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AGENDA

Hearing of Submissions Committee Meeting

Darebin Council Chamber
350 High Street Preston
6:00pm Monday, 3 June 2024

This meeting will be a scheduled hybrid meeting, at which both councillors and members of the public may participate either in person or virtually.

This meeting will also be livestreamed and may be accessed from Councils website www.darebin.vic.gov.au.

Persons wishing to observe the meeting in person are required to register by 12pm on the day of the meeting.

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Agenda

1. MEMBERSHIP

Cr. Susanne Newton (Mayor) (Chairperson)

Cr. Tim Laurence (Deputy Mayor)

Cr. Emily Dimitriadis

Cr. Gaetano Greco

Cr. Tom Hannan

Cr. Trent McCarthy

Cr. Lina Messina

Cr. Susan Rennie

Cr. Julie Williams

2. APOLOGIES

3. DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

4. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS HEARING OF SUBMISSIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Recommendation

That the Minutes of the Hearing of Submissions Committee Meeting held on 11 December 2023 be confirmed as a correct record of business transacted.

5. COUNCIL'S OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

6. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS

6.1 HEARING OF SUBMISSIONS: DRAFT 2024-25 BUDGET & ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS AND RENEWAL OF SPECIAL RATE LEVIES

Author: Coordinator Management Accountant
Coordinator Place and Behavioural Economics
Acting Head of Economic Development and Activation
Chief Financial Officer

Reviewed By: General Manager Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its meeting on 29 April 2024, Council resolved to give notice of its intention to adopt the draft budget 2024-25 and associated documents, including the following related matters:

- Draft 2024-25 Budget (Incorporating the 4-year budget)
- Draft 2024-25 Council Plan Action Plan
- Draft Revised Revenue & Rating Plan 2023-27
- Declaration of the public waste service charge
- Declaration of the service charge for kerbside collection services
- Granting of a rate rebate to pensioners, granting of two concessions aligned to equity principles to support the separation of waste cost recovery from general rates.
- Granting of a safety net concession for ratepayers experiencing hardship as a result of the service rate and service charge
- Renewal of three Special Rate Levies within the following business areas:
 - Preston Business District
 - Fairfield Business District
 - Northcote Business District

Prior to adopting the Budget in its final form, Council placed the draft budget & associated documents on public display, with any person requesting to be heard in support of their written submission to be heard by Council's Hearing of Submissions Committee at 6.00pm on 3 June 2024.

Community engagement occurred between the following dates:

Draft 2024-25 Budget & Associated Documents

- Between 30th April – 20th May 2024 (21 days) through online/hardcopy budget submission forms.

Special Rate Levy Renewal

- Between 2nd May 2024 – 30th May 2024 (28 days) through online/hardcopy budget submission forms.

To date, a total of 113 (102- Draft Budget / 11 - Special Rates) submissions were received by the closing date, including twenty-three (25) submitters (22 – Draft Budget / 3– Special Rates) requesting to be heard in support of their written submission.

Note: Council will continue to receive submissions relating to the renewal of Special Rate Levies until close date (30th May 2024) and report will be updated accordingly.

A break-down on the number of submissions by major theme is as follows:

- Leisure & Recreation: 42
- Financial Assistance, Grants and Addressing Disadvantage: 25
- Parks, Open Space & Reserves: 9
- General Matters: 9
- Active/Sustainable Transport: 6
- Traffic Management: 4
- Environmental Issues: 3
- Public Places: 3
- Waste Management: 1
- Special Rates Levy: 11

Connection to Council relating to submitters over the draft budget & associated documents were as follows:

Connection to Council	% of submissions
Live	66%
Visit	22%
Work	10%
Own a business	2%

Geographical location by suburb information relating to submitters over the draft budget & associated documents are as follows:

Postcode	Suburb	% of total Submitters
3072	Preston	21%
3073	Reservoir	14%
3070	Northcote	13%
3078	Alphington/Fairfield	10%
3083	Bundoora/Kingsbury	7%
3071	Thornbury	5%
3085	Macleod/Yallambie	5%
3087	Watsonia	4%
3056	Brunswick	2%
3058	Coburg/Moreland	2%
3079	Invanhoe	2%
3047	Broadmeadows/Dallas/Jacana	1%
3054	Carlton Nth/Princess Hill	1%
3055	Brunswick West	1%
3067	Abbotsford	1%
3082	Mill Park	1%
3095	Eltham	1%
3103	Balwyn	1%
3129	Box Hill/Mont Albert	1%
3135	Heathmont/Ringwood East	1%
3145	Caulfield East/Malvern East	1%
3146	Glen Iris	1%
3155	Boronia	1%
3750	Wollert	1%
3922	Cowes/Smiths Beach	1%

Detailed management responses to each submission can be found at **Appendix A** (draft 2024-25 budget & associated documents) and **Appendix B** (Special Rate Levy). A list of submitters requesting to be heard in support of their written submission can be found at **Appendix C**.

High-level management responses to themed submissions is as follows:

Leisure & Recreation / Parks, Open Space & Reserves / Public Places

Council owns, manages and maintains over \$1.5b in assets across the municipality and each of these assets plays an important role in delivering important services to the local community. It is important that Council invests in each of the asset types to ensure they are renewed, upgraded and enhanced before they fail.

Council relies on the following to help to make decisions on the renewal of existing assets and the construction of new assets:

- The 4-year Council Plan
- The 10-year capital works plan
- The 10-year financial plan
- The 10-year asset plan
- Strategic plans such as the Outdoor Sports Infrastructure Framework and masterplans

- Service demands from new and existing users
- Asset condition
- Asset inspections and audits
- Asset management plans
- Risk and safety assessments on individual assets.
- Prioritising areas of disadvantage
- Grants from external funding sources
- Distribution of limited resources across the municipality
- Judgements on previous investment decisions to ensure equity where possible.
- Project costs, return on investment, Council's financial ratios and risk appetite.

This year, strong, positive support has been shown for the KP Hardiman Pavilion Redevelopment project, attracting more than 20% of total submissions.

Financial Assistance, Grants and Addressing Disadvantage

Council has a substantial community grants program. The draft 2024-25 program is valued at \$963,040, to support organisations, projects and initiatives that make Darebin a better, healthier, sustainable, and more inclusive place.

Traffic & Transport issues

Road safety and sustainable transport infrastructure continue to be a focus. Council's Your Street Your Say program will continue to drive safety and improved transport, and the Electric Vehicle policy project will support more electric charging operators to install sustainable infrastructure across Darebin.

Special Rate Levy

Current challenges in the economic climate, and the need to build awareness of the role and activities of traders' associations, are key themes among submissions to the Special Rates Levy proposal. Council's Creative Culture and Economic Development department will continue to highlight the importance of building strong relationships between businesses and relevant trader's associations, to help businesses to understand spending and marketing activities and showcase mutual benefits.

Following the Hearing of Submissions Committee meeting, a report in relation to all submissions received will be submitted for consideration at a Council briefing scheduled for 11 June 2024.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

- (1) Receives and notes the written and verbal submissions.
 - (2) Thanks all submitters and presenters for addressing the Committee in support of their budget submission.
 - (3) Refers all submissions for further consideration to the Council meeting to be held on 24 June 2024 as part of Council's deliberations in adopting the Budget 2024-25 & associated matters and renewal of the special rate levies (**Appendix A & Appendix B**).
 - (4) Notes that submissions that are not incorporated into the 2024-25 Budget will be referred for consideration in the development of the draft 2025-26 Budget.
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BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

Council is required to adopt a four-year Budget each financial year. Prior to adopting the Budget in its final form, Council is required to place the proposed Budget on public display inviting submissions and then after considering all submissions Council can formally adopt a Budget for the financial year.

Community engagement occurred between the following dates:

Draft 2024-25 Budget & Associated Documents

- Between 30th April – 20th May 2024 (21 days) through online/hardcopy budget submission forms.

Special Rate Levy Renewal

- Between 2nd May 2024 – 30th May 2024 (28 days) through online/hardcopy budget submission forms.

This report provides details of the submissions made on the Draft 2024-25 Budget & associated documents by the closing date and submissions received thus far in relation to the renewal of three Special Rate Levies in the following business areas:

- Preston Business district
- Fairfield Business District
- Northcote Business District

Previous Council Resolution

Nil.

ALIGNMENT TO 2041 DAREBIN COMMUNITY VISION

Strategic Direction 1: Vibrant, Respectful and Connected

Strategic Direction 2: Prosperous, Liveable and Flourishing

Strategic Direction 3: Climate, Green and Sustainable

ALIGNMENT TO 2021-25 COUNCIL PLAN

Strategic Direction 1: Vibrant, Respectful and Connected

Strategic Direction 2: Prosperous, Liveable and Flourishing

Strategic Direction 3: Climate, Green and Sustainable

Strategic Direction 4 Responsible, Transparent and Responsive

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

4.1 We will ensure balanced and responsible financial decision making that meets the needs of our community now and into the future

DISCUSSION**CONSIDERATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (2020) PRINCIPLES****Financial Management**

Estimated financial impact of the community submissions will be provided to the Council at a briefing scheduled to be held on 11 June 2024.

Community Engagement

The consultation included:

- Your Say Darebin page and email to Your Say subscribers
- Darebin City Council website home page banner and Budget page
- Video for social media and You Tube channel
- Facebook, Instagram, organic posts
- LinkedIn
- Article in Darebin Community News
- Article in e-newsletters:
- Sustainable Darebin
- What's on for Families.
- East Preston Community Centre news
- Disability Access and Inclusion
- What's on for Older Active Darebin
- Darebin Business Update
- Website news item
- Communication to advisory groups
- Hard copy information will be distributed to customer service centre, libraries, community centres and neighbourhood houses.
- Posters will include a paragraph in 12 community languages and the Your Say Darebin page is translatable.
- Proposed renewal of special charges: Public notice in The Age, 2nd May 2024, and hard copy information to ratepayers and businesses within the rateable property areas of the 3 business precincts due for renewal.

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

- (b) priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;
- (c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;
- (g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;
- (h) regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;
- (i) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

Public Transparency Principles

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act;

Strategic Planning Principles

- (a) an integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting is to be adopted;

Service Performance Principles

- (a) services should be provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community;

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**Environmental Sustainability Considerations (including Climate Emergency)**

The approach to community engagement acknowledges Council's commitment to cultural considerations to support our diverse community.

A large range of activities to progress Council's commitment to our diverse community are reflected in the Council Plan Priorities 2021-25.

Equity, Inclusion, Wellbeing and Human Rights Considerations:

The approach to community engagement acknowledges Council's commitment to equity, inclusion and wellbeing as articulated through the Towards Equality Framework. A large range of activities to progress Council's commitments through existing strategies that seek to address equity, inclusion and wellbeing are reflected the Council Plan Priorities 2021-25.

Economic Development and Cultural Considerations

Council's commitment to Darebin's economy is demonstrated through council's existing strategies, policy positions and the Council Plan Priorities 2021-25.

The establishment of special rate schemes in Darebin's business precincts is consistent with Council's objectives to support its activity centres. The process is being led by the Economic Development Unit, which also acts as the primary point of contact with Council for the business association and oversees reporting and compliance with the pursuant Funding Agreements for the expenditure of the levies.

Operational Impacts

Nil

Legal and Risk Implications

Aside from meeting the various relevant sections of the Local Government Act, there are no further legal implications. The operational risks of our spending decisions are a key element in the decision-making process. Full consideration will be given to the risk impacts.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Following the Hearing of Submissions Committee meeting, a report in relation to all submissions received will be submitted for consideration to the Council meeting to be held on 24 June 2024 as part of Council's deliberations in adopting the Budget 2024-25 & associated matters and renewal of the special rate levies.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Nil

Attachments

- Community Feedback with Management Responses - Draft Budget (**Appendix A**) Confidential - enclosed under separate cover
- Community Feedback with Management Responses - Special Rate Levies (**Appendix B**) Confidential - enclosed under separate cover
- List of Speakers (**Appendix C**) Confidential - enclosed under separate cover

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any conflicts of interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

7. CLOSE OF MEETING