

3.4 DRAFT INTEGRATED PLANS (RG: File No.)

Responsible Senior Officer: Danny Wain, Chief Financial Officer

RECOMMENDATION

That,

Council endorses the draft Community Vision, Council Plan, Asset Plan and Financial Plan to be made publicly available for feedback between 1 and 26 September 2021.

INTRODUCTION

A draft Community Vision, Council Plan, Asset Plan and Financial Plan (the 'Plans') have been developed following community engagement and including a deliberative engagement process. Before finalising the Plans public feedback is now sought particularly on Council's proposed strategic direction.

The final Plans, incorporating feedback, will be presented to Council for adoption on 26 October 2021.

BACKGROUND

The Local Government Act 2020 has substantially changed the expectations and requirements of Councils in developing their strategic plans. The new Act not only mandates a requirement for a ten-year Community Vision, Financial Plan and Asset Plan, it also heightens the expectation that these plans have strong community engagement informing them.

Officers commenced discussions with Councillors about these requirements in early 2020 as the Local Government Bill was presented to Parliament and following its Assent in March 2020. A clear direction from Councillors at that time was to wait until the new Council was elected in October 2020 before deciding on Council's approach.

A presentation was made to the new Council in November 2020 setting out a broad proposal for Monash's 'integrated planning project'. Updates have been presented to Councillors throughout 2021 once the 2021/22 Annual Planning Process was largely complete.

DISCUSSION

The four Plans are presented for Council endorsement alongside an introductory document. Each are discussed below.

Context document

Instead of repeating information common to the four Plans in each Plan, a Context document has been developed that explains the relationship between the plans, the engagement process and contextual information about Monash and Council. Following the public feedback process a Mayor and CEO message will be added to the final Plans.

Community Vision

The Community Vision sets out a Vision Statement, six Themes and a set of principles to guide Council and the wider Monash community on our aspirations for the future.

Council Plan

The Council Plan sets out four Strategic Objectives, with each having explanatory text and five Strategies for their implementation. Each Strategic Objective also has proposed Priority projects and Strategic Indicators, however it is expected these will need to be reassessed based on finalising the Strategic Objectives and Strategies.

Financial Plan

The Financial Plan sets out six 10 year financial statements as well as Financial Performance Indicators and the assumptions behind these.

Asset Plan

The Asset Plan outlines Monash's approach to asset management, the future challenges and opportunities for managing our assets, as well as the 10 year funding requirements to maintain our assets and ensure we are able to continue to deliver our current services.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The four Plans, once adopted, will set Council's strategic direction for the next four years, will inform the prioritisation of new initiatives and capital works in each Annual Budget as well as the development of Council's other plans and strategies.

The four Plans have been developed to comply with the relevant sections of the Local Government Act 2020:

- Community Vision S88
- Strategic planning principles S89
- Council Plan S90
- Financial Plan S91
- Asset Plan S92

The four Plans must be developed through a deliberative engagement process. Additionally, Section 89 requires the Plans to be part of “an integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting”.

CONSULTATION

Community engagement was approached as a multi-layered activity to ensure broad, as well as in-depth, community input. Contributions from each step informed the next activity. The initial engagement was focused more on the aspirations and vision, with later stages looking at what was important in how Council would implement this.

Initial community views were sought through a brief survey with 800 responses through Council’s Annual Community Satisfaction Survey and a further 245 responses through an online survey.

Emerging themes from the survey were presented to Monash’s seven Advisory Committees through May and June 2021:

- Environmental Advisory Committee
- LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee
- Gender Equity Advisory Committee
- Youth Committee
- Multicultural Advisory Committee
- Disability Advisory Committee
- Positive Ageing Reference Group

The Committees confirmed the key themes resonated with their experience of Monash, what they loved about the City and their aspirations for the future. The consistent feedback however was the need for these to be considered from a perspective of Monash being inclusive of the broader community.

Lastly, a panel of community members was established to enable a deliberative engagement process. Twenty three people, representing the diverse Monash community, met four times through June and July to consider the emerging themes as well as the key issues and opportunities facing Monash, and through discussion proposed Vision Statements and principles to be incorporated into the Community Vision and Council Plan.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The community engagement processes elicited responses from many community members stating an interest in increased participatory decision-making. Improving the community’s understanding of the competing demands on council funding assists with their deliberation around priorities.

Social implications that resonated with our community were reflected across the six themes of the Community Vision, and the four strategic objectives of the Council Plan.

This included the social benefits of trees and green spaces - enhancing neighbourhood aesthetics and providing shade and lowering ambient temperature that can help combat extremes of temperatures.

The importance of inclusive services and decision making around service provision rates highly.

Enhanced public places and spaces also contribute highly to the social benefits of our community.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The four Plans, and the community engagement process undertaken, contributes to the Monash community “taking part in public life”, one of the 20 rights considered in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. The development process and the resultant plans provide the broader community the opportunity to shape the municipality they live in and participate in its governance.

GENDER EQUITY ASSESSMENT

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) was undertaken to inform the planning of the Imagine Monash in 2040 project. Gender is a fundamental consideration to the four Plans, as they:

- set out Council’s strategic direction,
- will influence the development of other strategies and plans and the review of Council services, and
- will help prioritise initiatives and capital works in future Council Budgets.

The GIA informed the planning of the consultation process, particularly the need to use multiple approaches to ensure a wide range of contributions as well as testing that the emerging themes reflected the broader needs of the community.

A strong theme through the consultation was to ensure Council services and the City were inclusive of the broader community.

Lastly, the GIA also found that a key requirement of Monash’s future integrated planning and reporting was the need to identify, monitor and report on how Council’s capital works, initiatives and services were contributing to achieving our strategic objectives including addressing gender equity.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Financial Plan sets out Monash City Council's long term financial position including the 10 year expected income and expenditure, financial indicators and the assumptions underpinning these. The Financial Plan confirms that Council can continue to deliver current services and maintain our assets. It is expected though that the Plan will need to be revised as the internal and external environment changes.

CONCLUSION

Council is asked to endorse the draft Community Vision, Council Plan, Asset Plan and Financial Plan for the purpose of seeking community feedback between 1 and 26 September 2021. Final Plans, incorporating feedback, will be presented to Council in October 2021 for adoption.