



Manningham Council response to the **Community Panel recommendations**

March 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

Manningham Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the land and waterways that is now known as Manningham.

Council pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging, and values the ongoing contribution to enrich and appreciate the cultural heritage of Manningham.

Council acknowledges and respects Australia's First Peoples as Traditional Owners of lands and waterways across Country and encourages reconciliation between all.

Our diverse community

Council also values the contribution made to Manningham over the years by people of diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Our commitment to gender equality

We are committed to ensuring that everyone in our community is treated with dignity, respect and fairness. We consider the gender, equality and diversity of all people in our community as we develop our plans, strategies and services. We will uphold our requirements in the Victorian Government's *Gender Equality Act 2020* and will continue to seek ways to improve all that we do to make Manningham a safe, respectful and inclusive community.

Our commitment to people with disability

We are committed to working with our community to enhance the health and well-being of people with disabilities. Activities targeting people with disabilities are integrated and reflected across our Council Plan, our Health and Wellbeing Strategy and associated action places to address the Victorian Government's *Disability Act 2006* s 38(1).

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Message from our Mayor

Following a wonderfully collaborative experience with the Manningham Community Panel, I am pleased to present the Panel's recommendations, along with Council's responses to each.

This document highlights the important work of the Panel in identifying their key priorities and aspirations that will shape Manningham's future.

Engaging a diverse group of people from various age groups, cultural backgrounds and geographic locations across Manningham has provided valuable insights.

The input of Panel members will ensure our strategic plans are grounded in the experiences and perspectives of our community in Manningham. This dynamic approach is helping us build a roadmap for a future that is inclusive, resilient, sustainable and vibrant for all.

The Panel's mission was to help identify Manningham's key priorities, challenges and opportunities – guiding us as we develop the Community Vision 2040, the four-year Council Plan and the 10-year Asset and Financial Plans.

Over the course of their deliberations, Panel members contributed around 1,680 collective hours to the process and heard from more than 50 speakers, including Council staff and community members.

The recommendations that follow cover a broad range of important themes, from community safety and transport, to open spaces and more. Council has carefully considered each recommendation and prepared a detailed response, outlining how we plan to approach and implement them.

We are focused on using the Panel's insights to inform our future work and ensure we move forward in a way that best serves our community.

Thank you to each of our Panel members for their dedication, time and contributions throughout this process. Your collective efforts, open dialogue and willingness to collaborate have been essential in shaping the recommendations we now have. Your engagement in these discussions will strengthen the foundation of our plans and our connection with our community.

I also want to thank the staff, contractors and community speakers who supported this process – your involvement has been essential in helping us build a shared vision for the future.

As Mayor, I am dedicated to ensuring these recommendations shape the ongoing development of our community. I look forward to continuing our collaboration with residents, working together to create a Manningham where everyone can thrive.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deirdre'.

Cr Deirdre Diamante
Mayor

Introduction

In September 2024, we took a crucial step towards building a future for Manningham, guided by the voices and values of our community

The Manningham Community Panel was formed and tasked with delving into complex challenges to help determine key priorities to shape the direction of our community.

Over seven externally facilitated sessions, 37 Panel members reviewed a wide range of data and community feedback. They engaged in robust deliberations, working collaboratively to develop well-considered recommendations that reflect community values.

The Manningham Community Panel handed over its recommendations to Council at its final meeting on 1 February 2025. The Panel's final report contains 14 recommendations and one minority report.

Council officers from across the organisation have carefully considered and responded to the recommendations, which have all been supported or supported in principle and will strongly influence Council's decisions.

This dynamic process will play a crucial role in helping guide our strategic planning, including our four-year Council Plan, 10-year Asset and Financial Plans and our Community Vision 2040.



Our approach to deliberative engagement

A deliberative engagement process puts the community at the centre of the decision-making. We sought and received expert advice from external consultants to inform our approach and facilitate the deliberations.

We worked with independent non-profit research group, [newDemocracy Foundation](#) and [MosaicLab](#)'s team of experienced facilitators and engagement practitioners, specialising in high-influence and deliberative engagement.

They provided independent advice on a structured method to deliver the Manningham Community Panel deliberative process.

The '[Deliberative Plan and Process Design](#)' document explained how to meet the requirements of the *Victorian Local Government Act (2020)* and provide informed community insights to Manningham Councillors.

"The process was great! You get to meet people within the community, different age groups, different backgrounds. [It] was really open and straightforward."

– Selina, Community Panel member

Our process followed seven key principles to ensure fairness, informed decision making and meaningful outcomes:

1. **Clear remit** – A well-defined scope of what the Panel was required to do.
2. **Representative panel** – Reflecting Manningham's community via stratified random selection.
3. **In-depth information** – historical information, data and costs were provided to the Panel.
4. **Time for deliberation** – Meetings held over several months, which included 1,680 collective participant hours of deliberation.
5. **Genuine influence** – Council committed to consider and incorporate the Panel's recommendations in its future plans to the fullest extent possible.
6. **Consensus-driven** – At least 80% agreement was required among Panel members for each recommendation.
7. **Independent decision-making** – The Panel shaped its own responses.

This deliberative engagement process is in line with the principles and practices set out in Council's [Community Engagement Policy](#).

"I was actually happy with this process because it's involving us – the community and the public – with their decision making and their process of providing these services which we are [benefiting] from."

– Hanan, Community Panel member

Our promise to the Community Panel

As part of the deliberative plan and process design, Council committed to implementing the recommendations of the Community Panel to the maximum extent possible and publicly and substantively responding to the recommendations in full, with reasoning.

Our promise to the Community Panel...

- Listen to what you say.
- Provide clear information that builds your knowledge of Council services.
- Work to understand your concerns and priorities.
- Report back on what we have heard.
- Base the Council Plan, Asset Plan and Financial Plan on your recommendations to the maximum extent possible.
- Identify where your recommendations have influenced the Council's strategic documents and service decisions.
- Identify where we can't incorporate a recommendation and clearly explain why.
- Provide transparent, annual progress updates during implementation.



Our Community Panel

How were the Panel members selected?

In early August 2024, 8,000 randomly selected households across Manningham received an invitation to express their interest in participating in this engagement.

From those who applied, independent non-profit research group, newDemocracy, coordinated a stratified random draw of 37 people – ensuring a diverse and representative group of community members.

The random selection process meant that everyone in the community had an equal chance of registering their interest and being selected to be a Community Panel member (within the demographic they represent).

This diversity was valuable as the Panel considered the challenges and opportunities facing Manningham and in developing their recommendations to Council.

Why was this process undertaken?

We established the Community Panel so Council's decisions would reflect the priorities, concerns and aspirations of our diverse community – ensuring their voices are heard and valued.

This process will help ensure that our major strategic documents are directly informed by our community. This includes our Council Plan, Community Vision, 10 Year Financial Plan and Asset Plan, which are pivotal in our efforts to plan for the future of Manningham.

By engaging our community in a deliberative process, we have strengthened our collaboration and connections, offering a more inclusive and informed foundation for future planning.

What was the Panel asked to do?

Council endorsed the following remit (the question to be answered) for the Manningham Community Panel at its [25 June 2024 meeting](#).

Council has a budget of \$147m, but we can't do everything and need to make hard choices. We need to know what services you value most to help us create a new Council Plan, Asset Plan and Financial Plan to guide Council activity for the next four years to align with the Community Vision. It will inform what the community pays and gets in return.

What range and level of services are you prepared to pay for?

We asked the Panel to prepare a self-written recommendation report, with a rationale and supporting evidence in response to the remit.

The Panel was also asked to review the Community Vision set in 2021 to ensure it was relevant to the current community needs.

Community Vision 2040

Manningham is a harmonious, inclusive and safe community that is committed to sustainable growth, wellbeing, and innovation. We celebrate our diversity and natural environment whilst fostering a connected community that enriches the lives of all.

— Manningham Community Panel (2025)

How did the Panel arrive at its recommendations?

To assist with their deliberations, Panel members were provided with a detailed [Background Information Document](#), which described the issues and challenges facing Council.

They then attended seven facilitated learning and deliberation sessions, held between September 2024 to February 2025.

During these sessions, Panel members reviewed a wide range of data and community feedback. They heard from several speakers, including Council staff and community members, which provided various perspectives on each topic of discussion.

The Panel also had the opportunity to ask for additional information as they considered different topics and issues in their deliberations.

A minimum of 80 per cent consensus was required for a recommendation to be included in the final report.

"Listening was the best thing. That's what most people will tell you, that we had to listen to everyone's view even if it wasn't what I was exactly thinking."

– Evelyn, Community Panel member

"I wasn't aware of this level of democracy ... that allows the residents to express their needs. That was very impressive. I'm very surprised and I'm very happy to have come through this experience."

– Hassan, Community Panel member

Community input and participation

Local residents, businesses and community organisations have contributed to the panel's work and the development of our Council Plan, long-term Financial Plan and Asset Plan in several ways.

Feedback received from community consultations assisted the Panel in understanding the broader community's priorities and aspirations for Manningham.

In addition to the Panel's recommendations, our strategic documents will be informed by:

- **Plan Manningham 2025+ community survey**

In this survey we asked our community members share their top three priority areas for Council to focus its resources on over the next four years. We received more than 1,260 survey responses between May and July 2024.

- **Targeted conversations**

Community members were invited to join our series of targeted conversations held in mid-2024. These were small group discussions where we brought people with similar backgrounds or interests together to discuss detailed information around topics relevant to their needs and priorities.

- **Individual submissions from community members**

We invited community members to share ideas on how to improve Council services and shape our community's future as individual submission to the Community Panel. Submissions received were considered by the Panel as they deliberated and prepared their recommendations for our major strategic plans.

Observing the Panel

As part of our commitment to an open and transparent process, community members were invited to attend each of the Community Panel sessions to observe the proceedings.

Interested residents and community members were able to register and attend for 90 minute segments, to observe the Panel, their process and deliberations.

Summary of responses from Manningham Council

The Community Panel made 14 recommendations and one Minority Report in its final report, provided to Council on 1 February 2025.

Council supports all 14 recommendations, along with the minority report. The table below summarises Council's response to each of the Panel's recommendations with the actions dependent on the detail and implementation timeline.

The level of support is defined as:

Support – Endorsed by Council and ready for part or full implementation within current council term.

Not support – Will not be implemented.

A more detailed response for each recommendation is included in the following section, including actions and additional information.

How to read our responses to the recommendations

Numbering

The recommendations are not in priority order and the numbers are just to provide an easy reference point.

Blue boxes

The text in the blue boxes remains true to the Panel's recommendations, and no words have been changed. Our response addresses the Panel recommendation and does not reflect all work undertaken by Council concerning the broad subject of the recommendation.

Actions

These actions are our commitment to what we will do about the recommendation and will be reflected in regular updates to the community.

Comments

Further information is included here to clarify, or provide general information or background information about the actions above.

Recommendation headline		Council response
1	Prioritising resources for seniors	Support
2	Investing in community safety	Support
3	Retaining existing and creating new and open spaces	Support
4	Increase Manningham connectivity through Bus Service	Support
5	Address cost shifting	Support
6	Youth Community Engagement	Support
7	Health and wellbeing support	Support
8	Council Assets, Multi-Use Facilities	Support
9	Promoting awareness of services available through customer service using existing and new platforms.	Support
10	Improving Manningham's active transport network (constructive footpaths and bicycle lanes)	Support
11	Funding community festivals and activities	Support
12	Upgrades for Local shops and business	Support
13	Explore and unlock new revenue streams to add to the remit budget, from available resources (not just assets)	Support
14	Equitable support for families and individuals in urgent need	Support



Recommendations and responses

Recommendation 1

Prioritising resources for seniors

Increase resources in areas like living assistance, transportation, and social interactions in order to reduce loneliness and improve wellbeing.

COUNCIL RESPONSE: SUPPORT

Except for living assistance, which is managed by My Aged Care.

Action

We will:

- Develop and implement an Age-friendly City Framework and Action Plan for Manningham to provide a range of opportunities to support wellbeing and reduce loneliness, including transport and social participation.
- Help residents access a range of services and programs, including:
 - Manningham Community Transport
 - supporting opportunities for seniors to participate in community life, including senior clubs, grants and dementia-friendly initiatives.

Comments

We are developing a new Age-friendly City Framework, a holistic approach to healthy ageing looks at that considers all elements of living well in senior years. This framework cuts across many Council services and focuses on:

- community and health care
- housing (which will also relate to the new Residential Strategy)
- social participation
- outdoor spaces and buildings
- social inclusion
- civic participation and employment
- communication.

We do not directly provide living assistance. These services are delivered by Commonwealth Government-appointed contractors accessed through the [My Aged Care web platform](#). Specially trained Council staff help residents navigate My Aged Care.

Note: This recommendation closely aligns with Recommendations 7 and 14.

How progressed do you expect this recommendation to be in four years' (2028)?

Fully implemented.

Recommendation 2

Investing in community safety

Council should be proactive in identifying where risks to safety are higher. Additionally they should only approve plans that comply with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.

COUNCIL RESPONSE: SUPPORT

Action

We will:

- Apply Crime Prevention Through Environment Design (CPTED) principles to enhance safety in parks, open spaces, and activity centres. Creating inviting, well-lit, and active public spaces will reduce the likelihood of crime and foster safer communities
- Meet regularly with Victoria Police on safety and emergency management
- Hold forums to inform the community about safety initiatives led by Victoria Police, Council, and other agencies
- Update our Road Safety Strategy in 2025
- Seek Transport Accident Commission (TAC) funding to improve pedestrian and vehicle safety
- Have a plan to develop a public lighting review program by July 2026
- Update our processes to ensure CPTED principles are considered in our project planning phases by December 2026.

Comments

We heard from the Community Panel that community safety is important.

While Victoria Police lead actions for community safety, we work closely with them and others to develop a joint approach. As community safety is a very broad term, our response focuses on addressing this in many ways, including:

- participating in local Safety Committee with all partners, including Victoria Police, Neighbourhood Watch, Education Department and Westfield
- conducting lighting, road and footpath audits
- running public education campaigns
- listening to our advisory committees about what they are hearing in our community
- working closely with Victoria Police in quick responses to race-based vandalism
- working with young people and coordinating a clinical or welfare response to at risk youth
- regular conversations between senior police command and council officers to look at emerging data and issues that we can jointly address.

We heard from the Community Panel that they want us to do more hence, we will look to increase this focus in our next Council Plan.

How progressed do you expect this recommendation to be in four years' (2028)?

Implemented.

Recommendation 3

Retaining existing and creating new and open spaces

We need to ensure there is sufficient green or open space available for our residents and pets, especially in areas of high density development to include the following:

- Provision of shelter, BBQ, Playground, off-leash areas, exercise, and toilets facilities.
- Open spaces should be considerate of the Domestic Animal Management Plan which will be implemented.

COUNCIL RESPONSE: SUPPORT

Action

We will:

- Review the existing Public Open Space contribution levied on developers to fund new open space and upgrades to existing open space which currently requires:
 - an 8% contribution for high growth areas
 - a 5% contribution where less change is forecast.
- Refresh our 20-year [Parks Improvement Program](#) to make our parks better for the community. This involves:
 - assessing park size, location and accessibility
 - studying the local population
 - consulting with community members to understand their needs.
- Review our [Domestic Animal Management Plan](#).

These steps help determine which facilities, such as playgrounds, fitness equipment, shelters and toilets, are appropriate for each park. We will also ensure that facilities are evenly distributed across Manningham to provide equal access for all.

Comments

We will develop a new Open Space Strategy to replace the [Open Space Strategy 2014](#), to guide the management and development of our open space network.

The new Strategy will respond to the projected residential growth so that communities have an accessible, diverse, well-connected and high-quality green open space network. The Strategy will support the community to recreate, socialise and/or find respite from the urban environment.

The development of the Strategy will be complex and we anticipate delivering it over the term of this Council. We will consult with our community later this year.

In some situations, especially in growth areas where there are gaps in open space, we may need to buy residential land and convert it into open space. Developer contributions fund this program and can only be used to purchase and upgrade open space. We also apply for Victorian Government funding where available. The new Open Space Strategy will help guide investment and strengthen our case for grants.

The final Open Space Strategy will be completed, and we will prepare a Planning Scheme Amendment. We will implement upgrades to open spaces as part of the annual capital works program will continue as an ongoing program.

How progressed do you expect this recommendation to be in four years' (2028)?

Fully implemented.



Recommendation 4

Increase Manningham connectivity through Bus Service

Advocate for improved bus services and routes to align with local community needs, particularly connecting key areas like activity centres, schools, universities and residential zones.

Improving the frequency of the Manningham Bus Loop (Route 282) and route connecting more activity centres such as Jackson Court. The route currently does not extend to Warrandyte, Park Orchards and Wonga Park which are also in the Manningham Municipality.

Expanding route to include suburbs/streets with a significant degrees of elevation (e.g. Dellfield Drive, Mayfair Avenue).

COUNCIL RESPONSE: SUPPORT

Action

We will:

- Continue to advocate to the State Government for the improvements to Manningham's bus network promised by Victoria's Bus Plan
- Seek the new bus route mapping tested by the 'North-East Bus Network Reform Pilot' to be shared with Council for feedback, and then advocate for funding to implement all improved and new routes on the ground. This will include increased frequency, reliability and efficiency and better connectivity for our eastern suburbs including Warrandyte, Wonga Park and Park Orchards
- Progress the objectives and actions on the Manningham Transport Action Plan 2021 and Bus Network Review 2017 or its equivalent.

Comments

The Victorian Government manage the public bus network. We agree that there is a need to improve connectivity throughout the whole municipality.

As the only metropolitan municipality in Melbourne without a rail network, improving the bus network is a key transport priority, as outlined in our Transport Action Plan. This plan includes finding appropriate solutions to improve the bus network to address our community's needs and exploring potential options like on-demand bus services.

The Victorian Government often looks at the number of people who use a bus service to decide when or if to fund improvements. To increase the likelihood of securing funding, we plan to promote the benefits of bus use in Manningham this year to boost ridership and improve our chances of obtaining funding for improvements.

The bus network map for Manningham includes all bus routes including 280/282 (the Manningham Mover). One of the challenges with the Manningham Mover is the low patronage, which means it is not seen as a high priority for the State government. That said, we will continue to advocate for the best outcomes for our community.

How progressed do you expect this recommendation to be in four years' (2028)?

Partially implemented.

Recommendation 5

Address cost shifting

To alleviate the financial pressures and burdens that Manningham council faces from the state government's cost shifting. This could be achieved by Manningham council clearly advocating for fundings requirements and responsibility to be agreed on before Council assumes responsibility for a service. This should apply to new and existing services.

COUNCIL RESPONSE: SUPPORT

Action

We will:

- Advocate for increased financial support from the Victorian Government. Advocacy will take the form of direct advocacy to the State Government through Council, Regional Council groups and through encouraging the Municipal Association of Victoria to lead advocacy campaigns.

Comments

Cost shifting is the practice whereby the Victorian Government delegates responsibilities, adds regulations, sets fees, or withdraws or reduces financial support once a program is established.

Cost shifting by the Victorian Government can also include:

- the transfer of assets without appropriate funding support
- the requirement to provide concessions and rebates without compensation payments
- increased regulatory and compliance requirements; and
- failure to provide for indexation of fees and charges for services prescribed under state legislation or regulation.

Cost shifting's impact on Manningham Council is anticipated to be nearly \$17 million per annum (and growing) from 2025/26.

Note: This recommendation strongly aligns with Recommendation 13.

How progressed do you expect this recommendation to be in four years' (2028)?

Partially implemented.

Recommendation 6

Youth community engagement

We would like to see affordable programs for the youth. Provide discounts for under 18s at all Council facilities for better participation.

Design programs to support health and wellbeing of Manningham youth.

COUNCIL RESPONSE: SUPPORT

Support is given to both Recommendation and Minority Report.

Action

We will:

- Develop and deliver a bi-annual youth forum to enable the voice of young people to be heard and contribute to the development of the wellbeing of Manningham
- Deliver Manningham Youth Services and activate Manningham Youth Hub (MY Hub) in collaboration with associated youth service providers and schools. This will provide dynamic and diverse programs to support good mental health of young people and engage young people in a range of opportunities to participate
- Deliver the Manningham Youth Advisory Committee and other engagement forums tailored to young people, providing robust platforms for the voice of young people to contribute to Council direction and decisions that impact their lives
- Investigate increased opportunities to provide discount entry to Manningham facilities e.g. Aquarena noting comment in Minority Report.

Comments

Involving young people is a key priority for Council and the Minority Report from the Panel provides an alternative recommendation to amplify the voice of young people and include more young people in decision-making processes, while prioritising mental health supports for young people.

This recommendation aligns strongly with our new four-year Health and Wellbeing Action Plan.

Manningham Youth Services is a key Council service, delivered by a third party on behalf of Council. It provides a broad range of support services for young people and their families/carers, including:

- in-house and outreach programs
- individual support
- drop-in services
- wellbeing support
- referrals to clinical support
- social programs
- life-skill programs

- mentoring and peer support
- close collaboration with local schools and local service providers.

We also partner with community safety and support services to maximise youth participation (and minimise anti-social behaviours) by providing a variety of recreation, sporting and cultural activities and volunteering opportunities.

Manningham Youth Advisory Committee (MYAC) has a membership of young people to help inform Council directions about matters that affect young people. They work closely with local schools and other service providers to provide wrap-around support for young people via initiatives through our VicHealth Partnership and Youth Providers Network.

We also host the annual Principals' Breakfast as a roundtable and practical workshop and are exploring opportunities on targeted issues, such as a youth forum.

Note: The Minority Report recommendation also aligns with Recommendations 7 and 14.

How progressed do you expect this recommendation to be in four years' (2028)?

Fully implemented.

Minority Report 1 - Youth Recommendation 7

What is this in relation to?

Final Draft no. 7 - Youth Community Engagement and Safety

Comments we would like noted:

As the young people of Manningham, we believe it is the individual's motive to improve themselves and engage. Manningham Council already has events and the support for this, so investing more into it will only create more loss. The money could be spent on other groups who need more support e.g. Seniors. If the council really wants to provide additional support for youth, consider merging this into Original Recommendation 8 to focus on mental health of youth.

As the younger participants of this panel, we believe Council should engage more youth into the deciding making processes. More youth voices should be heard when decisions are being made on topics that would interest or impact them.

Note: Council has responded to Minority Report 1 - Youth Recommendation 7 as part of the response to Recommendation 6 (page 20).

Recommendation 7

Health and wellbeing support

Implement and sustain a long-term program focused on enhancing the overall mental health and well-being of Manningham residents, with a particular emphasis on mental health, youth, and ageing.

For mental health, prioritise awareness through education, campaigns, and publications to support prevention efforts. Rather than directly providing services, the Council will play a key role in guiding and connecting residents to the support they need.

COUNCIL RESPONSE: SUPPORT

Action

We will:

- Raise awareness and promote opportunities for healthy lifestyles and good physical health, to support good mental health and wellbeing outcomes
- Work with community partner service providers to action health and wellbeing outcomes identified in the [Health and Wellbeing Plan](#).
- Advocate for mental health services to improve health and wellbeing.

Comments

We have a legislated obligation to develop a Health and Wellbeing Plan addressing 10 priorities, one of which is improving wellbeing. This plan acknowledges the interconnection between mental and physical health, recognising that:

- people with mental health issues are more vulnerable to chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease
- poor physical health can exacerbate mental health challenges.

This recommendation supports Council's role in promoting healthy eating, good physical health and physical activity, and reducing tobacco harm – which can improve overall wellbeing and help prevent mental illness. We also recognise the relationship of mental health on other social issues such as unemployment, social isolation, gambling, drug/alcohol addiction, family violence, homelessness and food insecurity.

Addressing mental ill-health requires a combined effort that involves:

- Victorian and Commonwealth Government services at the clinical/medical end of the spectrum
- Council-led prevention activities such as healthy lifestyles and social connection activities.

Note: This recommendation strongly aligns with Recommendation 6 (and associated Minority Report) and Recommendation 14.

Note: This recommendation also aligns strongly with our new four-year Health and Wellbeing Action Plan.

How progressed do you expect this recommendation to be in four years' (2028)?

Fully implemented.

Recommendation 8

Council assets, multi-use facilities

Transitioning single use facilities into multi-use facilities that can be shared for all different demographics (e.g. sporting groups, seniors, youth).

COUNCIL RESPONSE: SUPPORT

Action

We will:

- Implement the [Community Infrastructure Plan](#)'s short-term actions action relating to Warrandyte Community Facilities.
- Improve the health and wellbeing of residents as outlined in the Public Health and Wellbeing Act.

Comments

One of the guiding principles for our [Community Infrastructure Plan](#) is to “maximise the functionality and use of our existing community infrastructure”. To support this principle, actions are planned to conduct a detailed review of existing community facilities in Warrandyte and Wonga Park. The review will consider the consolidation of existing facilities. The Warrandyte Community Facilities review is identified as a short-term priority (actions addressed by 2028) and the Wonga Park is a medium-term priority (actions addressed between 2029-2035).

We are required to prepare a Health and Wellbeing Plan addressing 10 key priorities, one of which is improving wellbeing.

By supporting shared multi-use facilities and encouraging participants across a range of demographics, we aim to improve physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing in our community.

How progressed do you expect this recommendation to be in four years' (2028)?

Implemented.

Recommendation 9

Promoting awareness of services available through customer service using existing and new platforms

This initiative aims to boost awareness of customer service and council services offerings by leveraging both traditional and new platforms, such as AI chatbots, social media (e.g. Instagram) and mobile apps. Through targeted campaigns and user-friendly communication strategies, we empower customers to access and utilise available services effectively, enhancing satisfaction and awareness.

COUNCIL RESPONSE: SUPPORT

Action

We will:

- Provide our community with a range of channels to interact with us, aligning with our promise to celebrate choice, including telephone, email, in-person, live chat (including AI Chat Bot), webforms, Snap Send Solve and social media.
- Progress existing customer experience initiatives to improve and enhance current engagement channels and measure performance and customer sentiment through these channels.
- Investigate and report back on the use of new platforms promote awareness of customer service and council services to enhance how we engage and communicate with the community.

Comments

We are enhancing our existing program to generate insights into customer preferences, problems and complaints and enable us to identify and implement initiatives to improve customer experience. We will monitor our performance and measure success through customer feedback measures across a broad range of services, using them to further inform improvement opportunities, and sharing results with our community. This aligns with our Customer Promise to celebrate choice, serve consistently, respond proactively, and make it easy.

We will share our customer feedback performance measures, promote the available engagement channels, and raise further awareness of services offered across Manningham. We have also embarked on a multi-year Corporate Systems Program as part of our Technology and Data Strategy. This program will leverage modern technology to centralise and consolidate customer records and interactions, simplify customer processes and enhance communication and engagement campaign capabilities.

How progressed do you expect this recommendation to be in four years' (2028)?

Fully implemented.

Recommendation 10

Improving Manningham's active transport network (constructive footpaths and bicycle lanes)

Build new footpaths (first priority) and bike lanes (second priority) to facilitate easier commuting to facilities or other modes of transportation and encourage an active lifestyle.

COUNCIL RESPONSE: SUPPORT

Action

We will:

- Continue to build new footpaths and bicycle infrastructure in accordance with the [Capital Works Program](#).
- Prepare a revised Active Transport Strategy for Manningham in 2026. In part, the new strategy will:
 - identify, assess and prioritise new pedestrian and cycling links for construction
 - promote and encourage active transport as a lifestyle choice.
 - review of all walking and cycling strategic documents,

Comments

In the meantime, pedestrian and cycling projects will continue to progress in accordance with the [Capital Works program](#). Once the new strategy is completed in early 2026, it will:

- inform the prioritisation of walking and cycling projects in the Capital Works Program
- ensure that the delivery of these projects meets community need.

How progressed do you expect this recommendation to be in four years' (2028)?

Partially implemented.

While the Active Travel Strategy will be completed, the delivery of all prioritised footpaths and bicycle lanes will continue past 2028.

Recommendation 11

Funding community festivals and activities

Funding for general community and multicultural specific events that maximise engagement, involvement and connection.

COUNCIL RESPONSE: SUPPORT

Action

We will support ongoing community engagement through diverse cultural events that foster inclusion by:

- partnering with local organisations to deliver events through our Annual Grant Program
- utilising sponsorship arrangements for larger events that require more funding or support
- maintaining minimal direct involvement in event organisation, allowing community groups to lead festival and event management
- directly managing events when no suitable partner is available or when an event serves a significant public or Council purpose (e.g. Carols by Candlelight).

Comments

Manningham Council provides funding through various grant programs and via our Sponsorship Policy.

We support and enable a wide range of community-driven festivals and events, such as the Manningham Family Festival and the Warrandyte Festival, both of which have been running for over 20 years. As demand for more community-run events grows, careful budget consideration is needed. Partnering with external sponsors may also be necessary for financial sustainability.

We work in partnership with external organisations to deliver both festivals and events. Our preference is to fund organisations through [Manningham's Annual Grant Program](#) or Sponsorship arrangements for larger events that require additional funding. This approach is cost-effective and minimises risk, while also enabling community engagement.

Barriers such as resourcing and funding constraints could affect our ability to support an increasing number of events under the current funding structures. Review our Annual Grant Program, Sponsorship Policy and cultural programming to understand and maximise multicultural communities, engagement, involvement and connection.

While the recommendation is supported in principle, further discussions are needed on event prioritisation and the potential for increased funding or private sector involvement.

Note: This recommendation aligns with our ongoing efforts to support multicultural and community events.

How progressed do you expect this recommendation to be in four years' (2028)?

Partially implemented.

Recommendation 12

Upgrades for local shops and business

Revitalising local business centres by upgrading key activity hubs like Tunstall Square, Jackson Court, Templestowe Village, Macedon Square, and Bulleen Plaza. This effort will balance modernisation with input from local businesses and residents to ensure upgrades reflect community priorities while maintaining fairness across different precincts for day activities and nightlife.

COUNCIL RESPONSE: SUPPORT

Action

We will:

- Continue implementing upgrades to local business centres as part of the Vibrant Villages Action Plan 2023 and Annual Placemaking Program.
- Deliver a phased approach to upgrading activity centres, focusing on high-impact improvements such as parking, public amenities and streetscape enhancements, ensuring that business-related concerns are a key consideration in each phase. A transparent process will prioritise upgrades based on both local business and community needs
- Deliver infrastructure upgrades that are prioritised within the 10-year capital works program, with resources allocated across centres
- Continue to consult with local businesses and traders through Trader Associations and community feedback, ensuring that their specific needs (such as parking, customer access, and visibility) are addressed alongside broader community priorities.

Comments

The Vibrant Villages Action Plan 2023 provides a framework for upgrading activity hubs, including Tunstall Square, Jackson Court, Templestowe Village, Macedon Square and Bulleen Plaza. Upgrades are already underway, guided by considerations of both local business needs and community priorities, ensuring a balanced approach that benefits all stakeholders.

In addition to the action plan, the Annual Placemaking Program supports our activity hubs with artistic initiatives and community-driven activities to maintain vibrancy while catering to business and resident concerns.

While budget constraints may affect the speed of implementation, ongoing reviews of the Vibrant Villages Action Plan and the Annual Placemaking Program will guide the phased upgrades, ensuring they align with the evolving needs of the community, businesses, and visitors.

Initial Implementation in key areas:

- Start refurbishment work at priority centres identified through consultation, focusing on high-impact improvements
- Pilot community-requested features such as improved parking or public amenities to evaluate their success before broader implementation.

This approach will drive tangible progress, with upgrades tailored to the evolving needs of the community, businesses and visitors. The phased delivery will ensure that improvements are balanced, inclusive and reflect community priorities.

Activity centres will also become potential hubs for new housing development that will enhance the vibrancy and liveability of the centres. Increasing housing opportunities within our activity centres will improve the community wellbeing and connectedness of the centres.

To ensure our programs are meeting community needs, we will support the establishment of new trader associations to foster collaboration and ensure that businesses are well represented in the decision-making process.

How progressed do you expect this recommendation to be in four years' (2028)?

Partially implemented.



Recommendation 13

Explore and unlock new revenue streams to add to the remit budget, from available resources (not just assets)

Consider revenue generation, financially sustainable, and diversification of revenue streams.

Council to conduct Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats analysis of current assets to assess their utilization and identify opportunities for optimization or enhancement. This will guide the decision-making process in replacing outdated assets with new ones, ensuring they are both functional and appealing to all.

COUNCIL RESPONSE: SUPPORT

Action

We will:

- Consider the diversification of our revenue streams to reduce our reliance on rates income and to ensure that we continue to be financially sustainable over the long term
- Analyse the utilisation of our assets and consider future needs. This will include the identification of opportunities for optimal usage of our assets such as multi-use facilities and co-location of services.

Comments

Council will continue to deliver on our [Strategic Property Portfolio](#) and [Community Infrastructure Plan](#).

Our [Strategic Property Portfolio](#) contributes to Council's vision of being a financially sustainable organisation. The intention is to acquire and/or develop property that will:

- strategically enhance opportunities for development and community enhancement; and/or
- provide us with an additional funding source to enhance services and associated infrastructure for the benefit of the community.

Our [Community Infrastructure Plan](#) will direct Manningham's significant investment in new and upgraded infrastructure and guide decisions to decommission those assets that no longer meet the needs of the community.

This recommendation should be well-integrated into [Council's financial strategy](#), with new revenue streams identified and some already generating returns. A formal review at the four-year mark will evaluate our progress, refine strategies and explore further opportunities for sustainable growth.

How progressed do you expect this recommendation to be in four years' (2028)?

Implemented.

Recommendation 14

Equitable support for families and individuals in urgent need

Ensure that support is efficient (making sure that rate payers money is not wasted) and available to families needing immediate assistance through working together with local services.

COUNCIL RESPONSE: SUPPORT

Action

We will continue to work with local strategic partners to provide a range of services and programs that support wellbeing and community participation of residents experiencing various forms of disadvantage.

Comments

This recommendation aligns strongly with our four-year [Health and Wellbeing Action Plan](#).

Our Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Service is experiencing an increase in parents needing support, being affected by family violence, mental health and requiring access to emergency food relief and associated services. MCH delivers targeted programs to meet this need, including:

- the Circle of Security program to help parents build and strengthen a secure relationship with their child
- a parenting group specifically for dads.

Many people are facing the difficult choice between paying the rent or buying food.

Local food relief services are experiencing increasing demand and decreasing food supply.

To address this issue, we need to collaborate with local groups and neighbouring Councils to find innovative ways to support those in urgent need.

We have a legislated obligation to develop a Health and Wellbeing Plan, which must address 10 key priorities, including:

- the relationship between social issues like unemployment, social isolation, gambling, drug/alcohol addiction, family violence, homelessness and food insecurity.

We work with a range of local expert partners to address a range of social needs.

Our efforts include:

- funding agreements with local service providers in a coordinated approach to deliver food relief
- facilitating the [Manningham Food Relief Network](#) to meet community needs.

Family violence is prevalent across all life stages and is an underlying trigger to many social issues, including:

- community safety, community connection
- mental ill health
- homelessness, and food security
- accessing affordable services, from clinical support to essential services to daily needs such as swimming lessons for children.

Note: This recommendation relates closely with Recommendations 1, 6 and 7.


How progressed do you expect this recommendation to be in four years' (2028)?

Fully implemented.



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