

Notice of Meeting



Dear President and Councillors,

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Council of the Shire of Merredin will be held on Tuesday, 24 February 2026 in the Council Chambers, corner of King and Barrack Streets, Merredin. The format of the day will be:

2:30pm	Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Meeting
3:00pm	Briefing Session
5:00pm	Council Meeting

CRAIG WATTS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
19 February 2026

DISCLAIMER

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER BEFORE PROCEEDING:

Statements or decisions made at this meeting should not be relied or acted on by an applicant or any other person until they have received written notification from the Shire. Notice of all approvals, including planning and building approvals, will be given to applicants in writing. The Shire of Merredin expressly disclaims liability for any loss or damages suffered by a person who relies or acts on statements or decisions made at a Council or Committee meeting before receiving written notification from the Shire.

The advice and information contained herein is given by and to Council without liability or responsibility for its accuracy. Before placing any reliance on this advice or information, a written inquiry should be made to Council giving entire reasons for seeking the advice or information and how it is proposed to be used.

Common Acronyms Used in this Document	
BFAC	Bush Fire Advisory Committee
CEACA	Central East Accommodation & Care Alliance Inc
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CWVC	Central Wheatbelt Visitors Centre
DSO	Development Services Officer
EO	Executive Officer
EMCS	Executive Manager Corporate Services
EMIS	Executive Manager Infrastructure Services
EMS&C	Executive Manager Strategy & Community
GECZ	Great Eastern Country Zone
GO	Governance Officer
LEMC	Local Emergency Management Committee
LGIS	Local Government Insurance Services
LPS	Local Planning Scheme
MCO	Media and Communications Officer
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRCLC	Merredin Regional Community and Leisure Centre
OCM	Ordinary Council Meeting
SCM	Special Council Meeting
SRP	Strategic Resource Plan
WALGA	Western Australian Local Government Association
WEROC	Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils



February Ordinary Council Meeting

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Shire of Merredin
Ordinary Council Meeting
5:00pm Tuesday, 24 February 2026.



1. OFFICIAL OPENING

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2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE / APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Councillors:

Cr D Crook	President
Cr R Manning	Deputy President
Cr H Billing	
Cr P Boehme	
Cr P Madigan	
Cr L O'Neill	via Teams
Cr P Van Der Merwe	

Staff:

C Watts	CEO
L Boehme	EMCS
C Brindley-Mullen	SCEM
M Hussey	EO

Members of the Public:

Apologies:

Approved Leave of Absence:

Cr O'Neill's attendance via Teams was approved by the Shire President in advance in accordance with Regulation 14C.2(b) of the Local Government (Administration) Amendment Regulations 2022.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Members of the public may submit questions up to 2pm on the day of the meeting by emailing ea@merredin.wa.gov.au.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

5. APPLICATIONS OF LEAVE OF ABSENCE

6. PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

7. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

7.1 Ordinary Council Meeting held on 27 January 2026 (Attachment 7.1A)

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held 27 January 2026 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PERSON PRESIDING WITHOUT DISCUSSION

9. MATTERS FOR WHICH THE MEETING MAY BE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

20.1 Disposal of Land – 38 Whitfield Way, Merredin

20.2 Disposal of Land – Lot 1327 Mackenzie Crescent, Merredin

10. RECEIPT OF MINUTES OF MEETINGS

10.1 Minutes of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee held Tuesday 24 February 2026 (subject to the outcome of the meeting held prior to the OCM). Attachment 10.1A.

10.2 Minutes of the Kellerberrin SRRG Meeting held Tuesday 10 February 2026. Attachment 10.2A.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

RECEIVES the minutes of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee held Tuesday 24 February 2026 (subject to the outcome of the meeting held prior to the OCM);

RECEIVES the minutes of the Kellerberrin SRRG Meeting held Tuesday 10 February 2026;

11. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 11.1 Recommendations of the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee held Tuesday 24 February 2026 (subject to the outcome of the meeting held prior to the OCM). Attachment 10.1A

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. ADOPTS** the updated 'Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Terms of Reference,' as presented in Attachment 6.1B.
- 2. NOTES** the Risk and Regulation Action Plan, as tabled to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.
- 3. APPOINTS** Mr Mark McKenzie and Mr Ross Billing to be independent members of the Committee, with _____ to hold the position of Independent Presiding Member and _____ to hold the position of Independent Deputy Presiding Member until the next Council Elections in October 2027.

12. OFFICER'S REPORTS – DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

12.1 Lot 300 (1) Mitchell Street Merredin – Proposed Chemical Storage Shed

<h2>Development Service</h2>		
Responsible Officer:	Craig Watts, CEO	
Author:	Xinyi Zhao, DSO	
File Reference:	A9255	
Disclosure of Interest:	The Author and Authorising Officer declare that they do not have any conflicts of interest in relation to this item.	
Attachments:	Attachment 12.1A - Application for Development Approval and Supporting Documentation.	

Purpose of Report

Executive Decision

Legislative Requirement

For Council to consider a Development Approval (DA) application for the placement of a 13.4m x 20.4m x 4.85m high chemical storage shed on Lot 300 (1) Mitchell Street, Merredin.

Background

The Shire of Merredin has received a DA for the placement of a 13.4m x 20.4m x 6.37m high chemical storage shed on Lot 300 (1) Mitchell Street, Merredin. The land measures 5,381m² in area after the endorsement of amalgamation of three separate lots (WAPC Referral 201718) in October 2025.

Comment

The storage shed has a floor area of approximately 273.36m² and is proposed to be located with setbacks of more than 30 metres from Mitchell Street, approximately 7.5 metres from the other boundaries.

It is also noted that the design and the siting of the proposed storage shed should be compatible with the objectives of the Town Centre zone and retain the general streetscape of the locality. The proposed shed will have a more than 30 metres distance to the Mitchell Street, and public view will be largely screened by surrounding buildings and structures on Barrack Street. All of these circumstances contribute to minimising any visual impact on the general streetscape of the surrounding area.

Consultation

Councillor/Officer Consultation

No Councillor or Officer consultation is required.

Community Consultation

No community consultation is required.

Policy Implications

There are no policy implications.

Statutory Implications

Local Planning Scheme

Lot 300 (1) Mitchell Street, Merredin is zoned as 'Town Centre' under the Shire of Merredin Local Planning Scheme No.6 (the Scheme). A warehouse/storage is a D use in Town Centre zone, means the use is not permitted unless Council has exercised its discretion.

Assessment of the application confirms that the installation of a storage shed will comply with the provisions of the Scheme. The placement location of the proposed building will meet the objective of the Town Centre zone requirements and not adversely affect the streetscape of the locality or its original town centre character.

Statutory Requirements – Building Act Considerations

Building work including the placement or erection of a building or incidental structure on land will be subject to building permit requirements. The builder will need to apply to the Shire of Merredin for a relevant building permit to place the chemical storage shed on site at Lot 300 (1) Mitchell Street, Merredin.

Statutory Requirements – Dangerous Goods considerations

As prescribed within the *Dangerous Goods Safety Act 2004*, a person who engages in the storage activities of dangerous goods should hold the appropriate licence.

Consultation regarding the use, storage, disposal, signage and special ventilation requirements for hazardous, toxic, ionising or non-ionising material or equipment shall be directed to the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety.

It is noted that the shed has a 150mm high bund to contain any spillage, including a ramp to the primary entrance to the shed. The Personal Access door entry will require a similar treatment as this is not readily viewed on the plan.

Strategic Implications

∅ Council Plan 2025-2035

Theme: 1 Community and Culture

Strategic Objective: 1.7 Maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of our community through application of regulatory frameworks which support legislative compliance.

Priority Actions: 1.7.1 Promote responsible strategic and statutory planning to meet current and future needs.

Sustainability Implications

There is no impact on capacity, resourcing or asset management to carry out the Officer's recommendation.

Risk Implications

There is a health and compliance risk associated with this Item as the development may not comply with Dangerous Goods Safety Act 2004 and the Scheme. The risk rating is considered to be Low (2), which is determined by a likelihood of Unlikely (2) and a consequence of Insignificant (1). This risk will be minimised by the adoption of the Officer's Recommendation.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report including within the Long-Term Financial Plan.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That Council:

- 1) **GRANTS development approval for a proposed chemical storage shed (13.4m x 20.4m x 6.37m high), to be situated on Lot 300 (1) Mitchell Street, Merredin, as outlined in Attachment 12.1A, subject to the following conditions;**
 - a. **Compliance with local and state requirements for the storage of dangerous goods, and relevant health and safety requirements.**

ADVICE NOTES

- a. **If an applicant or owner is aggrieved by this determination, there is a right of review by the State Administrative Tribunal in accordance with the *Planning and Development Act 2005* Part 14. An application must be made within 28 days of the determination.**
- b. **This development approval does not constitute a building permit. An application for a building permit must be lodged with the Shire of Merredin and be approved before any building work can commence on site;**
- c. **All hazardous chemicals stored on site must be done so in accordance with the *Dangerous Goods Safety Act 2004* and subsidiary legislation;**
- d. **Consultation regarding the use, storage, disposal, signage and special ventilation requirements for hazardous, toxic, ionising or non-ionising material or equipment shall be directed to the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety;**
- e. **The Personal Access door entry will require a 150mm high bund to contain any spillage, including a ramp to the primary entrance to the shed;**

- f. Any sandwich panel material used in the construction of the storage shed must be covered with appropriate cladding on all sides to retain the streetscape of the area.**

13. OFFICER'S REPORTS – INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

14. OFFICER’S REPORTS – CORPORATE SERVICES

14.1 Statement of Financial Activity – January 2026

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Corporate Services</h2> 	
Responsible Officer:	Leah Boehme, EMCS
Author:	As Above
File Reference:	Nil
Disclosure of Interest:	The Author/Responsible Officer declare that they do not have any conflicts of interest in relation to this item.
Attachments:	Attachment 14.1A – Statement of Financial Activity Attachment 14.1B – Detailed Statements Attachment 14.1C – Capital Works Progress Attachment 14.1D – Investment Report Attachment 14.1E – Detailed Statements December updated

Purpose of Report

- Executive Decision
 Legislative Requirement

For Council to receive the Statements of Financial Activity and Investment Report for the month of January 2026 and be advised of associated financial matters.

Background

The Statement of Financial Activity, Detailed Statements, Capital Works Progress and Investment Report are attached for Council’s information.

Comment

Statement of Financial Activity

Regulation 34 of the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* requires the Shire to prepare a monthly statement of financial activity for consideration by Council within 2 months after the end of the month of the report. These reports are included at Attachments 14.1A to D inclusive.

It should be noted that attachment 14.1B, part of the Statement of Financial Activity for December 2025, that was presented to Council at the January Ordinary Council Meeting (OCM) did not include the budget amendments that had been passed at the November OCM.

This was due to human error, and the other attachments did reflect the current adopted budgets. An update of Attachment 14.1B with the budget amendments reflected, was provided to Councillors via email on Wednesday 28 January 2026 and has been included as attachment 14.1E in this item.

Consultation

Councillor/Officer Consultation

No Councillor or Officer consultation is required.

Community Consultation

No community consultation is required.

Policy Implications

There are no policy implications.

Statutory Implications

As outlined in the *Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*.

Strategic Implications

∅ Council Plan 2025-2035

Theme: 4 Communication and Leadership

Strategic Objective: 4.8 Financial Management

Priorities Actions: 4.8.1 Maintain strong fiscal and financial management of Council's budget

Sustainability Implications

∅ Strategic Resource Plan

There is no impact on capacity, resourcing or asset management to carry out the Officer's recommendation.

Risk Implications

The Statement of Financial Activity is presented monthly and provides a retrospective picture of the activities at the Shire. Contained within the report is information pertaining to the financial cost and delivery of strategic initiatives and key projects.

To mitigate the risk of budget over-runs or non-delivery of projects, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has implemented internal control measures such as regular Council and management reporting and a quarterly process to monitor financial performance against budget estimates.

Materiality reporting thresholds have been established at 10% or \$10,000 whichever is greater, for operating and capital, to alert management prior to there being irreversible impacts.

It should also be noted that there is an inherent level of risk of misrepresentation of the financials through either human error or potential fraud.

The establishment of control measures through a series of efficient systems, policies and procedures, which fall under the responsibility of the CEO as laid out in the *Local Government (Financial Management Regulations) 1996* regulation 5, seek to mitigate the possibility of this occurring.

These controls are set in place to provide daily, weekly, and monthly checks to ensure that the integrity of the data provided is reasonably assured.

There is a compliance risk associated with this Item as the Shire would be contravening the *Local Government Act 1995* and *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* if this Item was not presented to Council. The risk rating is considered to be Low (4), which is determined by a likelihood of Unlikely (2) and a consequence of Minor (2). This risk will be eliminated by the adoption of the Officer's Recommendation.

Financial Implications

The adoption of the Statements of Financial Activity is retrospective. Accordingly, the financial implications associated with adopting this are nil.

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That Council RECEIVE the Statements of Financial Activity and Investment Report for the period ending 31 January 2026 in accordance with Regulation 34 of the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996.

14.2 List of Accounts Paid – January 2026

<h3>Corporate Services</h3> 	
Responsible Officer:	Leah Boehme, EMCS
Author:	As above
File Reference:	Nil
Disclosure of Interest:	The Author/ Responsible Officer declare that they do not have any conflicts of interest in relation to this item.
Attachments:	Attachment 14.2A - Payments Listing January 2026

Purpose of Report

Executive Decision

Legislative Requirement

For Council to receive the schedule of accounts paid for the month of January 2026.

Background

The attached list of accounts paid during the month of January 2026, under Delegated Authority, is provided for Council's information and endorsement.

Comment

Nil

Consultation

Councillor/Officer Consultation

No Councillor or Officer consultation is required.

Community Consultation

No community consultation is required.

Policy Implications

There are no policy implications.

Statutory Implications

As outlined in the *Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*.

Strategic Implications

∅ Council Plan 2025-2035

Theme: 4 Communication and Leadership
Strategic Objective: 4.8 Financial Management
Priorities Actions: 4.8.1 Maintain strong fiscal and financial management of Council's budget

Sustainability Implications

∅ Strategic Resource Plan

There is no impact on capacity, resourcing or asset management to carry out the Officer's recommendation.

Risk Implications

There is a compliance risk associated with this Item as the Shire would be contravening the *Local Government Act 1995* and *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* if this Item was not presented to Council. The risk rating is considered to be Low (4), which is determined by a likelihood of Unlikely (2) and a consequence of Minor (2). This risk will be eliminated by the adoption of the Officer's Recommendation.

Financial Implications

All liabilities settled have been in accordance with the Annual Budget provisions.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That Council RECEIVE the schedule of accounts paid during January 2026 as listed, covering cheques, EFT's, directly debited payments and wages, as numbered and totaling \$805,708.42 from the Merredin Shire Council Municipal bank account and \$0 from the Merredin Shire Council Trust bank account.

14.3 Policy Review – Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

<h2>Corporate Services</h2> 	
Responsible Officer:	Leah Boehme, EMCS
Author:	As Above
File Reference:	Nil
Disclosure of Interest:	The Author/ Responsible Officer declare that they do not have any conflicts of interest in relation to this item.
Attachments:	Attachment 14.3A – Policy 2.28 – Equal Employment Opportunity – track changes Attachment 14.3B – Policy 2.28 – Equal Employment Opportunity – final

Purpose of Report

- Executive Decision
 Legislative Requirement

For Council to consider proposed changes to the Shire of Merredin Equal Employment Opportunity Policy 2.28.

Background

Shire policies should be reviewed regularly to ensure their accuracy and relevance. This Policy was last reviewed in August 2023 and is therefore due for review.

Comment

A number of changes are proposed to the existing policy to make it more effective and user friendly.

These include:

- Wording updated to ensure clarity and remove obscurity
- Definitions for discrimination and harassment included under Key Policy Definitions section
- Extra information added to the Guidelines section to highlight processes that will be undertaken by the Shire
- The EEO Management Plan has been added to the Related Policies, Plans and Procedures section

- Reference to the Corporate Business Plan has been updated to reflect new Council Plan adoption
- The Monitor and Review section has been updated to highlight that the policy will be monitored by the Governance Officer and reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team.

Consultation

Councillor/Officer Consultation

The Chief Executive Officer, Executive Manager Corporate Services and Executive Manager Strategy and Community participated in the policy review.

Community Consultation

No Community or Councillor consultation was required.

Policy Implications

Policy 2.28 will be updated as per the item, on adoption of the Officer's Recommendation.

Statutory Implications

As outlined in the *Local Government Act 1995* and associated regulations.

Strategic Implications

∅ Council Plan 2025-2035

Theme:	4 Communication and Leadership
Strategic Objective:	4.2 Provide accountable leadership, transparent decision making and good governance.
Priorities Actions:	4.2.1 Support the Shire President and Councillors by working in partnership with the Executive to deliver leadership and oversight of the Shire, providing advice, information and guidance to support sound, informed decision making.

Sustainability Implications

➤ Strategic Resource Plan

There is no impact on capacity, resourcing or asset management to carry out the Officer's recommendation as the proposed changes are within the Shire's available resources.

Risk Implications

There is a compliance risk associated with this Item. The risk rating is considered to be moderate (6), which is determined by a likelihood of unlikely (2) and a consequence of moderate (3). This risk will be eliminated by the adoption of the Officer's Recommendation.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report including within the Long-Term Financial Plan.

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Absolute Majority

Officers Recommendation

That Council ADOPTS updated policy 2.28 Equal Employment Opportunity, as presented in Attachment 14.3B.

14.4 Policy Review – Purchasing Policy 3.12

<h3>Corporate Services</h3> 	
Responsible Officer:	Leah Boehme, EMCS
Author:	As Above
File Reference:	Nil
Disclosure of Interest:	The Author/ Responsible Officer declare that they do not have any conflicts of interest in relation to this item.
Attachments:	Attachment 14.4A – Policy 3.12 – Purchasing Policy – track changes Attachment 14.4B – Policy 3.12 – Purchasing Policy – final

Purpose of Report

Executive Decision

Legislative Requirement

For Council to consider proposed changes to the Shire of Merredin Purchasing Policy 3.12.

Background

Shire policies should be reviewed regularly to ensure their accuracy and relevance. This Policy was last reviewed in May 2023 and is therefore due for review.

A review of the Purchasing Policy template currently provided by the WA Local Government Association (WALGA) showed that no changes have been made to the template since the Shire undertook its last review.

Comment

A number of changes are proposed to the existing policy to make it more effective and relevant to the Shire's requirements.

These include:

- Reference to the Shire's declaration of quotes form in the Purchasing Practice Purchasing Value Thresholds section for \$6,001 to \$20,000 and \$20,001 to \$50,000 categories, instead of the generic 'brief evaluation report' stated in the WALGA template
- New section 4.7 General Exemptions has been added to allow specific purchases to not require competitive purchasing processes i.e. Legal services and professional memberships

- New section 4.8 Special Exemptions has been added to specify that payments to WA Local Government Association (WALGA), Local Government Insurance Scheme (LGIS), the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) and Australian Tax Office (ATO) do not require a competitive purchasing process or a purchase order to be raised
- Review timeframe has been changed from annually to biennially

Consultation

Officer Consultation

The Chief Executive Officer, Executive Manager Corporate Services and Executive Manager Strategy and Community participated in the policy review.

Councillor/ Community Consultation

No Community or Councillor consultation was required.

Policy Implications

Policy 3.12 will be updated as per the item, on adoption of the Officer's Recommendation.

Statutory Implications

As outlined in the *Local Government Act 1995* and associated regulations.

Strategic Implications

∅ Council Plan 2025-2035

Theme:	4 Communication and Leadership
Strategic Objective:	4.2 Provide accountable leadership, transparent decision making and good governance.
Priorities Actions:	4.2.1 Support the Shire President and Councillors by working in partnership with the Executive to deliver leadership and oversight of the Shire, providing advice, information and guidance to support sound, informed decision making.

Sustainability Implications

➤ Strategic Resource Plan

There is no impact on capacity, resourcing or asset management to carry out the Officer's recommendation as the proposed changes are within the Shire's available resources.

Risk Implications

There is a compliance risk associated with this Item. The risk rating is considered to be moderate (6), which is determined by a likelihood of unlikely (2) and a consequence of moderate (3). This risk will be eliminated by the adoption of the Officer's Recommendation.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report including within the Long-Term Financial Plan.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officers Recommendation

That Council ADOPTS updated Purchasing Policy 3.12, as presented in Attachment 14.4B.

14.5 Creation of New Merrittville Reserve and Update of Policy 3.18

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Corporate Services</h2> 	
Responsible Officer:	Leah Boehme, EMCS
Author:	As Above
File Reference:	Nil
Disclosure of Interest:	The Author/Responsible Officer declare that they do not have any conflicts of interest in relation to this item.
Attachments:	Attachment 14.5A – Policy 3.18 – Financial Reserves – track changes Attachment 14.5B – Policy 3.18 – Financial Reserves – final

Purpose of Report

Executive Decision

Legislative Requirement

For Council to consider approving the creation of a new reserve account for the purpose of holding funds related to Merrittville Retirement Village. The creation of this reserve will also require an amendment to Policy 3.18 – Financial Reserves.

Background

With the Merrittville Management Committee making the decision to wind up their operations, management of Merrittville Retirement Village will become the Shire’s responsibility, as per the ‘Deed of Termination and Release of JVAs and Allocation Agreement signed 07 October 2019.

During Budget Review 1 in November 2025, Council approved the addition of income and expense accounts for the management of Merrittville once the transition occurs.

Discussions with the Committee have highlighted a need for the remaining loan funds (currently held by the Merrittville Management Committee) to be transferred to the Shire, as well as the potential for other funds to be transferred to ensure any required works can be undertaken immediately. To accept these funds from Merrittville, it is necessary to have a reserve approved and created within the Shire’s finance system.

Comment

Policy 3.18 – Financial Reserves provide guidelines for the type and use of Shire financial reserves. The Policy was adopted by Council on 16 March 2010. It has been regularly reviewed with minor amendments made when required. The most recent review occurred in July 2025.

Policy 3.18 states:

4.1 Creation of Reserves

Prior to the creation of a Reserve, Council shall adopt operating parameters in relation to the Reserve which are to set out:

- The purpose of the Reserve;*
- The basis of calculation for any transfer to the Reserve;*
- The basis of calculation for any transfer from the Reserve; and*
- The proposed allocation of any unexpended balance remaining in the Reserve following completion of the project.*

Every Reserve created must have a specific purpose and relate to the adopted 'Strategic Plan/Plan for the Future' of Council.

The Administration proposes that a new Reserve account is created to support the ongoing running of Merrittville Retirement Village into the future. It is proposed that the parameters in relation to the Reserve are as follows:

Reserve Name:	<i>Merrittville Retirement Village Reserve</i>
Purpose:	To ensure adequate funds are available to finance future development and/ or upgrades of the Merrittville Retirement Village precinct.
Calculation Basis:	Transfers to and from the Reserve are to be by Council resolution or in accordance with the Shire of Merredin Annual Budget.
Target Balance:	Sufficient to ensure adequate funding of capital renewal, repairs or upgrades to Merrittville Retirement Village.

The creation of this reserve will ensure that funds are available in future for Council to utilise to repair, renew or upgrade the Merrittville Retirement Village precinct.

In line with the creation of a new reserve account, the Policy has also been revised and amended to include the proposed new reserve. The updated document is available at Attachment 14.4A.

Consultation

Councillor/Officer Consultation

No Councillor or Officer consultation was required.

Community Consultation

No Community consultation was required however discussions were held with the Merrittville Management Committee to confirm the proposed course of action.

Policy Implications

Policy 3.18 Financial Reserves will be updated as per the item, on adoption of the Officer's Recommendation.

Statutory Implications

As outlined in the *Local Government Act 1995* and *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*.

Strategic Implications

∅ Council Plan 2025-2035

Theme: 4 Communication and Leadership

Strategic Objective: 4.2 Provide accountable leadership, transparent decision making and good governance.
4.8 Financial Management

Priorities Actions: 4.2.1 Support the Shire President and Councillors by working in partnership with the Executive to deliver leadership and oversight of the Shire, providing advice, information and guidance to support sound, informed decision making.
4.8.1 Maintain strong fiscal and financial management of Council's budget.

Sustainability Implications

➤ Strategic Resource Plan

There is no impact on capacity, resourcing or asset management to carry out the Officer's recommendation.

Risk Implications

There is a compliance risk associated with this Item as the Shire would be contravening the *Local Government Act 1995* and *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* if this Item was not presented to Council. The risk rating is considered to be Low (4), which is determined by a likelihood of Unlikely (2) and a consequence of Minor (2). This risk will be eliminated by the adoption of the Officer's Recommendation.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report including within the Long-Term Financial Plan. Initial funds to be placed in the reserve will come from the cessation of the Merrittville Management Committee and therefor will not have a financial impact on the current budget.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officers Recommendation

That Council;

1. **APPROVES** the creation of a new reserve account, 'Merrittville Retirement Village Reserve';
2. **AUTHORISES** the purpose, calculation basis and target balance, as per the table below; and

Reserve Name:	<i>Merrittville Retirement Village Reserve</i>
Purpose:	To ensure adequate funds are available to finance future development and/or upgrades of the Merrittville Retirement Village precinct.
Calculation Basis:	Transfers to and from the Reserve are to be by Council resolution or in accordance with the Shire of Merredin Annual Budget.
Target Balance:	Sufficient to ensure adequate funding of capital renewal, repairs or upgrades to Merrittville Retirement Village.

- 3. ADOPT the revised Policy 3.18 – Financial Reserves, as presented in Attachment 14.5B.**

15. OFFICER'S REPORTS – COMMUNITY SERVICES

NIL

16. OFFICER’S REPORTS – ADMINISTRATION

16.1 Response to WALGA Consultation Papers

<h1>Administration</h1> 	
Responsible Officer:	Craig Watts, CEO
Author:	As Above
File Reference:	Nil
Disclosure of Interest:	The Author and Authorising Officer declare that they do not have any conflicts of interest in relation to this item.
Attachments:	Attachment 16.1A – WALGA Electoral Reform Attachment 16.1B – WALGA Information Sheet – Renewable Energy Attachment 16.1C – WAPC Information Sheet – Significant Development Pathway Attachment 16.1D - WAPC Information Sheet – Local Planning Schemes

Purpose of Report



Executive Decision



Legislative Requirement

For Council to consider providing a response to the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) in relation to electoral reforms and amendments to the Planning and Development Regulations.

Background

At the recent WALGA Great Eastern Country Zone Meeting, member Shires were requested to provide a Council endorsed response in relation to proposed electoral reforms and amendments to the planning and development regulations. To enable responses to be considered by the State Council, a deadline of 27 February 2026 was set for the Planning and Development Regulations Amendments. A further email request for responses was sent by WALGA seeking responses to the electoral reform paper by 27 March 2026. The State Government is also seeking comments on these matters.

Comment

As provided in the attached Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) information sheets, the State Government is considering amendments to the *Planning and Development (Significant Development) Regulations 2024* and *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*, to support the state’s transition towards renewable energy. These will be applied to renewable energy facilities, battery energy storage facilities, electricity transmission infrastructure and hydrogen and ammonia production facilities. These significant changes include:

- 1) All future renewable energy development which cost more than \$20 million will be a “mandatory significant development” and be assessed and determined by the WAPC.
- 2) This will provide a single pathway for development determination, with the State Government managing all referrals and advice, with specialist assessment by the DPLH State Development Assessment Unit.
- 3) The Renewable Energy Planning Code will be introduced, which will supersede provisions within the Shire’s Local Planning Scheme, that the Shire must have due regard to.
- 4) Limitations on development of noise sensitive premises (ie residential premises) within prescribed setbacks to minimise impacts of wind farms.

The current pathway enables proponents to elect to have their development located within the Shire of Merredin to be assessed by the DPLH State Development Assessment Unit where the value of the project exceeds \$5 million, with developments over \$2 million being assessed by a Development Assessment Panel. The Development Assessment Panel comprises three (3) subject matter experts, and two representatives (elected members) of the Shire. The proposed amendment would negate any Shire representation within the determining body, and relegate it to that of a key stakeholder, being subject to the same consultation processes as any other member of the community.

Introduction of the Renewable Energy Planning Code will include a requirement that the Shire must not proceed with or approve a local planning policy or development plan that is inconsistent with an approved Planning Code. Over time, these will become embedded in the local planning scheme and remain a mandatory consideration when assessing these applications. Furthermore, there will be limitations on development of noise sensitive premises, such as housing, where they may be impacted by noise from proposed, approved or existing wind farms. Furthermore, the WAPC continues to state that community benefit schemes sit outside the planning framework, however the Queensland planning framework includes provisions for proponents to include social impact assessments with a subsequent community benefit scheme in place. Any amendment to the planning regulatory framework should include provisions for mandatory community benefit schemes. The amendments also make no mention of protecting rural land for agricultural purposes, especially high quality agricultural land. WALGA suggests that the WAPC may bypass existing local planning frameworks which restrict the development of non-agricultural land uses on agricultural land.

A new discussion paper seeking further feedback in relation to the frequency of local government elections, and mandatory voting has been released by WALGA. This matter has previously been considered by Council at its 22 October 2024 Ordinary Council Meeting. The resolution of Council (83479) at that time was:

“That Council SUPPORTS the adoption of the following Local Government Election Advocacy Positions:

1. *PARTICIPATION – Council support voluntary voting at local government elections (WALGA advocacy position 1a)*

2. *TERMS OF OFFICE – Council SUPPORTS continuation of four-year terms with a two year spill (WALGA Advocacy position 1a)..”*

The new discussion paper is seeking responses to several of the same queries the Shire responded to in 2024. Collated data from 2024 found that 98% of respondents supported the current local government election process with a two year spill. Utilising data collected from council elections conducted in the eastern states, WALGA suggests that while a 4 year full spill election cycle will reduce voter fatigue, this is likely to increase costs borne by Local Government. The most recent election cost the Shire approximately \$25,000. Costs to undertake elections over the past three elections has steadily increased, and with an increased voter turnout, this is expected to continue. Adding compulsory voting will likely increase these costs further. Although voter participation in local government elections is generally low, forcing compulsory voting may cause voter backlash and create a greater regulatory enforcement burden which then increases costs to the Shire.

Consultation

Councillor/Officer Consultation

No Councillor or Officer consultation is required. Council has previously considered and provided feedback to WALGA in relation to local government elections.

Community Consultation

No community consultation is required.

Policy Implications

There are no policy implications.

Statutory Implications

WALGA is seeking feedback in relation to proposed amendments to the *Local Government Act 1995* and Planning and Development regulations as detailed in this report.

Strategic Implications

Theme:	4 Communication and Leadership
Strategic Objective:	4.2 Provide accountable leadership, transparent decision making and good governance.
Priority Actions:	4.2.1 Support the Shire President and Councillors by working in partnership with the Executive to deliver leadership and oversight of the Shire, providing advice, information and guidance to support sound, informed decision making.

Sustainability Implications

There is no impact on capacity, resourcing or asset management to carry out the Officer's recommendation.

Risk Implications

There is a reputational risk associated with this item caused by not providing a response and the potential for the Shire to be unable to meet community expectations, leading to a perception that the Shire has no opinion on the matter. The risk rating is considered to be Low (4) which is determined by a likelihood of Unlikely (3) and a consequence of Minor (2). This risk will be eliminated by the adoption of the Officer's Recommendation.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report including within the Long-Term Financial Plan.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That Council responds to the request for comment on renewable energy confirming that it:

- 1) SUPPORTS the establishment of energy infrastructure that supports generation, storage and transmission of renewable energy across Western Australia in a sustainable manner which minimises land use conflicts and promotes context-sensitive design and orderly planning;**
- 2) DOES NOT SUPPORT actions which reduce the powers of Local Government or negate the position of Local Government as part of the decision making body;**
- 3) SUPPORTS amendments to planning legislation to require proponents to submit a social impact assessment, together with mandatory community benefit frameworks, similar to that provided in Queensland planning legislation; and**
- 4) SUPPORTS the protection of high quality rural land for agricultural purposes, noting that while some renewable projects may be compatible with agricultural uses, that local planning frameworks should be considered in any decision making processes.**

That Council responds to the request for comment on Local Government elections re-confirming that it:

- 1) SUPPORTS continuation of four-year terms with a two year spill; and**
- 2) SUPPORTS voluntary voting at Local Government elections.**

17. MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

18. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF WHICH DUE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

19. URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE PERSON PRESIDING OR BY DECISION

20. MATTERS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

In accordance with section 5.23 (2)(b)(c)(e)(ii)(iii), of the *Local Government Act 1995* Council will go Behind Closed Doors to discuss these matters.

20.1 Disposal of Land – 38 Whitfield Way, Merredin

<h2>Corporate Services</h2> 	
Responsible Officer:	Leah Boehme, EMCS
Author:	As above
File Reference:	Nil
Disclosure of Interest:	The Author/ Responsible Officer declare that they do not have any conflicts of interest in relation to this item.
Attachments:	Attachment 20.1A – Offers to Purchase 38 Whitfield Way, Merredin Attachment 20.1B – Valuation Report Attachment 20.1C – Advertising

This matter is being considered *behind closed doors* under s5.23(2)(c) & (e)(ii) of the *Local Government Act 1995* as it relates to:

- A contract entered into, or which may be entered into, by the local government and which relates to a matter to be discussed at the meeting; and
- Information that has a commercial value to a person.

20.2 Disposal of Land – Lot 1327 Mackenzie Crescent, Merredin

<h3>Corporate Services</h3>		 SHIRE OF MERREDIN INNOVATING THE WHEATBELT
Responsible Officer:	Leah Boehme, EMCS	
Author:	As above	
File Reference:	Nil	
Disclosure of Interest:	The Author/ Responsible Officer declare that they do not have any conflicts of interest in relation to this item.	
Attachments:	Attachment 20.2A – Offers to Purchase 1327 Mackenzie Crescent, Merredin Attachment 20.2B – Valuation Report Attachment 20.2C – Advertising	

This matter is being considered *behind closed doors* under s5.23(2)(c) & (e)(ii) of the *Local Government Act 1995* as it relates to:

- A contract entered into, or which may be entered into, by the local government and which relates to a matter to be discussed at the meeting; and
- Information that has a commercial value to a person.

21. CLOSURE

There being no further business, the President thanked those in attendance and declared the meeting closed at ___pm.

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