary shade solutions during establishment periods. Operational considerations such as removal of parking meter arrangements and Council support for the verandah reinstatement program were also raised.

First Nations Engagement and Cultural Brief

The consultant and Council officers have been actively and collaboratively engaging with First Nations representatives to inform and develop the Cultural Brief. This engagement has included participation in Yarning Circle sessions, where key cultural values, themes, and design considerations were discussed.

All feedback and cultural insights will be documented within the Cultural Heritage Report and will continue to inform the design development process. These cultural considerations will be progressively embedded into the future detailed design phase, with ongoing and continuous coordination with First Nations stakeholders to ensure culturally appropriate, respectful, and meaningful outcomes.

Consolidated Feedback – Key Themes and Design Considerations

The consolidated feedback from Councillors, Council staff, the Project Advisory Group, and community consultation has informed a series of key design considerations for refinement of the concept design.

Tree planting – proposed location species has been reviewed, with the following species recommended for removal from the proposal: Australian Blackwood, Queensland Brush Box, and Native Frangiapani. The suitability of the following community-nominated species is to be reassessed using the project tree matrix: Lime Tree (*Linden – Tillia*), Ornamental Pear (*Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer'), Maples (*Acer* spp.), and Fastigate English Oak (*Quercus robur* 'Fastigiata'). Where appropriate, it will be included within the proposed tree species palette for the streetscape as a replacement option to other species.

Council parks and garden have shared their proposal to change some of the planting palette in the ground cover which tested and practical, low maintenance planting approach that delivers long-term value while enhancing the visual and environmental quality of the site.

The use of Grampians Sandstone in main key nodes has been reviewed, noting its unsuitability due to its tendency to stain and weather in high-traffic public realm environments. It is recommended that Grampians Sandstone be retained only for secondary applications, including street furniture elements such as seating and benches, as well as feature elements and artwork integration. The use of light bluestone is proposed for primary and key nodes to achieve a higher-quality civic finish, while dark bluestone is recommended for intermediate areas to establish hierarchy and improve durability. Lower-order areas may be considered for a cost-effective finish such as exposed aggregate concrete or similar treatments, where appropriate.

The Noticeboard and Sheep artwork will be layered within the design plans to ensure provision for future referencing and integration within the overall streetscape concept. Council will determine the final location(s) of these elements during the detailed design stage, with annotation notes to be included to ensure the cultural and interpretive intent is appropriately retained.

In addition, shelter design should focus on providing appropriate weather protection, including suitability for colder conditions, as well as ensuring general public comfort and usability across all seasons.

Financial and Resource Implications

The cost associated with the community consultation to inform the updated concept design report will be managed within the approved budget.

A preliminary cost plan has been prepared based on a detailed review of the project scope, design requirements, materials, and construction contingencies. Night works have also been considered to minimise disruption to local businesses and road users, with initial estimates indicating an increase of approximately 20% to construction costs.

Further assessment will be undertaken to refine this cost plan and determine the most suitable delivery approach, balancing budget, construction timelines, stakeholder impacts, and overall project outcomes as part of the next stage of the project.

Council Plan, Community Vision, Strategies and Policies

Social and Community - We will promote a healthy community by ensuring people are safe, active and connected.

- 1.1 Partner with community, agencies and other levels of government to ensure our community facilities and services are welcoming, safe, accessible and inclusive so people can live healthy, resilient lives
- 1.2 Facilitate and encourage opportunities for people to participate in community and civic life
- 1.3 Promote and create spaces and places that bring people together

1.5 Promote safety and inclusion for whole of community including children, first nations, multicultural and gender diverse people

Business, Economy and Tourism - We will create a thriving and diverse local and regional economy that supports our businesses and strengthens our position as a desirable place to live, work, and visit.

2.1 Build business confidence, encourage private investment and decrease vacancy rates by investing in public assets

2.2 Support and promote local businesses, reducing barriers for success, development and growth

Community Infrastructure and Assets - We will deliver well-planned, high-quality infrastructure and spaces that connect people and respond to community needs.

3.1 Ensure transport infrastructure, roads and paths enable safe, accessible and efficient movement across the region

Legislation

There are no direct legislative requirements as a result of this report however the Hamilton CBD Revitalisation project will respond to various types of legislation through the various design and construction phases, some notable legislations are:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Road Management Act 200
- Building Act 1993 / Regulations 2018
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Local Government Act 2020

Gender Equality Act 2020

Though there are no direct implications for the *Gender Equality Act 2020* currently identified for this project, Officers will continue to ensure this lens is applied to the project as the design proceeds.

Risk Management

Key risks identified following the community consultation process relate to potential impacts on local businesses during construction, community dissatisfaction regarding tree species selection, and overall project delivery timeframes.

Construction works may temporarily impact pedestrian access, parking availability, vehicle movement, and business visibility within the package 1 of CBD Streetscape. To mitigate these impacts, Council will implement staged construction methodologies, appropriate traffic management measures, and consider after-hours or night works if affordable to minimise disruption. In addition, the future construction tender will require contractors to provide a detailed construction and staging methodology outlining how impacts to business owners, pedestrians, and surrounding stakeholders will be minimised throughout delivery.

A further risk relates to community concerns regarding the proposed tree species selection. To address this, the final tree selection will be informed through a consolidated tree species matrix assessment, considering factors such as canopy coverage, drought tolerance, maintenance requirements, infrastructure impacts, and long-term streetscape suitability.

There is also a risk that ongoing design refinements, authority approvals, utility coordination, and procurement processes may impact project timelines. Council officers will continue proactive project management and stakeholder coordination to support timely project delivery.

Climate Change, Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

Climate change, environmental, and sustainability considerations have been incorporated into this report and will continue to guide subsequent stages of the project. Key measures include increasing urban canopy cover to enhance shade provision and reduce the urban heat island effect, as well as selecting climate-resilient and drought-tolerant tree species to support long-term landscape sustainability and performance. The use of StrataVault tree pit systems will also be incorporated where appropriate to improve soil volume and promote healthy root growth within constrained urban conditions.

Further consideration will be given to water-sensitive urban design opportunities, where appropriate, to improve stormwater management and environmental performance. The project will also prioritise the use of durable, low-maintenance, and sustainable materials to reduce whole-of-life environmental impacts and ongoing asset management requirements. These initiatives collectively aim to improve environmental outcomes and support the long-term sustainability and resilience of the CBB streetscape.

Community Engagement, Communication and Consultation

Following the initial concept designs released in early 2025, the design has been revised to reflect community feedback. Key changes include the removal and replacement of London Plane trees, replacement of red brick paving with a larger, more suitable paver, and an increase in greening throughout the CBD. The updated design also introduces stronger cultural and heritage elements, sheltered seating and gathering spaces, and vertical greening to improve amenity and streetscape character.

Engagement activities included broader community consultation to ensure the updated concept design was accessible and available for review through multiple channels. Residents were able to view the revised concept plans online, or in person at Council offices, the cinema foyer, and at the Library and Hamilton Gallery entrance from Monday 4 May 2026. This multi-location display approach was supported by a range of communication channels to maximise community awareness, transparency, and participation.

A public drop-in session was also held at the local cinema, providing an informal opportunity for community members to view the concept plans, ask questions, and provide direct feedback to Council officers and the design team.

Targeted stakeholder engagement was undertaken with the Project Advisory Group (PAG), ensuring detailed input from key representatives with local knowledge and interest in the

project outcomes. In addition, engagement with First Nations stakeholders was conducted through a series of yarning circles, providing a culturally appropriate and respectful forum for discussion and feedback on the concept design and its relationship to Country.

The feedback received through these engagement activities has been carefully considered and has informed refinements to the concept design. Council will continue to engage with stakeholders as the project progresses into the functional and detailed design phases to ensure outcomes remain aligned with community expectations and project objectives.

Youth Charter

The guiding principles of the Youth Charter have been applied throughout the community consultation, ensuring they were given the opportunity to have their thoughts and ideas heard online, via direct email and phone contact and at the cinema session. Further involvement of young people has occurred within the First Nations Engagement process as well. These opportunities have provided valuable insights and have hopefully led to young people feeling heard and valued.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

Rejoice De Vera, Senior Project Manager
Trevor Haley, Manager Works
Alison Quade, Manager Communication and Engagement
Bill Scott, Manager Project Management Office
Rory Neeson, Director Wellbeing Planning and Regulation

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the outcomes of the community consultation process and the key themes of feedback received in relation to the CBD Streetscape Concept Design.
2. Adopts the updated Concept Design Report, as amended in response to community and stakeholder feedback.
3. Notes the identified key project risks, including impacts on business operations during construction, tree species selection, and project delivery timeframes, and the proposed mitigation measures including staging strategies, construction methodology requirements, and consolidated tree species matrix assessment.
4. Approves progression of the project to the functional and detailed design phase, including continued stakeholder engagement, technical investigations, and preparation of construction documentation.

12.3 Event Funding Assistance Policy

Directorate:	Wellbeing, Planning and Regulation
Report	Rory Neeson (Director Wellbeing, Planning and Regulation)
Approver:	Rory Neeson, Director Wellbeing, Planning and Regulation
Report Author:	Simone Logan, Acting Visitor Experience Coordinator
Attachment(s):	1. Operational Policy Economic Development Tourism Events Funding Assistance Pro [12.3.1 - 2 pages]

Executive Summary

This report seeks Council endorsement to rescind the Event Funding Assistance Policy. The policy is now redundant as all event funding is managed through the Community Partnership Grant Policy, adopted in June 2025 and scheduled for review in June 2028. This change streamlines Council's funding processes and reduces duplication of policies.

Discussion

Background and Context:

Historically, Council maintained a separate policy for Major and Minor Event Funding Assistance, providing a framework for supporting events that generated economic, community and promotional benefits in the Southern Grampians Shire. In recent years, work has been consolidated into the Event Funding Assistance Policy, which outlines the criteria and processes for event-related funding.

Records show that in 2001/2002 Council allocated a budget of \$20,000 for event funding assistance and supported 16 events, comprising 10 minor events and 6 major events, at a total cost of approximately \$15,000. Across the first five years of the program (2001/2002 to 2005/2006), Council provided approximately \$82,000 in total event funding support. By comparison, under the current Community Partnership Grants Program, Council provided \$82,504.30 in event funding assistance in the 2023/2024 financial year alone, reflecting the significant growth in Council's support for community events over time.

Policy Review and Supersession:

Following a comprehensive review, all event-related funding, sponsorship and support was incorporated into the Community Partnership Grant Policy, adopted by Council in June 2025.

The new Community Partnership Grant Policy provides a single, clear framework for all community and event funding programs, including processes, eligibility, assessment and acquittal.

The Community Partnership Grant Policy now supersedes the Event Funding Assistance Policy and all provisions previously contained within it.

Financial and Resource Implications

No additional resources or budget impact is associated with rescinding this policy. Event funding allocations continue to be made through the Community Partnership Grant stream in Council's annual budget.

Council Plan, Community Vision, Strategies and Policies

Leadership and Governance - We will demonstrate strong leadership and sound financial management through transparent decision-making, clear communication and meaningful engagement that builds community trust.

5.1 Improve effective governance and public accountability

5.2 Communicate clearly about Council decisions, projects and services to increase awareness, confidence and trust in the community.

Legislation

Policies are updated in-line with legislative changes, including reforms to Acts, regulations, recommendations issued by regulatory bodies and ministerial or best practice guidelines issued to Councils.

Gender Equality Act 2020

There are no direct gender equality implications with respect to rescinding the policies.

Risk Management

Regular review of policies ensures content is correct and best practice processes are in place.

Climate Change, Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

There is no climate change, environmental and sustainability considerations with respect to rescinding the policies.

Community Engagement, Communication and Consultation

There has been no community engagement, communication or consultation with respect to rescinding this policy. This policy has been superseded by the current Community Partnership Grant Policy, of which was developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

Simone Logan, Acting Visitor Experience Coordinator

Rory Neeson, Director Wellbeing, Planning and Regulation

RECOMMENDATION

That Council rescind the Event Funding Assistance Policy noting that all event funding is now administered under the Community Partnership Grants Program Policy which was adopted in June 2025.

12.4 Hamilton Moves - Community Consultation

Directorate:	Infrastructure and Sustainability
Report	Marg Scanlon, Director Infrastructure and Sustainability
Approver:	Aaron Smith, Manager Assets
Report Author:	Aaron Smith, Manager Assets
Attachment(s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Hamilton Moves [12.4.1 - 24 pages]2. Permanent Heavy Vehicle Bypass Route [12.4.2 - 1 page]3. Hamilton Moves Feedback Response (1) [12.4.3 - 2 pages]

Executive Summary

The Hamilton Moves Integrated Transport Plan, partially funded by the Department of Transport, was initiated in 2022 to assess connectivity and mobility within Hamilton. The study identified key transport challenges and opportunities, leading to 24 actions across four themes: Heavy Vehicles, Safety, Mobility, and Technology.

Over the past three years, significant progress has been made in implementing these actions, including realignment of heavy vehicle routes, road safety improvements undertaken through secured state government funding, and adoption of the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Policy. Key projects such as addressing gaps within footpath connections referred to as missing links, footpath upgrades, and road safety enhancements have been instrumental in improving overall transport efficiency and safety within the Hamilton CBD.

The Hamilton Moves study has more recently been shared with the public for consultation and feedback. The online engagement received 37 discreet visits. Five visitors registered their intent to provide feedback. Two respondents provided detailed responses.

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the findings from the consultation undertaken on the draft of Hamilton Moves and to seek endorsement of the Hamilton Moves plan.

Discussion

In March 2022, Council invited the community to provide local insights about how residents travel around Hamilton. The transport study was partially funded by the Department of Transport and was used to create a map of Hamilton's transport activities and identify where there may be connectivity issues and opportunities to improve.

Hamilton Moves was presented to the Council Briefing on 14 December 2022.

The briefing presentation outlined;

- Vision and purpose
- Context and foundation
- Project pathway
- Themes from community engagement
- SGSC's roles in improvement activities
- Focus areas – specifically heavy vehicle alternative routes

Hamilton Moves developed twenty-four actions across four themes as detailed below.

Since the completion of the study, progress has been made with various actions.

Since 2022 Council has captured traffic data through Council's VMS boards and tube counters which provide vehicle volumes and speeds. Council also accesses the state governments traffic DataVic portal which provides information on traffic volumes, speeds, vehicle type, incidents, accidents and fatalities.

Continuous improvement on traffic data will further inform Council and assist with planning and decision making. Potential future opportunities to collect relevant information from external companies using data received directly from vehicle manufacturers are being considered.

Progress across the Hamilton Moves four themes is tabled below:

THEME – HEAVY VEHICLES

Action	Progress
Realign Heavy Vehicle movements around the CBD And Interim Heavy Vehicle Route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cox Street Hamilton Redevelopment project required alternative Heavy Vehicle (HV) Routes to be established on the south and north of the CBD (South Boundary and North Boundary Roads) • Upon completion of the Cox Street project works the alternative HV Routes remain open to allow short-term movement and place benefits to the CBD. • Advocacy with DTP continues, with a focus on medium and long-term solutions to heavy vehicle movements in and around Hamilton.

THEME - SAFETY

Action	Progress
Intersection Upgrade – Coleraine Road and Hamilton CBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be addressed as part of the detailed design of the Hamilton CBD Streetscape project
Speed limit reductions and enhanced pedestrian crossings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2m TAC funding sourced via Safer Local Roads and Streets Program to establish six raised pedestrian crossings and one intersection treatment in Hamilton (works to be completed mid 2026). Speed limit reductions within the CBD are currently being progressed through DTP
Arterial road upgrades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council advocates for the Ballarat/Rippon Roads intersection treatments and school safety zone • The Lakes Edge Development will trigger a traffic management plan which will review the additional traffic loads and determine any necessary road, footpath and/or bicycle lane treatments
Lake Hamilton Enhancements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar lighting installation completed

Action	Progress
Freight Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maroona to Portland Rail Re-Sleeper Project has commenced (expected completion in 2027), which will allow for safer, more efficient and more regular rail freight operations.

THEME - MOBILITY

Action	Progress
Footpath Upgrade program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hamilton CBD Streetscape project in design development • Missing Links footpath program (completed over 5kms since 2022)
Active transport wayfinding signage upgrades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage audit completed
Bicycle racks in Hamilton CBD and Pedestrianisation and place activation in the Hamilton CBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hamilton CBD Streetscape project in design development
Grange Burn Recreation Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant uplift of the Grange Burn trail • Funding application submitted under the Integrated Water Management Program seeking to undertake the Grangeburn Reserve Master Plan
Connection of Hamilton CBD to regional rail trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coleraine Rail Trail crossing points - completed
Improved Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued advocacy for improved bus connectivity (one of Council's top advocacy items)

THEME - TECHNOLOGY

Action	Progress
Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EV Charging Infrastructure Policy Adopted • EV Charger installed within Hamilton in 2024
Provision for charging stations for micromobility modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential inclusion in Hamilton CBD Streetscape project in design development

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS – CONTINUED ADVOCACY

Additional actions identified in the Hamilton Moves Transport Plan Study around continued council advocacy, particularly with regards to rail (freight, level crossing safety and passenger), bus transport infrastructure, services and DDA compliance.

SHORT TERM – COMPLETED 2025

The Northern Alternative Heavy Vehicle Route was modified to discontinue Heavy Traffic along the eastern half of North Boundary Road. This effectively removed this route as a thoroughfare for non-local heavy vehicles. Local heavy vehicle movements can still be allowed through NHVR permits (standard practice); reducing any local economic impact of this closure. Heavy vehicles continue to be able to use the Southern Alternative Route as well as the Cox Street route. Council maintains administrative authority over NHVR Heavy Vehicle routes within its network of controlled roads. This means that Council ultimately has control over where and what type of heavy vehicle access is allowed on Council operated roads.

MEDIUM TERM

Officers continue to seek funding for upgrades of the Southern alternative route to address existing issues and make adjustments in alignment to improve it as a permanent route, including additional pavement upgrade to support long-term heavy vehicle use and intersection treatments (including potential land acquisition) to improve the safety and efficiency of the route. Considering the current State Government budget constraints, Council will continue to be responsible for the upkeep of the route. A continuation of the TAC's Safer Local Roads and Streets Program may also be able to help to address intersection treatments in the future.

Council should continue to advocate with DTP for a permanent bypass route which would potentially allow an exchange of the Alternative Route and Cox Street / Lonsdale Street between DTP and Council. Cox Street / Lonsdale Street may then be returned to Council and discontinued as a heavy vehicle route. The Hub Design development includes a parking and movement plan. This together with local data will inform a business case for the removal of Lonsdale/Cox Street heavy vehicle route.

- Continued advocacy to DTP and application for future grant opportunities for infrastructure & safety upgrades of the Alternative Southern Heavy Vehicle Route
- Continued advocacy for a permanent Heavy Vehicle Bypass; thereby allowing discontinuation of the Cox Street Heavy Vehicle Route.

LONG TERM

A permanent heavy vehicle bypass, designed to remove heavy vehicles from all of the Hamilton town centre should be established. The most suitable option for this is to develop Fairburns Road (from near Coleraine Road / Henty Highway) south to Digby Road and then continuing south to the extension of South Boundary Road (attachment 4.3.6).

- This bypass would essentially remove the requirement for Heavy Vehicles which are passing through Hamilton in every direction to be channelled around the town, avoiding both the CBD as well as problematic intersections such as Mt Baimbridge Road / Scoresby Street.

Financial and Resource Implications

- Discontinuance of the Northern Alternative Heavy Vehicle Route has had a positive impact on the cost of maintaining North Boundary Road, Hensley Park Road and Mill

Road. Recent renewal of Gray Street (between the rail crossing and Hensley Park Road) was required as a direct result of heavy traffic. The remainder of the previous heavy traffic route is in good condition and won't require significant expenditure with regards to pavement renewal any time soon.

- Continued Council investment will be required for maintaining the Southern Alternative Heavy Vehicle Route (South Boundary Road, Petschels Lane)

Council Plan, Community Vision, Strategies and Policies

Social and Community - We will promote a healthy community by ensuring people are safe, active and connected.

1.1 Partner with community, agencies and other levels of government to ensure our community facilities and services are welcoming, safe, accessible and inclusive so people can live healthy, resilient lives

Community Infrastructure and Assets - We will deliver well-planned, high-quality infrastructure and spaces that connect people and respond to community needs.

3.1 Ensure transport infrastructure, roads and paths enable safe, accessible and efficient movement across the region

3.2 Advocate for better investment from State and Federal Government in our community infrastructure and assets

3.4 Ensure appropriate and connected residential, business and industrial development which encourages liveability

Legislation

Road Management Act 2004

Gender Equality Act 2020

A Gender Equality Impact Assessment (GIA) has not been undertaken across Hamilton Moves. Specific initiatives identified within Hamilton Moves will be further considered through the GIA lens.

Risk Management

Discontinuance of the Northern Alternative Heavy Vehicle Route has reduced the risk of interaction between heavy vehicles and other road users and pedestrians along North Boundary Road, Hensley Park Road and Mill Road.

A foreseeable increase in traffic along the Southern Alternative Route will increase the road and intersection risks along this route and will require additional monitoring.

Climate Change, Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

The environmental impacts, particularly noise, on residents along the Northern Alternative Heavy Vehicle Route has been reduced. There have been no complaints from the residents

along this route with regards to heavy vehicles, speed or noise since the route was discontinued.

Community Engagement, Communication and Consultation

Community engagement was undertaken to inform the development of Hamilton Moves. Social Pinpoint, an online engagement tool was used, inviting community members to provide input through the identification and location of issues, opportunities and information on relevant traffic and transport within Hamilton.

Council received 37 unique visitors to the web page over a 28-day engagement period in Jan-Feb 2025. Five users registered their details intending to respond, with two responses received (attachments 4.3.3 and 4.3.4).

These responses targeted the Southern Alternative Heavy Vehicle Route and particularly focused on advocacy for the residents and users of Petchel's Lane. The main questions and themes raised by these responses, as well as officer comments and proposed actions are included in attachment 4.3.2.

Youth Charter

While no specific youth related issues were identified through the community consultation, Hamilton Moves acknowledges the importance of transport options, footpath and shared pathway connectivity for youth and those without passenger vehicle access.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

Aaron Smith, Manager Assets

Marg Scanlon, Director Infrastructure and Sustainability

RECOMMENDATION

That Council;

1. Adopts the Hamilton Moves Transport Plan.
2. Acknowledge the feedback received to Hamilton Moves from the community consultation and write to the respondents acknowledging their contributions.
3. Advocates to the Department of Transport and Planning and National Heavy Vehicle Regulator for an alternative heavy vehicle route removing heavy vehicles from Hamilton Central Business District.

12.5 Finance Report to 31 March 2026

Directorate:	People and Performance
Report	Finance Report as at 31 March 2026
Approver:	Darren Barber, Director People and Performance
Report Author:	Nick Templeton, Head of Finance
Attachment(s):	1. Finance Report as at 31 March 2026 [12.5.1 - 15 pages]

Executive Summary

The Finance Report for the period ended 31 March 2026 is presented for the information of Council.

The performance of Council for the first nine months is a result for the nine months to 31 March is a surplus of \$5.934m and the forecasted result for the same period was a surplus of \$2.660m.

Discussion

The Finance Reports set out actual results compared to Budget for the first nine months of the 2025/26 financial year and contains the:

- Comprehensive Income Statement,
- Balance Sheet,
- Cash Flow Statement,
- Statement of Capital Works

Further details are provided where there is a material variance between the actual YTD performance compared to the forecast YTD performance. The Report also includes additional information, graphical representations and tables on cash balances, current borrowing ratios, rates debtor balances, and sundry debtor balances.

Included in the March 2026 quarterly report is a summary of the key components of the Finance Report including the key information that is available for readers of the report. Narratives also accompany each of the statements.

The Comprehensive Income Statement result for the nine months to 31 March is a surplus of \$5.934m and the forecasted result for the same period was a surplus of \$2.660m. During the March quarter there was total revenue recognised of \$9.918m while the total expenditure for the three months was \$11.741m with a deficit for this period of \$1.823m.

The forecast at 31 March was for cash and investments of \$11.569m. Impacting the cash and investments are receipt of capital grants along with not drawing down loan funds that are included in the budget.

Cash and investment held at 31 March 2026 was \$10.408m.

Key narratives to 31 March 2026 include:

Income Statement

The Comprehensive Income Statement result for the nine months to 31 March is a surplus of \$5.934m and the forecasted result for the same period was a surplus of \$2.660m. The actual and forecasted result is impacted by the rates for the full year being raised in the first quarter, which means that 99% of the annual forecasted rates revenue is recognised in this period. Another impact to the result was that Council recognised \$5.082m of capital grants during the March quarter.

During the March quarter there was total revenue recognised of \$9.918m while the total expenditure for the three months was \$11.741m with a deficit for this period of \$1.823m.

The main variances within the report are identified with an explanation provided for what has transpired, which includes:

REVENUE

- User fees are below budget which is most pronounced for the Hamilton Livestock Exchange and relates to a reduction in stock numbers compared to previous years.
- Contributions to projects and reimbursement of expenditure is recognised under contributions and includes amounts received for the Pedrina Park Cricket Nets and Balmoral Bowling Club.
- Capital grants have been received for the Regional Precinct and Partnerships Program, Roads to Recovery, Melville Oval and the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program that was expected later in the financial year.
- Asset sales revenue is below expected levels as sale of excess property anticipated for the first nine months of 2025/26 has not yet occurred, however the properties are listed with agents for sale and are hopeful of sale during the financial year.
- Other revenue includes reimbursements for Workcover claims of \$180k that has been received and is not budgeted, which offsets salary-related expenditure for these claims. Transfer Station revenue exceeds budget by \$523k for internal charges relating to disposal of kerbside waste and interest on investments exceeds budget for the first nine months.

EXPENDITURE

- External Works is impacted by works auspiced by Council for community groups requiring Council to recognise the associated revenue and expenditure. For the nine month of 2025/26 \$269k has been recognised for these projects under contract works.
- Utility costs include electricity, gas, telephone and water charges which are all below budget for the first nine months. Hamilton Indoor Leisure and Aquatic Centre costs are below anticipated by \$134k with gas in particular showing savings.
- Plant and fleet operations includes cost allocations of Council-owned fleet and the recovery of costs of running those fleet items. The recovery remains below budget however has improved throughout the capital road construction period. Registration costs have been incurred and fully recognised which exceeds budget by \$39k.
- Finance costs relate specifically to loan interest. On 31 March, Council's loan balances include only prior year loans. However, \$5m was anticipated in the 2025/26 budget but has no current amount drawn down.

Statement of Cash Flows and Balance Sheet

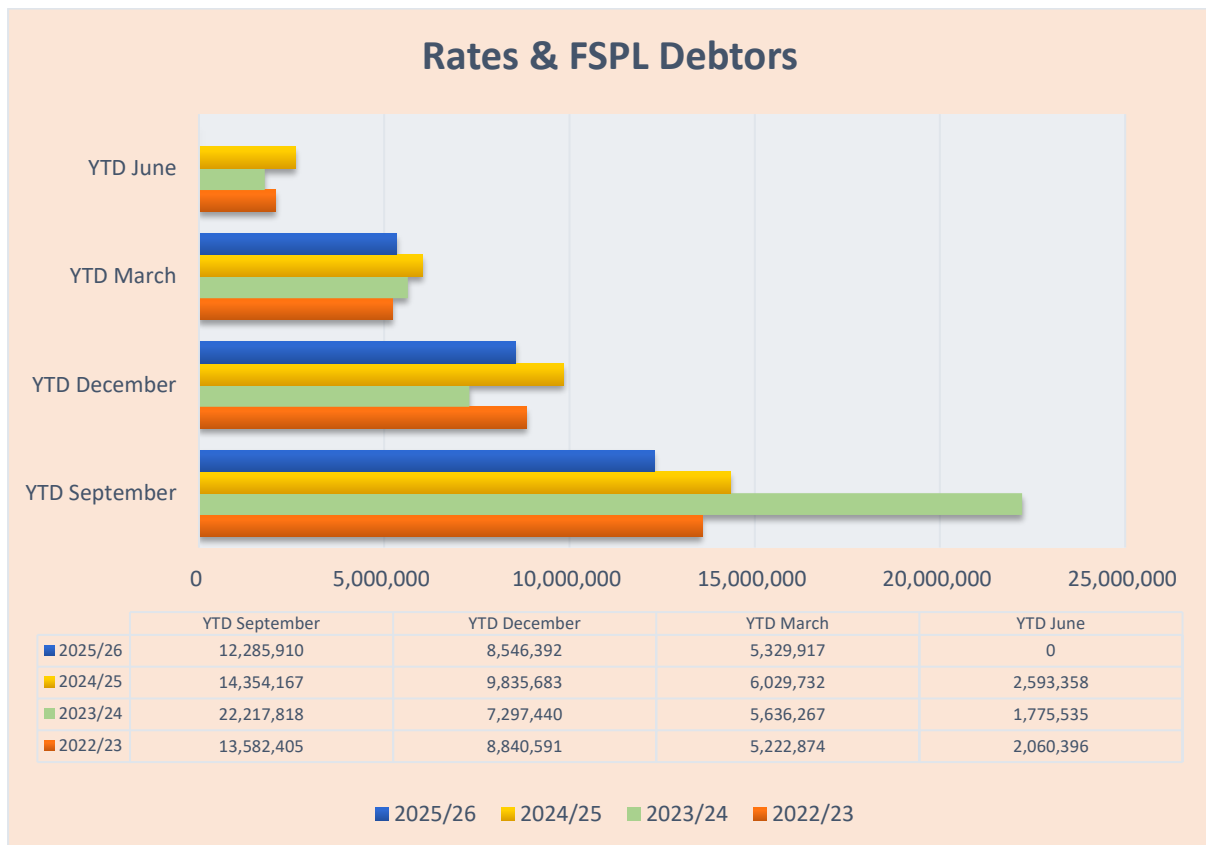
Council is holding \$10.408m in cash and investment at 31 March 2026. The forecast at 31 March was for cash and investments of \$11.569m. Impacting the cash and investments are receipt of capital grants along with not drawing down loan funds that are included in the budget.

Debt servicing and debt commitment ratios are both strong, being well below the acceptable maximum level which is due to the low level of borrowings. Council drew down loan funds from Treasury Corporation of Victoria during the first three months, and these funds have since been repaid.

Rate Debtors

The level of debtors for rates has shown a decline compared to the same period in the previous financial year. In both years Council is mindful of the financial pressures on ratepayers from both the cost of living and the significant challenges to our primary producers and other businesses. A one-off rates payment was made on behalf of ratepayers for the Primary Producer Support Payment, which has aided in the reduction of rates owing for the 2025/2026 year compared to the prior year.

Four-year rate debtors' comparison:



Statement of Capital Works

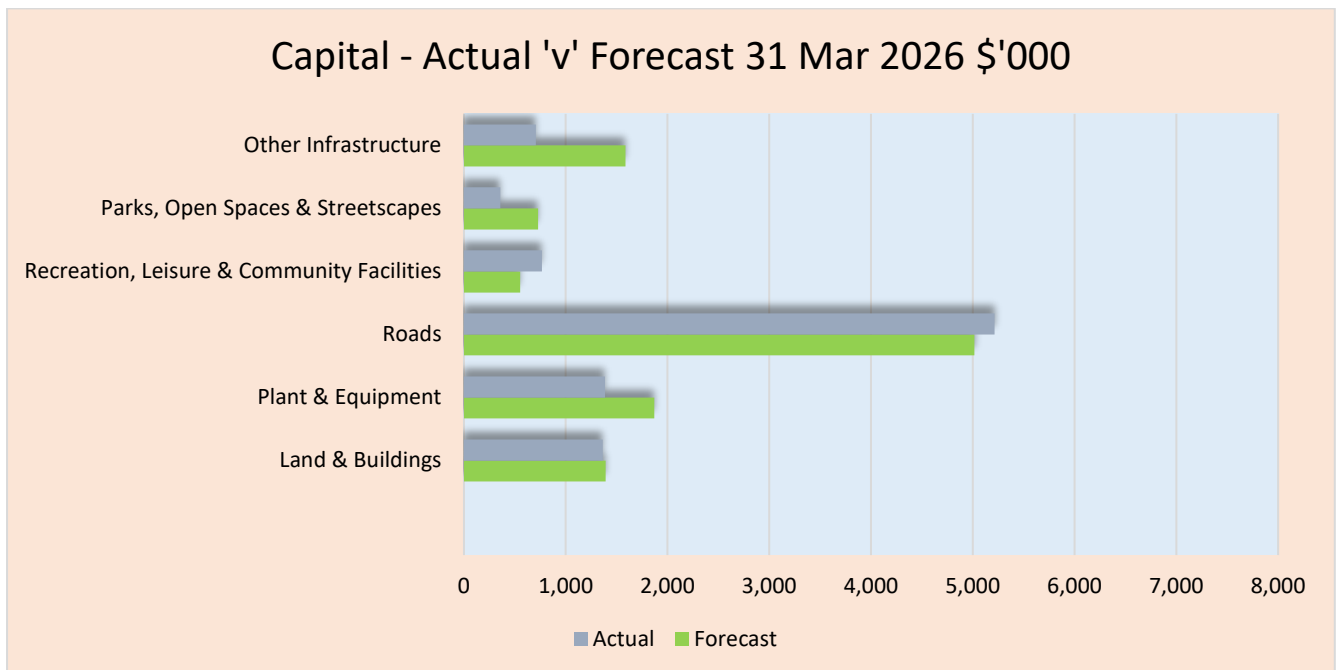
Detailed reports on the financial progress of the capital works and major projects are also provided for information. Capital works expenditure for the YTD to 31 March was \$9.790m compared to a YTD forecast of \$11.143m. The capital works carried forward from 2024/25 was a total net amount of \$4.226m.

Expenditure incurred included the replacement of both heavy and light fleet items, rehabilitation of Victoria Point Road, Nagorckas Road, and Sobey Road, and completion of the stair replacement project at Nigretta Falls. Works continued on the Road Safety Improvement Program and there were final seals done at Gallie Road, Hamilton-Chatsworth Road, and Mt Napier Road. Works were undertaken on outdoor pools, the Penshurst Caravan Park toilets along with design works on the Library and Community Hub, Art Gallery, and CBD Streetscape projects.

Items carried forward from the 2024/25 year was a total amount of \$4.226m and included the following projects:

- Lonsdale Street building demolition,
- Art Gallery design (multi-year project),
- Heavy fleet replacement,
- Storm event rectification works,
- Louth Swamp bridge,
- Hamilton entrance signs,
- Cox Street streetscape project completion, and
- Nigretta Falls stair replacement.

Below shows the actual capital expenditure at 31 March compared to the forecasted expenditure at that time by asset category:



Council Plan, Community Vision, Strategies and Policies

Leadership and Governance - We will demonstrate strong leadership and sound financial management through transparent decision-making, clear communication and meaningful engagement that builds community trust.

5.1 Improve effective governance and public accountability

5.2 Communicate clearly about Council decisions, projects and services to increase awareness, confidence and trust in the community.

5.3 Ensure balanced and responsible financial decision making meets long-term financial sustainability

Legislation

Section 97 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that after the end of each quarter, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) must ensure that a quarterly budget report is presented to the Council. The report must include a comparison of the actual and budgeted results to date and an explanation of material variations, and any other matters prescribed by the regulations.

In addition, the second quarterly report of a financial year must include a statement by the CEO as to whether a revised budget is, or may be, required. The June report is indicative only with the final report being Council's official financial report which is audited and then included as part of Council's Annual Report.

Council is also required to implement the financial management principles detailed in Section 101 of the Local Government Act 2020 which states:

The following are the financial management principles:

- (a) Revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments and financial transactions must be managed in accordance with a Council's financial policies and strategic plans;
- (b) Financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances;
- (c) Financial policies and strategic plans, including the Revenue and Rating Plan, must seek to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community;
- (d) Accounts and records that explain the financial operations and financial position of the Council must be kept.

(2) For the purposes of the financial management principles, financial risk includes any risk relating to the following:

- (a) The financial viability of the Council;
- (b) The management of current and future liabilities of the Council;
- (c) The beneficial enterprises of the Council

Gender Equality Act 2020

There are no direct implications to the *Gender Equality Act 2020* in preparing the Financial Report, however, Council casts a strong gender lens across all its operations, programs, and projects throughout the year and the budget allows for provisions that support gender equality initiatives.

Risk Management

The report measures financial risk and compliance with our annual budget.

Climate Change, Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

The report measures financial sustainability and compliance with our annual budget.

Community Engagement, Communication and Consultation

The report communicates our financial sustainability and compliance with our annual budget.

Youth Charter

There are no direct implications to the Youth Charter in preparing the Financial Report, however, Council casts a strong youth lens across all of its operations, programs and projects throughout the year and the budget allows for provisions that support youth initiatives.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

Nick Templeton, Head of Finance

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive the Finance Report for the quarter ended 31 March 2026.

12.6 Council Plan Reporting - Annual Plan Quarterly Report - 1 January - 31 March 2026

Directorate:	People and Performance
Report Approver:	Darren Barber (Director People and Performance)
Report Author:	Karly Herring, Governance Coordinator
Attachment(s):	1. Annual Plan Progress Report - 1 January - 31 March Quarter - Council Plan 2025-2029 [12.6.1 - 54 pages]

Executive Summary

The Annual Plan is developed each year to assist in the delivery of the Council Plan objectives and demonstrate to the community the key projects to be delivered each year of the Council Plan.

The Annual Plan Report for the period 1 January to 31 March 2026 has been prepared to provide information regarding the performance of the organisation against the Council Plan 2025-2029.

Discussion

The Annual Plan sets out specific actions and includes a detailed list of Council's activities and initiatives for the upcoming financial year. These initiatives are projects undertaken over and above normal service delivery and are intended to attain important outcomes for Council and the community.

Reports on the progress of the Annual Plan are reported to Council quarterly. This allows Council to receive timely, relevant and measurable information about how the organisation is performing. This in turn allows Council an opportunity to raise concerns about performance in a timely manner. The Annual Plan reporting also helps formulate the Annual Report and support the reporting against the Council Plan each year.

There are 82 actions in the Annual Plan for 2025-2026, of these 84 actions:

- 76 actions (93%) are on track - at least 90% of the target achieved;
- 6 actions (7%) require monitoring –between 70% and 90% of the target achieved; and
- 0 actions (0%) are off track – less than 70% of target achieved.

Details about the specific performance of the Annual Plan actions is detailed in the attached Action and Task Progress Report.

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no direct financial or resource implications associated with this reporting and where there are financial or resource implications relating to specific projects, these will be addressed through relevant business cases.

Council Plan, Community Vision, Strategies and Policies

Leadership and Governance - We will demonstrate strong leadership and sound financial management through transparent decision-making, clear communication and meaningful engagement that builds community trust.

5.1 Improve effective governance and public accountability

5.2 Communicate clearly about Council decisions, projects and services to increase awareness, confidence and trust in the community.

5.5 Advocate for community priorities

Legislation

Council is required to adopt a Council Plan in accordance with Section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The Council Plan is supported by the development of an Annual Plan which details the actions that will be undertaken to achieve the strategic objectives in the Council Plan.

Gender Equality Act 2020

There are no direct *Gender Equality Act 2020* implications associated with this reporting and any strategies, policies or programs will have individual and tailored Gender Impact Assessments undertaken as they develop.

Risk Management

Reporting on the Annual Plan is presented to Council quarterly so Council can regularly monitor the performance of the organisation against the Council Plan.

Climate Change, Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

No direct implications as part of the Annual Plan reporting, environment is a pillar within the Council Plan 2025-2029 and has standalone objectives and strategies.

Community Engagement, Communication and Consultation

The Annual Plan quarterly progress reports are publicly available for viewing on Council's website.

Youth Charter

There are no direct implications as part of the reporting itself and youth objectives and strategies are identified within the Council Plan 2025-2029 and Annual Plan actions. Youth were consulted during the development of the Council Plan and below outlines the guiding principles during that consultation:

Guiding Principle 1 – Collaboration

- Innovation and creativity - Youth input inspires fresh ideas and approaches.

Guiding Principle 2 – Listen

- Understand needs - Ensures programs and services align with youth priorities.
- Respond- Confirm our understanding and engage. Youth perspectives bring creativity and new ideas.

Guiding Principle 3 – Empower

- Support future leaders – Prepares the next generation to shape the region.

Guiding Principle 4 – Advocate

- Promote fairness – Supports equal opportunities and access.

Guiding Principle 5 – Respect

- Strengthen relationships – Respect fosters participation in programs and decision making.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

Karly Herring, Governance Coordinator

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive the Annual Plan report for 1 January – 31 March 2026.

12.7 s11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation - Planning and Environment Act 1987

Directorate:	People and Performance
Report Approver:	Darren Barber (Director People and Performance)
Report Author:	Tania Quinn (Acting Governance Coordinator)
Attachment(s):	1. Draft S 11 A Instrument of Appointment Planning and Environment Act 1987 - 9 June 2026 [12.7.1 - 2 pages]

Executive Summary

Council appoints many powers to its staff through instruments of delegation and authorisation.

The s11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation appoints Council staff to be authorised under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act) and allows them to fully discharge their duties and responsibilities under that Act.

The s11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation was last adopted by Council on 10 September 2025.

The Instrument has been updated to reflect a recent staff change and is attached for Council consideration.

Discussion

The Act, and a variety of other legislation, makes express provision for the appointment of authorised officers to act on behalf of Councils and these powers are essential to enable day to day decisions to be made and for the effective operation of the organisation.

The Instruments of Appointment and Authorisation are prepared for Council by Maddocks Lawyers.

S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation

The s11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation:

- Appoints the officers to be authorised officers for the purposes of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the regulations made under that Act; and
- Authorises the officers to institute proceedings for offences against the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the regulations made under that Act.

The Authorisation requires updating due to staff changes in the Planning Team including the commencement of a new staff member.

These appointments and authorisations must be made by Council and are not delegated by the CEO.

Financial and Resource Implications

Council subscribes to the Delegations and Authorisations service provided by Maddocks Lawyers, the cost of which is provided for in Council's budget.

There are no other financial implications in reviewing the Instruments of Delegation.

Council Plan, Community Vision, Strategies and Policies

Leadership and Governance - We will demonstrate strong leadership and sound financial management through transparent decision-making, clear communication and meaningful engagement that builds community trust. through transparent decision-making, clear communication and meaningful engagement that builds community trust.

5.1 Improve effective governance and public accountability

Legislation

Section 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* appoints officers to be authorised officers for the purposes of the Act and regulations made under the Act.

Section 313 of the *Local Government Act 2020* authorises the officers either generally or in a particular case to institute proceedings for offences against the Act and regulations described in the s11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation.

Gender Equality Act 2020

The adoption of this Instrument does not have any direct gender implications.

Risk Management

The use of the Maddocks service alleviates the potential risk of staff not being appropriately authorised in the exercise of various powers and functions. Updates are provided by Maddocks regularly and capture any legislative changes. The service is available to all Victorian Councils which enables consistency.

Climate Change, Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

Many of the activities undertaken by staff on behalf of Council have social, economic, or environmental effects, including many of the powers included in the instruments of authorisation and delegation. The Instruments ensure that the decisions are made by the most appropriate person or persons within the organisation.

Community Engagement, Communication and Consultation

There is no requirement for community consultation in relation to the review of the Instrument.

Affected staff have been consulted in the preparation of this Instrument and will be provided with confirmation of the amendments to the Instrument once considered by Council.

Youth Charter

There are no direct Youth Charter implications as a result of the update of this instrument.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

Tania Quinn, Acting Governance Coordinator

RECOMMENDATION

In the exercise of the powers conferred by the legislation referred to in the attached instrument, Council resolves that:

1. Council adopt the attached s11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation for the members of Council staff set out in the instrument; and
2. The s11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation comes into force immediately once the common seal of Council is affixed to the instrument and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it and, upon coming into force, all previous s11A instruments are revoked.

12.8 Audit and Risk Committee Minutes - 20 May 2026

Directorate: People and Performance
Report Approver: Darren Barber, Director People and Performance
Report Author: Nadine Rhook, Executive Assistant Director People and Performance
Attachment(s): 1. 20-05-2026 - ARC Minutes - Final [**12.8.1** - 20 pages]

Executive Summary

The Minutes from the 20 May 2026 meeting as endorsed by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) are presented to Council for adoption.

Discussion

Under Section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020* the Council must establish an Audit and Risk Committee, as an Advisory Committee of the Council. This Committee fulfils both a statutory and consultative function. It provides feedback, advice and direction to Council on both Risk and Financial matters in accordance with the committee charter.

Items discussed listed below:

ITEM	ITEM
1	Membership & Expiry Dates
2	Committee & Auditors in Camera
3	Welcome
4	Apologies
5	Committee Secretariat
5.1	- Confirmation of Minutes – 11 February 2026
5.2	- Conflicts of Interest Disclosure & Register of Committee Members Interests
5.3	- CEO Report
5.4	- Governance & Risk Management Disclosures
5.5	- Project Management Framework Update
5.6	- Summary Table of Outstanding Matters
5.7	- Audit and Risk Committee Self Assessment
5.8	- Audit and Risk Committee Chair Report Biannual Report December 2025
5.9	- Audit and Risk Committee Charter
6	Annual Financial Reporting
6.1	- Finance Report to March 2026
6.2	- Quarterly Councillor's Expenditure Report (For Information)
6.3	- Draft Budget 2026-2027
7	Internal Audit

7.1	- Progress Report of Internal Audit Actions (CAMMS Interplan)
7.2	- Internal Audit Status Report
7.3	- Internal Audit – Contract Management – Action Plan
7.4	- Internal Audit – Records Management – Final Report
7.5	- Internal Audit – Draft Scope IT General Controls
7.6	- Report and Correspondence of Note: VAGO, Ombudsman and IBAC Reports
8	Compliance Management
8.1	- Compliance Framework Review & Quarterly Compliance Reporting
8.2	- Child Safety Standards Update
9	Risk Management
9.1	- OHS Quarterly Report - Summary
9.2	- Risk Management Quarterly Report
9.3	- Cyber Security Update
10	External Audit
10.1	- Interim Management Letter
11	Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes
	- Nil
12	Other Items
13	Next Meeting

Financial and Resource Implications

Preparation of reports, agenda and minutes of the Audit and Risk Meeting utilises Council resources. Council Officers and Chief Executive Officer attend the Audit and Risk Committee meeting to present reports and provide information to the committee.

Independent members of the Audit and Risk Committee are paid a sitting fee as members of the Committee and internal auditors are engaged to conduct audits in accordance with the endorsed audit schedule throughout the year.

Council Plan, Community Vision, Strategies and Policies

Leadership and Governance - We will demonstrate strong leadership and sound financial management through transparent decision-making, clear communication and meaningful engagement that builds community trust.

5.1 Improve effective governance and public accountability

5.2 Communicate clearly about Council decisions, projects and services to increase awareness, confidence and trust in the community.

Legislation

The Audit and Risk Committee is established in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* (Section 53).

Gender Equality Act 2020

There are no *Gender Equality Act 2020* implications through the noting of the Audit and Risk Committee minutes.

Risk Management

The Audit and Risk Committee has clear function in review of Councils Risks as per the Committee Charter.

Climate Change, Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

Whilst there is no direct implication in this category associated with the report, it should be noted that Council and the committee are committed to producing documentation and data through systems that have the least impact in the environment. Agendas, reports and minutes are produced electronically and distributed via email. Presenters are encouraged to attend meetings virtually to reduce the need for travel.

Community Engagement, Communication and Consultation

Changes in membership will be communicated to the relevant stakeholders when a change in membership has occurred.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

Darren Barber, Director People and Performance
Nadine Rhook, Executive Assistant Director People and Performance

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the Minutes for the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on 20 May 2026.

12.9 Audit and Risk Committee Charter

Directorate:	People and Performance
Report Approver:	
Report Author:	Nadine Rhook (Executive Assistant to Director People and Performance)
Attachment(s):	1. Audit Risk Committee Charter - Final [12.9.1 - 8 pages]

Executive Summary

The Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) requires Council to prepare and adopt an Audit and Risk Committee Charter that clearly sets out the functions and responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Committee. The Charter supports Council's governance framework by outlining the Committee's role in providing independent oversight and advice in relation to financial and performance reporting, risk management, internal control, governance and legislative compliance. This report presents the updated Charter for Council's consideration and approval.

The current Audit and Risk Committee Charter was last adopted by Council on 11 September 2024 and is subject to review at least once every two years. As part of this review, the Charter has been updated to ensure continued alignment with the requirements of the Act and to incorporate minor formatting changes following feedback from the Committee. Approval of the revised Charter will support Council in meeting its legislative obligations and maintaining an effective governance and accountability framework.

Discussion

The requirement to prepare a charter are established under Division 8, Section 54 of the Act and specifies that the Audit and Risk Committee Charter must specify functions and responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Committee.

An Audit and Risk Committee must undertake an annual assessment of its performance against the Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

The Committee provided feedback on the Charter that included minor formatting and this has been updated.

Financial and Resource Implications

There is a budget provided for the Audit and Risk Committee and relating items.

Council Plan, Community Vision, Strategies and Policies

Leadership and Governance - We will demonstrate strong leadership and sound financial management through transparent decision-making, clear communication and meaningful engagement that builds community trust.

- 5.1 Improve effective governance and public accountability
- 5.2 Communicate clearly about Council decisions, projects and services to increase

awareness, confidence and trust in the community.

5.6 Improve service delivery and efficiency through sustainable leadership

Legislation

The *Local Government Act 2020*, section 54(1) requires Council to prepare and approve an Audit and Risk Committee Charter and specify the functions and responsibilities as stated in section 54(2).

Gender Equality Act 2020

There are no Gender Equality Act implications as part of this Charter.

Risk Management

While the review of the Audit and Risk Committee Charter does not introduce new operational risks, there is a governance and compliance risk to Council if the Charter is not maintained in line with legislative requirements. An up-to-date Charter supports the effective operation of the Audit and Risk Committee by clearly defining its role, responsibilities and reporting arrangements. Review and approval of the revised Charter assists Council to meet its obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020* and supports sound governance, accountability and oversight.

Climate Change, Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

There are no implications for Climate Change, Environmental and Sustainability considerations with the review of this survey.

Community Engagement, Communication and Consultation

As the Audit and Risk Committee Charter is an internal governance document that outlines the role, functions and responsibilities of the Committee, community engagement has not been required as part of this review. Consultation has occurred with the Audit and Risk Committee to ensure the Charter remains current, fit for purpose and aligned with legislative and governance requirements. Any updates arising from this review are administrative in nature and support Council's internal governance framework.

Youth Charter

There are no direct implications to the Youth Charter in preparing the Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

Darren Barber, Director People and Performance

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the final Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

12.10 Councillor Expenses Policy

Directorate:	People and Performance
Report Approver:	Darren Barber (Director People and Performance)
Report Author:	Karly Herring, Governance Coordinator
Attachment(s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Council Policy People and Performance Councillor Expenses Policy - For Rescission [12.10.1 - 13 pages]2. DRAFT - Council Policy People and Performance Councillor Expenses Policy 2026 [12.10.2 - 13 pages]

Executive Summary

Section 41 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to adopt and maintain an expenses policy in relation to the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for Councillors and members of delegated committees.

The policy must:

- Specify procedures to be followed in applying for reimbursement and in reimbursing expenses;
- Comply with any requirements prescribed by the regulations in relation to reimbursement of expenses;
- Provide for the reimbursement of childcare costs where provision of childcare is reasonably required for a Councillor or a member of a delegated committee to perform their role;
- Have particular regard to expenses incurred by a Councillor who is a carer in a care relationship within the meaning of section 4 of the *Carer's Recognition Act 2012*.

Discussion

The Councillor Expenses policy was last adopted by Council on 10 February 2026. As part of the Gender Equality Action Plan 2026-2029 consultation with Councillors, two amendments were recognised and have been applied to the policy, being:

1. The Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 outline the reporting requirements in relation to Councillor Expenses. The regulations and current policy state the reporting categories required include:
 - (a) Travel expenses
 - (b) Car mileage expenses
 - (c) Childcare expenses
 - (d) Information and communication technology expenses
 - (e) Conference and training and expenses

The Regulations have been updated to now only include the following categories, and this is now reflected in the Policy and the change will carry over to the reporting requirements which proceed quarterly to Audit and Risk Committee as well as publicly published in Council's Annual Report.

- (a) Travel expenses
- (b) Professional Development expenses; and

- (c) Expenses to support the performance of the role.

For the avoidance of doubt, there is no change being made to what Councillors are eligible to claim in the performance of their role, it is merely a change to reporting categories and the claims will be sorted into three categories, as opposed to five categories.

2. The second amendment relates to wording included for clarification purposes only, being:

In accordance with section 35(6) of the Act, a Councillor is not to be taken to be absent from Council meetings during the period of 6 months after the Councillor or their spouse or domestic partner –

- (a) becomes the natural parent of a child; or
- (b) adopts a child under the age of 16 years –
- (c) and the Councillors has responsibilities for the care of the child during that period

Financial and Resource Implications

This Policy supports the Act and ensures clarity and consistency around the expenses that Council will pay or reimburse for Councillors and members of Delegated Committees.

This Policy will also make it clear to the community what resources are provided to Councillors and members of Delegated Committees to ensure that they are adequately reimbursed and trained in their roles.

Council Plan, Community Vision, Strategies and Policies

Leadership and Governance - We will demonstrate strong leadership and sound financial management through transparent decision-making, clear communication and meaningful engagement that builds community trust.

5.1 Improve effective governance and public accountability

5.2 Communicate clearly about Council decisions, projects and services to increase awareness, confidence and trust in the community.

5.3 Ensure balanced and responsible financial decision making meets long-term financial sustainability

Legislation

Section 41 of the *Local Government Act 2020*

Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024

Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2024

Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020

Gender Equality Act 2020

There are no direct Gender Equality implications as a result of the Councillor Expenses Policy, all Councillors are entitled to the same resources and subject to the same process.

Allowances are set by the Independent Remuneration Tribunal and applied depending on the category of Council and the elected role held by each individual.

Risk Management

The adoption of the Expenses Policy ensures that Council's distribution of resources and training to Councillor's and members of Delegated Committees is equal and fair. This will ensure each Councillor has the same access and that there are clear guidelines for the reimbursement of expenses.

Climate Change, Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

There are no direct Climate Change, Environmental or Sustainability considerations as a result of the Councillor Expenses Policy but it has been written with sustainability and environment focus, being the priority order of travel and the distribution of meeting papers being electronic as opposed to paper based.

Community Engagement, Communication and Consultation

There has been no community engagement, communication and consultation with regard to reviewing this policy but once adopted it will be publicly available on the Council website.

Youth Charter

There are no Youth Charter considerations related to the adoption of the Councillor Expenses Policy.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

Karly Herring, Governance Coordinator
Tania Quinn, Acting Governance Coordinator

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Adopt the Councillor Expenses Policy; and
2. Rescind the previous Councillor Expenses Policy.

12.11 Councillor Gift Policy

Directorate:	People and Performance
Report Approver:	Darren Barber (Director People and Performance)
Report Author:	Karly Herring, Governance Coordinator
Attachment(s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Council Policy People and Performance Councillor Gift Policy June 2025 For R [12.11.1 - 6 pages]2. Council Policy People and Performance Councillor Gift Policy 2026 [12.11.2 - 7 pages]

Executive Summary

Section 138 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) requires Council to adopt a Councillor Gift Policy which must include procedures for the maintenance of a gift register and any matters prescribed by the regulations.

Council last adopted its Councillor Gift Policy on 11 June 2025. A corporate governance audit was undertaken by RSD, with recommendations tabled at the February 2026 Audit and Risk Committee meeting. One of these recommendations included making minor amendments to the Councillor Gift Policy and the amended policy is attached for consideration.

Discussion

The Councillor Gift Policy aims to ensure transparency and the principles of good governance and accountability are practiced by Councillors.

The Policy provides an overview of Councillor's legislative responsibilities with regard to gifts, including legislated thresholds, conflicts of interest, personal interests, campaign donations and standards of conduct.

The Policy outlines the overall process for declining or accepting gifts as well as the process of recording all gifts and all offers of gifts in a register.

The RSD audit recognised the following:

- The policy currently allows Councillors to accept gifts where the gift would generally be regarded as only having a token value and could not be perceived to influence actions. It fails to define a token value with no clear threshold (for example \$50). This might cause inconsistencies in treatment. There should be a clear requirement for all non-token offers (accepted or declined) to be disclosed – this is now set at \$50 or less in value.
- Reference is made within the policy regarding section 137 of the *Local Government Act 2020* that anonymous gifts are not to be accepted. However, there is no explicit mention of monetary gifts. Other council's policies reviewed had clear statements that no monetary gifts are to be accepted, regardless of value – the policy has now been updated to explicitly state this.
- Council policy refers to the requirement for declarable gifts, benefits and hospitality to be recorded on the gift register. However, wording as per the policy also states that

Councillors will disclose all gifts or offers of gifts, regardless of value. It should be made clearer that this is the case, and all gifts (irrespective of the legislated disclosure threshold, or whether they were accepted or declined) are to be declared and disclosed via the Council Gift Register – this has been amended.

The RSD audit also recognised low levels of gift reporting from Councillors and highlights a need for a policy refresher training session with Councillors to ensure awareness of obligations, this will be conducted as part of presenting the updated policy to Councillors at briefing.

Financial and Resource Implications

This Policy applies to Councillors as staff obligations are addressed separately in the Staff Code of Conduct.

Council Plan, Community Vision, Strategies and Policies

Leadership and Governance - We will demonstrate strong leadership and sound financial management through transparent decision-making, clear communication and meaningful engagement that builds community trust.

5.1 Improve effective governance and public accountability

5.2 Communicate clearly about Council decisions, projects and services to increase awareness, confidence and trust in the community.

Legislation

Section 138 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to adopt a Councillor Gift Policy.

Gender Equality Act 2020

There are no direct gender equality implications for this Policy.

Risk Management

Regular review of Council policies ensure policies are fit for purpose.

The Councillor Gift Policy reduces risk by increasing transparency and accountability by implementing a gift register for inspection and oversight.

Climate Change, Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

There are no environmental or sustainability considerations in relation to this report.

Community Engagement, Communication and Consultation

This policy will be made publicly available on Council's website and a register is available for viewing.

Youth Charter

There are no direct youth implications for this Policy.

Disclosure of Interests

All Council Officers involved in the development and advice provided in this Report affirm that no general or material interests need to be declared in relation to any matters in this Report.

Karly Herring, Governance Coordinator
Tania Quinn, Acting Governance Coordinator

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Adopt the Councillor Gift Policy; and
2. Rescind the previous Councillor Gift Policy.

13 Notices of Motion

13.1 Notice of Motion - Rippon-Ballarat Road Intersection

Councillor: Cr Henry

Attachment(s): 1. Notice of Motion Rippon Ballarat Rd intersection [13.1.1 - 1 page]

I hereby give notice of my intention to move the following motion at the Council Meeting to be held on 9 June 2026.

MOTION

That Southern Grampians Shire Council:

Develop a community communication plan to gain data and stories around the use and safety of the intersection of Ballarat Rd and Rippon Rd to be used to lobby Department of Transport for urgent development of the intersection.

14 Urgent Business

There is no Urgent Business listed on tonight's agenda.

15 Mayor, Councillors and Delegate Reports

Address from the Mayor and Councillors in relation to matters of civic leadership and community representation, including acknowledgement of community groups and individuals, information arising from internal Committees and delegates committees, advocacy on behalf of constituents and other topics of significance.

16 Confidential Reports

There are no Confidential Matters listed on tonight's agenda.

17 Close of Meeting

This concludes the business of the meeting.