

LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL

Notice of an Ordinary Meeting of the Loddon Shire Council to be held in the Council Chambers, Serpentine on Tuesday 24 March 2015 at 3pm.

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1. APOLOGIES

Nil

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES

2.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

SUMMARY

Seeking approval of the unconfirmed minutes of the previous Council Forum and Meetings.

Author: John McLinden - Chief Executive Officer

Council Plan ref: Core business 8: Compliance

File No: 02/01/001

Attachment: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council confirm:

1. *the minutes of the Council Briefing of 24 February 2015*
2. *the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting of 24 February 2015*
3. *The minutes of the Council Forum of 10 March 2015*

2.2 REVIEW OF ACTION SHEET

SUMMARY

Approval of Action Sheet.

Author: John McLinden - Chief Executive Officer

Council Plan ref: Core business 8: Compliance

File No: 02/01/001

Attachment: 2.2 Action Sheet

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Action Sheet.

3. COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

3.1 MAYORAL REPORT

SUMMARY

Approval of the Mayoral Report.

Author:	John McLinden, Chief Executive Officer
Council Plan ref:	Core business 1: Leadership
File No:	02/01/001
Attachment:	Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Mayoral Report.

3.2 COUNCILLORS' REPORT

SUMMARY

Approval of Councillors' Reports.

Author:	John McLinden, Chief Executive Officer
Council Plan ref:	Core business 1: Leadership
File No:	02/01/001
Attachment:	Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Councillors' Report.

4. **DECISION REPORTS**

4.1 **PLANNING APPLICATION 5040**

SUMMARY

Planning application 5040 seeks approval for the use and development of approximately 49.7 ha in the farming zone for the establishment of a trade supply depot, rural industry (grain storage and handling) and road freight terminal (including associated buildings and works), native vegetation removal and access to the Road Zone Category 1. Five objections to the proposed development have been received.

Author	Tyson Sutton, Manager Planning and Local Laws
Council Plan ref:	Core business 9: Regulation
File no:	13/02/004
Attachment:	Application, objections, Farming Zone decision guidelines, referral responses

RECOMMENDATION

That Council refuse planning permit application 5040 on the following grounds:

1. *The proposed use and development is inconsistent with the State Planning Policy Framework namely clauses 11.05-3, 11.12, 12.04-2, 14.01 and 17.01.*
2. *The proposed use and development does not satisfactorily respond to the objective and strategies for Community and Settlement, land management and environment, economic development and infrastructure contained at Clause 21.04 of the Loddon Planning Scheme.*
3. *The proposal is inconsistent with the purpose of the Farming Zone.*
4. *The proposal is inconsistent with the decision guidelines of the Farming Zone.*
5. *The proposal does not represent the proper and orderly planning of the area.*
6. *That VicRoads as a determining referral authority have objected to the proposed development on the grounds:*

A 'Road Freight Terminal' on this land is not considered complimentary to the adjoining area and is not considered appropriate and it is not in accordance with the decision guidelines of Clause 35.07-6 of the Loddon Planning Scheme.

Direct access onto the Calder Highway will have considerable impact on the operational efficiency and road user safety and it is not in accordance with the decision guidelines of Clause 52.29 of the Loddon Planning Scheme.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council held preliminary discussions regarding this application during is scheduled Forum on 10 March 2015, including a presentation from a number of the objectors.

BACKGROUND

Planning permit application 5040 relates to land described as Lot 1 LP210100. The subject site is located midway between Bridgewater and Marong and it is located on the Calder Highway at Leichardt. It is located between the intersections with Connors Road and Robbins Road. It has an overall area of approximately 49.75 ha and maintains a 1.4 kilometres (approx.) frontage with the Calder Highway. Access to the site is currently provided via Robbins Road, which is a Rural Gravel Access Road. It is located within the Farming Zone and is partially affected by the Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 2.

The subject land is generally flat and there are no buildings on the site. The site is currently used for mixed farming and contains a small number of scattered trees; as such the site's character is generally an

open rural landscape, noting that there is significant native vegetation within the Road reserve along the Calder Highway frontage as identified by the Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 2.

The subject site has a gentle fall from the sites eastern boundary (Robbins Road) and the sites north-western corner to an unnamed dry creek (creek) located within the site approximately 400 metres from the sites north western corner. The creek runs in a south to north direction from the Calder Highway to Connors Road.

Application 5040 was received on 25 November 2014 seeking approval for the use and development of the land for trade supplies, rural industry (grain storage and handling) and road freight terminal and associated buildings and works. The application also seeks approval for the removal of native vegetation and the creation of access to a Road Zone, Category 1. The proposal contains three defined uses in accordance with the provisions of the planning scheme. These uses are as follows:

- Rural industry
 - Land used to:
 - (a) handle, treat, process, or pack agricultural produce;
 - (b) service or repair plant, or equipment, used in agriculture; or
 - (c) manufacture mud bricks.
- Road freight terminal
 - Road freight terminal is not defined in the Loddon Planning Scheme; however it is nested under "Transport terminal"
 - Land used to assemble and distribute goods or passengers. It includes facilities to park and manoeuvre vehicles. It does not include a Tramway.
- Trade supplies
 - Land used to sell by both retail and wholesale, or to hire, materials, tools, equipment, machinery or other goods for use in:
 - (a) automotive repairs and servicing;
 - (b) building;
 - (c) commerce;
 - (d) industry;
 - (e) landscape gardening;
 - (f) the medical profession; primary production; or local government, government departments or public institutions.

The rural industry and road freight terminal components of the proposal are intended to store and handle cereal grain, dry fruit, flour, rice and other agricultural produce on site and then package these products for distribution in a bulk format for export to the Asia Pacific region via the Port of Melbourne. The raw material is to be sourced from local farmers and producers in central and northern Victoria and Southern NSW. The applicant advises that there will be approximately 500 tonnes of bulk agricultural produce stored on the site at any time. It is also intended to store and distribute limited quantities of bottled wine on site for export. There will be comparatively minor export volumes stored and distributed from the site.

The trade supplies component (semi-trailer sales, repair and hire) of the proposal is for the import, repair, sales and hire of semi-trailer trays for use in the construction, farming, earthmoving and transport industries. The applicant has advised that most of the sales are conducted online or via the phone and as such few customers will visit the site. It is proposed to construct an office and workshop, with a showroom for displaying a semi-trailer tray.

The application proposes the construction of two buildings in association with the uses of the land. The trade supplies includes a large shed approximately 3540m² in area (115m(l) x 30m(w) x 11m(h)) with an additional 505m² office showroom. The rural industry/road freight terminal is to be housed in a 1500m² shed (50m(l) x 30m(w) x 11.3m(h)) with an additional 156m² office area.

It is proposed that all of the proposed operations will share a common access from the Calder Highway. The proposed access is located approximately 550m to the northwest of the Robbins Road/Calder Highway intersection. The access is intended to be constructed in a similar fashion to an intersection.

The gates into the property are to be set back 60 metres from the road to allow safe off highway parking of vehicles waiting to gain access to the site.

The application has been referred to the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP) and VicRoads. DELWP have not objected to the application subject to conditions. VicRoads have objected to the application on the following grounds:

Roads Corporation objects to the issue of a Planning Permit because the proposed development:

- *For a 'Road Freight Terminal' on this land is not considered complimentary to the adjoining area and is not considered appropriate and it is not in accordance with the decision guidelines of Clause 35.07-6 of the Loddon Planning Scheme.*
- *With direct access onto the Calder Highway will have considerable impact on the operational efficiency and road user safety and it is not in accordance with the decision guidelines of Clause 52.29 of the Loddon Planning Scheme.*

As a result of VicRoads objection Council must refuse the application. However, as the refusal may be appealed, it is important for Council to consider the proposal and reach a position to present to VCAT should it be required.

Notice of the application was given to adjoining and nearby landholders. A total of five objections have been received. The grounds of objection are summarised as follows:

- The proposed use is not suitable in an agricultural area
- Other suitable grain handling sites are available
- Impact on visual amenity
- Inconsistent with the Local Planning Policy Framework including the Municipal Strategic Statement
- Inconsistent with the purpose of the Farming Zone
- Out of scale and character with the area
- Trade supplies prohibited in the Farming Zone
- Inconsistent with the decision guidelines of the Farming Zone
- Restricted site lines for access and egress
- Potential contamination of groundwater
- Retention of stormwater
- Will undermine the Marong Business Park
- Traffic Risk
- Applicant has a history of non-compliance
- The use not related to farming
- Noise
- Proposed building inconsistent with the proposed use.
- Creation of a precedent for non-agricultural uses in farming areas.
- Dust
- Rural amenity

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

State Planning Policy Framework and Local Planning Policy Framework

Decision making should ensure that applications achieve the goals set out in the planning scheme. The State Planning Policy Framework and Local Planning Policy Framework (including the Municipal Strategic Statement) provide strategic direction and policy position to guide the exercise of discretion in assessing applications for planning approval. A significant number of policies and strategies are relevant to the proposed use and development. These are addressed in the body of this report.

Clause 11.05 –sets out strategies for Regional Development across the state. It includes the following:

- Ensure regions and their settlements are planned in accordance with any relevant regional growth plan.

- Deliver networks of high-quality settlements by:
 - Balancing strategic objectives to achieve improved land-use and development outcomes at a regional, catchment and local level.
 - Preserving and protecting features of rural land and natural resources and features to enhance their contribution to settlements and landscapes.

The proposed use and development is considered to be inconsistent with this policy in the context of the Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan (discussed in further detail later in this report); as well as failing to contribute to the preservation and protection of rural land.

Clause 11.05-3 seeks to support rural productivity through managing land use change and development in rural areas to promote agriculture and rural production. It seeks to do this by preventing inappropriately dispersed urban activities in rural areas. The proposed use and development will not achieve the objectives of this policy as the dominant use of the site will not promote agriculture or rural production.

Loddon Mallee South regional growth at Clause 11.12 of the Loddon Planning Scheme contains the following objectives and strategies:

Objective - To strengthen communities especially in small towns.

Related Strategies

- Support Bendigo as the regional city and the major population and economic growth hub for the region, offering a range of employment and services.
- Manage and support growth in Castlemaine, Gisborne, Kyneton and Maryborough as employment and service hubs that reinforce the network of communities within the region.
- Support sustainable growth and expansion in Inglewood, Bridgewater, Marong and Harcourt to capitalise on their proximity to Bendigo.
- Facilitate increased commercial and residential densities, mixed use development and revitalisation projects for underutilised sites and land in Bendigo.

The proposed use and development will do little to strengthen small towns being located approximately midway between Bridgewater and Marong. It is anticipated that the majority of the workforce will be derived from Bendigo and will generate little economic activity for the townships of the municipality.

Objective - To strengthen communities especially in small towns.

Related Strategies

- Support the ongoing role and contribution of the region's small towns, settlements and non-urban areas through investment and diversification of their economies.
- Plan for facilities and infrastructure needed to deliver education and training that supports growth.

The location of the proposed development will act to draw investment away from existing settlements and may discourage future investment in townships. Support of the application may create expectations of future commercial development in rural areas and will fail to encourage expansion and diversification within townships.

Objective - To strengthen and diversify the economy.

Related Strategies

- Support expansion of the region's diverse economy to enable residents to work and participate in the region.
- Facilitate greater employment and investment outcomes from growth sectors such as health, education and professional services.
- Support and develop emerging and potential growth sectors such as tourism, renewable energy, resource recovery and other green industries.
- Facilitate new manufacturing and food processing industries that build on supply chains and take advantage of well located and affordable land.
- Maintain and develop buffers around mining and quarrying activities.
- Facilitate access to natural resources where appropriate, including sand and stone, minerals, timber and renewable energy potential.
- Support the development and expansion of tourism infrastructure in Bendigo.

The proposed use and development will help to strengthen and diversify the economy.

Objective - To improve infrastructure

Related Strategies

- Provide adequate waste and resource recovery infrastructure and services to support new development and population growth.
- Minimise the impact of urban development on the current and future operation of major infrastructure of national, state and regional significance, including highways, railways, airports, communication networks and energy generation and distribution systems.
- Support upgrades at Bendigo Airport that improve access and infrastructure to support emergency services.
- Maintain and strengthen passenger and freight transport networks and explore opportunities to develop freight-related activities in Marong and Maryborough.

The application fails to achieve this objective. The proposed development will make use of existing infrastructure. Required upgrades to the Calder Highway will have a small impact on the functionality of the roadway.

Objective - To protect and enhance the natural and built environment

Related Strategies

- Protect and improve the condition of the region's important environmental assets such as forests, wetlands and rivers.
- Maintain non-urban breaks between settlements.
- Support the designation of Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park as a World Heritage place to underpin tourism.
- Facilitate tourism opportunities in appropriate locations near heritage places and natural environments.

The application fails to achieve this objective. It will not maintain non-urban breaks between settlements as it will create a typically urban type development in a rural area separating the settlements of Bridgewater and Marong.

Objective - To ensure food, water and energy security.

Related Strategies

- Facilitate ongoing productivity and investment in high value agriculture.

- Facilitate new opportunities in agriculture that respond to the potential impacts of climate change.
- Support and facilitate development in renewable energy, waste to energy, carbon sequestration and other new energy opportunities.
- Support ongoing investment in water infrastructure and management of water resources to enhance security and efficiency of water supply to irrigators, farms and urban areas.

The application fails to achieve this objective. It does not facilitate ongoing productivity and investment in high value agriculture or new opportunities in agriculture that respond to the potential impacts of climate change. The proposed development will limit the opportunity to facilitate these matters by reducing the agricultural potential of the land.

Clause 12.01-2 of the Loddon Planning Scheme contains the following objective for Native vegetation management:

To ensure that permitted clearing of native vegetation results in no net loss in the contribution made by native vegetation to Victoria's biodiversity.

The limited scope of vegetation removal proposed by the application in conjunction with required offsets will not result in a net loss in the contribution made by native vegetation to Victoria's biodiversity.

Clause 12.04-2 of the Loddon Planning Scheme contains the following objective for Landscapes:

To protect landscapes and significant open spaces that contribute to character, identity and sustainable environments.

The application fails to achieve this objective. The scale of the proposed development will result in significant changes to the landscape and detrimentally affect the identity and character of the area. It will result in the open rural atmosphere of the land becoming dominated by an industrial scale development.

Clause 14.01 of the Loddon Planning Scheme contains the following objective for Agriculture:

To protect productive farmland which is of strategic significance in the local or regional context.

The application fails to achieve this objective. The development will occupy quality agricultural land and permanently remove it from production.

Clause 17.01 of the Loddon Planning Scheme contains the following objective for Commercial activity:

To encourage development which meet the communities' needs for retail, entertainment, office and other commercial services and provides net community benefit in relation to accessibility, efficient infrastructure use and the aggregation and sustainability of commercial facilities.

The application fails to achieve this objective. The proposed development does not provide net community benefit in relation to accessibility, efficient infrastructure use and the aggregation and sustainability of commercial facilities.

Clause 18.02-4 of the Loddon Planning Scheme contains the following objective for management of the road system:

To manage the road system to achieve integration, choice and balance by developing an efficient and safe network and making the most of existing infrastructure.

The application will achieve this objective. The proposed development will make the most of existing infrastructure by utilising the Calder Highway for transport of goods to and from the site.

Clause 18.02-5 of the Loddon Planning Scheme contains the following objective for car parking:

To ensure an adequate supply of car parking that is appropriately designed and located.

The application will achieve this objective. The proposed development will provide an appropriate number of car parking spaces to service its demand. The car parking is appropriately located and designed to function efficiently within the proposed operation.

Clause 21.04 forms part of the Municipal Strategic Statement and provides a number of objectives and strategies for specific planning matters within the municipality. The strategies provide the methodology by which the Responsible Authority will achieve its identified objectives.

Clause 21.04 contains the following objectives and strategies:

Objectives for Community and Settlement

- To encourage population growth.
- To encourage development of attractive and functional townships.

Related strategies

- Direct urban development to key townships;
- Encourage new commercial development and services to locate within the existing commercial/retail areas;
- Support location of new industry in appropriate areas of the town with access to appropriate infrastructure and without compromising residential amenity and the appearance of the town;
- Encourage development that utilises and augments existing infrastructure, rather creating the need for additional services and capital works.

The application does not support the identified strategies for community and settlement. It does not direct urban development to townships, locate new commercial development within the existing commercial/retail areas or utilise and augment existing infrastructure but rather creates the need for additional services and capital works.

Objective for land management and environment

- To protect and enhance the condition of the natural resource base of the Shire to provide for the environmental and economic health of the Shire.

Related strategies

- Promote the dependence of the Shire's economy on the condition of the natural resource base;
- Identify and protect significant remnant vegetation parcels, especially in salinity recharge and discharge areas, along waterways and in erosion prone areas;
- Ensure all new land use and development aims for net improvement in the condition of the natural resource base. This may involve the use of permit conditions to offset, avoid, mitigate or repair degradation of land, water and air in the Loddon Shire that may arise from the proposed use and/or development. Such conditions may include fencing of waters, strategic replanting of indigenous vegetation and control of pest plants and animals;

- Ensure new use and/or development does not produce polluted run-off that leaves the property untreated;
- Encourage sustainable reuse of effluent (intensive animal industry and urban), storm water and irrigation runoff;

The application does not support the identified strategies for land management and environment. It does not ensure new use and/or development does not produce polluted run-off that leaves the property untreated. However, this issue may be addressed via suitable permit conditions.

Objective for economic development

- To encourage and support a diverse and environmentally sustainable economy in the Shire.

Related strategies – Agriculture

- Encourage and support the protection and improvement of the condition of the natural resource base;
- Support development that will provide for more sustainable, more intensive agriculture;
- Encourage high value, sustainable, intensive agriculture on high quality agricultural land;
- Ensure development (including subdivision) in farming areas is clearly related to ongoing farming prospects;
- Support initiatives for value adding and processing of local produce;
- Discourage non-agricultural land use and development in areas of high quality and productive agricultural potential;

The application does not support the identified strategies for agriculture. The proposed development does not encourage and support the protection and improvement of the condition of the natural resource base, result in development that will provide for more sustainable more intensive agriculture or encourage high value sustainable intensive agriculture on high quality agricultural land. The development is not clearly related to ongoing farming prospects. A component of the proposal will support value adding and processing of local produce. The identified strategies clearly discourage non-agricultural land use and development in areas of high quality and productive agricultural potential such as that on which the proposed development is located.

Related strategies – Retail

- Support the provision of a range of retail services to prevent the need for the community to shop elsewhere;
- Encourage new businesses to locate within the existing retail centres.

The proposed development provides diversity to the range of retail services for the community but does not locate the new business within an existing retail centre. Given the scope of the proposed development it would not be able to located within any of the Shire's existing commercial areas. However, such a development would be more appropriately located on the fringe of a township to provide linkage with existing retail operations.

Related strategies – Tourism

- Protect the natural and physical features that contribute to the 'tourism experience' including the natural environment, heritage elements, landscape features and cultural activities;

The application does not support the identified strategies for tourism. It fails to protect the landscape features that are a significant element of the Shire's environment.

Strategies for Infrastructure

- Direct development to areas with existing high quality transport infrastructure, reducing the overall current and future road maintenance pressure on the Shire;

The application does not support the identified strategies for infrastructure. As a result of VicRoads objection to access directly from the Calder Highway the proposed development would have to be serviced via Robbins Road. This is currently constructed to as a rural gravel access and is not of a sufficient standard to service the site. Upgrades to Robbins Road would increase road maintenance liabilities for the Shire.

The Local Planning Policy Framework contains two policies that are relevant to this application. These are Clause 22.04 Industrial Development and Clause 22.05 Development in Rural Areas. They are addressed as follows:

Clause 22.04 identifies that proposals for industrial development in rural areas may be supported where they can:

- demonstrate it is appropriate as the industry relates to value adding of local produce;
- minimise impact on agriculture land and land management practices;
- have access to and from sealed roads;
- dispose of effluent satisfactorily;
- avoid or minimise impacts on native vegetation;
- maintain the visual qualities of the rural landscape; and
- minimise impact on residential amenity.

The rural industry is a relatively small component of the overall proposal and is generally compliant with the identified policies however it cannot be assessed in isolation from the rest of the application.

The basis for the Development in Rural Areas policy (Clause 22.05) is as follows:

Agricultural production is the major focus of the economy and community in Loddon Shire. The promotion of innovative, diverse and sustainable agriculture is a central aim of planning in the Shire. Council recognises that quality agricultural land is a valuable and non renewable resource and its protection and sustainable use is fundamental to the future economic health of the Shire. The rural areas of the Shire also offer landscapes of unique quality. These landscapes are important for their contribution to the character of the Shire and their attraction to visitors. Development in rural areas must be managed to prevent detriment to the viability of rural industries and to protect the landscape quality of the rural areas.

The objectives of this policy are:

- To protect the natural and physical resources upon which agricultural industries rely.
- To maintain farmland in productive agricultural use.
- To promote the development of new and diverse industries, fulfilling the potential of existing infrastructure.
- To prevent land use conflicts between sensitive uses and agricultural uses.
- To ensure that new use and development in the Shire is not prejudicial to agricultural industries or the productive capacity of the land.
- To encourage the most productive and sustainable uses of water and soil in the Shire.
- To ensure that development in rural areas does not compromise landscapes of significant value.
- To limit the subdivision, use or development of land that will be incompatible with the utilisation of the land for sustainable resource use.
- To encourage safety from structure fires and wildfires.

The application does not support the objectives of this Clause. It will not protect the natural and physical resources upon which agricultural industries rely, maintain farmland in productive agricultural use, ensure that new use and development in the Shire is not prejudicial to agricultural industries or the productive capacity of the land or ensure that development in rural areas does not compromise landscapes of significant value.

The Clause provides the following policy statement in relation to landscape:

Development in rural areas should be sited so as not to compromise the quality of significant landscapes, especially landscapes visible from significant tourist routes. Consideration should be given to using topographic features or existing vegetation to assist to screen new development. Permit conditions requiring muted colours of buildings, landscaping or setbacks may be included on permits for development in significant landscapes.

The proposed development does not achieve the goals of this policy. It will compromise a significant landscape on a major tourist route into the municipality. The subject land is located in an area that provides visitors with a first impression of the Shire being at the southern boundary adjacent to the Calder Highway. It will alter the first impression from an idyllic rural landscape to one with a more industrial flavour.

Amendment C36

Amendment C36 to the Loddon Planning Scheme implements the recommendations of the Loddon Shire Rural Zones Review 2012. The review found that agriculture is the foundation of the Loddon Shire's economy and productive agricultural land is a key asset of the municipality and that the planning scheme must support the unhindered operation and growth of farm businesses.

The proposed use and development will remove productive land from agriculture use and will restrict opportunities for nearby farm businesses to increase their productive capacity. The scale of the proposed development and its lack of connectivity to any of the municipality's settlements run contrary to the principles of protecting farmland for agriculture.

The amendment proposes to introduce new policy into Clause 22.05 of the Loddon Planning Scheme as follows:

Rural Industry

It is preferable that rural industry be located within existing urban areas to capitalise on infrastructure and contribute to the employment options, viability and vibrancy of the town and minimise loss of farmland.

Rural industry should only be located in rural areas where;

- *Amenity impacts of the industry make it unsuitable for an urban area;*
- *Existing road infrastructure is suitable for the traffic to be generated by the industry;*
- *The industry will not compromise agricultural use of surrounding land;*
- *There are clear advantages of locating the industry in the rural area that outweigh the advantages of locating it in an urban area*

As council has adopted the amendment it can be considered in the assessment of a planning permit application. The proposed use and development is considered to be inconsistent with the grounds set out in the adopted policy. The amenity impacts of the proposal do not make it unsuitable for an urban area. All facets of the proposal are typically located within or on the fringe urban environments. The existing road infrastructure is unsuitable for the traffic to be generated by the proposed development.

Given VicRoads opposition to access from the Calder Highway the only alternative options are via Robbins Road to the east or Connors Road to the north. Neither of these roads are constructed to a standard suitable to service the proposal. There are no clear advantages of locating the industry in the rural area that outweigh the advantages of locating it in an urban area. The siting of the proposal in or at

least on the fringe of an urban area would provide access to reticulated water and sewerage while also providing an incentive for workers to relocate to the township.

The proposed site is located approximately equidistant between the townships of Bridgewater and Marong; it does not have access to reticulated water or sewerage and would not provide any incentive to workers from outside of the Shire to relocate.

Council Plan

The Council Plan 2013-2017 identifies one of the strengths of the Shire as a diverse agricultural sector that holds much agricultural know-how within its agrifood workforce. Large areas of flat, fertile and affordable land make it attractive for a range of farming enterprises. Access to irrigation water in areas to the north-east of the Shire supports highly productive, diverse agricultural and horticultural enterprises. This diversity is important as it enables the local economy to ride downturns in any particular commodity. Amongst its priorities for 2013-2017 the plan identifies:

3.2 Maintain planning protocols that protect prime agricultural land

5.1 Exploit our existing strengths and areas of competitive advantage to grow and diversify the economy

The proposal is considered to be contrary to the above identified priorities from the Council Plan. The approval of non-agricultural developments in the Farming Zone fails to protect agricultural land and can lead to increased land prices through changes to expectations of development potential. This in turn can contribute to a decline in the ability of farm enterprises to expand their operations reducing the ability of the Loddon Shire to exploit its identified strength.

Farming Zone

The subject land is located in the Farming Zone of the Loddon Planning Scheme. The purpose of the zone is:

- To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.
- To provide for the use of land for agriculture.
- To encourage the retention of productive agricultural land.
- To ensure that non-agricultural uses, including dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture.
- To encourage the retention of employment and population to support rural communities.
- To encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.

The proposed use and development is considered to be contrary to the purpose of the zone. The proposal does not implement the State Planning Policy Framework or Local Planning Policy Framework. It removes productive agricultural land and does not facilitate the use of the land for agriculture. It will not ensure that non-agricultural uses do not adversely affect the use of surrounding land for agriculture.

Whilst the applicant has indicated that the balance of the land not being developed in accordance with the proposal will be used for agriculture it will be restricted in its ability to be utilised to its highest potential. The insertion of a large commercial site within farmland will have an ongoing and lasting impact on the productivity of the land. Given the expanse of hardstand proposed for the site it is likely that dust and stormwater will be transported outside of the development site into the area proposed to be retained for agriculture.

The applicant has advised the proposal will employ up to 35 people on the site which is consistent with the purpose of encouraging the retention of employment and population. However the resultant support of this for local communities is debatable given that the site is closer to Marong than any settlement in the Loddon Shire.

Decision guidelines

In assessing any application the Responsible Authority must consider the decision guidelines of the applicable planning controls in addition to the general decision guidelines of the planning scheme. For

this proposal this means the decision guidelines of the Farming Zone, Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 2, Clause 52.05 Advertising Signs, Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation, Clause 52.29 Land Adjacent to a Road Zone Category 1 and Clause 52.34 Bicycle Facilities as well as those at Clause 65 that apply to all applications.

The decision guidelines of the Farming Zone, Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 2 and Clause 65 include consideration of the State Planning Policy Framework and Local Planning Policy Framework (including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies). The relevant Clauses of these sections have already been addressed in this report. On balance they do not support the application.

The decision guidelines of the Farming Zone are divided into five broad categories being general issues, agricultural issues and the impacts from non-agricultural uses, dwelling issues, environmental issues and design and siting issues. All but dwelling issues are relevant to this application. The decision guidelines of the Farming Zone can be seen in the attachments to this report.

As a result of the multi-faceted nature of the application there are elements of the proposal that are consistent with the decision guidelines of the Farming Zone and aspects that are inconsistent. For example, the rural industry component of the application would support agricultural production by providing additional options for distribution of produce and access to markets. However the trade supplies (semi trailer sales) which is the larger component of the proposal offers little to support or enhance agricultural production. On balance the decision guidelines of the Farming Zone do not support the application.

The decision guidelines of the Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 2, Clause 52.05 Advertising Signs, Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation, Clause 52.29 Land Adjacent to a Road Zone Category 1 and Clause 52.34 Bicycle Facilities have been considered in the preparation of this report. The proposed development is considered to be generally consistent with these provisions with the exception of Clause 52.29.

Clause 52.29 requires the Responsible Authority to consider the views of the relevant road authority. VicRoads has objected to the application due to the proposal to achieve access and egress directly via the Calder Highway. They consider that direct access onto the Calder Highway will have considerable impact on the operational efficiency and road user safety.

Objections

The application has received five objections, the grounds of which have previously been summarised. The issues raised by objectors are addressed as follows:

- The proposed use is not suitable in an agricultural area
The proposed use is discretionary in the Farming Zone. Therefore the zone identifies it as appropriate in suitable locations. However, for the reasons outlined throughout this report the subject land is not considered a suitable site.
- Other suitable grain handling sites are available
Without doubt there are other sites within the Loddon Shire that could accommodate a grain handling facility such as that proposed. However, the suitability of alternative sites for grain handling is largely irrelevant to the consideration of this application. The Responsible Authority must consider whether the proposed use and development is consistent with the Loddon Planning Scheme if located on the subject land.
- Impact on visual amenity
The proposed use and development would result in changes from an open rural vista to one dominated by an industrial type architecture. The design of the proposed development is intended to stand out and attract attention rather than blend with the local environment. It would be the dominant visual element in the landscape.
- Inconsistent with the Local Planning Policy Framework including the Municipal Strategic Statement.
The relevant clauses of the Local Planning Policy Framework in addition to the State Planning Policy Framework have been addressed elsewhere in this report. On balance it is considered that the proposal is inconsistent with the Local Planning Policy Framework including the Municipal Strategic Statement.

- Inconsistent with the purpose of the Farming Zone

The purpose of the Farming Zone has been addressed elsewhere in this report and as previously discussed the proposal is considered to be inconsistent with the purpose of the Farming Zone.

- Out of scale and character with the area

The proposed use and development is intensive and on a large scale in comparison to the established character of the area. The area is characterised by open rural vistas with sporadic development punctuating the landscape. Existing buildings generally appear in small clusters delineating the location of farm homesteads. The scale of the proposed development means that it will dominate and redefine the character of the area.

- Trade supplies prohibited in the Farming Zone

Trade supplies are a discretionary use in the Farming Zone. It is specifically listed in Section 2 of the table of uses and as such an application for this use can be considered on its merits.

- Inconsistent with the decision guidelines of the Farming Zone

The relevant decision guidelines of the Farming Zone have been addressed in the body of this report. On balance the decision guidelines of the Farming Zone do not support the application.

- Restricted sightlines for access and egress /traffic risk

The access/egress as proposed in the application maximises available site lines for traffic entering and exiting the site as well as passing vehicles. However VicRoads have objected to access directly from the Calder Highway and have expressed a preference for the use of Robbins Road to service the site. Robbins Road would require significant upgrades to both the road and the highway intersection in order to service the development. It also has significantly reduced sightlines compared to the proponents preferred option due in large to Dunns Hill to the southeast.

- Potential contamination of groundwater

While there is potential for the proposed use and development to contribute to contamination of both ground and surface water it is considered a manageable impact. Appropriate stormwater and waste management practices would minimise this potential.

- Retention of stormwater

Stormwater from buildings is proposed to be harvested for use on site and is to be retained in storage tanks. Increased runoff from the areas of hardstand would need to be managed so that sediment or contaminants from the ground were not transported off site. Appropriate design and construction of site drainage including onsite retention could address this issue.

- Will undermine the Marong Business Park

The Marong Business Park is an initiative of the City of Greater Bendigo located approximately seven kilometres to the southeast of the subject site. The Park is predominantly for industrial purposes.

- Applicant has a history of non-compliance

A history of non-compliance by the proponent is a matter for the public record and has been discussed in some detail in the minutes of the City of Greater Bendigo Council. However it does not bear on the merits of the proposal being considered. The application must be assessed against the provisions of the Loddon Planning Scheme.

- The use not related to farming

The majority of the proposed use and development is for commercial activities that do not relate to agriculture. This matter is discussed earlier in this report in consideration of the purpose and decision guidelines of the Farming Zone.

- Noise

It is anticipated that the proposed use of the site will result in the generation of additional noise in the area. This will result from both vehicle movements and the onsite activities. Given the separation of the site from sensitive uses and the type of noise generated it is not expected that this would create a detrimental impact on the amenity of the area.

- Proposed building inconsistent with the proposed use.

This issue relates to the rural industry component of the proposal. The lack of traditional grain handling facilities (silos etc.) in the proposal and the size of the building proposed to house this aspect of the operation suggests that the use will not process significant volumes of grain. It is not what is typically envisaged when thinking of a grain handling facility.

- Creation of a precedent for non-agricultural uses in farming areas.

Planning decisions are not guided by precedent. Each application must be assessed on its merits against the requirements of the planning scheme. However, approval of the application may create expectations that similar proposals in the Farming Zone will be supported and encourage the view of farmland as a cheaper alternative to appropriately zoned commercial or industrial land.

- Dust

The proposed use and development can be reasonably expected to generate dust. However dust from the site would generally not be to the same level as existing cropping activities in area although it is likely to be more frequent across the year. Existing agricultural activities generate dust on a seasonal basis while that from the proposed use would be a year round occurrence. Given the relatively low levels of dust expected to be generated, prevailing winds and location of sensitive uses it is not expected that dust from the site will have a significant impact on surrounding landholders.

- Rural amenity

Amenity is an elusive concept. It has its usual meaning of pleasantness, but also has a wider ambit. It has a physical component, which can include character and appearance of building and works, quality of infrastructure and absence of noise, unsightliness or offensive odours. It embraces all the features, benefits and advantages inherent in the environment in question. It also has a psychological or social component. It is more succinctly defined as features, benefits or advantages of the local environment that people currently enjoy.

The amenity of the area is defined by the existing environment and activities that make up the area. In this instance these are characterised by the rural landscape and by cropping and grazing. The proposed development will result in significant changes to the existing amenity of the area.

COSTS/BENEFITS

Benefits of the proposal include the establishment of a new business within Loddon Shire, including associated potential employment and economic development benefits.

Encouragement of appropriate development within the Shire is considered to offer a variety of benefits including population growth, economic diversity and development, infrastructure improvement or increased community and private services.

Conversely, approval of inappropriate development has the potential to detract from residential amenity and precinct attractiveness.

RISK ANALYSIS

Failure to process planning applications in a timely manner or undertake rigorous assessment of development or works proposals is considered to pose the following risks:

- Barrier to development and associated economic growth within the Shire
- Proliferation of incompatible land use development
- Council's reputation as a regulatory authority
- Infrastructure, service provision or regulatory and enforcement pressures
- Protection of zones to accommodate intended activities or reduction of surrounding property amenity

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation and engagement with planning permit applicants is routinely conducted at the required periods throughout the assessment and permit approval process.

Objectors to the proposal were also provided the opportunity to speak to their submissions before Council at a scheduled forum on 10 March 2015.

4.2 FINANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 28 FEBRUARY 2015

SUMMARY

This report provides Council with financial information for the period ending 28 February 2015.

Author	Kirsten Koch, Management Accountant
Council Plan ref:	Strategic enabler: Sound financial management protocols
File no:	08/06/001
Attachment:	Finance Report for Period Ending 28 February 2015

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *receives and notes the 'Finance Report for the period ending 28 February 2015'*
2. *approves budget revisions included in the report for internal reporting purposes only.*

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council is provided with Finance Reports on a monthly basis.

BACKGROUND

The Finance Report for the period ended 28 February 2015 includes standard monthly information about budget variations, cash, investments, interest, debtors and creditors, and provides a comparison of year-to-date actual results to year-to-date budget (by dollars and percentage) and total revised budget (by percentage).

The information is in the format provided in the 2014/15 Budget, and includes operating results, capital expenditure and funding sources.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Nil

COSTS/BENEFITS

The benefit to Council and the community is that accurate and regular financial reporting is being disclosed.

Provision of financial reports on at least a quarterly basis is a requirement of the Local Government Act.

RISK ANALYSIS

The provision of regular and accurate finance reports to Council minimises the risk of Council not delivering projects within the approved budget.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

There has been considerable consultation internally with respective managers in understanding their budget responsibilities and keeping within budgetary constraints.

External engagement with the community was undertaken during the submission period of the budget, and regular reporting provides a mechanism of monitoring the financial outcomes of Council against that expectation.

4.3 FEBRUARY 2015 AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

SUMMARY

This report provides Council with an overview of the Audit Committee meeting held in February 2015.

Author	Jude Holt, Director Corporate Services
Council Plan ref:	Strategic enabler: Effective and efficient operating systems and procedures
File no:	06/02/003
Attachment:	Results of Local Government Performance Reporting Framework first quarter trial data Annual report of Audit Committee activities for 2014

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *receives and notes the:*
 - a) *February 2015 Audit Committee Meeting Report*
 - b) *Annual report of Audit Committee activities for 2014*
 - c) *Results of the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework first quarter trial data*
2. *endorses the performance improvement recommendations documented in the Audit Report – Review of contract management*

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council was provided with a summary of the November 2014 Audit Committee Meeting at the Ordinary Meeting held on 16 December 2014.

BACKGROUND

The Audit Committee was created under Section 139 of the Local Government Act 1989, which states that "Council must establish an audit committee".

The committee is made up of four independent community members, and Cr Gavan Holt, as Council's representative. Council's Chief Executive Officer and Director Corporate Services attend the meetings in an advisory capacity.

The primary objective of the Audit Committee is to assist Council in the effective conduct of its responsibilities for:

- the enhancement of the credibility and objectivity of internal and external financial reporting
- effective management of financial and other risks and the protection of Council assets
- compliance with laws and regulations as well as use of best practice guidelines
- the effectiveness of the internal audit function
- the provision of an effective means of communication between the external auditor, internal audit, management and the Council
- facilitating the organisation's ethical development
- maintaining a reliable system of internal controls.

In order to provide a structured approach and ensure that the committee addresses each of its responsibilities, an annual calendar of actions and an internal audit review program are established each year, and these guide the activities of the committee.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

At the commencement of the meeting the Chair advised committee members that Mrs Jo Haw had tendered her resignation from the committee effective immediately.

The committee has rotation process of one community member per year which expires on 30 April; Mrs Haw's position will be advertised along with the normal annual rotation.

Items included on the meeting agenda for February 2015 were:

- the audit report for the review of contract management
- a report on the committee's activities for 2014 which will be provided to Council
- presentation of the annual performance survey for consideration by the committee, which will be issued to committee members for completion and an assessment of the results provided at the May 2015 Audit Committee meeting
- an assessment of the agenda, which remains unchanged
- presentation of the results of the first quarter trial of the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework
- a report of the initial meeting with Council's new external auditor, Martin Thompson of Crowe Horwath
- presentation of the Victorian Auditor-General indicators for financial sustainability
- presentation of the community services activities by Council's Director Community Wellbeing, Wendy Gladman

Other items on the agenda included the following standing items:

1. Fraud Report
2. Major Lawsuits
3. Monthly Finance Report
4. Risk Management Report.

The committee was also provided with an overview of the Outstanding Action List which showed that Council had 43 outstanding actions to be completed, with 16 added to the list from the Review of Local Laws and Management Letter, and 9 completed during the period.

COSTS/BENEFITS

There are costs associated with the audit committee and internal audit function.

However, in most cases, actions resulting from audit reviews do not bear any new costs as they are undertaken by current staff.

The benefits that the internal audit function provides Council are:

- business improvement relating to the audit review areas
- standard policy and procedure documents which are developed through the action list
- improvement in knowledge management that will assist with succession planning over time
- a reduction in risk in areas relating to audit reviews.

RISK ANALYSIS

The internal audit program has been created and is annually updated on a risk basis, ensuring that Council's program addresses the areas of highest risk or greatest concern to audit committee members and Council officers.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Nil

4.4 PLANNING APPLICATION 5019

SUMMARY

Application 5019 seeks to expand an existing broiler farm. This report recommends refusal as the proposal fails to comply with the relevant Code of Practice as required by the Loddon Planning Scheme.

Author	Tyson Sutton, Manager Planning and Local Laws
Council Plan ref:	Core business 9: Regulation
File no:	13/02/004
Attachment:	Code of Practice Assessment

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to refuse planning permit application 5019 on the following grounds:

1. *The proposal does not comply with the Victorian Code for Broiler Farms 2009 as required by Clause 52.31 of the Loddon Planning Scheme.*

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council has not previously discussed this matter.

BACKGROUND

Planning permit application 5019 was received 24 September 2014 and proposed the construction of 10 additional chicken sheds at 12 Railway Drive, Inglewood. The proposal would increase the maximum capacity of the site to approximately 93,000 birds.

The application was made following compliance action by Loddon Shire's Municipal Building Surveyor after the property owner was observed constructing the above sheds without the necessary building approvals.

Planning permit 3550 was issued 3 January 2002 allowing the use of the subject land for "Free range Meatbird Poultry Operation". The permit restricted the operation of the establishment to a maximum of 3000 birds. The permit was amended in December 2014 to allow construction of replacement sheds as those already on the site no longer provided for appropriate welfare standards.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The subject land is identified as 12 Railway Drive, Inglewood and is comprised of two irregular shaped parcels being CA's 4 and 5, Section D, Township of Inglewood, Parish of Inglewood. The subject land has a total area of 8.8 hectares. It is located between the Inglewood Cemetery and the Inglewood-Serpentine Road and is contained within the Farming Zone of the Loddon Planning Scheme. The surrounding area is predominantly used for agricultural production with the exception of the cemetery to the northeast and a lifestyle property to the east.

The application seeks to expand the previously approved operation through the construction of an additional 10 sheds with an increase in total bird numbers to 93,265. The use of the property is defined by the Scheme as a "Broiler Farm"

Land used to keep broiler chickens which are housed permanently in sheds and reared for meat production.

Planning approval for the proposed development is required in accordance with the provisions of the Farming Zone. Within the Farming Zone a broiler farm is a Section 2 use and is conditional on meeting the requirements of Clause 52.31 – Broiler Farm of the planning scheme. A use in Section 2 requires a permit. Any condition opposite the use must be met. If the condition is not met, the use is prohibited.

Given that the use is contained within Section 2 of the Farming Zone planning approval is also required for buildings and works.

Clause 52.31 of the Loddon Planning Scheme identifies that a proposal to increase the capacity of an existing broiler farm must comply with the Victorian Code for Broiler Farms 2009 (the Code). As a result of the condition contained within the zone the use and development of the land for a broiler farm (or increase in capacity) is prohibited unless it complies with the Code. The purpose of the Code is to:

1. deliver sound environmental performance in the planning, design, construction, operation and management of broiler farms
2. protect local amenity from adverse impacts, including offensive odours, dust, noise and visual impacts
3. protect the surrounding environment from adverse impacts
4. permit an economically viable, competitive and sustainable broiler farm industry.

To achieve these outcomes, the Code sets requirements for the:

- siting and size of broiler farms
- application of best practice in the design, construction, operation and management of broiler farms to satisfy relevant environmental standards
- preparation, assessment and determination of broiler farm development proposals through the planning permit system
- ongoing monitoring of broiler farm operations through routine audits.

This section specifies the six best practice elements of broiler farm siting, design and operation that make up the key components of this Code. Each of the six elements addresses the different issues that prospective permit applicants must consider when planning a broiler farm development. All planning permit applications (regardless of the farm classification) for a new or expanded broiler farm must be assessed against each element. This Code divides the six elements into three parts – 'Location, farm size and setback requirements'; 'Farm design'; and 'Farm operation and management' – as follows:

- Part 1 Location, farm size and setback requirements
 - Element 1 (E1): Location, siting and size
- Part 2 Farm design
 - Element 2 (E2): Farm design, layout and construction
 - Element 3 (E3): Traffic, site access, on farm roads and parking
 - Element 4 (E4): Landscaping
 - Element 5 (E5): Waste management
- Part 3 Farm operation and management
 - Element 6 (E6): Farm operation and management (environmental management plan (EMP))

Each of the six elements contains an objective and a number of standards that must be met by the proposal. These can be met by designing the development in accordance with an approved measure or by demonstrating that an alternative measure will meet the relevant objectives of standards with equivalent or superior performance. The application has been assessed against the objectives and standards of the Code. The assessment of the application has been based on the approved measures as the applicant has not provided details of any alternative measures. The proposal has been found to be noncompliant with the Code.

Following assessment against the Code the applicant was informed in writing of the identified issues and requested to advise how they wished to proceed. No response has been received.

COSTS/BENEFITS

Benefits of the proposal include the expansion of a rural business within Loddon Shire, including associated potential employment and economic development benefits.

Encouragement of appropriate development within the Shire is considered to offer a variety of benefits including population growth, economic diversity and development, infrastructure improvement or increased community and private services.

Conversely, approval of inappropriate development has the potential to detract from residential amenity and precinct attractiveness.

RISK ANALYSIS

Failure to process planning applications in a timely manner or undertake rigorous assessment of development or works proposals is considered to pose the following risks:

- Barrier to development and associated economic growth within the Shire
- Proliferation of incompatible land use development
- Council's reputation as a regulatory authority
- Infrastructure, service provision or regulatory and enforcement pressures
- Protection of zones to accommodate intended activities or reduction of surrounding property amenity

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation and engagement with planning permit applicants is routinely conducted at the required periods throughout the assessment and permit approval process.

4.5 ENDORSEMENT OF THE LODDON MALLEE REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2018

SUMMARY

Seeking Loddon Shire endorsement of the Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan 2015-2018.

Author	John McLinden, Chief Executive Officer
Council Plan ref:	Core business 3: Planning for future needs
File no:	13/09/001
Attachment:	Draft Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan 2015-2018

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *endorse the Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan 2015 - 2018 as representing the actions required to positively transform the Region*
2. *acknowledge Loddon Shire Council's ongoing participation in the implementation and application of the Plan*

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Councillors received a briefing about the development of the draft plan at the March 2015 Council Forum.

BACKGROUND

The Loddon Mallee Regional Development Australia Committee guided the development of regional strategic plans for the north and south of the Loddon Mallee region in 2010. The Loddon Mallee RDA has now reviewed those plans and has combined the North and South Regional Strategic Plans into one Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan.

It should be noted that the regional strategic plans of all regions within Victoria are currently undergoing review to ensure that they remain relevant and aligned with local and regional priorities.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The plan has four priority areas which, if delivered well, will see the prosperity of the Loddon Mallee region positively influenced. The priority areas are:

1. foster our competitive advantages in agriculture and food processing and other regionally significant industries
2. build the connecting infrastructure for a diverse economy
3. enhance the well-being and economic participation of our people
4. protect and enhance the liveability and appeal of our region

The plan has been reviewed with broad consultation with a number of key stakeholders throughout the region. The Loddon Mallee Regional Development Australia Committee sees as pivotal that each local government within the region supports the plan. Local government within the Loddon Mallee region, including the Loddon Shire, have an important role, not only in providing regional leadership, but also in playing its role in implementing key aspects of the Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan.

The Loddon Mallee RDA Committee respectfully requests that the Loddon Shire endorse the attached Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan 2015-2018 and commits to playing its part in implementing the plan for the betterment of the entire Loddon Mallee region.

COSTS/BENEFITS

Individual projects arising from the plan will be costed and included in the relevant Budget year. Benefits to the community will flow from the four priority areas listed in discussion above.

RISK ANALYSIS

No risks to Council have been identified for this recommendation.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Refer to discussion.

4.6 REVIEW OF COUNCIL PLAN 2013 TO 2017

SUMMARY

Seeking Council determination whether a review of the current Council Plan is necessary.

Author	John McLinden, Chief Executive Officer
Council Plan ref:	Core business 3: Planning for future needs
File no:	02/02/003
Attachment:	nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council, having reviewed the Loddon Shire Council Plan 2013-2017, has formed the opinion that a review of the Council Plan is not necessary at this time.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Councillors were asked to consider the need for review of the Council Plan at the March 2015 Council Forum.

BACKGROUND

The Local Government Act requires a council to prepare a four-year council plan by June of the year immediately following a council general election. Council prepared its current Council Plan 2013-2017 with an adoption date of 24 June 2013.

The Local Government Act also requires a municipality to consider at least once each financial year if its council plan requires review. In 2013/14, Council decided not to review the council plan.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The requirement for a Council to consider if it should review its council plan at least annually stems from the need for Council to ensure its council plan remains relevant in a changing environment. Council undertook a thorough review of its mission, its overall direction and the strategies that it employs to deliver services that its community expects, when it developed the Council Plan in June 2013.

The Council Plan is underpinned with a number of operational plans known as Directorate Plans, and these are reviewed annually, and progress on the implementation of these initiatives has been recently reported to Council.

As seen from that report, a number of initiatives have been completed or are well under development, but there is also a significant amount of work still to be completed over the next two years, that is the remaining life of the current Council Plan. It is recommended that there may be some value in updating some of the contextual material within the Council Plan to ensure its relevance, but the overall direction and the strategic platforms that are designed to deliver Council's vision should remain unchanged, as Council is only part way through the delivery of these programs, which still remain relevant.

Minor contextual changes can be made to the Council Plan without the need for a fully developed public consultation process. It is suggested that officers make these amendments and return the plan to Council for endorsement, but no formal review of the Council Plan is warranted at this time.

COSTS/BENEFITS

Costs of individual projects within the plan are included in the Budget for the relevant delivery years.

RISK ANALYSIS

No risks have been identified in relation to this recommendation.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Councillors were consulted about the need to review the plan.

4.7 MODEL RAILWAY INGLEWOOD EUCALYPTUS DISTILLERY SITE

SUMMARY

Seeking Council support for the Miniature Railway Club of Inglewood to gain access to land situated between the Inglewood Eucalyptus Distillery Museum site and the existing railway line.

Author	Bryan McEwan, Director Economy and Community
Council Plan ref:	Strategic Platform 4: Make our towns liveable and memorable
File no:	16/04/001
Attachment:	Map of site

RECOMMENDATION

That Council supports the Miniature Railway Club of Inglewood to gain access to the road reserve and unreserved Crown land situated between the Inglewood Eucalyptus Distillery Museum site and the existing railway line.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

[Identify the Council meetings that this issue has been discussed at before, and what was determined in those discussions.]

BACKGROUND

A group of model railway and steam enthusiasts have established a model railway club based in Inglewood. The group, which has strong interest from local enthusiasts in Inglewood and from well beyond the district, would like to establish a model railway on the site of the Inglewood Eucalyptus Distillery Museum. Mr Ian Collie, representing the club, has approached Council seeking support.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The group has approached the Committee of Management that manages the Inglewood Eucalyptus Distillery site and is seeking its support to establish the railway tracks upon its land and to operate a regular miniature railway event. The Committee of Management, as a delegated committee of Council, will consider this matter and have already provided verbal in-principle support to the idea, Mr Collie advises. The Committee of Management will, sometime in the future, approach Council if it believes that a variation to the Instrument of Delegation is required to facilitate this development.

Mr Collie has also sought advice in relation to planning approvals and this advice has been provided.

The railway is proposed to be constructed upon the land owned by Council and managed by the Committee of Management on Council's behalf, and also onto the road reserve and the unreserved Crown land which lies immediately south of the Inglewood Eucalyptus Distillery site. A map of these sites is attached to this report.

The land additional to the Eucalyptus Distillery Museum site is controlled by the Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning, and Mr Collie, on behalf of the Miniature Railway Club of Inglewood, is seeking Council's support to obtain access to this land for the construction and operation of the railway line.

There appears to be sufficient interest within Inglewood and this club to establish a model railway. This location provides a high exposure for the activities of the club and may support the operation of the Inglewood Eucalyptus Distillery Museum and bring additional visitors to the site. This can only be a good thing, the site has sufficient room to accommodate the proposal, and although appropriate planning approvals must be obtained before any construction or operation of the miniature railway occurs, it is certainly appropriate that Council supports the Miniature Railway Club to have access to the additional land which lies to the south of the museum site so as to properly construct the miniature railway.

COSTS/BENEFITS

No costs to Council are identified with this recommendation.

RISK ANALYSIS

No risks have been identified with this recommendation.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

As explained in the discussion above.

4.8 FEES AND CHARGES – BRIDGEWATER PUBLIC CARAVAN PARK

SUMMARY

Report provides Council with a recommendation to amend fees and charges for the Bridgewater Public Caravan Park.

Author	Christine Coombes, Economic Development Officer
Council Plan ref:	Core business 4: Economic development
File no:	13/09/015
Attachment:	Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve an amendment to fees and charges for the Bridgewater Public Caravan Park.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

In February 2015 Council adopted an amendment to the fees and charges for the Bridgewater Public Caravan Park.

BACKGROUND

Nil

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

An amendment to the fees and charges schedule for the Bridgewater Public Caravan Park (BPCP) was adopted by Council in February 2015.

It is now proposed to revise fees and charges for the park and adopt a new schedule to align fees with those charged at the Wedderburn Pioneer Caravan Park (WPCP) and to incorporate suitable peak and off peak fees in relation to the standard of park amenities.

	BPCP March 2015		BPCP February 2015		BPCP October 2014		WPCP 14/15	*WPCP 15/16
	Peak	Off peak	Peak	Off peak	Peak	Off peak	One rate	One rate
Powered site 2 adults	\$35.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$27.00	\$30.00
Powered site extra person/night	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$8.00 (2 people)	\$8.00 (2 people)
Un-powered site 2 adults	\$25.00	\$20.00	\$25.00	\$18.00	\$35.00	\$28.00	\$20.00	\$20.00
Un powered site extra person/night	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$6.75 (2 people)	\$7.00 (2 people)

	BPCP March 2015	BPCP February 2015	BPCP October 2014	WPCP 14/15	*WPCP 15/16
	1 week or more (Maximum stay 12 weeks)	1 week or more (Maximum stay 12 weeks)	4 weeks or more (Maximum stay 12 weeks)	Weekly Fee	Weekly Fee
Powered site 2 adults	\$150.00p/w	\$100.00p/w	\$150.00p/w	\$147.00	\$150.00
Powered site extra person/night	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$8.00 (2 people)	\$8.00 (2 people)
Un-powered site 2 adults	\$120.00p/w	\$90.00p/w	\$140.00p/w	\$118.00	\$120.00
Un powered site extra person/night	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$6.75 (2 people)	\$7.00 (2 people)

*Proposed fees for 2015/2016.

Peak means Victorian School Holidays and Victorian public holiday long weekends, being Labour Day, Easter, Anzac Day (If this falls on a Friday or Monday), Queen’s birthday and Melbourne Cup.

Fees changed:

- Powered site 2 adults (peak) \$30 increase to \$35
- Powered site 2 adults (off peak) \$20 increase to \$30
- Unpowered site 2 adults (off peak) \$18 increase to \$20
- Powered site 2 adults 1 week or more \$100 increase to \$150 per week
- Unpowered site 2 adults 1 week or more \$90 increase to \$120 per week

As adopted in February 2015 Caravan and Motorhome Club Group bookings were provided with a discount of 10% across both powered and unpowered sites as per:

- across both peak and off-peak periods
- the group must be a formalised caravan or motorhome club
- a group is defined as 10 or more caravans or motorhomes
- 2 night minimum booking
- discount for Caravan and Motorhome Club Group bookings is at the discretion of the Park Managers and taking into account the expected occupancy (demand) at the time the booking is required.

The above discount would reduce the fees for the Bridgewater Public Caravan Park to a lower rate than that of Wedderburn Pioneer Caravan Park, to align the fees, this discount rate would be need to be removed.

COSTS/BENEFITS

The setting of a broader range of fees and charges will enable Council to collect additional revenue from the park to offset management and running costs, while balancing the attraction of visitors to the park.

The longer visitors stay, and the attraction of a greater range of caravanners and campers, will lead to a further boost to the local economy.

RISK ANALYSIS

By not offering a discount to groups, there is a negative effect on occupancy rates, leading to fewer return visits and the park not reaching its full potential.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The fees and charges amendment has been prepared in conjunction with the Director Economy & Community, Director of Corporate Services and the Finance Accountant and compared with other caravan parks.

4.9 MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN AUDIT REPORT

SUMMARY

Provides Council with notification of the results of the recent Municipal Emergency Management Plan audit, conducted by the State Emergency Service in January 2015.

Author:	Andrew Hamilton – Emergency Management Co-ordinator
Council Plan ref:	Core Business 2. – Provision of Wellbeing Services
File no:	11/01/001
Attachment:	Letter of audit compliance from Trevor White, Chief Officer Operations VicSES Certificate of Audit Compliance MEMP Audit Summary.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receive and note *the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) audit summary, indicating that the Loddon Shire MEMP is compliant with both the guidelines issued by the Minister and the Emergency Management Act 1986.*
2. *Pursuant to Section 21A(3) of the Emergency Management Act 1986, provide a written response to the Chief Officer Operations of the Victoria State Emergency Service, acknowledging receipt and consideration of the audit report as well as the proposed action to address the identified deficiency, being the review, amendment and subsequent endorsement of the revised MEMP by Council.*

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

On 15 September 2011 Council were provided with a briefing on the previous audit of the Loddon Shire MEMP pursuant to Section 21A (1) of the Emergency Management Act 1986.

BACKGROUND

The MEMP is required to be prepared in accordance with Section 20(2) of the Emergency Management Act 1986. The Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) is charged with preparing and reviewing the plan annually; with Council responsible for ensuring the maintenance and keeping of the Plan.

A previous MEMP audit was conducted by the Victorian State Emergency Service (SES) and subsequent results reported to Council in September 2011, in accordance with Section 21A(1) of the Emergency Management Act 1986. The MEMP is required to be audited every 3 years in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Minister.

On Thursday 23 October 2014, the MEMP was again audited by a team from the SES, Victoria Police (VicPol) and Department of Human Services (DHS).

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

In late January, a detailed report outlining the results of the audit was forwarded to Council by the SES Chief Officer – Operations, Trevor White; indicating that the current MEMP complies with both the Guidelines issued by the Minister and the Emergency Management Act 1986. A summary of the audit report was also supplied (see attached) along with a letter commending the Municipal Emergency Management Staff for developing the Plan along with their preparation for the audit.

On the 3 February 2015, the audit report and accompanying documentation was tabled at the MEMPC. In accordance with Section 21A(3) of the Emergency Management Act 1986, Council is required to acknowledge the audit report within three months from the date of receiving the report.

The MEMP audit summary report identifies that the Plan complies more than adequately in 15 categories, complies adequately in 8 categories and falls short in 1 category, being that the current MEMP has not been endorsed since 2011 by Council. The recommendation by the SES is that the current MEMP be presented to and endorsed by Council.

In the Summary Report, Question 11 indicates that the MEMP complies, however in the detailed report the MEMP complies more than adequately. Council staff will draw this anomaly to the attention of the SES audit team.

The MEMP structure and content has undergone major changes in the past six months with legislative and agency responsibilities being reformed. There is currently a number of legislative amendments and new legislation being introduced, including two Emergency Management Acts operating concurrently.

The Emergency Management Act 1986 and the Emergency Management Act 2013, are having to be read together, with the 1986 Act being gradually phased out over the next twelve months. This requires a major rewrite of the MEMP, incorporating any recommendations from the audit report. It is expected that the revised MEMP, in consideration of the legislative changes, will be submitted for endorsement by the MEMP Committee and then Council within the next 6 months.

RISK ANALYSIS

Difficulties may arise in the review and amendment of the MEMP given continued changes expected over the next year to the Emergency Management Manual and Legislation. Such changes may require on going alteration of the MEMP along with adjustment in the roles and responsibilities for council staff.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

All emergency service organisations will be consulted and participate in the updating the MEMP through the MEMPC.

5. INFORMATION REPORTS

5.1 LODDON HEALTHY MINDS NETWORK – STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

SUMMARY

This report is to provide Council with an update on progress in relation to the Loddon Healthy Minds Network Strategic Plan.

Author	Wendy Gladman, Director Community Wellbeing
Council Plan ref:	Core business 2: Provision of wellbeing services
File no:	12/01/005
Attachment:	Loddon Healthy Minds Network – Strategic Plan 2011-2016 Action Plan

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Loddon Healthy Minds Network Strategic Plan progress report.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council adopted the Healthy Minds Strategic Plan 2011-2016 in December 2011. A progress report was presented to Council in December 2012 and December 2013.

BACKGROUND

The Loddon Healthy Minds Network is a special committee of Council which has been operating since 2007. The network meets bi-monthly and consists of representatives from Council, health professionals and community members with an interest in mental health and wellbeing. Cr Condliffe is the current Chair of the network.

The Strategic Plan adopted by Council in December 2011 established the direction of the Healthy Minds Network for the period 2011-2016.

The six key performance priorities of the network were determined as:

Community Awareness	Build an awareness with the general public about mental health issues
Advocacy	Advocate for the best possible outcomes for Loddon residents
Education	Educate clients, carers and network members about the services that are available
Promotion	Promote the network and its services
Partnerships	Develop key partnerships
Governance	Improve the governance of the network

From each of these key performance areas, goals were identified, and an action plan developed providing timeframes and measures.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The Loddon Healthy Minds Strategic Plan 2011-2016 action plan is attached and demonstrates progress on actions during 2014.

The Healthy Minds network members reviewed the Strategic Plan content and action plan at its February meeting. Following this, the members determined that although the updating of the current plan is not due to occur until 2016 for a 2017 commencement, due to the significant changes in the mental health

arena and with most of the current action plan having been satisfied, they would like to commence the development of a new Loddon Healthy Minds Strategic Plan during 2015.

COSTS/BENEFITS

The Loddon Healthy Minds Strategic Plan 2011-2016 action plan is attached and demonstrates progress on actions during 2014.

The development of the new strategic plan will not require any additional funds for completion.

RISK ANALYSIS

The current strategic plan does not reflect the recent changes to the Mental Health Act and a number of new service providers in the mental health field and so may not adequately support the Loddon Healthy Minds Network to achieve the desired outcomes.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Bi-monthly meetings inform the progress of the Loddon Healthy Minds Strategic Plan actions.

5.2 INWARDS CORRESPONDENCE

SUMMARY

Relevant correspondence received by Council since previous meeting.

Author: John McLinden - Chief Executive Officer

Council Plan ref: Strategic enabler: Transparent communication

File No: various

Attachment: Copies of inwards correspondence

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Inwards Correspondence.

Date	From	Subject
16/2/15	Victoria State Emergency Service	VICSES Unit Controller Appointment
13/2/15	Community Leadership Loddon Murray Inc.	2015 Loddon Murray Community Leadership Program

5.3 PROGRESS REPORT ON PROJECTS WITHIN THE COUNCIL PLAN 2013-2017

SUMMARY

A report on progress of actions within the current Council Plan 2013-2017

Author	John McLinden, Chief Executive Officer
Council Plan ref:	Core business 3: Planning for future needs
File no:	02/02/003
Attachment:	nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the report on progress against the Council Plan.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

This is the first progress report for 2015.

BACKGROUND

Council has agreed to receive a six monthly update on progress against its Council Plan.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

This report provides a series of snapshots which provide Council with a clear understanding of progress against each of the key projects contained within Council's four year plan.

COSTS/BENEFITS

No costs and benefits are identified for this progress report.

RISK ANALYSIS

No risks are associated with this report.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Nil required.

STRATEGIC PLATFORM 1

BUILD A NETWORK OF STRONG COMMUNITIES

OBJECTIVE:

Support our townships in preserving their individuality whilst leveraging their collective strength.

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

1. Completion of suite of new community plans with consistent framework
2. Implement social media strategy
3. Facilitate a solution for childcare

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS:

Community support policy
Social media policy

Complete. Council's Social Media Strategy has been approved and implemented with councils Facebook page now going live.

2013 – 2017 PRIORITIES:

KEY PROJECTS:

1.1	Build unique brand identities for each of our communities based on their geography, history and personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define each of our town brand identities and communicate these
1.2	Use community planning to allow our communities to create their own futures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructure community planning to focus on the longer term • Promote succession planning within communities
1.3	Build a spirit of connectivity and mutual support amongst the communities of Loddon Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an annual event to bring community planning groups together to share
1.4	Leverage social media to better communicate with our residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a social media strategy and implement actions
1.5	Promote a calendar of events across the region and support them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and support events on new website
1.6	Drive improvement in life services including lobbying for assistance with childcare shortfall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify service needs and develop links with providers to source options for provision of childcare
1.7	Support volunteer organisations to remain active within the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the benefits of membership of a volunteer organisation • List volunteer groups on website and provide contact details

With the redesign of Council's website, much greater promotion and support of events occurs. This action is ongoing and complete.

Council has **completed** this action by undertaking a review of all of our volunteer groups and ensuring that their contact details are up-to-date and listed on the website.

Council has undertaken significant work in identifying the needs for the provision of childcare in our community and has worked with a consultant to develop a cost-effective model for small rural communities.

Implementation of this model is awaiting guideline decisions from the Federal government.

Council is ready to assist our community to implement this model but is unable to until the Federal government resolves its position in relation to the provision of childcare for isolated rural communities.

STRATEGIC PLATFORM 2

GROW OUR POPULATION THROUGH APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE:

Capitalise on the demand for lifestyle properties, without compromising premium agricultural land or our environment.

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

1. 10% increase in planning approvals for new residential housing
2. Reduce planning approval turn around for residential and business applications to 12 weeks
3. Complete register of significant planning achievements

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS:

Rural zones review
Settlement plan (in progress)
Loddon Shire Planning Scheme

Completed

2013 – 2017 PRIORITIES:

KEY PROJECTS:

2.1 Implement planning strategies that accelerate growth in appropriate areas

- Implement Rural Zones Review
- Develop and commence implementation of Settlement Strategy

2.2 Adopt a pro-development attitude to planning and stimulate investment needed to service the community's changing housing requirements

- Bridgewater residential subdivision
- Implement online planning application process for commercial development (SPEAR system)
- Develop Loddon Shire Settlement Strategy

Partially complete. Council has completed the planning scheme amendment which will implement Council's Rural Zones Review. This amendment is currently with the Minister and Council is seeking a meeting with the Minister to accelerate the approval of the Planning Scheme Amendment which will complete the implementation of the Rural Zones review.

Council has commenced the development of a Settlement Strategy and will have that strategy completed by the end of 2015. Implementation of the strategy will commence shortly thereafter.

Work has commenced on the development of the Loddon Shire Settlement Strategy.

7 the Bridgewater residential subdivision has now been rezoned and the land is available for development. As the land is privately owned, further progress on this matter rests with the landowner. Council has set the environment to allow this development to occur.

2.3 Improve our turnaround time on planning approvals for housing projects

- Implement a planning application progress tracking system
- Drive improvement in turnaround time by enforcing targets

2.4 Attract investors to develop infrastructure and services

- Develop and commence implementation of new Economic Development Strategy which incorporates investment attraction for essential infrastructure and services
- Identify surplus council properties and market them

Partially complete. An electronic tracking system for planning applications has been developed but is still suffering some teething problems. Additional resources have been invested into ensuring that the data being placed on the tracking system is accurate to ensure that the system needs management needs.

Development of Council's Economic Development Strategy is a work in progress and will be completed by June 2015.

There has been significant work done to improve the turnaround time for planning permits, still more work needs to be done.

A number of surplus properties have been identified and reported to Council for disposal. Work continues on this project.

STRATEGIC PLATFORM 3

CHAMPION OUR AGRIFOOD ENTERPRISES

OBJECTIVE: Be an advocate for our agrifood sector and ensure it is adequately resourced to remain the backbone of our shire's economy.

SUCCESS INDICATORS: 5% growth in agricultural sector average GDP

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS: Economic Development Strategy

2013 – 2017 PRIORITIES:

KEY PROJECTS:

3.1 Remove the road blocks for new agrifood enterprises or expansion of existing ones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby state government to remove barriers to agricultural value-adding • Support the Innovative Farming Project to help existing farmers understand expansion opportunities • Support the Northern Victorian Regional Transport Strategy
3.2 Maintain planning protocols that protect prime agricultural land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider at next planning scheme review
3.3 Engage with the agribusiness sector in a regular more formal way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage Agribusiness Development Officer • Implement agribusiness actions from new Economic Development Strategy • Strengthen relationships with existing 'hero' agrifood businesses
3.4 Continue to seek out agrifood value-adding opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage Agribusiness Development Officer

Council provided strong advocacy support for the Innovative Farming Project, developed as a response to the Murray Darling Basin Plan. This project seems to have stalled due to a lack of funding.

Council continues to support the Victorian Regional Transport Strategy and has the Director Operations sitting on the steering committee.

Council continues to seek an appropriate candidate to fulfil the role of Agribusiness Development Officer. The position has recently been readvertised, and with applications having now closed, Council will now go through the selection process.

Completed, with Council endorsing the review in January. Next steps will be implementation of the amendments falling out from the recommendations of the review.

STRATEGIC PLATFORM 4

MAKE OUR TOWNS LIVEABLE AND MEMORABLE

OBJECTIVE: Improve the liveability of our main townships by making them attractive to existing residents, prospective residents and tourists.

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

1. Three new streetscape projects completed
2. Completion of master plan for high use recreational amenities

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS: Loddon Shire Planning Scheme
Community Plans

2013 – 2017 PRIORITIES:

KEY PROJECTS:

The Wedderburn Streetscape construction plans are complete, with construction scheduled June 2015.

4.1	Renew the streetscape in our major towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wedderburn Streetscape Project • Develop plans for Boort, Pyramid Hill, Bridgewater streetscape redevelopment
4.2	Enhance our overall amenities by offering improved, but rationalised facilities in line with financial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inglewood Town Hall Hub Project • Wedderburn Community Centre Redevelopment
4.3	Work with our business community to foster a customer service culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a self-diagnostic customer service template for businesses • Facilitate annual customer service training for businesses
4.4	Lift local hospitality capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver local accommodation guide and promote through website
4.5	Enforce a clean up of our towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct audit, identification and prioritisation of all unsightly properties in all major towns • Systematically apply process for enforcement according to priority

Complete

Consultants have been engaged to develop streetscape plans for these towns.

Complete

Inglewood Town Hall Hub project design is now complete and building and planning approvals are being sought.

Some initial policy settings and guidelines have been prepared to address the issue of unsightly properties but implementation has stalled.

Council's Economic Development Department continues to deliver customer service training for our businesses.

4.6 Improve stormwater and wastewater management

Ongoing

- Implement high priority works identified in township drainage strategies
- Develop Stormwater Asset Management Plan
- Partner in Sewer Connections Project with Coliban Water and Department of Health to increase the number of properties connected to township sewer schemes
- Investigate opportunities to implement sewer extension schemes

4.7 Improve the appearance and functionality of recreation and public spaces

Development is approaching completion but is behind the initial delivery schedule. Discussion with Council on draft plan expected to occur in June 2015.

The relationship with Coliban Water has been strengthened and there is an agreed approach to increasing the amount of connections to sewerage in sewered towns.

- Implement a capital works program for parks and gardens facilities
- Develop master plans for all high use recreational facilities
- Develop and implement a new recreation strategy

Draft Recreation Strategy completed and being circulated for final comments from steering committee prior to presentation to Council in April forum.

Master plans for all recreational facilities have now been **completed**, and will be reviewed in 12 months as many infrastructure items are now completed.

Capital works program for parks and gardens in 2015/16 to be discussed with Council at the time of presentation of the Annual Infrastructure program.

4.8 Take leadership in building infrastructure, amenities and services appropriate to town needs

Completed

- Develop and implement a Stormwater Asset Management Plan
- Review Councils Building Asset Management Plan and Road Asset Management Plan
- Develop assessment and prioritisation guidelines for each infrastructure category comprising Council's Annual Infrastructure Program
- Develop long term Parks and Gardens and Buildings capital works programs

4.9 Set the benchmark for recreational vehicle (RV) friendly towns

Completed

- Install dump points at three strategic locations across Loddon Shire
- Implement action from the Loddon Shire Council Tourism Strategy 2011-2016 to establish Loddon as an RV Friendly Shire

Council's Building Asset Management Plan and Road Asset Management Plans reviews will commence in June but not likely to be completed until August/September.

STRATEGIC PLATFORM 5

GROW AND DIVERSIFY OUR ECONOMY

OBJECTIVE:

Attract investment that introduces new industries, presents opportunity for existing businesses and grows our working population.

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

1. Annual increase in employment
2. Investment by at least two new industry projects evident in the Shire

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS:

Economic Development Strategy
Tourism strategy and marketing plan

2013 – 2017 PRIORITIES:

KEY PROJECTS:

- 5.1 Exploit our existing strengths and areas of competitive advantage to grow and diversify the economy
- 5.2 Build our tourism sector product, capability and promotion appropriate to the different range of products in the north and south of the shire
- 5.3 Promote development of tourist accommodation

- Develop a new Economic Development Strategy
- Complete foreshore redevelopment plans for the Boort Lakes and the Loddon River at Bridgewater
- Complete construction of the Bridgewater Public Caravan Park
- List suitable accommodation venues on website
- Encourage investment in tourism accommodation

Council's Economic Development Strategy development has commenced and will be completed by June 2015.

The Bridgewater Public Caravan Park has been **completed**.

Plans for the development of the foreshore of Little Lake Boort have been abandoned and plans are currently under preparation for Bridgewater.

Completed

STRATEGIC PLATFORM 6

SUPPORT OUR TRANSITIONING TOWNSHIPS

OBJECTIVE:

Support small town communities to retain the best possible quality of life in the face of a declining population with increasing needs.

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

1. Maintain current population across all small town communities
2. Maintain 65%+ overall satisfaction rating with small town communities

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS:

Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan

2013 – 2017 PRIORITIES:

KEY PROJECTS:

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 6.1 | Support initiatives that assist community members who may be isolated or at risk |
| 6.2 | Rationalise community facilities to provide less but better facilities and amenities |
| 6.3 | Ensure that residents of small towns have access to a set of basic services |

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the Red Cross Vulnerable People project and implement a Community Register of Vulnerable People • Identify and access funding for projects targeted at reducing isolation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Council's Building Asset Management Plan |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the basic service offer to very small towns • Find cost-effective ways of delivering services to very small communities • Advocate for improved transport to large towns |

Council continues to participate in the Red Cross Vulnerable Persons Project and a register of vulnerable persons is compiled in accordance with Council's obligations under the Emergency Management Framework.

This work is not yet started but needs to be addressed in 2015-16.

STRATEGIC PLATFORM 7

CONNECT WITH THE NEXT GENERATION

OBJECTIVE:

Engage with youth to equip them for a positive future and keep our communities young, vibrant and energised.

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

1. Implement at least two new youth programs/initiatives
2. Improve work/school participation rate of 15 to 19 year olds, reducing percentage of disengaged youth to below 10%

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS:

Loddon Shire Youth Strategy

Youth Strategy scheduled for review from May/June 2015 following adoption of the recreation strategy.

2013 – 2017 PRIORITIES:

KEY PROJECTS:

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 7.1 | Identify the needs of young people and develop future leaders |
| 7.2 | Create an arts and culture youth engagement program |
| 7.3 | Support youth mentoring |

- Renew Council's Youth Strategy
- Explore the interest in a youth council
- Build a young professional leadership incubator
- Maintain Kool Skools Program
- Continue to facilitate and expand the range of Freeza events
- Partner with businesses and Local Learning Employment Network to build part time job and work experience opportunities as well as more formal career pathways
- Encourage our youth to participate in volunteering
- Continue Council's support for youth mentoring programs in partnership with secondary schools and the North Central Local Learning and Employment Network

Council has engaged with each of the senior schools in the municipality and has put together the beginnings of a Youth Advisory Council. This advisory council has had its first meeting and will be formalised in the coming months.

There is insufficient mass to sustain a young professionals leadership network within Loddon Shire, so partnership arrangements have been made to promote the Bendigo Young Professionals Network, which has been welcoming and available for young professionals within Loddon Shire.

Council continues to maintain a Kool Skools program.

Council continues to renew the Freeza program with a new series of events proposed each year.

Council has maintained its support for the youth mentoring program in partnership with secondary schools and the Local Learning and Employment Network.

6. COMPLIANCE REPORTS

6.1 DOCUMENTS FOR SIGNING AND SEALING

SUMMARY

This report provides Council with a list of documents signed and sealed during the month.

Author:	John McLinden - Chief Executive Officer
Council Plan ref:	Core business 8: Compliance
File No:	02/01/001
Attachment:	Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. receive and note the 'Document for Signing and Sealing' report*
- 2. endorse the use of the seal on the documents listed*

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Nil

BACKGROUND

N/A

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Lease for Railway Lot 12 at Inglewood (Station Building) between VicTrack and Loddon Shire Council

Lease for Railway Lot 19 at Inglewood (Goods Shed) between VicTrack and Loddon Shire Council

Sub-lease Inglewood Railway lot 19 (Goods Shed) between VicTrack and Loddon Shire Council and Workspace Australia Ltd

Sub-lease Inglewood Railway lot 12 (Station Building) between VicTrack and Loddon Shire Council and Inglewood and Districts Health Service

6.2 SECTION 86 COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT MEMBERSHIP DETAILS- KORONG VALE SPORTS CENTRE

SUMMARY

This report seeks Council's approval of the membership of Korong Vale Sports Centre Section 86 Committee of Management.

Author	Jude Holt, Director Corporate Services
Council Plan ref:	Strategic Platform 1: Build a network of strong communities
File no:	02/01/027
Attachment:	Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council appoints the names provided in this report as members of the Korong Vale Sports Centre Section 86 committee of management, effective immediately.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council approved the current list of committee members for Korong Vale Sports Centre Committee of Management on 23 September 2013.

BACKGROUND

Current Section 86 committee instruments of delegations include Clause 3.6 which outlines the requirement for nomination and appointment of committee members, which is as follows:

Members and Office Bearers of the Committee

At the Annual General Meeting each year nominations shall be called for proposed members of the committee. The committee must then elect from its proposed members the following office bearers:

- *President, who shall be Chairperson of the Committee*
- *Secretary*
- *Treasurer.*

The full list of proposed members must be forwarded to Council for formal appointment at an Ordinary Meeting of Council, in accordance with section 86(2). Until this formal appointment by Council occurs, the previous committee members will continue to hold office.

Clause 3.3 Membership of the committee outlines Council's preferred composition of the committee specific to each delegation, and states that Council seeks to provide broad representation to the committees.

For community based committees, that is at least 6 community representatives.

For organisation based committees, each delegation has a list of organisations that are required to provide representatives for the committee.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Korong Vale Sports Centre is an organisation based committee with representatives from each of the stakeholder groups. The following is a list of nominated representatives for the committee which meets the minimum requirement:

Name	Community group
Judy Matthews	Korong Vale Bowls Club
Andrew Day	Korong Vale Bowls Club

Robert Day	Korong Vale Cricket Club
Faye Day	Korong Vale Cricket Club
Joan Earl	Korong Vale Lawn Tennis Club
Peter Gibson	Korong Vale Lawn Tennis Club
John Murnane	Community Representative

The Council representative for this committee is Cr Neil Beattie .

COSTS/BENEFITS

The benefit of this report is that Council has an up to date and accurate record of current committee members to ensure that contact can be made, particularly where Council is requesting committees to comply with reporting requirements under the legislation.

RISK ANALYSIS

Section 86 Committees act for and on behalf of Council which creates a risk for Council should they ever act outside their delegated authority.

Under Section 86(2) of the Act, "Council may appoint members to a special committee and may at any time remove a member from a special committee".

Council's appointment of committee members, not only satisfies the legislation, but also provides Council with the opportunity to sight the list of committee members before formally appointing them as they are the people that will be operating the committees, and in effect, acting for and on behalf of Council over the course of the year.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Nil

7. GENERAL BUSINESS

8. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Closing of Meeting to the Public

RECOMMENDATION

That the meeting be closed to the public.

NEXT MEETING

The next Ordinary Meeting of Council will be held on 28 April at Serpentine commencing at 3pm.