



Agenda

Youth Council Meeting

Monday 1 September 2025 at 6pm

Council Chamber,

25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang

Youth Councillors

Youth Cr Kaynat Virk Youth Mayor

Youth Cr Emily Tricarico Deputy Youth Mayor

Youth Cr Osama Akkad

Youth Cr Angelica Banquil

Youth Cr Bavleen Kaur

Youth Cr Mustafa Khraim

Youth Cr Zachary Melvaine

Youth Cr Angela Rolevska

Youth Cr Tanya Sharma

Youth Cr Sandy Tran

Youth Cr Elly Watson

Youth Cr Sophie Winter

Officers

Jacinta Stevens Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

Bobbie-Lea Bright Unit Manager Compliance & Governance

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**1 Opening**

**1.1 Meeting Opening and Introductions**

The Youth Mayor will open the meeting and welcome everyone in attendance.

**1.2 Apologies/Absent**

**1.3 Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement**

The Chair will read the following statement:

*“On behalf of Council, I recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.*

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

**1.4 Youth Council Charter**

The Chair will read the following statement:

*“We the members of the City of Whittlesea Youth Council, commit to advocating for and being the voice of the youth within our municipality. We ensure a safe space for all, to engage in constructive collaboration on matters affecting young people. We aim to empower and foster community connectedness in our youth so they feel valued and supported to achieve their aspirations.”*

**1.5 Acknowledgements**

**2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

**3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting/s**

# Recommendation

**THAT Youth Council confirm the Minutes of the Youth Council Meeting held on 4 August 2025, as circulated.**

**4 Officers' Reports**

4.1 Draft Budget 2026-27 and Community Action Plan 2026-27 consultation

**4.1 Draft Budget 2026-27 and Community Action Plan 2026-27 consultation**

**Director/Executive Manager:** Director Customer & Corporate Services

**Report Author:** Unit Manager Corporate Planning

**In Attendance:** Manager ePMO & Change   
Unit Manager Financial Development & Accountability  
Unit Manager Corporate Planning  
Corporate Planner

# Executive Summary

Each year, Council publishes a Community Action Plan that articulates key actions and sets the strategic direction for the financial year. This plan supports the long-term vision outlined in Whittlesea 2040 and the broader Community Plan 2025-29.

At the same time, Council delivers its annual Budget, allocating $350 million in operating expenditure this financial year to sustain essential services and support infrastructure development for the growing community. The Budget is closely aligned with Council’s long-term financial plan, ensuring responsible investment and sustainable service delivery.

Recognising the need to prioritise within limited resources, Council seeks community input, including the Youth Council, to identify valued services and priorities. Insights gathered will shape key planning documents and inform ongoing community engagement efforts available at *engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/priorities2026*.

# Officers’ Recommendation

**THAT the Youth Council provide feedback to assist in developing key documents, including the Budget 2026-27 and Community Action Plan 2026-27.**

# Background / Key Information

Each year, the Council publishes a Community Action Plan that outlines the key initiatives it will prioritise during the financial year, in line with the Community Plan 2025–29. The Community Action Plan 2026–27 will act as the annual supplement to the overarching Community Plan 2025–29. It clearly sets out the community and internal outcomes that guide our strategic direction, with these actions planned for delivery within the 2026–27 financial year. The Action Plan plays a vital role in progressing our strategic objectives, which are embedded in the Whittlesea 2040 Vision – “A place for all” – and the Community Plan 2025–29.

At the same time, Council releases its annual Budget, detailing the investment and delivery of essential services and critical infrastructure to support our rapidly expanding community. It is vital to balance the ongoing provision of services and programs while also developing infrastructure and facilities to meet the needs of our growing population. The Budget is crafted to align with our long-term financial plan, which carefully balances current expenditure on projects and services with the need to ensure our financial sustainability over the longer term.

For the current financial year, Council has an operating budget of $350 million to deliver services and programs to the community. However, resources are limited, and difficult decisions must be made. Understanding which services and assets the community values most both now and in the future is essential to inform the development of key strategic documents that will guide the Council’s activities over the next five to ten years.

Our Community Priorities engagement process gathers valuable insights that will inform the Budget 2026–27 and Community Action Plan 2026–27.

We are seeking input from the Youth Council as part of a broader community engagement effort to ensure their perspectives are considered. Feedback from this session will be presented and considered alongside the wider community consultation currently underway at engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/priorities2026.

# Implementation Strategy

Communication

The community is regularly engaged regarding Budget and Community Action Plan development, service delivery and performance as part of Council’s integrated engagement program.

Critical Dates

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dates | Activity |
| Mon 1 Sept - Tue 30 Sept 2025 | Community Consultation - Phase 1 |
| Mon 1 Sept 2025 | Youth Council - Engagement |
| Dec 2025 - Jan 2026 | Community Consultation - Phase 2 |
| Feb 2026 | Community Consultation - Phase 3 |
| Tue 14 Apr 2026 | Unscheduled Council Meeting - endorse Draft Budget and Community Action Plan |
| Wed 15 Apr – Tue 28 Apr 2026 | Community Consultation (Public Exhibition Period) - Phase 4 |
| Tue 5 May 2026 | Hearing of Submissions (HoS) |
| Tue 23 Jun 2026 | Council Meeting - Adopt Budget and Community Action Plan |

# Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* 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.

# Attachments

Nil

4.2 Park and Playground Renewal Program update

**4.2 Park and Playground Renewal Program update**

**Director/Executive Manager:** Director Infrastructure & Environment

**Report Author:** Coordinator Open Space Projects

**In Attendance:** Coordinator Open Space Projects

Landscape Architect

# Executive Summary

The Park and Playground Renewal Program supports the ongoing upgrade of parks and playgrounds in alignment with the City of Whittlesea’s Open Space Strategy (2016) and the Parks and Open Space Asset Management Plan. Play equipment generally has a 25-year design life before it is required to be renewed.

The City of Whittlesea currently manages 255 public playgrounds, with projections indicating growth to approximately 300 playgrounds by 2035. Council successfully upgrades between six and nine playgrounds annually, with annual capital budgets ranging from $1.55 million to $2.5 million depending on the program of works for that year. For the 2025-26 financial year, eight playgrounds are scheduled for renewal, valued in total at $2.2 million. In addition to the annual renewal program, Council also constructs new playgrounds and upgrades existing playgrounds as part of major redevelopment of our parks and also kindergarten projects.

Given the growing number of playgrounds across the municipality, Council is required to renew approximately nine playgrounds each year to ensure none exceed their 25-year lifespan. Council regularly reviews playground provisions as part of the Public Open Space Plan and identifies opportunities to enhance some playgrounds to better meet local requirements and rationalise smaller playgrounds if there is an overprovision i.e. where more than one playground exists within a 400-metre walkable catchment.

# Officers’ Recommendation

**THAT the Youth Council note the 2025-26 financial year park and playground renewal program.**

# Background / Key Information

Local and neighbourhood play spaces, as defined in the Open Space Strategy (2016), are included in the Park and Playground Renewal Program. Each year, six to nine playgrounds are selected for upgrade through a priority assessment process based on annual safety audits, condition assessments, community impact and maintenance requirements.

Since 2020, 36 playgrounds have been upgraded under the program, with consistently strong and positive feedback received from the community.

For the 2025-26 financial year, the following playgrounds will be upgraded:

* Virginia Park, Bundoora;
* Freeman Park, Mill Park;
* Centenary Park, Mill Park;
* Poppy Park, South Morang;
* Northumberland Drive Park, Epping;
* Stage Coach Park, South Morang;
* Ashbrook Park, Bundoora; and
* Medora Park, Bundoora.

In support of the long-term sustainability of public open space assets, Council regularly reviews playground provisions as part of the Public Open Space Plan and identifies opportunities to enhance some playgrounds to better meet local requirements and also rationalise smaller playgrounds if there is an overprovision (e.g. where more than one playground exists within a 400-metre walkable catchment).

The scope of the playground renewal program includes manufactured equipment, passive recreation infrastructure (e.g. basketball half courts or fitness equipment), furniture, surfacing, connecting pathways and natural features such as trees and planting.

The design of playgrounds in the Park and Playground Renewal Program is now undertaken inhouse with qualified landscape architects and undertaken in accordance with a number of guides including:

* Australian Standard AS 4685 Playground Equipment and Surfacing;
* Australian Standard AS 4422 Playground Surfacing – Specifications, Requirements and Test Method; and
* Australian Standard AS 4828.1 Design for Access and Mobility, Part 1: General Requirements for Access.

The design process incorporates risk-benefit assessments aimed at balancing safety with the developmental benefits of engaging, challenging play. Rather than eliminating all risks, the process evaluates potential hazards alongside the physical, emotional and social benefits of activities like climbing, balancing and exploring. Guided by the above standards and informed by community consultation, nature play and adventurous elements are incorporated to foster resilience, creativity and independence.

At Hibiscus Park, Bundoora, the renewal project addressed several pre-existing site issues, including poor access via a degraded gravel path, outdated play equipment with safety concerns, and a lack of passive recreation areas or shelter for informal gatherings. Targeted upgrades have transformed the site with a new concrete path improves north-south connectivity; a multi-use court fills a local gap in basketball infrastructure; and the playground has been revitalised with diverse equipment and a new shelter featuring BBQ facilities, seating and amenities. Thirty-nine trees have been planted to enhance shade and support long-term canopy growth, complemented by drainage improvements to strengthen site resilience.

Certification of structures, including footings, shelters and basketball courts is carried out by a registered professional engineer to ensure compliance with all relevant standards and safety requirements.

# Implementation Strategy

Communication

Community consultation has been undertaken with local residents for all eight playground upgrades scheduled for this financial year. This process informed residents of the planned upgrades and invited feedback on the proposed infrastructure. Residents will also be notified prior to the commencement of construction.

Further consultation will be conducted for playgrounds identified to be downgraded. This will include:

* Direct mail;
* Digital engagement; and
* Targeted social media posts.

Feedback from local residents will be collected and assessed to help inform the design and delivery of the proposed replacement infrastructure.

Critical Dates

The construction of the eight playground upgrades will occur by June 2026. The program is on track to meet this date.

The consultation for future playground sites proposed for major changes is proposed in September 2025. Responses will be evaluated and a design for each site developed by December 2025 with construction due to be finished by June 2026.

# Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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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.

# Attachments

1. Open Space Strategy - Summary Report [**4.2.1** - 42 pages]

4.3 Town Centre Revitalisation Program update

**4.3 Town Centre Revitalisation Program update**

**Director/Executive Manager:** Director Infrastructure & Environment

**Report Author:** Unit Manager Urban Design & Placemaking

**In Attendance:** Manager Urban Design & Transport  
Unit Manager Urban Design & Placemaking

# Executive Summary

To provide Youth Council with an overview of the Town Centre Revitalisation Program, including the recently completed and upcoming projects.

# Officers’ Recommendation

**THAT the Youth Council provide feedback on the Town Centre Revitalisation Program presentation.**

# Background / Key Information

The Town Centre Revitalisation Program began in 2019 as a Council Action Plan item. The program has continued since, to deliver streetscape and infrastructure upgrades around local shops within the municipality.

Some of the key projects delivered through this Program include Rochdale Square and Tramoo Street in Lalor, Gorge Road in South Morang and Alexander Avenue in Thomastown.

# Implementation Strategy

Communication

N/A

Critical Dates

N/A

# Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*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.

# Attachments

1. TC Revitalisation Program Presentation [**4.3.1** - 21 pages]

**5 Notices of Motion**

No Notices of Motion

**6 General / Urgent Business**

No Urgent Business

**7 Closure**