



REPORT: Organisational Sustainability Review and Improvement Plan

DIVISION: Development and Environment
REPORT DATE: 12 April 2024
TRIM REFERENCE: ID24/682

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Seek endorsementStrategic Project Update	
Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The report seeks to place the draft Organisational Sustainability Review and Improvement Plan on public exhibition for community feedback in conjunction with the draft 2024/2025 Budget and Operational Plan.	
Reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In response to the resolution of CSC23/65, That the Council determine that consideration of a Special Rate Variation application to Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal NSW (IPART) be deferred until 2025/2026.	
Financial Implications	Budget Area	Strategy, Partnerships and Engagement
	Funding Source	Strategic Strategy, Partnerships and Engagement
	Proposed Cost	Cost implications associated with the implementation of the proposed improvement strategies has not been defined.
Policy Implications	Policy Title	There are no policy implications arising from this report.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Towards 2040 Community Strategic Plan is a vision for the development of the region out to the year 2040. The Plan includes six principle themes and a number of objectives and strategies. This report is aligned to:

Theme:	4 Leadership
CSP Objective:	4.1 Council provides transparent, fair and accountable leadership and governance
Delivery Program Strategy:	4.1.2 Council's decision-making processes are open, transparent and accountable
Theme:	4 Leadership
CSP Objective:	4.2 The resources of Council are sustainably managed
Delivery Program Strategy:	4.2.4 The business activities of Council are financially sustainable and provide financial returns to the community

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That the draft Organisational Sustainability Review and Improvement Plan, attached as Appendix 1, be endorsed for the purpose of public exhibition only.**
- 2. That the draft Organisational Sustainability Review and Improvement Plan be placed on public exhibition from Wednesday, 1 May 2024 until 9am Monday, 3 June 2024.**
- 3. That community and stakeholder engagement be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Strategy (including Community Participation Plan).**
- 4. That following completion of the public exhibition, a further report be presented to Council for consideration, addressing the outcomes of the public exhibition.**

Murray Wood
Chief Executive Officer

SJ
Director Strategy,
Partnerships and
Engagement

BACKGROUND

Previous Resolutions of Council

23 November 2024 CSC23/65	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the Council determine that consideration of a Special Rate Variation application to Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal NSW (IPART) be deferred until 2025/2026.2. That Council develop an Organisational Sustainably Review and Improvement Plan, as part of the development of the 2024/2025 Operational Plan and Budget process.
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Council appointed independent industry consultants AEC Group Ltd to undertake an independent review of the financial sustainability of Dubbo Regional Council. The review was completed in November 2023.

In its report, AEC Group recommended the following vision of a sustainable scenario for Council:

“The vision for a sustainable Dubbo Regional Council is that the Council will be able to achieve the vision outlined in the Community Strategic Plan while maintaining over the medium to long term both fiscal capital (that is access to cash) and the infrastructure capital (that is assets that the Council owns).”

An Enhanced Asset Renewal and Enhanced Cash scenario was developed by AEC to assess the increase in cash required to general sufficient funds to maintain fiscal capital, while also increasing the investment in asset renewals and maintenance to maintain the infrastructure capital.

Informed by analysis, AEC concluded that an improvement in the cash generated from Council’s operations is required to an aggregate amount equivalent to a cumulative increase over four years of 37.1% in ordinary rates, above what would otherwise be projected through the annual rate peg (increase in rates) and growth.

Whilst this conclusion was expressed in the form of the required percentage increase in ordinary rates, the report also identified that may be achieved through a combination of initiatives, including:

- Identification of operational efficiencies and productivity improvements.
- Reduction in service provision – levels and/or range of services.
- Reduction in debt through sale of surplus assets.
- Increase in revenue from operations through increase in service fees, rates and/or charges.

Specifically, to support long term financial sustainability, the review recommended that Council consider the following:

- 9.1.1 Efficiencies Savings and Productivity Improvement
- 9.1.2 Review of User Charges and Fees
- 9.1.3 Increase in General Rate Through a Special Rate Variation
- 9.1.4 Revise Current Range and Levels of Service
- 9.1.5 Establish Governance & Enhanced Capital Works Program Framework
- 9.1.6 Asset Management

The draft Organisational Sustainability and Improvement Plan (provided here in **Appendix 1**) forms part of Council's response to the review recommendations, specifically 9.1.1. Elements included in the Plan also refer to 9.1.2 and 9.1.4.

REPORT

The draft Organisational Sustainability and Improvement Plan has been developed in conjunction with the draft 2024/2025 Budget and Operational Plan and supports Council's commitment to ensuring long-term viability and effectiveness. The Plan will address key areas for development and implements strategies to promote efficiency, improvement, and sustainability.

1. Plan Development

The development of the Plan included three key stages with a further stage identified for implementation:

Stage one: Plan definition

- Project and plan approach created by Executive Leadership Team.
- Councillor workshop to confirm project approach, parameters of plan and metrics to be applied.
- Internal workshop with Senior Leadership Team.
- Project and plan approach provided to Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.
- Staff engagement to support informed ideas generation.

Stage two: Plan creation

- Collation of existing efficiency and improvement commitments.
- Collation of new efficiency and improvement ideas.
- Finalising, quantifying and prioritising draft actions.
- Senior Leadership Team review of draft to align potential resource allocation.

- Executive Leadership Team review of the draft plan.

Stage three: Plan consideration

- Presentation of draft plan to Councillors.
- Presentation of draft plan to Council Ordinary Meeting.
- Draft plan to be place Public Exhibition: 1 May – 3 June 2024.
- Post Public Exhibition, draft plan presented to Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee for consideration.
- Post Public Exhibition draft plan presented to Council Ordinary Meeting for consideration.

Stage four: Plan implementation

- Implementation of adopted Plan.
- Report on the implementation in line with the adopted plan.

2. Recognition and focus on continued improvement

Council has a strong focus on continual improvement both from a business operation perspective and ensuring we can deliver services to our community in a financially responsible manner. The draft Organisational Sustainability and Improvement Plan presents one component of Council's ongoing focus on organisational improvement.

(a) Organisational direction and capacity

This includes ensuring the organisation has a robust focus on strategic direction, organisational capability culture and ongoing capacity. The organisation has an internal focus on the following key workstreams:

- Organisation effectiveness

This includes building shared and individual understanding, rigour and accountability to deliver together for our community.

- Workplace wellbeing

Ensuring the organisation provides strategies to maintain and enhance workplace wellbeing.

- Resource allocation

Ensuring we continue to design and implement robust processes for organisation wide prioritisation and allocation of resources by the Elected Body.

To aid in understanding the key components of organisational direction and capacity, the draft Plan also includes a high-level service catalogue. The service catalogue supports service profiling, service level recognition, service review identification and organisational development and change management.

(b) Service Review Program

The service review program forms an integral part of this Plan, the objective to support long term financial sustainability and a culture of continuous improvement.

NSW Office of Local Government guidelines for Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) require a service review program to be undertaken by all Council's as provided below:

- 4.3 To encourage continuous improvement across the council's operations, the Delivery Program must identify areas of service that the council will review during its term, and how the council will engage with the community and other stakeholders to determine service level expectations and appropriate measures.*

Service reviews are undertaken in accordance with Council's adopted Service Review Framework, which also includes a service review program. The Plan provides a snapshot of service reviews Council has undertaken, reviews underway and planned reviews upcoming.

3. Plan Structure and Improvement Strategies

The Organisational Sustainability and Improvement Plan includes a range of improvement strategies, which have been broadly defined by the outcomes they aim to achieve, which includes the following:

- **Efficiency**

Less input for same output, or same input for greater output.

- **Improvement**

A measured improved output our outcome (cost/service standard/offering).

- **Service Sustainability**

Altering a service to save input (financial or resource) without significant impact.

Table 1 shows the draft improvement strategies that are proposed to be included in the Plan, in addition to a strategic goal or target.

Each identified improvement strategy will develop a range of achievable actions. It should be noted that identified actions need to undergo feasibility analysis to ensure they represent a

defined improvement, are consistent with the identified improvement strategies and have measurable return benefits in respect of financial, staff time and resource allocation.

Improvement strategy	Goal/ target
Implement proactive processes in relation to debt management activities.	90+ day debt is < 30% of all total sundry debtor's debt.
Consider system modules or improvements that support agile account management to reduce staff administration time.	Reconciliation of accounts is optimised.
Holistic review of software, subscriptions and applications seeking to reduce duplication, ensure future proofing and integration with core systems.	Instances of duplication are reduced.
Pre-review scoping of Service Reviews is undertaken regularly, and reviews with assumed benefit is high and complexity is low are prioritised.	Establish a working group to assess and make recommendations.
Review Council "office" space in line with activity-based working, flexible working options and alternative use of "office" space where suitable.	Reduce administration office space by 10%.
Consider standardisation of venue hire rates, alternatives for customer/client use.	Complete assessment of the community halls; standards, m ² hireable and amenity.
Review of Council fleet policy and lease back vehicle provision.	Reduce fleet costs.
Seek better value for Council through centralised, bulk-buy for discounts or purchasing power agreements for consumables and other supplies.	Implement centralised consumables.
Review internal services with process mapping to identify bottlenecks, duplication, time lags and seek to improve efficiencies across the organisation.	Complete process mapping of the 42 identified processes by 2027. Complete framework.
Build internal capability and knowledge and provide staff with systems to increase efficient use of time.	Staff time allocated to data entry tasks is reduced.
Review funding, sponsorship, in-kind support and alternatives for assistance to community groups and organisations.	Conduct a survey to establish satisfaction ratings. Review in 12months.
Vacant positions are reviewed for alignment to core requirements.	Alignment checklist is developed and applied.
Review of staff and stakeholder time investment during consultation activities.	Effective scheduling to reduce staff overtime.
Commercial hire of venues is prioritised.	Complete the review of the Internal Business Hire Procedure.
Consider alternate methods of asset maintenance and routine task over traditional methods.	Undertake targeted trials.
Review the delivery and provision of Civic events.	Measure community need and satisfaction.
Investigate and consider the deferral of renewals/upgrades in consideration of risk ratings.	Asset service life is increased.
Investigation of alternative water source options in consideration of strategic planning for the region.	Identify alternatives.

Implement Councils Volunteer framework to seek/drive improvements to service delivery or community outcomes	Increasing number of volunteers.
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Table 1. Improvement Strategies

4. Plan Review

Council's implementation of the Plan, including underway and completed improvement actions will be reported to Council as a component of the bi-annual Delivery Program updates (every 6 months). This reporting will also provide a snapshot of Council's achievement towards the identified targets from each improvement strategy included in this Plan.

Council will implement and report on the adopted Service Review Program.

Council will also report through the following means:

- Monthly Financial Snapshot to Council and Community.
- Monthly Facility Performance Snapshot to Council and Community.
- Corporate Measures (goals, targets and KPIs) as part of the Operational Plan progress reporting every six months to Council and Community.
- In the Annual Report.
- In the State of the Region report.

Consultation

The Plan is proposed to be placed on public exhibition alongside Council's draft 2024/2025 Budget, Operational Plan and associated documents for community feedback.

Resourcing Implications

- The Organisational Sustainability Review and Improvement Plan was developed in-house with any direct costs incurred considered part of normal operational expenses.
- Resourcing of the improvement strategies may be undertaken either within the adopted budgets of the responsible branches/owners, or via the suitable internal applications. These applications may include internal funding requests or organisational support for the reallocation or distribution of staff to dedicated project work to be determined at Management level and in line with Council's Procurement Policy.

Timeframe

Key Date	Explanation
1 May – 3 June 2024	Public exhibition period
27 June 2024	Ordinary Council Meeting to consider result of the public exhibition period and adoption of the documents

APPENDICES:

- 1 [↓](#) Draft Organisational Sustainability Review and Improvement Plan



ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Wiradjuri people who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, work and play. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging of the Wiradjuri Nation and thank them for their care of the land, water and sky and extend that respect to other Indigenous Australians.

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Background

Why this Plan was created

Council appointed AEC Group Ltd to undertake an independent review of the financial sustainability of Dubbo Regional Council, the review was completed in November 2023. In considering the recommendations of the independent review at the Ordinary Council Meeting – 23 November 2023 Council resolved: CSC23/65 Independent Financial Sustainability Review (ID23/2637)

1. That the Council determine that consideration of a Special Rate Variation application to Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal NSW (IPART) be deferred until 2025/2026.

2. That Council develop an Organisational Sustainability Review and Improvement Plan, as part of the development of the 2024/2025 Operational Plan and Budget process.

How this Plan links to the AEC Independent Financial Sustainability review

In its independent report, AEC Group recommended the following vision of a sustainable scenario for Council:

The vision for a sustainable Dubbo Regional Council is that the Council will be able to achieve the vision outlined in the Community Strategic Plan while maintaining over the medium to long term both fiscal capital (that is access to cash) and the infrastructure capital (that is assets that the Council owns).

An Enhanced Asset Renewal and Enhanced Cash scenario was developed by AEC to assess the increase in cash required to general sufficient cash to maintain fiscal capital, while also increasing the investment in asset renewals and maintenance to maintain the infrastructure capital.

Informed by analysis, AEC concluded that an improvement in the cash generated from Council's operations is required to an aggregate amount equivalent to a cumulative increase over four years of 37.1% in ordinary rates, above what would otherwise be projected through the annual rate peg (increase in rates) and growth.

Whilst this conclusion was expressed in the form of the required percentage increase in ordinary rates, the report also identified what could be achieved through a combination of initiatives, including:

- 1 Identification of operational efficiencies and productivity improvements.
- 2 Reduction in service provision – levels and/or range of services.
- 3 Reduction in debt through sale of surplus assets.
- 4 Increase in revenue from operations through increase in service fees, rates and/or charges.

Specifically, to support long term financial sustainability, the review recommended Council consider:

- 9.1.1 Efficiencies Savings and Productivity Improvement
- 9.1.2 Review of User Charges and Fees
- 9.1.3 Increase in General Rate Through a Special Rate Variation
- 9.1.4 Revise Current Range and Levels of Service
- 9.1.5 Establish Governance & Enhanced Capital Works Program Framework
- 9.1.6 Asset Management

This Organisational Sustainability and Improvement Plan forms part of Council's response to the review recommendations, specifically 9.1.1. Elements within this plan also refer to 9.1.2 and 9.1.4.

How was the plan developed

Development of this of this Plan included three key stages with a further stage identified for implementation:



instead of ad hoc decisions made in isolation, which may threaten sustainability.

This Plan is to be considered by Council and Community with the draft 2024/2025 Delivery Program and Operational Plan. It is important that all aspects of the Plan are reflected in Council's Operational Plan in current and future years, and are embedded throughout the organisations strategic focus, to align both resourcing and prioritisation.

The organisation is also drafting a corporate blueprint, set as a key performance indicator for the Chief Executive officer by September 2024. The Blueprint is an internal business framework to direct and assist Council to ensure the needs and priorities of the community are met. The Blueprint will support the effective integration and implementation of corporate strategies – including this Organisational Sustainability and Improvement Plan.

Organisational capability, culture and capacity

In addition to the creation of this Plan, there have been a number of initiatives undertaken to build organisational capability, culture and capacity to guide continuous improvement:

- ✓ Creation of Corporate Strategy and Performance function. Whilst limited with resources of 1.5 team members, the function works in partnership with staff across the organisation to advocate for improvement and drive increased focus on efficiency, effective service definition and delivery.
- ✓ The organisation's 'plan on a Page' is set for an 18-month period with agreed workstreams to address key areas requiring organisational focus to improve service delivery and performance.
- ✓ Building staff capability with the roll out of continuous improvement workshops across the organisation.
- ✓ Through Local Government Professionals, Council engaged Morrison and Low to facilitate service review training on site for 21 staff participants in February 2024. Attendees included Directors, Managers and Staff from across the organisation who will lead service review projects, support projects or support staff through any potential change management.

Organisational direction and capacity

Organisational direction

For an organisation to be sustainable, its strategy, services, capability, capacity and resources must integrate to guide sustainable decision-making. The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework aims to guide the pathway to organisational sustainability with integration between the key resourcing strategies,

Service Sustainability

Sustainability is often defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

A company or organisation implements sustainable practices by reducing its consumption of limited resources or finding alternative resources. Sections of the organisation can be viewed as a business in regards to how we operate and service efficiency. However, providing products and services to our community should be considered in conjunction with what the community needs and can afford. Such complex factors can drive the type and level of services that are provided to our community.

The Corporate Strategy and Performance function initiates the service review program to assess services, service levels provided to our community and service delivery areas, ensuring that our community receives optimal services at levels that maintain overall financial sustainability.

This Plan is to be considered in addition to the service review program and identifies improvement strategies, framed as 'service sustainability'.

Service Identification

To understand how we can provide a sustainable organisation in the future, we need to understand the services we provide as an organisation to our community.

Core services of the organisation have been identified in a high-level catalogue. This catalogue along with supporting detail, informs supports service profiling, service level recognition, service review identification and organisational development and change management. It will also inform an organisational wide process mapping program which will support efficiencies and improvement.

The service catalogue is included in Appendix 1.

Service Review Program

Service Review Program alignment to financial sustainability and improvement

The service review program forms an integral part of this Plan, the objective to support long term financial sustainability and a culture of continuous improvement.

Office of Local Government guidelines for Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) require a service review program to be undertaken by all Council's as follows:

4.3 To encourage continuous improvement across the council's operations, the Delivery Program must identify areas of service that the council will review during its term, and how the council will engage with the community and other stakeholders to determine service level expectations and appropriate measures.

Service reviews at Dubbo Regional Council are undertaken in accordance with the adopted Service Review Framework (Council adopted October 2023). Reviews can be undertaken at three levels across all organisational service areas on the principals of WHAT, HOW, WHY.

Level 1: The WHAT we are doing. A process, a specific/defined service delivery area.

Level 2: The HOW we are achieving. Exploring service delivery structures, key process design, resourcing, benchmarked performance, post project learnings or key function reviews.

Level 3: The WHY we are doing. An examination of full functions or service areas in the context of challenges and opportunities, consideration of why we are operating that way, defining what is the expected performance level, or exploring alternative service delivery models.

The Framework identifies reviews that could explore a potential significant service delivery change, for example potential divestment, proposed project scopes are considered by Council. This is to mitigate the risk on investment in exploring avenues without there being an appetite for potential change regardless of the findings of any review.

In accordance with the Framework, updates on the service review program are provided to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee quarterly and Council on a regular basis.

2024 – 2025 Program

In October 2023 Council resolved CSC23/58 the 2024 – 2025 Service Review Program. The program identifies eight service areas to be reviewed, noting that the outcomes of the financial sustainability review will likely inform the identification of further service reviews. The program would also be reviewed in line with new term of Council as part of the review of the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program (before mid 2025).

Service Review	Scope of Review
Corporate system review Level 2 review	The review will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek independent advice to review capabilities and shortcomings of corporate system across key functions including service provision from external system providers. • consider base case for general ledger rebuild and project plan for implementation of work orders in context of any potential future system change or investment.
Visitor Information Services – Dubbo and Wellington Level 2 review	The review will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish insight to current service delivery and financial analysis of the Dubbo and Wellington Visitor Information Centres as combined and separate entities and examine accreditation and industry benchmarking. • provide analysis of challenges and opportunities to both operational sites, examine service alignment within the current operational branch and other services such as customer experience. • Explore opportunities for service delivery partnerships within Council and with external stakeholders.
Major projects management – internal service delivery: Stage 2 Level 2 review	The review will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider project management systems and processes for capital and non-capital projects across the organisation. • undertake system evaluation in context of project management service structure.
Major Infrastructure Delivery: Wheelers Lane Stage 1 and 2 Level 1 review	The review will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enable the organisation to learn lessons from this major road infrastructure project at all stages from design, procurement and installation. • assess the performance of Council against original project performance targets. • undertake post event engagement with internal and external stakeholders to gain learnings regarding project engagement approach. • assess potential capability and capacity gaps in service delivery as well as opportunities to apply learnings to other infrastructure projects

Service Review	Scope of Review
Community, recreation and cultural services review: Stage 1 service definition. Level 1 review	<p>The review will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish insight into current service delivery of cultural services including definition of core services, service levels and performance indicators. establish insight into current service delivery of recreation services including definition of core services, service levels and performance indicators. establish insight into current service delivery of community services including definition of core services, service levels and performance indicators. undertake gap or overlap analysis of each defined service with existing resources and financial capacity as identified from financial sustainability review. <p>Outcomes from the stage one review will inform any required stage 2 projects that may further examine service performance, design and structure.</p>
Airport Operations Level 1 review	<p>The review will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider current service design, structure and capacity in the context of regulations, risk and operational requirements, in addition to stakeholder expectations and satisfaction. develop recommendations utilising insights from the 2023 stakeholder survey project, industry benchmarks and consider future requirements in line with strategic precinct planning and expected service performance.
Rural Road Maintenance Grading Program Level 2 review	<p>The review will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> examine current practices and determine if there is merit in a hierarchical approach to road maintenance. determine merit/risk in heavily trafficked roads receiving more maintenance grading than those servicing a small number of landholders in the cycle.
Grant attraction and management Level 1 review	<p>The review will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> examine historical performance on delivering incoming grant funded projects/program management. undertake gap and risk analysis/identify challenges throughout the grant lifecycle including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> business case preparation and project prioritisation identifying opportunities making a successful application finalising funding agreements/ contracts project/program delivery reporting, acquittals. consider capability and capacity to support stakeholder and community applications. consider capability and capacity challenges in regard to delivering on grant funded commitments.

2022 – 2023 Program

The 2022- 2023 Program included 15 service reviews across the organisation. Whilst a service review provides opportunity for insight and direction setting, the implementation of recommendations is where the benefit to financial sustainability or improvement is realised.

The implementation of recommendations from the reviews undertaken is summarised below. Progress of implementation plans are also reported regularly to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee and Council.

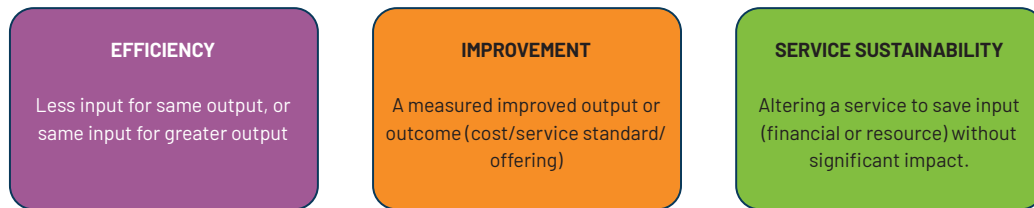
Completed Service Reviews (2022-2023 program)	
Service Review project	Implementation of recommendations
Media and Communications	Service Review: Complete Implementation Plan: On Target (Underway)
Level 3 review	42 recommendations (29 complete, 10 underway, three proposed not to be implemented due to organisation or service delivery change resulting in the action no longer being required). Improvements to date: Creating a dedicated engagement team to provide information to community regarding projects undertaken by Council. Creating a dedicated website to provide transparent information to community. Consolidation of staff for communications, digital, website, social media and marketing into a single team to provide clear and transparent information to community.
Subdivision Planning Approvals Process	Service Review: Complete Implementation Plan: On Target (Underway)
Level 2 review	37 recommendations (10 underway, 25 not due to start, 1 cancelled action, not supported at Executive level). Improvements to date: Process redesign, examination of positions/resources and system training.
Aquatic Facilities	Service Review: Complete
Level 3 review	Implementation Plan: Complete Council endorsed a management contract arrangement in June 2023. Improvements to date: Estimated saving of \$500,000 per annum.
Finance Partners Model Review	Service Review: Complete Implementation Plan: Off target
Level 1 review	Due to competing organisational priorities no further action has been undertaken.

Completed Service Reviews (2022-2023 program)	
Service Review project	Implementation of recommendations
Library Services Regional and Local	Service Review: Complete
Level 3 review	Implementation Plan: On Target (Underway)
	21 recommendations (3 underway, 18 not due to start)
	Improvements to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dubbo Libraries: Vacant positions reviewed/evaluated and updated with a cost saving of \$30,000 annually. MRL customer policies (3) were updated, and the Library Customer Information Privacy statement was revised. Draft Macquarie Regional Library Strategic Plan (2024-2030) under development, with a more inclusive focus on Member Councils to the Macquarie Regional Library partnership.
Business continuity and resilience Water and Sewer Operations	Service Review: Complete
Level 2 review	Implementation Plan: Complete
	Improvements to date: Structure review complete.
	End of life ICT infrastructure replaced and aligned with best practice Cyber Security controls, including the implementation of an Intrusion Detection System (IDS), Application Control and Endpoint Protection system. Processes and standards aligned with corporate policies including the corporate adopted Cyber Security Framework.
Robotic Process Automation Corporate and financial services – stage 1	Service Review: Complete
Level 1 review	Implementation Plan: Complete
	18 candidates for automation identified. Implementation of recommendations were cost prohibitive in regard to further engagement of external consultants. Stage 2 component to build internal capacity to implement automation and process improvements on priority basis.
	Improvements to date: Internal capacity to implement automation and process improvements has increased. Automation platform (Microsoft Power Automate) has been implemented with a number of automations successfully implemented.
Cemetery services including maintenance and grave digging	Service Review: Complete
Level 1 review	Implementation Plan: Complete
	Review resulted in services continuing to be delivered internally.
	Improvements to date: Expansion of the availability of burial days. Implementation of new matrix has led to the inclusion of two additional operational service days. Importantly, the updated matrix has eliminated previous restrictions on village services, allowing for more flexibility and accommodation of community needs.
Child care services	Service Review: Complete
Level 1 review	Implementation Plan: Complete
	Review of financial performance and fees and charges in context of service delivery and industry comparisons undertaken.
	Improvements to date: Changes to fees and charges above CPI to be applied from the 1 January 2024.

Completed Service Reviews (2022-2023 program)	
Service Review project	Implementation of recommendations
Community Committees	Service Review: Complete Implementation Plan: On Target (Underway)
Level 1 review	Implementation of Council recommendation underway. Improvements to date: Improved participation, reduction in cancelled meetings.
Information Services: Corporate Information Management	Service Review: Complete Implementation Plan: On Target (Underway)
Level 1 review	Review was completed in November 2023, with the Executive Leadership Team endorsing the 10 recommendations as proposed. 10 recommendations (1 underway, 9 not due to start) In addition to informing process redesign and improvements the review identified the need for the organisation to strategically and operationally define information governance. Due to numerous project demands on internal key stakeholder, staff are exploring options to engage an external resource to lead this. Improvements to date: Process redesign, commencement of development of the governance framework
Wellington Caves Complex	Service Review: Complete Implementation Plan: Not due to start
Level 3 review	Implementation Plan: under development.

Improvement Plan

Improvement strategies are broadly defined by the outcomes they aim to achieve, namely an efficiency, an improvement or a service sustainability.



Identified improvement strategies are supported by a range of actions. The actions range in scope and scale from **investigate, trial, review, consider** to **implement, invest, apply, advance**.

Improvement Strategies – Historical and ongoing

Advertising

- Reduction in advertising cost of \$150,000 over 4 years – this has been achieved through better value rate negotiation, targeted campaigns and guideline amendments.
- Reduction in costs in conjunction with adjustments to meet consumer needs.

Postage

- Council has seen a reduction in postage cost of \$38,000 over 4 years – this has been achieved by the implementation of E-rates (emailed rate notices) project complete in 2018, along with increased use of email over traditional mail.
- Conversion of posted/mailed rates notices to e-mail continually increasing.

Street lighting LED conversion

- Printing and Stationery
- Reduction in printing cost of \$228,000 over a 4 year period – achieved by printing reduction strategy which included reduction of print quantities for brochures (including Annual Report, Dubbo Region Guides) and the use of smart printers.
- \$400K annual saving (electricity and maintenance). The installation of smart-assisted LED lighting was complete in 2020, the project had a 5 year payback period (2025) on initial investment.

Telephone and communications

- Phone system upgrade – Council tendered for a replacement Unified Communications (UC) system to replace aging telephony systems of the former Dubbo City and Wellington Council in October 2016. The system was subsequently installed and operational by December 2017. The redundant systems were decommissioned through January and February 2018. This project was forecast to reduce operational expenditure by \$90,000 ex GST per annum.
- Redundant service review – Information Services undertook a review of all fixed line, mobile and data services between January and June 2018. The review resulted in over 200 unused services being decommissioned. This project is expected to result in an annual saving of approximately \$36,000 ex GST.
- Telecommunications contract review – Information Services undertook a review of existing telephony contracts in June of 2017. All Council mobile services were subsequently migrated to Local Government Procurement (LGP) based plans (Contract LGP115) in early 2018. Annual saving of approximately \$96,000 ex GST are forecast under this initiative.

Improvement Strategies – Current and ongoing

- **Implementation of a best practice General Ledger, to utilise the suite of corporate enterprise systems effectively**
Assumed saving and efficiency of over \$1 million.
- **Establish a Project Management Office to centralise all aspects of project management across the organisation**
Assumed saving of \$200,000.
- **Investigate opportunities and mechanisms for Council assets to be utilised by externals at a cost or for other benefit**
Increase in alternative income streams.
- **Seek to achieve at a minimum cost-neutrality with user pays activities**
Review fees and charges in consultation with users.
- **Prioritise holistic asset management processes**
Review of all existing asset management plans.
- **Prioritise and implement energy efficiency initiatives**
Council operations greenhouse gas emissions are reduced to net zero by 2050.
- **Renew of desk phones**
Reduction in costs associated with renewal of desk phones in line with the implementation of (preferred future-proofed) soft phone applications.
A review of fixed line telephone services/lines resulted in a change in carrier for fixed line telephony in March 2024. These services are supplied via a Local Government Procurement panel contract.
Projected saving from this change is \$47,000 annually.

Improvement Strategies – Future state, long term

Improvement strategy	Goal/ target
Implement proactive processes in relation to debt management activities.	90+ day debt is < 30% of all total sundry debtors debt
Consider system modules or improvements that support agile account management to reduce staff administration time.	Reconciliation of accounts is optimised.
Holistic review of software, subscriptions and applications seeking to reduce duplication, ensure future proofing and integration with core systems.	Instances of duplication are reduced.
Pre-review scoping of Service Reviews is undertaken regularly, and reviews with assumed benefit is high and complexity is low are prioritised.	Establish a working group to assess and make recommendations
Review Council "office" space in line with activity-based working, flexible working options and alternative use of "office" space where suitable.	Reduce administration office space by 10%
Consider standardisation of venue hire rates, alternatives for customer/client use.	Complete assessment of the community halls; standards, m2 hireable and amenity.
Review of Council fleet policy and lease back vehicle provision.	Reduce fleet costs.
Seek better value for Council through centralised, bulk-buy for discounts or purchasing power agreements for consumables and other supplies.	Implement centralised consumables.
Review internal services with process mapping to identify bottlenecks, duplication, time lags and seek to improve efficiencies across the organisation.	Complete process mapping of the 42 identified processes by 2027. Complete framework.
Build internal capability and knowledge and provide staff with systems to increase efficient use of time.	Staff time allocated to data entry tasks is reduced.
Review funding, sponsorship, in-kind support and alternatives for assistance to community groups and organisations.	Conduct a survey to establish satisfaction ratings. Review in 12months.
Vacant positions are reviewed for alignment to core requirements.	Alignment checklist developed and applied
Review of staff and stakeholder time investment during consultation activities.	Effective scheduling to reduce staff overtime.
Commercial hire of venues is prioritised.	Complete the review of the Internal Business Hire Procedure.
Consider alternate methods of asset maintenance and routine task over traditional methods.	Undertake targeted trials.
Review the delivery and provision of Civic events.	Measure community need and satisfaction.
Investigate and consider the deferral of renewals/upgrades in consideration of risk ratings.	Asset service life is increased.
Investigation of alternative water source options in consideration of strategic planning for the region.	Successfully identify alternatives.
Implement Councils Volunteer framework to seek/drive improvements to service delivery or community outcomes	Increasing number of volunteers.

At the development of this Plan not all actions had undergone a feasibility analysis. Proposed actions are responsive to a range of factors and will be reviewed for alignment to the Plan, assumptions on return benefits and likelihood to significantly contribute to the improvement strategy target.

Actions are categorised by the outcome they aim to achieve, if they are, operationally focussed (internal) or service focused (external), timing, benefit and complexity. Definitions of these categories is outlined below.

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES:

Inward facing actions that: provide same service with less input; alter input without significantly impacting output/impact or create greater output/impact with same input.

OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS:


Inward facing actions that: deliver an improvement to the output (cost/service standard/offering); delivers an improved way of operating, broader than a specific or singular output.


SERVICE EFFICIENCIES:

Actions that would have an impact/alteration to a service to the community or stakeholder that: provide same service with less input; alter input without significantly impacting output/impact or create greater output/impact with same input.


SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS:


Actions that would have an impact/alteration to a service to the community or stakeholder that: provide same service with less input; alter input without significantly impacting output/impact or create greater output/impact with same input.

 Timing: when was/will the action be undertaken				
Historical	Recent	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
	Completed in 2022 or 2023	Underway or completed by June 2025.	completed July 2025 to June 2028.	Completed after July 2028.

 Benefit: what is the defined impact			
Once-off cost saving	Ongoing cost saving	Increased revenue	Improved resource utilisation
Enables resource reallocation	Improved service	Improved corporate practice	Building block for financial sustainability

Priority 3			
Priority 2			
Priority 1			
	Easy Action well defined. Believed to be achievable within existing capability and with required resources	Moderate some environmental factors, some unknown element of action.	Hard action not well defined, policy implications, high risk or investment, innovation/ new technology

 Complexity: What's required to achieve the action		
Easy	Moderate	Hard
Action well defined. Believed to be achievable within existing capability and with required resources	some environmental factors, some unknown element of action.	action not well defined, policy implications, high risk or investment, innovation/ new technology

 Priority: When the action is due, in consideration of expected impact how the action be prioritised in accordance with other workload of the organisation		
1	2	3
When timing is due will be done as priority above operational demands and linked as action or Task in the Operational Plan, and or identified as corporate priority for organisation and relevant individuals	Will be considered in balance with Operational Plan requirements, considered in service planning and prioritised for staff goal setting.	Will be undertaken if operational branch planning and resources allow. Will not be prioritised over Operational Plan delivery or day to day services.

During the scoping of actions, the complexity and priority matrix will be applied, whilst considering the context of timing and benefit. Defined actions are then compared to similar actions to determine a program of activities consistent with the improvement strategies identified in this Plan.

Measuring Performance and Improvement

Council's implementation of this Plan, including underway and completed improvement actions will be reported to Council as a component of the bi-annual Delivery Program updates (every 6 months).

This reporting will also provide a snapshot of Council's achievement towards the targets identified for each Improvement Strategy included in this Plan.

Council will implement and report on the adopted Service Review Program.

Council also reports through the following means:

- Monthly Financial Snapshot to Council and Community
- Monthly Facility Performance Snapshot to Council and Community
- Delivery Program and Operational Plan every six months to Council and Community
- Annual Report each year
- State of the Region Report

Service Catalogue

GREEN: indicates services areas that have been reviewed and implementing recommendations from review through an improvement plan.

ORANGE: Indicates services Proposed to be reviewed in the 2024- 2025 Service Review Program.

Core Service Area	Service Summary		
Cemetery	Service administration, asset development and asset management of cemetery facilities.	Library LGA	Strategic planning, asset development and asset management of Dubbo and Wellington Library
Strategic Community Culture and Places Administration	CCP executive support, divisional administration, project and reporting support.	Experience Development	Create and oversee delivery of visitor experience development projects and advocate for positive visitor experience outcomes in the region.
Open Space, Reserves and Parks	Strategic planning, asset development and asset management of open space, parks, reserves and street trees.	Collection Management: Gallery	Collection management of Council art collection, art donations and loaning.
Street Trees	Strategic planning, stakeholder engagement asset development and asset management of street trees.	Collection Management: Gallery	Collection management of Council art collection, art donations and loaning.
Sporting and Aquatic Facilities	Strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, asset development, utilisation and management of sporting facilities including aquatics	History and Heritage Services	Industry and community liaison and coordination, strategic planning, asset management, programming, content and advocacy to support history and heritage outcomes.
Public Amenities	Strategic planning, asset development and asset management of public amenities	Arts and Culture Services	Industry and community liaison and coordination, strategic planning, content, programming and advocacy to support LGA and sister city cultural outcomes.
Community Development and Support	Community liaison and industry coordination to support safe community outcomes.	Collection Management: Museum and Local Studies	Collection management of Council museum collection, donations and loaning.
Rainbow Cottage, Family Day Care	Service delivery, asset development and asset management of Rainbow Cottage child care.	Financial Support: Arts and Culture	Facilitate provision of Arts and Culture Grants
Volunteer Management	Advocate of community volunteerism and lead volunteering at Council program	Old Dubbo Gaol	Strategic planning, service design and delivery, asset development and asset management of Old Dubbo Gaol.
First Nations Advocacy	Stakeholder liaison and internal leadership to support adherence to first nations protocols.	Collection Management: Old Dubbo Gaol	Collection management of ODG collection, donations and loaning.
Community Development and Support	Community liaison, community coordination and advocacy to support positive outcomes for youth, Aboriginal, senior and disability sectors of the community.	Wellington Caves	Strategic planning, service design and delivery, asset development and asset management of Wellington Caves.
Financial Support: Community	Facilitate provision of Community Grants and Donations	Wellington Caves Holiday Park	Strategic planning, service design and delivery, asset development and asset management of Wellington Caves Caravan Park.
Community Halls	Strategic planning, asset development and asset management of community Halls	Western Plains Cultural Centre	Strategic planning, service design and delivery, asset development and asset management of Western Plains Cultural Centre.
Library Regional	Strategic service planning and service management of Macquarie Regional Library.	Regional Event Services	Event attraction, promotion and support services

Core Service Area	Service Summary
Financial Support: Events	Facilitate provision of event Grants
Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre	Strategic planning, service design and delivery, asset development and asset management of DRTCC.
Wellington Civic Centre	Strategic planning, service design and delivery, asset development and asset management of WCC
Showgrounds Dubbo and Wellington	Strategic planning, service design and delivery, asset development and asset management of Regional Showgrounds
Strategic Development and Environment	D&E executive support, divisional administration, project and reporting support.
Waste Services	Service design and delivery: internal and contract for waste services
Waste Depots	Strategic planning, service design and delivery, asset development and asset management of Waste locations
Environmental Sustainability	Develop strategies, policies, plans and initiatives to improve Council's sustainability, particularly in the area of Resource Recovery and Efficiency.
Ranger Services	Environmental/Compliance - Ranger services
Environmental Compliance	Environmental and environmental health regulation and compliance.
Parking Compliance	Parking compliance and education.
Animal Shelter Services	Service delivery for the management of impounded animals and associated asset management.
Environment and Health Compliance	Environment and environmental health regulation, compliance and education.
Swimming Pool Compliance	Compliance and licensing - private swimming Pools
Building and Development Services	Management of Statutory Planning, Building Certification functions - includes advisory, assessment, certification, inspections, building control and local heritage program.
Land Information Services	Manage Property and Land Information and e-Services - S7.11 and S.608 Certificates, manage Geographical Names database and integration to Planning Portal.
Growth Planning - Strategic Landuse Planning	Development, implementation and ongoing administration of development strategies, Local Environmental Plans, Development Control Plans, Floodplain Management Plans and demographic data
Growth Planning - Developer Contributions	Negotiation, development, implementation and ongoing administration of Council's Contributions Plans and Planning Agreements.
Major Project Delivery	Project delivery management of approved and tendered project
Project Engineering Services	Engineering services: roads, footpaths, earthworks, structures, stormwater

Gravel Quarry Management	Managing quarry operations
Transport Planning	Strategic Planning for transport assets and services
Road and Footpath Operational Works	Construction and maintenance of road and footpath assets
Water and Sewer Capital works	Capital works
Water and Sewer Asset Planning and Management	Water supply and sewerage asset management
Water Operations - reticulation	Drinking Water Supply distribution and Sewerage management Operations
Water Operations - Treatment	Drinking water treatment and Sewer treatment
Water Compliance	Water and Sewage Compliance with regulations
Water Client Services	Customer service and support to water customers
Infrastructure Strategy	Long term city planning
Engineer Services - developments and subdivisions	Development and subdivision engineering
Stormwater Management and Assessments	Stormwater Asset Management service and floodplain management
Traffic Management Services	Strategic and regulations for Traffic, Parking, Cycleways and Road Safety
Fleet Maintenance	Fleet management - workshop operations
Strategic Fleet Management	Strategic planning of fleet and services
Fleet Acquisitions and Administration	Purchase of fleet and hiring of external plant and vehicles, compliance, insurance and administration.
Depot Management	Asset development and asset management of Dubbo and Wellington Depots
Centralised Stores Service	Provision of stores services and inventory procurement and management
Parks and Gardens Presentation	Park maintenance and gardening
Sporting Facility Presentation	Sporting facility presentation
Cemetery Operations	Maintenance and grave establishment at cemeteries
Reserves and Roadside Presentation	Maintenance of reserves and identified roadsides
Natural Resources	Natural resource management
Street Trees Maintenance	Street tree management
Strategic Organisational Performance Administration	Organisational Performance executive support, divisional administration, project and reporting support.
Financial Assistance	Through Financial Assistance Policy facilitate community grants and donations
Procurement	Procurement Strategy and Policy, Procurement services and vendor panel management

Core Service Area	Service Summary
Central Administration building management	Building management of Dubbo and Wellington Central Administration Buildings, assets maintenance and asset renewals, meeting room services.
Property Services: Leases and Licences	Strategic oversight of corporate property portfolio
Property Services: Acquisitions	Facilitate land, property and road corridor acquisitions.
Property Services: Crown lands	Management of Crown lands within property portfolio.
Residential and industrial Land Development	Land development and redevelopment: Residential and Industrial
Property Re- Development	Property development and redevelopment services
Building Assets	Building asset services: asset condition reports, maintenance/ renewal services
Building Project Services	Project services to renewal and construction projects on Council Building facility
Cleaning Services	Internal and contract cleaning of Council facilities
Commercial Strategy Service	Strategic commercially centred advice to service reviews and investigations/ business case development on commercial opportunities
Dubbo Regional Livestock Markets	Strategic planning, service delivery, compliance, asset development and asset management of Dubbo Regional Livestock Markets
Dubbo Regional Airport - Strategic Planning	Strategic planning, service delivery, compliance, asset development and asset management of Dubbo Regional Airport
Wellington Aerodromes and Recreation Park	Strategic planning, service delivery, compliance, asset development and asset management of Wellington Aerodromes and Recreation Park
Dubbo Regional Airport - Route development	Route development to ensure the service is providing the needs of the community and opportunities for expansion
Dubbo Regional Airport - Airside Precinct Development	Airside Precinct Development and Management
Dubbo Regional Airport - Airside Precinct Operations	Airside operations and maintenance, inspections of the runways and taxiways
Corporate Governance	Governance and legal services: Insurance, PIDs, Code of Conduct, Legal Advisory Services
Meeting Administration and Governance	Council and committee meeting administration and compliance
Councillor Support	Mayor and Councillor services and support
Civic Event Services	Civic event management
Enterprise Risk	Enterprise Risk and Business Continuity oversight
Internal Audit	Oversight of the internal audit program, that is reported outcomes to the ARIC

Emergency Management	Emergency management
HR Business Partnering	Partnering with specific divisions to support structure, position and people activities
Learning and Development	Employee capability development
Payroll	Payroll services
Talent Acquisition	Attraction, selection and onboarding of new employees
Injury Management	Injury, return to work and claims management
Health and Wellbeing	Health and wellbeing programs
Safety	Work Health and Safety Services
Strategic and Administrative Grant Support	Incoming Grants administration and application and acquittal support
Strategic Strategy Partnerships and Engagement	SPE executive support, divisional administration, project and reporting support.
Information Services Corporate information management	Corporate information governance and services including record management
Information Services Strategic Management	Strategic Planning, Risk management, Smart Council
Information Services Projects	Project Management and business analysis and improvement
Information Services Operations	ICT Support Services and operations management
Information Services Systems	Systems and Applications Management
Information Services Infrastructure	Infrastructure Management
Geographical Information Services	Geographical Information Services to Council and Emergency services including mapping and drones
Customer Experience Services	Customer Experience operations
Customer Experience Strategy	Through the Customer Experience Strategy, lead cultural and operational change to support positive customer experience journey across the organisation.
Engagement Services	Design, inform, monitor and support implementation of engagement programs in partnership with internal and external project owners.
Customer Insights	Service Optimisation and Improvement of customer journey.
Destination Communication Services	Regional brand and reputation management including media management, stakeholder management, content development and campaigns
Corporate Communication Services	Council brand and reputation management including media management, stakeholder management, content development and campaigns
Investment Attraction	Support investment attraction at an industry and individual level with data, insights, connections and opportunity.

Core Service Area	Service Summary		
Visitor Attraction	Build destination appeal, visitation and spend through always on and campaign based marketing activities	Corporate Performance	Coordination and reporting on Service Review Program and delivery, support and monitoring of business improvement initiatives and performance reporting
Regional Workforce Attraction	Lead and partner on initiatives to directly and indirectly attract workers to the region.	Strategic Asset Management	Corporate Asset Management Framework and oversight
Industry Development	Undertake activities that support local industry capability, supply chain development and collaboration.	Strategic and Operational Rates management	Rating Classification Management, Rate Levying, and Land valuations
Economic Activation and Resilience	Deliver programs and projects that directly and indirectly support economic activation	Account Receivables Services	Invoicing of other fees and charges, collection and receipting
Visitor Information Centres	Service design and delivery, asset development and asset management of Dubbo and Wellington Visitor Information Service	Investment Management	Investment of council funds in accordance with the Investment Policy and Strategy, to ensure maximum returns
Destination Development	Industry liaison and coordination, strategic planning and advocacy to support visitor economy outcomes.	Debt Recovery Management	Monitoring and recovery of unpaid rates, implementing payment plans with ratepayers
Marketing and Creative Services	Provision of creative and marketing services (websites, social, graphic design, campaigns, design and delivery)	Financial Planning	Preparation of the Annual Budget and Long-Term Financial Plan
Strategic partnerships	Strategic advice, investigations and support on community and industry strategic partnership opportunities. Management of industry partnership program.	Budget Monitoring	Regular monitoring of actual expenditure to approved budget, quarterly review and reporting of performance to council
Corporate Planning	Organisational strategy development and monitoring, including organisational priorities every 18 months and CEO Priorities every 12 months.	Business Analytical Services	Preparation of various reports for the functional areas that assist with monitoring of expenditure
Community Strategic Planning	Coordination of Integrated Planning and Reporting, including Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan	Grant Acquittal	Monitoring and reporting of Grant expenditure against the Grant Deed to the funding body
		Accounts Payable	Payment of funds to suppliers and contractors via electronic funds transfer
		Financial Statement Preparation	Preparation of the Financial Statements, and regular monitoring of financial transaction for accuracy and completeness