



Shire of
Plantagenet

Mount Barker • Kendenup • Narrikup
Porongurup • Rocky Gully

ORDINARY AGENDA

**An Ordinary Meeting of Council will be held at the
Shire of Plantagenet Council Chambers, Mount Barker
at 5:00pm on Tuesday 24 March 2026**

Julian Murphy
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



DISCLAIMER

This agenda has yet to be dealt with by the Council. The Recommendations shown at the foot of each Item have yet to be considered by the Council and are not to be interpreted as being the position of the Council. The minutes of the meeting held to discuss this agenda should be read to ascertain the decision of the Council.

In certain circumstances, members of the public are not entitled to inspect material, which in the opinion of the Chief Executive Officer is confidential and relates to a meeting or a part of a meeting that is likely to be closed to members of the public.

No responsibility whatsoever is implied or accepted by the Shire of Plantagenet for any act, omission, statement or intimation occurring during Council or Committee meetings.

Any person or legal entity who acts or fails to act in reliance upon any statement, act or omission made in a Council or Committee meeting does so at that person's or legal entity's own risk.

In particular and without derogating in any way from the broad disclaimer above, in any discussion regarding any planning application or application for a licence, any statement of intimation of approval made by any member or Officer of the Shire of Plantagenet during the course of any meeting is not intended to be and is not taken as notice of approval from the Shire of Plantagenet. The Shire of Plantagenet advises that anyone who has any application lodged with the Shire of Plantagenet must obtain and should only rely on WRITTEN CONFIRMATION of the outcome of the application and any conditions attaching to the decision made by the Shire of Plantagenet in respect of the application.

The Shire of Plantagenet advises that any plans or documents contained within this agenda may be subject to copyright law provisions (Copyright Act 1968, as amended) and that the express permission of the copyright owner(s) should be sought prior to their reproduction. It should be noted that Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against any persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may represent a copyright infringement.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The Evacuation signal is a siren.

On hearing the siren, please leave the building immediately through either of the front doors. Assembly areas are to your right.

A warden will issue you with further instructions.

Obey the instruction of the warden at all times.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ITEM	SUBJECT	PAGE NO
1	DECLARATION OF OPENING / ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS.....	3
2	RECORD OF ATTENDANCE / APOLOGIES / LEAVE OF ABSENCE (PREVIOUSLY APPROVED)	3
3	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	3
3.1	RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS PUBLIC QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE	3
3.1.1	MR PATRICK BEERE ASKED THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AT THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2026.....	3
3.2	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME - SECTION 5.24 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1995.....	4
4	PETITIONS / DEPUTATIONS / PRESENTATIONS.....	4
5	DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST.....	4
6	APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE	4
7	CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES.....	5
7.1	ORDINARY MINUTES OF COUNCIL HELD 24 FEBRUARY 2026.....	5
8	ANNOUNCEMENTS BY PRESIDING MEMBER WITHOUT DISCUSSION	5
9	REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND OFFICERS.....	6
9.1	DEVELOPMENT & REGULATORY SERVICES REPORTS	6
9.1.1	MOUNT BARKER STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE - SELF SUPPORTING LOAN.....	6
9.2	INFRASTRUCTURE AND ASSETS REPORTS.....	13
9.3	CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORTS	14
9.3.1	MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT – FEBRUARY 2026	14

9.3.2 LIST OF ACCOUNTS – FEBRUARY 202617

9.3.3 COUNCIL POLICY – LOAN BORROWINGS20

9.3.4 PLACE-BASED RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN24

9.3.5 HEALTH & WELLBEING PLAN 2026-203027

9.3.6 AUDIT REGULATION 17 REVIEW32

9.4 EXECUTIVE SERVICES REPORTS.....35

9.4.1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL REFORM35

10 MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN38

**11 NEW BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE INTRODUCED BY
DECISION OF THE MEETING38**

12 CONFIDENTIAL38

13 CLOSURE OF MEETING.....38

1 DECLARATION OF OPENING / ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

The Presiding Member will declare the meeting open.

Welcome to this Ordinary Meeting of Council, of Tuesday the 24 March 2026, commencing at 5:00pm. This meeting is being audio-recorded, in accordance with Regulation 14I of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996.

I also point you to the Disclaimer and Emergency Procedures on the lead in pages of this document for this building.

The Shire of Plantagenet acknowledges the traditional custodians of our area and their continuing connection to the land and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Menang Noongar community and their culture; and to Elders past and present.

2 RECORD OF ATTENDANCE / APOLOGIES / LEAVE OF ABSENCE (PREVIOUSLY APPROVED)

Members Present:

In Attendance:

Apologies:

Members of the Public Present:

Previously Approved Leave of Absence:

Cr B Bell

3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

3.1 RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS PUBLIC QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE

3.1.1 MR PATRICK BEERE ASKED THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AT THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2026.

Mr Beere asked the following questions of Council and the responses noted under were sent to Mr Beere on 3 March 2026:

Q1: Has there been any progress on the investigation into the tree/vegetation clearing of the block bounded by Montem, Menston and Mario Streets?

Response

An investigation is being conducted by the Department of Water & Environmental Regulation (DWER). As the investigation is with DWER, the Shire does not have any statutory power to influence this investigation, though several months ago the Shire's CEO issued a letter to DWER asking for strong action to be taken, rather than just a simple educational warning or some other outcome of a similar effect. DWER routinely investigates illegal clearing cases involving 1,500+ hectares, so the fact that they are supporting action on the relatively small clearing at 46 Marion Street is encouraging from the Shire's perspective as its not uncommon for this level of clearing to simply receive educational warnings.

Q2: If so, what has been the outcome of the investigation?

Response:

Due to privacy laws, the Shire is not able to release any information about the specifics of any investigation as it is required to remain confidential between the relevant landowner and the investigatory authority (DWER in this case).

3.2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME - SECTION 5.24 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1995

4 PETITIONS / DEPUTATIONS / PRESENTATIONS

5 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Part 5 Division 6 Local Government Act 1995

6 APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Section 5.25 Local Government Act 1995

7 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

7.1 ORDINARY MINUTES OF COUNCIL HELD 24 FEBRUARY 2026

Minutes, as circulated, of the Ordinary Meeting of the Shire of Plantagenet, held on 24 February 2026.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Shire of Plantagenet, held on 24 February 2026, be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

8 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY PRESIDING MEMBER WITHOUT DISCUSSION

9 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND OFFICERS

9.1 DEVELOPMENT & REGULATORY SERVICES REPORTS

9.1.1 MOUNT BARKER STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE - SELF SUPPORTING LOAN

File Ref:	N67585
Attachments:	<u>Plantagenet -Indicative Quote \$1.9M</u> <u>Plantagenet – Indicative Guarantee Fees</u> <u>Breakdown of Building Costs</u> <u>Quantity Surveyors Report</u> <u>SES Building Plan 2026/2027 LGGS</u>
Responsible Officer:	André Pinto Executive Manager Development and Regulatory Services
Author:	Mike Barnes Community Emergency Services Manager
Proposed Meeting Date:	24 March 2026

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's consideration of a request to take out a self-supporting loan on behalf of the Mount Barker State Emergency Service (SES) for the construction of a purpose-built administration and garaging facility.

BACKGROUND

Each year, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) provides capital and operational expenditure allocations to the Shire to support the operations of Bush Fire Brigades (BFB) and the State Emergency Service (SES). Included in the capital expenditure program is funding for the replacement or upgrade of aging BFB or SES facilities.

A new facility for the Mount Barker State Emergency Service was submitted for consideration in the 2024–2025 Local Government Grants Scheme (LGGS) budget but was unsuccessful. DFES advised that the application could not be supported due to the high volume of requests and limited available funding.

To strengthen our application for the next funding round, DFES has indicated that a commitment to a self-supporting loan would significantly improve the likelihood of approval.

Self-supporting loans have been successfully used within the LGGS framework since its inception in 2003/04, with local governments having taken out such loans for the construction of volunteer BFB/SES facilities. These loans are typically offered for projects exceeding \$1,000,000 and provide the following benefits:

- Enable the BFB/SES Capital Grants Committee to approve more projects within the available funding pool.
- Loans are generally arranged through the Western Australian Treasury Corporation (WATC) over a 10-year term.
- Local Government is responsible for making repayments (principal, interest, and guarantee fee) in accordance with the loan schedule.
- DFES reimburses the Local Government for these repayments upon receipt of a tax invoice.
- A copy of the approved loan repayment schedule and debenture documents must be provided to DFES.
- Annual repayments are automatically submitted for approval to the SES Capital Grants Committee for the duration of the loan, eliminating the need for repeated applications.

In addition to financial arrangements, the Local Government will be responsible for site preparation and coordination of the tender and construction process.

Mount Barker SES Ground Works

The proposed site for the new facility is located at #2 Marmion Street (adjacent to Frost Park). The area is relatively flat and currently grassed. Site works, including establishment of an access track from Marmion Street through to McDonald Avenue and the construction of a carpark, are estimated to cost \$1.5 million.

The site plan also allows for:

- Co-location of the Mount Barker Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service with shared car parking and separate buildings.
- Future accommodation for the WA Police Force should they choose to upgrade their facility.
- Space for the State Cache, currently stored in the existing MBSSES building.

If Council supports this proposal, DFES will be advised during the application process that the Shire is prepared to take out a self-supporting loan over 10 years, with repayments funded annually through the LGGS.

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

Section 6.20 Local Government Act 1995 relates to borrowings by local authorities.

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

Consultation has been undertaken with the Mount Barker State Emergency Service and DFES.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All repayments relating to the self-supporting loan would be met by DFES with minimal financial implications to the Council. However, should DFES default, the

loan would become the Council's responsibility. Extending the loan may also affect the Council's ability to borrow money for its own purposes in the future.

The net cash impact on the 2026-2027 budget will be approximately \$1.5M for ground works, and indicative repayment amounts adjusted as follows (subject to change due to fluctuating interest rates).

An indicative rate loan repayment schedule has been received from WATC for \$1.9M loan over 10 years. Interest rate is 5.1387% p.a. annual repayments being \$122,679.39. The total interest payment over the term is \$553,587.88 (Attachment 1).

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Council – 'Self-Supporting Loans' Policy states as follows:

1. Eligible Organisations

1.1 Loans will only be considered for applicants that are incorporated bodies occupying land either owned by, or vested in the care, control and management of a community organisation.

1.2 Organisations are to provide:

- a) Three years audited financial statements.*
- b) A business plan for the proposed term of the loan that clearly demonstrates an ability to repay.*
- c) Their constitution.*
- d) Minute agreeing to borrow funds.*
- e) Whatever security or guarantees that the Council considers appropriate to ensure that the loan is repaid.*
- f) Any other information that the Council requires.*

2. Funding Details

2.1 Funds will only be provided for capital works on the subject land when ownership of all infrastructure ultimately vests in the community (notwithstanding established leasehold arrangements).

2.2 Loans will be provided at the State Treasury interest rate when drawing the loan and will be fixed for the duration of the loan. The term of the loan is not to exceed ten years. Loan repayments will be amortised and will generally be six monthly unless the applicant organisation requests otherwise. An additional Government Guarantee Fee will be payable six monthly at rates that may vary during the term of the loan.

3. Approval Process

3.1 The Council will consider the approval of the loan on the following basis:

- a) Demonstrated ability to repay.*
 - b) Maximum loan amount 100% project cost or 100% of value of completed structure (not to include land content).*
 - c) Stability, sound management, membership base, community accessibility and longevity of applicant organisation.*
-

- d) *Funds being used for capital improvements.*
- e) *Debenture security over assets (including lease) of organisation if considered appropriate.*

3.2 *Organisations will be required to:*

- a) *Enter into a Deed of Agreement for the period of the loan repayments.*
- b) *Pay all costs associated with the preparation of documents concerning the raising of the loan.*
- c) *Insure and keep insured premises where the premises are security over repayment of a loan.*

3.3 *Any proposal to lend to a community organisation that has not been included in the Council's annual budget must be advertised for one month in accordance with Section 6.20 (2) of the Local Government Act 1995.*

4. *Other*

4.1 *Funds will only be released after documentary proof of significant expenditure (or committed expenditure) is submitted.*

4.2 *The Council will seek any remedy available to it under law in terms of the recovery of delinquent instalments of loans.*

4.3 *The Council will consider the objectives of Policy No. F/FM/6 – Borrowing Program and Asset Financing in determining applications for self-supporting loans.'*

The above Self-Supporting Loan policy has been written based on loan recipients being community groups. Given that the Shire will be the recipient; and DFES, a State Government department, will make the repayments, much of this policy is not applicable. The requirements under Clauses 1.2, 3.1, 3.2(c) and 4.1, will not be required.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

If this proposal is supported, the drawdown of loan funds will likely occur in the 2026/2027 budget.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications for this report.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The current facility is no longer fit for purpose. With one of the buildings now condemned, and has asbestos, a new facility is required; the ongoing maintenance of which will be part of the annual LGGS.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Shire of Plantagenet Strategic Community Plan 2022/2023 – 2032/2033 provides that a strategic priority will be to support the community in emergency and fire management planning, preparedness, response and recovery. Other relevant parts of the Plan include:

- Providing fit-for-purpose community facilities.
- Supporting our local emergency services volunteers.

Accordingly, the recommended outcome this report aligns with the Strategic Community Plan.

RISK MITIGATION IMPLICATIONS

Medium Risk

This item has been evaluated against the Shire of Plantagenet Risk Assessment and Acceptance Criteria. The perceived level of risk is considered to be “Medium” and can be managed by specific procedures, increased monitoring and the allocation of additional resources.

REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no regional implications for this report.

OFFICER COMMENT

The proposed new loan will fund the Mount Barker State Emergency Service administration and garaging facility. The current shed is outdated. A new purpose-built facility would provide a two-bay building incorporating space for equipment storage, vehicles and trailers, where the administration building will contain the training, operations and communication rooms and ablutions.

The total loan is estimated to be \$1.9M, with a ten-year maturity date. Repayments would be \$122,679.39 including the guaranteed fee per annum.

The request from the Mount Barker State Emergency Service meets the requirements of the Council’s Self-Supporting Loan policy as detailed below:

1. *Eligible organisation:*

- 1.1. DFES is an incorporated body. Their offices are situated in 20 Stockton Bend, Cockburn Central WA 6461.

2. *Funding details:*

- 2.1. The new loan is to finance one SES unit provided for capital works for the construction of the Mount Barker State Emergency Service facility to completion.

3. *Approval Process:*

- 3.1. A Deed of Agreement for the period of the loan repayments will be entered into prior to establishing the loan. The costs associated with preparation of documentation to be met by DFES.
- 3.3 It is proposed for the loan to be included in the 2026/2027 budget, so no advertising will be needed.

4. *Other:*

The objectives of – Borrowing and Asset Financing Policy are:

'To recognise the degree to which borrowing is acceptable, determine in what circumstances borrowing should and should not be utilised, consider funding strategies for major assets and categories of services and satisfy the Western Australian Treasury Corporation that any new borrowings will not place financial stress on the Council.'

Under that policy, the Council may give favourable consideration to borrowing money for the acquisition or construction of an asset where the asset to be acquired is a new addition to the Council's asset base and the project contributes to the achievement of an identified strategic objective. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to be in line with the policy.

As a part of deliberations on loan financing, the policy requires the Council to consider its capacity to pay based on the trends shown in quantitative data required by the Western Australian Treasury Corporation.

Rather than setting specific ratio limits within which the Shire should aim, a longer-term view should be formed about capacity to pay. This would be based on trend data, rather than at the point in time when the loan is being applied for. Given the proposal is for repayments to be made by a State Government department, the risk is negligible and there will be no impact on capacity to pay.

VOTING REQUIREMENTS

Absolute Majority

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approves the proposal to build a two bay SES unit for the Mount Barker State Emergency Service.
2. Applies for a \$1.9million self-supporting loan to fund the SES development and makes provisions in the 2026/27 budget accordingly, subject to the following conditions:
 - a) The loan be taken out with the Western Australian Treasury Corporation for a period of 10 years;
 - b) The interest rate be fixed for the life of the loan;
 - c) Principal, interest and government guarantee repayments be funded annually by DFES through the Local Government Grants Scheme; and
 - d) DFES pay all costs associated with the preparation of documents concerning the raising of the loan.
3. Authorises The Chief Executive Officer to apply to the Western Australian Treasury Corporation for a loan of \$1.9million for the construction of the Mount Barker State Emergency Service, to be taken out in the 2026/2027 financial year.
4. Authorises the Shire President and the Chief Executive Officer to affix the Common Seal of the Council:
 - a) To a Debenture Agreement between the Shire of Plantagenet and the Western Australian Treasury Corporation; and
 - b) To a Deed of Repayment between the Shire of Plantagenet and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, as proposed.
5. Set aside \$1.5million in the 2026-2027 budget to undertake the necessary site works at the location.

9.2 INFRASTRUCTURE AND ASSETS REPORTS

Nil

9.3 CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORTS

9.3.1 MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT – FEBRUARY 2026

File Ref:	N67734
Attachment:	<u>Monthly Financial Report – February 2026</u>
Responsible Officer:	Anthony Middleton Executive Manager Corporate & Community
Author:	Kylie Caley Manager of Finance
Proposed Meeting Date:	24 March 2026

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the monthly financial reports for the month ending 28 February 2026.

BACKGROUND

The *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*, regulation 34 states that a local government must prepare each month a statement of financial activity reporting on the revenue and expenditure, as set out in the annual budget.

Variances between budgeted and actual expenditure including the required material variances (10% with a minimum value of \$20,000) are included in the variance report.

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

Nil

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

s.6.4 *Local Government Act 1995*, Part 6 - Financial Management
r. 34 *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*
r. 35 *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Policy implications do not apply for this report and it is the opinion of the author that policy development is not required.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This item reports on the current financial position of the Shire. The recommendation does not in itself have a financial implication.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications for this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications for this report.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no asset management implications as no assets are being created or acquired.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Shire of Plantagenet Corporate Business Plan 2025 - 2029 provides:

At *Key Pillar 4 Performance & Leadership* the following:

Strategy 4.2:

'A Shire that is open and transparent with its community.'

Corporate Action 4.2.3 - Develop effective reporting and communication tools relevant to the way our community access information

Strategy 4.3:

'Commitment to continuous improvement in service delivery.'

Corporate Action 4.3.2 - Be transparent with our financial management by reporting regularly readable and meaningful financial data to the community

Accordingly, the recommended outcome for this report aligns with the Corporate Business Plan.

STRATEGIC RISK IMPLICATIONS

Low Risk

This item has been evaluated against the Shire of Plantagenet Risk Assessment and Acceptance Criteria. The perceived level of risk is considered to be "Low" risk and can be managed by routine procedures and with currently available resources.

REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no regional implications for this report.

OFFICER COMMENT

The attached Statement of Financial Activity for the period 1 July 2025 to 28 February 2026 represents eight (8) months, or 66% of the year. The following items are worthy of noting:

- Closing surplus position of \$2.8m;
- Operating results:
 - 56% of budgeted operating revenue has been received; and
 - 65% of budgeted operating expenditure spent;
- Capital expenditure achieved 19% of budgeted projects, including:
 - Plant & Equipment 2%
 - Infrastructure – Roads, Drainage, & Footpaths 13%

- All Other Capital Expenditure 4%
- Cash holdings of \$9.9m of which \$7.5m is held in cash backed reserve accounts;
- Rates debtors outstanding equate to 13.4% of total rates raised for 2025/2026 (this includes deferred pensioner rates); and
- Page 10 of the statements detail major variations from year to date (amended) budgets.

VOTING REQUIREMENTS

Simple Majority

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the monthly financial statements for the period ending 28 February 2026 as presented.

9.3.2 LIST OF ACCOUNTS – FEBRUARY 2026

File Ref:	N67745
Attachment:	<u>List of Accounts – February 2026</u>
Responsible Officer:	Kylie Caley Manager - Finance
Author:	Debbie Evans Finance Officer - Creditors
Proposed Meeting Date:	24 March 2026

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the list of payments that were made during the month of February 2026.

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

No external consultation has occurred in relation to this report.

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

This information is provided to Council monthly in accordance with provisions of the *Local Government Act 1995* and *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*.

Regulation 12(1)(a) of the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* provides that payment may only be made from the municipal fund or trust fund if the Local Government has delegated the function to the Chief Executive Officer.

Regulation 13 of the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* provides that if the function of authorising payments is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, then a list of payments is to be presented to the Council at the next ordinary meeting and recorded in the minutes.

Regulation 13A of the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* provides that a list of payments must be prepared and presented to Council each month for all credit, debit, or purchasing cards utilised by authorised employees during the month.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Council Policy – Purchasing Policy

Council Policy – Corporate Credit Card Policy

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Expenditure is in accordance with the 2025/2026 Annual Budget.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications for this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications for this report.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no asset management implications as no assets are being created or acquired.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Shire of Plantagenet Corporate Business Plan 2025 - 2029 provides:

At *Key Pillar 4 Performance & Leadership* the following:

Strategy 4.2:

'A Shire that is open and transparent with its community.'

Corporate Action 4.2.3 - Develop effective reporting and communication tools relevant to the way our community access information

Strategy 4.3:

'Commitment to continuous improvement in service delivery.'

Corporate Action 4.3.2 - Be transparent with our financial management by reporting regularly readable and meaningful financial data to the community

Accordingly, the recommended outcome for this report aligns with the Corporate Business Plan.

RISK MITIGATION IMPLICATIONSLow Risk

This item has been evaluated against the Shire of Plantagenet Risk Assessment and Acceptance Criteria. The perceived level of risk is considered to be "Low" risk and can be managed by routine procedures and with currently available resources.

STRATEGIC RISK IMPLICATIONS

There are no strategic risk implications for this report.

REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no regional implications for this report.

OFFICER COMMENT

Accountability in local government encompasses various dimensions, as councils strive to fulfill a range of social, political, and financial objectives for the community's benefit.

These accountability principles are rooted in strong financial integrity, adherence to conflict of interest standards, and the expectation that local governments are fully responsible for community resources.

Council has delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer to make payments from the Shire's Municipal and Trust funds as required.

All payments are independently evaluated by the Manager of Finance to verify that expenditures are for the Shire of Plantagenet and comply with Council policies, procedures, the *Local Government Act 1995*, and relevant regulations. The review also ensures there is no misuse of corporate credit or fuel purchase cards.

VOTING REQUIREMENTS

Simple Majority

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives the list of accounts paid during the month of February 2026 as per the attached Schedule of Payments, and as summarised below:

Municipal Account (inclusive of credit card and fuel card purchases

Cheque Payments

EFT Payments	EFT9613 – EFT9786	\$1,333,018.47
Direct Debit Payments		\$130,630.52
EFT Payroll Payments		\$477,685.81
Total Municipal Account Payments		\$1,941,334.80
Licensing Trust Account		
Direct Debit Payments		\$ 147,641.15
Total Licensing Trust Account Payments		\$ 147,641.15
TOTAL OF ALL ACCOUNTS		\$2,088,975.95

9.3.3 COUNCIL POLICY – LOAN BORROWINGS

Synergy Ref:	N67736
Attachment:	<u>1. Current Council Policy – ‘Financial Management – Borrowing Program and Asset Financing’</u> <u>2. Proposed Council Policy - ‘Financial Management – Loan Borrowings’</u> <u>3. Current & Future Loan Spreadsheet Calculations</u>
Responsible Officer:	Julian Murphy Chief Executive Officer
Author:	Anthony Middleton Executive Manager – Corporate & Community Services
Proprietor/Applicant:	N/A
Proposed Meeting Date:	24 March 2026

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to undertake a review of the Council Policy (Financial Management – Borrowing Program and Asset Financing) with a view to:

- a) Setting a measurable guide for the maximum level of borrowings;
- b) Moving from a pay-as-you-go focus to a responsibility planned, generationally equitable funding model; and
- c) Clarifying what type of expenditure can be funded by long-term borrowings.

BACKGROUND

The current Council Policy (Financial Management – Borrowing Program and Asset Financing) is attached.

Local Governments in WA have the power to borrow in accordance with s6.20 of the Local Government Act 1995 which empowers local governments to borrow money, obtain credit, or arrange financial accommodation to perform their functions.

Loan funds, or borrowings, are an important financial management tool in the funding of the Shire’s expenditure, particularly for large, long-lived assets. Borrowings are also a useful tool to better align the cost of paying for a major asset with the consumption/benefit of the asset.

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

Nil

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

The Local Government Act 1995 legislates the requirements relating to borrowings as follows:

Section 6.20 - provides that a Shire has the power to borrow.

Section 6.21 – states the restrictions on borrowings.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This item recommends repealing the existing Council policy and replacing it with a new proposed policy (refer to attachment 1 & 2).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for this report.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications for this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications for this report.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no asset management implications as no assets are being created or acquired.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Shire of Plantagenet Corporate Business Plan 2025 – 2029 provides:

At Key Pillar 4 Performance & Leadership the following:

Strategy 4.2:

‘A Shire that is open and transparent with its community.’

Corporate Action 4.2.3 - Develop effective reporting and communication tools relevant to the way our community access information

Strategy 4.3:

‘Commitment to continuous improvement in service delivery.’

Corporate Action 4.3.2 - Be transparent with our financial management by reporting regularly readable and meaningful financial data to the community

Accordingly, the recommended outcome for this report closely aligns with the Corporate Business Plan.

RISK MITIGATION IMPLICATIONSLow Risk

This item has been evaluated against the Shire of Plantagenet’s Risk Assessment and Acceptance Criteria. The level of risk is considered to be Low and can be managed by routine procedures and with currently available resources.

STRATEGIC RISK IMPLICATIONS

There are no strategic risk implications for this report.

REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no regional implications for this report.

OFFICER COMMENT

There are several large projects planned to occur in the coming years that will require loan borrowings to achieve and may push the limits of the Shire's borrowing capacity. As such, it is important to clearly define where the Council's loan borrowing limit is and begin planning long-term for expected borrowings as early as possible. These projects include:

- Closure of the Mount Barker Waste Management Facility; and
- Mount Barker Swimming Pool Redevelopment.

Borrowing Capacity

Borrowing capacity is guided by the WA Treasury Corporation and includes two (2) key ratios:

1. **Total Debt Ratio (TDR)** - is a measure of leverage and indicates the extent to which the total debt of a local government can be serviced by operating activities.

The Shire should maintain a TDR of 50% or less (based on WA Treasury Corporation guidelines). The ratio is calculated by:

$$= \frac{\text{Debt}}{\text{Operating Revenue}}$$

Using the above formula, the Shire's TDR as at 30 June 2025 was 5.8% (\$878,549 / \$15,143,349). Using the TDR, the Shire's maximum borrowing capacity (as at 30 June 2025) is \$7,571,674 (50% of operating revenue of \$15,143,349).

2. **Debt Service Cover Ratio (DSCR)** - is a measurement of debt serviceability and an indicator of the Shire's ability to generate sufficient cash flow to cover debt repayments.

The Shire should maintain a DSCR greater than or equal to 2.0 (based on Department guidelines). The ratio is calculated by:

$$= \frac{\text{Adjusted Operating Surplus}}{\text{Debt Service Costs}}$$

or

$$= \frac{\text{Op. Revenue} - (\text{Op. Expenditure} - \text{Depreciation} - \text{Interest})}{\text{Debt Service Costs}}$$

Using the above formula, the Shire's DSCR as at 30 June 2025 was 3.7. The maximum annual serviceability (annual repayments of both principal and interest) using the benchmark DSCR (as at 30 June 2025) is \$795,767 (50% of adjusted operating surplus of \$1,591,533). The term that a loan is taken out for will greatly affect the DSCR, i.e. the longer the loan term, the lower the principal repayments each year and the higher the DSCR.

The attached spreadsheet (attachment 3) shows existing and known proposed loan borrowings over the next 15-year period until 2040. Whilst more work needs to be done identifying possible major projects to be funded over this period, the calculations using what is currently known show:

- a) the TDR does not exceed 36% during this period (benchmark is 50%);
- b) the borrowing capacity available for each financial year to reach the maximum TDR of 50% (Minimum is in 2029 of an additional \$2.5m);
- c) DSCR does not get less than 3.0 (benchmark is 2.0 or higher); and
- d) Loan servicing costs 'spare' to meet the maximum DSCR of 2.0% (Minimum is in 2029 of \$449,826).

Inter-Generational Equity

The current Council Policy states that 'the Shire will strive to achieve a high reliance on pay-as-you-go financing for its capital improvements.' This is realistically not achievable considering the asset management spend required and this position also places a very heavy bias towards today's residents paying for tomorrow's assets. The proposed Council policy better balances the use of savings through reserve accounts with debt via loan borrowings. A robust planning process through the Corporate Business Plan and Long-Term Financial Plan is the preferred method to achieve increased inter-generational equity.

What can loans be used for?

The proposed policy clarifies and expands on what type of expenditure can and can't be funded by long-term borrowings.

The proposed Council Policy - 'Financial Management – Loan Borrowings' is attached (attachment 2).

VOTING REQUIREMENTS

Simple Majority

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council

- 1. Repeals the Council policy titled 'Financial Management – Borrowing Program and Asset Financing'; and**
- 2. Adopts Council policy - 'Financial Management – Loan Borrowings', as proposed.**

9.3.4 PLACE-BASED RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Synergy Ref:	N67735
Attachment:	<u>Our Statement of Commitment</u>
Responsible Officer:	Julian Murphy Chief Executive Officer
Author:	Anthony Middleton Executive Manager – Corporate & Community Services
Proprietor/Applicant:	N/A
Proposed Meeting Date:	24 March 2026

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to consider endorsing the Place-based Reconciliation in the Great Southern: Our Statement of Commitment.

BACKGROUND

The Great Southern Place-based Reconciliation Pilot is bringing together Noongar communities, local governments, Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs), community members, services and State agencies across the region to trial a co-designed approach to reconciliation through a Place-based Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

Two Shire Corporate & Community Services staff have been attending workshops to progress this initiative and represent the Shire, including attendance at the Opportunity Rising Big Yarn held in Albany in November 2025.

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

Reconciliation Action Plans in Australia are not mandated by specific legislation, but they are a formal, structured program governed and endorsed by the national body, Reconciliation Australia. While they are not a legal requirement, RAP's function as a voluntary, binding commitment to implement practical actions for reconciliation, often used to meet broader legal and policy obligations.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Policy implications do not apply for this report and further policy development is not required.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for this report.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications for this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications for this report.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no asset management implications as no assets are being created or acquired.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Shire of Plantagenet Corporate Business Plan 2025 - 2029 provides:

At *Key Pillar 1 Community* the following:

Strategy 1.3:

'Continue to build meaningful relationships with our First Nations and multicultural communities and share stories.'

Corporate Action 1.3.1 - Engage with and develop an understanding of the needs of First Nation and multicultural communities:

- Assist and encourage activation of the Mount Barker Aboriginal Community Centre
- Appropriate recognition of unmarked Noongar graves at the Mount Barker East Cemetery
- Appropriate recognition of local Noongar soldiers that fought during the major war campaigns
- Increase diversity of employment within the Shire staff
- Consult where necessary on major capital projects
- Investigate opportunities to highlight local Noongar culture and stories (such as Wilson Park promotional storyboard, Mount Barker Aboriginal Reserve digitisation project and Music Festival with an Aboriginal music feature)
- Dual naming opportunities

Corporate Action 1.3.2 - Commence formal Reconciliation Action Plan process

Corporate Action 1.3.3 - Partner with the First Nation community to host local events to recognise National Reconciliation and NAIDOC Week events

Accordingly, the recommended outcome for this report strongly aligns with the Corporate Business Plan.

RISK MITIGATION IMPLICATIONSLow Risk

This item has been evaluated against the Shire of Plantagenet's Risk Assessment and Acceptance Criteria. The level of risk is considered to be Low and can be managed by routine procedures and with currently available resources.

STRATEGIC RISK IMPLICATIONS

There are no strategic risk implications for this report.

REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no regional implications for this report.

OFFICER COMMENT

A Great Southern place-based Reconciliation Action Plan is currently being drafted, informed directly by the outcomes, priorities, and collective discussions from the Opportunity Rising Big Yarn. The Shire's contributions have played a role in advancing the place-based RAP development and shaping its supporting governance mechanisms.

As part of this place-based RAP process, it is recommended that the Shire affirm the attached 'Our Statement of Commitment' and continue participation in the Great Southern's Reconciliation Action Network and place-based RAP.

VOTING REQUIREMENTS

Simple Majority

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the 'Place-based Reconciliation in the Great Southern: Our Statement of Commitment', as proposed.

9.3.5 HEALTH & WELLBEING PLAN 2026-2030

Synergy Ref:	N67738
Attachment:	<u>Draft Health & Wellbeing Plan 2026-2030</u>
Responsible Officer:	Anthony Middleton Executive Manager – Corporate & Community Services
Author:	Nicole Selesnew Manager Community Services & Recreation
Proprietor/Applicant:	N/A
Proposed Meeting Date:	24 March 2026

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to consider the draft Health & Wellbeing Plan 2026-2030.

BACKGROUND

Local governments in WA have a statutory obligation for public health. Part 5 of the Public Health Act 2016 was mandated on 4 June 2024, requiring local governments to prepare and publish their local public health plans by 4 June 2026.

Public health planning is a proactive, systematic approach to enhancing the health and well-being of communities. It involves assessing health needs of the community, setting priorities, and developing evidence-based strategies to foster sustainable, equitable, and collaborative health improvements. Through careful planning, the aim is to shift focus toward prevention and long-term resilience, benefiting both individuals and communities.

A draft of the Shire's first public health plan, titled the Health & Wellbeing Plan 2026-2030 is attached.

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

WA Country Health Service (WACHS) have provided statistics, advice and feedback to staff during the development of the draft plan.

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

The Public Health Act 2016 states:

45. Local public health plans

- (1) A local government must prepare a public health plan (a ***local public health plan***) that applies to its local government district.
 - (2) A local public health plan must be consistent with the State public health plan.
-

-
- (3) A local public health plan may be prepared in conjunction with a plan for the future of the local government district prepared under the *Local Government Act 1995* section 5.56.
 - (4) A local public health plan must —
 - (a) identify the public health needs of the local government district; and
 - (b) include an examination of data relating to health status and health determinants in the local government district; and
 - (c) establish objectives and policy priorities for —
 - (i) the promotion, improvement and protection of public health in the local government district; and
 - (ii) the development and delivery of public health services in the local government district;and
 - (d) identify how, based on available evidence, the objectives and policy priorities referred to in paragraph (c) are proposed to be achieved; and
 - (e) describe how the local government proposes to work with the Chief Health Officer and other bodies undertaking public health initiatives, projects and programmes to achieve the objectives and policy priorities referred to in paragraph (c); and
 - (f) include a strategic framework for the identification, evaluation and management of public health risks in the local government district and any other matters relating to public health risks in the local government district —
 - (i) that the local government considers appropriate to include in the plan; or
 - (ii) that are required to be included in the plan by the Chief Health Officer or the regulations;and
 - (g) include a report, in accordance with the regulations, on the performance by the local government of its functions under this Act.
 - (5) A local government must review its local public health plan each year and may amend or replace it at any time.
 - (6) Unless it is sooner replaced, a local public health plan must be replaced at the end of the period of 5 years after it was prepared.
 - (7) A local government must prepare its first local public health plan not later than 2 years after this section comes into operation.

46. Publication of current local public health plans

- (1) A local government must make its current local public health plan publicly available without charge.
- (2) A local government may comply with subsection (1) in any way the local government considers appropriate, including (without limitation) by making the current local public health plan available on a website maintained by or on behalf of the local government.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Policy implications do not apply for this report and further policy development is not required.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for this report.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications for this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications for this report.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no asset management implications as no assets are being created or acquired.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Shire of Plantagenet Corporate Business Plan 2025 – 2029 provides:

At *Key Pillar 1 - Community* the following:

Strategy 1.4 – Improve the health and activity levels of our Community

Corporate Action 1.4.7 - Adoption of a Shire Public Health Plan by 30 June 2026

In addition, several strategies within the draft Health & Wellbeing plan directly match strategies contained within the Corporate Business Plan 2025 – 2029. These include Strategy 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.6, 2.8, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and corporate action 4.5.4 and 4.7.2.

Accordingly, the recommended outcome for this report closely aligns with the Corporate Business Plan.

RISK MITIGATION IMPLICATIONSLow Risk

This item has been evaluated against the Shire of Plantagenet's Risk Assessment and Acceptance Criteria. The level of risk is considered to be Low and can be managed by routine procedures and with currently available resources.

STRATEGIC RISK IMPLICATIONS

There are no strategic risk implications for this report.

REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no regional implications for this report.

OFFICER COMMENT

The Shire of Plantagenet has developed this Health & Wellbeing Plan to meet the legislative requirements of a Public Health Plan as required by the Public Health Act 2016. This plan is integrated with the Shire's Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan to allow for the Shire to assess and ensure our resources are used most appropriately and efficiently to address the public health needs of the community. This plan is a five-year strategic document that aims to identify public health priorities and future planning to work toward a healthier community.

The findings from the collation and analysis of local data in the *Lifestyle Risk Factors* and the *Long-Term Health Conditions* sections of the plan has identified the following ten (10) key health risks for the Plantagenet community:

- Obesity;
- Tobacco smoking prevalence;
- Tobacco hospitalisations / deaths;
- Alcohol-attributable hospitalisations (males);
- Intentional self-harm (hospitalisations);
- Transport accidents (hospitalisations);
- Arthritis;
- Cancer;
- Heart disease; and
- A mental health condition.

This plan sets out strategies and actions to address these ten risk areas by focussing on the following four priority goals:

1. Promote - Foster strong, active, connected communities and healthier environments;
2. Prevent - Reduce the prevalence of chronic disease, communicable disease, and injury;
3. Protect - Manage emergencies and environmental health risks and minimise their impacts; and
4. Enable - Develop partnerships to support health and wellbeing

The draft Shire of Plantagenet Health & Wellbeing Plan 2026 – 2030 is attached.

This plan is a very small piece of a much larger health jigsaw puzzle and it is acknowledged that a local government's ability to influence many health outcomes is limited. The Shire also has very limited resources to devote to Public Health. As such, of the twelve (12) strategies established in the plan, only two (2) are new to this plan:

- Strategy PHP 1.3 – Improve and increase access to mental health & wellbeing services; and
- Strategy PHP 2.3 – Develop strategies to reduce harm due to alcohol and tobacco use.

The Draft Public Health Plan incorporates five (5) identified actions to implement the two (2) new strategies detailed above. They are:

- 1.3.2 - Develop a professional office space for the delivery of mental health and wellbeing services by existing providers;
- 1.3.3 - Widely promote the list of Great Southern mental health service providers on offer in the Shire;
- 2.3.1 - Consider implementing policies or strategies to make all Shire premises and facilities smoke free places;
- 2.3.2 - Partner with Healthways ('Alcohol Think Again' and 'Make Smoking History') to support programs that reduce supply, demand and the harm resulting from alcohol, tobacco, vaping and e-cigarettes; and
- 2.3.3 - Promote the Good Sports program and assist to expand membership in excess of the current 3 member clubs in the Shire.

The remainder of the strategies and actions in the draft plan have previously been endorsed by the Council through either the Strategic Community Plan 2025-2035 or Corporate Business Plan 2025-2029. The other poor indicators identified in the Shire of Plantagenet Health Profile 2011-2020, such as road trauma and obesity are to be addressed through traditional local government services such as Roadwise and investment in sport & recreation.

VOTING REQUIREMENTS

Simple Majority

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Health & Wellbeing Plan 2026 – 2030, as proposed.

9.3.6 AUDIT REGULATION 17 REVIEW

Synergy Ref:	N67737
Attachment:	<u>Review Report</u>
Responsible Officer:	Julian Murphy Chief Executive Officer
Author:	Anthony Middleton Executive Manager – Corporate & Community Services
Proprietor/Applicant:	N/A
Proposed Meeting Date:	24 March 2026

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to consider the review undertaken on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the Shire's systems and procedures in relation to risk management and legislative compliance.

BACKGROUND

The Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996 (Regulation 17) require the CEO to review the appropriateness and effectiveness of the local government's systems and procedures in relation to:

- a) financial management;
- b) legislative compliance;
- c) risk management.

This review is to be conducted not less than once in every four (4) financial years. The previous review was adopted by the Council in May 2022.

The Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee considered this item at its meeting held on 10 March 2026 and resolved:

That it be recommended to the Council that:

- 1. The Audit Regulation 17 review be accepted, as proposed; and**
- 2. The seven (7) recommendations contained within be endorsed and added Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee's status report for addressing.**

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

Nil

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996, regulation 17 (CEO to review certain systems and procedures) states:

- (1) The CEO must review the appropriateness and effectiveness of the local government's systems and procedures in relation to the following matters —
 - (a) financial management;
 - (b) legislative compliance;
 - (c) risk management.
- (2) Under subregulation (1), the CEO may review any or all of the matters referred to in subregulation (1)(a) to (c) at any time but must review each of those matters not less than once in every 4 financial years.
- (3) The CEO must report to the audit, risk and improvement committee the results of each review carried out under subregulation (1).

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Policy implications do not apply for this report and further policy development is not required.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for this report.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications for this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications for this report.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no asset management implications as no assets are being created or acquired.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Shire of Plantagenet Corporate Business Plan 2025 - 2029 provides:

At Key Pillar 4 Performance & Leadership the following:

Strategy 4.2:

'A Shire that is open and transparent with its community.'

Corporate Action 4.2.3 - Develop effective reporting and communication tools relevant to the way our community access information

Strategy 4.3:

'Commitment to continuous improvement in service delivery.'

Corporate Action 4.3.2 - Be transparent with our financial management by reporting regularly readable and meaningful financial data to the community

Accordingly, the recommended outcome for this report aligns with the Corporate Business Plan.

RISK MITIGATION IMPLICATIONS

Low Risk

This item has been evaluated against the Shire of Plantagenet's Risk Assessment and Acceptance Criteria. The level of risk is considered to be Low and can be managed by routine procedures and with currently available resources.

STRATEGIC RISK IMPLICATIONS

There are no strategic risk implications for this report.

REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no regional implications for this report.

OFFICER COMMENT

The Audit Regulation 17 review has recently been completed and a copy is attached.

The review of 'financial management' as required by 1(a) of the regulation has not been completed as part of this review as it has recently been considered by the Council on 17 June 2025.

The report raised seven (7) recommendations on the following topics:

1. Risk Register;
2. Insurance Coverage;
3. Integrated Planning & Reporting;
4. Fraud & Corruption Controls;
5. Policy Framework;
6. Regular Risk Reports; and
7. Audit Advisory Committee Performance

Details of each finding and recommendation above is contained within the report, however, each item raised has been noted that it "does not represent a deficiency", rather an "enhancement opportunity".

VOTING REQUIREMENTS

Simple Majority

COMMITTEE/OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Audit Regulation 17 review, as proposed.

9.4 EXECUTIVE SERVICES REPORTS

9.4.1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL REFORM

Synergy Ref:	N67742
Attachment:	<u>Draft Discussion Paper – Electoral Reform</u>
Responsible Officer:	Julian Murphy Chief Executive Officer
Author:	Julian Murphy Chief Executive Officer
Proposed Meeting Date:	24 March 2026

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to establish a Council position on potential changes to the Local Government electoral system.

BACKGROUND

The Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) is seeking feedback on potential changes to the Local Government electoral system relating to:

1. full spill elections every 4 years; and
2. compulsory voting at Local Government elections

WALGA has provided a discussion paper (attached) for Councillors' information.

WALGA's currently supports voluntary voting for Local Government Elections and elections every two years with four-year terms for Councillors.

The WALGA discussion paper includes questions on each of the issues below:

Election Frequency

1. Does your Local Government support half spill elections every two years or full spill elections every four years?
2. What are the key considerations informing this view?
3. If full spill elections every four years were introduced, what transitional arrangements and consequential amendments may be required?
4. Any other comments?

Compulsory or Voluntary Voting

5. Does your Local Government support compulsory voting or voluntary voting in Local Government elections?
6. If the frequency of Local Government elections were changed to every 4 years, would your Local Government support compulsory or voluntary voting?

7. What are the key considerations informing this view?
8. Any other comments?

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

No external consultation has occurred in relation to this report.

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

Local Government Act 1995

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Policy implications do not apply for this report and further policy development is not required.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of the WA Electoral Commission undertaking postal elections for the Shire of Plantagenet is about \$32,000 per election (based on a 45% participation rate).

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications for this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications for this report.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no asset management implications as no assets are being created or acquired.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Shire of Plantagenet Corporate Business Plan 2025 – 2029 provides:

At Key Pillar 4 - Performance & Leadership the following:

Strategy 4.3 – Commitment to continuous improvement in service delivery

Corporate Action 4.3.1 - Implement review processes in service delivery on a regular basis and as needed

Accordingly, the recommended outcome for this report aligns with the Corporate Business Plan.

RISK MITIGATION IMPLICATIONS

Low Risk

This item has been evaluated against the Shire of Plantagenet Risk Assessment and Acceptance Criteria. The perceived level of risk is considered to be “Low” risk and can be managed by routine procedures and with currently available resources.

STRATEGIC RISK IMPLICATIONS

There are no strategic risk implications for this report.

REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no regional implications for this report.

OFFICER COMMENT

The CEO has consulted with Council at a recent Forum where the issue of Local Government electoral Reform was discussed.

The general view of Councillors at the Forum was that the Shire of Plantagenet does not support full spill elections every 4 years or compulsory voting for Local Government elections.

The WALGA Electoral Reform Discussion Paper outlines that the analysis of data from the past two elections across Australia indicates that, on average, returning Council Members constitute between 47% and 57% of the Council following full spill elections.

The instances of all Councillors being replaced at full spill elections is infrequent across other Australian states.

It is important that the stability of Councils is supported by the electoral frequency. The industry view, until now, has been that maintaining approximately half of the Council members at each election ensures that there is retention of corporate knowledge, leadership and strategic direction across election cycles.

Should compulsory voting be introduced, the cost for compulsory voting by postal method would significantly increase the costs to Council. Alternative methods of voting such as online voting would assist in increasing participation as well as reducing elections costs for Local Governments.

Changes to legislation to allow providers other than the WA Electoral Commission to conduct postal elections may result in more market competition and lesser costs for Councils undertaking postal elections.

Council's position on the Local Government electoral system relating to full spill elections every 4 years; and compulsory voting at Local Government elections will be provided to WALGA as part of their consultation process.

VOTING REQUIREMENTS

Simple Majority

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council establishes the following position in response to the Western Australian Local Government Association request for feedback regarding potential reforms to the local government electoral system:

- 1. The Shire of Plantagenet does not support full spill elections every 4 years;
or**
- 2. Compulsory voting at Local Government elections.**

10 MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

Nil

**11 NEW BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE INTRODUCED BY
DECISION OF THE MEETING**

12 CONFIDENTIAL

13 CLOSURE OF MEETING