

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Ordinary Council Meeting

Tuesday 15 April 2025

CONFIDENTIAL

CONSIDERATION FOR EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Pursuant to section 90(2) of the Local Government Act 1999 the Council orders that all members of the public, except the Mayor, Councillors and (Council Officers) be excluded from attendance at the meeting for the receipt and consideration in confidence of Strategic Projects Update.

The Council is satisfied that, pursuant to section 90(3) of the Act, the information to be received, discussed or considered in relation to the Agenda Item is:

- (d) commercial information of a confidential nature (not being a trade secret) the disclosure of which -
- (i) could reasonably be expected to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied the information, or to confer a commercial advantage on a third party; and
- (ii) would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.
- (k) tenders for the supply of goods, the provision of services or the carrying out of works.

The Council is satisfied that the principle that the meeting be conducted in a place open to the public has been outweighed in the circumstances because the information contained within the report and attachments presents matters relating to commercial contractual matters, including tenders for service, the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to prejudice the commercial position of Council or the third parties and is considered on balance to be contrary to the public interest as it could prejudice the Councils position in obtaining best value outcomes on behalf of the community.

Author: Chris White, General Manager People, Place and Liveability

Authoriser: Sarah Philpott, Chief Executive Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council report titled 'Strategic Projects Update' as presented on Tuesday 15 April 2025 be noted.
2. On the basis of assessment of the tenders received, Council declines to award the contract for the Umpherston Sinkhole/Balumbul master plan at this time.
3. That Council authorises officers to develop, design and cost the scope of works for required maintenance and presentation upgrades at Umpherston Sinkhole/Balumbul, prior to future consideration and determination by Council.
4. That Council authorises officers to collaborate with the North Gambier Football and Netball Club and its architect to develop the scope and cost for architectural services

for the upgrade of the grandstand and changing facilities at Vansittart Park, prior to future consideration and determination by Council.

5. That Council authorises officers to remove the funds budgeted in the 2024/25 financial year for the CBD master plan and activation at BR3, and to include these funds in the draft budget for 2025/26.

PURPOSE

This report provides an update following a review of Expressions of Interest (EOIs) received in connection with the commissioning of a master plan for Umpherston Sinkhole/Balumbul. This information has been extrapolated to inform recommendations in connection with the next stages of other key strategic projects, including the master plans for Vansittart Park and the Mount Gambier CBD. Options to deliver associated community benefits that respond to emerging opportunities are also identified in the report.

BACKGROUND / OPTIONS

In March 2022, Council endorsed its Sport, Recreation, and Open Space Strategy (SROSS) following a comprehensive audit of Council owned and/or managed open spaces and sporting precincts within the city.

A key recommendation of SROSS was the development of master plans for key recreation and sporting sites, carried out in consultation with relevant users and stakeholders. These master plans are intended to provide a coordinated and strategic approach to infrastructure development, ensuring that facilities are fit for purpose and capable of meeting community needs well into the future.

At its Ordinary Meeting of 16 April 2024, Council resolved as follows:

1. *That Council Report No. AR24/24333 titled 'Master Plan Options' as presented on 16 April 2024 be noted.*
2. *That Council determines the priority order of master plans for the following sites:*
 - *Umpherston Sinkhole/Balumbul*
 - *Vansittart Park*
 - *Olympic Park*
 - *Hastings Cunningham Reserve*
3. *That a regenerative maintenance program for Umpherston Sinkhole/Balumbul be presented to Council by October that identifies the resourcing and budget requirements to mitigate the degenerative impact of tourism on this significant natural asset.*
4. *That Council commence implementation of the endorsed schedule in the current financial year, and that a further discussion on implementation of the other projects and budget allocations be considered during the budget process.*

Also relevant to the content of this report and attendant recommendations is Council's resolution of December 2024, as follows:

1. *That Council report titled 'CBD Activation and Master Plan' as presented on Tuesday 17 December 2024 be noted.*

2. *That administration utilises remaining 2024/2025 operational CBD Activation budget allocation for the pursuit of test and trial place-activation initiatives that directly align to the feedback and priorities highlighted through recent studies.*
3. *That Council endorse the allocation of funds for the delivery of a CBD Master Plan, as follows:*
 - i. *An initial allocation of \$75,000 from 2024/2025 operating budget provision for "Strategic Work Plan Delivery" to be adjusted at budget review 2.*
 - ii. *The commitment of a further allocation of \$75,000 within the 2025/2026 annual budget from the operating budget capacity provision for "Strategic Work Plan Delivery".*
4. *That administration progress with the development of a project scope for the engagement of suitably positioned industry experts to deliver the CBD Master Plan.*

In initially prioritising the master plan for Umpherston Sinkhole/Balumbul, Council was cognisant of the significant pressure it faces from increased visitation. While this influx of visitors has brought positive attention to the site, it has also led to negative outcomes such as vandalism and accelerated wear and tear.

Council invited EOIs from suitably qualified consultants in January/February 2025 to develop a master plan for Umpherston Sinkhole/Balumbul, and a review of submissions was carried out by an assessment panel in March 2025*. The General Manager City Infrastructure advises that:

- Four tenders were received.
- One tender (costed at \$28,500) did not respond adequately to the brief for tenderers.
- The remaining three tenders responded adequately to the brief, and range in price from \$94,000 to \$140,000.

(* - Note: The General Manager People, Place and Liveability declared a perceived conflict of interest in connection with the assessment of the tenders received and did not participate in this process).

As discussed at the Confidential Elected Member Briefing of 25 March 2025, the compliant EOIs received significantly exceeded the allocated budget of \$50,000 for the master plan, and would also exhaust or exceed the additional \$50,000 which had been anticipated for the subsequent master plan for Vansittart Park. Under these circumstances, and mindful that neither master plan can be effectively delivered within currently budgeted or proposed resources, it is not recommended to proceed with an engagement at this time.

In consideration of the above, it is noted that an opportunity now exists to redirect budgeted funds to carry out priority maintenance and presentation upgrades at Umpherston Sinkhole/Balumbul. In this way, Council would realise a quick and tangible improvement to the asset – to the benefit of visitors and the community – whilst still preserving the opportunity to carry out a master plan for the site when alternate/additional funding has been identified. Such works will need to be scoped, designed and costed for review and approval by Council.

Similarly, and in order to deliver an appreciable community benefit at Vansittart Park, an effective use of a portion of committed funds would be to partner with the North Gambier Football and Netball Club (NGFNC) to commission the architectural services required to repair and upgrade the heritage grandstand and changing facilities/amenities. Recent meetings with the club and a suitably qualified architect indicate that a maximum contribution

of \$10,000 from Council would enable the delivery of this important work. This would align with the current aspirations and advocacy work of the club – maximising the potential to gain significant external funding to complete the refurbishment and upgrade works - and, again, would complement the future development of a master plan for the wider site. An 'in principle' decision to support this process would facilitate further discussion with NGFNC and their architect, prior to future referral to Council to commit funds to the project.

Finally, in connection with this matter, and mindful of the need to still approach the market in connection with Council's resolution to commission a CBD masterplan and associated 'rapid activation', it will be necessary to re-budget these sums in the 2025/26 draft budget – this will allow for due consideration of any tenders received (estimated June 2025).

IMPLICATIONS TO CONSIDER

Legal	Council must consider its legal obligations under the Local Government Act 1999 and Crown Land Management Act 2009 with respect to management of community land owned by or under the care and control of Council. It should also be noted that any changes to uses or aspirations for the reserves may require review of the relevant Community Land Management Plans.
Financial and Budget	The costs and benefits should be weighed up for each of the proposed master plans to ensure value for money for the community and Council, as well as the ability to deliver on such plans. Options to more cost-effectively deliver community benefits should also be considered.
Community Consultation and Engagement	Relevant users and stakeholders will be engaged and consulted as required in connection with any proposals to redevelop or plan community assets, sites and precincts.
Other Resources	Placemaking initiatives will involve the utilisation of available internal skills and resources. before external contractors are engaged. For short-term placemaking activity, this may leverage capacities of our City Infrastructure Team.

RISK ANALYSIS

The risk identification and categorisation relies on the City of Mount Gambier [Risk Management Policy](#).

Risk	Consequence Rating	Risk Likelihood Rating	Risk Rating	Mitigation
Finance - Market response	Insignificant (1)	Unlikely (2)	Low	Pre-procurement market assessment.
Reputation - community concern or outrage	Moderate (3)	Possible (3)	Moderate	Identification of alternative means to deliver community outcomes.
Legal / Regulatory / Policy - Contractual considerations	Moderate (3)	Unlikely (2)	Moderate	Adherence to policies. Local Government best practice.
People - internal resource implications	Minor (2)	Unlikely (2)	Low	Predominantly within existing workplans .

APPLICATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN

This report aligns to the following strategic objectives(s):

Priority 3: Infrastructure and Services

- 3.12 Effectively and efficiently manage Council owned and controlled land holdings to meet the needs of the community and advance our strategic objectives.
- 3.13 Improve the quality and safety of, and access to, our active open space facilities, including our sporting and recreation reserves.

Priority 5: A Vibrant Community

- 5.1 Define a clear vision and action plan for the CBD which guides decision making and supports its ongoing growth as a vital economic, social and cultural hub for our community.
- 5.2 Provide well-considered public realm improvements which echo our local identity, enhance access and walkability and foster greater community connection.
- 5.3 Encourage innovation by actively supporting the test and trial of new ideas that enhance the vibrancy and appeal of our CBD.
- 5.4 Support the strategic growth of an inner-city population through focussed residential and overnight stay growth initiatives.
- 5.5 Foster a collaborative and 'open for business' environment amongst CBD traders, embracing times of peak visitation, improving our early evening economy and ensuring a destination experience throughout the calendar year.

RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICY

N/A

IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS

Having approached the market for Expressions of Interest in connection with the proposed Umpherston Sinkhole/Balumbul master plan, it is apparent that insufficient funds have been allocated at this time in order to allow for the completion of this task and/or for the envisaged subsequent master plan for Vansittart Park. At the same time, opportunities have presented themselves for appropriate investment at both sites which would result in the timely delivery of community benefits, whilst not constraining Council's ability or intention to commission appropriate master plans for the site when sufficient (or alternative) funds exist or have been identified.

In view of the above, it is recommended that a scope of remediation and improvement works (along with associated design) to address maintenance and presentation issues at Umpherston Sinkhole/Balumbul be developed and implemented as a priority – at this time representing a more effective spend of the funding currently committed to the site.

It is further recommended that Council prioritise supporting the engagement of architectural services in collaboration with the North Gambier Football Club to develop the detailed plans for the comprehensive upgrade and extension of the changing rooms, amenities and facilities at the Vansittart Park grandstand – again, noting that this will not preclude the future development of a master plan for the wider site, but will maximise opportunities for a key community facility upgrade in the short term.

Finally, Expressions of Interest will be sought during April/May 2025 to give effect to Council's resolution to commission a master plan for the Mount Gambier CBD, with a view to the matter being referred to Council for determination in June 2025. At the same time, the costs,

logistics, permits and options associated with the envisaged 'rapid activation' of the CBD (potentially via the installation of a 'parklet') will be assessed for review and determination by Council, again in accordance with the extant resolution of Council. Given that an effective commencement of this project will require further consideration and approval by Council, and that such authority cannot be achieved before June 2025 at the earliest, it is recommended that the currently budgeted funds of \$225,000 for the CBD master plan (\$150,000) and associated activation (\$75,000) be removed from the current financial year at BR3, and then be re-budgeted in the 2025/26 budget

CONCLUSION

Having approached the market in connection with Council's resolutions to commission master plans for key strategic sites/precincts, it has now been established that current budget allocations are not sufficient to support the engagement of suitably qualified consultants for the Umpherston Sinkhole/Balumbul and Vansittart Park plans. The forthcoming issue of the brief for the CBD master plan will assist Council in future consideration of this matter.

Notwithstanding the above, this report identifies opportunities to deliver community benefits at both Umpherston Sinkhole/Balumbul and Vansittart Park through the partial redirection of committed funds. If accepted, the attendant recommendations will require further referral to Council of the developed scopes for both sites (i.e. maintenance and presentation works at Umpherston Sinkhole/Balumbul and a contribution to the procurement of professional services at Vansittart Park) which will identify accurate project costs. This approach would not prejudice Council's ability to develop master plans for both sites as funding (including potential additional grant funding) is identified and sourced.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

CONSIDERATION FOR KEEPING ITEMS CONFIDENTIAL

1. In accordance with Sections 91(7) and 91(9) of the Local Government Act 1999 the Council orders that the report Strategic Projects Update and its attachments, resolution/s and minutes arising from the report, having been considered by the Council in confidence under:
 - (d) commercial information of a confidential nature (not being a trade secret) the disclosure of which -
 - (i) could reasonably be expected to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied the information, or to confer a commercial advantage on a third party; and
 - (ii) would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.
 - (k) tenders for the supply of goods, the provision of services or the carrying out of works.

be kept confidential and not available for public inspection until a further order of Council to release.
2. Further that Council delegates the power to review, revoke, but not extend the confidential order to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the provisions of Section 91(9)(c) of the Local Government Act 1999.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Ordinary Council Meeting Tuesday 15 April 2025



RESOLUTION OCM 2025/62

Moved: Cr Sonya Meziniec

Seconded: Cr Max Bruins

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CARRIED

RESOLUTION OCM 2025/65

Moved: Cr Frank Morello

Seconded: Cr Paul Jenner

1. That Council report titled 'Strategic Projects Update' as presented on Tuesday, 15 April 2025 be noted.
2. The Council instructs the Chief Executive Officer to exercise her existing delegation to award the Umpherston Sinkhole/Balambul masterplan to the successful tenderer, and to make such budget adjustments as may be required at BR3 to give effect to this resolution.
3. That Council authorises officers to develop, design and cost the scope of works for required maintenance and presentation upgrades at Umpherston Sinkhole/Balumbul, prior to future consideration and determination by Council.
4. That Council authorises officers to collaborate with the North Gambier Football and Netball Club and its architect to develop the scope and cost for architectural services for the upgrade of the grandstand and changing facilities at Vansittart Park, prior to future consideration and determination by Council.
5. Council authorises officers to remove the funds budgeted in the 2024/25 financial year for the CBD master plan and activation at BR3, and to include these funds in the draft budget for 2025/26.

CARRIED

RESOLUTION OCM 2025/66

Moved: Cr Sonya Meziniec

Seconded: Cr Josh Lynagh

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CARRIED