ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL – 19 JUNE 2019

14.2 COUNCIL PLAN 2017-27 AND BUDGET 2019/20: ADOPTION

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: KYLIE BENNETTS, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF THE CEO
PREPARED BY: STEVEN ROSS, ACTING MANAGER ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE
PETER LIU, COORDINATOR MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING & FINANCIAL ANALYSIS
DENNIS O’KEEFFE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

1. PURPOSE

1.1 For Council to formally consider and respond to public submissions and adopt the updated Council Plan 2017-27 (including Budget 2019/20) - Year 3.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 The integrated Council Plan 2017-27, which includes the Strategic Resource Plan, the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, a financial strategy, 10-year financial plan and annual budget was adopted on 21 June 2017 and updated on 20 June 2018. It sets a 10-year direction for the City, with a four-year focus on the specific actions Council will undertake to work towards achieving this direction.

2.2 The Plan was adopted following a highly participative and successful community engagement, in which over 2,000 pieces of feedback were received in February and May 2017.

2.3 Each year Council reviews the Council Plan to determine whether the strategies, priorities and measures require adjustment. Council also develops an annual budget, which includes the capital and operating programs.

2.4 A draft version of the updated Council Plan 2017-27 – Year 3 including the draft Budget 2019/20 was released on 17 April 2019 for a 28-day review period between 23 April to 21 May 2019. Council received 200 submissions on the draft document and at the Special Council Meeting on 4 June 2019, heard 19 speakers to the submissions. The key themes coming out of the submissions related to:

2.4.1 Netball court lighting at the RF Julier Reserve (81 submissions)
2.4.2 Support for EcoCentre programs (68 submissions)
2.4.3 Concerns about rate increases and Council expenditure (23 submissions)

2.5 In response to the submissions received, officers are proposing to:
2.5.1 Consult and plan for netball lighting, and conduct a feasibility study of a third multi-purpose court, at RF Julier Reserve. This will be funded through the Sports Field Lighting Expansion program.

2.5.2 Investigate the opportunity to improve lighting in the triangle car park in 2019/20 as part of other lighting renewal work occurring on the foreshore. Depending on the costings, it would either be funded from within the program or a request for additional funding during the 2019/20 year would need to come to Council for approval.

2.6 Since the release of the draft Budget 2019/20, officers have identified proposed changes to a range of budget items to reflect new and better information on (see attachment 1 – Proposed changes to Budget 2019/20):

2.6.1 ($1.9m) Operational budget – a number of changes including $1.4m of 2019/20 Victoria Grants Commission funding to be paid to Council in 2018/19.

2.6.2 ($9.1m) Project portfolio for 2019/20 – identifying a number of changes to the timing, cost and scope of proposed projects outlined in the draft budget. The significant changes including: $0.7 million for South Melbourne Market Compliance works and $1.3 million for Workplace Plan works both funded from the Asset Renewal Reserve and $7.5 million projects deferred from 2018/19.

2.6.3 $10.7m Reserves drawdown due to the above changes.

2.6.4 Fees and charges updated to include the latest Footpath Trading Fee Policy endorsed by Council on 15 May 2019 and all statutory fees have been updated as prescribed by the Victorian Government.

2.7 The impact of all the proposed changes above is that the revised cumulative cash surplus will be $0.6 million.

2.8 The Council Plan and annual budget provides a strategic response to an environment that is rapidly changing and ensures Council is investing in essential assets and services to ensure that Port Phillip remains the bold, liveable, caring and beautiful place for our communities while operating within the rates cap, maintaining financial sustainability and an overall low financial sustainable risk rating.

2.9 The proposed Budget for 2019/20 includes:

2.9.1 A rate increase of 2.50 per cent (equivalent to the rates cap)

2.9.2 An increase in most fees and charges by 2.75 per cent

2.9.3 $2.2 million of efficiency savings. This adds to the $11 million of savings delivered over the previous five budgets.
2.9.4 There is no increase to an already low debt position.
2.9.5 Cash reserves for operational liquidity and contingency of $26.0 million.
2.9.6 $65 million invested in projects to maintain, grow and improve services and assets.
2.9.7 A cumulative cash surplus of $0.6 million, which is above the financial strategy target of $0.5 million. This provides additional contingency for enterprise financial risks including waste/recycling sector disruptions.
2.9.8 Service level increases for street cleaning services, graffiti removal and amenity issues management.
2.9.9 Continued support for pensioners with a council-funded pensioner rates rebate which will increase by 3.0 per cent to $170 in 2019/20.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:
3.1 Having considered all the submissions received and heard at the Special Meeting of Council on 4 June 2019, makes the changes to the updated Council Plan 2017-27 – Year 3 (including Budget 2019/20) as outlined in Attachment 2 of this report.
3.2 Notes that officers will consult and plan for netball lighting, and conduct a feasibility study of a third multi-purpose court, at RF Julier Reserve. This will be funded through the Sports Field Lighting Expansion program.
3.3 Notes that officers will investigate the opportunity to improve lighting in the triangle car park in 2019/20 as part of other lighting renewal work occurring on the foreshore. Depending on the costings, it would either be funded from within the program or a request for additional funding during the 2019/20 year would need to come to Council for approval.
3.4 Responds in writing to those that have made formal written submissions, to advise them of the outcome of Council’s decision as set out in Attachment 1.
3.5 Adopts the Revised Council Plan 2017-27 – Year 3, pursuant to ss125-127 of the Local Government Act 1989 as set out in Attachments 2 and 3.
3.6 Delegates authority to the CEO to reflect any changes made by Council at tonight’s meeting, which are not reflected in Attachment 3, and to make minor typographical corrections or changes to images before final publication.
3.7 Notes that the adopted Council Plan 2017-27- Year 3 will be sent to the Minister for Local Government before 17 July 2019.
4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

Annual review of the Council Plan

4.1 In December 2018, officers presented a report to Council to provide an update on operating environment changes and to seek approval of the 10-Year Financial Outlook and the parameters for the review of the Council Plan, the Strategic Resource Plan and development of the Budget 2019/20.

4.2 Council agreed to limit the 2019/20 review of the Council Plan and Budget to items where:

   4.2.1 further strategic work has revealed a need for refinements in the long-term outcomes, priorities or initiatives

   4.2.2 adjustments are required to measures and targets to reflect further work or updated results

   4.2.3 there are changes required to respond to the operating environment.

4.3 The annual review provided an opportunity to align the Council Plan with:

   4.3.1 adopted core strategies, two of which (Move, Connect, Live and Don’t Waste It!) were adopted in October 2018, after the updated version of the Council Plan in June 2018

   4.3.2 the recent mid-year review of progress on the priorities under each strategic direction, and

   4.3.3 in response to changes to our operating environment

Developing the draft Budget 2019/20

4.4 The Council Plan is supported by a financial strategy which provides clear direction on the allocation, management and use of financial resources. It aims to ensure that Council remains financially sustainable while maintaining assets and services, responding to growth, and delivering on priorities.

4.5 The financial strategy is embedded in a 10-year Financial Plan and forms part of the amended Council Plan. It sets the parameters within which Council agrees to operate to maintain acceptable financial outcomes over the short, medium and long term.

4.6 Key highlights of the draft Budget 2019/20 included:

   4.6.1 A rate increase of 2.50 per cent (equivalent to the rates cap)

   4.6.2 An increase in most fees and charges by 2.75 per cent

   4.6.3 $2.2 million of efficiency savings. This adds to the $11 million of savings delivered over the previous five budgets.
4.6.4 There is no increase to an already low debt position.

4.6.5 Cash reserve for operational liquidity and contingency of $27.0 million.

4.6.6 $55 million invested in projects to maintain, grow and improve services and assets

4.6.7 A cumulative cash surplus of $0.6 million, which is above the financial strategy target of $0.5 million. This provides additional contingency for enterprise financial risks including waste/recycling sector disruptions.

4.6.8 Service level increases for street cleaning services, graffiti removal and amenity issues management

4.6.9 Continue to support pensioners with a council-funded pensioner rates rebate which will increase by 3.0 per cent to $170 in 2019/20.

Changes included in the draft updated Council Plan

4.7 The draft updated Council Plan (including Budget 2019/20) was released to the public on 17 April 2019. It reflected new and better information following on from the adoption of key strategies, updated progress on delivery to the plan and changes to the operating environment. Some of these changes included service level increases for street cleaning services, graffiti removal and amenity issues management.

4.8 Changes to the draft updated Council Plan including a summary of changes to the draft Budget 2019/20 were detailed in the Council Plan document (see section ‘Changes to this Plan’ in Attachment 3).

Consultation and public submissions to the updated Council Plan and Budget 2019/20

4.9 A draft version of the updated Council Plan 2017-27 – Year 3 including the draft Budget 2019/20 was released on 17 April 2019 for a 28-day review period between 23 April to 21 May 2019. Council received 200 submissions on the draft document and at the Special Council Meeting on 4 June 2019, heard 19 speakers to the submissions. A speakers’ summary is contained in Attachment 4.

4.10 The key themes coming out of the submissions related to:

4.10.1 Netball court lighting at the RF Julier Reserve (81 submissions)

- The Port Melbourne Netball Club and its supporters are requesting lighting to enable training to take place in the evenings and improve safety of participants. Current situation makes it unsafe to use the courts and limits opportunity to use the facility in winter.

4.10.2 Support for EcoCentre programs (68 submissions)

- The EcoCentre and its supporters are requesting an increase in Council funding for its operations from $193,000 to $408,000 to enable the
EcoCentre to continue to successfully provide services to an increasing audience.

4.10.3 Concerns about rate increases and Council expenditure (23 submissions)

- Many are disappointed with the rate increase and would like Council to minimise expenditure, see value for money benchmarking, or focus on revenue opportunities than expenditure cuts
- The Ratepayers of Port Phillip and its supporters suggested the following to reduce $26m expenditure over 4 years:
  - Customer Service Program up to $10m
  - Diversity magazine $0.2m
  - Memberships $0.3m
  - Transition to Community Childcare $4.6m
  - South Melbourne Town Hall upgrades $7.1m
  - EcoCentre redevelopment $2.8m
  - South Melbourne Market solar installation $0.77m
  - Electric vehicle charging stations $0.24m
- Other suggestions were: reducing staff numbers and salaries, ceasing Customer Experience Program and implementation of all 4 key strategies, removing duplicated services (Childcare, transport, affordable housing), Inner Metro Sustainability Hub, cost of resealing roads, lifting rents of Arts organisations, focus on projects and services that are Council’s responsibility

4.11 In addition to the Port Melbourne Netball Club and EcoCentre submissions, Council received funding requests for inclusion in the Budget 2019/20 for the following initiatives:

4.11.1 Albert Park Bowling Club – replacement of club’s green carpet playing surface, upgrade of the clubhouse and night time security of the green.

4.11.2 Individual – plant boxes for vegetable gardens along Bevan Street

4.11.3 Port Phillip Spiders and individuals – earlier installation of the Lagoon Oval lights and redevelopment

4.11.4 Meyden Group – bring forward of St Kilda Strategic Plan through activity centre structure plan ($70,000)

4.11.5 unChain Port Phillip – $100,000 for development of the St Kilda Triangle business case
4.11.6 South Melbourne Symphony Orchestra – a funding deed to cover relocation cost and associated costs from the South Melbourne Town Hall

4.11.7 Junction Area Action Group (JAAG) – upgrade of Triangle reserve adjacent to the Astor Theatre

4.11.8 Van Haandel Group – permanent lighting at the St Kilda Triangle site

4.12 In response to the submissions received, officers are proposing to:

4.12.1 Consult and plan for netball lighting, and conduct a feasibility study on a third multi-purpose court, at RF Julier Reserve. This will be funded through the Sports Field Lighting Expansion program.

4.12.2 Investigate the opportunity to improve lighting in the triangle car park in 2019/20 as part of other lighting renewal work occurring on the foreshore. Depending on the costings, it would either be funded from within the program or a request for additional funding during the 2019/20 year would need to come to Council for approval.

4.13 For the remainder of submissions, officer are not recommending any budget changes or scope changes to annual programs. However, Council will continue to proceed with activities to improve returns on our assets (such as the development of the Property Policy) and undertake other activities within existing resourcing, such as a review of the Divercity Magazine.

Other changes to the Budget 2019/20 since public consultation

4.14 The following table lists the proposed changes to the Budget and the reason for the change see attachment 1 – Proposed changes to Budget 2019/20:

4.14.1 ($1.9m) Operational budget – a number of changes including $1.4m of 2019/20 Victoria Grants Commission funding to be paid to Council in 2018/19.

4.14.2 ($9.1m) Project portfolio for 2019/20 – identifying a number of changes to the timing, cost and scope of proposed projects outlined in the draft budget. The significant changes including: $0.7 million for South Melbourne Market Compliance works and $1.3 million for Workplace Plan works both funded from the Asset Renewal Reserve and $7.5 million projects deferred from 2018/19.

4.14.3 $10.7m Reserves drawdown due to the above changes.

Fees and charges updated to include the latest Footpath Trading Fee Policy endorsed by Council on 15 May 2019 and all statutory fees have been updated as gazetted by the Victorian Government.

Updated overall Budget 2019/20 financial position

4.15 The impact of all the proposed changes above is that the revised cash surplus will be $0.6 million.
4.16 As outlined in the Financial Strategy in this report, the Plan operates within the rates cap, maintains financial sustainability and an overall low financial sustainable risk rating as measured by the VAGO Financial Sustainability Indicators, whilst investing in essential assets and services.

4.17 The updated financial sustainability table is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Indicator Targets</th>
<th>Forecasts</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Projections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net Result %</td>
<td>Greater than 0%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>(2.5%)</td>
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<td>Working Capital Ratio &gt;100%</td>
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<td>Internal Financing</td>
<td>Net cashflow from operations to net capital expenditure &gt;100%</td>
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</table>
| Overall Financial Sustainable Risk Rating | Low | Low | Low | Low | Low | Low | Low | Low | Low

4.18 The proposed Budget for 2019/20 includes:

4.18.1 A rate increase of 2.50 per cent (equivalent to the rates cap)

4.18.2 An increase in most fees and charges by 2.75 per cent

4.18.3 $2.2 million of efficiency savings. This adds to the $11 million of savings delivered over the previous five budgets.

4.18.4 There is no increase to an already low debt position.

4.18.5 Cash reserve for operational liquidity and contingency of $26.0 million.

4.18.6 $65 million invested in projects to maintain, grow and improve services and assets

4.18.7 A cash surplus of $0.6 million, which is above the financial strategy target of $0.5 million. This provides additional contingency for enterprise financial risks including waste/recycling sector disruptions.

4.18.8 Service level increases for street cleaning services, graffiti removal and amenity issues management.

4.18.9 Continued support for pensioners with a council-funded pensioner rates rebate which will increase by 3.0 per cent to $170 in 2019/20.

4.19 Resource implications of proposed adjustments to the Council Plan have been represented in the 10-Year Financial Plan and Budget 2019/20.
Updating the Council Plan document to reflect financial changes and any decisions made by Council at the 19 June 2019 meeting

4.20 Attachment 2 contains a summary of the proposed financial changes to the Budget 2019/20 since the draft was released to the public on 17 April 2019.

4.21 The ten-year financial statements, fees and charges, service information and other supporting tables in the Council Plan document will be updated to reflect the proposed changes in Attachment 2 and any other decision made by Council to the Budget 2019/20 at the 19 June 2019 Council meeting.

4.22 Rate information in the Council Plan and Budget 2019/20 document in Attachment 3 will be updated to reflect Council decisions relating to the Council report to the 19 June Council meeting on Declaration of Rates and Charges – 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.

4.23 The Council Plan document content in Attachment 3 will also be updated to include a Message from the CEO and the section on How the community helped shape this plan will be updated to reflect the recent community workshop and submission process. Draft text has been included in Attachment 2.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

5.1 Council released the draft Council Plan and Budget and called for public submissions at an Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 17 April 2019. In accordance with statutory requirements, Council provided a 28-day period for the public to review the draft Council Plan and Budget. The public review period ran from 22 April 2019 to 5pm Tuesday 21 May 2019 and included:

5.1.1 Public notice in The Age and advertisement in the Port Phillip Leader
5.1.2 Publication of the draft Plan and strategies on Council’s website and HaveYourSay page
5.1.3 Email notification to specific mail lists and social media commentary
5.1.4 Copies of the plan exhibited at the three town halls and City libraries
5.1.5 The opportunity to make written submissions, through the Have Your Say page of Council’s website and via email.

5.2 In addition, Council held a half-day workshop on 4 May 2019 with 25 community members, representing community organisations or as individuals, to:

5.2.1 to explore service priorities to help guide future budget development and decision making and
5.2.2 to take a more deliberative approach to engaging about Council’s challenge of delivering the level and variety of services the community expects, while also needing to find Budget savings over the longer term.

5.3 Participants were provided with profile information about Council’s 28 service categories.
Summary of engagement activities

5.4 Workshop participants were shown the outcomes from the community survey undertaken in late 2018, based on 662 responses, and were asked to agree/disagree with the survey findings of the most important service categories.

5.5 Participants were then asked to individually provide feedback via polling on:
- 5.5.1 the three services they think should be a priority for Council
- 5.5.2 the three suggested services for decreased Council spending
- 5.5.3 the three service areas they think Council should stop investing in

5.6 Results were tallied at each table to provide top three answers. This was followed with a conversation at each table to explore whether the top three priorities identified at a table level were the group’s ‘best’ three priorities for the outcome sought.

5.7 At the request of some of the participants, a final poll was conducted on identifying alternative proposals for raising Council revenue.

5.8 Participants were asked to score their experience on the workshop. Close to half participants were somewhat satisfied or satisfied and around one third were somewhat dissatisfied. Council officers received valuable feedback from participants about how to make improvements for future workshops around participant demographics, timing and level of information.

5.9 Officers believe there is a clear benefit in this approach to engaging the community on services and will report back on options for Council consideration. Officers are still finalising the analysis and will release this to the public in the coming months.

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Local Government Act 1989 (the Act), requires Council each year to:
- 6.1.1 review the Council Plan to determine whether the strategies, actions and measures require adjustment
- 6.1.2 develop an annual Budget, which includes detail on the capital and operating programs
- 6.1.3 release the proposed amendments to the Council Plan and draft Budget for a minimum 28-day statutory public review period and invite submissions from the public
- 6.1.4 receive and hear all submissions at a Council meeting
- 6.1.5 adopt the updated Council Plan and annual Budget by 30 June.

6.2 The financial and non-financial tables supporting the Budget 2019/20 and draft Strategic Resource Plan have been prepared in accordance with regulations laid down by the Local Government Amendment (Performance Reporting and Accountability Act 2014).
7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

7.1 Officers use the Victorian Auditor General’s financial sustainability indicators to monitor Council’s financial sustainability. Council’s financial strategy is designed to ensure an overall low risk rating over the period of the plan unless Council can demonstrate it is prudent not to (i.e. for one-off abnormal transactions that do not have an enduring impact). As demonstrated in the table below, officers forecast that Council will achieve an overall risk rating of low throughout the 10-year period.

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For details on financial risks, rates assistance, Budget 2019/20 at a glance and fees and charges, please refer to the Council Plan document in Attachment 3.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

8.1 The proposed amendments to the Council Plan 2017-27 is aligned to the adopted Creative and Prosperous City, and Integrated Transport strategies, including proposed targets for sustainability measures and funded priorities to achieve the targets.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

9.1 The proposed amendments to the Council Plan 2017-27 is aligned to the adopted Creative and Prosperous City, and Integrated Transport strategies, including proposed targets for sustainability measures and funded priorities to achieve the targets.

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

10.1 The updated Council Plan 2017-27 – Year 3, when adopted, will replace the current version of the Council Plan 2017-2027.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 TIMELINE

11.1.1 Following Council’s adoption of the Budget 2019/20, the public notice of the adoption of the Budget will be placed in the Port Phillip Leader before 30 June 2019.
11.1.2 A copy of the Revised Council Plan 2017-27 – Year 3 including the Budget 2019/20 will be forwarded to the Minister for Local Government by 17 July 2019.

11.1.3 A rates brochure will be distributed in conjunction with the issuing of rate notices by the end of July 2019.

11.2 COMMUNICATION

11.2.1 Each person or organisation that has lodged a submission will be notified in writing, thanking them for their submission, advising them of the Council decision and the reasons for that decision.

11.2.2 The Revised Council Plan 2017-27 – Year 3 will be made available at local libraries and promoted on Council’s website.

11.2.3 Council and the community will continue to receive updates on the Council’s financial performance against the Council Plan and Budget through regular CEO reports and the Annual Report.

KEY MESSAGES

11.2.4 The Revised Council Plan 2017-27 reflect changes following a strategic review of the environment Council is operating in, its achievements to date and a commitment to continuous improvement.

11.2.5 Officers have worked closely with Councillors to review the Council Plan and develop a prudent budget that provides a financially disciplined approach to risks and opportunities that are emerging and prioritise significant investment in initiatives that will enable us to be more responsive to our communities and deliver on Council’s vision for the city.

11.2.6 Council values community input into its plan and thanks each person and group who has provided input into the annual review of the Council Plan and development of the Budget 2019/20.

12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

12.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.

TRIM FILE NO: 16/02/221

ATTACHMENTS

1. Summary of submissions, proposed responses and recommendations
2. Proposed changes to the Council Plan and Budget 2019/20
3. Draft Council Plan 2017-27 (Year 3) including draft Budget 2019/20
4. Speakers Summary Council Plan and Budget 4 June 2019