

Yarra Service Planning and Review Principles



Deliberative engagement process and evaluation report

City of Yarra

29.02.24

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Giving every person a voice.

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Executive summary

OVERVIEW

Yarra City Council (Council) is refining its approach for how it plans and reviews its services. To inform the new approach, Council asked a representative sample of the Yarra community to develop a draft set of community-supported service planning and review principles. The timeline for this project was late November 2023 – March 2024.

Council engaged Capire Consulting Group (Capire) to design, deliver and report on a process that aligns with the principles of deliberative engagement. These deliberative engagement principles included a wicked dilemma, the ability to influence the outcomes, information sharing, representative views and experiences, time to learn, deliberate and form recommendations, and participant-led reporting.

The representative sample of the Yarra community was selected from a public Expression of Interest process. The selected participants formed a Community Working Group (CWG) that met for four sessions (a total of 15 hours) in February 2024. In developing the draft principles, Council asked the CWG to consider Council's financial pressures, Yarra's increasing population and changing community need, all with the following dilemma in mind:

How can Council deliver value for rates and make sure its services meet the needs of our growing and diverse community?

As part of the process, the CWG were made aware that change is a non-negotiable for Council to be financially sustainable; that Council is not asking them to consider which services council should or shouldn't deliver; and that the draft principles may be edited by council officers or councillors prior to Council endorsement to ensure the principles are usable.

THE COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP

The aim was to recruit approximately 44 people representing a medium-sized group for a deliberative engagement process. Overall, 237 people expressed interest in the process. Some of the criteria used to match the CWG membership to the Yarra community included gender, age, suburb, representation from diverse cohorts (such as those who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, speaking a language other than English at home, a member of the LGBTIQ+ community, and/or have a disability), household type and tenure.

Following an extensive selection process that ensured those selected to the best of their ability represented Yarra's diverse community, 50 people were recruited and 38 people completed the process (attending a minimum of three sessions). It is normal in processes like this to have people drop out before and during the engagement.

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THE DRAFT PRINCIPLES

Throughout the four sessions the CWG developed a draft set of service planning and review principles. through an iterative process. The objectives for each session are described in the below table.

| 1. Introductions and scene setting | 2. Exploring the issues and drafting the principles | 3. Testing and refining the principles | 4. Finalising recommendations to Council |
|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">To meet and greet participants.To introduce participants to their role and the purpose and outcomes of the process.To introduce participants to local government's role in relation to service delivery.To build a shared understanding of the project context. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">To continue to explore issues and opportunities in relation to service planning.To identify of key themes that the group want to focus the principles around.To begin drafting the service planning and review principles. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">To explore scenarios using the principles to support the testing and refining of them.To consider the suitability of the principles in helping Council to prioritise service reviews. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">To consolidate final feedback and agree final edits.To finalise any additional recommendations or considerations for how service reviews are prioritised.To present the draft principles to council officers.To present the journey to Councillors. |

OVERARCHING THEMES

Across the four sessions and the creation of the draft principles, the following overarching themes emerged:

Financial sustainability and appropriate resource allocation: This was strongly considered by the CWG. They accepted that this was a key driver and that change to service delivery is inevitable to achieve financial sustainability. They understood that these principles would help guide how change happens. A key intent from the CWG is that decisions around improving financial sustainability need to demonstrate community benefit.

Social justice and community benefit: This is the overarching intent of the CWG's work. They want to ensure that community members experiencing vulnerability are being cared for, and that when making decisions around subsidising services and charging fees that social impact and equity are accounted for. They want Council to consider in its review of services how it can strengthen community through incorporating First Nations' voice and values, place-making and environmental sustainability. The CWG also wants Council to ensure that when assessing the adequacy of the market to deliver services that these same values are considered.

Governance and evidence-based decisions: The CWG wants to see Council continue to be connected to what the community needs and how it is changing to ensure they have access to the services they need (no matter who delivers them). They want Council to make evidenced-based decisions and to ensure that input from those impacted by service changes are part of that evidence base.

Maintaining influence of quality and social benefit: The CWG accepts the reality that various models of service delivery will continue to be part of change (such as inhouse, partnerships, outsourced etc.), however there is concern around how various models are able to guarantee quality and social benefit. The CWG wants to ensure that in any future changes to service delivery models Council seeks ways to maintain influence over quality and social benefit.

Get creative and think holistically: The CWG wants council to be proactive and innovative in adapting to community need and when finding solutions to challenges e.g. partnering with other Councils facing the same challenges. The CWG also wants Council to consider the overall benefit of service reviews and planning; how a change in one service can provide opportunity and benefit to other services and the community elsewhere.

DRAFT PRINCIPLES

The following are the final community-supported draft principles. Council will consider the dialogue and intent of principles as they work to refine the principles for adoption.

When planning and reviewing services, Council will:

- Actively include a range of local Indigenous voices and values in all decision-making and placemaking to ensure ongoing community resilience.
- Be proactive in supporting communities and service providers to dramatically reduce waste and greenhouse emissions and prioritise regenerative systems to improve wellbeing and biodiversity and sustainable outcomes.
- Ensure Yarra's artistic and cultural identity is valued and supported given their contribution to community resilience.
- Select service providers that are in line with Council sustainability policies and goals.
- Be adaptable and proactive by identifying, planning for, and implementing solutions that respond to dynamic factors and community need (such as means, levels of advantage and disadvantage, life stages and changing demographics).
- Deliver qualitative and quantitative, evidenced-based outcomes that include community input, which will be shared and communicated in an accessible way to the community.
- Use comparative benefit analysis to measure value for money and the positive impact of service reform on the community.
- Actively engage the community, prioritising those most directly impacted and in line with the Community Engagement Policy.
- Prioritise financial sustainability and appropriate resource allocation to enable us to respond to changing community needs, now and into the future.
- Prioritise service delivery models where it can maintain control of quality and influence the community benefits and outcomes.

- Prioritise social benefits, especially those that address the needs of vulnerable and diverse people.
- Seek creative and innovative ways to continually improve and address challenges, including collaborating and partnering with others facing the same challenges (e.g. working with councils, not-for-profits, government, businesses, volunteers).
- Ensure social impact and equity are accounted for when pricing a user-pays, market-comparable service.
- Make decisions based on the analysis of the impact of a change in one service on all other services.
- Evaluate the alignment of market services against Council's Social Justice Charter (the values of Access, Equity, Rights, and Participation).
- Ensure services are accessible within a user's ability and means, including geographically (prioritising active and public transport access) and digitally accessible.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

The following indicators were used to evaluate the process from the perspective of the participants. All indicators received high levels of agreement.

- The recruitment process was clear
- Members understood what was expected of them
- Members had many opportunities to express their opinions and views
- Members felt their views were respected by other CWG members
- The quality of information provided allowed members to form an opinion
- The presentations were valuable to members
- Desire to take part in similar engagement activities
- Members would recommend this type of process to friends or family
- Members felt their participation was worthwhile.

Through a pre and post-process survey, Capire measured the impact of the process on CWG members' relationship with Council, trust in Council, individual skills to contribute to Council decision making and community connection. Overall, CWG members reported an increase in these measures at the completion of the process. The survey data showed that:

- 79% of CWG members reported that they have a positive relationship with Council (compared to 67% in pre-survey)
- 59% of CWG members reported that they trust that Council supports community involvement in making decisions (compared to 48% in the pre-survey)
- 59% of the CWG reported that they understand how Council plans and delivers services (compared to 21% in the pre-survey)
- 84% of the CWG reported that they have the skills to contribute to Council decision-making (compared to 79% in the pre-survey)
- 84% of the CWG reported that they feel connected to the Yarra community (compared to 82% in the pre-survey).

1. Introduction

This report outlines the engagement process designed and delivered to develop a draft set of community supported service planning and review principles (draft principles). This report details the engagement design process, the recruitment of a representative sample of the community to form a Community Working Group (CWG), and the process for supporting the CWG to develop the draft principles.

1.1. Project background

Yarra City Council (Council) committed to undertaking an engagement process that would support Council in preparing a framework that would guide the planning and review of its services. The objective was to develop a draft set of community-supported service planning and review principles. The principles will inform and guide Council's future planning and review of services. The principles will also guide service planning and review decisions and identify a mechanism for prioritising service reviews for current and future Councils.

Council committed to delivering a process that aligns with the principles of deliberative engagement including:

- A wicked dilemma: a change that is complex and requires deep thinking and deliberation to consider.
- Influence: The ability to influence the outcomes, meaning there is elements of the project that the public can influence.
- Information sharing: Providing comprehensive information to help participants understand the dilemma and consider any trade-offs.
- Representative: To ensure diversity of views and experiences are representative of the broader community.
- Time: Appropriate amount of time to learn, deliberate and form recommendations.
- Participant-led reporting: The process for preparing the outputs from the process is led by the participants.

Council engaged Capire Consulting Group (Capire) to design, deliver and report on the engagement process. This work was part of a broader engagement program, as illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Broader engagement program to inform the service planning and review approach

1.2. Engagement scope and objectives

The purpose of the CWG was to help Council plan for and prioritise services for the years ahead by recommending and identifying draft principles that will support future service planning and reviews.

The dilemma that Council asked the CWG to consider when developing the draft principles was:

How can Council deliver value for rates and make sure its services meet the needs of our growing and diverse community?

As part of this, Council asked the CWG to consider Council's financial pressures, Yarra's increasing population and changing community need.


The following key messages were shared throughout the process to ensure the CWG were aware of the non-negotiable parts of this process:

- Change is a non-negotiable. Council will need to change how it delivers its services to ensure financial sustainability. The principles would help guide the extent and type of change.
- Council was not asking the CWG to recommend which services it should or shouldn't deliver.
- The principles that the CWG are developing are draft, which means officers and councillors can edit before they are adopted. The CWG's work will go to Councillors as a report along with council officers' recommended principles.

Overall, the engagement aimed to:

- design a process where participants are given time and space to digest information, share and listen to different perspectives and deliberate ideas.
- design a process that is transparent and clear on the level of influence the process entails.
- design and deliver a process where participants clearly understand the remit, their role, tasks and the expected outcomes.
- provide participants with objective plain English information that will be presented from a mixture of internal and external sources, including results of stage 1 broad engagement and social research.
- deliver an independently facilitated process and provide a safe space for dialogue.
- develop a draft set of community-supported service planning principles.

This engagement process was designed to align with the 'Involve' level of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) (see Figure 2). At the 'Involve' level the promise is that 'Council will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how the input influenced the decision.' This level is considered appropriate given the complexity of how this work relates to the Financial Sustainability Strategy (FSS) and the complexity of service planning and review processes.



| | INFORM | CONSULT | INVOLVE | COLLABORATE | EMPOWER |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|
| PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL | To provide the public with balance and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions. | To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions. | To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. | To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. | To place final decision making in the hands of the public. |
| PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC | We will keep you informed. | We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influence the decision. | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible. | We will implement what you decide. |

Figure 2. IAP2 public participation spectrum

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1.3. Engagement limitations

Several limitations regarding the engagement methodology and analysis should be acknowledged when reading this report. The limitations are outlined below.

- It was taken with good faith that the information participants provided in their Expression of Interest (EOI) forms about their demographics was true.
- Session discussions were largely participant-led. Some participants may have chosen to contribute to some activities and not to others.
- The participants were selected to represent the demographic profile of the City of Yarra. However, the final membership is not necessarily a statistically accurate sample of the whole population due to some people exiting the process or lower EOIs received from some demographic categories.
- The EOI process occurred over the summer holidays, at a time where less people may be accessing Council communication channels. This may have impacted the number of EOIs received. The mitigation strategy for this limitation was to keep the EOIs open for eight weeks, which is a longer period than usual. This extended time period may have impacted people being able to commit to the dates.
- While the working group members delivered a strong cross-section of views across the municipality, it cannot be guaranteed that the community's complete set of views was represented.
- The number of participants fluctuated across the sessions. This is normal due to the unexpected personal commitments of members.
- Given the quick turnaround required for this project and the extent of the work that took place between Capire and Council in between sessions, the proposed edits on the principles between session 3 and 4 were provided to participants to read the day before only (i.e. not enough time to consider proposed edits before the session). This limitation was mitigated by allowing a significant part of session 4 to enable participants to read, discuss and reflect on the proposed edits before further refinement.

2. Engagement design

The following section provides an overview of the activities delivered as part of the deliberative engagement process. Figure 33 illustrates a high-level overview of the key project phases.

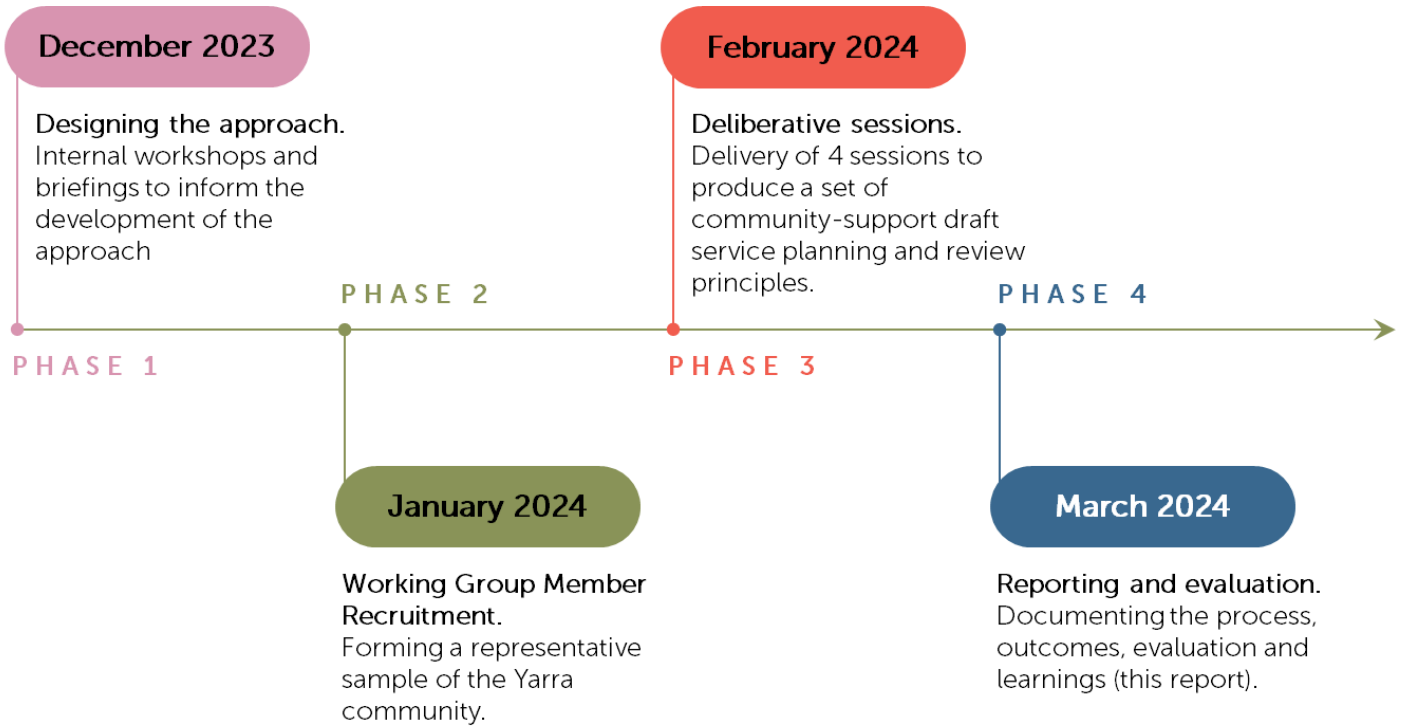


Figure 3. High-level process overview

2.1. Designing the approach

Internal engagement

A series of internal engagement activities informed the design of the engagement process. Specifically, the scope of engagement, the working group's remit, outputs and key information Council wanted to share with the group.

Internal engagement activities included:

- Project working group co-design sessions
- Regular Project Control Group briefings
- Regular Councillor briefings.

Alignment with Council's Community Engagement Policy

Council's Community Engagement Policy has a guiding set of engagement principles. These are applied to each of Council's engagement projects. Table 1 demonstrates how the engagement principles guided the design of this engagement program.

Table 1. Alignment of the engagement approach with Council's engagement principles

| Engagement principles | How the project aimed to deliver on these principles |
|---|--|
| <p>Representative: We identify people and groups likely to be affected by our decisions and ensure they have the chance to participate</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given service review and planning impacts the whole community, targets were set to ensure that recruitment of the CWG reflected the demographic make-up of the Yarra community (aiming for the CWG to be representative). |
| <p>Accessible: We use methods that empower underrepresented groups to get involved. We use a variety of online, print and face-to-face methods to maximise our reach and remove potential barriers and ensure culturally safe spaces for engagement.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad recruitment was undertaken, as well as direct communication to specific groups and through Council departments (e.g. Youth Services) to inform a diverse mix of community members about the opportunity and support them to submit an expression of interest. Those expressing an interest were asked whether they required any support to participate including interpreters and transportation. Council and Capire were adaptive and solutions-focused to remove barriers to participation for CWG members as they arose, including offering transport to and from sessions, providing parking permits and providing quiet spaces when needed. The tools and techniques employed throughout the engagement accounted for the diverse ways people absorb information and participate, including verbal/aural, visual, kinaesthetic and reading/writing communication and activities. |
| <p>Meaningful: We empower stakeholders with relevant, objective and plain English information and resources to allow informed participation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CWG received an online welcome pack prior to session one (see table of contents in Appendix A) with extensive background information to contextualise the remit. Printed versions of the welcome pack were also provided, and critical information was printed for table discussion across the four sessions. All other materials were printed on request. Understanding that not all CWG members would have read the welcome pack or feel comfortable reading that amount of information (some technical), the first session was dedicated to establishing the context and explaining the technical information provided e.g. Council's financial position and sustainability factors. The CWG were encouraged to learn and seek information that would help them to make informed contributions. |
| <p>Transparent: We explain which elements the community can influence, to what level and how we will use our community's input.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The remit, 'the current state of play' and the purpose of the CWG were communicated on the first session and reiterated throughout the four sessions. The purpose and use of the draft principles was also communicated, including answering questions from the CWG about who would see them, further refine them, approve them and ultimately use them. Council has made a commitment to circle back to the CWG and report to the community on how the engagement outputs have been considered. |
| <p>Accountable: We report back to the community, explaining what we asked, what we heard, and what we did.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council will inform community about how the CWG process has been considered in the final decision and what principles it could (or couldn't) adopt. |
| <p>Respectful: We value and respect our community's time, engaging closely when their influence is high and scaling back when it is more limited.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council reimbursed each CWG member for their time (\$100 per session). The time required to participate in the process is reflective of the 'involve' engagement level. There was no expectation that CWG members would do 'homework' in between sessions and any information provided via email was explored during sessions. |

| Engagement principles | How the project aimed to deliver on these principles |
|--|--|
| Flexible: We adapt to evolving circumstances, including allowing for newly identified stakeholders to engage as necessary throughout the process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The engagement was highly adaptive. Council and Capire undertook collaborative session planning between each session, adjusting how the sessions were delivered to best meet the needs of the members and the project as needs emerged and changed. |
| Supportive: We advocate on behalf of the Yarra community where the work of external agencies (including other tiers of government) impacts our community. | N/A |
| Prepared: We ensure our engagement practitioners and decision makers have the appropriate training, guidance and resources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capire and Council worked collaboratively throughout the engagement to prepare for and deliver the sessions, including pivoting where necessary and drawing on the expertise of each; Council delivering the technical information and guidance regarding the remit and project expectations, Capire guiding and facilitating the CWG journey. |

2.2. Working group member recruitment

Selection process

Engaging a representative sample of the Yarra community is a critical element of deliberative practice. The aim was to recruit a working group of 44 people. The size of the group was recommended based on the deliberative recruitment objectives of having a large enough group to ensure diverse participation, but also acknowledging the level of influence and the need to match resources with influence.

The recruitment process was managed by Capire, with support from Council. Recruitment was promoted through a public Expression of Interest (EOI) process. An invitation and EOI form were set-up and promoted through the dedicated Your Say Yarra page. Promotion activities included:

- Promotion to networks and advisory groups.
- Utilising Council's social media channels.
- An article on Yarra Life and December edition of the Your Say newsletters.
- Direct invitation to contacts from previous phases of this project or related projects (e.g. social research, Financial Sustainability Strategy and the Service Planning and Review Principles stage 1 engagement participants who indicated that they want to stay informed).

All recruitment materials directed people to the Council Your Say project page for more information and to access the EOI form. For those who preferred to complete the form over the telephone, they were able to call a dedicated number for support.

The EOI form asked a series of questions that allowed Capire to understand the applicant and they should be included in the pool of potential participants.

The EOI form included questions that identified:

- Whether they could attend all sessions (this is compulsory).
- Demographics to enable selection against targets.
- Service use and experience.
- Any support or assistance required to participate.
- Any known or perceived conflicts of interest.

Once the EOI period had closed, Capire and Council evaluated the EOIs received and the participants from previous project phases and relevant projects that had indicated their interest in participating in the CWG, for their eligibility against the agreed demographic criteria (stratification targets) to create a representative sample of the Yarra population. From those that were eligible, individuals were then randomly selected to meet the stratification targets, and to ensure a diversity of views, voices and experiences.

Capire contacted individuals to advise them that they had been selected for the CWG. Where individuals declined the invitation, Capire selected a new participant from the eligible list that met the same demographic profile. This process took place until 50 people confirmed their participation in the CWG.

Support offered to participants

Each participant received a per diem to cover costs in recognition of their commitment and acknowledgement of any out-of-pocket expenses incurred to participate.

Participants received \$100 per session, with a combined total of \$400 paid at the final session. Each session was fully catered and held in an accessible venue, near public transport (Richmond Town Hall). The following supports were also made available to participants as needed:

- Transport.
- Translated materials and interpreters.
- Prayer room.
- Quiet rest room.
- Accessibility aids such as hearing loops.

2.3. Session Attendance

A total of 38 people completed the process. The following number of people attended each session. The group's attrition was comparable to similar processes. Section 5 outlines CWG feedback and insights regarding their participation in the engagement.

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 42 | 41 | 38 | 37 |
| Session 1 | Session 2 | Session 3 | Session 4 |

2.4. Process overview

Figure 4 provides a high-level overview of the process. The CWG crafted their draft principles over four sessions, 15 hours in total. The following sub-sections detail the follow key outcomes of the process:

- Building informed participation.
- Crafting the principles.
- Prioritising service review triggers.

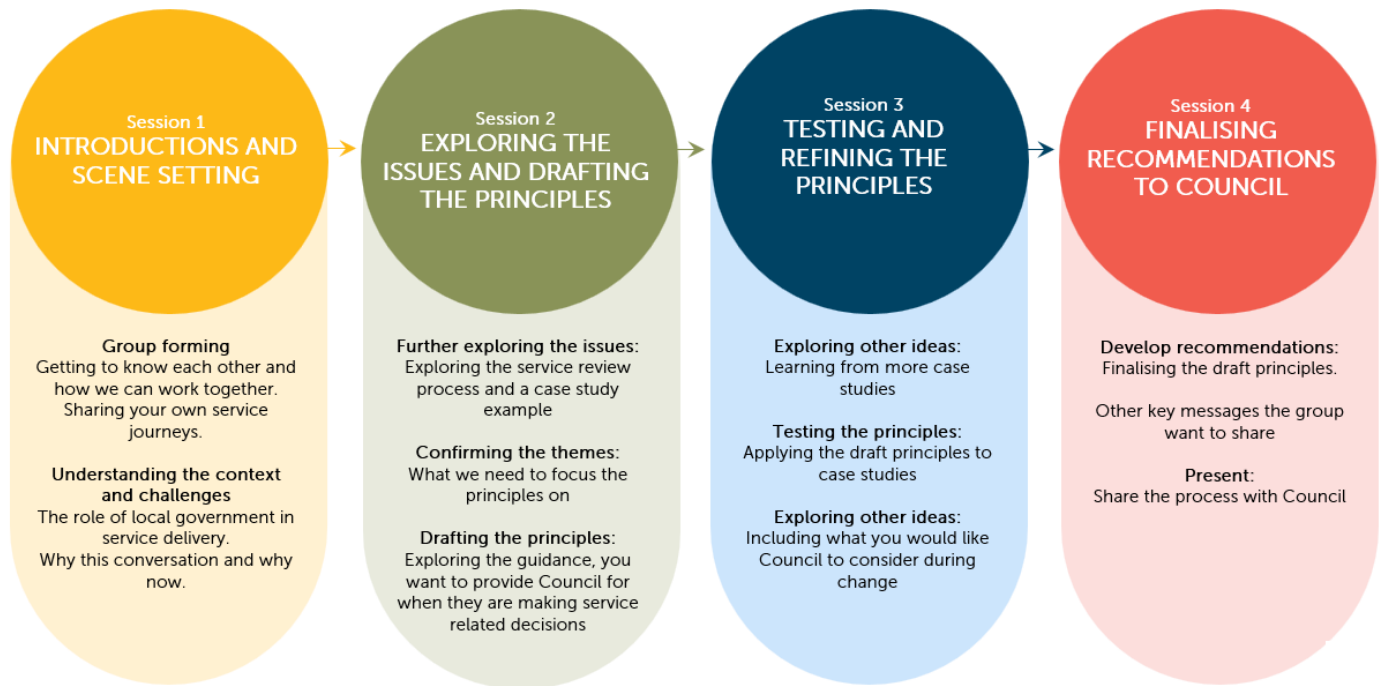


Figure 4. Overview of the CWG sessions

2.4.1. Building informed participation

Building informed participation is a key element of a deliberative process. The following methods were used to build informed participation throughout the process.



Background reading

Prior to the first session, Council shared with CWG members a Welcome Pack of background reading. The pack included:

- A welcome from the Mayor and CEO.
- Project background.
- Information on the role of local government.
- Information on the Yarra community.
- Information on Yarra’s current financial position.
- High-level findings from the stage 1 engagement.
- Information on the services offered by Council.
- Links to additional reading (e.g. the Council Plan and Vision, see Appendix A for the full list).



Presentations

Over the first and second sessions the following presentations were delivered:

- Overview of the Financial Sustainability Strategy.
- Current financial position of Council.
- Overview of the stage 1 engagement with general community and social research findings.
- Service review process.
- Case study presentation: Tony Kennen presented on Port Phillip’s review of childcare services.



Learning from each other

CWG members shared their own connections to various services in Yarra through a table-based activity. Members mapped their past and current services and the kinds of services they expected to access in the future. They then discussed their knowledge of Council’s role in the services they access.



Questions on notice

Throughout the sessions, CWG members had the opportunity to pose questions in response to presentations and background information. Where answers were not readily available the project team worked between sessions to gather answers and any supporting information to be shared at the following session.



Tactile learning

CWG Members worked together at their table to explore the various levels of government, and which is responsible for various services.

2.4.2. Crafting the draft principles

This section provides an overview of the CWG journey and the facilitated activities which aimed to support the group to create, refine and finalise their recommended draft principles for Council.

The following activities were delivered to support the CWG members in preparing their draft principles.

1. Brainstorming values to identify key themes

The CWG brainstormed in small groups the important values that Council needs to consider when reviewing and planning services for the Yarra community. From that brainstorming, the groups identified emerging key themes.

The whole CWG then came together, with small groups placing each of their themes onto a wall, and a sorting and categorising exercise took place to converge the various themes into one set of overarching themes.

The overarching themes were:

- Social justice
- Community need
- Affordability
- Futureproofing
- Responsible governance
- Quality and value.
- Environmental.

Outcome: CWG understand the themes that are most meaningful to them (to guide the draft principles).

Output: High-level themes to help the CWG start to craft draft principles under each theme.

2. Drafting principles under the key themes

Capire distributed the themes across the tables, and those tables became the 'theme champions'. Members were able to choose which theme they wanted to focus on initially. Tables considered what factors required consideration and added more detail under their theme to begin to craft principle/s that could help direct Council when planning and reviewing services.

Tables then presented their initial drafts to the rest of the group.

Outputs: Preliminary draft principles under each theme.

3. Exploring the qualities of a good principle and assessing the preliminary drafts

The project team shared high-level feedback on the preliminary draft principles that highlighted:

- areas of potential duplication.
- that the focus was more on the planning of services, and that the group needed to balance that with principles that would also be suitable for reviewing services.

- the opportunity to make the principles more specific to support Council to making hard decisions in the future.

To guide refinement, the project team reshared the qualities of a good principle, which were:

- **Clear:** The principle is easy to understand with clear intent.
- **Specific:** The principle provides direction on how Council should plan services and decide on the appropriate level of change.
- **Relevant:** The principle is relevant to the challenge Council is faced with (providing value for rates, being financially sustainable and planning for a growing community).
- **Flexible:** The principle is flexible enough it can be adapted to different situations (e.g. different services, unforeseen circumstances like a pandemic, changing community need).

With consideration for the project team’s feedback, CWG members started to assess and refine the preliminary drafts at their tables using the above qualities, including producing additional principles where they thought necessary.

Simultaneously, three CWG members volunteered to form an editor’s group with support from two project team members who helped with wordsmithing and sense checking around how the principles delivered on the qualities. The editor’s group was responsible for collating the proposed edits and any additional draft principles from the CWG working in small groups, in real-time. With the information provided from their fellow CWG members, the editors produced the next iteration of the draft principles for review.

At this stage, the themes were no longer used but remained presented on the wall for members to reflect on as needed.

Outcome: CWG understand the qualities of a good principle in this context.

Outputs: CWG edited draft principles.

4. Testing draft principles with case studies

Each table was given a service case study. The case study shared key information, such as:

- The role of the service.
- Council’s strategic objectives that it aligns with.
- Number of staff.
- Operational expenditure, revenue and net position.
- How many people use the service.
- Community benefits.
- Challenges for Council in delivering the service.

Each table was provided with the latest iteration of the draft principles to consider and document how they would support Council to review the service in their case study. The purpose wasn’t to deliberate over the future of the service but to consider the useability of the principles against the service and then suggest further edits.

Capire gathered the feedback and the further edits proposed from each table and collated them for the next session.

Outcome: CWG understands the extent to which the current draft principles are useful for a service review.

Output: Feedback and suggestions to help with the final refinement of the principles.

5. Considering the proposed edits

Between sessions 3 and 4, Capire gathered feedback from the project team on the draft principles. Some CWG members also sent (via email) additional commentary on the draft principles and/or new principles to consider. Based on the CWG member edits and suggestions, and Council feedback, Capire proposed some suggested revisions to principles, focusing on clarity and removing duplication only. The collated feedback and proposed edits can be found in Appendix B.

These were shared with the CWG members as A3 posters on easels at the start of the final session (session 4). Members rotated around the room to read, consider, accept/reject the proposed edits and provide further ideas or alternatives for refinement if they deemed necessary. During this activity several gaps and additional principles were proposed.

Outcomes: An understanding of the principles needing the most work to guide the CWG members to then focus on refining them.

Step 6: Final edits

The draft principles and additional proposed principles were themed to allow them to be divided amongst the tables. Tables then worked to refine their designated 2-3 principles accounting for CWG feedback and the level of acceptance/rejection.

The revised principles were collated and presented on-screen and read out, one-by-one, to the whole group. Members were asked to identify if they could 'live with it' – encouraging members to focus on the intent rather than the need to further wordsmith. At times members proposed further edits or alternatives which required majority approval by the CWG. Through this process, the principles were accepted or updated to create the final set of draft principles.

Output: Final draft principles for presentation to Council.

2.4.3. Prioritising service review triggers

A secondary objective of this engagement was to test the idea as to whether the draft principles would also serve the purpose of helping Council prioritise what order services get reviewed and when. In consultation with Council's project team, it was identified that the principles were not going to completely cover off all the various elements that might trigger a service review. As such, the project team developed a draft set of triggers that considered the various reasons a service may need to be reviewed with consideration for the values identified by the CWG. The draft triggers included two non-negotiable triggers which must remain up-front and through an online survey, CWG members were able to prioritise the order of the remaining eight triggers.

Outcome: CWG informs the prioritisation of triggers to guide what order services are reviewed and when.

3. Community working group members

The following section provides an overview of the community members who Capire recruited to make up the CWG. Across the public EOI and social research, 237 expressed interest in the process and in the end 50 community members were selected to participate.

104

Expression of Interest

133

Social Research Interest

50

Selected participants

The 50 participants were selected to match the demographic profile of Yarra and achieve diverse representation and views. There were some limitations in being able to match the demographic profile, primarily due to limited EOIs from some cohorts and last-minute drop-out which is not unusual for processes like this (especially one occurring over summer holidays, see limitations). The following table details the key gaps and strategies undertaken to address notable gaps.

| Notable gaps | Recruitment efforts |
|---|--|
| Alphington-Fairfield | Our target was two, we recruited none. We received one public EOI and nine from the social research participants were from these suburbs and we contacted all. Capire also undertook targeted promotion with local community groups to try and increase the number of EOIs received. |
| Young workforce (25 to 35 years) | Our target was 13, we recruited 8. We received 15 public EOIs and all were contacted to participate. An additional 18 participants who expressed interest in participating in the deliberative engagement process from the social research were contacted. |
| Secondary schoolers (12 to 17 years) | Our target was 2, we received 0 EOIs and the social research did not engage people under the age of 18 years. Council undertook targeted promotion of the opportunity via the Youth Services team to try and increase the EOIs received. |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders | Our target was two, we recruited one. We received one public EOI. Council undertook targeted promotion of the opportunity via the Aboriginal Partnerships Officer who reached out to some contacts. |

The following pages provide a snapshot of how the demographic make-up of the recruited 50 CWG members compares to the community profile of Yarra as well as other diversity characteristics that were aimed for.

Gender

| | | |
|------------|------------|---------------------|
| 50% | 48% | 2% |
| Female | Male | Identified as other |

Typically underrepresented community cohorts¹

| | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 7 | 10 | 8 |
| who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander | who speak a language other than English at home | members of the LGBTQI+ community | with a disability |

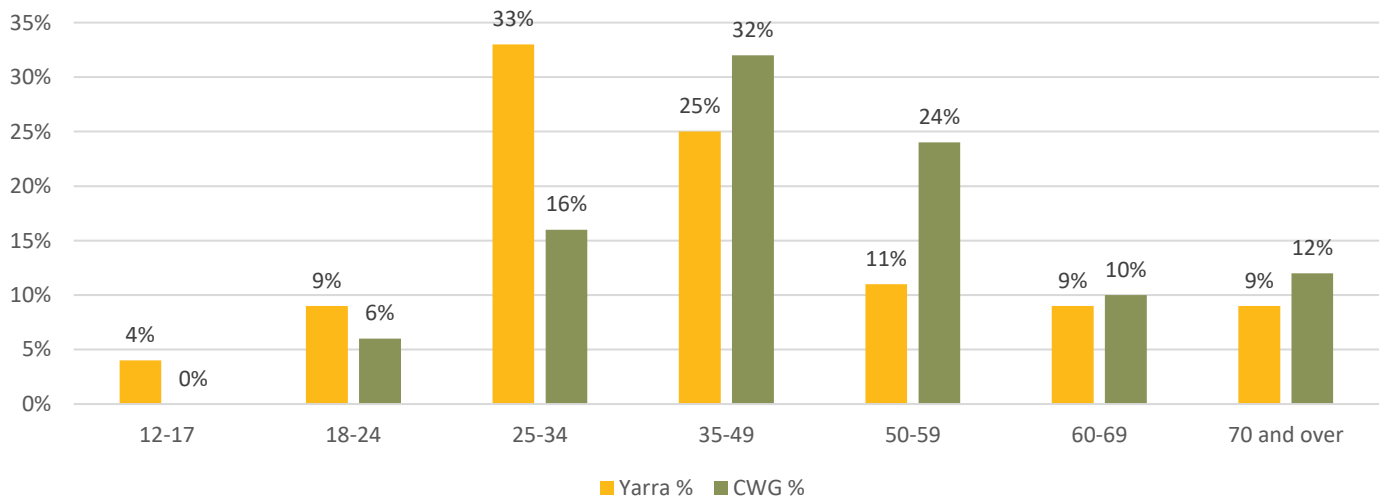
Concessions card status Past participation in Council engagement activities

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 40% | 67% |
| were concession card holders | had not participated in Council consultation in the past 12 months |

Years connected to Yarra

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------|------------|------------------|
| 10% | 26% | 16% | 48% |
| Less than 2 years | 2-5 years | 6-10 years | 11 years or more |

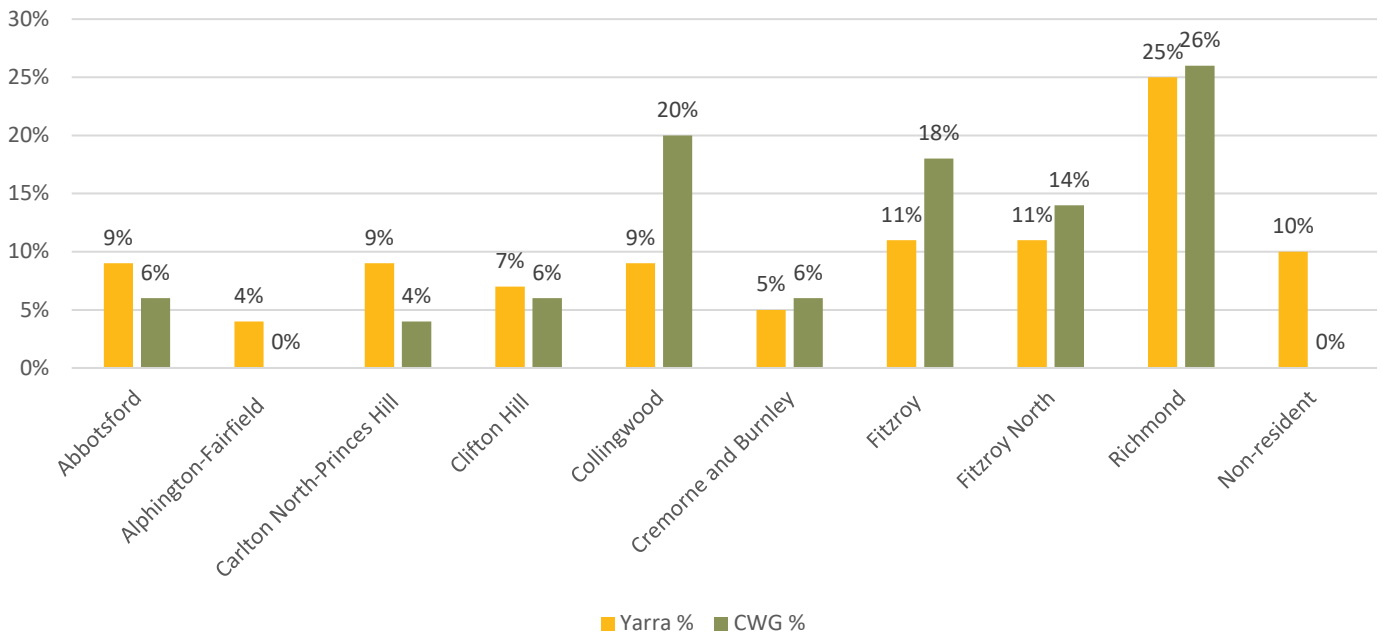
Age-groups represented²



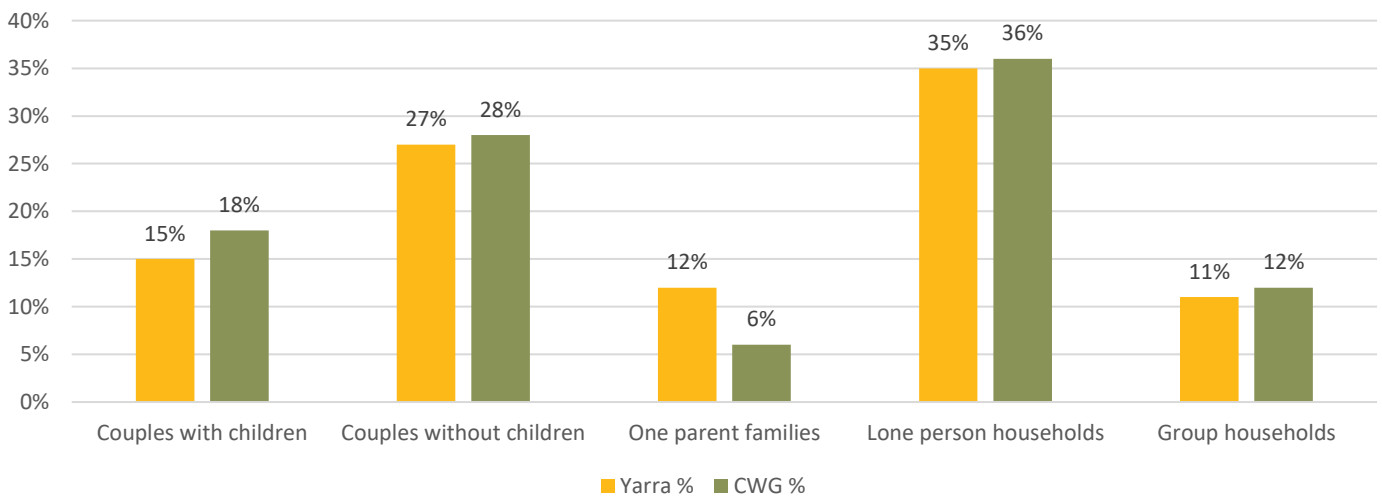
¹ This data does not include the demographic information of the social research participants. This information could not be shared with Capire for confidentiality reasons.

² Note social research age brackets were slightly different to the EOI age brackets.

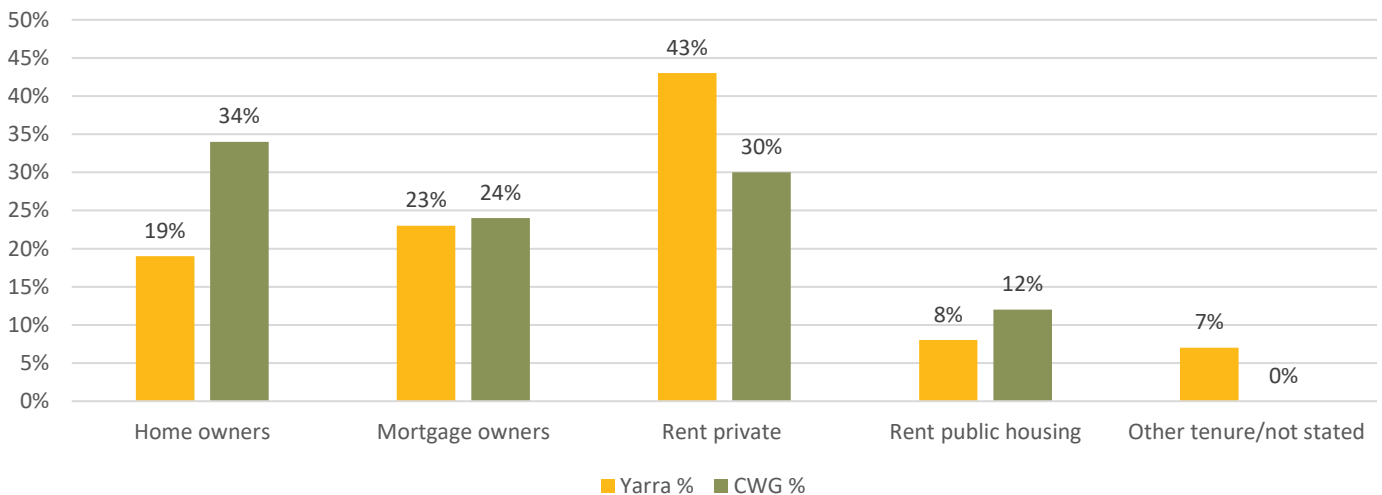
Geographic spread



Household types



Housing tenure represented



4. Outputs

The following section details the key outputs developed through the deliberative engagement.

1. The final community-supported draft principles: Where the group landed at the completion of the final session.
2. Refinement of the principles process and observations: Critical input for supporting Council to understand the CWG's intent relating to the draft principles and their refinement, which should be considered in the refinement of the draft principles for Council's endorsement.
3. Prioritisation of triggers to undertake a service review: Overall results of a survey undertaken with the group following the final session, which asked members to consider order of prioritisation of the various triggers Council may use to identify which service needs to be reviewed and when.

4.1. Final community-supported draft principles

The following are the final community-supported draft principles. Section 4.2 outlines the outcomes of the refinement process and highlights how principles evolved and associated CWG dialogue. We recommend that Council consider the dialogue and intent of principles as they work to refine the principles for Council adoption.

When planning and reviewing services, Council will:

- Actively include a range of local Indigenous voices and values in all decision-making and placemaking to ensure ongoing community resilience.
- Be proactive in supporting communities and service providers to dramatically reduce waste and greenhouse emissions and prioritise regenerative systems to improve wellbeing and biodiversity and sustainable outcomes.
- Ensure Yarra's artistic and cultural identity is valued and supported given their contribution to community resilience.
- Select service providers that are in line with Council sustainability policies and goals.
- Be adaptable and proactive by identifying, planning for, and implementing solutions that respond to dynamic factors and community need (such as means, levels of advantage and disadvantage, life stages and changing demographics).
- Deliver qualitative and quantitative, evidenced-based outcomes that include community input, which will be shared and communicated in an accessible way to the community.
- Use comparative benefit analysis to measure value for money and the positive impact of service reform on the community.
- Actively engage the community, prioritising those most directly impacted and in line with the Community Engagement Policy.
- Prioritise financial sustainability and appropriate resource allocation to enable us to respond to changing community needs, now and into the future.
- Prioritise service delivery models where it can maintain control of quality and influence the community benefits and outcomes.
- Prioritise social benefits, especially those that address the needs of vulnerable and diverse people.
- Seek creative and innovative ways to continually improve and address challenges, including collaborating and partnering with others facing the same challenges (e.g. working with councils, not-for-profits, government, businesses, volunteers).
- Ensure social impact and equity are accounted for when pricing a user-pays, market-comparable service.

- Make decisions based on the analysis of the impact of a change in one service on all other services.
- Evaluate the alignment of market services against Council's Social Justice Charter (the values of Access, Equity, Rights, and Participation).
- Ensure services are accessible within a user's ability and means, including geographically (prioritising active and public transport access) and digitally accessible.

4.2. Refinement of principles process and observations

The following section details the draft principles finalised by the CWG in session 4. Table 2 details the proposed edits and suggestions that were shared at the start of session 4 against the refined draft principles. It also includes facilitator observations of the process undertaken to refine the draft principles.

Appendix B details the process undertaken to reach the proposed edits including the below, all of which informed the proposed suggested edits:

- The previous draft principles prepared in session 3
- The CWG feedback shared on the previous draft principles
- The project team feedback on the draft principles.

Table 2: Draft principles and facilitator observations

| Suggested revision (shared at the start of session 4) | Updated draft principle (finalised in session 4) | Facilitator observations |
|---|--|---|
| <p>1. Improve environmental performance and resilience and identify opportunities to implement Indigenous practices.</p> | <p>1a. Actively include a range of local Indigenous voices and values in all decision-making and placemaking to ensure ongoing community resilience.</p> <p>1b. Be proactive in supporting communities and service providers to dramatically reduce waste and greenhouse emissions and prioritise regenerative systems to improve wellbeing and biodiversity and sustainable outcomes.</p> <p>1c. Ensure Yarra’s artistic and cultural identity is valued and supported given their contribution to community resilience.</p> <p>1d. Select service providers that are in line with Council sustainability policies and goals.</p> | <p>Capire’s suggested revision attempted to refine down a previously broad principle that was trying to include too much in one principle. CWG members felt that the suggested edit left out key themes. The suggested edit received low levels of acceptance.</p> <p>The group went back to unpack key elements from the previous CWG version:</p> <p><i>Ensure the environmental impact and sustainability of the services are considered for both the present and future by considering the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Climate emergency - Indigenous practices - Place making - Community resilience - Moving around in physical and lived context. <p>They accepted that the previous version was trying to cover too much and instead revised it to form multiple principles, resulting in four updated principles that cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indigenous voice and practices - The climate emergency and environmental sustainability - Arts and culture. <p>With some tweaking as a whole group, there was acceptance from the CWG for the four updated principles.</p> |
| <p>2. Be adaptable and responsive by proactively identifying, planning for and implementing solutions that respond to dynamic factors, such as means, level of advantage/disadvantage, life stages and changing demographics.</p> | <p>2. Be adaptable and proactive by identifying, planning for, and implementing solutions that respond to dynamic factors and community need (such as means, levels of advantage and disadvantage, life stages and changing demographics).</p> | <p>CWG members were supportive of the suggested revision, which had only received minor edits from the previous version developed by the CWG.</p> <p>The CWG agreed on minor edits as a whole group, made for readability purposes only.</p> <p>When the new revised version was presented to the whole CWG it was accepted.</p> |

| Suggested revision (shared at the start of session 4) | Updated draft principle (finalised in session 4) | Facilitator observations |
|--|---|---|
| <p>3. Make transparent and evidence-based decisions about how and why decisions are made and include input from those impacted.</p> | <p>3. Deliver qualitative and quantitative, evidenced-based outcomes that include community input, which will be shared and communicated in an accessible way to the community.</p> | <p>The suggested revision of the principle was accepted by approximately half of those who chose to participate in the accept/reject activity.</p> <p>A new draft was prepared by an assigned small group considering feedback shared by other CWG members, and from the project team on earlier iterations. The group based their revised version on an alternative version that has been proposed by the project team as part of their earlier feedback.</p> <p>The CWG wanted to ensure that the principle included the assertion that information that is shared with the community will be accessible to the audience.</p> <p>When the new revised version was presented to the whole CWG it was accepted.</p> |
| <p>4. Use a cost-benefit analysis to demonstrate the positive impact of service reform on the community.</p> | <p>4. Use comparative benefit analysis to measure value for money and the positive impact of service reform on the community.</p> | <p>CWG members shared mixed levels of support for the suggested edits. Members expressed concerns about the limitations of a cost-benefit analysis being able to identify the more intangible social benefits. The CWG critiqued the inclusion of the word 'cost' and the assumption that all benefits have a monetary value.</p> <p>A small group workshopped an alternative to cost-benefit, and, following advice from the project team, adjusted it to 'comparative benefit analysis'. When presented to the whole CWG the new revised principle was accepted.</p> |
| <p>5. Ensure the community is consulted, prioritising the community members directly affected by/actively using/engaging with that service. Consultation should be accessible and timely, using diverse range of methods, where appropriate, as per Council's Community Engagement Policy.</p> | <p>5. Actively engage the community, prioritising those most directly impacted and in line with the Community Engagement Policy.</p> | <p>Overall, CWG members supported the intent of this principle but agreed on the need to refine the language and readability.</p> <p>Some discussions questioned the need for a principle of this kind given Council has an existing Community Engagement Policy. However, the CWG deemed it important that a principle highlights a requirement to actively engage with those directly impacted by a service review that may result in change.</p> <p>During the testing of the draft principles against case studies, some CWG members suggested that engagement may not be needed for all service reviews. The insurance case study was noted as an example of this.</p> <p>The revised principle was accepted by the CWG.</p> |

| Suggested revision (shared at the start of session 4) | Updated draft principle (finalised in session 4) | Facilitator observations |
|--|--|---|
| 6. Prioritise financial sustainability and appropriate resource allocation in order to continually respond to changing community need and expectation. | 6. Prioritise financial sustainability and appropriate resource allocation to enable us to respond to changing community needs, now and into the future. | <p>CWG members were broadly supportive of the suggested edits. The CWG agreed that being financially sustainable in order to be adaptive within a service context is critical.</p> <p>There was a common had across principle 6 and principle 7 regarding ‘in-house’ and ‘outsourcing’ of services. Not all CWG members agreed on the suitability of including reference to prioritising inhouse service delivery. An alternate principle proposed by a CWG member sought to encourage Council to consider other areas for efficiencies across the organisation (namely, not community services) to reinvest in service delivery that has a direct community benefit. This was not supported by the CWG and highlighted as out of scope because it is picked up by other levers in the Financial Sustainability Strategy.</p> |
| 7. Prioritise service delivery models where it can maintain control or influence the community benefits, outcomes and quality of the service. | 7. Prioritise service delivery models where it can maintain control of quality and influence the community benefits and outcomes. | <p>The suggested revision received mixed levels of acceptance. While more accepted the revision than not (11, compared to 6). Others requested to reconsider previous versions or shared their thoughts via post-it notes.</p> <p>The CWG members working to refine this principle debated the need to specify prioritising inhouse service delivery. Not all CWG members agreed on which model is preferred, but the majority agreed that while it will likely be a mixture of both, appropriate resource allocation, community benefit and quality criteria must be determined and monitored by Council. Some members were also concerned about the word ‘control’, feeling like it invoked authoritarian oversight.</p> <p>A CWG member proposed an alternative principle to the group which encouraged the prioritisation of in house service delivery. A vote was taken with the whole CWG; 26 (majority) voted for the updated draft principle (as it reads in the adjacent column), and 13 voted for the proposed alternative. There was a small number that voted for both options.</p> <p>Given it received the majority vote, the principle remained as it reads.</p> |
| 8. Ensure that where a service is subsidised the service delivers a clear social benefit, considers the needs of vulnerable community members and delivers on our Community Vision and Council Plan. | 8. Prioritise social benefits, especially those that address the needs of vulnerable and diverse people. | <p>Of those CWG members who undertook the accept/reject activity for this principle, 19 accepted the suggested revision and 2 rejected it.</p> <p>Throughout the sessions, there were numerous conversations around the intent and complexity of this principle; responding to community need, particularly those experiencing vulnerability or with different needs to the</p> |

| Suggested revision (shared at the start of session 4) | Updated draft principle (finalised in session 4) | Facilitator observations |
|--|--|--|
| | | <p>mainstream population while ensuring that Council operates within its means.</p> <p>In a small group, CWG members reflected on CWG comments and discussed and edited the principle to ensure that it focused on addressing the needs of vulnerable and diverse people, not just when considering subsidising a service.</p> <p>When the new revised version was presented to the whole CWG, it was accepted.</p> |
| <p>9. Seek creative ways to continually improve and address challenges, including collaborating with other's facing the same challenges.</p> | <p>9. Seek creative and innovative ways to continually improve and address challenges, including collaborating and partnering with others facing the same challenges (e.g. working with councils, not-for-profits, government, businesses, volunteers)</p> | <p>CWG members had mixed views about the suggested revision.</p> <p>Members suggested including concepts from other previous principles to be more specific about what is meant by 'others', which drove the final edits made to this principle.</p> <p>The use of words like creative and innovative was somewhat contested but from the perspective of the majority, the intent is for Council to consider alternative and progressive ways to address challenges when undertaking service reviews and planning.</p> <p>When the new revised version was presented to the whole CWG it was accepted by the majority.</p> |
| <p>10. Ensure social impact and equity are accounted for when pricing a user-pays, market comparable service.</p> | <p>10. Ensure social impact and equity are accounted for when pricing a user-pays, market-comparable service.</p> | <p>The CWG supported the suggested version, which is a version with only minor amendments from previous iterations of this same principle by the CWG.</p> |
| <p>11. Look at service reviews holistically: compare the impact of a change in one service with the impact of a change in another.</p> | <p>11. Make decisions based on the analysis of the impact of a change in one service on all other services.</p> | <p>Of those CWG members who undertook the accept/reject activity for this principle, 17 indicated that they accepted the suggested revision and 3 rejected it.</p> <p>The CWG were keen to have a principle that highlighted a whole of organisation lens on service review and planning. However, members noted that the word holistically was not plain language and deemed the principle required work for clarity.</p> <p>When the new revised version was presented to the whole CWG it was accepted by the majority.</p> |

| Suggested revision (shared at the start of session 4) | Updated draft principle (finalised in session 4) | Facilitator observations |
|---|--|---|
| 12. Consider withdrawing from services that are adequately delivered by the market. | 12. Evaluate the alignment of market services against Council's Social Justice Charter (the values of; 1) Access 2) Equity 3) Rights 4) Participation). ³ | <p>This principle was proposed by a CWG member between sessions 3 and 4, it read: <i>Council should withdraw from services that are adequately delivered by the market.</i></p> <p>The project team proposed the addition of 'consider' e.g. Council may stay in a service if it is profitable so that it can subsidise something else. The project team also noted that the term 'adequately' required definition and provided an example <i>e.g. there is enough market providers with capacity in reasonable proximity that are charging similar prices.</i></p> <p>From those that undertook the accept/ reject activity for this principle, 17 rejected the suggested version and two accepted. Feedback from the CWG focused on defining what 'adequately delivered by the market' means.</p> <p>CWG members decided that Council's Social Justice Charter values described what was meant by 'adequate' and highlighted the important values that should guide the evaluation of market services when considering withdrawing from a service during service planning and review.</p> <p>When this principle was presented to the whole CWG, not all members knew of Council's Social Justice Charter, however, once the values were read out, the CWG agreed that this captured the intent of the principle.</p> |
| 13. Consider equitable access to services and promote 20-minute neighbourhoods. | 13. Ensure services are accessible within a user's ability and means, including geographically (prioritising active and public transport access) and digitally accessible. | <p>This principle was proposed by a CWG member not captured in versions collated during session 3. CWG feedback rejected the proposed principle however agreed on a new principle that highlights geographic and digital accessibility.</p> <p>The '20-minute neighbourhoods' term was discussed and both Capire and Council highlighted that is a planning term. It was also highlighted that there has been misinformation circulated on the web and social media about 20-minute neighbourhoods that make it a decisive concept. In response the group worked to suggest an alternative that still captured the intent of geographical accessibility.</p> <p>When the new revised version was presented to the whole CWG it was accepted.</p> |

³ Yarra's Social Justice Charter reflects Council's values of Access, Equity, Rights and Participation (<https://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/about-us/council-information/social-justice-charter>)

4.3. Prioritisation of triggers

A secondary output of this process was to develop a mechanism that would support Council to prioritise which services it reviews. Following session 3, Council considered the usability of the draft principles to also support the prioritisation of service reviews. It was agreed that the principles alone would not support this objective. The project team reflected on other council practices and what we heard is important to the community over the course of the four sessions to recommend to the CWG for consideration and prioritisation. The CWG were asked to prioritise the triggers and provide any feedback on the proposed triggers.

CWG members were sent a survey following the final session to complete this activity. As part of the survey, Council also shared two non-negotiable triggers:

1. Changes to the legislative requirements
2. Changes to funding arrangements or cost of delivering service.

It was also reiterated that the triggers do not determine the output of the service review, they just signal to Council that a review is needed.

The following eight principles were shared with the CWG for prioritisation and feedback:

- Service is not well utilised by the community (e.g. low demand).
- Service has a negative impact(s) on the environment.
- Service has a low social benefit (e.g. not responding to community need).
- A comparable service of same quality and price has become available by external provider(s) (external market maturity and availability).
- Service has poor community satisfaction.
- Service is unable to maintain the quality expected by the community.
- A gap or new community need has emerged (e.g. we need to consider reallocation of resources to meet an identified need).
- Service is not directly delivering on the Council Plan / Community Vision.

A total of 27 participants completed the trigger survey, with the results illustrated in Figure 5. The two triggers which were ranked highest priority were 'social benefit' (1st 19%, 2nd 37%) and 'poor community satisfaction' (1st 22%, 2nd 19%). The trigger ranked the lowest priority is 'a comparable service of same quality' (7th 15%, 8th 56%).

The triggers listed below are in the order of priority, as ranked by participants:

1. Service has a low social benefit (e.g. not responding to community need).
2. Service has poor community satisfaction.
3. Service has a negative impact(s) on the environment.
4. Service is not well utilised by the community (e.g. low demand).
5. Service is unable to maintain the quality expected by the community.
6. A gap or new community need has emerged (e.g. we need to consider reallocation of resources to meet an identified need).
7. Service is not directly delivering on the Council Plan / Community Vision.
8. A comparable service of same quality and price has become available by external provider(s) (external market maturity and availability).

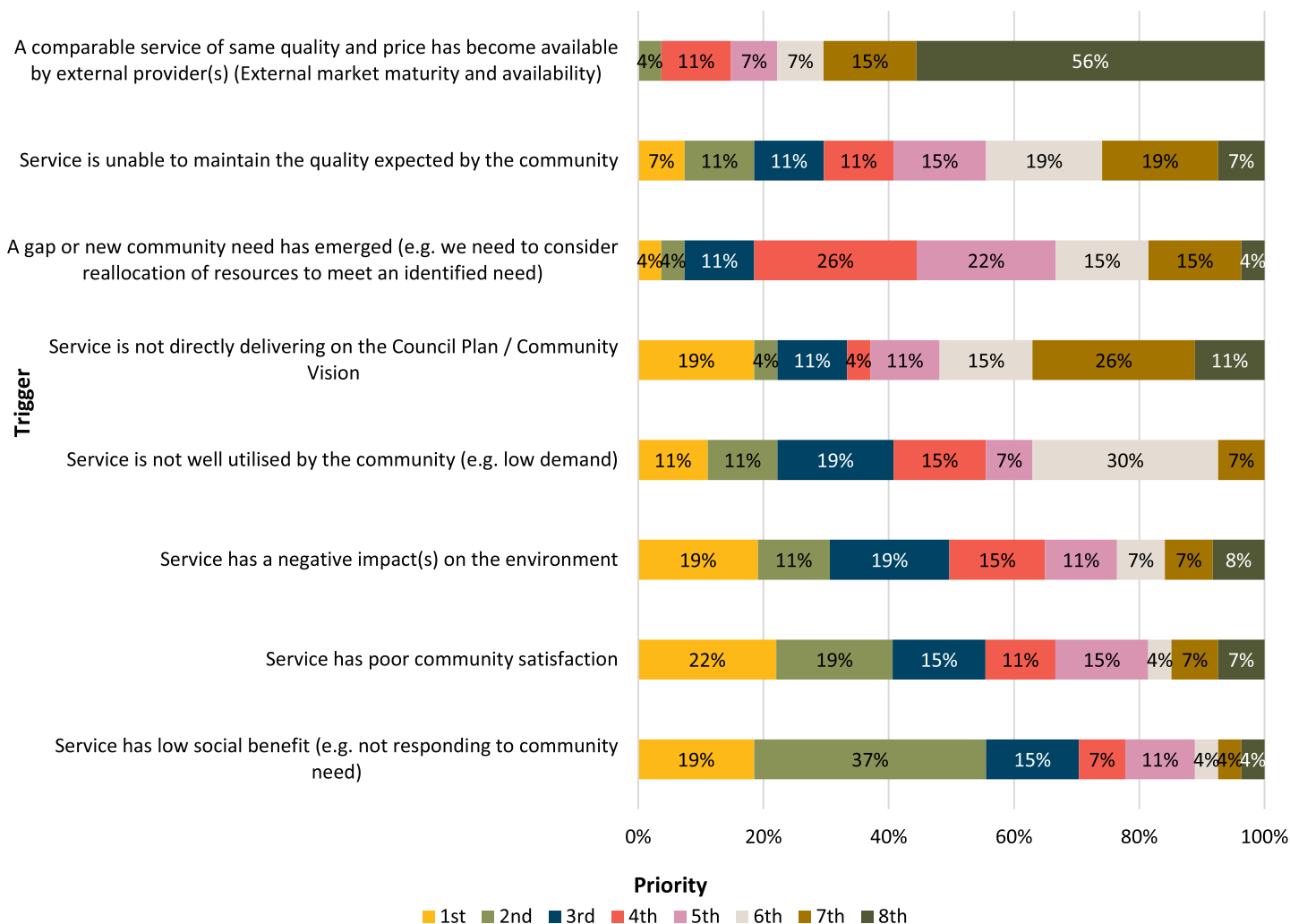


Figure 5. Prioritisation results of service review triggers (n=27)

The CWG were asked if there were any additional things they wanted Council to consider when initiating a service review. The most common responses discussed how Council should ensure it cares for vulnerable community members and that services should create efficiencies/cost savings where possible including:

- collaborating with other services.
- sharing resources.
- interrogating staff levels.
- investing in technology.

“The above [triggers] don't fully capture the prioritisation of vulnerable community members. If a service is satisfying the most privileged, but not the most disadvantaged, that requires a review.” – CWG member

“[Consider] Not for profit providers with outstanding experience and reputation for outsourcing”- CWG member

Other considerations highlighted by CWG members are summarised below:

- Service quality is integral.
- Services should address gaps in the market.

- Services should meet community need.
- The 'environmental impact' trigger should also consider reference to the City of Yarra's built environment heritage.
- The 'low demand' trigger should not be an issue as long as the service is value for money and the target population are happy with the service provision.
- The 'Council Plan / Council Vision' trigger is a lower priority as the assumption is this is a background factor.
- A participant suggested Council establish a sub-committee of community representatives to have input on decision-making.

A couple of participants provided additional triggers for consideration and/or specific examples of when service review should be undertaken.

"If new expert or external evidence, identifies an area where significant benefit could be derived, a review could be undertaken to capture that benefit, or save those costs. E.g. Solar panels on school roofs to save electricity bills" – CWG member

"Council needs to make some key decisions in the short term to stabilise the financial position. Priority focus should be on the areas where significant savings & improvements can be made quickly e.g. finding 5% savings in waste services would deliver approx. \$1m savings which will be a lot more impactful than cancelling a fitness class with 4 attendees." – CWG member

5. Evaluation

5.1. Participant journey

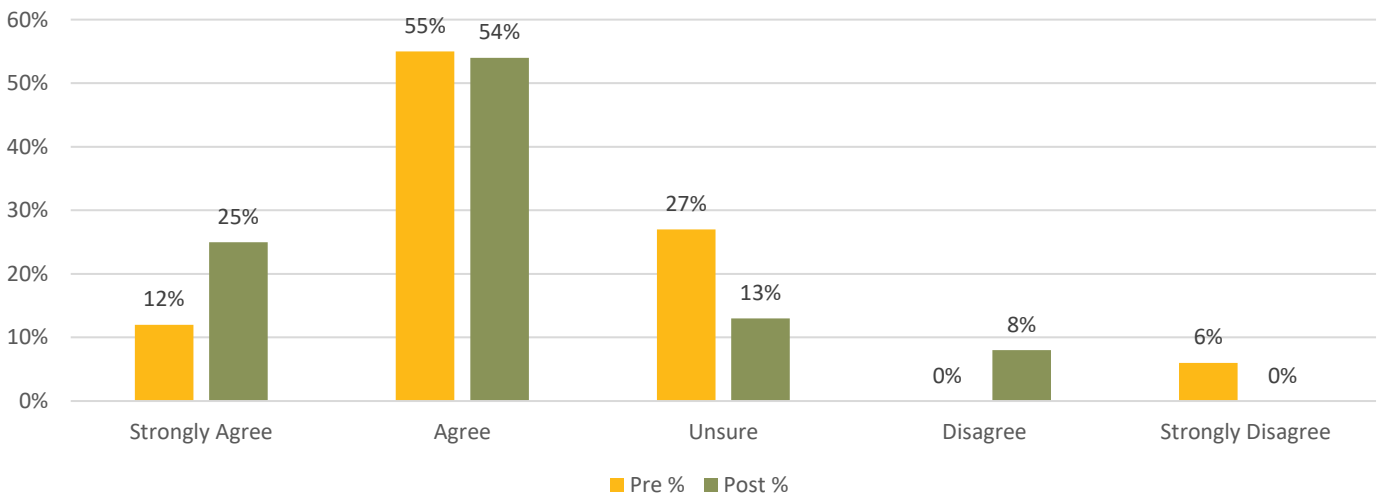
This section details data gathered via surveys pre and post CWG participation on participants' perceptions, trust and confidence in Council, civic participation, and knowledge of Council's administration of services. Collecting this data at the beginning and end of the process helps Council understand what impact engagement processes like this have on their community.

Surveys were distributed via QR codes, with hardcopies and support offered to aid completion. The completion rate was as follows:

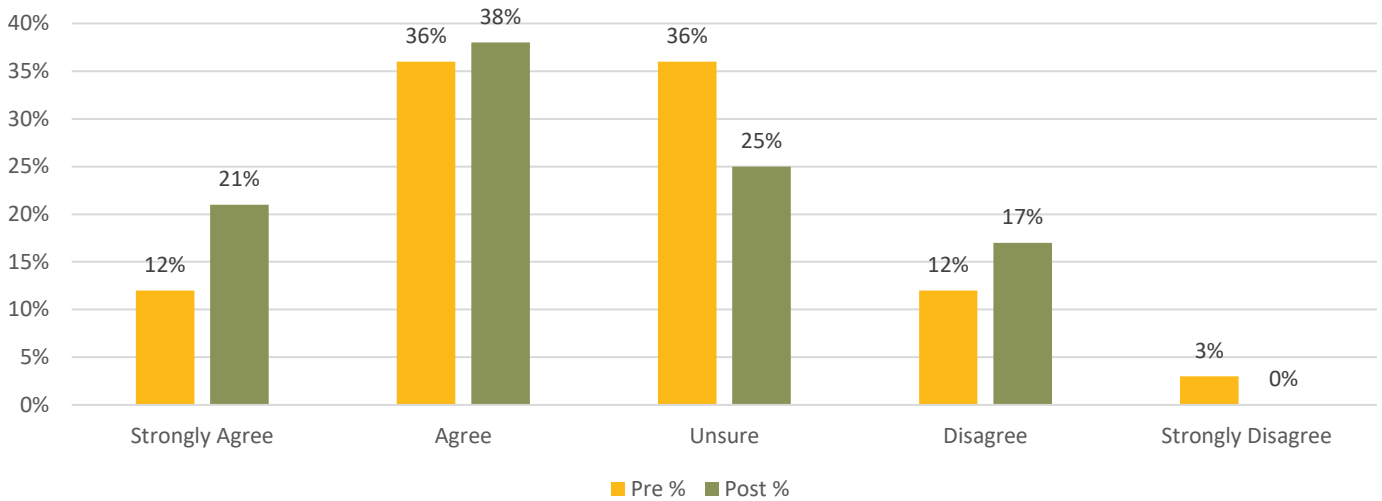
- Pre-surveys (collected on session 1), n = 33
- Post-surveys (collected on session 4), n = 24.

The surveys included multiple choice questions, the results of which are presented in the graphs and open-ended questions from which, responses have been themed, and all quotes have been included verbatim, attributable to CWG members.

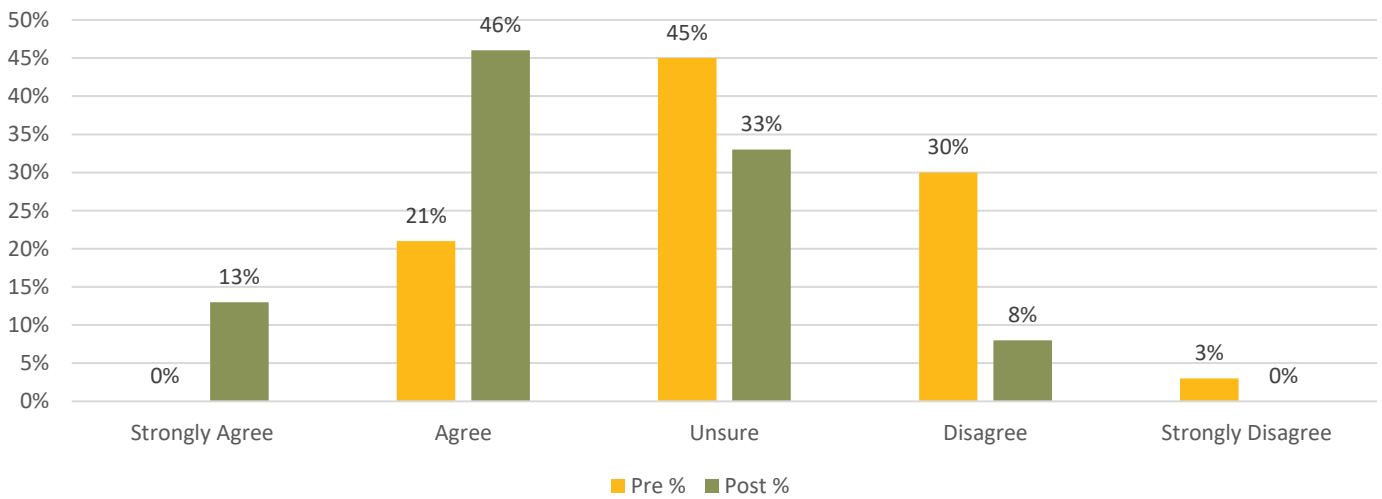
I have a positive relationship with Yarra Council



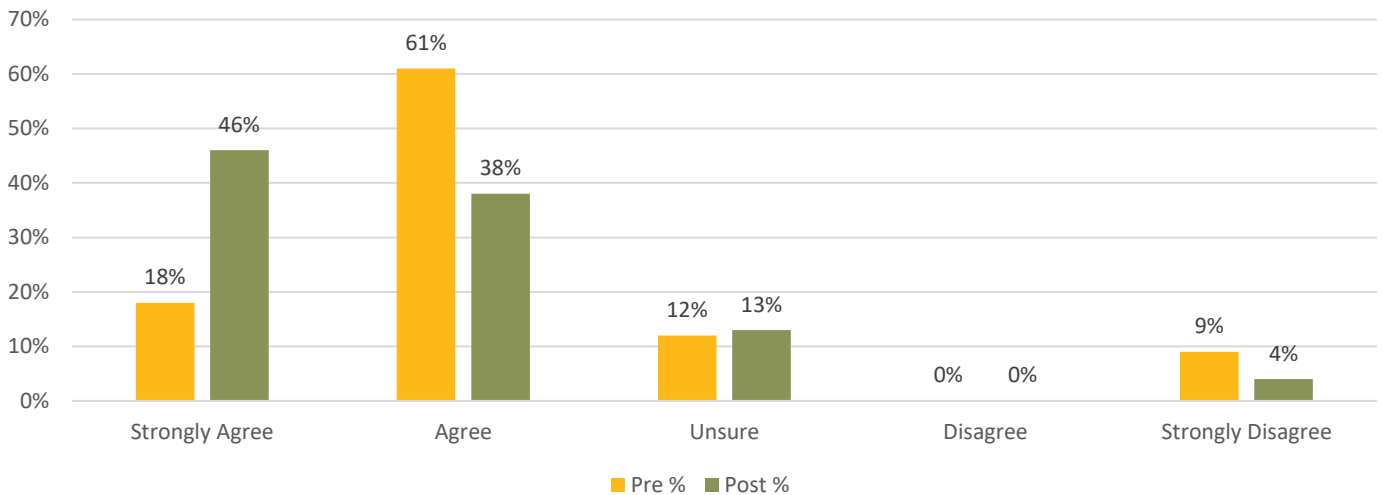
I trust that Yarra Council actively supports community involvement in making decisions



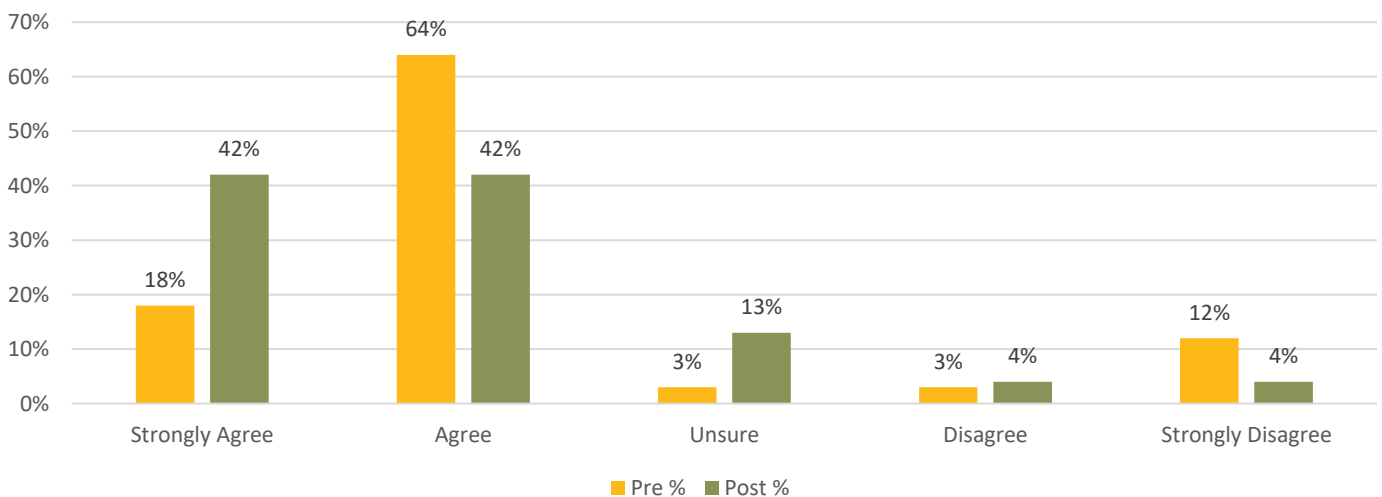
I understand how Yarra Council plans and delivers services



I feel like I have the skills to contribute to Council's decision making



I feel connected to the Yarra community



Motivation to Participate

Participants were asked 'what motivated you to join the Community Working Group?'. Most responses highlighted a desire to represent their community and have a positive impact on Council decision making. The high-level themes that emerged for this question are listed below:

- Be a representative for my community
- Contribute to change and help inform long term decision making
 - To bring forward thinking, concerned mainly about budget decisions, social equity, future residents and the environment.
- To understand Council processes
- Concerns regarding Council transparency
- An opportunity to meet new people

- An opportunity to see how the deliberative and decision-making process works

“Chance to see how the decision-making process works and see the diverse views of other community members.”

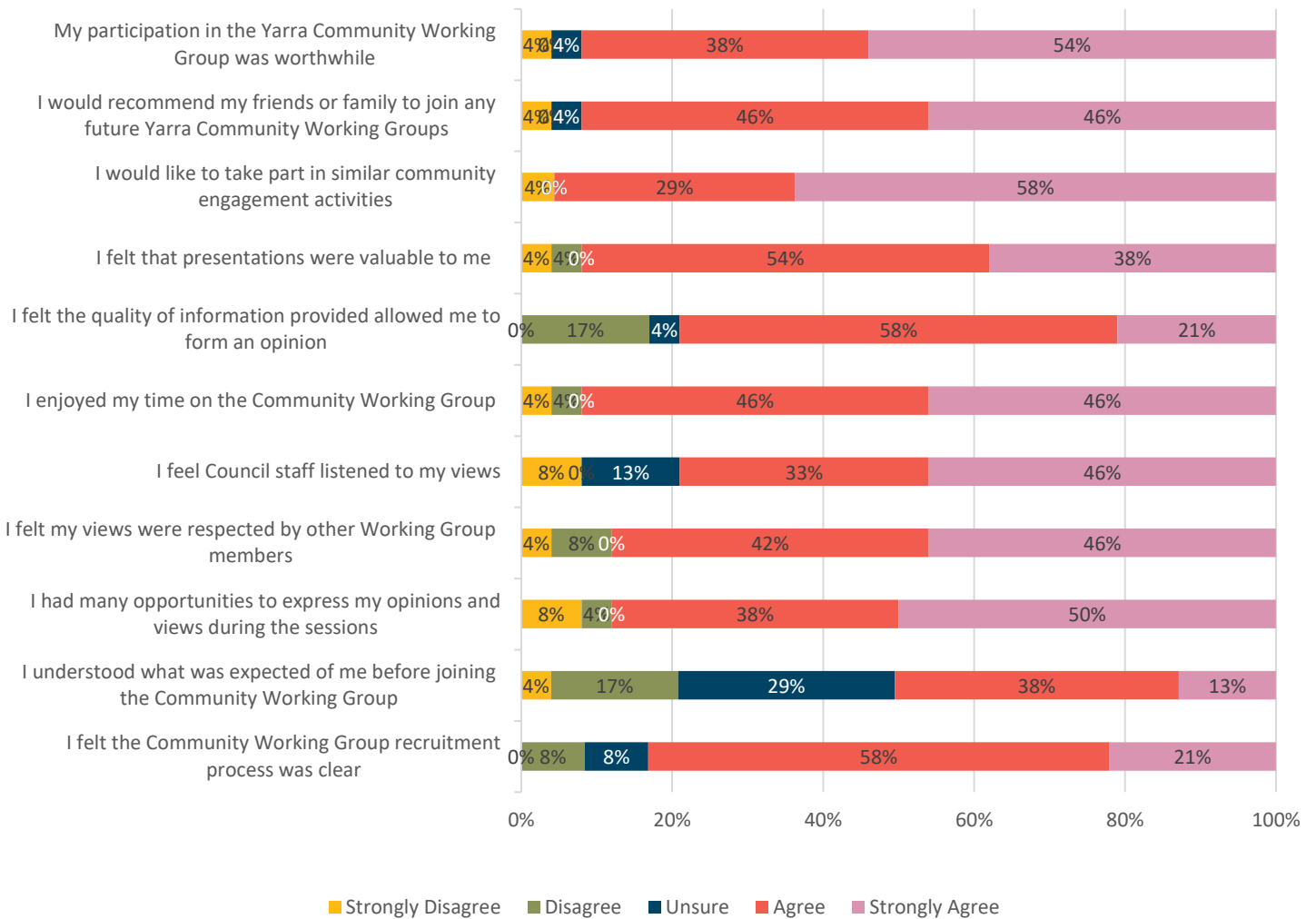
“To learn and give back and support my community.”

“Under representation of young people in government.”

5.2. Process evaluation

A series of indicators were used to assess the overall project delivery from the perspective of the CWG members. Participants completed a process evaluation survey at the end of the fourth session. The survey collected feedback on the recruitment process, their experience of the CWG, the information provided, interest in future events and whether they felt the experience overall was worthwhile. The below graph illustrates the results of the survey. Overall, across all areas, the evaluation was highly positive. The question which received the least support was “I understood what was expected of me before joining the CWG”.

Participant process evaluation survey results



CWG Reflections

Participants were also asked to reflect on the process and suggest any improvements they would recommend for future Yarra CWGs in two open-text questions. Overall, participants highlighted that there was great facilitation of a complex process, they valued Council contributions and catering at the sessions. A couple of participants commented that they hope Council listen to the CWG and takes on the feedback. However, several suggestions related to receiving reading material 48 hours in advance, to allow enough time for CWG members to adequately consider the content before the session. One participant highlighted that this is of particular importance for those who have English as their second language. Several participants also requested more pre-reading including information on,

- Council processes
- Council policies and strategies
- Examples of Council activities in-house and outsourced

Participants also suggested that the sessions could include more activities that require physical movement (i.e. out of chairs) on longer days and that it was difficult to concentrate in the evenings—other comments related to concerns that louder individuals dominated certain discussions. Some practical suggestions include,

- Better hearing loop machine
- Wi-Fi access
- Provision of iPads

One person felt there was not enough consideration given to the benefits and efficiencies of in-house provision of services. This person felt that the process *“preferred the conclusion that out-sourcing essential community services is the only viable option”*.

Other open-ended feedback included:

“Thanks for the opportunity. Great to meet so many people enthusiastic to make Yarra an even better place to live.”

“The catering did an excellent job, as did the council officers and the representatives of Capire.”

“Keep consultation going and listen to the community.”

“If English wasn’t your first language then participation was harder. Some participants had a lot more previous experience in council and therefore I had to do some catching up trying to work out what was required of me. The process needs participants to be confident to speak up and be able to synthesise information very quickly and for those who have a disability and if different linguistic and educational levels providing more time, support, earlier information to help them.”

“Make them longer, split the cohort into smaller groups, avoid bottlenecking the group’s opinions through a small number of people at any point, provide more information, give community opinions statutory power.”

“Word smithing component was difficult, sometimes those with personal views were taken into account more so than the majority. More structure breaks and timing of these as we spent long periods sitting and working.”

Appendix A: Welcome pack table of contents

The welcome pack was provided via email to the CWG prior to the first session. The pack included:

1. Welcome from the Mayor
2. Welcome from the CEO
3. Project context
4. The role of local government
5. About Yarra City Council
6. Our current financial position and how we pay for the future
7. City of Yarra services and costs associated
8. Comparing data to other Councils
9. What did we hear from community to date?
10. What happens next?
11. Support and payments, who can I contact, getting to the venue.

Documents provided to the CWG along with the welcome pack:

- City of Yarra Council Plan
- City of Yarra Quarterly report
- City of Yarra – Your Rates 2023 – 2024
- City of Yarra Annual Report 2022 –2023
- City of Yarra – Service Catalogue Graphic Designed Pdf
- City of Yarra – Service Overview
- City of Yarra – Pricing Policy.

Appendix B: Materials provided to support final principle refinement

Each of the draft principles, with suggested edits, information on previous iterations, CWG comments and Council comments were displayed on easels around the room for consideration, deliberation and refinement by the CWG during session 4.

Suggested edits/revisions:

When planning or reviewing a service, Council will:

Improve environmental performance and resilience, and identify opportunities to implement Indigenous practices.

Previous draft principle/s:

- Ensure the environmental impact and sustainability of the services are considered for both the present and future by considering the following:
 - Climate emergency
 - Indigenous practices
 - Place making
 - Community resilience
 - Moving around in physical and lived context.

CWG comments on draft principle/s:

- Do we need to be more specific? We are already prioritising the environment due to the council environmental policy. Should this have more specific goals? (e.g. prioritise service reviews for services with worse environmental impact)
- Cultural events does not apply
- Can this point reference a pro-active approach with regards to the climate emergency?
- Divide info of environmental sustainability, impacts and community connections.
- Refine the principle with these details:
 - Placemaking – defined by designing of physical environment to enrich the wellbeing of residents and visitors. Ability for people of any ability to move around in a physical & livable context.
 - Community resilience – the intergenerational ability to respond to climate crisis.

Project team comments on draft principle/s:

- This principle commits us to building many layers into each service review. Is the focus on environmental sustainability?
- Consider breaking this one up. It is trying to cover too many things.

Suggested edits/revisions:

When planning or reviewing a service, Council will:

Be adaptable and responsive by proactively identifying, planning for and implementing solutions that respond to dynamic factors, such as means levels of advantage/disadvantage, life stages and changing demographics.

Previous draft principle/s:

Be adaptable and responsive to proactively identify, plan for and implement solutions that respond to the current and future needs of the community. They must identify and consider dynamic factors such as means levels of advantage/disadvantage, life stages and changing demographics.

CWG comments on draft principle/s:

- Too wordy
- Consider separating it into two sentences

Project team comments on draft principle/s:

- Suggest adding market conditions, as this is one of the key aspects that changes frequently.
- Suggested alternative: Proactively identify, plan for and implement solutions that respond to current and future needs of the community and adapts to evolving market conditions.
- Suggest removing 'they must identify and consider dynamic factors such as means levels of advantage/disadvantage, life stages and changing demographics' - this detail is a standard practice for council.

Suggested edits/revisions:

When planning or reviewing a service, Council will:

Make transparent and evidence-based decisions about how and why decisions are made and include input from those impacted.

Previous draft principle/s:

- Be transparent about how and why decisions are made that directly impact the community.
- Provide evidence-based outcomes, that can be understood by the community through transparent business principles that are both qualitative and quantitative.
- Consult community members directly affected by/actively using/engaging with that particular service as a priority.
- Ensure the community is consulted in an accessible and timely way using diverse range of methods as per their needs, where appropriate, as per councils engagement policy.

CWG comments on draft principle/s:

- First two dot points are saying similar things. The second one can bog people down by having to jump through reporting hoops.
- First two both cover transparency, evidence-based and impact. How can we make these cleaner?
- Any service provided by Council must be made through evidence-based decision-making considering both qualitative and quantitative.
- Council should use evidence to make recommendations.

Project team comments on draft principle/s:

- Suggested alternative: Services will deliver qualitative and quantitative evidence-based outcomes, that can be shared and understood by the community.

Suggested edits/revisions:

When planning or reviewing a service, Council will:

Use a cost-benefit analysis to demonstrate the positive impact of service reform on the community.

Previous draft principle/s:

- Ensure they have a demonstratable positive impact on community and service used whilst showing
 - Cost effectiveness / value for money
 - Measurable outcomes that are targeted for; local businesses, community amenities and resident needs.

CWG comments on draft principle/s:

- Council should prioritise service reviews where reform is most likely to deliver community benefit.
- Demonstratable positive impact on community and service used whilst balancing the impacts. Positive impacts that Council should measure;
 - Cost effectiveness / value for money
 - Measurable outcomes that are targeted for; local businesses, community amenities and resident needs.

Project team comments on draft principle/s:

- Suggested alternative: Cost benefit analysis will be used to demonstrate the positive impact of services on the community

Suggested edits/revisions:

When planning or reviewing a service, Council will:

Ensure the community is consulted, prioritising the community members directly affected by/actively using/engaging with that service. Consultation should be accessible and timely, using diverse range of methods, where appropriate, as per Councils' Community Engagement Policy.

Previous draft principle/s:

- Consult community members directly affected by/actively using/engaging with that particular service as a priority.
- Ensure the community is consulted in an accessible and timely way using diverse range of methods as per their needs, where appropriate, as per councils engagement policy.
- Council should outsource reviews of the most contentious services to deliberative engagements panels.
- Continue community engagement and have regular representative samples and lived experiences of specific service users.

CWG comments on draft principle/s:

- Who else is doing this?
- Council should outsource reviews of the most contentious services to deliberative engagement panels.

Project team comments on draft principle/s:

- First dot point could be considered an approach not a principle - recommend including it in and introductory preamble
- Combine with dot points together.
- I like the as per council engagement policy, so that we are not creating duplicates. The policy guides the depth of engagement.

- Consider adding where appropriate - because we could be looking at an internal service or a service that doesn't directly impact community.

Suggested edits/revisions:

When planning or reviewing a service, Council will:

Prioritise financial sustainability and appropriate resource allocation to enable us to respond to changing community needs now and into the future.

Previous draft principle/s:

- Ensure financial sustainability to provide for community needs now and into the future by including but not limited to:
 - where community needs change
 - demographics
 - community trends
 - market trends
- Will be high quality and adequately resourced

CWG comments on draft principle/s:

- Not clear enough
- Isn't clear how to prioritise financial or community needs
- Council to allocate appropriate resources to meet the expected standard of delivery and need (i.e. don't just half-arse it)
- Council should assess the ability of a service model to reallocate resources, or scale as required, in response to a crisis.

Project team comments on draft principle/s:

- Suggested alternative: Financial sustainability of services will be prioritised so as to provide for the diversity of current and future needs of the community.
- If there is a desire to include expectations around delivery standards, can we be more specific e.g. is about quality, access, pricing etc.?

Suggested edits/revisions:

When planning or reviewing a service, Council will:

Prioritise service delivery models where it can maintain control or influence the community benefits, outcomes and quality of the service.

Previous draft principle/s:

- Set and maintain control of service quality standards that allows for a delivery of service that meets community needs
- Council will prioritise service delivery models where they can maintain control and influence the outcomes and quality, resorting to outsourcing only when there is evidence of community benefit

- will be high quality and adequately resourced

CWG comments on draft principle/s:

- Council will prioritise service delivery models where they can maintain control and influence the outcomes and quality of the service
- Can this principle be finished at quality?
- Not about control, needs to prioritise community benefit more
- Council should assess the ability of a service model to retain control over service level and service quality, alongside the cost to deliver.

Project team comments on draft principle/s:

- Suggested Alternative: Service delivery models where Council can maintain control or influence the community benefits, outcomes and quality of the service, will be prioritised.

Suggested edits/revisions:

When planning or reviewing a service, Council will:

Ensure that where a service is subsidised the service delivers a clear social benefit, considers the needs of vulnerable community members and delivers on our Community Vision and Council Plan.

Previous draft principle/s:

- Where council has to subsidise a service, it must deliver a clear community benefit and deliver on our community vision

CWG comments on draft principle/s:

- Council should deliver a package of services that best gives effect to the Council Vision and Council Plan, as well as all adopted policies, strategies, and plans.
- Ensure continuity of service provision where they are affected by legislative change particularly affecting those with high needs

Project team comments on draft principle/s:

- I believe the more common terminology that relates to competitive neutrality is “social benefit”, could we swap the word community benefit with social benefit?
- Suggested Alternative: Council subsidised services, must deliver a clear social benefit and deliver on our community vision else charge market pricing
- Regarding the second principle, legislative as the reason for review is narrow, do we want to consider this in the event of any change?
- Do we want to prioritise delivering services to those most vulnerable?
- Consider that the term high-need could be interpreted in various ways. Consider vulnerable/experiencing vulnerability as an alternative.

Suggested edits/revisions:

When planning or reviewing a service, Council will:

Seek creative ways to continually improve and address challenges, including collaborating with others facing the same challenges.

Previous draft principle/s:

- Council will not be afraid to seek creative ways to address challenges in service delivery, encouraging diverse voices to contribute to a culture of continuous improvement

CWG comments on draft principle/s:

- Remove “not be afraid” and “culture”
- Council should avoid a status quo bias
- Council should consider opportunities to collaborate with other Council’s, or to source services from other Council’s.
- Council should consider alternative methods of achieving the same objective.

Project team comments on draft principle/s:

- Additional to the CWG suggestions the diverse voices could be read as community engagement, which has been addressed in other principles.
- Collaborating with other Councils is one way to creatively address challenges. Do we need to specifically state it? Another creative way is partnership, which is similar but more broadly applicable.
- Suggested Alternative: Council will seek creative and diverse/innovative ways to address challenges in service delivery and contribute to continuous improvements.

Suggested edits/revisions:

When planning or reviewing a service, Council will:

Ensure that social impact and equity are accounted for when pricing a user-pays, market-comparable service.

Previous draft principle/s:

- Ensure that when pricing a market-comparable service, social impact and equity are accounted for.

CWG comments on draft principle/s:

Project team comments on draft principle/s:

- The principle isn’t fully clear. Using the word ‘pricing’ could be interpreted in different ways. Is this about when we make decisions about user-pay models and how much we charge a user?
- Consider Tony Keenan’s example about Kindergarten pricing in Port Melbourne, where they were subsidising a service with lower fees than others operating in the market. Do you raise prices or target the service to those most in need (or both) to maximise social impact?

Suggested edits/revisions:

When planning or reviewing a service, Council will:

Look at service reviews holistically: compare the impact of a change in one service with the impact of a change in another.

Previous draft principle/s:

- Council should compare the impact of a change in one service with the impact of a change in another service.

CWG comments on draft principle/s:

Project team comments on draft principle/s:

- Is this about not looking at service reviews in isolation? e.g. looking at them holistically.

Suggested edits/revisions:

When planning or reviewing a service, Council will:

Consider withdrawing from services that are adequately delivered by the market.

Previous draft principle/s:

- Council should withdraw from services that are adequately delivered by the market.

CWG comments on draft principle/s:

Project team comments on draft principle/s:

- This is a strong principle but good. Maybe update to 'consider', e.g. we may stay in a service if it is profitable even if others in the market are delivering it, 'so that we can subsidise something else'.
- We also need to define 'adequately' e.g. there is enough market providers with capacity in reasonable proximity that are charging similar prices.

Suggested edits/revisions:

When planning or reviewing a service, Council will:

Consider equitable access to services and promote 20-minute neighbourhoods.

Previous draft principle/s:

- Consider the accessibility of services (i.e. 20-minute neighbourhood)

CWG comments on draft principle/s:

Project team comments on draft principle/s:

- This talks to the planning for and distribution of services, which we need to consider if we were planning a new service, stepping out of a service or consolidating our facilities – which we might consider if they were under utilised.
- Need to consider that the term '20-minute neighbourhoods' is used and understood in different ways within the community. To avoid confusion, it may be better to focus on equitable access.

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Capire acknowledges
and deeply respects the Wurundjeri
people and
the Traditional Owners
of the Victorian land.



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