



Council Improvement Proposal

Becoming more Fit for the Future DRAFT

for public exhibition May 2015



Disclaimer: This is a draft document which has been prepared for public discussion purposes and does not necessarily indicate the position of Council. Council will endorse this proposal after consideration of all public submissions received and amendments have been made to address concerns where appropriate.

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Local Government Reform

What is Fit for the Future

The NSW Government has been working with local councils since 2011 to gather data and inputs focusing on reviewing local government to be sustainable into the future.

Over this period there has been an Independent Local Government Review Panel established to review the structure, form and performance of local government in NSW and the Local Government Acts Taskforce established to review the relevant legislation. Bega Valley Shire Council made submissions into both these processes. The State Government released their response to the findings of this three-year independent review of local government in September 2014. The response, branded Fit for the Future, incorporated: a package of funding; expert assistance; facilitators and technical support; and a range of documents and templates for councils to assess their 'fitness'.

Since the release of the response, the government has run a series of workshops and received further feedback. There are a number of considerations and discussions currently underway. These include merger discussions, development of shared service models, discussions relating to rural council models, and five pilot joint organisations of councils in regional NSW.

Councils need to demonstrate how they currently meet, or are working towards meeting, a number of benchmarks established by the State Government. These benchmarks have been based on the work of TCorp and the Independent Local Government Review Panel and have been reviewed by IPART. Bega Valley Shire Council has previously been assessed by TCorp as being rated as financially sustainable and performing in the top 10% of NSW councils.

There are four key criteria that form the framework under which the FftF model is being developed. These are:

Sustainability – generate sufficient funds over the long term to provide the agreed level and scope of services and infrastructure for communities as identified through the integrated planning and reporting (IPR) process.

Effective infrastructure and service management – maximise return on resources and minimise unnecessary burden on the community and business, while working strategically to leverage economies of scale and meet the needs of communities as identified in the IPR process.

Efficiency – efficient service and infrastructure delivery, achieving value for money for current and future ratepayers.

Scale and capacity – demonstrate strong organisational and regional capacity to mobilise resources to engage effectively across community, industry and government.

Step 1 Scale and capacity

REVIEW THE SITUATION – Do you have the right scale and capacity?

Each council has been asked to look at its current situation and consider the future needs of its community and the recommendations of the Independent Local Government Reform Panel.

The NSW Government have also provide a self-assessment tool to help guide councils assess their current status. The assessment tool aims to assist councils to get a clear picture of how they are performing in the areas of financial management, service delivery and scale of operations.

The key points highlighted by the guidance material that councils must address include:

- More robust revenue base and increased discretionary spending
- Scope to undertake new functions and major projects
- Ability to employ a wider range of skilled staff
- Knowledge, creativity and innovation
- Advanced skills in strategic planning and policy development
- Effective regional collaboration
- Credibility for more effective advocacy
- Capable partner for State and Federal agencies
- Resources to cope with complex and unexpected change
- High quality political and managerial leadership

The starting point for all FFtF proposals is therefore the Independent Panel's final report. For Bega Valley Shire the recommendation from the panel is **'NO CHANGE'** however a number of options have been discussed including realigning boundaries, and developing alternative service delivery models in co-operation with neighbouring Councils.

Step 2 Assessing performance against benchmarks and planning for the future

Once a council has determined they have suitable scale and capacity, the following seven key benchmarks have been established for councils to demonstrate how they are achieving the key benchmarks or working towards achieving them into the future. A council does not need to meet all benchmarks now to be determined FfF but they must develop a Council Improvement Proposal (CIP) to show how they will work towards meeting and continuing to meet them.

The seven benchmarks are:

1. SUSTAINABILITY Operating performance ratio – greater than or equal to break-even average over three years
2. SUSTAINABILITY Own source revenue ratio – greater than 60% average over three years
3. SUSTAINABILITY Building and infrastructure asset renewal ratio – greater than 100% average over three years
4. INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE MANAGEMENT Infrastructure backlog ratio less than 2%
5. INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE MANAGEMENT Asset maintenance ratio – greater than 100% over three years
6. INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE MANAGEMENT Debt service ratio – greater than 0% and less than or equal to 20% average over three years; and
7. EFFICIENCY Real operating expenditure per capita – a decrease in real operating expenditure per capita over time.

All NSW councils are required to comply with the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework. Bega Valley Shire Council has an adopted community strategic plan to 2030 developed with considerable community input supported by a Resourcing Strategy including asset, workforce and financial strategies and supported by an adopted long term financial plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Council has now completed a detailed review of its Resourcing Strategy. This has involved a detailed review of Council's:

- Financial Strategy
- Asset Management Strategy; and
- Workforce Strategy.

As part of the process, Council's suite of asset management plans (AMPs) have also been fully updated utilising new asset management software and data. This has enabled a full assessment of progress under the adopted long term financial plan and highlighted areas of

positive movement and some minor gaps. The updated data has allowed an informed review and update of the Council's long term financial plan.

Council has also completed a full service review utilising templates applied in other councils and best practice methodology, and participated in a number of audit, benchmarking and comparison processes. Council also engaged consultants to undertake external reviews in a number of priority areas.

This process has included a full internal review across all areas utilising a framework developed and implemented by Port Stephens Council. Staff worked with Councillors to develop a template which was workshopped with staff along with independent staff facilitation. The reviews considered:

A review of the current position of each service reflecting back to Council's adopted level of service – source of funding, expenditure, current level of service, current staffing, and why the service is delivered;

- Resources required to deliver the service
- Assessment of statutory reporting
- Emerging trends relating to the service area
- Efficiency opportunities internal, funding procedures; impacts on service, budget, staffing resources
- Alternative service delivery options
- Options for considered service – continue at same level of service; change level of service; outsource options; cease activity
- Implications of service recommendation options – financial, service, staffing, assets.

Work on this process was completed in March 2015 and an initial assessment has been undertaken of key service improvement areas which are being included in the draft Operational Plan for action in 2015-16. The full data set will be used to inform management options for future service profiles and options under FftF over the coming 12 months.

It was also identified there were several service areas requiring independent, external review. Staff assessed the cost of some of the consultant organisations listed on the OLG panel to assist councils determine their FftF status against the adopted benchmarks. As Council had no identified budget for this activity only a number of core service areas were externally reviewed where budget capacity allowed. These included the library and procurement areas of Council with a review of economic development and business growth activities commenced.

Also in the period Council participated in the *NSW Local Government Operational and Management Effectiveness* program conducted by PwC. This provided key benchmarking data against corporate and governance areas, identifying areas of compliance and some areas for improvement. The second report in this project is due in April and will be charted against the first assessment to add to the improvement strategies being developed in core governance areas of:

- Workforce
- Finance
- Operations
- Risk management; and

- Corporate leadership.

Council also accelerated its Internal Audit Action Plan and is linking the findings from the audit process into the development of its Council Improvement Plan and Operational Plan.

All these aspects have contributed to Council being in a position to finalise a CIP and commence preparing its timeframe for a full Community Strategic Plan review.

The above processes also provide input to future discussions with other local government bodies about shared service opportunities and reviewed models of service profiles.

Step 3 Preparing a Council Improvement Proposal

This draft CIP has been prepared with data gathered during Step 2 and on the premise that Council has the scale and capacity to continue as a standalone council as determined by the ILGRP. The draft CIP outlines:

- Confirmation of Council's **scale and capacity** assessment as being **NO CHANGE;**
- Outlines a short profile of the LGA and the key challenges and opportunities
- Performance against FftF benchmarks
- Water utility performance
- Key strategies to meet all benchmarks over the coming period which for Bega Valley will see all benchmarks achieved in 2015-16
- The CIP action plan and how this plan will improve performance; and
- How the plan will be put into action.

Bega Valley Shire Council

current position

Our Place

The Bega Valley Shire is located at the south-eastern extremity of New South Wales. The Shire's coastal fringe extends from Wallaga Lake in the north to Cape Howe and the Victorian border in the south. Collectively this 225-kilometre section forms the beautiful Sapphire Coast, the heart of Australia's Coastal Wilderness.

The main industries in the Bega Valley Shire are farming, particularly dairy farming, and the associated cheese manufacturing industry in Bega; commercial fishing, particularly in Eden, and tourism along much of the coast. The Shire's major industrial precincts are at North Bega, Eden and South Pambula and the main retail areas are within the town centres of Bega, Eden and Merimbula.

Bega Valley is a regional centre for both schools and higher education institutions. There are currently eighteen primary schools and four high schools which covers a mixture of both private and public schools. The University of Wollongong operates a branch campus in Bega and offers courses in the facilities of Arts, Commerce, Education, Health and Behavioural Sciences and Business. There is also a TAFE Illawarra campus in Bega which offers a number of vocational courses targeted at school leavers and all those requiring trade skills training.

Merimbula, Eden, Bermagui and Tathra are significant tourism centres, and the long stretches of coastline in the Shire are a summer draw card for many visitors. The main tourist towns such as Bermagui, Eden and Merimbula typically experience a threefold boost in their populations during the peak summer tourist period. On average, Bega Valley Shire receives over 820,000 visitors annually, more than half of whom are domestic overnight visitors, spending around \$255 million each year.

Our Community

The Bega Valley Shire has a relatively small population of approximately 34,000 people. Current projections of population growth of 1.1% per annum will see a population of 37,295 people calling the Bega Valley home by 2030. Bega Valley gains population from the Sydney metropolitan area and parts of southern NSW, and to a lesser extent, Canberra and Melbourne.

The population of Bega Valley Shire showed strong growth in the last decades of twentieth century, but since 2006, population growth has slowed to more modest levels.

Data from the 2012 Census show the most populous age group in Bega Valley Shire was 50-54 year olds, with 2,857 persons. In 2030 the most populous forecast age group will be 65-69 year olds, with 3,013 persons.

The number of people aged under 15 is forecast to increase by 811 with 8,523 people under the age of 15 forecast to live within Bega Valley by 2030, representing a rise in the proportion of the population to 17.7%. The number of people aged over 65 is expected to increase by 2,915 residents with 10,037 residents over the age of 65 by 2030, this represents 27% of the population

In 2012, the dominant household type in Bega Valley Shire was 'Couples without dependents', which accounted for 37.7% of all households. The main changes in household type between 2012 and 2030 are forecast to be 'Couples without dependents' which will increase by 1,014, comprising 39% of all households in 2030. In contrast 'Group households' is forecast to decrease by 79 households, to comprise 1.7% of all households in 2030, compared to 2.2% in 2012.

Understanding our population drivers

Council has focussed its attention on managing population churn, by building or enabling infrastructure, facilities and services to attract business and visitor investment, at a level higher than comparative regional areas.

Bega Valley Shire understands the need to ensure that it is well-positioned to benefit from the growth expected in knowledge-intensive service sectors (professional services, health, ICT and education). Growth in these sectors will help address the current low wage profile in the shire, and will stimulate further growth in higher value goods and services.

The Shire's economy is still in transition from the traditional structure based on commodities – forestry products, traditional fishing and agriculture, and family tourism (largely a readily substituted 'commodity') – to a more valued-based economy.

Latest population figures from idProfile:

Bega Valley Shire	Change between 2011 and 2036							
Area	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	Total change	Avg. annual % change
Bega Valley Shire	32,994	33,722	34,976	36,321	37,520	38,829	+5,835	+0.65

Key challenges and opportunities

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning and our IPR plans and asset plan commitments • Asset management planning and • Financial position, leadership and management, a strong long term financial plan - BVSC is listed in the top 10% of NSW Councils in TCorps financial assessment (refer TCorp) • Council's commitment to addressing its infrastructure backlog put in place in 2009 is showing results as recently reflected in the update of Asset management Plans • Agile and adaptive decision making and service delivery • Own source revenue position • Debt service ratio – making debt work for us • Workforce strategy • Natural environment • High level of volunteerism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remoteness in relation to links to services, government and training • Ageing population and workforce • Lack of clarity of roles of levels of government • Costs of services • Limited public transport • Large geographic area with 5 population centres and 20 villages and centres to service and ageing duplicated infrastructure

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major infrastructure projects including Eden Port and Merimbula Airport • New and emerging industries including small producers • New models of service delivery • Potential service delivery refocus utilizing inter-Council agreements and Joint Organisations • East West link to Canberra • Links to ACT and Victoria • Review of Federation and Taxation review • Natural environment • Strong local community commitment and activism in sustainable and alternative energies • Development of a sustainable infrastructure gap • University campuses • New regional hospital • Cultural sector and events • Tourism opportunities directly from Asia & focusing on experience seekers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding policy positions by other levels of government • Attracting and retaining professional staff • Infrastructure provision for tourism peak loads • Ageing and widely distributed and duplicated infrastructure • Reliance on volunteers who provide significant input in managing sportsgrounds, halls and other community infrastructure • Community expectations of level of service brought from city areas • Climate change impacts need to be understood and catered for

The priority list of outcomes from the latest community survey utilised to inform the development of Council's current Community Strategic Plan are listed below and are taken from the IRIS Report. These highlight the community's priority action areas used to focus action in the current adopted community strategic plan 2030.

IRIS Community Survey

Prioritising Services and Facilities

After asking respondents to rate their level of importance and satisfaction with 39 service/facilities provided by Council, analysis using an opportunity matrix revealed the following service priorities for Council:

- Appearance and adequacy of public toilets
- Maintaining sealed roads

- Cleaning and maintenance of public toilets
- Planning with the community for the future of the Shire
- Council responsiveness to community requests
- Consulting and engaging with the community
- Maintaining unsealed roads
- Informing the community of Council decisions, activities and services
- Promoting economic development and business growth
- Weed Control and protection of natural bush land
- Planning for town commercial centres
- Clean lines of creeks and waterways
- Appearance and presentation of the town centres
- The way residential and rural lands are being developed
- Promotion of Tourism and recognition of brand
- Adequacy and maintenance of car parking in the town centres

Priority action areas

Overall, one in three residents (32.0%) are aware of Council's long term community plan and other various plans. A greater proportion of male residents (37.0%) were found to be aware of Council's long term community plan, compared to female residents (27.4%).

With regards to mentioning a priority action area for the Shire over the next 10 years, a total of 88.8% of residents were able to mention at least one priority action area.

Residents felt 'Management of roads / pathways / parking' was the number one priority for the Shire, mentioned by one in five residents (20.6%). This was followed by 'Promoting tourism' (15.7%) and 'Planning for growth / development / sustainability' (13.4%).

Our Financial challenges

Over the next 20 years, BVSC will face many challenges that will require strong financial leadership and creative solutions to meet its aspirations. The key challenges faced over this period include:

1. Managing the changing landscape in relation to funding sources available to local government and exploring the opportunities for Council to be more financially self-sustaining.
2. Maintaining required investment in Council's infrastructure, meeting both renewal and maintenance targets to ensure future generations are able to enjoy our community's assets.
3. Meeting expectations from all areas including community, service users and government by ensuring standards across key services keep pace with demand and in balance with the capacity to fund these operations.
4. Addressing the challenges of population growth and an ageing population which will impact service and infrastructure requirements.

Performance against Fit for the Future benchmarks

In order to be determined Fit for the Future Council needs to demonstrate its current position against a number of benchmarks. To do this information from Council's 2013-14 (General Fund) financial results are entered into an online Self Assessment Tool provided by the Office of Local Government. The forecast performance is based on the Council's forecast for the 2016-17 (General Fund) financial results taken from Council's current financial plans and assumptions adopted as part of the integrated planning and reporting framework. The online template automatically calculates whether Council meets the benchmark.

Council is required to attach its adopted plans and long term financial plan to demonstrate the inputs into the template.

As this process is all online Council has prepared this report to demonstrate Council's performance and plan for the community to consider.

In preparing its first community strategic plan and long term financial plan Council utilised a number of consultants and undertook community surveys. Council has monitored its performance against its adopted plans and has seen improvement in its asset management gap brought about through its redirection of funds and the direction of a three year special variation application applied progressively to transport, recreation and buildings infrastructure.

The following definitions outline how the result is calculated against each of the benchmarks.

SUSTAINABILITY

Operating performance ratio:

$$\frac{\text{Total continuing operating revenue (exc. capital grants \& contributions) less operating expenses}}{\text{Total continuing operating revenue (exc. capital grants and contributions)}}$$

Benchmark - greater than or equal to break-even average over three years

Operating Performance:-Consistent with Accounting Code/TCorp measure. Numerator and denominator excludes fair value adjustments, reversal of revaluation decrements, net gain/losses on sale of assets and net share/loss of interests in joint ventures.

Own source revenue ratio:

$$\frac{\text{Total continuing operation revenue less all grants and contributions}}{\text{Total continuing operating revenue inclusive of capital grants and contributions}}$$

Benchmark - greater than 60% average over three years

Own Source Revenue:- Consistent with Accounting Code/TCorp measure. Numerator and denominator excludes fair value adjustments, reversal of revaluation decrements, net gain on sale of assets and net share of interests in joint ventures.

Building and asset renewal ratio:

$$\frac{\text{Asset renewals(building and infrastructure)}}{\text{Depreciation, amortisation \& impairment(building \& infrastructure)}}$$

Benchmark - greater than 100% average over three years

Consistent with Accounting Code/TCorp measures.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE MANAGEMENT

Infrastructure backlog ratio

$$\frac{\text{Estimated cost to bring assets to a satisfactory condition}}{\text{Total (WDV) of infrastructure, buildings, other structures \& depreciable land improvement assets}}$$

Benchmark - less than 2%

Consistent with Accounting Code/TCorp measures.

Asset maintenance ratio:

$$\frac{\text{Actual asset maintenance}\text{¶}}{\text{Required asset maintenance}}$$

Benchmark - greater than 100% average over three years

Consistent with Accounting Code/TCorp measures.

Debt service ratio:

$$\frac{\text{Cost of debt service (interest expense \& principal payments)\text{¶}}}{\text{Total continuing operating revenue (exc. capital grants \& contributions)}}$$

Benchmark – greater than 0% and less than or equal to 20% average over three years

Debt Service:-Denominator excludes fair value adjustments, reversal of revaluation decrements, net gain on sale of assets and net share of interests in joint ventures.

EFFICIENCY

Real operating expenditure per capita:

$$\frac{\text{Operating expenditure}}{\text{Population}}$$

Benchmark - a decrease in real operating expenditure per capita over time

Expenditure is deflated by the Consumer Price Index (for 2009-11) and the Local Government Cost Index (for 2011 -14) as published by IPART.

The numerator excludes revaluation decrements, net loss from disposal of assets and net loss of interests in joint ventures.

The denominator is population data from ABS, Regional Population Growth, Australia - Table 1. Estimated Resident Population, LGAs, NSW - Released 3.4.2014. The data has been averaged over 2 calendar years except for 2013-14 where population data for 2013 has been used.

Bega Valley Shire Council Performance

Sustainability

EXPLANATION: The ratios have been developed to demonstrate Council's financial sustainability and indicates Council's capacity to meet ongoing operating expenditure requirements. Councils with higher own source revenue have greater ability to control their own operating performance and financial sustainability. This area also demonstrates whether assets are deteriorating faster than they are being renewed and indicates if Council's infrastructure backlog is likely to increase.

Sustainability				
Measure	2014 Performance	Achieves Benchmark	Forecast 2017 Performance	Achieves Benchmark
Operating Performance Ratio ¹	-0.010	No	3.25	Yes
Own Source Revenue ²	60.30	Yes	62.76	Yes
Building and Infrastructure Renewal Ratio ³	107.7	Yes	112.7	Yes

Council comment against performance:

1. Council does not currently meet the Operating Performance Ratio. Actions to address this are outlined in our action plan for the future
2. Own Source Ratio: Reducing grant environment results in increasing own source revenue ratio. No significant changes required.
3. Building and Infrastructure Renewal Ratio: actions are in place to continue achieving and improving this result.

Infrastructure and service management

EXPLANATION: in this areas councils demonstrate how effectively they are managing their infrastructure as increasing backlogs may affect a council's ability to provide services and remain sustainable. It also highlights if a council is spending enough on maintaining its assets to avoid increasing its infrastructure backlog and indicates whether a council is using debt wisely to share the lifelong cost of assets and avoid excessive rate increases.

Infrastructure and Service Management				
Measure	2014 Performance	Achieves Benchmark	Forecast 2017 Performance	Achieves Benchmark
Infrastructure Backlog Ratio ¹	13.65	No	1.95	Yes
Asset Maintenance Ratio ²	115.0	Yes	115.0	Yes
Debt Service Ratio ³	3.82	Yes	4.10	Yes

Council comment against performance:

1. In this benchmark area Council does not currently meet the Infrastructure Backlog Ratio. Actions have been commenced to address this which are listed in the action plan.
2. Asset Maintenance Ratio: Ratio is meeting benchmark. No significant changes required.
3. Debt Service Ratio: Accounting policy restricts new borrowings to new capital projects only. Councils LTFP calls for some additional borrowing to service capital projects. Results remain significantly under benchmark.

Efficiency

EXPLANATION: This area indicates how well councils are utilising economies of scale and managing service levels to achieve efficiencies.

Efficiency				
Measure	2014 Performance	Achieves Benchmark	Forecast 2017 Performance	Achieves Benchmark
Real Operating Expenditure per Capita ¹		No		Yes

Council comment against performance:

1. Real Operating Expenditure per Capita: While our ratio currently fails to meet the benchmark that is due to the fact that in 2012, 2013, & 2014 Council was in receipt of large amounts of Emergency funding, expenditure of which is classified as operating expenditure. If Council was not in receipt of these funds the ratio would have been met. Without any non-recurrent funding impacts, Council meets this ratio over the forecast ratio timeline.

Water utility performance

Bega Valley Shire Council (BVSC) is the Local Water Utility (LWU) that provides water and sewerage services to communities throughout the Shire. Following discussions in the local government sector BVSC has prepared two scenarios for consideration, one as required by the fit for the future process excluding water and sewer and one including the utility results.

Water utility performance in NSW is regulated primarily by the NSW Office of Water, NSW Environment Protection Authority and NSW Health. To help NSW LWUs manage their overall performance and regulatory compliance the NSW Office of Water has published the “Best Practice Guidelines”.

The Guidelines contain six elements required for managing long term performance and financial sustainability. The six elements include Integrated Water Cycle Management, Water Conservation, Strategic Business Planning, Drought Management, Pricing and Performance Monitoring. Council’s compliance with the guidelines is detailed below. It should be noted that NSW Office of Water have recently updated the Guidelines and accordingly there is some uncertainty over some of the new performance indicators.

Best Practice Framework Current Compliance

Council has undertaken much of the preparatory technical work needed to complete an Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) Plan. Council recently awarded a tender to GHD Pty Ltd the aim being completion of the IWCM in early 2016.

Council has implemented a number of water conservation measures in the areas of policy, media and a long term partnership with “Save Water Alliance”. Council is substantially compliant with this element of the Guidelines.

Council has undertaken a comprehensive Strategic Business Planning (SBP) process and adopted its Water Supply and Sewerage SBP in 2014. Council is substantially compliant with this element of the Guidelines including provisions related to Long Term Financial planning.

Council has completed its Drought Management Plan and is substantially compliant with this element of the Guidelines.

Council charges for water, sewer and Section 64 contributions in accordance with NSW Office of Water methodology. Council is substantially compliant with the Guideline requirements in this area however it has yet to achieve the required 75% 25% split for water usage and access. Further discussions with NSW Office of Water are planned to resolve this aspect of Council charges.

Council is required to complete annual performance monitoring for the NSW Office of Water. Council is substantially compliant with this element of the Guidelines and has submitted the performance report on time every year.

Water and Sewer Capital Works

Council devotes substantial resources towards renewal and new capital works.

Currently there is a backlog in the Water Utility of \$591K going into surplus in 2016. Currently there is no backlog in the Sewer Utility. The following Table lists the major capital works planned for delivery over the next four years.

Capital Works			
Proposed Works	Timeframe	Cost	External Funding
Sewer: Merimbula Effluent Disposal Upgrade Stage 1	2017	\$7.34m	Possible NSW Government and Federal Government subsidy funding
Sewer: Merimbula Effluent Disposal Upgrade Stage 2	2018	\$4.72m	Possible NSW Government and Federal Government subsidy funding
Sewer: Bermagui Sewer Treatment Plant Upgrade	2018	\$2.1m	Not applicable
Water: Nutley's Creek Reservoir Construction	2016	\$1.06m	Not applicable
Water: Bemboka Water Treatment Plant	2016	\$2.22m	Not applicable
Water: Upgrade Transfer Main from Yellowpinch to Eden Stage 1	2019	\$1.27m	Not applicable
Water: Upgrade Transfer Main from Yellowpinch to Eden Stage 2	2020	\$3.18m	Not applicable

Strategies Towards Best Practice Compliance

The current level of compliance with the Best Practice Management Guidelines is substantial. The areas requiring work include completion of the IWCM and minor changes to the access/usage charging arrangements for water. A contract has already been awarded to complete the IWCM and as stated above, further discussions are planned with NSW Office of Water to resolve compliance issues related to water charging.

The overall strategy towards full Best Practice Guideline Compliance is simply to complete a formal audit against the Best Practice Compliance Checklist once the IWCM is completed in early 2016. The audit can be undertaken by either specialist consultants or NSW Office of Water.

Becoming even more Fit for the Future

Sustainability

Key strategies 2016-2020:

By capitalising design and other capital project costs

Application of more rigorous capitalisation of employment costs. Implementation of new payroll timesheet capture system will allow more employee's to accurately cost time to capital projects. Estimates are a 5% shift from operating costs to the Capital Budget.

By revision of asset useful life

Implementation of independent review of Asset Management data using IPWEA framework. Using amendments to Accounting code, reassess the useful life of assets and how they apply to Special Schedule 7. It is estimated that the change in definition from Backlog to Satisfactory standard will reduce the value of depreciation and correspondingly increase the operating ratio.

Utilise useful life data based on our actual consumption (depreciation) pattern

Infrastructure and service management

Key strategies 2016-2020:

Implement amended Accounting Code in relation to Special Schedule 7. Implementation of consistent definitions on Asset Management will help align backlog with "satisfactory" condition. New method will meet Accounting code and will be audited under financial audit.

This ratio uses data from unaudited information in the Financial Statements therefore making it auditable is the key.

In conjunction with Council's auditors in the interim audit, we are looking at devising ways to make SS7 auditable.

This includes clarification of definition of 'Satisfactory Condition' and coming up with standard methodologies to calculate the reportable amounts.

Efficiency

Key strategies 2016-2020:

Negative Impact on this ratios have been contributed by:

- Increase in level of service e.g. take up of operation of Sapphire Aquatic Centre and waste services
- One off events that increase Council's OpEx e.g. Natural Disaster remediation works.

Some of the negative impacts can be avoided but some are outside of Council's area of control.

Improvement Action Plan

Operating Performance Ratio – >0 BVSC -0.010

By capitalising design and other capital direct costs - improvement suggested by the IAC identifying that 5% of Salaries and Wages bill could potentially be capitalised. This avenue is being explored and a detailed analysis is being undertaken.

By revision of Asset Useful Life -Use useful life based on our consumption pattern

1. Roll out of an Integrated Asset Management Software to capture real time condition data accurately.
2. Introduction of greater finance participation in the asset revaluation process so the impact of revaluation on financial position of Council is well understood.
3. An independent review will be conducted for all our asset class to work out the actual consumption rate (depreciation) following the IPWEA assessment guidelines.

Infrastructure Backlog – (<2%) BVSC 13.65%

This Ratio uses data from unaudited information in the Financial Statements therefore making it auditable is the key.

In conjunction with Council's auditors in the interim audit, we are looking at devising ways to make SS7 auditable.

This includes clarification of definition of 'Satisfactory Condition' and coming up with standard methodologies to calculate the reportable amounts.

Real operating expenditure per capita – decreasing over 5 years

The negative impact on this ratio has been contributed by an increase in level of service provided by the Council. This has included the take up of operation of Sapphire Aquatic Centre and management of land fills.

One off events that increase Council's Operating Expenditure such as. natural disaster remediation works which have impacted Council's expenditures over three years also contribute to the historical data..

Some of the impacts can be avoided but some are outside of Council's direct control.

Remedial action is to be mindful of the impact of such changes and one-off events on the ratio and making sure that is communicated clearly and reported in the appropriate manner.

Other actions considered

As part of the Resourcing Strategy review and linked to the proposed direction of the Office of Local Government's (OLG) proposed changes to the key aspects of developing both community strategic plans under the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) framework and the Fit for the Future (FtF) council improvement plan process Council has endeavoured to embark on as thorough and integrated service review of the Council's operations as sustainable within current resources (human and financial).

This approach has included a full internal review across all areas utilising a framework developed and implemented by Port Stephens Council. Staff worked with Councillors to develop a template which was workshopped with staff with independent staff facilitation.

Staff assessed the cost of some of the consultant organisations listed on the OLG panel to assist Council's determine their FfF status against the adopted benchmarks. As Council had no identified budget for this activity only a number of core service areas were externally reviewed where budget capacity allowed.

Also in the period Council participated in the NSW local government operational and management effectiveness program conducted by Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) Analytics Department and hosted by NSW Local Government Professionals. This provided key benchmarking against corporate and governance areas identifying areas of compliance and some areas for improvement.

Council also accelerated its Internal Audit action plan and is linking the findings from the audit process into the development of its council improvement plan and operational plan.

Council has participated in the NSW local government operational and management effectiveness program conducted by Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) Analytics Department and hosted by NSW Local Government Professionals. 72 Councils participated in the program aimed at benchmarking NSW councils against NSW and Australian local government bodies and business. The first benchmarking report was conducted using the 2012-13 financial year. The results for the 2013-14 year are due in April.

The first BVSC customised report was provided to council when received in late 2014.

The benefits from participating in this project allow council to:

- Evaluate our practices to understand current operational and management performance
- Identify areas for focus when striving to optimise operational excellence
- Understand how Australian businesses – and in some cases international businesses and Australian Federal agencies – perform in the areas of workforce, operations and finance using results from similar surveys conducted by PwC in Australia and globally.

Asset Strategy

The Asset Management Strategy is prepared following a review of the Council's current Asset Management Strategy 2011, service delivery practices, financial sustainability indicators, asset management maturity and fit with Council's vision for the future outlined in the Bega Valley Shire Council Community Strategic Plan. The Strategy outlines an asset management improvement plan detailing a program of tasks to be completed and resources required to bring Council to a minimum 'core' level of asset maturity and competence.

Strategy outlook

1. Council has developed a range of "Technical Levels of Service" that reflect current activities to provide a range of services and infrastructure to the community. The cost of meeting these "Levels of Service" have been built in to Council's Financial Strategy and maintaining this level of service is achievable over the next 10 years
2. The organisation is able to fund current infrastructure life cycle cost at current levels of service and available revenue.

The organisation's current asset management maturity is at a competent level with investment needed to improve information management, lifecycle management, service management and accountability and direction.

No	Strategy	Desired Outcome
1	Move from annual budgeting to long term financial planning	The long term implications of Council services are considered in annual budget deliberations.
2	Develop and annually review Asset Management Plans covering at least 10 years for all major asset classes (80% of asset value).	Identification of services needed by the community and required funding to optimise 'whole of life' costs.
3	Develop Council's Long Term Financial Plan covering 10 years, and incorporating asset management plan expenditure projections with a sustainable funding position outcome.	Sustainable funding model to provide Council services.
4	Incorporate Year 1 of Council's Long Term Financial Plan revenue and expenditure projections into annual budgets.	Long term financial planning drives budget deliberations.
5	Review and update asset management plans and the long term financial plan after adoption of annual budgets. Communicate any consequence of funding decisions on service levels and service risks.	Council and the community are aware of changes to service levels and costs arising from budget decisions.
6	Report Council's financial position at "Fair Value" in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, financial sustainability and performance against strategic objectives in Annual Reports.	Financial sustainability information is available for Council and the community.
7	Ensure Council's decisions are made from accurate and current information reflected in asset registers, on service level performance and costs, and 'whole of life' costs.	Improved decision making and greater value for money.
8	Report on Council's resources and operational capability to deliver the services needed by the community in the Annual Report.	Service delivery is matched to available resources and operational capabilities.
9	Ensure responsibilities for asset management are identified and incorporated into staff position descriptions.	Responsibility for asset management is defined.
10	Implement an Improvement Plan to realise 'core' maturity for the financial and asset management competencies within two years.	Improved financial and asset management capacity within Council.

11	Report to Council and Audit Committee on development and implementation of Asset Management Strategy, Asset Management Plans and Long Term Financial Plans.	Oversight of resource allocation and performance.
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Financial strategy

Narrow the gap

‘Narrow the Gap’ refers to a model whereby an expenditure item is mapped to a funding source. This way if a change occurs to the expenditure item, then the corresponding funding source is also altered and vice versa. This could result in funds being reallocated, or additional funds needing to be sourced.

By knowing where our organisation has the highest gap between the funding source and the cost of delivering the service, we can begin to shift resources to close that gap. By consistently monitoring and adapting to keep the gap as narrow as possible Council will continue to be sustainable into the future.

So how are our expenditure items funded? The following table shows the alignment of funding source to item:

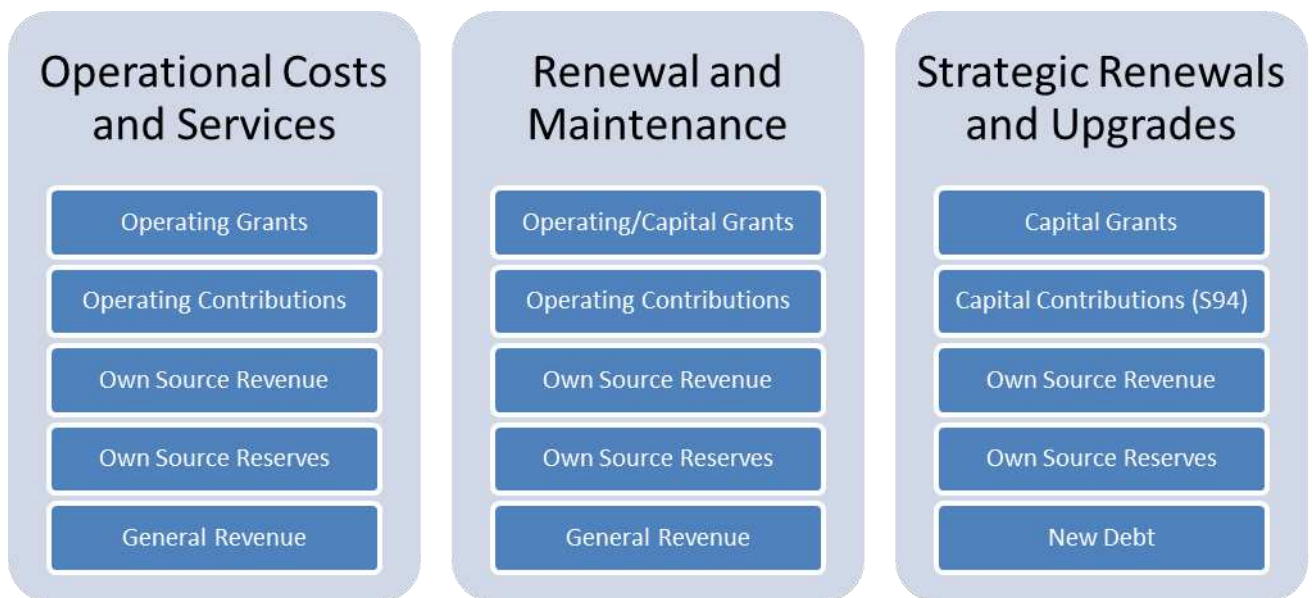
Funding Source	Expenditure Item
Rates and Charges	Infrastructure, Maintenance and Renewal
Fees and Charges	Operating Costs
Grants and Contributions	Services Provided
Debt and Reserve Funds	Upgrades and Strategic Renewals

Priority of funding

Although similar to ‘Narrow the Gap’, having a funding priority spells out which funding source should be expended prior to seeking an additional source. The ‘Priority of Funding’ principle is about *how* we pay for things.

For example, we say that planning services should be funded by Fees and Charges. However, many of those fees and charges are fixed by the NSW State Government. It is impossible for Council to match the service to the revenue as the State also imposes the services to be offered and allocates the charge. Therefore, in some instances, Council needs to subsidise the service from another source of revenue. What source of revenue should be looked at first?

The diagram below outlines the priority of funding for each of the following areas, Operational Costs and Services, Renewal and Maintenance and Strategic Renewals and Upgrades. The first priority for funding is through the upper level, working through all priority options. Before the next source of funding can be accessed, the previous source of funding needs to not only be expended but also shown to be maximised.



Council has publicly stated that Special Variation of Rates and Charges will be considered as a matter of last resort and as such is listed last on the priority of funding.

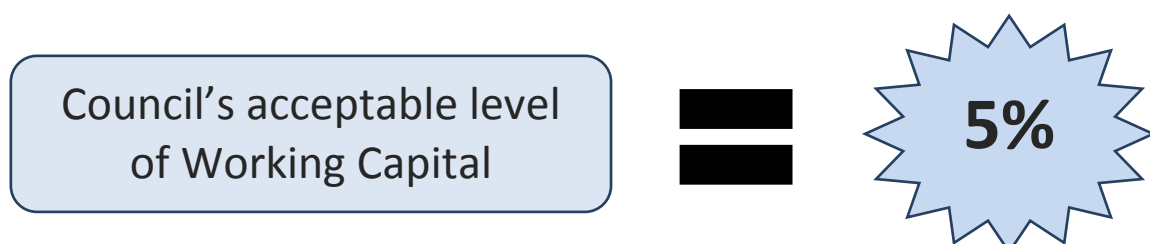
Continuous improvement

Sound financial management is the responsibility of all Council employees. As such, there needs to be mechanisms in place to ensure that the entire organisation respects, understands, and applies sound financial practises into their daily work.

Council needs to provide high quality development opportunities for employees to ensure they are adequately skilled in not only managing their financial responsibilities, but to also assist in enhancing Council's financial policies and practises.

Working capital

Working capital is effectively the measure of an organisations uncommitted cash after all possible liabilities have been taken into account. An organisation should aspire to a healthy level of working capital as these funds would be what is called on in case of an emergency or an unforeseen financial event. Anywhere between 3%-5% of total expenditure (Operating & Capital) is considered a healthy level of working capital.

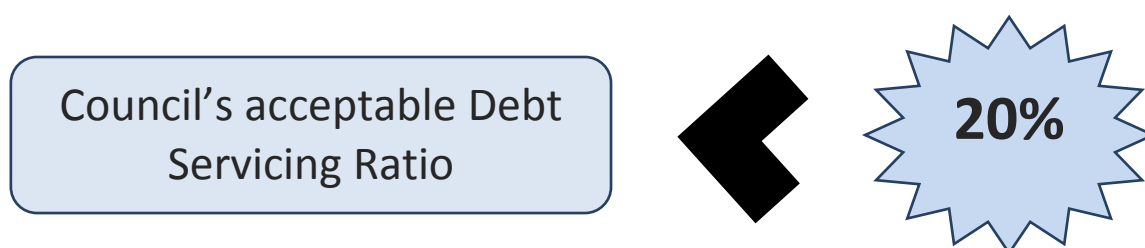


Debt

In many instances it can be reasonably stated that the benefit to specific assets will be derived from present and future generations (or in part) then it is reasonable that debt can be used to spread the cost of that asset to those future users.

With this in mind, Council should not shy away from the informed use of debt to fund strategic projects that provide improved facilities to future generations of community users.

The main measure of debt relates to the percentage of debt repayments compared to annual revenues. The Debt Servicing Ratio is benchmarked in local government at being less than 20%.



In order for debt to be considered as a potential funding source, the project must be a Strategic Renewal or Upgrade, the life of the debt must not exceed the useful life of the asset, and the asset needs to be able to generate sufficient revenues to meet all borrowing costs.

Council has also applied a prudent loan borrowing program which is well within the benchmarks and has allowed for achievement of new works required to continue to grow the local area.

Over the period of the last plan Council has experienced significant effects from four flood events which has resulted in significant emergency funding and redirection of effort to this work.

In relation to asset management the following outlines the Council's proposed strategies and action to achieve the benchmark ratios.

Asset management strategy implementation

No	Strategy	Desired Outcome
1	Move from Annual Budgeting to Long Term Financial Planning	The long term implications of Council services are considered in annual budget deliberations.
2	Develop and annually review Asset Management Plans covering at least 10 years for all major asset classes (80% of asset value).	Identification of services needed by the community and required funding to optimise 'whole of life' costs.
3	Develop Long Term Financial Plan covering 10 years incorporating asset management plan expenditure projections	Sustainable funding model to provide Council services.

	with a sustainable funding position outcome.	
4	Incorporate Year 1 of Long Term Financial Plan revenue and expenditure projections into annual budgets.	Long term financial planning drives budget deliberations.
5	Review and update asset management plans and long term financial plans after adoption of annual budgets. Communicate any consequence of funding decisions on service levels and service risks.	Council and the community are aware of changes to service levels and costs arising from budget decisions.
6	Report Council's financial position at Fair Value in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, financial sustainability and performance against strategic objectives in Annual Reports.	Financial sustainability information is available for Council and the community.
7	Ensure Council's decisions are made from accurate and current information in asset registers, on service level performance and costs and 'whole of life' costs.	Improved decision making and greater value for money.
8	Report on Council's resources and operational capability to deliver the services needed by the community in the Annual Report.	Services delivery is matched to available resources and operational capabilities.
9	Ensure responsibilities for asset management are identified and incorporated into staff position descriptions.	Responsibility for asset management is defined.
10	Implement an Improvement Plan to realise 'core' maturity for the financial and asset management competencies within two years.	Improved financial and asset management capacity within Council.
11	Report to Council by development and implementation of Asset Management Strategy, AM Plans and Long Term Financial Plans.	Oversight of resource allocation and performance.

Asset management action plan

Ref	Task	Priority and Importance	Responsibility	Budget
Asset Knowledge Data				
1	Review and develop asset hierarchy down to appropriate asset/component level (develop in tandem with hierarchy development for all infrastructure assets)	High	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
2	Review, collect and record required asset location, attribute and condition data to appropriate type/component level with target 98% coverage and 98% confidence (ensure all assets incorporated)	High	Water and Sewerage Assets Engineer, Civil Assets, Design & Development Manager, Manager Leisure Services	Internal resources.
3	Review and collect spatial data for all assets	Medium	Water and Sewerage Assets Engineer, Civil Assets, Design &	Internal resources.

			Development Manager, Manager Leisure Services	
4	Collect and maintain historical condition data for all assets	Medium	Water and Sewerage Assets Engineer, Civil Assets, Design & Development Manager, Manager Leisure Services	Internal resources.
5	Collect and record utilisation and performance data for major assets	Medium	Water and Sewerage Assets Engineer, Civil Assets, Design & Development Manager, Manager Leisure Services	Internal resources.
6	Record and manage operations and maintenance work type and cost data at asset type/component level	High	Water and Sewerage Assets Engineer, Civil Assets, Design & Development Manager, Manager Leisure Services	Internal resources.
7	Record and manage renewals and new works data	High	Water and Sewerage Assets Engineer, Manager Leisure Services	Internal resources.
8	Develop unit rate cost data for main/routine activities and works	Medium	Civil Assets, Design & Development Manager, Water and Sewerage Services Manager, Manager, Community & Cultural Services	Internal resources.
9	Review and update asset valuation and depreciation data/calculations	High	Water and Sewerage Assets Engineer, Civil Assets, Design & Development Manager, Manager Leisure services	Internal resources.
10	Review and develop age/life data for all assets	Medium	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
Asset Knowledge Processes				
11	Develop and implement asset hierarchy/classification guidelines and processes	High	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
12	Review, develop and confirm/implement asset ID system for all assets	High	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.

13	Review, develop and implement data capture strategy, guidelines and processes	High	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
14	Develop and implement condition assessment strategy, guidelines and processes	High	Asset Management Steering Group with sign off by Civil Assets, Design & Development Manager Water and Sewerage Services Manager Manager, Community & Cultural Services for their respective areas	Internal resources.
15	Develop and implement guidelines/ processes for measurement of utilisation and performance for all assets	Medium	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
16	Review valuation/depreciation methods/processes	High	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
17	Review, develop and implement formal asset handover guidelines/processes including processes for asset capitalisation, data transfer, operations/ maintenance start-up	Medium	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
18	Review asset valuation processes in finance system	High	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
19	Review, confirm and formalise data management guidelines, processes and responsibilities	Medium	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
20	Develop and introduce data validation and auditing processes	Medium	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
Strategic Asset Planning Processes				
21	Review and develop levels of service for all assets including process for community/ customer research and consultation/input	High	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
22	Review and develop performance indicators and performance measurement and reporting	High	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
23	Review and undertake basic demand forecasting and trend	Medium	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.

	analysis; include basic demand management considerations			
24	Develop Social and Recreation Plans/Strategies to assist in managing/balancing demand for new community infrastructure and recreation facilities and inform capital works planning	High	Leadership Executive Group	Internal resources.
25	Undertake risk analysis/assessment and develop risk registers for all assets and implement risk management systems and processes for critical/major assets	High	Water and Sewerage Assets Engineer, Civil Assets, Design & Development Manager, Manager Leisure Service in their separate areas of responsibility in conjunction with Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
26	Develop lifecycle planning/costing guidelines and processes	Medium	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
27	Undertake lifecycle planning for all Infrastructure assets and develop robust long term financial forecasts	High	Asset Management Steering Group In close cooperation with the Finance Section	Internal resources.
28	Develop long term forward works programs/projections for all assets	High	Civil Assets, Design & Development Manager, Water and Sewerage Services Manager, Manager, Community & Cultural Services	Internal resources.
29	Review/develop project evaluation/prioritisation model to guide project/CAPEX expenditure decisions	Medium	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
30	Develop and implement asset rationalisation guidelines and processes for all assets	High	Water and Sewerage Assets Engineer, Civil Assets, Design & Development Manager, Manager Leisure Services in their separate areas of responsibility in conjunction with Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
31	Develop and review Asset Management Plans and adopt as	High	Water and Sewerage Assets Engineer,	Internal resources.

	guiding strategy for management of Council assets (initial First Cut Plan top down/core approach then develop more robust advanced Plan aligned with IP&R and CSP process using more comprehensive data and driven by community engagement process, LoS, demand forecasting, robust financial forecasting linked to LTFP etc); subsequent review/refinement ongoing.		Civil Assets, Design & Development Manager, Manager Leisure Services in their separate areas of responsibility in conjunction with Asset Management Steering Group	
Operations, Maintenance and Works Processes				
32	Review, develop and document operations and maintenance strategy with a focus on levels of service, planned maintenance, risk management	High	Civil Assets, Design & Development Manager, Water and Sewerage Services Manager, Manager, Community & Cultural Services	Internal resources.
33	Undertake maintenance reviews to optimise maintenance processes and systems	Medium	Water and Sewerage Assets Engineer, Civil Assets, Design & Development Manager, Manager Leisure Services in their separate areas of responsibility	Internal resources.
34	Investigate need for and implement AM&M system for operations/ maintenance works management and work orders with new Civica system implementation	High	Civil Assets, Design & Development Manager, Water and Sewerage Services Manager, Manager, Community & Cultural Services	Internal resources.
35	Investigate/implement mobile computing and use of data loggers for information transfer and data capture	Medium	Asset Management Steering Group in association with the IT group	Internal resources.
36	Develop and implement service agreements/specifications e.g. AUS- SPEC to guide operations/ maintenance service delivery	Medium	Civil Assets, Design & Development Manager, Water and Sewerage Services, Manager, Community & Cultural Services	Internal resources.
37	Review condition monitoring/defect inspection systems/processes for critical/major assets	Medium	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
38	Develop/introduce best practice maintenance and construction specifications and standards	Medium	Civil Assets, Design & Development Manager, Water and Sewerage Services Manager,	Internal resources.

			Manager, Community & Cultural Services	
Information Systems				
39	Continue to rationalise asset registers/ databases further develop Civica Asset Management	High	Asset Management Steering Group in conjunction with the IT group	Internal resources.
40	Review and implement asset management and works/maintenance management system eg Civica/AIM or additional other systems for full capabilities if necessary	High	Asset Management Steering Group in conjunction with the IT group	Internal resources.
41	Consider implementation of strategic system eg Moloney financial forecasting system and integrate with introduction of new systems	High	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
42	Review system integration/interfacing and implement full integration/interfacing of all asset management and maintenance systems with spatial system and relevant corporate/ business systems	High	Asset Management Steering Group in conjunction with the IT group	Internal resources.
43	Review/develop plans/records management system	Medium	Asset Management Steering Group in conjunction with the IT group	Internal resources.
44	Improve links between spatial system and AM&M system	High	Asset Management Steering Group in conjunction with the IT group	Internal resources.
45	Provide systems training and facilitate systems skills development on an ongoing basis	Medium	IT Group	Internal resources.
Organisation Context				
46	Continue to review corporate/organisation strategies and enhance AM focus as opportunities arise inc. integrated with IP&R and CSP process	High	Leadership Executive Group	Internal resources.
47	Review AM policy and strategy	High	Leadership Executive Group (Complete)	Internal resources.
48	Develop organisation long term financial strategy incorporating	High	Leadership Executive Group	Internal resources.

	asset management forecasts			
49	Continue to develop/confirm AM Improvement Plan	High	Leadership Executive Group	Internal resources.
50	Undertake external review/audits of asset management every three years	Medium	Leadership Executive Group	Internal resources.
51	Review works and services related tendering/procurement guidelines and processes to align with industry best practice	Medium	Leadership Executive Group	Internal resources.
52	Review, enhance and develop organisation quality focus particularly relating to asset management systems, processes and practices	Medium	Asset Management Steering Group for referral to Leadership Executive Group	Internal resources.
53	Continue to develop asset management roles and responsibilities	High	Asset Management Steering Group for referral to Leadership Executive Group	Internal resources.
54	Review/refine organisation/Infrastructure Department structure to deliver desired asset management and service delivery strategy	High	Leadership Executive Group	Internal resources.
55	Develop asset management steering group and define roles and responsibilities	High	Leadership Executive Group Asset Team	Internal resources.
56	Review need and program for external specialist assistance	Medium	Leadership Executive Group	Internal resources.
57	Develop and implement AM training program for AM staff and support staff	High	Asset Management Steering Group in cooperation with the Business Services Manager	Internal resources.
58	Develop and implement AM awareness programs for corporate team and elected representatives	High	Asset Management Steering Group	Internal resources.
59	Ensure that the Asset Management Steering Group reports on progress to the LEG in conjunction with the CSP cycle and reviews planned progress with actual progress.	High	Asset Management Steering Group and LEG	Internal resources.

How our plan will improve performance

Expected improvement performance					
Measure	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Achieves FFTF benchmark
Operating performance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Own source revenue	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Building & infrastructure asset renewal ratio	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Infrastructure backlog ratio	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Asset maintenance ratio	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Debt service ratio	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Real operating expenditure per capita	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Putting our plan into action

Council will resolve to adopt its final plan and improvement proposal in June 2015. A page focussing on reporting the actions planned to achieve the benchmarks and to report annually against progress will be included in Council's operational plan and on its integrated planning and reporting website.