

Agenda

Scheduled Council Meeting

Monday 21 February 2022 at 6:30 pm

You are advised that a Meeting of Council has been called by the Chief Executive Officer on Monday 21 February 2022 at 6:30 pm for the transaction of the following business.

This meeting will be held in the Council Chamber at Civic Centre, 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang 3752 and will be [livestreamed via Council's website](#).

C Lloyd
Chief Executive Officer

Administrators

Lydia Wilson Chair of Council

Peita Duncan Administrator

Chris Eddy Administrator

On 19 June 2020 the Acting Minister for Local Government appointed the Panel of Administrators for the City of Whittlesea and appointed Ms Lydia Wilson as Chair of the Panel. The Panel of Administrators comprises of Ms Lydia Wilson, Ms Peita Duncan and Mr Chris Eddy who will undertake the duties of the Council of the City of Whittlesea until the October 2024 Local Government Election.

Senior Officers

Craig Lloyd Chief Executive Officer

Debbie Blandford Acting Director Planning & Development

Samantha Boyle Unit Manager Governance & Risk

Mark Montague Acting Director Corporate & Shared Services

Debbie Wood Director Infrastructure & Environment

Order of Business

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Note:

At the Chair of Council's discretion, the meeting may be closed to the public in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The provision which is likely to be relied upon to enable closure is set out in each item. These reports are not available for public distribution.

Question Time:

During the meeting, the Chief Executive Officer will answer questions from residents and ratepayers. Questions are required to be submitted in writing prior to the advertised commencement time of a Scheduled Council Meeting. It is preferred to receive any questions by 3.30pm unless this unreasonably prevents or hinders you from participating. A Question Time form can be downloaded from Council's website and copies of the form are available at the meeting. Refer: <https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/about-us/council/council-meetings/>

Council will hold public question time for up to 30 minutes at each Scheduled Council Meeting to allow members of the public to present the questions they have submitted to Council. When Council Meetings are held remotely by electronic means in accordance with Section 394 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, members of the public will be unable to present their questions, however the Chief Executive Officer will read out and answer questions from residents and ratepayers.

Council is committed to ensuring that all residents and ratepayers of the municipality may contribute to Council's democratic process and therefore, if you have special requirements, please telephone the Governance Team prior to any Council Meeting on (03) 9217 2294.

1 Opening

1.1 Meeting Opening and Introductions

The Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson will open the meeting and introduce the Administrators and Chief Executive Officer:

Administrator, Ms Peita Duncan;
Administrator, Mr Chris Eddy; and
Chief Executive Officer, Mr Craig Lloyd.

The Chief Executive Officer, Craig Lloyd will introduce members of the Executive Leadership Team:

Acting Director Planning and Development, Ms Debbie Blandford;
Unit Manager Governance and Risk, Ms Samantha Boyle;
Acting Director Corporate Services, Mr Mark Montague; and
Director Infrastructure and Environment, Ms Debbie Wood.

Following the Introductions, the Chief Executive Officer, Craig Lloyd will then read the following prayer:

Almighty God, we ask for your blessing upon this council to make informed and good decisions to benefit the people of the City of Whittlesea.

Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.

Amen

1.2 Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement

The Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson will read the following statement:

“On behalf of the City of Whittlesea I recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan as the Traditional Owners of this place.

I would also like to personally acknowledge Elders past, present and emerging.”

1.3 Attendance

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting/s

Recommendation

THAT the following Minutes of the preceding meeting as circulated, be confirmed:

Scheduled Meeting of Council held 31 January 2022.

4 Public Questions, Petitions and Joint Letters

4.1 Public Question Time

4.2 Petitions

Nil petitions

4.3 Joint Letters

Nil joint letters

5 Officers' Reports

5.1 Connected Communities

Nil reports

5.2 Livable Neighbourhoods

5.2.1 Tender 2020-123 Supply and Delivery of Quarry Products Evaluation

Summary

Responsible Officer	Director Infrastructure & Environment
Author	Senior Infrastructure Engineer
In Attendance	Samuel Beshai, Senior Infrastructure Engineer

Attachments

1. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Tender 2020-123 Supply and Delivery of Quarry Products Evaluation Summary [5.2.1.1 - 4 pages]
2. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Schedule of Rates [5.2.1.2 - 2 pages]

The attachments have been designated as confidential by the Director Infrastructure & Environment, under delegation from the Chief Executive Officer, in accordance with Rule 53 of the Governance Rules 2021 and sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* on the grounds that they contain private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that—

- (i) relates to trade secrets; or
- (ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

In particular, the attachments contain information regarding tender amounts submitted by tenderers and tender evaluation scoring prepared by Council Officers. They also contain details of credit and reference checks about the tenderers provided to Council in confidence. The release of this information could reasonably be expected to prejudice the commercial positions of the persons who supplied the information or to confer a commercial advantage on a third party.

Purpose

It is proposed that contract number 2020-123 for Supply and Delivery of Quarry Products is awarded to the following panel of providers:

- Repurpose It, and
- Conundrum Holdings.

Brief Overview

The tender evaluation panel advises that:

- 4 tenders were received.
- 2 tenderers are recommended.
- The recommended tenders were the highest ranked and operate within the City of Whittlesea's municipal boundary.
- This was a collaborative tender conducted with Nillumbik Shire Council, however both Council's reserved the right to award independently. As such, the information in this report only pertains to the City of Whittlesea.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Accept the tenders submitted by Repurpose It and Conundrum Holdings for the following contract:**

Number: 2020-123

Title: Supply and Delivery of Quarry Products

Value: Total expenditure is limited to \$1,250,000 (excluding GST) unless otherwise approved by Council.

Term: 1 March 2022 to 28 February 2025

Options: Term extensions of any period up to 28 February 2027, subject to the following conditions:

- a) **Tenderer to provide proof of currency of insurance cover as required in the tender documents.**
- b) **Price variations to be in accordance with the provisions as set out in the tender documents.**
- c) **Tenderer to provide contract security as required in the tender documents.**

2. **Approve the funding arrangements detailed in the confidential attachment.**

Key Information

The City of Whittlesea has a network of approximately 1,400km of roads throughout the municipality, 70km of which are unsealed local roads. Council has an obligation under the Road Management Act (2004) to ensure safe and useable access of its road network including unsealed roads and does so through the provision of quarry materials and a rural road maintenance program.

The purpose of this contract is to enable the procurement of suitable material which consistently meets Council's requirements while achieving best value for Council.

Tenders for the contract closed on 23 November 2021. The tendered prices and a summary of the evaluation are detailed in the confidential attachment.

No member of the Tender Evaluation Panel declared any conflict of interest in relation to this tender evaluation.

A Tender Probity & Evaluation Plan was designed specifically for this tender process, and it was authorised prior to this tender being advertised. All tenders received were evaluated in accordance with that plan. The evaluation involved scoring of conforming and competitive tenders according to these pre-determined criteria and weightings:

- Price 60%
- Capability 20%
- Capacity 10%
- Sustainability 10%

The weightings reflect the relative importance of each element to this particular contract. They were determined as being most appropriate after considering numerous factors including (but not restricted to) the time, quality, risk and contract management requirements which were likely to have the most impact on achieving best value. Only tenders that were conforming and competitive were fully scored. Tender submissions that were evaluated as non-conforming or not sufficiently competitive were set aside from further evaluation. In cases where this occurred the reasons for that outcome are detailed in the confidential attachment.

The evaluation outcome was as follows:

Tenderer	Conforming	Competitive	Score	Rank
Tenderer A Repurpose It	Yes	Yes	98.6	1
Tenderer B Conundrum Holdings	Yes	Yes	88.5	2
Tenderer C	Yes	Yes	79.2	3
Tenderer D	Yes	Yes	78.6	4

Refer to the confidential attachment for further details of the evaluation of all tenders.

Community Consultation and Engagement

This was a collaborative tender conducted with Nillumbik Shire Council in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Community consultation and engagement was not required in relation to the subject matter of this report as it relates to commercial arrangements and contractual obligations that are confidential.

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

Liveable neighbourhoods

Our City is well-planned and beautiful, and our neighbourhoods and town centres are convenient and vibrant places to live, work and play.

Sustainable environment

We prioritise our environment and take action to reduce waste, preserve local biodiversity, protect waterways and green space and address climate change.

Council will be able to streamline the service delivery of quarry products for maintenance and renewal of its unsealed road network throughout the municipality.

The products from Repurpose It's tender are produced entirely from recycled material. This will benefit Council and the Community by contributing to closing the loop on construction waste and resource recovery, reduction in landfill, and minimising the reliance on raw materials.

Considerations

Environmental

Tenderers were required to demonstrate their commitment to social and environmentally sustainable work practices.

Cultural and Health

The contract management will include KPIs regarding product quality, supply and delivery, site safety, Occupational Health and Safety and delivery times to ensure a safe roadside environment is maintained for road users.

Economic

Both recommended tenderers are local businesses which operate within the City of Whittlesea municipal boundary and support local community initiatives.

Financial Implications

Sufficient funding for this contract is available in the annual budget for Unsealed Road Maintenance.

Link to Strategic Risk

Strategic Risk Service Delivery - Inability to plan for and provide critical community services and infrastructure impacting on community wellbeing

By establishing a contract for the supply and delivery of quarry products, Council will be able to streamline the service delivery of it unsealed road maintenance.

Strategic Risk *Life Cycle Asset Management - Failure to effectively plan for the construction, on-going maintenance and renewal of Council's assets*

Furthermore, this will ensure Council will continue to meet its infrastructure maintenance obligations under the Road Management Act (2004) of ensuring safe and useable access to the road network in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

There is no requirement to communicate the decision of this report to the community. However individual items of work may require information to be provided to the community.

Critical Dates

The Initial contract term will commence on 1 March 2022 and end on 28 February 2025.

Options exist to extend the contract up to 28 February 2027. A separate report requesting Council approval will be presented before the exercise of any optional extension that results in an increase in limit of the contract sum.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020 and Rule 47 of the Governance Rules 2021, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

Conclusion

The tenders from Repurpose It and Conundrum Holdings were determined to provide best value and it is considered that these companies can perform the contract to the required standards. Both recommended tenderers have an operational business premises within the municipal boundary of the City of Whittlesea. It is recommended that Repurpose It and Conundrum Holdings are awarded the contract to ensure service continuity and adequate supply of quarry products as required.

5.2.2 Declaration of Road - Cameron Street, Donnybrook

Responsible Officer Acting Director Corporate & Shared Services

Author Acting Chief Financial Officer

Attachments

1. Declaration Plan [5.2.2.1 - 1 page]
2. Site Plan [5.2.2.2 - 1 page]
3. Title Plan [5.2.2.3 - 1 page]

Purpose

The report seeks Council's final approval to declare Council owned land in Cameron Street, Donnybrook, a public highway for the purposes of the *Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)* (Act). This land is shown on the road declaration plan (Attachment 1) and is contained in certificate of title volume 12260 folio 394.

Brief Overview

As part of its development, Mirvac has designated the Council land at Cameron Street, Donnybrook, the location for a future municipal road to provide access to its development, which it has agreed to construct at its cost. For this to occur, Council has acquired title to the land, which now needs to be declared a public highway.

Council resolved at the 8 November 2021 Council meeting to give public notice via the Whittlesea Review and on Council's website of the proposal to declare Council owned land in Cameron Street, Donnybrook, a public highway, and to invite public submissions in accordance with Section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act).

The public submission period was open for four weeks, closing on 12 January 2022. No submissions were received and there was therefore no requirement for the Advisory Committee to meet.

Recommendation

That following the completion of the community engagement process in accordance with Section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council:

1. Note that no public submissions were received in response to the proposal to declare the Council land in Cameron Street, Donnybrook, contained in Certificate of Title volume 12260 folio 394 a public highway.
2. Pursuant to section 204(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989* (Vic), formally declare the Council land in Cameron Street, Donnybrook, contained in Certificate of Title volume 12260 folio 394, a public highway via published notice in the Victorian Government Gazette.
3. Pursuant to section 17(2) of the *Road Management Act 2004*, record the Council land declared to be a public highway on its Register of Public Roads and assume responsibility for the future inspection and maintenance of the constructed road in accordance with Council's Road Management Plan.

Key Information

Mirvac Pty Ltd (Mirvac) has acquired, or is in the process of acquiring, the parcels of land coloured pink on the plan attached to this report at Attachment 2 (Site Plan) to facilitate its development of the Olivine Estate.

Part of the Council land, shown coloured grey on the Site Plan (Attachment 2), abuts part of the land comprising the Olivine Estate development.

As part of its development, Mirvac designated the Council land as the location for a future municipal road to provide access to its development. Mirvac has agreed with Council to construct the road, at its cost, if Council acquires title to the land and is able to declare the Council land as a public highway. The title for this land was transferred into Council's name for nil consideration pursuant to the *Road Management Act 2004* (Vic).

On 22 September 2020, Council acquired title to the Council land by the registration of an application pursuant to section 59(1) of the *Transfer of Land Act 1958* with nil consideration.

At Council's meeting held on 8 November 2021, Council resolved to commence the statutory process to consider declaring the whole of the land contained in certificate of title volume 12260 folio 394 (Council land) to be a public highway for the purposes of the Act and invite public submissions on the proposal.

Community Consultation and Engagement

The proposal was advertised via public notice in the Whittlesea Review on 14 December 2021 and on Council's website with the submission period closing on 12 January 2022. No submissions were received.

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

Liveable neighbourhoods

Our City is well-planned and beautiful, and our neighbourhoods and town centres are convenient and vibrant places to live, work and play.

Declaration of the identified Council land as a public highway will facilitate the development of road access to the Olivine Estate and improve the liveability of the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Considerations

Environmental

No implications

Social, Cultural and Health

No implications

Economic

No implications

Financial Implications

If Council declares the Council land to be a public highway, Council will then be responsible for the future inspection and maintenance of the constructed road in accordance with its Road Management Plan.

Link to Strategic Risk

Strategic Risk *Service Delivery - Inability to plan for and provide critical community services and infrastructure impacting on community wellbeing*

Traffic congestion issues will be created with a corresponding impact on the liveability of the surrounding neighbourhoods if this road declaration is not made.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

Notice of declaration of the Council land as a public highway will be included in the Victorian Government Gazette.

Critical Dates

No critical dates.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the Governance Rules 2021, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

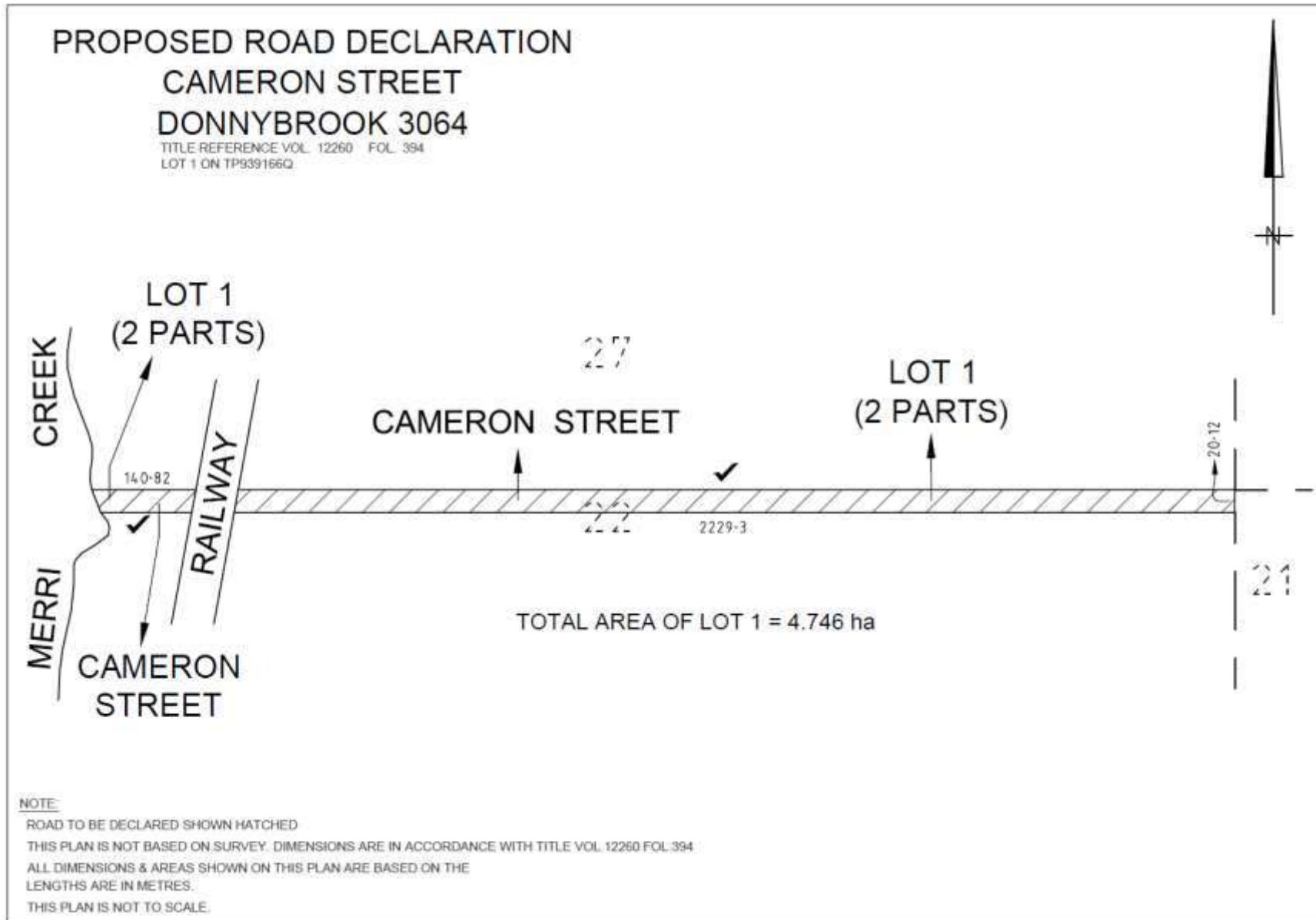
The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

Conclusion

Declaration of the Council land at Cameron Street, Donnybrook, as a public highway will facilitate the construction of road access to the Olivine Estate and improve the liveability of surrounding neighbourhoods.

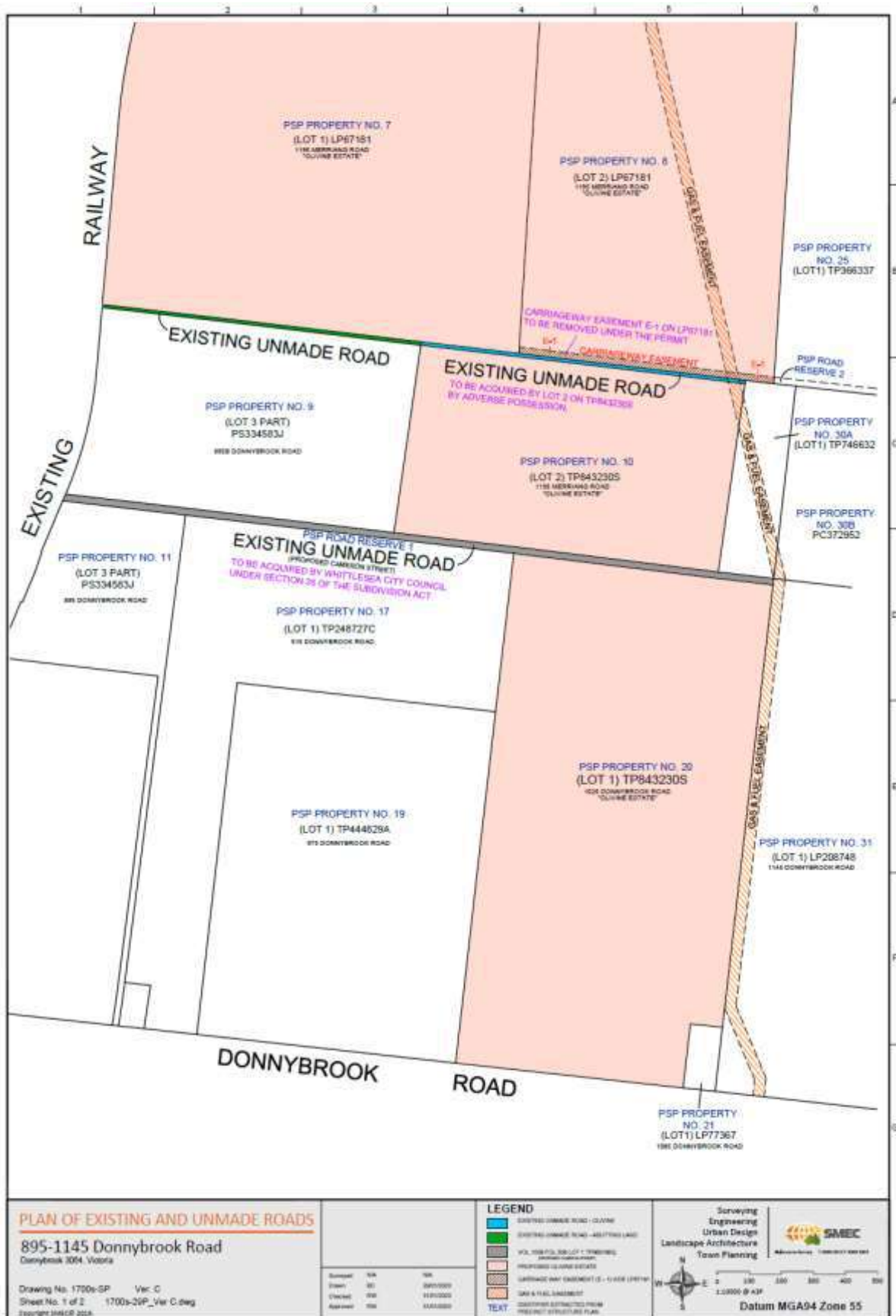
No public submissions were received on the proposal.

Attachment 1 - Declaration Plan



SMEC Ref: 1700s_35P Ver A

Attachment 2 – Site plan



Attachment 3 – Title plan no. TP939166Q

TITLE PLAN	EDITION 1	TP 939166Q						
LOCATION OF LAND Parish: KALKALLO Township: - Section: - Crown Allotment: - Crown Portion: 22 (PT) Last Plan Reference:- Derived From: VOL. 1008 FOL. 508 Depth Limitation: NIL	Notations ANY REFERENCE TO MAP IN THE TEXT MEANS THE DIAGRAM SHOWN ON THIS TITLE PLAN							
Description of Land/Easement Information <u>ENCUMBRANCES</u> ANY EASEMENTS AFFECTING THE SAME		THIS PLAN HAS BEEN PREPARED BY LAND REGISTRY, LAND VICTORIA FOR TITLE DIAGRAM PURPOSES COMPILED: Date: 15/9/2008 VERIFIED: A. DALLAS <i>Assistant Registrar of Titles</i>						
<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">TOTAL AREA = 4.746 ha</p>								
<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <th colspan="2">TABLE OF PARCEL IDENTIFIERS</th> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">WARNING: Where multiple parcels are referred to or shown on this Title Plan this does not imply separately disposable parcels under Section 8A of the Sale of Land Act 1962</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">LOT 1 = CP 22 (PT)</td> </tr> </table>			TABLE OF PARCEL IDENTIFIERS		WARNING: Where multiple parcels are referred to or shown on this Title Plan this does not imply separately disposable parcels under Section 8A of the Sale of Land Act 1962		LOT 1 = CP 22 (PT)	
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LOT 1 = CP 22 (PT)								
LENGTHS ARE IN METRES	Metres = 0.3048 x Feet Metres = 0.201168 x Links	Sheet 1 of 1 Sheets						

5.2.3 Amendment C247: Wollert Open Space Anomaly: Adoption

Responsible Officer	Director Planning & Development
Author	Strategic Planner Infrastructure
In Attendance	Stephen Parker, Strategic Planner Infrastructure

Attachments

1. C247 Panel Report [5.2.3.1 - 9 pages]
2. C247 Addendum to Panel Report [5.2.3.2 - 17 pages]
3. Land Budget Update [5.2.3.3 - 1 page]

Purpose

The purpose of this report is update Council on the outcome of the Planning Panel for Amendment C247 to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme and to recommend that the Amendment be adopted in line with the independent Planning Panel's recommendations (*refer Attachments 1 and 2*). The reports recommends that the Amendment be adopted and subsequently submitted to the Minister for Planning for approval subject to minor changes.

Brief Overview

This report details the outcomes of the Planning Panel process in relation to Planning Scheme Amendment C247 which proposes corrections to public open space contributions in Wollert Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) and Wollert Development Contributions Plan (DCP). Council resolved at its meeting on 6 September 2021 to request the appointment of an independent Planning Panel to consider an unresolved submission made in respect to the Amendment.

The submission was subsequently withdrawn and the Planning Panel accordingly supported the adoption of Amendment C247. In addition, the Planning Panel accepted Council's request that the Amendment documents be updated to correct additional errors identified in the PSP and DCP documents post exhibition of the Amendment.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Endorse the following changes to Amendment C247 to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme:**
 - a) **further amendments to the Credited Open Space section in the Summary Land Use Budget tables in the Wollert Precinct Structure Plan and Wollert Development Contributions Plan as follows:**
 - **in the line entry for Local network park – residential, correct the figures for the total area of land required to 34.98 hectares, and percentage of total to 2.4 per cent.**
 - **in the line entry for Local network park – employment, correct the figure for the total area of land required to 7.49 hectares.**
 - **insert an additional line entry reading “Local network park – existing road reserve, and specify “0.3 hectares” as the total area of land required.**
 - b) **update all references to Clause 52.01 in the Wollert PSP and DCP to Clause 53.01**
2. **Adopt Amendment C247 to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme, Wollert Precinct Structure Plan and Wollert Development Contribution Plan in line with the Planning Panel Report and its Addendum including the changes noted above.**
3. **Submit Amendment C247, together with Council’s response to the Panel’s recommendations and the Panel Report, to the Minister for Planning for approval.**

Key Information

Background

Planning Scheme Amendment C247 seeks to correct anomalies in the Schedule to Clause 53.01 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme, the Wollert Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) and the Wollert Development Contributions Plan (DCP). The anomalies reference an incorrect percentage figure of land required for public open space in the Wollert PSP area.

Council resolved to seek Authorisation to prepare the Amendment at the 5 March 2019 Council Meeting. The Amendment documents were subsequently prepared in consultation with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA).

Amendment C247 was exhibited from 25 March 2021 to 26 April 2021, with one submission received. The submitter did not provide a reason for the submission, stating only that they objected to the Amendment. Efforts to resolve the matter rather than refer the submission to a Planning Panel were unsuccessful.

At its meeting on 6 September 2021, Council resolved to refer the submission to a Planning Panel. Council also resolved that Council would submit to the Planning Panel that the objection was outside the scope of the Amendment and should be considered irrelevant.

Amendment Proposal

The Amendment seeks to correct the abovementioned anomaly in the Planning Scheme, Wollert PSP and Wollert DCP. Clause 53.01 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme requires persons who subdivide land to make a contribution to Council for public open space. The Schedule to Clause 53.01, the Summary Land Use Budget in the Wollert PSP and Table 11 of the Wollert DCP incorrectly state the figure as 3.70% for development within the Residential precinct and 0.80% for development within the Employment precinct.

Through the assessment of planning permits in the Wollert PSP area it became apparent that the contribution amount specified was incorrect when compared to the detailed land use budget. The figures should be 4.47% within the Residential precinct and 4.44% within the Employment precinct. Council Officers recognised this and have been using the correct figures to make sure Council is collecting the correct contribution to date. This has been accepted by all developers within the PSP area and secured through Section 173 Agreements. As such, this Amendment seeks only to correct the displayed figures in the planning scheme documents, not to change any other aspect of the implementation of Clause 53.01, the Wollert PSP or Wollert DCP.

Community Consultation and Engagement

The Amendment was exhibited between 25 March 2021 and 26 April 2021, in accordance with Section 19 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, as follows:

- Written notices were sent to the affected landowners and the prescribed Ministers.
- A notice was placed in the Government Gazette
- The Amendment documentation was made available at the Planning Counter in the Council offices (Civic Centre, South Morang) and electronically if required.

Council received one submission, the day after the exhibition period closed. The submission acknowledged the receipt of notice, advised they had reviewed the documents and that they objected to the proposed Amendment. There was no reasoning for the objection provided. Lawyers acting on behalf of Council sought clarification regarding the specifics of the submission from the objector's legal representative, however none was provided.

Once Council had resolved to refer the matter to a Planning Panel, the objector was notified of this decision via their lawyer. Upon, receiving this notice the submission was withdrawn ahead of the Panel Hearing.

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

Liveable neighbourhoods

Our City is well-planned and beautiful, and our neighbourhoods and town centres are convenient and vibrant places to live, work and play.

The Amendment will ensure that the public open space is provided for in the Wollert precinct in accordance with the approved Wollert PSP and DCP.

Considerations

Panel Hearing and Report

In line with Council's request, the Minister for Planning appointed a Panel to consider the unresolved submission to Amendment C247. The Planning Panel notified Council the Directions Hearing would be held on 10 November 2021 and would consider the preliminary issue raised by Council including, whether the submission was relevant. The decision in relation to this preliminary issue would determine whether the matter would proceed to a full hearing.

One day prior to the Directions Hearing, the submitter notified Planning Panel that they did not wish to be involved and would withdraw their submission. However, Council lawyers recommended to go ahead with the Directions Hearing to enable a discussion of the additional corrections which has been identified post exhibition of the Amendment and which were sought to be included in this Amendment.

Additional Corrections included in the Amendment

Subsequent to the exhibition of the Amendment, it was identified that 0.3ha of land required for public open space had been categorised in the PSP's Land Budget as existing road reserves, rather than properties in the Residential or Employment precincts. As such, the quantum of land required for Public Open Space in both the Residential and Employment precincts was incorrect.

The figures displayed were:

- Local Network Park – Residential: 35.20 Hectares (2.5% of total NDA)
- Local Network Park – Employment: 7.57 Hectares (0.5 % of total NDA)

Council proposed an addendum to Amendment C247 to correct both figures and add an additional line to the table which correctly attributes the misallocated 0.3Ha to the Existing Road Reserve properties.

The changes identified were:

- Local Network Park – Residential: 34.98 Hectares (2.4% of total NDA)

- Local Network Park – Employment: 7.49 Hectares (0.5% of total NDA)
- Local Network Park – Existing Road Reservation: 0.3 Hectares

The updated changes are shown in Attachment 3.

Given, these additional errors are purely administrative and similar to the errors identified in the exhibited Amendment, it was considered by officers and Council's representation that they are consistent with the intent of the Amendment and should be incorporated.

Planning Panel Hearing and Report

The Directions Hearing proceeded on 10 November 2021, with Council the only party to be heard. It was argued at the Hearing that the additional corrections were very much of the same type as the initial anomalies and of the same type of procedural, administrative issue that Amendment C247 sought to correct.

The Panel Report was provided to Council on 30 November 2021 (*refer Attachment 1*). The Report states "the Panel agrees with Council that the submission is not a relevant submission for the purposes of the PE Act (*Planning and Environment Act 1987*)", and that "the Amendment is well founded and strategically justified and should proceed".

The Report did not address the additional items raised in the submission to the Directions Hearing. Council officers noted this omission and therefore requested clarification of Panel's position on the additional matters.

The Panel Chair, in response, produced an Addendum to the Report which supported Council's request to include these further corrections to the Amendment (*refer Attachment 2*).

Combining the Panel Report and its Addendum, the recommendations of the Planning Panel are:

Adopt Amendment C247wsea to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme as exhibited, with the following change:

- Update references to Clause 52.01 in the Wollert Precinct Structure Plan and the Wollert Development Contributions Plan to reference Clause 53.01
- Make further amendments to the Credited Open Space section in the Summary Land Use Budget tables in the Wollert Precinct Structure Plan and Wollert Development Contributions Plan as follows:
 - In the line entry for Local network park – residential, correct the figures for the total area of land required to 34.98 hectares, and percentage of total to 2.4 per cent
 - In the line entry for Local network park – employment, correct the figure for total area of land required to 7.49 hectares

- Insert an additional line entry reading “Local network park – existing road reserve and specify “0.3 hectares” as the total area of land required.

It is recommended that Council support and implement the recommendations of the Planning Panel.

Financial Considerations

Given, the Amendment was required to be considered by a Planning Panel, Council was required to pay the costs of conducting the Panel and the costs for its legal representation. This is a standard cost for Planning Scheme Amendment process and therefore the operational cost is factored into a budget for Planning Scheme Amendments. There is also a small fee for lodging the Amendment with the Minister for Planning for approval which is also budgeted for.

Link to Strategic Risk

Strategic Risk *Financial Sustainability - Inability to meet current and future expenditure*

The adoption of Amendment C247 is critically important to ensure that Council collects the right amount of public open space contributions. Otherwise, there is a risk that Council could potentially under-collect Land Equalisation Amounts and would be required to fund this shortfall from other sources.

Strategic Risk *Service Delivery - Inability to plan for and provide critical community services and infrastructure impacting on community wellbeing*

The implication of not adopting the Amendment and using incorrect figures for the public open space required in the Wollert PSP area would result in the under collection of public open space contributions which Council would need to be funded through other sources.

The potential flow on effect of having to fund this under-collection may impact the provision of local parks and open space in other areas.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

The Planning Panel Report Addendum notes that this is an administrative Amendment, and they do not require submitters to be notified.

Critical Dates

Item	Critical Date
Council resolved to seek authorisation to prepare Amendment C247	5 March 2019
Authorisation to prepare the Amendment received from the Minister of Planning	28 August 2020
Exhibition of Amendment C247	25 March 2021- 26 April 2021
Consideration of Submission by Council and Resolution to appoint Planning Panel	6 September 2021
Directions Hearing	10 November 2021
Planning Panel Report received	30 November 2021
Planning Panel Report Addendum received	14 December 2021

Next Steps

Subject to adoption by Council, the final version of Amendment C247 along with supporting documents will be submitted to the Minister for Planning for approval.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the Governance Rules 2021, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

Conclusion

Amendment C247 seeks to correct anomalies in the Schedule to Clause 53.01 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme, the Wollert Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) and the Wollert Development Contributions Plan (DCP).

Its approval will ensure the intended implementation of strategic plans guiding the development of the Wollert PSP area is achieved and that the correct amount of public open space contribution is provided.

Council resolved at its meeting on 6 September 2021 to appoint a Planning Panel to consider the submission received during the exhibition of the Amendment. Notwithstanding that the submission was subsequently withdrawn, the Directions hearing was conducted on 10 November 2021 and the Planning Panel report and addendum subsequently released.

The report found that the submission was not relevant and therefore the Amendment should be adopted subject to the correction of errors.

From a statutory perspective, Council is required to consider the report and provide a formal position on each recommendation. Given the report recommendations align with Council's submission, it is recommended that Council adopt all the Planning Panel recommendations.

**Planning
Panels
Victoria**

**Whittlesea Planning Scheme Amendment C247wsea
Corrections to public open space contributions in Wollert PSP**

Panel Report

Planning and Environment Act 1987

30 November 2021

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[section 27(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the PE Act)]

For the Amendment to proceed, it must be adopted by the planning authority and then sent to the Minister for Planning for approval.

The planning authority is not obliged to follow the recommendations of the Panel, but it must give its reasons if it does not follow the recommendations. [section 31 (1) of the PE Act, and section 9 of the *Planning and Environment Regulations 2015*]

If approved by the Minister for Planning a formal change will be made to the planning scheme. Notice of approval of the Amendment will be published in the Government Gazette. [section 37 of the PE Act]

Planning and Environment Act 1987

Panel Report pursuant to section 25 of the PE Act

Whittlesea Planning Scheme Amendment C247wseawsea

Corrections to public open space contributions in Wollert PSP

30 November 2021



Sarah Carlisle, Chair

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2.3 Strategic Resource Plan 2020-2024.....	5
2.4 Discussion and conclusion	5
2.5 Recommendation	6

Appendix A Documents considered

Glossary and abbreviations

Council	Whittlesea City Council
DCP	Development Contributions Plan
PE Act	<i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i>
Planning Scheme	Whittlesea Planning Scheme
PSP	Precinct Structure Plan
the Submitter	Tag Wollert Pty Ltd

Overview

Amendment summary	
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Exhibition	25 March to 26 April 2021
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Panel process	
The Panel	Sarah Carlisle, Chair
Directions Hearing and Hearing	10 November 2021 by video conference
Site inspections	Not required
Parties to the Hearing	Council represented by Terry Montebello of Maddocks, assisted by Council officers Stephen Parker and Linda Martin-Chew
Citation	Whittlesea PSA C247wsea [2021] PPV
Date of this report	30 November 2021

1 Introduction

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(i) Amendment description

The Amendment proposes to correct an anomaly in:

- the Whittlesea Planning Scheme (the Planning Scheme) – the Schedule to Clause 53.01 (Public open space contribution and subdivision)
- the Wollert Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) – Requirements R82 and R83 and the Land Use Budgets at Table 1 and Table 9
- the Wollert Development Contributions Plan (DCP) – the Summary Land Use Budget Table.

These documents incorrectly identify the percentage of land required for open space contributions, which impacts the administration of the Public Open Space Equalisation scheme in the Wollert PSP area.

The percentage contributions for land in the different precincts are to be updated as follows:

- residential precinct – updated from 3.70 per cent to 4.47 per cent.
- employment precinct – updated from 0.80 per cent to 4.44 per cent.

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The Amendment applies to land covered by the Wollert PSP.

1.2 Background

The Wollert PSP and DCP were introduced into the Planning Scheme in February 2017 through Amendment C187. An update to planning controls was subsequently made through Amendment C210 in October 2017.

The Wollert PSP area is to be developed in two distinct precincts, a residential precinct and an employment precinct. Once assessments of planning permit applications commenced, it was discovered the percentage figures used in the documents to require a public open space contribution were incorrect. The error is due to the amount of land being required for open space in each precinct being divided by the total Wollert Developable Area rather than the respective precinct developable areas.

Following public exhibition, one submission was received from Tag Wollert Pty Ltd (the Submitter). The submission relevantly states:

Our client has reviewed the exhibited material and in summary objects to the changes proposed by the amendment and does not support the changes proposed to clause 53.01, the PSP and DCP to require an increased POS contribution.

The objection does not address the content of the Amendment, and the reason for the objection was not supplied. Council sought clarification from the Submitter but none was provided.

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In Council's request for a Panel to be appointed, Council indicated that it proposed to submit to the Panel that the submission is not within the scope of the Amendment and therefore should not be considered as relevant by the Panel. Council requested the Panel to consider this issue on a summary basis at the Directions Hearing, rather than proceeding to a full Hearing.

The Panel wrote to Council and the Submitter on 14 October 2021 indicating that it would take submissions from the parties at the Directions Hearing on the preliminary question of whether the submission is a relevant submission, and whether the matter should proceed to a full Hearing.

The Panel received no correspondence from the Submitter, and no indication from it that it wished to contest either the preliminary question, or that it wished to be heard in relation to the Amendment or its submission.

The day before the Directions Hearing, Council received correspondence from Best Hooper acting for the Submitter, formally withdrawing the submission. Nevertheless, Council had by that stage prepared a written submission that it wished to present to the Panel. The Directions Hearing proceeded on 10 November 2021 as the Hearing.

2 Strategic justification

2.1 Planning policy framework

The Council minutes dated 6 September 2021 (Document 3) and the Explanatory Report briefly set out in the relevant parts of the Planning Policy Framework.

The Panel agrees with Council that the Amendment is consistent with and implements the following planning policy:

- Clause 02.03-9 (Infrastructure – Open space), which states that Council aims to facilitate an appropriate range and proportion of open space types to reflect community expectations for nature conservation, formal and informal recreation
- Clause 11.02-2S (Structure planning), which includes the objective to facilitate the preparation of a hierarchy of structure plans or precinct structure plans
- Clause 11.03-2S (Growth Areas), which seeks to identify the locations of open space to be retained for recreation
- Clause 15.01-4L (Health Neighbourhoods), which seeks to create walkable neighbourhoods defined by a 400-800 metre walk to facilities and open space
- Clause 19.02-6S (Open Space), which includes this objective to establish manage and improve a diverse and integrated network of public open space that meets the needs of the community
- Clause 19.02-6L (Open space) which seeks to provide growth areas with adequate good quality open space as they develop.

2.2 Wollert Precinct Structure Plan

The Wollert PSP addresses open space contributions in:

- Section 3.5.2 Local Parks Contributions Residential
- Section 3.5.3 Local Parks Contributions Employment.

Both require the provision of land in accordance with Clause 52.01 (now Clause 53.01) of the Planning Scheme at the time of subdivision. The Requirements also detail the equalisation scheme to balance the liability of public open space evenly across all properties in the respective precincts.

2.3 Strategic Resource Plan 2020-2024

The Amendment supports the objective of the Strategic Resource Plan 2020-2024 that seeks to achieve a balanced budget on a cash basis ensuring Council remains financially sustainable in the long term.

2.4 Discussion and conclusion

(i) Strategic justification for the Amendment

The Amendment is administrative in nature, and seeks to correct a mathematical error in the tables setting out the open space contributions required in the residential and employment precincts. The error is due to the amount of land being required for open space in each precinct being divided by the total Wollert Developable Area, rather than the developable areas in each

precinct. The detailed parcel specific land use budgets in both the PSP and the DCP are correct, and the subtotals of the credited open space and total open space do not change.

Council noted in its submission to the Panel that the Amendment should also have changed the relevant clause references from Clause 52.01 to Clause 53.01, given the Victoria Planning Provisions have been recently updated and the number changed.

The Panel concludes that the Amendment is supported by, and implements, the relevant sections of the Planning Policy Framework. The Amendment is well founded and strategically justified, and should proceed.

(ii) Observations about the submission

The Panel agrees with Council that the submission from Tag Wollert Pty Ltd is not a relevant submission for the purposes of the PE Act.

Section 21 allows any person to make a submission to the planning authority 'about an amendment'. While the submission may be 'about the Amendment' in the broadest sense (in that it objects to the Amendment), it does not address the content of the Amendment, and does not provide any reason for the objection to the Amendment.

The Panel considers that the submission is therefore not a submission to which section 21 applies. As such, the Panel queries whether Council had a statutory obligation to consider the Submission under section 22(1), or to refer it to the Panel under section 23(1)(b). It also queries whether the Panel had an obligation to consider the submission under section 24 (had it not been withdrawn). Even if it did, there is in essence nothing to consider.

2.5 Recommendation

The Panel recommends:

1. **Adopt Amendment C247wsea to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme as exhibited, with the following change:**
 - a) **update references to Clause 52.01 in the Wollert Precinct Structure Plan and Wollert Development Contributions Plan to reference Clause 53.01.**

Appendix A Documents considered

No.	Date	Description	Provided by
1	Various	Exhibited Amendment documents	Council
2	27/04/2021	Submission from Best Hooper on behalf of Tag Wollert Pty Ltd objecting to the Amendment	“
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**Planning
Panels
Victoria**

**Whittlesea Planning Scheme Amendment C247wsea
Corrections to public open space contributions in Wollert PSP**

Addendum to the Panel Report

Planning and Environment Act 1987

14 December 2021

Planning and Environment Act 1987

Whittlesea Planning Scheme Amendment C247wsea

Addendum to the Panel Report pursuant to section 25 of the PE Act

14 December 2021



Sarah Carlisle, Chair

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Appendix A Letter from Council

Overview

Amendment summary	
The Amendment	Whittlesea Planning Scheme Amendment C247wsea
Common name	
Subject land	All land within the Wollert PSP
Planning Authority	Whittlesea City Council
Authorisation	28 August 2020
Exhibition	25 March to 26 April 2021
Submissions	Number of Submissions: 1 (from Tag Wollert Pty Ltd) Opposed: 1
Panel process	
The Panel	Sarah Carlisle, Chair
Directions Hearing and Hearing	10 November 2021 by video conference
Site inspections	Not required
Parties to the Hearing	Council represented by Terry Montebello of Maddocks, assisted by Council officers Stephen Parker and Linda Martin-Chew
Citation (main report)	Whittlesea PSA C247wsea [2021] PPV
Date of Panel Report – Addendum	14 December 2021

1 Addendum

This report is to be read in conjunction with the Whittlesea Planning Scheme Amendment C247wsea Panel Report dated 30 November 2021 (Whittlesea PSA C247wsea [2021] PPV).

1.1 Issues raised

Planning Panels Victoria received a letter from Whittlesea City Council on 1 December 2021, which is provided in Appendix A. In this letter, Council raised one further housekeeping matter which was dealt with in Council's submissions to the Hearing, but was not dealt with in the Panel's main report.

The matter relates to a minor correction required to the credited open space figures set out in the Summary Land Use Budget tables in the Wollert Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) and Development Contributions Plan (DCP).

The Summary Land Use Budget tables show the areas required for local parks as:

- local network park – residential: 35.20 hectares (2.4 per cent of the total)
- local network park – employment: 7.57 hectares (0.5 per cent of the total).

It came to Council's attention after exhibition of the Amendment that some of the open space required for local parks (0.3 hectares) is within road reserves rather than within the residential and employment Net Developable Areas. Council proposed to make a further change to the Amendment to correct this error. The further change would involve amending the figures in the Summary Land Use Budget tables as follows:

- local network park – residential: 34.98 hectares (2.4 per cent of the total)
- local network park – employment: 7.49 hectares (0.5 per cent of the total)
- local network park – existing road reserve: 0.3 hectares.

The total amount of credited open space remains at 93.19 hectares (6.5 per cent of the total).

1.2 Panel Response

The Panel appointed to consider Whittlesea Planning Scheme Amendment C247wsea has reviewed Council's request and supports the request to further amend the Summary Land Use Budget tables in the PSP and DCP as proposed.

1.3 Further recommendation

In addition to the recommendation in its main report dated 30 November 2021, the Panel recommends:

1. **Prior to adopting Amendment C247wsea to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme, make the following change:**
 - a) **make further amendments to the Credited Open Space section in the Summary Land Use Budget tables in the Wollert Precinct Structure Plan and Wollert Development Contributions Plan as follows:**
 - **in the line entry for Local network park – residential, correct the figures for the total area of land required to 34.98 hectares, and percentage of total to 2.4 per cent**

- **in the line entry for Local network park – employment, correct the figure for the total area of land required to 7.49 hectares**
- **insert an additional line entry reading “Local network park – existing road reserve, and specify “0.3 hectares” as the total area of land required.**

1.4 Notice to Submitters

Given the administrative nature of the further change to the Amendment, Council is not required by the Panel to undertake any additional notice to submitters.

Appendix A Letter from Council



Enquiries: Stephen Parker 9217 2567
File reference: Amendment C247

1 December 2021

Ms Sarah Carlisle
Panel Chair
Planning Panels Victoria
GPO Box 2392
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Dear Ms Carlisle

Planning Scheme Amendment C247wsea Panel Report

Thank you for providing the Panel Report for Amendment C247wsea.

In the course of the short hearing, Terry Montebello on behalf of Council orally, and also in his written submission, explained that there was an opportunity to address one other housekeeping matter in the amendment that had not been the subject of exhibition but was of the same type of anomaly correction that the exhibited amendment was dealing with.

This matter is dealt with at paragraphs 24-28 of Council's written submission to the Panel.

We note that the Panel did not deal with this in its report either to say it could be dealt with or that it could not be dealt with.

We would be grateful if the Panel could please indicate whether this was an accidental omission and it will be addressed in a supplementary correction to the report or whether it was a deliberate omission and needs to be addressed by Council and the VPA separately.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me at george.saisanas@whittlesea.vic.gov.au or on mobile 0419343504.

Yours sincerely

George Saisanas
Manager Strategic Futures

Council Offices
25 Ferris Boulevard, South Morang VIC 3752
Mail to: Locked Bag 1, Bundoora MDC VIC 3083
Phone: 9217 2170
National Relay Service: 133 677 (ask for 9217 2170)
Email: info@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Free telephone interpreter service
 131 450

ABN 72 431 091 058

whittlesea.vic.gov.au

**Planning
Panels
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**Whittlesea Planning Scheme Amendment C247wsea
Corrections to public open space contributions in Wollert PSP**

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5	10/11/2021	Council submission to the Panel	“

Attachment 3: Open Space Land Budget Update

Table 1: Current Open Space Land Budget

CREDITED OPEN SPACE			
Local Sports Reserve (DCP land) - Residential	50.42	3.5%	5.30%
Local Network Park (via CI 52.01) - Residential	35.20	2.5%	3.70%
Local Network Park (via CI 52.01) - Employment	7.57	0.5%	0.80%
Sub-total Credited Open Space	93.19	6.5%	9.80%
Total All Open Space	330.22	23.0%	34.73%

Table 2: Proposed Open Space Land Budget (Amendment C247)

Credited Open Space			
Local sports reserve (DCP land) - residential	50.42	3.5%	5.30%
Local Network park - (via CL 52.01) - residential	34.98	2.4%	4.47%
Local network park - (via CL 52.01) - employment	7.49	0.5%	4.44%
Local Network Park - Existing Road Reserve	0.3		
SUB-TOTAL CREDITED OPEN SPACE	93.19	6.50%	9.80%
TOTAL OPEN SPACE	330.21	23.01%	34.73%

5.3 Strong Local Economy

5.3.1 Strong Local Economy Strategy - Economic Development

Responsible Officer	Director Planning & Development
Author	Economic Development Project Officer
In Attendance	Darcy Coombes, Economic Development Project Officer

Attachments

1. Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022–2026 [5.3.1.1 - 17 pages]
2. Strong Local Economy Action Plan 2022–2023 [5.3.1.2 - 5 pages]
3. SLE Submissions and Responses - 21 Feb Council Meeting [5.3.1.3 - 42 pages]

Purpose

It is proposed that Council adopt the Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022–2026, to guide commitments and decision-making toward the Key Directions detailed in *Whittlesea 2040* over the next five years of implementation.

It is also proposed that Council endorse for consideration as part of the upcoming 2022-23 Council Budget process, the Strong Local Economy Year One Action Plan 2022–2023. The Action Plan will be reported against and updated each financial year for the life of the Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022–2026.

Brief Overview

The Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022–2026 (the Strategy, attachment 1) and Strong Local Economy Year One Action Plan 2022–2023 (the Action Plan, attachment 2) are the culmination of community engagement, Council’s research and corporate planning over the last six months as a commitment to achieving the vision for a Strong Local Economy as outlined in *Whittlesea 2040: a place to be*, under the Integrated Planning Framework.

The Strong Local Economy Strategy project team has finalised the Strategy (attachment 1) and Action Plan (attachment 2). Development of the Strategy has been informed by community and key stakeholder consultation undertaken throughout October 2021. As part of the external consultation process, the project team undertook the following:

- Release of the Strong Local Economy Discussion Paper, informed by Community Plan & Investment Attraction Plan findings
- Publication of an engagement page on the “Engage City of Whittlesea” website, accompanied by a general community survey
- Planned two focus group sessions for the general community (though these sessions did not eventuate due to a lack of interest from community)
- Social media engagement from Council’s official pages on Facebook and LinkedIn
- Distribution of the Discussion Paper and the engagement page, with a call to action to provide feedback, to Business e-News subscribers

- The inaugural meeting of the Business Advisory Panel, consisting of a number of business representatives within the City of Whittlesea community
- A focus group session attended by the broader business community to discuss concerns and priorities for action
- Targeted correspondence via phone from Economic Development, resulting in a further twenty-eight engagements
- Open lines for internal feedback from City of Whittlesea staff and partner organisations.

Development of the Strategy was also informed by a raft of relevant community feedback that had been collected as part of prior consultation. Additional feedback was drawn from the Community Plan “Let’s Talk” series, Climate Change Action Plan engagement and COVID–19 Business Impact Surveys.

Findings from the consultation period were taken into consideration to ensure that community desires were reflected in both the Strategy’s longer-term vision and immediate commitments in the Action Plan. Key themes arising from the consultation process which informed the final Strategy and Action Plan included the following:

- Amenity and infrastructure investment throughout the municipality to support our economic growth, including libraries, sport facilities and co-working spaces for precinct activation
- Addressing employment equality, workforce readiness and economic participation for identified under-represented populations
- Impacts of commutes and connectivity on choosing local employment, and investment in road and public transport infrastructure
- Diversification of employment across sectors, including opportunities to harness future technologies and the circular economy
- Increased focus on early learning—both provision as a service and as a growing employment sector
- Council services to address youth disengagement from education and personal development
- Linking education with local employment, fostering relationships between industry and secondary/tertiary institutions, and facilitating employer-driven upskilling
- Post COVID–19 support for international students to return to on-site learning, as well as local employment in casual and non-permanent roles
- Focus on attracting external investment and selling City of Whittlesea’s appeal
- Increasing tourism spend especially from people visiting friends & relatives
- Support for both start-ups (networking, funding and mentoring) and existing businesses to incentivise growth/innovation

- Investment and revitalisation of existing precincts, in addition to funding new employment precincts, to drive local employment and shrink the jobs deficit.

The Strategy and associated Action Plan will be released simultaneously and include key themes for enabling Whittlesea's future economy as envisioned by *Whittlesea 2040: A place to be*. Themes are accompanied by Council initiatives in the Action Plan and an Evaluation framework to ensure outcomes under the Strategy are met.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Adopt the Strong Local Economy Strategy and publish it on the City of Whittlesea website.**
2. **Endorse for consideration as part of the 2022–23 Council Budget process the Strong Local Economy Year One Action Plan 2022–23.**
3. **Write to participating stakeholders to advise where feedback and comments have been incorporated in the Strategy and Action Plan documents, with relevant documents made available on the City of Whittlesea Council website.**

Key Information

The Strategy is the first strategy to be developed under Council's adopted Integrated Planning Framework, covering the Key Directions underpinning the *Strong Local Economy* pillar within *Whittlesea 2040: A place to be*. The Strategy is informed by the following:

- Themes and opportunities highlighted in the Strong Local Economy Discussion Paper, which was developed on a raft of research, policy review and existing Community Plan feedback
- Submissions received during Phase 3 – External Engagement (refer to community consultation & engagement section of report)

The Strategy has been developed in alignment with best practice Place-based strategy development.

The Strong Local Economy Year One Action Plan 2022–23 is set to accompany the Strategy as a standalone document, enabling review and update as needed and to be reported against on an annual basis. It is intended to seek endorsement of the Action Plan with relevant actions requiring budget approval to form part of the Council's 2022/23 Budget consideration and approval processes. This Action Plan has been compiled following feedback received during the community consultation and engagement process and engagement with departments across Council. It includes actions within existing resources/activities and proposed new initiatives.

Community Consultation and Engagement

Input into the development of the draft Strong Local Economy strategy followed a series of consultation and engagement activities in response to the Discussion Paper. The consultation period was open from 6 October to 29 October 2021. Activities included:

- Engagement page on Hive and community survey.
- Targeted focus group workshops with the business community and inaugural Business Advisory Panel meeting
- Targeted calls to stakeholders and accompanying business survey
- Multiple workshop discussions with the internal Project Control and Project Working Groups, both to provide feedback and to ascertain priority actions for the Action Plan

Considerable feedback was received during the consultation period supporting the approaches and confirming directions for the Strategy. A comprehensive table of feedback received from community members, businesses and key institutional stakeholders during external consultation has been attached (attachment 3). Each of these comments has been taken into account in developing the Strategy and Action Plan, and a Council officer response has been provided to each individual item of feedback.

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

Strong local economy

Our City is a smart choice for innovation, business growth and industry as well as supporting local businesses to be successful, enabling opportunities for local work and education. The Strategy is also aligned with all existing Economic Development strategies, policies, and plans, which will be consolidated under the banner of the Strong Local Economy Strategy with priority actions and service planning detailed in each year's Action Plan.

Considerations

Environmental

Positive impact – the Strong Local Economy Strategy and associated actions are not envisioned to have negative impacts on environment and sustainability. Inclusions to the Strong Local Economy Strategy of the circular economy and agritourism/environmental tourism aspects should lead to further net positive environmental outcomes, and alignment with existing climate change mitigation and waste management objectives.

Social, Cultural and Health

Positive impact – the Strong Local Economy Strategy considers actions to improve equality in employment and economic participation. Particular attention taken has been taken to improving economic access and equity for women and for CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) communities. The Strategy also contains outcomes for localisation of employment and services, in alignment with existing community wellbeing objectives.

Economic

Positive impact – the Strong Local Economy Strategy seeks to lay the groundwork for improving economic outcomes over the next five financial years in alignment with the vision and key directions of Whittlesea 2040. The conclusion of the Phase 3 consultation period ensures that objectives and outcomes align with the wants and needs of local businesses, key stakeholders, and the community.

Financial Implications

Funds for the development of a Strong Local Economy Strategy were allocated in the 2021-22 Council Budget. The project has been completed within budget.

Link to Strategic Risk

Strategic Risk *Service Delivery - Inability to plan for and provide critical community services and infrastructure impacting on community wellbeing*

The Strong Local Economy Strategy is a committed activity to action the Whittlesea 2040 goals as part of the Integrated Planning Framework. Council is also bound by the Local Government Act to apply effective community and stakeholder engagement in developing the Strategy content and Council's overall strategic direction.

Implementation Strategy**Communication**

Ongoing communication with external partner stakeholders has continued to inform development of the draft Strategy and associated Action Plan.

As part of Council's requirements under State Government legislation, a Gender Impact Assessment has also been undertaken with the assistance of the Equity & Inclusion team. This Assessment has aimed to ensure the Strategy and Action Plan consider different impacts these commitments will have on different genders (and other groups, including under-represented target groups as identified within the Strategy) and consider these impacts in the implementation phase.

Critical Dates

- 21 February 2022: Council Meeting to seek adoption of the Strategy and endorsement of the Action Plan
- 31 March 2022: Strong Local Economy Strategy launch event
- 1 July 2022: Commencement of Action Plan commitments for 2022/23 financial year.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the Governance Rules 2021, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

Conclusion

The Strategy and associated Action Plan have been informed by community, business, and stakeholder feedback both on the Discussion Paper and recent Community Plan consultation. The final version of the Strategy is presented to Council for adoption.



Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022–2026

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Whittlesea recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Willum Clan as the Traditional Owners of this place.

About 50,000 years before colonisation, a diversity of Wurundjeri people, families and communities managed the land that the City of Whittlesea now occupies. Throughout this time the Plenty River and other local natural features provided an abundance of flora and fauna as both a source of food and shelter.

The pre-colonial legacy of the Wurundjeri people can still be seen today as the Whittlesea area is home to a number of protected and sacred ‘scarred’ trees. These trees were used for making bark canoes or as boundary markers for distinct tribal groups. Today the scarred river-red gum trees serve as a reminder that Aboriginal people have always been, and will always be, central to the social, economic and cultural prosperity of the City of Whittlesea.



Cover photo: Epping Central overhead
 Photo: Wurundjeri Djirri Djirri dancers, celebrating connection to country

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About this document

The Strong Local Economy Strategy (the Strategy) outlines the City of Whittlesea’s contribution toward building a prosperous and inclusive economy for all.

Informed by the analysis of trends impacting our economy and engagement with local businesses, institutional stakeholders, partner organisations, and the wider community, the Strategy:

- Sets out the economy we want and outlines how this will positively impact our community
- Provides an overview of the City of Whittlesea’s existing economy
- Identifies the challenges and opportunities facing our local economy – including the recent impact and ongoing effects of COVID-19
- Defines Council’s priority areas for action and what we will do to contribute to strengthening our local economy between 2022–2026
- Outlines how we will monitor our economy to ensure our actions respond to what our community needs.

The Strategy also presents a summary of current Council services and priorities for action under the following Whittlesea 2040 ‘key directions’:

1. Increased local employment,
2. Education opportunities for all, and
3. Successful, innovative local businesses.

It builds on and has been prepared to support the national, state and regional priorities for job creation, workforce education and training and business support and incentives, as set out in the *Federal Economic Recovery Plan for Australia 20/21*, *Australia’s 2022-23 Migration Program*, *Victorian Government Jobs Plan 2020/21*, *Victorian Department of Education Strategic Plan 2021-25*, *North & West Melbourne City Deal Plan 2020 – 2040* and *The Future Workforce: Melbourne’s North (2015)*.

This Strategy is provided in three parts:

- *The Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022–2026 (this document)* – outlines Council’s strategic direction toward strengthening our local economy.
- *The Strong Local Economy Action Plan 2022–2023* – A Year One Action Plan which sets out Council’s commitments to deliver on the Strategy. The Action Plan will be reviewed annually.
- *The Strong Local Economy Discussion Paper (October 2021)* – detailed supporting evidence including consultation outcomes and an in-depth analysis on each of the trends, challenges and opportunities explored in the Strategy.

How we engaged

In early 2021 Council launched the *Let’s Talk: Shaping the Community Plan 2021-25* consultation program. This process engaged more than 1,300 people across 40 online and face-to-face events, 786 completed surveys, 26 community service providers, 12 pop-up stalls and 17 targeted focus groups sessions. Feedback from this process was used to develop the *Strong Local Economy Strategy Discussion Paper*.

Consultation on the *Strong Local Economy Discussion Paper* was undertaken throughout October 2021. This included an online engagement page and community survey, direct phone calls with businesses, community members, and partners. Further feedback was obtained during a targeted focus group session with local businesses and institutional stakeholders and the inaugural meeting of the Business Advisory Panel.



Photo: City of Whittlesea banners

Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022–2026 / 5

How we plan – an integrated people focussed approach

The Strong Local Economy Strategy is the first of seven strategies that outlines Council’s commitments, the outcomes we strive for and the actions we will deliver for our community.

The seven strategies are known as Council’s Integrated Planning Framework. Each strategy expands on our long-term 20-year community vision, *Whittlesea 2040: A place for all* and our *Community Plan 2021–2025*, to provide our community with more information on Council’s priorities and our overall strategic direction.

The Integrated Planning Framework adopts the State Outcomes and Benefits Framework as well as a Community Wealth Building Approach.

A Community Wealth Building Approach

Community Wealth Building aims to create a fairer and more sustainable economy by empowering local people and redirecting wealth back into local economies.

The City of Whittlesea has considered this approach in the preparation of the Strong Local Economy Strategy.

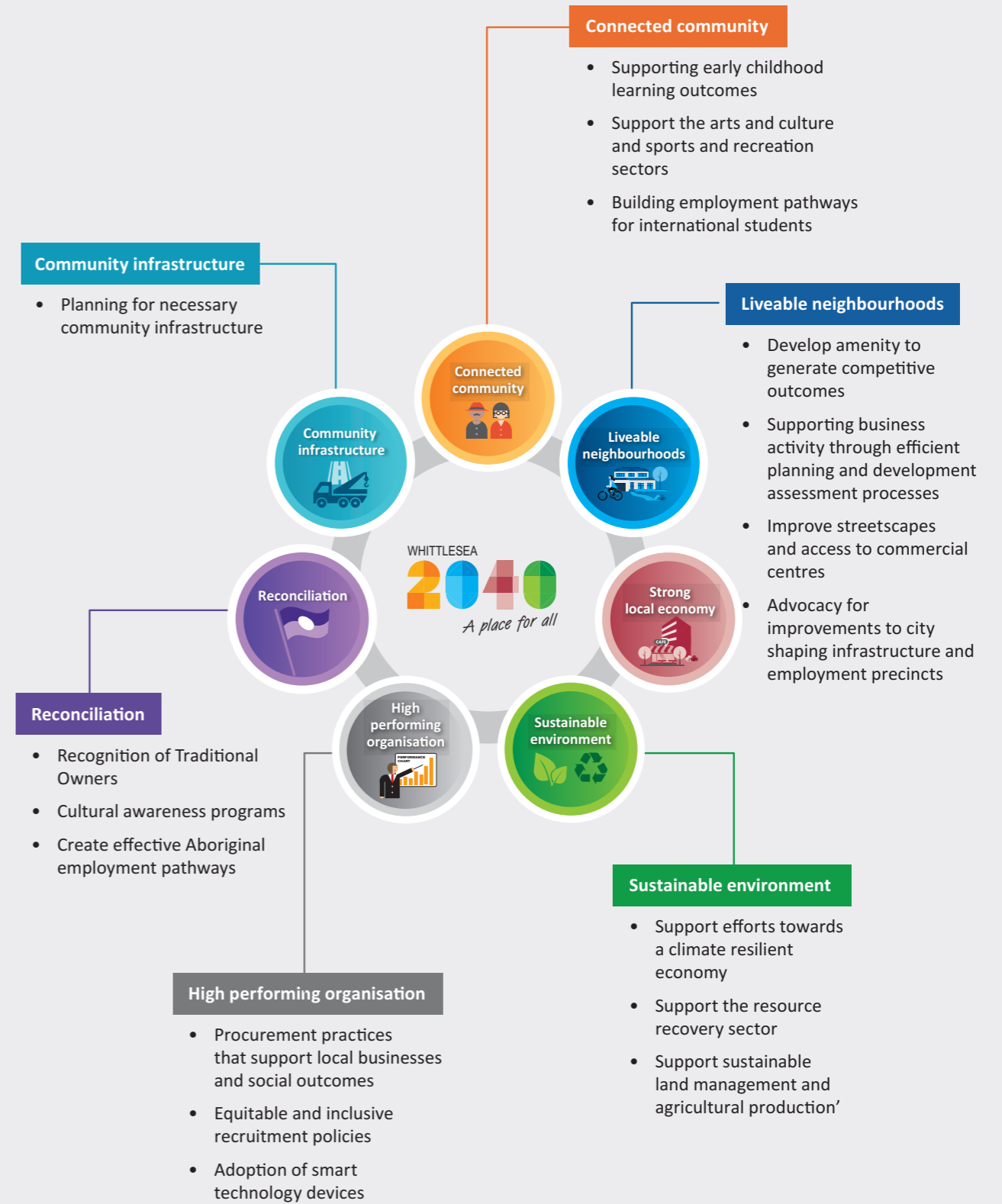
The Centre for Local Economic Strategies identifies five Pillars for Community Wealth Building that large institutions, such as Council, can apply for positive impact at scale.

Five Pillars for Community Wealth Building

Pillar	Council applies this by:
1 Socially progressive procurement of goods and services	Social Procurement Policy
2 Positive and fair employment practices to provide opportunities for disadvantaged groups	Inclusive Employment Policy
3 Using land and property to support positive community outcomes	Social and Affordable Housing Policy, Parks and Open Space program
4 Harnessing wealth and savings for local community and economic benefit	Encouraging community to strengthen business-to-business transactions and networks, and promote behaviours of locally conscious, community-led investment
5 Encourage a diversity in business ownership, building wealth that stays in local communities.	Supporting local business, encouraging new small business development and business growth.

Council can also encourage large businesses and partner institutions to adopt similar practices for the benefit of the local community.

Economic links in other strategies



The economy we want

“In 2040 the City of Whittlesea is the smart choice for innovation, business growth and industry investment. People of all ages have opportunities to learn and develop skills locally. There are many opportunities to gain employment and build careers not too far from home. Residents support local business, and we are renowned for our successful local economy.” Whittlesea 2040: A place for all



Key direction 1: Increased local employment

- Our municipality attracts investment to provide more local jobs to match population growth
- Our economy is inclusive and accessible for all
- Our community has access to employment support and career advisory services.



Key direction 2: Education opportunities for all

- Our community use libraries to learn and develop
- Our workforce has skills matched to industry needs both now and into the future
- Businesses and education providers collaborate to develop locally required skills.



Key direction 3: Successful and innovative local businesses

- Our businesses innovate and thrive by adapting to technology and the circular economy
- Our economy has a diverse base that fosters small business development
- Our community has vibrant and competitive business precincts.

Community benefits of a Strong Local Economy

Key Direction 1: Increased local employment

- More businesses to employ local talent
- Improved and equitable economic opportunities for all
- Less commuting time and cost
- Employment and career advisory services for job seekers
- Extra hours with family and friends

Key Direction 2: Education opportunities for all

- Libraries facilitate education programs
- Increased ability for all residents to be productive
- Education providers support local skills needs
- Bridge the skills gap
- Access to tertiary qualification programs

Key Direction 3: Successful and innovative local businesses

- Business innovation and technology
- Business networks/mentorship program
- Support small businesses
- Workers spending locally
- Sustainability and health benefits

Introducing the City of Whittlesea

The City of Whittlesea is located in Melbourne’s northern suburbs, about 20 kilometres from the Melbourne Central Business District.

It is one of Melbourne’s largest and fastest growing municipalities, covering a land area of 489 square kilometres. It has established urban areas across Bundoora, Epping, Lalor, Mill Park and Thomastown, growth precincts in Mernda, Doreen, South Morang, Epping North, Wollert and Donnybrook and rural areas which are characterised by farming and historic township communities including Whittlesea Township.

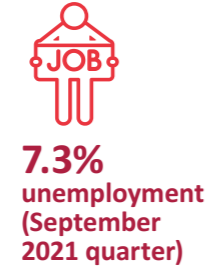
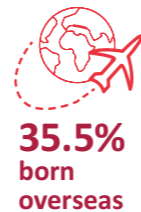
Comparative housing affordability and good transport links to inner Melbourne will continue to act as significant drivers for population growth in future years.

The City of Whittlesea population is projected to grow by more than 150,000 new residents between 2020 and 2040, making it the third most populous local government area in Victoria.

Jobs are projected to grow by around 60,000 over the same period (based on Department of Planning job projections (2016-2031), extrapolated to 2040).

Note: Employment projections are based on Department of Planning estimates published prior to COVID-19.

Overview of the City of Whittlesea community



Source: see page 28

Overview of the City of Whittlesea economy

Whittlesea Economic Profile 2019/20



\$9.09
billion



17,297
businesses



72,045
local jobs



116,486
employed residents



-44,441
jobs deficit

Largest sectors



- Construction 1,115
- Health 948
- Manufacturing 865
- Wholesale 549
- Education 551

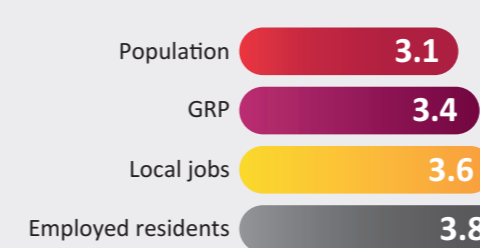


- Health 12,065
- Manufacturing 9,757
- Construction 9,319
- Retail 8,555
- Education 6,715

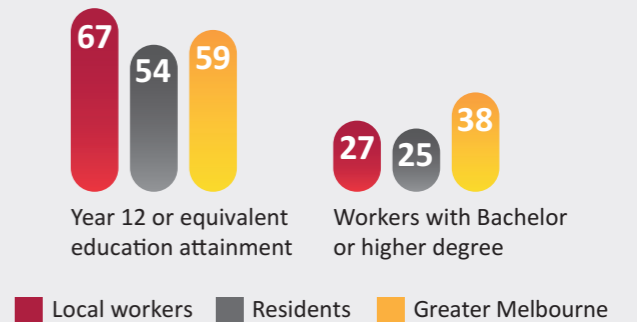


- Health 16,560
- Manufacturing 14,249
- Construction 13,903
- Retail 12,123
- Logistics 9,360

Average annual growth from 2017 to 2020 %



Skills and education gaps %

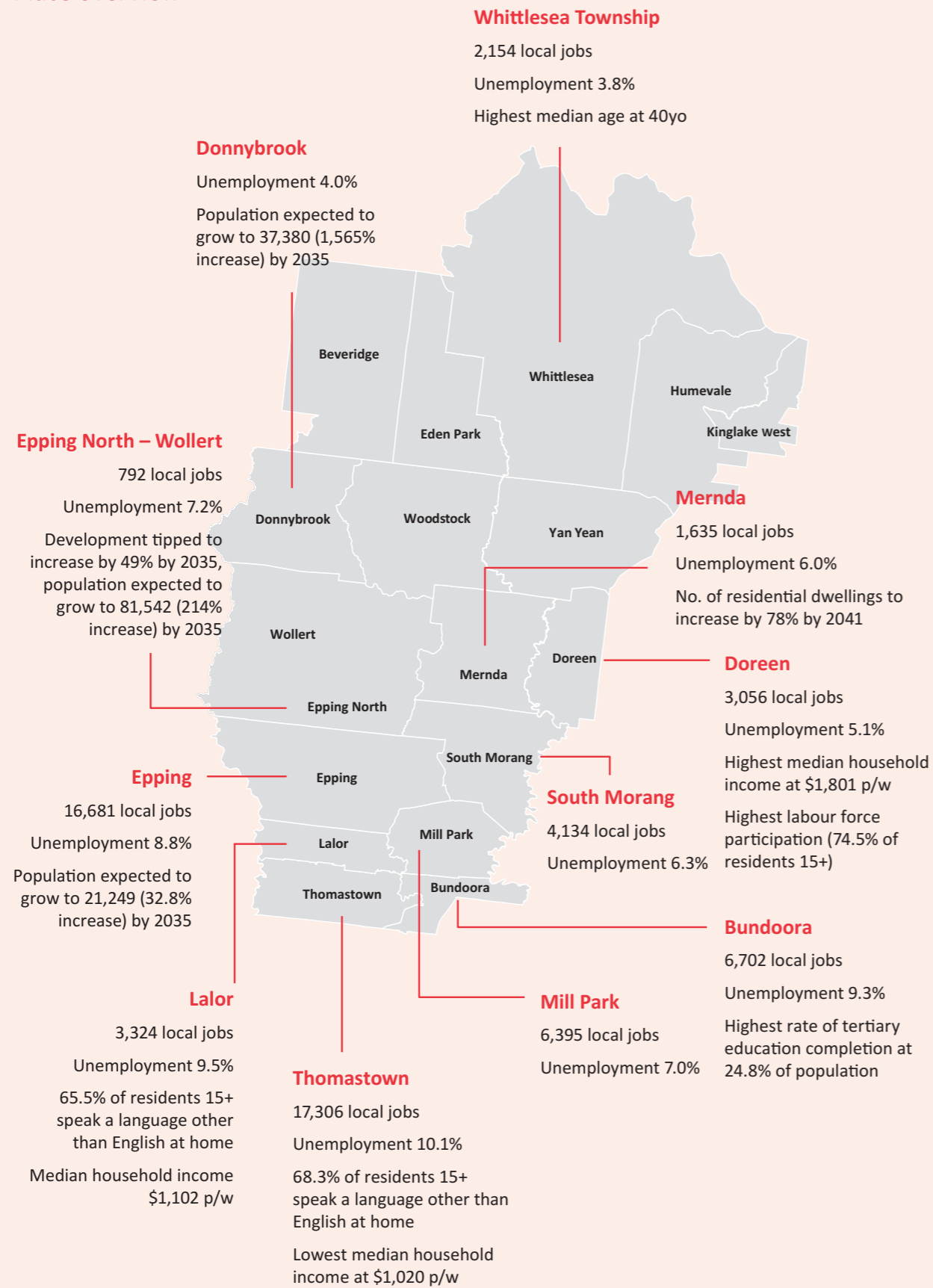


Average annual incomes \$



Source: see page 28

Place overview



Sources: see page 28

Challenges facing our economy



COVID-19

The pandemic has caused job losses and accelerated other changes in the local economy.



Jobs deficit

There are 44,500 more locals participating in the workforce than there are local jobs.



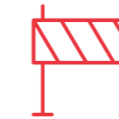
Gender inequality

There is a gender pay gap of -30 per cent across the municipality. This compares to a gap of only -1 per cent across City of Whittlesea staff.



Economic inequality

There is a large discrepancy in incomes and skills between established areas and new growth areas.



Barriers to participation

There are several vulnerable groups who face barriers to higher participation rates.



Diversifying the industry base

41 per cent of all local employment is generated in the health, construction and manufacturing sectors.



Climate change and waste

Continuing changes to weather patterns will have impacts on business productivity, production costs and equipment damage.

Unequal outcomes

There are large spatial differences in terms of the socio-economic profile of residents in the City of Whittlesea. This means that the economic challenges vary from location to location.

Established areas like Thomastown, Lalor and Epping, are older, have lower incomes and are less skilled. These areas have a relatively high share of non-English speaking households and have a higher proportion of single parents which are more likely to be exposed to economic hardship.

In contrast, growth areas like Doreen and Mernda, are attracting a different demographic, with higher incomes and higher skill levels. These areas are located further away from highly skilled jobs. They also have a relatively large share of people who provided unpaid childcare.

Key direction 1 Increased local employment



Why is this important?

The City of Whittlesea must increase local jobs to satisfy the needs of a rapidly growing residential population from a diverse range of backgrounds and skill levels.

What the community told us

32 per cent of people want a greater number and diversity of job opportunities closer to home.

“More job opportunities so people can stay within their municipality, creating ownership and connection within the area they reside.”

Jobs deficit

There are more resident workers than local jobs and this gap is increasing. In 2020, there were 72,045 jobs in the City of Whittlesea. Each year the community welcomes 8,300 new residents, but only creates 2,300 more jobs.

Resident workers and Local Jobs, 2019/20



The gap is increasing

Change 2009/10 to 2019/20



Source: see page 28

Jobs and skills mismatch

In 2016, 70 per cent of local residents worked outside the City of Whittlesea. Some workers are clearly trading off proximity for affordability or lifestyle, while others have no choice but to commute to access jobs that suit their qualifications.

In 2016, around 50 per cent of local jobs were performed by workers from outside the area.

Underemployment also appears to be a concern given the increase in the City of Whittlesea's part-time resident workforce between 2011 and 2016.

Commuter impacts

The shortfall in jobs and mismatch has added to the commuter population with around 1 in 5 resident workers travelling into inner Melbourne every day for work. Some residents may be attracted by higher paying jobs outside the municipality. Of those residents working within the municipality, only 20% are earning more than \$65,000 per year, compared to 33% of those working elsewhere.

Gender inequality¹

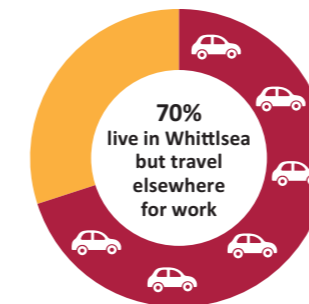
Women trade their careers and financial independence for lower skilled / paid jobs close to home, to be available for caring responsibilities. In contrast, men trade their caring responsibilities and time with their families for long days with long commutes to maintain their careers. (Gender Equity in Employment Report)

There is a persistent pay gap between men and women which continues to limit the economic potential of the City of Whittlesea. In 2017/18, women living in the City of Whittlesea earn only 70 per cent of what men do (30 per cent pay gap), a greater discrepancy than the Australian national figure of 86 per cent (14 per cent gap).

The gender equality issues also vary across locations. For women living in Doreen, childcare responsibility is a contributing factor behind unemployment. While in Thomastown, issues such as language difficulties and car ownership are contributing factors.

Many residents need to travel elsewhere for work

Residents place of work, 2016



Source: see page 28

Mismatch across occupations

Where residents work by occupation, 2016



COVID-19 impact on employment

Some of the acute impacts COVID-19 is having on employment include:



Job losses

The number of jobs fell by 3,000 in the June Quarter 2020.



Increased barriers to participation

The pandemic has exacerbated insecure employment, financial insecurity, heightened occupational risks for essential workers and increased isolation and domestic violence.



Remote working

An increase in remote working may benefit the City of Whittlesea's large female workforce who are highly educated and unable to find equivalent work close to home.



Online shopping

5.2 million households shopping online in January 2021, a 44 per cent increase compared to the year before. This is particularly relevant given retail is our fourth largest employer.

¹ The City of Whittlesea recognises that the LGBTIQ community are not adequately represented in the Australian Government Census or other economic data sources, and, as a result, in this strategy. The City of Whittlesea is incorporating questions related to sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex variations in its direct data collection through the annual household survey, and commits to utilising more representative data when it becomes available.



Achievements to date and current activities

- Developed the Investment Prospectus and the first Investment Attraction Plan to attract businesses and create more local jobs
- Launched the Explore Whittlesea website and social media channels to promote the City of Whittlesea as a tourist destination, highlighting the City’s attractions, events and hospitality
- Delivered an advocacy campaign for a North and West City Deal with partners
- Contributed to the Economic Development Strategy vision of 10,000 new jobs
- Established our Social Procurement Policy and Council’s Local Supplier Database
- Prepared planning scheme amendments and master planning for major employment areas and activity centres
- Establishment and review of the Priority Development Assessment planning application process
- Establishing Council’s Inclusive Employment Program
- Developing an economic participation plan
- Participating in the Jobs Victoria Jobs Advocates program.



Priorities for action

Investment attraction

In 2021, Council endorsed the Investment Attraction Plan 2021-2026. Council is focussed on attracting new investment to the city and supporting further investment by existing businesses to create more local job opportunities for local residents.

Agriculture

Today, Agriculture generates \$51 million in economic activity (value added). A range of agribusiness related opportunities have been identified to take advantage of the region’s productive and viable farming land, proximity to major regional transport and infrastructure and access to recycled water.

Diverse natural, cultural and landscape values

The City of Whittlesea has several nature-based, heritage and recreational assets. There are already a range of tourism offers including cellar doors, cafes and restaurants, wildlife, tourism destinations (e.g. Funfields), and events such as the Whittlesea Country Music Festival and Whittlesea Agricultural Show.

Future opportunities have also been identified to harness our diverse natural and cultural assets, and promote representation of these assets in our visitor economy. These include the Regional Sports and Aquatic Facility at Mernda, and the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland and proposed Aboriginal Gathering Place.

Community Wealth Building – celebrating benefits of local employment

As part of a Community Wealth Building approach, opportunities exist for large institutions such as Council to promote positive employment and enterprise practices.

Council directly supports more inclusive economic participation outcomes through our social procurement practices and our Inclusive Employment Program. By encouraging other large employers and businesses in the municipality to adopt the same approach, developing an economic participation plan and supporting the Victorian Government’s Job Advocates program, we can also help to enrich opportunities for disadvantaged groups identified within our municipality.



Photo: That’s Amore Cheese Thomastown

Key direction 2 Education opportunities for all



Why is this important?

Residents of the City of Whittlesea must have the skills to adapt to the changing future needs of business to ensure a prosperous future for all.

What the community told us

Our community wants diverse employment pathways and opportunities for skills development and training, especially for young people and people who are long-term unemployed.

Lower education and skills

The City of Whittlesea overall has a lower proportion of residents with qualifications than the average for Greater Melbourne.

Most future jobs are expected to require post-school qualifications. The City of Whittlesea currently has a large skills gap compared to Greater Melbourne.

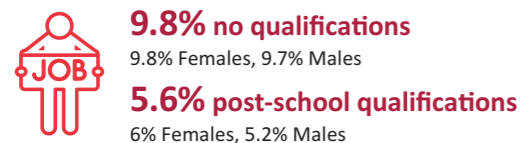
The skills gap limits potential

Compared to Greater Melbourne, people who live in the City of Whittlesea are less likely to (%):

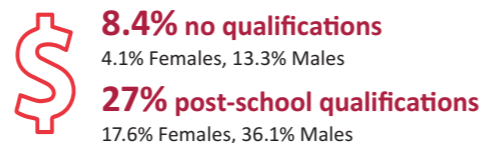


This has implications for labour force outcomes and earnings

Unemployment rate



Earn more than \$65,000/year



Source: see page 28

Barriers to participation

Five key population groups do not have equal access to employment or pathways to employment.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Unemployment rate (11.7 per cent) in 2016 was higher than the City of Whittlesea average (7.2 per cent)

Young people

Youth disengagement (not earning or learning) in Whittlesea was 1.3 times greater than in Greater Melbourne in 2016

Culturally and linguistically diverse people

44 per cent of people spoke a language other than English at home in 2016, well above the Greater Melbourne average (32 per cent)

Women

Women were more likely to be unemployed, work part-time, earn less with a tertiary education, undertake unpaid childcare and rely on jobs closer to home

People with a disability

Working-age people with a disability were 2.4 times more likely to be unemployed (17 per cent) than people without a disability (7.2 per cent)

Source: see page 28

COVID-19 impact on education

Some of the acute impacts COVID-19 is having on education include:

International education

Australia's education industry is the largest service-based export. Border closures reduce the inflows of international students and spending.

Online education

From pre-school to university, education providers have been forced to adapt to increased teaching online.

Increased digitisation and automation

To remain competitive, businesses and education providers in the City of Whittlesea will need to reskill and upskill workers for the digital transformation.



Achievements to date and current activities

- Supported the establishment of the Melbourne Polytechnic Food Incubator to support our growing food sector
- Established an ongoing partnership with Whittlesea Youth Commitment and other service providers to support young people
- Partnership with Melbourne Polytechnic, Whittlesea Community Connections and Yarra Valley Water to investigate local food and farming opportunities at the Whittlesea Community Farm and Food Collective
- Continue to support the Whittlesea Tech School, hosted by Melbourne Polytechnic, a high-tech learning centre and community hub to engage with science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics
- Partnership with Deakin University to define regenerative agricultural practices and produce best practice regenerative agriculture case studies
- Facilitating employment training and support services.



Priorities for action

Growing population and skill base

Population growth has been a major driver of the City of Whittlesea's economy over the past decade with an average of 4.5 per cent per year. This growth has increased local expenditure, driving demand for local services and increasing the skills profile in the City of Whittlesea.

Highly skilled multicultural community

The City of Whittlesea has a strong multicultural resident base. In 2016, 35.5 per cent of residents stated they were born overseas, and 44 per cent spoke a language other than English at home. These residents are also highly skilled. In 2016, 46 per cent of recent overseas arrivals in the City of Whittlesea had a tertiary education, well above the City of Whittlesea's general population average of 28 per cent.

The rise of knowledge workers

Knowledge-based jobs require more cognitive skills and rely on non-routine work. These jobs are difficult to automate, often requiring creativity, problem solving and/or human presence e.g. child care. Improving the education and qualification levels is key for lifting participation and employment levels, as well as increasing the attractiveness of the municipality to new businesses.



Photo: Willow Home and Decor

Key direction 3 Successful, innovative local businesses



Why is this important?

The City of Whittlesea must have a competitive business environment to retain and attract investment and create the jobs we need to support the rapidly growing community.

What the community told us

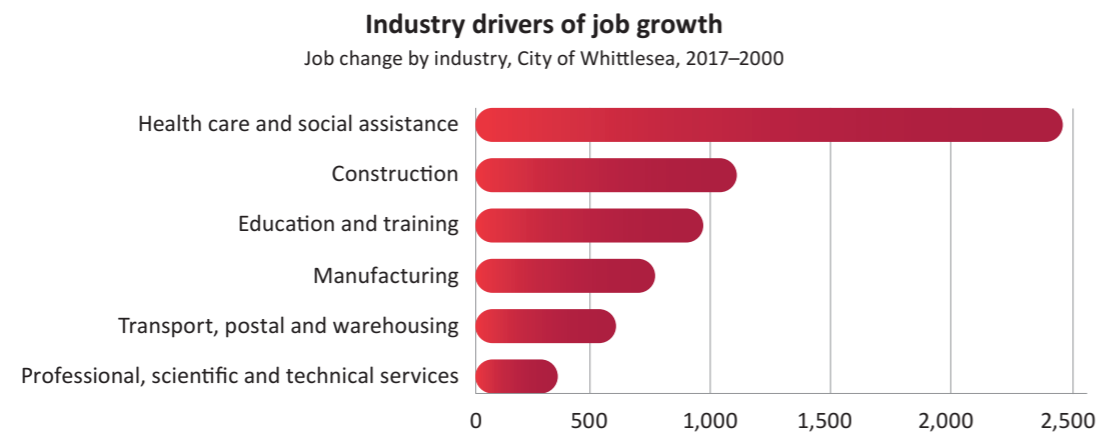
47 per cent of community survey respondents want us to help local businesses grow through initiatives such as grants, incentives and marketing support.

Diversifying the industry base

The City of Whittlesea has 17,297 businesses in 2020. The three largest industries by employment are Health care and social assistance, manufacturing and construction.

City of Whittlesea's local jobs market is primarily focused on the provision of household services such as health, construction and retail. In 2019/20, nearly 41 per cent of local employment was in these three fast-growing industries.

However, business services, such as architects, engineers, tax professionals, accountants, lawyers and computer programmers, are under-represented.



Specialisations
Compared to Greater Melbourne, Whittlesea has a comparative advantage in **manufacturing, construction, health care and social assistance, agriculture, wholesale trade, retail trade** but a **competitive disadvantage** in **business services (1), arts and recreation services**

¹ Business services include financial and insurance services, professional, scientific and technical services, information media and telecommunications, rental, hiring and real estate services, administrative and support services.

Source: see page 28

Supporting sectors undergoing transition

Technological and consumer-based change places some industries at risk of further job losses, especially manufacturing, retail trade and agriculture.

Enhancing local entrepreneurship

In the City of Whittlesea, around half of workers are employed by small businesses (i.e. less than 20 employees).

The City of Whittlesea has experienced much slower growth in micro businesses with 1-4 employees and larger businesses with more than 200 employees.

Climate change

The municipality will continue to be affected by climate change impacts of rising temperatures, more frequent, intense and longer heatwaves, decline in rainfall and longer, more extreme fire seasons. (City of Whittlesea, 2021b)

These changes will impact health outcomes, natural assets, built infrastructure and essential services. Economic productivity will be impacted, with supply chain disruption, asset and equipment damage and increased production costs. The industries of health and social services, manufacturing, construction and agriculture are expected to be most affected.

COVID-19 impact on business

Some of the acute impacts COVID-19 is likely to have on business include:



Slower economic growth

Economic growth is likely to be slower than forecast due to a range of factors, including slower population growth.



Supply chain disruption

Major global supply chain disruption has impacted manufacturing and delivery times. However, this leads to emerging local manufacturing opportunities to address supply chain weakness.



Business resilience and adaptability

41 per cent of Australian businesses surveyed by the ABS in April 2021 had changed the way they provide products and services, 39 per cent changed suppliers and 31 per cent changed the type and range of products or services.



Nature based / outdoor tourism

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen people seeking travel and outdoor experiences closer to home due to the uncertainty of border restrictions and requirements.



Achievements to date and current activities

- Established the Business Advisory Panel to enable our business community to provide advice, insight and feedback to Council on key initiatives
- Introduced the Business Concierge Service to streamline the permit approvals for small businesses
- Launched the Whittlesea Localised online platform to encourage business-to-business engagement and transactions
- Delivery of the Ignite start up program and series of events supporting start-ups and entrepreneurs
- Delivery of the Business Pandemic and Recovery Support Programs including a \$450,000 Business Assistance Grants Program for more than 100 businesses
- Development and implementation of the Visitor Economy Marketing Plan and campaigns
- Worked with the local business community to provide promotional support through shop local campaigns
- Supported local businesses in response to the pandemic through educational webinars, business development programs and networking events
- Designed and constructed streetscape improvements to Lalor Shops and Rochdale Square
- Established the Vacant to Vibrant program, matching vacant shops with prospective business owners
- Commencement of the Shopfront Improvement Program
- Support food and hospitality businesses through the State Government’s Outdoor Eating and Entertainment, Outdoor Activation and Local Government Business Concierge and Hospitality Support programs
- Supported businesses financially through the Economic Development Community Grants Programs
- Established partnership with Deakin University to investigate agricultural opportunities in the municipality through the production of a Land Capability Assessment
- Developing a Circular Economy Action Plan
- Advocacy for the development of key activity centres and employment precincts
- Refreshing the Epping Central Structure Plan
- Advocating for the improved NBN and mobile infrastructure
- Establishing a Whittlesea Business Network.



Priorities for action

Circular and green economy

The transition to a circular economy will see governments dedicate significant investment towards innovative solutions that reduce emissions and waste. The City of Whittlesea can support this transition and harness funding opportunities through:

- Activities and investment at the Cooper Street West Waste and Resource Recovery Hub;
- Existing strengths in advanced manufacturing, education and training, food production and processing;
- The City of Whittlesea’s commitment to zero net emissions.

These strengths will provide opportunities for local job creation and drive local investment in technology, resource efficiency and adoption of low emission approaches to doing business.

Industry specialisations as a comparative advantage

Specialisations make the City of Whittlesea’s economy unique, and will drive where investment can work with future growth. The following opportunity sectors have been identified:

- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Wholesale Trade (including Melbourne Market – Fresh Food Wholesale Trade)
- Manufacturing (including Food Manufacturing)
- Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services (including waste recycling services)
- Construction
- Education and Training (including Tertiary Education)
- Transport, Postal and Warehousing
- Retail Trade.

Other proposed projects and partnerships which will have a direct impact on jobs in the City of Whittlesea including the Melbourne Food Innovation and Export Hub (MFIH) in Epping.

Leveraging infrastructure investment

Major infrastructure projects identified for Melbourne’s north and west would deliver unprecedented investment in the region. Major projects committed to or identified include Melbourne Airport Rail Link, North East Link, Suburban Rail Loop, Melbourne Metro 2, the Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal, Wollert Rail, Wallan Rail Electrification and the Outer Metropolitan Ring Road / E6.

These are expected to significantly improve the economic performance of Melbourne’s North and West, providing multiple opportunities for the City.

Importance of competitive precincts

The shift to knowledge jobs has also led to a substantial shift in the geography of jobs, with a concentration of a disproportionate share of economic activity in a handful of economic regions with strong job density. The development of successful employment precincts will be critical to the success of the City of Whittlesea.

Innovation and start-ups

In the past decade, there has been strong growth in tech-based start-up businesses. They grow quickly and through applying digital applications, decreased barriers to entry, abundance of skilled labour, and where available, supply of low-rent office space (e.g. co-working spaces). Further support for start-ups can assist this important source of innovation and jobs creation.

Community wealth building

Encouraging re-investment in the local community improves local spending power, local ownership of economic decision-making, and social enterprise outcomes. Council can demonstrate these practices and encourage local businesses to do the same.

Making it happen

The Action Plan clearly outlines the actions Council is committed to delivering and how we will track our performance over time.

It is also hoped the Action Plan can help to facilitate and strengthen our productive relationships with key stakeholders.

Action Plan

The Strong Local Economy Strategy will be delivered through implementation of:

- **The Strong Local Economy Action Plan:** An Action Plan that sets out a series of tasks for each key direction outlined in this strategy.
- **Investment Attraction Plan 2021-26:** A plan which outlines Council's existing commitments to grow investment and employment over the next five years.

An Action Plan for each year of the strategy will be released annually in line with Council's Community Plan and annual budget processes.



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Photo: Westfield Plenty Valley

Monitoring our economy

Council has prepared an evaluation framework to monitor the trends and performance of the local economy.

The indicators below will help us to track the health of our economy and progress towards the outcomes identified in this Strategy. They have been nominated with consideration of access to regular, accurate data.

Council will continue to monitor these indicators and will work with other levels of government as well as partners in the private and not-for-profit sectors and our broader community to influence these indicators for the better.

All indicators will be monitored looking at differences across age, sex and key population groups, focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities, people with a disability and young people, and will be compared against State and other local government area averages.



Key direction 1: Increased local employment

- Increase in the number of medium and large businesses
- Increase in number of local jobs
- Decreased unemployment rate
- Increased investment in key commercial and industrial areas
- Increase in value of building approvals, residential and non-residential.



Key direction 2: Education opportunities for all

- Increased enrolment across higher educational programs
- Increased access to library facilities and services
- Increased number of local qualified workers in local jobs
- Increase in education and training programs reflective of local industry needs.



Key direction 3: Successful and innovative local businesses

- Increase in small employing businesses
- Decrease vacancy rates in key commercial industrial areas
- Increased availability of land for investment
- Increased adoption of circular economy principles and practices
- Increased NBN and mobile phone coverage and network capacity
- Increase local and international export as a share of Gross Regional Product (GRP).

Photo: Uni Hill Shopping Centre



Sources

- p. 10, Sources: NIEIR, ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016, ABS Regional Population, Department of Education
Unemployment rate: ABS September 2021 Labour force survey
- p. 11, Sources: NIEIR, ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016, ABS Business Counts and Exits, ABS Regional Population
- p. 12, Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016
- pp. 14–15, 22, Source: NIEIR, 2020
- p. 18, Source: ABS, 2016
- p. 19, Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016

Glossary

Aboriginal – Throughout this document, the term ‘Aboriginal’ is taken to include people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent. ‘Aboriginal’ is used in preference to ‘Indigenous’, ‘First Nations’, and ‘Koori’.

Circular economy – a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible.

Climate change – a change in global or regional climate patterns attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.

Deficit – A deficit is synonymous with a shortfall or loss and is the opposite of a surplus.

Economic inequality – refers to the disparities in income and wealth among individuals in a society.

Economic participation – an individual’s engagement in work and/or education, and their access to economic resources that results from such participation.

Entrepreneur – a person who sets up a business or businesses, taking on financial risks in the hope of profit.

Gender inequality – social process by which people are treated differently and disadvantageously, under similar circumstances, on the basis of gender.

Green economy – defined as low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. Growth in employment and income are driven by public and private investment into such economic activities, infrastructure and assets that allow reduced carbon emissions and pollution, enhanced energy and resource efficiency, and prevention of the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Inclusive employment – efforts that promote fair and equitable access to decent employment, ensuring satisfactory pay and conditions, career prospects and opportunities for social integration.

Innovation – a new idea, method, or process applied in a research or business setting.

Remote working – the practice of an employee working at their home, or in some other place that is not an organization’s usual place of business.

Skills gap – a mismatch between the skills that employers need and the skills that job seekers possess.

Start-up – a company or project undertaken by an entrepreneur to seek, develop, and validate a scalable business model.

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Strong Local Economy Action Plan 2022–2023



Cover photo: Melbourne Fruit, Vegetable and Flower Market
Photo: Willow Home and Decor

Purpose of this document

The Strong Local Economy Action Plan 2022–2023 (Action Plan) sets out the actions Council will focus on delivering in the first year of the Strong Local Economy Strategy (Strategy).

It is made up of the key actions from the Community Plan and Investment Attraction Plan and summarises what we will do to build employment, educational opportunities and innovative enterprises of all sizes in the City of Whittlesea, with the ultimate aim to deliver a prosperous and inclusive economy for all.

Actions are set out under each of the three Key Directions, the outcomes they are contributing to, and Council’s role in delivering on each action. Outcomes are detailed further in the Strong Local Economy Strategy.

An Action Plan for each year will be developed in line with Council’s Community Plan and annual budget process. Actions listed in this document are subject to consideration in Council’s annual budget process.

Council’s roles

Role	Aim	What Council may do?
Provider	To implement projects, programs and campaigns for use by businesses and community for a prosperous and diverse economy.	Initiate campaigns, incentives and business or educational support programs.
Facilitator	To establish partnerships and collaborate with stakeholders, to create economic participation opportunities.	Partner with key stakeholders and provide contributions (funding, knowledge and expertise, network opportunities) to roll out programs.
Advocate	To support economic and precinct investment through promotion and influencing decision-making, rather than direct involvement.	Educate key stakeholders including higher levels of government to address provision gaps, and influence government and decision making.



Photo: Whittlesea Township

Key direction 1 Increased local employment



Actions	Council's role
Outcome: Our municipality attracts investment to provide more local jobs to match population growth	
Develop and implement the Investment Attraction Communications Framework	Provider
Deliver the Investment Attraction Partner Engagement and Advocacy Framework	Provider
Develop an incentives package for business attraction and support	Provider
Outcome: Our economy is inclusive and accessible for all	
Deliver an Inclusive Employment Program	Provider
Development of an Economic Participation Plan	Provider
Outcome: Our community has access to employment support and career advisory services	
Support the delivery of the Jobs Advocates program	Facilitator

Key direction 2 Education opportunities for all



Actions	Council's role
Outcome: Our community use libraries to learn and develop	
Partner to deliver public co-working facilities and business incubator services	Facilitator
Increase access to library services	Facilitator
Undertake the Library Service Review	Facilitator
Outcome: Our workforce has skills matched to industry needs both now and into the future	
Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiatives	Facilitator
Outcome: Businesses and education providers collaborate to develop locally required skills	
Continue to support and collaborate with Business Advisory Panel	Facilitator



City of Whittlesea

Photo: Uni Hill precinct Bundoora

Key direction 3 Successful, innovative local businesses



Actions	Council's role
Outcome: Our businesses innovate and thrive by adapting to technology and the circular economy	
Develop a Circular Economy Plan	Provider
Support the Whittlesea Community Farm and Food Collective	Facilitator
Develop an Agri-Food Plan	Provider
Actively advocate and participate for the delivery of improved NBN and mobile infrastructure	Advocate
Implement the Economic Development Engagement Framework	Provider
Outcome: Our economy has a diverse base that fosters small business development	
Develop a Destination Plan to attract investment to the municipality, including agri-tourism	Provider
Implement the Shopfront Improvement Program	Provider
Deliver the Whittlesea Business Network program	Provider
Deliver and facilitate program of business training, networking and events	Provider
Continue to support businesses through the implementation of a streamlined application process and Business Concierge service	Provider
Strengthen business to business connections	Provider
Support sustainable local agribusiness	Provider
Promote the 'support local' campaign to support community and local businesses	Provider
Outcome: Our community has vibrant and competitive business precincts	
Refresh Epping Central Structure Plan	Provider
Actively facilitate and advocate for the development and implementation of key activity centres and employment precincts including Epping metropolitan activity centre, Plenty Valley Town Centre, Mernda major activity centre and state-significant industrial precincts in Epping and Thomastown	Facilitator / Advocate
Ensure City of Whittlesea actively participates and advocates for strategic employment generators: Melbourne Food Innovation and Export hub (MFI) and Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal.	Advocate

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Strong Local Economy Strategy – Discussion Paper Submissions and Responses

Topic	Submissions	Initial officer response – 15 Nov	Where it is reflected in the draft Strategy and proposed response
What do you see as the key challenges facing the City of Whittlesea? Why?			
1.	<p>City of Whittlesea is always competing for attracting business – compared to other areas. The challenge is to make the area more appealing for business.</p> <p>Key objectives / challenges I see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How do we make it more appealing? b. How to secure funding? c. How does a business find space? d. How do you provide incentives? (e.g., reduced rent but require them to employ locals and stay in the area for 1 year) 	<p>City of Whittlesea recently adopted the Investment Attraction Plan, which will be actioned as a priority activity under the Strong Local Economy Strategy.</p>	<p>Opportunities for showcasing City of Whittlesea’s competitive advantage have been reflected under Key Direction 3: Strong, Innovative Local Business.</p> <p>Actions arising from the Investment Attraction Plan to promote business growth and incentivise investment have been reflected in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan, which will accompany the Strategy.</p>
2.	<p>Accessing funding is challenging for start-ups. They need financial assistance. They also need mentoring and networking support.</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>A Business Innovation and Enterprise Officer has recently been appointed within Economic Development to investigate incentives and programs to promote and aid start-ups and business innovation.</p>	<p>Actions arising from the Investment Attraction Plan to promote business growth and incentivise investment have been reflected in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan, which will accompany the Strategy. This includes Action ‘Develop an incentives package for business attraction and support’ in the Action Plan.</p>
3.	<p>Consider a start-up fund? Also consider the local market for start-up businesses. What opportunities are local?</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>A Business Innovation and Enterprise Officer has recently been appointed</p>	<p>Actions arising from the Investment Attraction Plan to promote business growth and incentivise investment have been reflected in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan, which will accompany the Strategy. This includes</p>

		within Economic Development to investigate incentives and programs to promote and aid start-ups and business innovation.	Action 'Develop an incentives package for business attraction and support' in the Action Plan.
4.	There are challenges for established business in to find further investment opportunities.	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan. A Business Innovation and Enterprise Officer has recently been appointed within Economic Development to investigate incentives and programs to promote and aid start-ups and business innovation.	Growth and innovation opportunities for existing businesses have been reflected more strongly in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan under Key Direction 3: Strong, Innovative Local Businesses. Changes have been made to include existing business support and innovation grants in existing planned actions.
5.	There are challenges in growing the visitor economy given it is predominantly a residential area. Perhaps adventure-based tourism is the best opportunity. Businesses need to offer services and experiences and work together to offer a reason for people to visit the area.	Noted. A Visitor Economy Plan is a priority action for Economic Development in financial year 22 – 23 and will be included in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Actions arising in financial year 2022 – 23 to grow the visitor economy have been reflected in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan, including 'Develop a Circular Economy Plan'.
6.	Potentially businesses can showcase what they do (e.g., manufacturing) as a means of attracting visitors. i.e., what they are producing.	Noted. A Visitor Economy Plan is a priority action for Economic Development in financial year 22 – 23 and will be included in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	A number of action items to showcase and promote local products have been reflected in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan, including 'Support the Whittlesea Community Farm and Food Collective', 'Promote the "support local" campaign to support community and local businesses', and 'Develop an Agri-Food Plan'.
7.	International students are hopefully coming back soon. What will that look like? The typical entrepreneur has changed due to COVID. How do we best support them?	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The Strong Local Economy Strategy reflects barriers to participation for international students under Key

			<p>Direction 2: Education Opportunities for All.</p> <p>COVID-19 impacts on the future of work and education—both challenges and opportunities arising—have been better reflected in the Strategy.</p>
8.	<p>Whittlesea is a fast-growing area. We need adequate amenities and infrastructure to support this growth. We need to ensure visitors have a positive experience. How is the city connected? Ensure all the pieces of the puzzle are there.</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>	<p>Infrastructure and amenities for the growing workforce have been reflected in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Economic linkages to the Liveable Neighbourhoods and Connected Communities portfolios have also been identified in the Strategy.</p>
9.	<p>Is the development of infrastructure keeping up with growth? Consideration must be given to the whole life cycle cost of infrastructure assets. Need to look at planning approval process – encourage customer service approach and fast-tracked.</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>	<p>Infrastructure and amenities for the growing workforce have been reflected in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Infrastructure maintenance and lifecycle costs will be further reflected in the upcoming Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy and the Community Infrastructure Strategy.</p>
10.	<p>Challenge – competition with start-ups and businesses moving to other municipalities. Make the city more attractive to attract new investment. How do we secure the funding to get started – first 3-5 years before expansion. Consider how we support new businesses with incentives. Start-ups might be contracts with reduced rent for a period (12 months) Tied to</p>	<p>City of Whittlesea recently adopted the Investment Attraction Plan, which will be actioned as a priority activity under the Strong Local Economy Strategy.</p>	<p>Actions arising from the Investment Attraction Plan to promote business growth and incentivise investment have been reflected in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan, which will accompany the Strategy. This includes</p>

	targets with respect to local workers. Ensuring they stay for say 5 years.		Action 'Develop an incentives package for business attraction and support'.
11.	Mentoring and Network platforms for shared business learnings.	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>A Business Innovation and Enterprise Officer has recently been appointed within Economic Development to investigate incentives and programs to promote and aid start-ups and business innovation.</p>	'Deliver and facilitate program of business training, networking and events' is an action item which has been included in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan. Council will continue to elevate its networking and support offerings as we continue to recover from disruptions caused by COVID-19.
12.	Start-up funds. Local marketing to promote product and services.	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>A Business Innovation and Enterprise Officer has recently been appointed within Economic Development to investigate incentives and programs to promote and aid start-ups and business innovation.</p>	Actions arising from the Investment Attraction Plan to promote business growth and incentivise investment have been reflected in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan. Several action items to showcase and promote local products have also been reflected in the Action Plan, including 'Support the Whittlesea Community Farm and Food Collective' and 'Develop an Agri-Food Plan'.
13.	Importance of ensuring sound business feasibility planning – support for that. How do existing companies get access to new investment for innovation? (don't just focus on start-ups)	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>A Business Innovation and Enterprise Officer has recently been appointed within Economic Development to investigate incentives and programs to promote and aid start-ups and business innovation.</p>	Growth and innovation opportunities for existing businesses have been reflected more strongly in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan under Key Direction 3: Strong, Innovative Local Businesses. Changes have been made to include existing business support and innovation grants in existing planned actions.

<p>14.</p>	<p>Amenity and infrastructure. Lot of planning and thought about how the city connects</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>	<p>Infrastructure and amenities to accommodate the growing workforce (transport/commutes, facilities for childcare etc.) have been reflected in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan. These will also be further reflected in the upcoming Connected Communities Strategy, Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy, and the Community Infrastructure Strategy.</p> <p>Strategic land use planning and a place-based approach to planning for our future economy have been key considerations in the development of the Strategy. These are reflected in a number of Strategic Futures initiatives in the Action Plan, as well as in the Place Overview section of the Strategy.</p>
<p>15.</p>	<p>High power prices, delivery of goods to customers. The need for more local awareness of what is actually produced in Whittlesea.</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>Supply chains and impacts to costs from challenges including COVID-19 have been reflected in the Strong Local Economy Strategy.</p> <p>A number of action items to showcase and promote local products have been reflected in the Action Plan, including 'Support the Whittlesea Community Farm and Food Collective', 'Promote the "support local" campaign to support community and local businesses', and 'Develop an Agri-Food Plan'.</p>

<p>16.</p>	<p>Phone signal, Cooper St is very busy at peak times, especially at the end they are based with the Hume Freeway. Links to public transport at their end of Cooper Street is a bit hit and miss.</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>	<p>‘Actively advocate and participate for the delivery of improved NBN and mobile infrastructure’ is an action item which has been included in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan.</p> <p>Issues surrounding transport connections and infrastructure have been identified in the Strategy and will be further explored in the Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy.</p>
<p>17.</p>	<p>COVID managing the ongoing Shortage of staff.... Absentee of staff, managing the workforce to keep areas segregated. Staff being off due to at Exposure site so being off work 2-5 away each day out of 50 staff (10%) Staff abusing the system</p>	<p>Noted; additional COVID support and management will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>Impacts to business continuity, education sector and workforce planning from COVID-19 have been reflected strongly in the Strong Local Economy Strategy.</p>
<p>18.</p>	<p>Adapting to COVID-19 and dealing with the impact of the pandemic on some of our clients</p>	<p>Noted; additional COVID support and management will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>Impacts to business continuity, education sector and workforce planning from COVID-19 have been reflected strongly in the Strong Local Economy Strategy. Opportunities for the future of work have also been highlighted.</p>
<p>19.</p>	<p>The main Challenger is managing COVID. Trying to adapt our methods of selling to accommodate COVID safe practices and dealing with people who do not follow rules. Demand and price for the lines we sell are also an issue which is usually a function of supply. The last two years have seen normal buying patterns disrupted most likely due to COVID. Rents within the market are significantly higher than in similar</p>	<p>Noted; additional COVID support and management will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>Impacts to business continuity, education sector and workforce planning from COVID-19 have been reflected strongly in the Strong Local Economy Strategy. Opportunities for the future of work have also been highlighted.</p>

	situations outside the market even accounting for a premium for being within this central location.		
20.	As a farmer my main concern is rate increases. Increased traffic makes it dangerous to drive machinery on the roads. As a sheep farmer we are very concerned about dog attacks due to increased population. Theft in the area is also a concern.	The City of Whittlesea is currently developing the Green Wedge Management Plan which may cover some of these concerns for rural land. Other concerns will be noted for consideration in the Strong Local Economy Strategy.	Actions have been included in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan to support the longevity of our agricultural sector, including ‘Support sustainable local agribusiness’. Further actions to increase local security will be identified in the upcoming Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy and Connected Communities Strategy.
21.	We are at our infancy stage of our business lifecycle. As honey producers we are developing the foundations for consistent harvests. The initial set up costs have been challenging.	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan. A Business Innovation and Enterprise Officer has recently been appointed within Economic Development to investigate incentives and programs to promote and aid start-ups and business innovation.	A number of action items have been included in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan to support new and existing local agriculture businesses, including ‘Support sustainable local agribusiness’, ‘Support the Whittlesea Community Farm and Food Collective’, and ‘Develop an Agri-Food Plan’ for financial year 2022 – 23.
22.	facing new covid normality in navigating how to deal with client’s expectations	Noted; additional COVID support and management will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Impacts to business continuity, education sector and workforce planning from COVID-19 have been reflected strongly in the Strong Local Economy Strategy.
23.	The main challenge for our organisation is ensuring all young people have the opportunity to reach their true potential. Raising the awareness of what opportunities are available and the various pathway options is key to our work, as is ensuring young people develop employability and entrepreneurial skills necessary for future jobs. Gaining access to various industries	Noted; skill matching, employee upskilling and lifelong learning have been identified as priority objectives for the Strong Local Economy Strategy and will be included in the Strategy.	The Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan have been updated to better reflect youth disengagement from work and education, upskilling through employment, and fostering connections between local businesses and educational institutions to allow

	<p>to showcase the broad range of careers and jobs within a sector is vital in providing agency for young people to make informed choices. Engaging with a wide range of local industry representatives and professionals to build connections enhances the networking capacity for young people which helps them gain a better understanding of the value of education and training and raises aspirations.</p> <p>With the recent restrictions imposed on activities due to the pandemic, many of our planned expos, industry tours, work placements and work-ready engagement activities have either been cancelled, postponed, or been moved to an online delivery. Students and schools' staff are fatigued with only having online access to career pathway information and virtual experiences, and many young people are struggling with social connectedness as they emerge from the extended lockdowns. Assisting with the building of young people's confidence, resilience and social cohesion is going to be a major focus for the coming year or so.</p>	<p>Youth disengagement from employment and education has also been identified as an issue for consideration under the Strategy.</p> <p>Additional COVID support and management will also be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>young people to find further opportunities to find meaningful work and/or education.</p> <p>A number of objectives to strengthen access to and service offerings by libraries have also been included in the Action Plan, as well as the action item 'Facilitate partnerships between industry, education, and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiatives' for financial year 2022 – 23.</p>
24.	<p>Like most businesses, the last 18 months have been really hard financially. We are now facing the challenges that come with re opening to fully vaccinated customers only and the uncertainty of staying open.</p>	<p>Noted; additional COVID support and management will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>Impacts to business continuity, education sector and workforce planning from COVID-19 have been reflected strongly in the Strong Local Economy Strategy. Opportunities for the future of work have also been highlighted.</p>
<p><i>What do you see as the key opportunities facing the City of Whittlesea? Why?</i></p>			
25.	<p>Look at what is missing? Some areas have been abandoned and area in need of revitalisation.</p> <p>We can look to access Federal and State government money for infrastructure and revitalisation. Look to provide</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>A Business Innovation and Enterprise Officer has recently been appointed</p>	<p>Growth and innovation opportunities for existing businesses (as well as attracting investment from new businesses) have been reflected more strongly in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan under Key Direction 3:</p>

	<p>entrepreneurs assistance in getting started and for them to stay here for at least 1 year. Everyone has a role to play. It is a collective responsibility. Look to get experts together (e.g., marketing and business leaders) to provide some mentoring and networking opportunities for newer entrepreneurs in need of guidance. Conduct a review of streets and parks to improve liveability – Look into sustainable transport solutions. “Thinking of a good father” – an Italian saying that roughly translates for making the best decision for the common good / best interest of others.</p>	<p>within Economic Development to investigate incentives and programs to promote and aid start-ups and business innovation. Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>	<p>Strong, Innovative Local Businesses. Changes have been made to further reflect existing businesses and precinct revitalisation. ‘Deliver and facilitate program of business training, networking and events’ is also an action item which has been included in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan.</p>
26.	<p>Finding the opportunity to market and promote what is already here.</p>	<p>Noted. A Visitor Economy Plan is a priority action for Economic Development in financial year 22 – 23 and will be included in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>The development of a Destination Plan (an action item in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan) will aim to promote and attract investment to support growth in the visitor economy. A number of action items to showcase and promote local products have been reflected in the Action Plan, including ‘Support the Whittlesea Community Farm and Food Collective’, ‘Promote the “support local” campaign to support community and local businesses’, and ‘Develop an Agri-Food Plan’.</p>
27.	<p>City of Whittlesea as an innovative food hub – research, export, and recycling in food. Look into advocacy around food.</p>	<p>Noted. An Agriculture and Food Plan is a priority action for Economic Development in financial year 22 – 23 and will be included in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>Several action items have been included in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan to support new and existing local agriculture businesses and promote research and innovation in the food sector. These action items include ‘Support sustainable local agribusiness’, ‘Support the Whittlesea Community</p>

			Farm and Food Collective’, and ‘Develop an Agri-Food Plan’ for financial year 2022 – 23.
28.	Resources not being utilised. Don’t leave areas to be abandoned – revitalisation – important opportunity. Council or State or Fed funding opportunities. Responsibilities – understand the impact of decision making on the economy. The importance of time. Sense of urgency in business. Experts in business and marketing – capacity building.	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Growth and innovation opportunities for existing businesses (as well as attracting investment from new businesses) have been reflected more strongly in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan under Key Direction 3: Strong, Innovative Local Businesses. Changes have been made to further reflect existing businesses and precinct revitalisation.
29.	Market, promote and sell what is here in the City of Whittlesea. What is being done.	Noted. A Visitor Economy Plan is a priority action for Economic Development in financial year 22 – 23 and will be included in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The development of a Destination Plan (an action item in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan) will aim to promote and attract investment to support growth in the visitor economy. A number of action items to showcase and promote local products have been reflected in the Action Plan, including ‘Support the Whittlesea Community Farm and Food Collective’, ‘Promote the “support local” campaign to support community and local businesses’, and ‘Develop an Agri-Food Plan’.
30.	Positioning Melbourne’s north as a food hub. Waste. Waste to energy. Food manufacturing. Exporters. Research, recycling, export.	Noted. An Agriculture and Food Plan is a priority action for Economic Development in financial year 22 – 23 and will be included in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Several action items have been included in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan to support new and existing local agriculture businesses and promote research and innovation in the food sector. These action items include ‘Support sustainable local agribusiness’,

			<p>‘Support the Whittlesea Community Farm and Food Collective’, and ‘Develop an Agri-Food Plan’ for financial year 2022 – 23.</p> <p>Environmental programs will be captured through the development of a Circular Economy Plan and Council’s future Sustainable Environment strategy.</p>
31.	Visiting friends and relatives. How can we leverage off that?	Noted. A Visitor Economy Plan is a priority action for Economic Development in financial year 22 – 23 and will be included in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The development of a Destination Plan (an action item in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan) will aim to promote and attract investment to support growth in the visitor economy.
32.	Shopping tour operators – cellar door sales.	Noted. A Visitor Economy Plan is a priority action for Economic Development in financial year 22 – 23 and will be included in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The development of a Destination Plan (an action item in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan) will aim to promote and attract investment to support growth in the visitor economy. ‘Promote the “support local” campaign to support community and local businesses’ is an Action Plan item which will explore opportunities to bolster business for local producers.
33.	Students. A big one for Polytechnic. The entrepreneur has changed during COVID – discussion on how to support the new entrepreneur. May need to rethink what MPs approach is for start-up and innovation in post-covid recovery. What does that look like for the food and kitchen incubator and does the training look different?	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	COVID-19 impacts on the future of work and education—both challenges and opportunities arising—have been better reflected in the Strategy.

34.	Planning approvals – encourage business owners and operators to meet with Council and discuss the initiative – what might be fast tracked. Prioritised assessment and approvals	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Enhancement of our planning support and planning assessment levels is an ongoing priority throughout Council. Council continues to advocate and work toward more efficient planning approvals and outcomes, and will more specifically reflect this in the Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy.
35.	In the new evolving recycling economy, there could be great advantages utilising existing business's equipment or adding to current production systems. Thus, expanding operations, increasing worker participation, and growing the community involvement. i.e., a recycling depot for specific goods (Council supplying factory recycle operations).	<p>Noted. A Circular Economy Plan is a priority action for Economic Development in financial year 22 – 23 and will be included in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>City of Whittlesea also recently adopting the Rethinking Waste Plan which details Council commitments to increase recycling operations and minimise landfill waste.</p>	<p>Council have committed to developing a Circular Economy Plan, which aims to equip the municipality for the transition to the circular economy.</p> <p>Further environmental programs (including implementation) will be captured through the development of the Circular Economy Plan as well as Council's future Sustainable Environment strategy.</p>
36.	O'Herns Road opening up to the North of their Site to take the pressure off Cooper Street getting to Sydney Road. Linking cycle trail to O'Herns entrance to their site.	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>	Noted. Issues surrounding transport connections and infrastructure have been reflected in the final Strategy and will be further explored in the Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy as well as the Community Infrastructure Strategy.
37.	Strong opportunities, being an essential service sale have grown. Consistently picking up new business	Noted.	Noted – strengths and further growth opportunities have been identified in the Strong Local Economy Strategy.

	Location is ideal for their premises, with a good base of factory workers		
38.	Greenfields and brownfields sites that could underpin development opportunities Strength in location, key industries e.g., food and beverage manufacturing	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Noted – strengths and further growth opportunities have been identified in the Strong Local Economy Strategy. Actions arising from the Investment Attraction Plan to promote business growth and incentivise investment have been reflected in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan, which will accompany the Strategy.
39.	The opportunities are constantly growing as the City develops and grows. There are more businesses being set up north of the market all the time. The market offers a central location for the supply, sale and distribution of fresh produce and flowers. There are opportunities to further develop this site.	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Noted – strengths and further growth opportunities have been identified in the Strong Local Economy Strategy. Opportunities for further development and investment attraction have been laid out in the Action Plan.
40.	As farmers the opportunities for farmers are decreasing. An opportunity to sell produce directly to customers to value add our product.	The City of Whittlesea is currently developing the Green Wedge Management Plan which will address opportunities for supporting farming and rural land uses. Other concerns will be noted for consideration in the Strong Local Economy Strategy. Note also that a Visitor Economy Plan and an Agriculture and Food Plan are priority actions for Economic Development in financial year 22 – 23 and will be included in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Actions have been included in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan to support the longevity of our agricultural sector, including ‘Support sustainable local agribusiness’. The development of a Destination Plan (an action item in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan) will aim to promote and attract investment to support growth in the visitor economy. ‘Promote the “support local” campaign to support community and local businesses’ is an Action Plan item which will explore opportunities to bolster business for local producers.

<p>41.</p>	<p>Selling our honey to the local community is a prime strategy (selling at pop stalls, markets and through community cafes and restaurants). Offering our pollinating services to agricultural industry is another opportunity in the City of Whittlesea.</p>	<p>The City of Whittlesea is currently developing the Green Wedge Management Plan which will address opportunities for supporting farming and rural land uses. Other concerns will be noted for consideration in the Strong Local Economy Strategy.</p> <p>Note also that a Visitor Economy Plan and an Agriculture and Food Plan are priority actions for Economic Development in financial year 22 – 23 and will be included in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>The Strategy aims to ensure our economy has a diverse and sustainable base that fosters small business development.</p> <p>Actions arising include strengthen business to business connections, support sustainable local agribusiness, development of a Destination Plan and the delivery of a “support local” campaign to support community and local businesses.</p>
<p>42.</p>	<p>Excellent due to the diversity of industry and high-level population growth in the area</p>	<p>Noted.</p>	<p>Noted. Through the development and implementation of the Investment Attraction Communications Framework, the municipalities strengths and opportunities will be promoted.</p>
<p>43.</p>	<p>Opportunities are there for peripheral professional services to support the existing large business precincts such as the Northern Hospital and other health centred areas such as in Bundoora, Melbourne Market and major retail and education hubs etc. Advanced manufacturing, food processing, digital and green economy are all possibilities. Construction is a major area of employment and the production of building products for a green, circular economy has potential, and looking at the application of similar skill sets to comparable industries such as the caravan or boat building industry could benefit from better promotion and understanding. There is great potential for growth in agri-business with the blend of rural and urban businesses, the location of major transport</p>	<p>Noted; these points will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Note also that a Circular Economy Plan, Visitor Economy Plan and Agriculture and Food Plan are priority actions for Economic Development in financial year 22 – 23 and will be included in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>Through the development and implementation of the Investment Attraction Communications Framework, the municipalities strengths and opportunities will be promoted to attract investment that will provide more local jobs to match population growth.</p> <p>Furthermore, the development of a Destination and Agri-Food Plan will aim to our economy to have a diverse and</p>

	hubs, research and development, and agriculturally based tourism. The visitor economy has started to develop but is generally untapped in a number of natural environments throughout the municipality, and creative industries could be further supported, developed, and promoted reflecting the strong diversity and richness of various cultural groups.		sustainable base that fosters small business development.
44.	I feel there are too many roadblocks for Business in respect to getting approval from Council for new projects that businesses propose.	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The Action plan highlights the opportunity to support business permit approvals through our Business Concierge program.
<i>What do you think are the issues for employment in the City of Whittlesea LGA?</i>			
45.	Lack of amenity. Large industrial areas with little in the way of social gathering places.	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan. Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.	Actions arising aim to ensure our community has sustainable and vibrant business precincts valued by the community through actively participating and advocating for the development and implementation of key activity centres and employment precincts. Council’s current Design Guidelines encourage developments to ensure precincts and premises are attractive and retain a level of amenity in line with the surrounds. Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.
46.	Not much turnover of perm staff, do struggle with the skill set when trying to get casual workforce but thinks this could an industry issue rather than a City of Whittlesea issue.	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The Strong Local Economy Strategy action plan will seek to strengthen relationship between education and

			industry. In particular, we will ‘Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support service’ and ‘Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiatives’ to ensure our workforce has skill matched to industry needs both now and into the future.
47.	Local laws officers are a bit silly sometimes, over the top with visitors to their premises if they cannot find a park, they are quick to issue a ticket once their own parking is taken. Lipton Drive workers park in their street and taken up space for workers from Heatherbrae	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan. This has also been brought to the attention of Local Laws and Building & Planning units in financial year 21 – 22.	Economic Development will continue to work with internal colleagues to ensure our business community is supported.
48.	Finding enough jobs for the large and growing population	Noted; this has been identified as a priority objective and will be included in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The Investment Attraction Plan recognises the importance to attract new and retain businesses in the municipality. The Strong Local Economy Strategy action plan will seek to strengthen relationship between education and industry. In particular we will ‘Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support service’ and ‘Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiatives’ to ensure our workforce has skill matched to industry needs both now and into the future.

49.	Finding the right employees for any role in the business. There is much comment on the lack of suitable labour for picking fruit and vegetable crops. The reasons that this occurring is many and complex but so are the lack of jobs for sections of the community. We have employed a young person with no skills or qualifications, provided training and financial incentive only to have him resign. No reason given but it seems it is easier to be on the dole.	Noted; skill matching, employee upskilling and lifelong learning have been identified as priority objectives for the Strong Local Economy Strategy and will be included in the Strategy. Youth disengagement from employment and education has also been identified as an issue for consideration under the Strategy.	The Strong Local Economy Strategy action plan will seek to strengthen relationship between education and industry. In particular we will 'Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support service' and 'Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiatives' to ensure our workforce has skill matched to industry needs both now and into the future.
50.	It's very hard to find experienced farm staff as this is no longer a farming community.	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The Strong Local Economy Strategy action plan will seek to strengthen relationship between education and industry. In particular, we will 'Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support service' and 'Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiatives' to ensure our workforce has skill matched to industry needs both now and into the future.
51.	I don't have enough knowledge to answer this question. Perhaps creating better definition of what the City of Whittlesea wants to be known for may go a long way in resolving such challenges.	Noted.	Noted. Through the development and implementation of the Investment Attraction Communications Framework, the municipalities strengths and opportunities will be promoted.
52.	low level of English skills / poor level of bus service connecting to Campbellfield areas	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Education for all is a key direction of the Strong Local Economy Strategy.

			<p>Actions arising aim to ensure our community use libraries to learn and develop and that our workforce has skills matched to industry needs now and into the future.</p> <p>Additional supporting commitments also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>
<p>53.</p>	<p>Residential growth through the northern suburbs of the municipality needs further employment options and diversity. Lack of efficient and reliable public transport networks within the City of Whittlesea continues to be an accessibility issue particularly for young people and this has a negative impact on all those who are at risk of unemployment. There is also a perception that public transport is unsafe. The main public transport routes - trains and trams - lead the residents directly away from the LGA towards the city - thus many people possibly find employment either in the CBD or within easy access of those routes more desirable.</p> <p>If there are less jobs than residents within the City of Whittlesea, then clearly the need for more employment options is necessary - and that needs to include a range of skilled and entry level options. There is a need for more skilled workers in various industries and an opportunity for a better understanding of that need through shared data, future skills information, and promotions within education settings to help elevate awareness, interest and understanding of the benefits associated with industry sectors. Greater investment from Federal and State Government could provide better incentives for innovative approaches and improved engagement</p>	<p>Noted; skill matching, employee upskilling and lifelong learning have been identified as priority objectives for the Strong Local Economy Strategy and will be included in the Strategy.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>	<p>The Strategy highlights the importance of our municipality to attract investment to provide more local jobs to match population growth.</p> <p>Investment Attraction Plan will aim to increase the number and diversity of employment opportunities for our community now and into the future.</p> <p>Additional actions arising aim to ensure that our workforce has skills matched to industry needs now and into the future and support our businesses to innovate and thrive by adapting to technology and the circular economy.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>

	between business opportunities, residents, and education facilities.		
54.	For our business in the town of Whittlesea the main issue is distance people need to travel and lack of public transport.	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>	<p>Actions arising aim to ensure our community has sustainable and vibrant business precincts valued by the community through actively participating and advocating for the development and implementation of key activity centres and employment precincts.</p> <p>We have consulted broadly across City of Whittlesea Council departments to understand the impacts of our public transport and road infrastructure on economic participation and equity in employment. These findings are reflected in our objectives and actions surrounding advocacy for increased public transport and road spending, and improved linkages and connectivity between residential and employment hubs.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>
55.	Important to keep local economy with local jobs, it also becomes a risk that people will choose to move away to areas where there are jobs if you can't	Noted; this has been identified as a priority objective and will be included in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The Strategy highlights the importance of our municipality to attract investment to provide more local jobs to match population growth.

			Actions arising from the Investment attraction Plan will aim to increase the number and diversity of employment opportunities for our community now and into the future.
56.	Need more jobs	Noted; this has been identified as a priority objective and will be included in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	<p>The Strategy highlights the importance of our municipality to attract investment to provide more local jobs to match population growth.</p> <p>Actions arising from the Investment attraction Plan will aim to increase the number and diversity of employment opportunities for our community now and into the future.</p>
57.	Any development needs to be sustainable	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Actions arising aim to ensure our community has sustainable and vibrant business precincts valued by the community through actively participating and advocating for the development and implementation of key activity centres and employment precincts.
58.	Public transport is a big issue, particularly for the early starting roles and for locations further in the north, not all job seekers drive, particularly the younger ones	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>	Actions arising aim to ensure our community has sustainable and vibrant business precincts valued by the community through actively participating and advocating for the development and implementation of key activity centres and employment precincts.

			<p>We have consulted broadly across City of Whittlesea Council departments to understand the impacts of our public transport on economic participation and equity in employment particularly for target disadvantaged populations including youth. These findings are reflected in our objectives and actions surrounding advocacy for improved linkages and connectivity between residential and employment hubs.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>
59.	Businesses and their staff need to be adaptable and able to react quickly to influences outside their control, they would appreciate assistance to be able to adapt quickly	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	<p>The Strategy identifies the opportunity to take a coordinated approach and encourage businesses and education providers collaborate to develop locally required skills.</p> <p>Actions arising from the Strategy include ‘Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiative’; ‘Support the delivery of the Jobs Advocates program’ and ‘Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support service’.</p>
60.	Connection is important, to be aspirational, young people need to have a broad vision and a broad understanding of what’s possible, what are the opportunities and how do they get there	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	<p>The Strategy identifies the opportunity to take a coordinated approach and encourage businesses and education providers collaborate to develop locally</p>

			required skills. Actions arising from the Strategy include 'Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiative'; 'Support the delivery of the Jobs Advocates program' and 'Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support service'.
61.	Lack of access to a car significantly restricts job opportunities	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan. Note also that infrastructure for public and active transport will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.	Actions arising aim to ensure our community has sustainable and vibrant business precincts valued by the community through actively participating and advocating for the development and implementation of key activity centres and employment precincts. Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.
62.	Many existing businesses from multi-cultural communities and these businesses might need support on how they can increase local job opportunities	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The Strategy highlights the opportunity for businesses and education providers to collaborate to develop locally required skills.
63.	Is there a need for a centralised job advertisement service (as some local businesses currently advertise for jobs on Facebook)	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Council is currently engaged and will actively promote the Melbourne's North job link, where businesses and local residents can upload and find jobs in their local area.
64.	Farming and Agri/food jobs are hoping to be able to find people with some experience in that industry so with an	The City of Whittlesea is currently developing the Green Wedge	The City of Whittlesea is currently developing the Green Wedge

	<p>understanding of the conditions as not everyone copes with the lifestyle and unusual hours, also, there tends to be an itinerant workforce</p>	<p>Management Plan which will address opportunities for supporting farming and rural land uses. Other concerns will be noted for consideration in the Strong Local Economy Strategy.</p> <p>Note also that a Visitor Economy Plan and an Agriculture and Food Plan are priority actions for Economic Development in financial year 22 – 23 and will be included in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>Management Plan which will address opportunities for supporting farming and rural land uses.</p> <p>The Strategy highlights the opportunity to support our businesses to innovate and thrive by adapting to technology and the circular economy.</p> <p>The Action plan highlights the opportunity for council to progress the Whittlesea Community Farm and Food Collective; Develop an Agri-Food action plan and support sustainable local agribusiness.</p>
65.	<p>Issues of high turnover and lost IP/time taken in recruitment process for farming work</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>The Strategy highlights the opportunity to support our businesses to innovate and thrive by adapting to technology and the circular economy.</p> <p>The Action plan highlights the opportunity for council to progress the Whittlesea Community Farm and Food Collective; Develop and Agri-Food action plan and support sustainable local agribusiness.</p>
66.	<p>Tough hours/conditions in some of the food processing jobs, largely unskilled workforce</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>The Strategy highlights the opportunity for businesses and education providers collaborate to develop locally required skills, and Facilitate partnerships between industry, education, and job</p>

			seekers through the Local Jobs Initiatives.
67.	Cost pressures placed by the large supermarket chains will potentially leading to automation of processes and subsequent reduction of jobs	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The Strategy highlights the opportunity for businesses and education providers to collaborate to develop locally required skills.
68.	The challenge in the food industry of just how quickly you need to be able to react if there is a problem	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	<p>Council will continue to engage with food businesses through its own engagement and the Melbourne’s North Food Group to understand the needs and issues facing the business and/or sector.</p> <p>The Strategy highlights the opportunity for businesses and education providers collaborate to develop locally required skills.</p>
69.	Problems from poor internet coverage and reliability, the rapid growth of the area has seen a significant decrease in service quality, even with a provider like Telstra	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>	<p>The Action Plan highlights the commitment to actively advocate and participate for the delivery of improved NBN and mobile infrastructure.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>
70.	Supply chain challenges caused by COVID	Noted; additional COVID support and management will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The Strategy highlights the opportunity to ensure our economy has a diverse and sustainable base that fosters small business development through the action to strengthen business to business connections.

71.	Food businesses don't have long to react when they have a problem	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	<p>Council will continue to engage with food businesses through its own engagement and the Melbourne's North Food Group to understand the needs and issues facing the business and/or sector.</p> <p>The Strategy highlights the opportunity for businesses and education providers collaborate to develop locally required skills.</p>
72.	COVID safe – will people still follow the rules as we start to open up?	Noted; additional COVID support and management will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Council has received additional funding the COVID Business Support Officer roles. Two officers will continue to visit local businesses to educate and inform of changes to covid restrictions.
73.	Extra resources are needed to monitor all of the COVID rules and that can be challenging if you have a 24-hour business like Kapiris Bros	Noted; additional COVID support and management will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	<p>Council has received additional funding the COVID Business Support Officer roles. Two officers will continue to visit local businesses to educate and inform of changes to covid restrictions.</p> <p>Furthermore, the action plan highlights the opportunity to support employment needs through facilitating partnerships between industry, education, and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiatives.</p>
<i>What do you think are the opportunities for employment in the City of Whittlesea LGA?</i>			
74.	New emerging technologies, adaptation of many existing businesses to opportunities in recycling, expanding more manufacturing and less warehouses for imported goods. Made in Australia could be Made in Whittlesea, Melbourne.	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Noted. Through the development and implementation of the Investment Attraction Communications Framework,

			<p>the municipalities strengths and opportunities will be promoted.</p> <p>The Strategy further highlights the importance to support our businesses to innovate and thrive by adapting to technology and the circular economy.</p>
75.	Population size is a positive	Noted.	Noted. Through the development and implementation of the Investment Attraction Communications Framework, the municipalities strengths and opportunities will be promoted.
76.	Good supply of staff in the factory workforce. Easy access for people with Ring Road and Hume Freeway.	Noted.	Noted. Through the development and implementation of the Investment Attraction Communications Framework, the municipalities strengths and opportunities will be promoted.
77.	<p>Growing industries such as food and beverage manufacturing, construction, transport and logistics and health and community services.</p> <p>Increased focus on sovereign capability will help advanced manufacturing.</p>	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Noted. Through the development and implementation of the Investment Attraction Communications Framework, the municipalities strengths and opportunities will be promoted.
78.	There must be many opportunities if only the supply and demand could be linked in some way.	Noted.	The Strategy highlights the opportunity to ensure our economy has a diverse and sustainable base that fosters small business development through the action to strengthen business to business connections.
79.	There seems to be a lot of opportunity for tradespeople as Whittlesea is building so much infrastructure and housing.	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The Strategy highlights the opportunity to ensure our economy has a diverse and sustainable base that fosters small business development through the

			action to strengthen business to business connections.
80.	<p>Creating incentives for local businesses to hire local population. This may include subsidies, grants, etc. Another strategy is that the City of Whittlesea's becomes a best in class in a certain sector - attracting new investments and growth opportunities.</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>A Business Innovation and Enterprise Officer has recently been appointed within Economic Development to investigate incentives and programs to promote and aid start-ups and business innovation.</p> <p>City of Whittlesea recently adopted the Investment Attraction Plan, which will be actioned as a priority activity under the Strong Local Economy Strategy.</p>	<p>Actions arising from the Investment Attraction Plan and highlighted in the Strategy capture the opportunity launch a Council grants and incentives package for business attraction and support and through the development and implementation of the Investment Attraction Communications Framework, the municipalities strengths and opportunities will be promoted.</p>
81.	<p>great...with improved public transport options</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>The Strategy captures the importance to ensure our community has sustainable and vibrant business precincts valued by the community through current and future advocacy efforts.</p> <p>We have consulted broadly across City of Whittlesea Council departments to understand the impacts of our public transport on economic participation and equity in employment particularly for target disadvantaged populations. These findings are reflected in our objectives and actions surrounding</p>

			advocacy for improved linkages and connectivity between residential and employment hubs.
82.	A range of opportunities are required from entry level through to higher skilled and professional level in a diverse range of employment fields. Construction, retail, beauty services and hospitality have become a major area of employment interest for young people as noted in the VETDSS and Structured Workplace Learning data for Whittlesea. However, further opportunities need to be encouraged in job growth areas such as health, engineering, civil construction, IT and freight and logistics.	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The Strategy identifies the opportunity to take a coordinated approach and encourage businesses and education providers collaborate to develop locally required skills. Actions arising from the Strategy include 'Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiative'; 'Support the delivery of the Jobs Advocates program' and 'Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support service'.
83.	I'm really not sure, the majority of our 180 Casual employees come from City of Whittlesea.	Noted.	Noted.
84.	Significance of the food/agriculture sector	Noted. An Agriculture and Food Plan is a priority action for Economic Development in financial year 22 – 23 and will be included in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Council continues to prioritise its support to the agricultural sector. Action arising in the Action Plan is the development of the Agri-Food Plan to identify further opportunities.
85.	Given the high proportion of rural land in the municipality, we're not making the most of that	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The development of the Agri-Food Plan will aim to identify such opportunities. Currently Council is committed to supporting the agricultural sector.
86.	With proximity to the wholesale market, Melbourne airport, the Hume Hwy and Melbourne, plus tertiary institutions, there's an opportunity for research in the agri-business sector	Noted. An Agriculture and Food Plan is a priority action for Economic Development in financial year 22 – 23 and will be included in the Strong	Council is currently advocating or the development of the Melbourne Food Innovation and Export. In addition, the Strategy action plan highlights the

		Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	development of the Agri-Food Plan in year one.
87.	Significance of the rural land in the north, along with its history provides an opportunity for Agri-tourism	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The Action plan commits to the development of a Destination Plan which will encompass Agri-tourism.
88.	There are a number of employment services operating in Whittlesea as well as state and federally based employment services, need to coordinate to make sure that the services work together and don't duplicate or compete for the same outcomes	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan. A Business Innovation and Enterprise Officer has recently been appointed within Economic Development to investigate incentives and programs to promote and aid start-ups and business innovation. Council's potential role in facilitating or supporting job matching and employment services is being explored.	The Strategy identifies the opportunity to take a coordinated approach. Actions arising from the Strategy include 'Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiative'; 'Support the delivery of the Jobs Advocates program' and 'Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support service'.
89.	Job seekers are keen to be able to find local jobs	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The current Job Advocates program offers opportunities for job seekers to connect and engage with relevant providers. Furthermore, through the Strong Local Economy action plan, Council seeks to facilitate partnerships between industry, education, and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiatives.
90.	Can Council play a part in helping businesses match up opportunities with job seekers?	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Council can and will facilitate connections between various stakeholders into the future to promote employment opportunities and local collaboration.

		A Business Innovation and Enterprise Officer has recently been appointed within Economic Development to investigate incentives and programs to promote and aid start-ups and business innovation. Council's potential role in facilitating or supporting job matching and employment services is being explored.	Actions arising from the Strategy include 'Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiative'; 'Support the delivery of the Jobs Advocates program' and 'Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support service'.
91.	Hume example of engaging with the multi-cultural communities via networking events and awards, giving people the sense of belonging to the local community	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan. Note also that this will be a consideration for future plans including the Connected Communities Plan.	Networking events and award recognition is currently in place through Council's participation to the Northern Business Achievement Awards and Community Awards. The development of the Small and Microbusiness Network is currently in progress.
92.	The group seemed quite receptive to the idea of a chamber of commerce being set up	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Noted. Economic Development will seek to establish a Small and Micro Business Network in the 2021/2022 financial year, with delivery of the program and membership to continue into following financial years.
93.	Interest in being able to utilise local suppliers to reduce risk in the supply chain and have a local network, be able to find out what local manufacturers are available	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	A Community wealth Building approach to economic development was highlighted as an opportunity for Council to explore and adapt to.
94.	The group was interested to hear re Whittlesea Localised	Noted.	The Whittlesea Localised platform will continue to be made available to the business community to encourage business-to-business connections.

95.	COVID has seen an emergence of new community leaders, many of whom are young and female and who stood up in the crisis. We should provide further training opportunities for them	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	<p>Councils recently endorsed its Community Leadership Program is an opportunity for community members to develop their leadership skills.</p> <p>With regards to training and employment, the action plan acknowledges the opportunities to Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training, and support services to ensure our community has access to employment, training, and career advisory services.</p>
96.	Larger retailers i.e., Big W to assist with work opportunities. Too many small businesses and no more than 2 employees	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The Strong Local Economy Strategy action plan will seek to strengthen relationship between education and industry. We will Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support services and Facilitate partnerships between industry, education, and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiatives to ensure our workforce has skill matched to industry needs both now and into the future.
<i>What is your view on the City of Whittlesea as a place for education? What are the strengths?</i>			
97.	Do not know the current facilities.	Noted.	Noted. Through the development and implementation of the Investment Attraction Communications Framework, the municipalities strengths and opportunities will be promoted.

98.	La Trobe Uni have previously had conversations about placements into their workforce but COVID did stall those conversations. It would be good to be more connected to education providers.	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Education for all is a key direction of the Strong Local Economy Strategy. Actions arising from the Strategy include 'Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiative'; 'Support the delivery of the Jobs Advocates program' and 'Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support service'.
99.	Links with RMIT, use their service for Food Tech Interns - 3 month contracts La Trobe Uni Interns	Noted.	Education for all is a key direction of the Strong Local Economy Strategy. We will 'Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support service' and 'Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiatives' to ensure our workforce has skills matched to industry needs both now and into the future.
100.	Close to La Trobe and RMIT Universities and Melbourne Polytechnic; on tram/train routes for further education opportunities	Noted.	Noted. Through the development and implementation of the Investment Attraction Communications Framework, the municipalities strengths and opportunities will be promoted.
101.	There are good train networks in the southern section of the City so this would facilitate student government.	Noted.	Noted. Through the development and implementation of the Investment Attraction Communications Framework, the municipalities strengths and opportunities will be promoted.
102.	I would say that the City of Whittlesea is not renowned for quality education. There are many primary schools.	Noted.	Noted. Through the development and implementation of the Investment

			Attraction Communications Framework, the municipalities strengths and opportunities will be promoted.
103.	I don't know enough too much about this subject. Given its geographical location it may prove to be a potential outer metro hub for tertiary education and/or specialised education/training).	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Noted. Through the development and implementation of the Investment Attraction Communications Framework, the municipalities strengths and opportunities will be promoted. In addition, an action arising in the Strong Local Economy action plan is to ensure City of Whittlesea actively participate and advocate for the development and implementation of key activity centres and employment precincts including Plenty Valley activity centre, MAC, and Epping Central structure plan, which includes access to education.
104.	Excellent....due to a young demographic cohort as well as a wide range of industries offering regular employment to local community	Noted.	Noted. Through the development and implementation of the Investment Attraction Communications Framework, the municipalities strengths and opportunities will be promoted.
105.	There is reasonable access to educational institutions - including schools (all sectors), TAFEs and Universities. These institutions provide a diverse range of courses, qualifications, and pathways. Schools are well connected through their various networks including Whittlesea Careers Development Network, Northern Melbourne VET Cluster, Northern VCAL and SBAT Networks. The HWLLEN provides support for staff and schools with career awareness and options through a wide range of programs, projects, and events. The Whittlesea	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan. Skill matching, professional development and lifelong learning have been identified as priority objectives for the Strong Local	Education for all is a key direction of the Strong Local Economy Strategy. Actions arising include 'Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support service' and 'Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiatives' to ensure our workforce has skills matched

	<p>Tech School plays a significant role in providing professional development opportunities for school staff, innovative programs for young people, and as a connector for community groups and businesses as an innovation hub. There is great potential for the education and business community to intersect on many levels, whether that be through R&D, professional development, short courses, re-engaging with training, upskilling, or re-training for different careers.</p>	<p>Economy Strategy and will be included in the Strategy.</p>	<p>to industry needs both now and into the future.</p>
106.	<p>I feel there are many schools/colleges within the City of Whittlesea so that in itself is a strength.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>	<p>Noted. Through the development and implementation of the Investment Attraction Communications Framework, the municipalities strengths and opportunities will be promoted.</p>
107.	<p>There is currently a good network of employers who are willing to give young people an opportunity</p>	<p>Noted.</p>	<p>Noted. The Action Plan highlights the need to continue to Facilitate partnerships between industry, education, and job seekers to ensure our workforce has skill matched to industry needs both now and into the future.</p>
108.	<p>Need to look ahead to how we regain the social connection that has been lost during COVID, particularly for young people</p>	<p>Noted; additional COVID support and management will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>Education for all is a key direction of the Strong Local Economy Strategy.</p> <p>We will ‘Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support service’ and ‘Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiatives’ to ensure our workforce has skills matched to industry needs both now and into the future.</p>

			Social connection will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.
What is your view on the City of Whittlesea as a place for education? What are the weaknesses?			
109.	It is easier to have employer driven education to meet the needs of existing and expanding businesses. Do not forget there are a lot of retired or near retired skilled workers in Whittlesea that could be invaluable to existing businesses. Their experiences together with a focused and driven employer could easily lead to expansion and adapt to opportunities in the post Covid 19 environment.	Noted; skill matching, employee upskilling and lifelong learning have been identified as priority objectives for the Strong Local Economy Strategy and will be included in the Strategy.	Ensuring our workforce has skills matched to industry needs both now and into the future is highlighted in the Strategy.
110.	Not sure what is available. Gap between education providers and businesses	Noted.	Education for all is a key direction of the Strategy. Actions have been highlighted in the Year One action plan, in particular: 'Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support service' and 'Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiatives'.
111.	Quality of these interns can vary Some people don't want to work, not interested in working but that is a population issue not just City of Whittlesea	Noted.	Education for all is a key direction of the Strategy. Actions to Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support services and the Business Advisory Panel will aim to strengthen student placements and employment outcomes.
112.	Transport connections to education institutions from all points on municipality Could be a bigger variety of schools, particularly private schools for a diverse population	Noted.	Actions arising aim to ensure our community has sustainable and vibrant business precincts valued by the community through actively

			<p>participating and advocating for the development and implementation of key activity centres and employment precincts.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>
113.	<p>Schools in the newer development are huge and probably too big. Infrastructure and roads around them need to be planned for and constructed at the same time as the buildings are erected.</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>	<p>Actions arising aim to ensure our community has sustainable and vibrant business precincts valued by the community through actively participating and advocating for the development and implementation of key activity centres and employment precincts.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>
114.	<p>Going forward, more secondary, and tertiary education choice should be addressed. A tech business</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>Actions arising aim to ensure our community has sustainable and vibrant business precincts valued by the community through actively participating and advocating for the development and implementation of key activity centres and employment precincts.</p>
115.	<p>see above....no weaknesses to report</p>	<p>Noted.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>

116.	As the growth corridors expand, further facilities are required to provide good access for all residents and workers to educational facilities. There is greater potential for linking industry needs with educational facilities for a range of purposes. Innovation hubs would assist with supports needed for the development of social enterprises and provide connectedness for greater collaboration.	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan. Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.	Actions arising aim to ensure our community has sustainable and vibrant business precincts valued by the community through actively participating and advocating for the development and implementation of key activity centres and employment precincts including Plenty Valley Activity Centre and Epping Central Structure Plan.
117.	I don't think City of Whittlesea would be thought of as a place for education any more or less than any other area. There isn't a reason for this perception.	Noted.	Actions arising from the Investment Attraction Plan aim to highlight key opportunities and successful business cases through the development of the Investment Attraction Framework.
118.	Are there opportunities for on-the-job training or free TAFE courses to provide job skills?	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Actions have been highlighted in the Year One action plan, in particular: 'Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support service' and 'Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiatives'.
119.	Difficult to find opportunities for student placements	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Education for all is a key direction of the Strategy. Actions to Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training and support services and the Business Advisory Panel will aim to strengthen student placements and employment outcomes.
120.	Schools, TAFEs and other education providers, businesses and community organisations need to work together	Noted.	Education for all is a key direction of the Strategy. The actions to facilitate

			partnerships Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiatives and the Business Advisory Panel will aim to strengthen employment outcomes.
121.	There's a need to connect education with employment outcomes (but acknowledging that may not be council's responsibility)	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan. Council is committed to linking education to employment outcomes within the municipality.	Education for all is a key direction of the Strategy. The actions to facilitate partnerships Facilitate partnerships between industry, education and job seekers through the Local Jobs Initiatives and the Business Advisory Panel will aim to strengthen employment outcomes.
122.	Can Council help to promote education opportunities for the community and help them find what's already out there? e.g., Whittlesea Tech community offering and the fact that it can be a connecting point for entrepreneurs	City of Whittlesea is exploring opportunities to connect more closely with education institutions to promote offerings. This will be also considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	Actions arising from the Investment Attraction Plan aim to highlight key opportunities and successful business cases through the development of the Investment Attraction Framework.
<i>Is there anything else you would like to add to this discussion?</i>			
123.	It is encouraging to see a proactive Local Council driving change in the community.	Noted.	Noted.
124.	Childcare facilities - what is available for employees to access? Predicts this could be a challenge for workforce as they return to office working. Can there be introductions/links to centres so employers can promote to employees?	Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	The Action Plan highlights the opportunity to strengthen business to business connections.
125.	No Happy with the services available to them as a business.	Noted.	Noted.

<p>126.</p>	<p>Transport congestion is a major issue as are gaps in public transport connections</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>	<p>We have consulted broadly across City of Whittlesea Council departments to understand the impacts of our public transport and road infrastructure on economic participation and equity in employment. These findings are reflected in our objectives and actions surrounding advocacy for increased public transport and road spending, and improved linkages and connectivity between residential and employment hubs.</p> <p>Actions arising from the Investment Attraction Plan to develop the Investment Attraction Communications Framework to promote the municipality as a destination for investment that will increase employment diversity and opportunities for our local community to reduce time spent travelling.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>
<p>127.</p>	<p>Transport within the City is limiting the ease of moving around. Edgars Road is being incrementally extended as development takes place around it rather than putting it in completely and then building around it.</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable</p>	<p>Actions arising aim to ensure our community has sustainable and vibrant business precincts valued by the community through actively participating and advocating for the development and implementation of</p>

		<p>Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>	<p>key activity centres and employment precincts.</p> <p>We have consulted broadly across City of Whittlesea Council departments to understand the impacts of our public transport and road infrastructure on economic participation and equity in employment. These findings are reflected in our objectives and actions surrounding advocacy for increased public transport and road spending, and improved linkages and connectivity between residential and employment hubs.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>
<p>128.</p>	<p>Traffic is a big problem. Outer ring road would help. As far as broad acre farming goes Whittlesea is very limited. Encouraging tech savvy companies is probably more appropriate. Imagine Whittlesea as a tech hub (think Silicone Valley). It is also lacking quality accommodation/dining to attract tourists (think Yarra Valley). Encouraging environmental programs. We would like to see Whittlesea working to net zero emissions. Being a leader. Cleverer recycling (see Mitchel shire for recovery centre, Wallan). Electric car recharge centres. etc.</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure commitments will also be a key focus of upcoming Liveable Neighbourhood and Connected Communities strategies.</p>	<p>We have consulted broadly across City of Whittlesea Council departments to understand the impacts of our public transport and road infrastructure on economic participation and equity in employment. These findings are reflected in our objectives and actions surrounding advocacy for increased public transport and road spending, and improved linkages and connectivity between residential and employment hubs.</p>

			<p>Actions arising from the Investment Attraction Plan to promote business growth and incentivise investment have been reflected in the Strong Local Economy Action Plan, which will accompany the Strategy.</p> <p>The development of a Destination Plan will aim to promote and attract investment to support growth in the visitor economy. Environmental programs will be captured through the development of a Circular Economy Plan and Council’s future Sustainable Environment strategy.</p>
129.	<p>Reiterate the need for the city to have a specialisation (e.g., best in class for green products, for organic Agri products, etc)</p>	Noted.	<p>The Action Plan identifies the development of an Agri-Food Action plan will aim to highlight such opportunities.</p>
130.	<p>We are interested in maintaining our strong link with Eco Dev to share local data and information which could provide schools with a better understanding of the future business strategy, and potential employment growth. This also includes creating deeper connections with industry and schools through particular projects and programs which strengthens the development of employability, entrepreneurial and technical skills and leads to local job pathways.</p>	Noted.	<p>Education for all is highlighted as Key direction #2 of the Strong Local economy Strategy. The Action Plan identifies the opportunity to Develop an Economic Participation Framework and Facilitate and support a coordinated employment, training, and support services.</p>
131.	<p>Equity and diversity and recognising the diversity of pathways that people come via. While they haven’t got all the skills just yet, they are capable of learning them.</p>	<p>Noted; this will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>Education for all is highlighted as Key direction #2 of the Strong Local economy Strategy. The Action Plan identifies the opportunity to Develop an Economic Participation Framework and Facilitate and support a coordinated</p>

			employment, training, and support services.
132.	The selections above are evidence of the COW's "current" direction's not choices as to "which" direction the Council should go by doing...ABC? Not great selection of Answers sorry	Noted; further comments and suggestions can be provided to our department email for consideration: business@whittlesea.vic.gov.au .	Noted. The Strong Local Economy Strategy is informed by the key priorities of Whittlesea 2040.
133.	<p>Focus on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Larger retailers to the area too employ more local's 2. Cap small business 3. Cap or evaluate the type of or number of businesses being opened as too many health advisors not enough skills or maintain their stay longer than their leases 4. Cap the amount of empty land needing to be built on 5. Focus more on cleaning up garden beds + maintaining them in the municipality. if council can't keep up put fake grass like Toorak+ Bentleigh areas have - less maintenance b/c Council doesn't keep up with this 6. Clean up Carome Homestead which is heritage listed. It would be such a beautiful tourist attraction, and which leads to the Plenty Gorge 7. Make more tracks in Plenty Gorge safer to walk in 	Noted; these suggestions will be considered for inclusion in the Strong Local Economy Strategy and Action Plan.	<p>The Strategy Action Plan aims support several key outcomes to support the economy we want, including attracting investment to provide more local jobs to match population growth, foster small business development and support sustainable and vibrant precincts valued by the community.</p> <p>Further improvements to amenities and local infrastructure will be explored as part of the Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy.</p> <p>We have consulted broadly across City of Whittlesea Council departments to understand the impacts of our infrastructure on economic participation and equity in employment. These findings are reflected in our objectives and actions surrounding advocacy for increased public and active transport spending.</p>