

Notice of Meeting



Dear President and Councillors,

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Council of the Shire of Merredin will be held on Tuesday, 29 July 2025 in the Council Chambers, corner of King and Barrack Streets, Merredin. The format of the day will be:

2:00pm	Presentation to Council – Malcolm Willis, Wheatbelt AGcare
2:15pm	Briefing Session
4:00pm	Council Meeting

CRAIG WATTS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
25 July 2025

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	
CBP	Corporate Business Plan
CEACA	Central East Accommodation & Care Alliance Inc
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSP	Community Strategic Plan
CWVC	Central Wheatbelt Visitors Centre
EO	Executive Officer
EMCS	Executive Manager Corporate Services
EMDS	Executive Manager Development Services
EMIS	Executive Manager Infrastructure Services
EMS&C	Executive Manager Strategy & Community
GECZ	Great Eastern Country Zone
GO	Governance Officer
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
SCP	Strategic Community Plan
SRP	Strategic Resource Plan
WALGA	Western Australian Local Government Association
WEROC	Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils



July Ordinary Council Meeting

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Shire of Merredin
Ordinary Council Meeting
4:00pm Tuesday, 29 July 2025



1. Official Opening

This meeting is being recorded on a digital audio device to assist with minute taking purposes. The public is reminded that copying or distribution of any part of the recording is not permitted. The Shire reserves all rights in relation to its copyright. Audio contained in a recording must not be altered, reproduced or republished without the written permission of the Shire and in accordance with Section 8.5 of the Shire of Merredin Standing Orders Local Law 2017, no person is to use any electronic, visual or audio recording device or instrument to record the proceedings of the Council or a Committee without the written permission of the Council.

2. Record of Attendance / Apologies and Leave of Absence

Councillors:

Cr D Crook	President
Cr R Manning	Deputy President
Cr B Anderson	
Cr H Billing	
Cr M McKenzie	
Cr L O'Neill	
Cr P Van Der Merwe	

Staff:

C Watts	CEO
L Boehme	EMCS
B Wall	EMIS
C Brindley-Mullen	EMS&C
P Zenni	EMDS
R Cahill	TO

Members of the Public:

Apologies:

Approved Leave of Absence:

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

Nil

7. Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meetings

7.1 Ordinary Council Meeting held on 24 June 2025

Attachment 7.1A

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held 24 June 2025 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

Nil

10. Receipt of Minutes of Meetings


Nil

11. Recommendations from Committee Meetings for Council Consideration

Nil

12. Officer's Reports – Development Services

12.1 Proposed Shire of Merredin Local Government Property Amendment Local Law 2025

<div>Development Services</div> <div></div>	
Responsible Officer:	Peter Zenni, EMDS
Author:	Chris Liversage – Conway Highbury
Legislation:	Local Government Act 1995
File Reference:	LE/08/09
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Attachments:	Attachment 12.1A – Shire of Merredin Local Government Property Amendment Local Law 2025

Purpose of Report



Executive Decision



Legislative Requirement

For Council to consider making the *Shire of Merredin Local Government Property Amendment Local Law 2025*, which will provide the power for an authorised person to direct a person to leave local government property and not re-enter within a specified period of up to 12 months, to advertise the proposed amendment local law for public comment, and send a copy of the proposed amendment local law to the CEO of newly formed Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety as required by the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Background

At its meeting held on 25 March 2025, Council resolved to adopt a draft *Shire of Merredin Local Government Property Amendment Local Law 2025 (CM Ref 83560)* to give greater powers to the Shire to direct persons to leave and not return to specified local government property due to antisocial or undesirable behaviour.

Comment

The proposed amendment local law adds new clauses 4.7 to 4.9 to the existing *Shire of Merredin Local Government Property Local Law 2002*.

These proposed clauses provide power for an authorised person to direct a person to leave local government property and not re-enter within a specified period of up to 12 months.

The proposed amendment local law was advertised for public comment on 11 April 2025 as required by the *Local Government Act 1995* for a six-week period ending on 2 June 2025, and

a copy was sent to the CEO of the then WA Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

There were no comments from the public or the Department. The Shire may now 'make' the Amendment Local Law which will come into effect 14 days after publication in the Government Gazette.

Policy Implications

Compliance with Shire of Merredin Policy 3.13 – Use of Common Seal.

Statutory Implications

The process to make or amend a local law is set out in clause s3.12 of the *Local Government Act 1995*. In summary this involves:

1. Adopting a draft (amendment) local law;
2. Advertising it for comment;
3. Considering any comments received;
4. Resolving to make the local law if no changes are considered necessary following public comment;
5. Publishing it in the Government Gazette; and

Giving local public notice of it coming into effect.

Strategic Implications

Ø Strategic Community Plan

Theme: 4. Communication and Leadership

Service Area Objective: 4.2.3 The Council is well informed in their decision-making, supported by skilled administration team who are committed to providing timely, strategic information and advice

Priorities and Strategies for Change: Nil

Ø Corporate Business Plan

Theme: 4. Communication and Leadership

Priorities: Nil

Objectives: 4.4.1 The Shire is continuously working to maintain efficient communication, providing open, transparent and factual information, through a variety of channels

Sustainability Implications

Ø Strategic Resource Plan

Nil

Risk Implications

The proposed amendment will enhance the Shires ability to deal with inappropriate behaviour at Shire facilities. The proposed Shire of Merredin *Local Government Property Amendment Local Law 2025* has been subject to public advertising and will receive further consideration by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Legislation. Accordingly, the risks associated with this proposal are considered Low (3) based on the Likelihood (1) and Consequence (3) of an adverse event associated with the proposal taking place.

Financial Implications

There are costs associated with the drafting, adverting and Gazettal of the proposed amendment local law. An allocation of funds for the completion of the local law review project forms part of the Shire's 2025/26 Annual Budget.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That Council;

1. **MAKES** the Shire of Merredin *Local Government Property Amendment Local Law 2025*, as shown in Attachment 12.1A;
2. **AUTHORISES** the Shire President and Chief Executive Officer to affix the Shire of Merredin Common Seal to the Shire of Merredin *Local Government Property Amendment Local Law 2025*;
3. **PUBLISHES** the local law in the Government Gazette;
4. **SENDS** a copy to the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety;
5. **GIVES** local public notice in accordance with s3.12(6) of the *Local Government Act 1995*, after Gazettal;
 - a. Stating the title of the local law;
 - b. Summarizing the purpose and effect of the local law and specifying the day on which it comes into operation; and
 - c. Advising that copies of the local law may be inspected or obtained from the Shire offices.
6. **SENDS** a copy of the local law and a duly completed explanatory memorandum signed by the Shire President and Chief Executive Officer to the Western Australian Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation; and
7. **AUTHORISES** the Chief Executive Officer to take any other action necessary to progress the gazettal of the Amendment Local Law.

12.2 Application for Development Approval – Lot 12 Abattoir Road, Merredin, Distribution-level Battery Energy Storage System (DBESS)

<div>Development Services</div> <div>SHIRE OF MERREDIN INNOVATING THE WHEATBELT</div>	
Responsible Officer:	Peter Zenni, EMDS
Author:	Paul Bashall – Planwest (WA) Pty L:td
Legislation:	Planning and Development Act 2005 Shire of Merredin Local Planning Scheme No.6
File Reference:	A9221
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Attachments:	Attachment 12.2A - Development Approval Application (Full Application supporting detail is available on request or refer to June 2025 Ordinary Council Minutes) Attachment 12.2B – Copy of Advertisement Attachment 12.2C – ACenergy Submission Attachment 12.2D – Schedule of Submissions

Purpose of Report



Executive Decision



Legislative Requirement

For the Council to consider submissions received during the advertising of an application for Development Approval (DA) lodged by Urbis Ltd on behalf of ACenergy Pty Ltd for a distribution-level battery energy storage system (DBESS) on a portion of Lot 12 Abattoir Road, Merredin.

Background

On 24 June the Council considered a DA for proposed development of a \$9 million DBESS and determined that the proposed development was a 'use not listed' in accordance with clause 3.4.2 of the *Shire of Merredin Local Planning Scheme No.6*, and thereby advertise the Development Approval application for a period of 14 days in accordance clause 64 (7) (a) of the Deemed Provisions.

The Council also authorised the Chief Executive Officer, where there are no adverse comments received during the advertising period, to grant Development Approval for the proposed distribution-level Battery Energy Storage System (DBESS) development on the subject land, with 8 conditions and 3 advice notes.

The advertising included referral of the DA to the Department of Environment Regulation, the Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Power and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. The DA was also advertised in the local paper in Merredin (The Phoenix).

During the advertising period, the Council received two (2) submissions.

Proposed Development

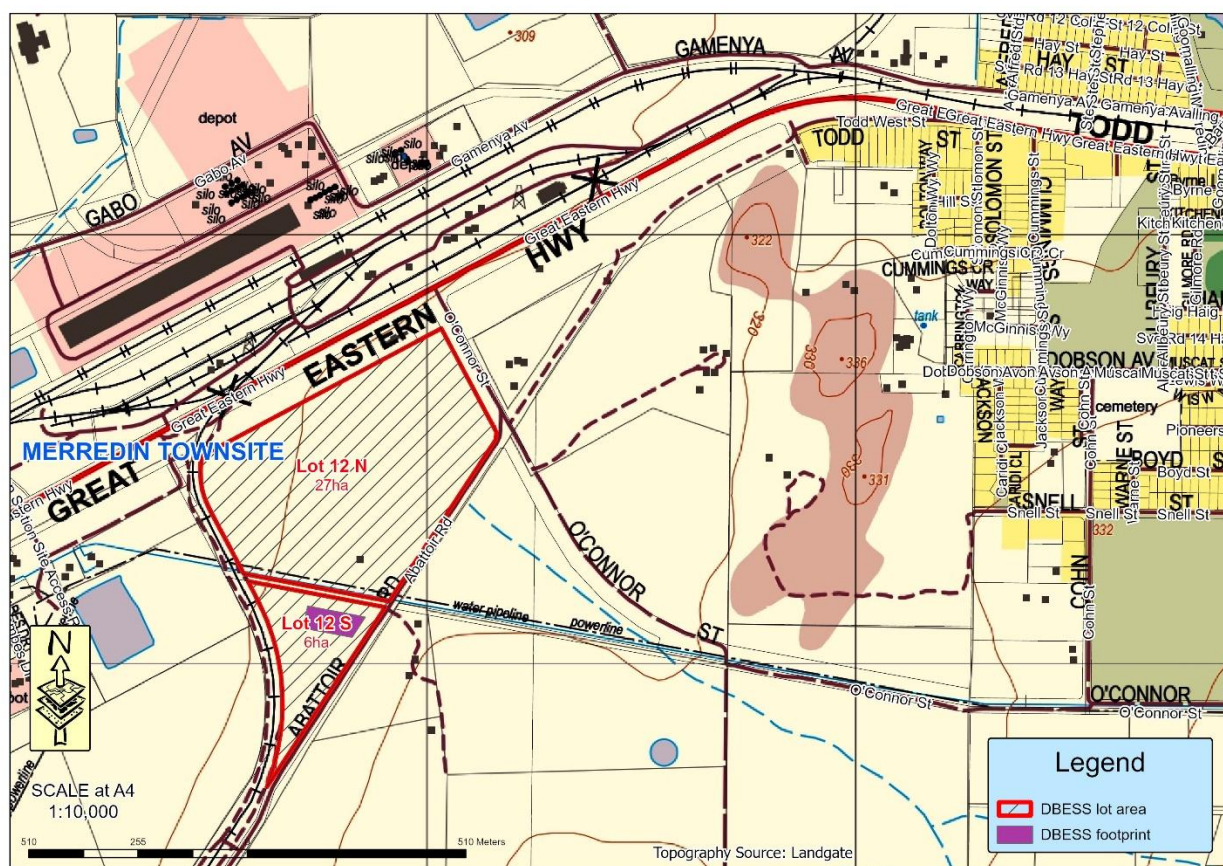
The proposed development is located on the north side of the southern portion of Lot 12, Abattoir Road in Merredin, which is about 3 kilometres southwest of Merredin Town Centre.

Figure 1 provides a location plan of the site in relation to Merredin townsite.

ACEnergy has an extensive history for the delivery and provision of modern and efficient renewable energy projects and intends to develop a modern renewable energy storage facility. The DBESS comprises a set of large batteries designed to take up the excess power generated from local sources, including rooftop solar, in Merredin. This aims to even out the supply to the grid by absorbing the excess power generated at peak periods.

The subject site is an agricultural property, does not contain any areas of remnant vegetation and is currently used for cropping and sheep grazing purposes. The only visible development are several sheds located on the northern part of the property approximately 100 metres from any of the proposed development.

FIGURE 1 – LOCATION PLAN



Source: Planwest, Landgate

The DBESS project will be connected to Western Power's transmission network to the Merredin Terminal.

The DBESS planning report submitted by Urbis states that the facility will cover approximately 0.65ha of land and will comprise of the following supporting infrastructure:

- The installation of a new driveway from Abattoir Road leading to a gated entry;
- Security fencing and landscaping around the DBESS;
- Sufficient landscaping to screen the development from surrounding development;

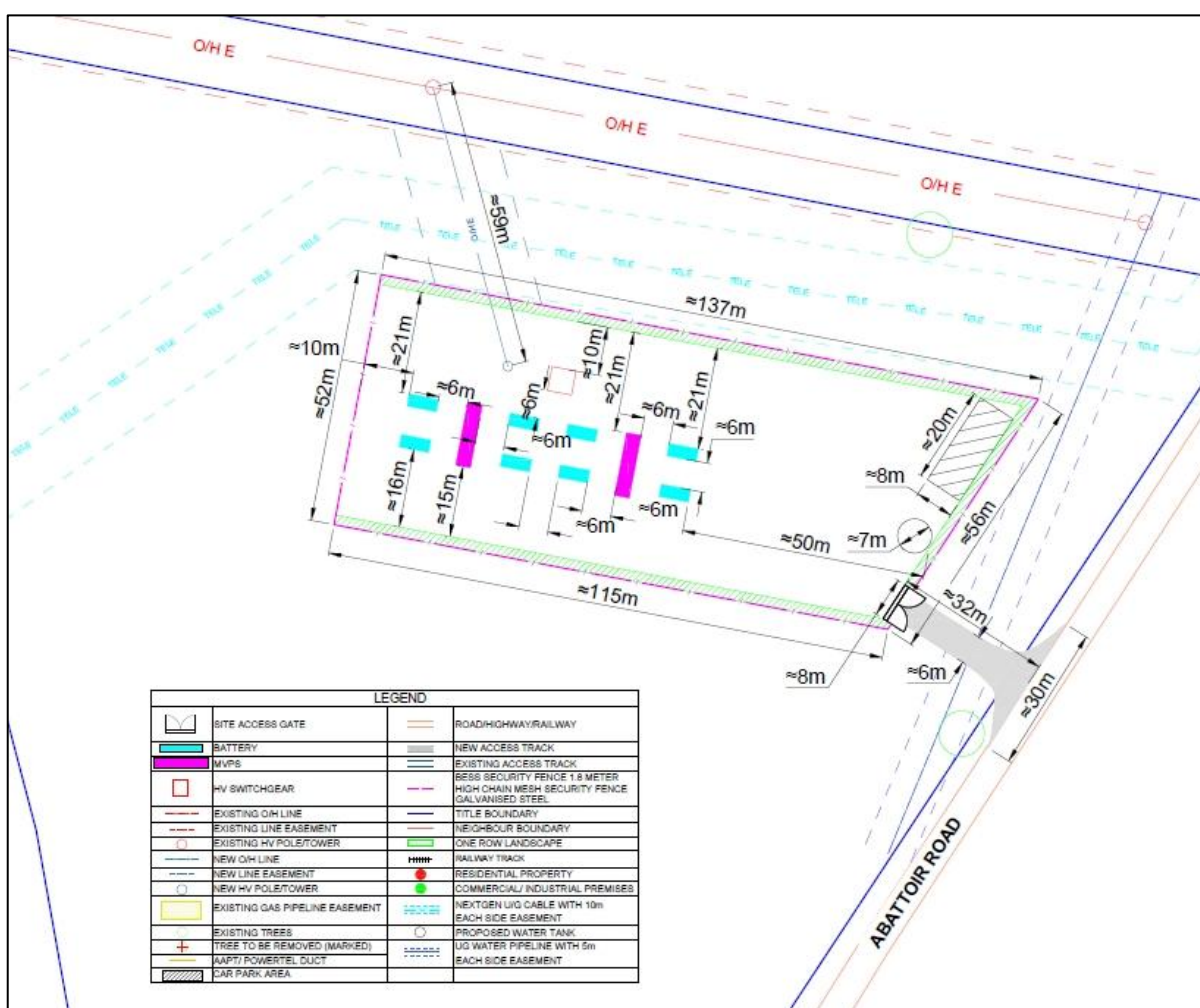
- Electrical components of the DBESS, including approximately eight (8) battery containers; two medium voltage power stations (MVPS) and high voltage switchgear; and
- Ancillary electrical transmission lines to connect the DBESS to the existing powerlines to the north.

The proposed DBESS will be a utility-scale lithium iron phosphate (LFP) solution designed for grid-scale applications. This containerised system, resembling a standard 20-foot shipping container, ensures efficient transport and installation. The DBESS will be manufactured offsite to then be delivered to the subject site as a pre-assembled unit, facilitating streamlined installation and commissioning.

The system features modular battery units with liquid cooling technology to optimise thermal management and enhance performance. The proposal will be equipped with a comprehensive fire detection and suppression system, including thermal sensors, gas detection, and automated suppression mechanisms to mitigate any fire risks.

Figure 2 shows the site plan provided by the applicant showing the 8 batteries (in blue), 2 power stations (in pink) and the access to Abattoir Road.

FIGURE 2 – SITE PLAN EXTRACT FROM DA REPORT



Source: Urbis, Planwest

The DA is accompanied by several documents and specialist reports including:

- Certificate of Title
- Development plans and elevations

- Traffic impact statement (TIS)
- Environmental noise assessment
- Bushfire risk assessment
- Landscape plan
- Stormwater report
- A DBESS fire safety document

Traffic

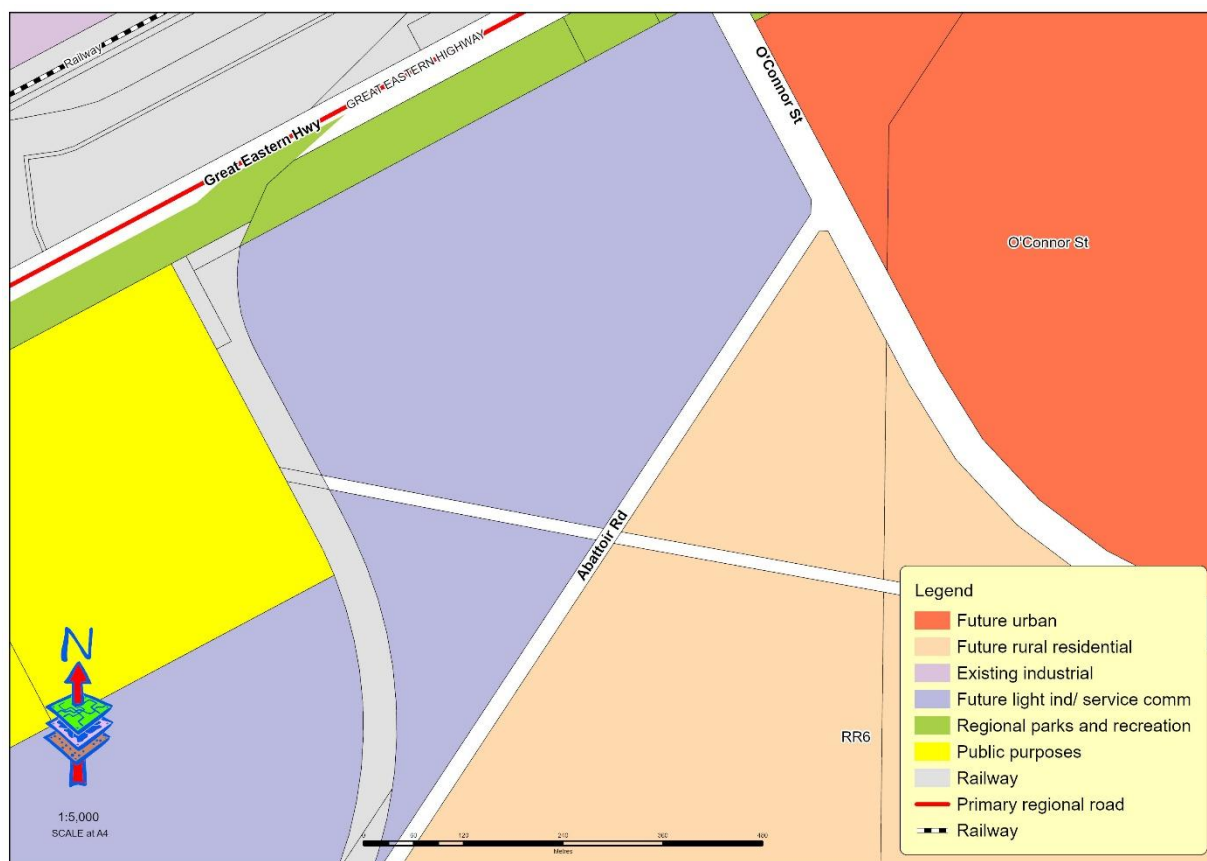
The TIS was carried out by Level 5 Design, (transport planning and traffic management consultants) concluding that there would be minimal traffic to and from the facility once construction was completed. On completion, the facility would largely be monitored by staff in Merredin and mostly completed remotely. Whilst the level of vehicular traffic during the construction phase is limited to 5 heavy vehicle movements per day over a 3 week period, as the road is not sealed, the Shire will require the preparation of a road site survey report and require that any damage to the road associated with the construction phase is rectified by the applicant to the satisfaction of the Shire.

Environmental

The noise emanating from the facility was seen as having a potential impact on nearby sensitive uses in the future. The draft local planning strategy (the draft strategy) has designated this area for 'Future light industry/service commercial' uses. The proposed development is not considered inconsistent with this designation.

The draft strategy has been advertised and was presented to the Council for final adoption at it's May 2025 Ordinary Meeting. **Figure 3** provides an extract from the draft strategy.

FIGURE 3 – EXTRACT FROM DRAFT LOCAL PLANNING STRATEGY



Source: Planwest, Landgate

The land on the east side of Abattoir Road (Lot 11) is designated in the draft strategy, and zoned in the local planning scheme, for Rural Residential. For this reason, it was recommended that a noise assessment be completed to ensure there would be minimal impact on any future sensitive uses in the Rural Residential area.

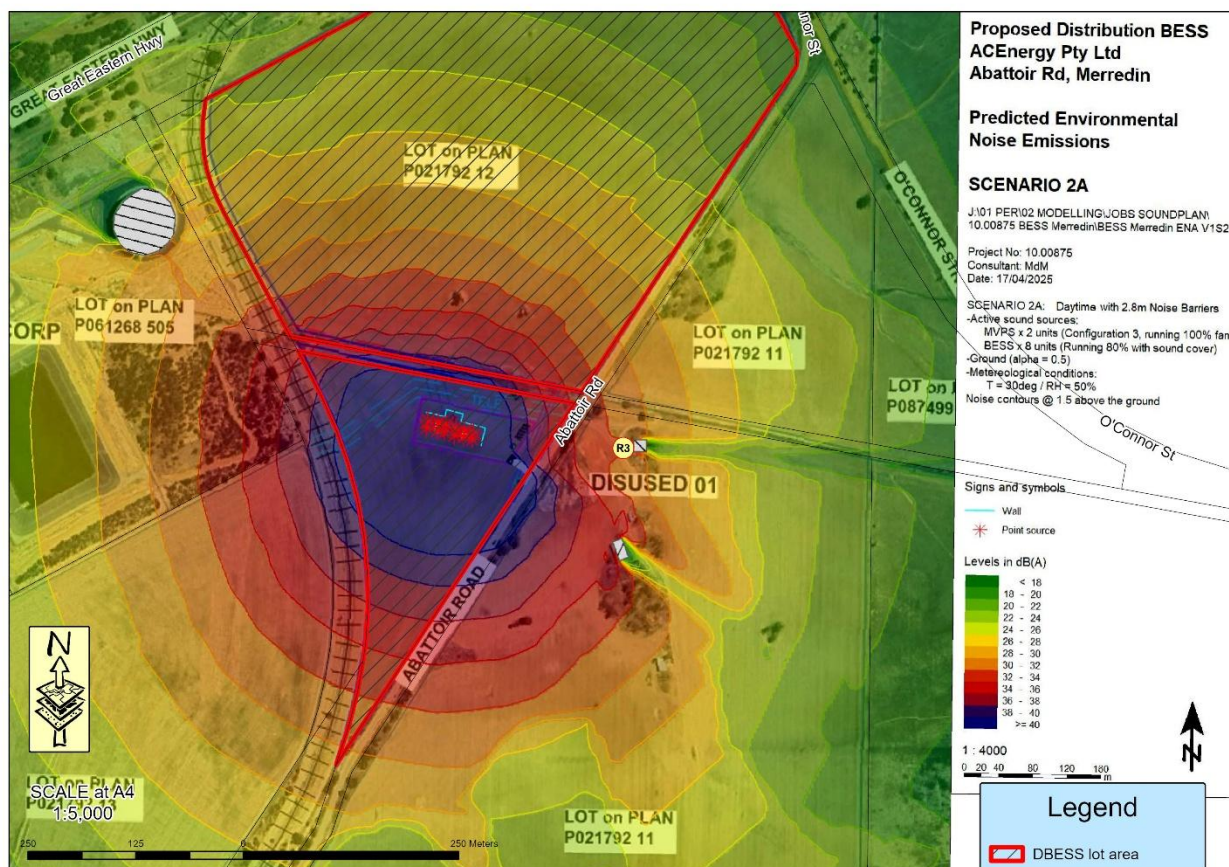
An environmental noise assessment was carried out by Acoustics Consultants Australia. The assessment produced 4 scenarios of daytime and nighttime impacts, with and without noise barriers. This assessment was based on the equipment shown in the DA.

In Western Australia, noise levels for residential areas are regulated under the *Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997*. These regulations set assigned noise levels based on the time of day and type of area. For residential (sensitive) uses, the maximum allowable noise levels typically vary depending on whether it's daytime, evening, or nighttime. The regulations also account for intrusive noise characteristics, meaning certain types of noise may have stricter limits.

The daytime scenarios with and without barriers (Scenarios 1 and 1A) were modelled with less than 36dB impact on adjacent properties. Nighttime impacts were slightly higher with Scenario 2A (nighttime with barriers) modelling less than 40dB to the east (location of future sensitive uses).

Figure 4 shows an extract from the noise assessment report for Scenario 2A. The extract shows an existing (disused) house marked as R3 as being the nearest sensitive receptor of potential noise. The 40dB noise contour only extends 8 metres into Lot 11 and would therefore most likely be within a development setback area of any future development.

FIGURE 4 – EXTRACT FROM ENVIRONMENTAL NOISE ASSESSMENT (Scenario 2A)



Source: Planwest, Acoustics Consultants Australia

The noise assessment report provides detailed noise level types and impacts, however as a general rule, the noise regulations state that for residential areas, typical daytime noise limits are:

- 7am – 7pm: Generally, 45-50dB at the property boundary.
- 7pm – 10pm: Slightly lower limits, around 40-45dB.
- 10pm – 7am: Stricter limits, usually 35-40dB.

Modelling indicates that the use of 2.8m barriers around the DBESS and MVPS units will provide significant benefit in reducing the noise impact on the areas being protected by the barriers and are recommended to be retained.

Notwithstanding the above assessment, it is noted that both sides of Abattoir Road (Lots 11 and 12) are owned by the same entity.

Bushfire Management

The subject land is not within the Bushfire Prone mapping, however, due to the nature of the proposed development, a Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) assessment has been completed by Western Environmental.

The report states that the proposed BESS is sited appropriately to ensure that the radiant heat exposure of renewable energy assets during a bushfire is reduced so that it does not exceed 10 kW/m² at a flame temperature of 1090 K. This siting of renewable energy assets is also designed to reduce the potential for a fire originating from this infrastructure to spread to the surrounding vegetation, igniting a bushfire. This method is considered best practice in Western Australia.

The facility has the ability to meet the requirements of each of these documents and is recommended for approval on the condition that a BMP is prepared which includes an assessment of the facility against the applicable guidelines to ensure a design is created which reduces the risk to facility operators, responding firefighters and the surrounding community.

Landscape

A landscape plan has been prepared by Ground Control Landscape Architecture Pty Ltd to address the potential visual impact of the proposed development.

Perimeter planting of the site will be carried out along all boundary fences except the west side. There are no public places to the west that could be visually impacted by the proposal. This planting will reduce the impact of the infrastructure and the barriers.

Stormwater

Premise Pty Ltd has prepared a Stormwater Drainage Strategy for the land surrounding the development site.

The drainage calculations contained in the report show that the drainage system is robust. Therefore, Premise believes that this drainage strategy will adequately manage flood risk while keeping pre-development flows to their natural flow paths.

Premise recommends that upon topsoil stripping, the Contractor provides a finished surface level for the DBESS Infrastructure Pad that is 150mm above the existing surface level.

	Comment
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The proposed development is consistent with the Shire's vision of becoming a renewable energy hub in the region. The proposal will more efficiently capture excess energy that is already collected by existing infrastructure (including rooftop solar systems). This system may be one of the first of its kind in Western Australia, however it is anticipated that there may be many more variations of this concept.

The location of the proposed development is consistent with the future strategy for the town.

Strategic Considerations

The existing Shire of Merredin Local Planning Strategy (the Strategy) currently designates this area as 'Light industry/mixed business'. As mentioned, the draft strategy has a similar designation. The proposed development is consistent with both the existing and proposed strategies.

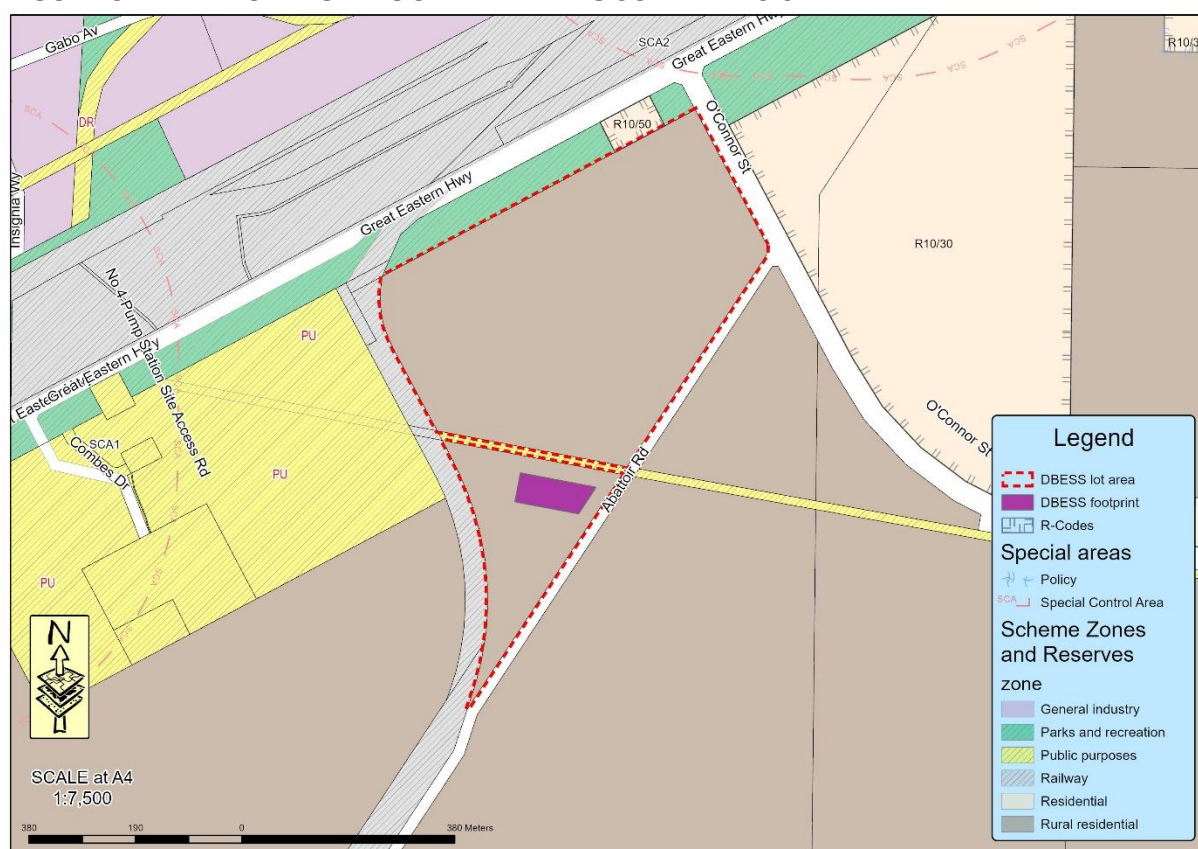
Storm Water Management

A condition of development requires that storm water management be addressed via the drainage strategy that is acceptable to the Shire's engineers. This ensures that any drainage from the site will be managed on the site and will not impact any neighbouring properties or public infrastructure like roadways, road reserves and other reserves.

Statutory Considerations

Figure 5 includes an extract from the Local Planning Scheme No 6 (the Scheme) showing the subject land zoned 'Rural residential'.

FIGURE 5 – EXTRACT FROM LOCAL PLANNING SCHEME No 6



Source: Planwest, Landgate

The proposed development is considered to be covered by the 'uses not listed' provision of the Scheme in clause 3.4.2. This clause provides the local government with the discretion to determine whether the use is acceptable within the zone. In this case it is recommended that

part b) is used whereby the local government may *‘determine that the use may be consistent with the objectives of the particular zone and thereafter follow the advertising procedures of clause 64 of the deemed provisions in considering an application for development approval’*.

Following a Scheme review, the Shire has formally resolved to support the Omnibus amendment to the Scheme. However, there are no changes to the Scheme that impact the current proposal.

Advertising

The proposed development was advertised on the Council’s web site and in The Phoenix newspaper circulated in Merredin from 4th July to 21 July 2025. A copy of the advertisement in The Pheonix is included in Attachment 12.2B.

Building Requirements

The granting of a DA does not exempt the applicant from complying with any building or health requirements. This issue is added as an advice note.

Conditions of Approval

The June 2025 Ordinary Council Meeting resolution stated that that this Item need not return to the Council if no adverse comments were received during the advertising period. The Resolution authorised the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to determine the DA with conditions and advice notes.

Commonly a DA remains valid for 2 years, during which time the proposed development must be substantially commenced. However, the applicant has requested a longer period in which the remains valid. A period of 4 years is recommended.

However, the submission received from the proponent seeks to modify one of the recommended conditions. Although strictly this is not an adverse comment, it is a submission that potentially requires the Council to modify its recommended approval.

This condition (No 3) relates to the measures designed to reduce the noise impact of the facility.

Submission

The first submission received from Department of Water and Environmental Regulation had an objection to this development.

The second submission (from the proponent) requested modification to the noise condition proposed to be applied to the Development Approval. A copy of the submissions are in Attachment 12.2C and a Schedule of Submissions is included in Attachment 12.2D.

The reason for the requested revision is that the batteries and Medium Voltage Power Station (MVPS) for the Merredin D-BESS are currently preliminary selections and may change in the final design.

To ensure the most accurate and effective noise mitigation strategy, ACenergy intends to update the noise assessment based on the final equipment selection prior to construction commencing and seek the Shire’s endorsement of this assessment.

The updated assessment will be conducted by a suitably qualified consultant and align with the Acoustics Consultants’ report, particularly Section 4.4, which identifies multiple mitigation options, including acoustic barriers, cooling system adjustments, and noise reduction kits. The proponent’s intention is to adopt a flexible approach to noise mitigation that may combine these measures, if necessary, to achieve compliant noise levels while optimising project

efficiency. This revision ensures clarity and alignment with the Shire's goal of minimising environmental impact.

Summary

In summary, it is agreed that Condition 3 should change to allow a more flexible approach to address the noise reduction measures that should be provided. However, the revised condition suggested by the proponent is considered too complicated and, as such, a modified condition has been recommended.

Policy Implications

The proposed development is consistent with State Planning Policies and Local Planning Policies. There are no local implications as the proposal is consistent with the existing and draft local planning strategy.

Statutory Implications

Compliance with the Shire of Merredin Local Planning Scheme No.6.

Strategic Implications

Ø Strategic Community Plan

Theme:	5. Places and Spaces
Service Area Objective:	5.4 Town Planning & Building Control 5.4.2 The Shire has current local planning scheme and associated strategy which is flexible and able to suitably guide future residential and industrial growth
Priorities and Strategies for Change:	Nil

Ø Corporate Business Plan

Theme:	5. Places and Spaces
Priorities:	Nil
Objectives:	5.4 Town Planning & Building Control 5.4.2 The Shire has current local planning scheme and associated strategy which is flexible and able to suitably guide future residential and industrial growth

Sustainability Implications

Ø Strategic Resource Plan

Nil

Risk Implications

The proposed development will not result in an adverse impact on the amenity of the surrounding area. The Shire will advertise the application for public comment and liaise with adjacent landowners and relevant government agencies. Bushfire considerations will be addressed via the preparation and implementation of a dedicated Bushfire Management Plan. Accordingly, the risks associated with this proposal are considered Low (3) based on the

likelihood of Rare (1) and consequence of Moderate (3) of adverse events associated with the proposed development taking place.

Financial Implications

Development Application fees have been paid.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That Council;

- 1. Grants Development Approval for the proposed distribution-level Battery Energy Storage System (DBESS) development on a portion of Lot 12 Abattoir Road, Merredin, as outlined in Attachment 12.2A, subject to the following conditions and advice notes.**

Conditions

- 1. If the development, the subject of this approval, is not substantially commenced within a period of 4 years from the date of the approval, the approval will lapse and be of no further effect. For the purposes of this condition, the term "substantially commenced" has the meaning given to it in the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015 as amended from time to time.*
- 2. The removal of all construction infrastructure once the facility has been completed to the satisfaction of the local government.*
- 3. The preparation of a revised Acoustics Consultants report to reflect the final design of the BESS facility, and the development incorporating appropriate measures to reduce the noise impact of the facility to a level considered acceptable to the satisfaction of the local government.*
- 4. The BESS facility complying with the Landscape Concept Plan as presented by Ground Control Landscape Architecture Pty Ltd, and a strategy for the on-going maintenance and management of the landscaping, to the satisfaction of the local government.*
- 5. The preparation and compliance with a Stormwater Drainage Plan to contain all drainage on site to the satisfaction of the local government.*
- 6. The preparation and implementation of a Bushfire Management Plan (BMP) to the satisfaction of the local government.*
- 7. The preparation of a road site survey report (for Abattoir Road) to be submitted to the Shire of Merredin prior to the construction phase, any damage to the road associated with the construction phase of the project is to be rectified by the applicant to the satisfaction of the local government.*
- 8. Any new crossover to Abattoir Road shall be located and constructed to the satisfaction of the local government.*

Advice Notes

- 1. 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.

- 2. The applicant is advised that granting of development approval does not constitute a building permit and that an application for relevant building permits must be submitted to the Shire of Merredin and be approved before any work requiring a building permit can commence on site.*

13. Officer's Reports – Engineering Services

14. Officer's Reports – Corporate and Community Services

14.1 Statement of Financial Activity – June 2025

<div>Corporate Services</div> <div>SHIRE OF MERREDIN INNOVATING THE WHEATBELT</div>	
Responsible Officer:	Leah Boehme, EMCS
Author:	As Above
Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> <i>Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996</i>
File Reference:	Nil
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Attachments:	Attachment 14.1A – Statement of Financial Activity Attachment 14.1B – Detailed Statements Attachment 14.1C – Capital Works Progress Attachment 14.1D – Investment Report

Purpose of Report



Executive Decision



Legislative Requirement

For Council to receive the Statements of Financial Activity and Investment Report for the month of June 2025, 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 as the end of financial year processes are still be completed, the attached financials are draft documents and may be subject to changes prior to the closure of the 2024/25 financial year books.

Policy Implications

Nil

Statutory Implications

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

Strategic Implications

Ø Strategic Community Plan

Theme:	4. Communication and Leadership
Service Area Objective:	4.2.2 The Shire is progressive while exercising responsible stewardship of its built, natural and financial resources
Priorities and Strategies for Change:	Nil

Ø Corporate Business Plan

Theme:	4. Communication and Leadership
Priorities:	Nil
Objectives:	4.2 Decision Making

Sustainability Implications

Ø Strategic Resource Plan

Compliance with the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* and to also give Council some direction regarding its management of finance over an extended period of time.

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 30 June 2025 in accordance with Regulation 34 of the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996.

14.2 List of Accounts Paid – June 2025

<div>Corporate Services</div> <div>SHIRE OF MERREDIN INNOVATING THE WHEATBELT</div>	
Responsible Officer:	Leah Boehme, EMCS
Author:	As above
Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> <i>Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996</i>
File Reference:	Nil
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Attachments:	Attachment 14.2A - Payments Listing June 2025

Purpose of Report

☐

Executive Decision

☒

Legislative Requirement

For Council to receive the schedule of accounts paid for the month of June 2025.

Background

The attached list of accounts paid during the month of June 2025, under Delegated Authority, is provided for Council's information and endorsement.

Comment

Nil

Policy Implications

Nil

Statutory Implications

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

Strategic Implications

Ø Strategic Community Plan

Theme: 4. Communication and Leadership
Service Area Objective: 4.2.2 The Shire is progressive while exercising responsible stewardship of its built, natural and financial resources
Priorities and Strategies for Change: Nil

Ø Corporate Business Plan

Theme: 4. Communication and Leadership
Priorities: Nil
Objectives: 4.2 Decision Making

Sustainability Implications

Ø Strategic Resource Plan

Compliance with the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* and to also give Council some direction regarding its management of finance over an extended period of time.

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 June 2025 as listed, covering cheques, EFT's, directly debited payments and wages, as numbered and totaling \$1,417,391.95 from the Merredin Shire Council Municipal bank account and \$0 from the Merredin Shire Council Trust bank account.

14.3 Creation of New Swimming Pool Reserve, Deletion of Cummings Units Reserve and Update of Policy 3.18

Corporate Services



Responsible Officer:	Leah Boehme, EMCS
Author:	As above
Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1995, Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996</i>
File Reference:	Nil
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Attachments:	Attachment 14.3A – Policy 3.18 Financial Reserves update

Purpose of Report



Executive Decision



Legislative Requirement

The purpose of this report is for Council to approve the creation of a new reserve account for the purpose of redeveloping or replacing the existing swimming pool.

As the Cummings Street Units settlement is now complete and these are no longer an asset of the Shire, it is also proposed to remove the Cummings Street Units Reserve.

The creation of a new reserve and deletion of an existing reserve will also require an amendment to Policy 3.18 – Financial Reserves.

Background

Over the past two (2) years it has become apparent that the Merredin and District Olympic Swimming Pool is nearing its end of life. This has included the failure of the slide pump during the 2024/25 pool season and concerns raised over the safety and longevity of the steel stair structure. The pool has also suffered serious leaks which have led to inflated water bills during the 2024/25 financial year.

As part of the Recreation Master Plan development, consultants have sought feedback from the community on future plans for the pool. Councillors and staff have also toured a recently redeveloped pool in Mukinbudin to see what options may be available for the pool moving forward.

To ensure the Shire has adequate funds to undertake this project in future, and to ensure that there are co-matching funds available should grant opportunities present, the creation of this reserve is recommended.

The sale of the Shire's equity in the Cummings Street Units was recently completed, with settlement occurring on 30 June 2025. As the units no longer belong to the Shire, it is not

necessary to have a reserve account for the completion of capital works associated with this asset. All funds in the reserve were split as required at settlement and the reserve balance is now \$0.

Comment

Policy 3.18 – Financial Reserves provide guidelines for the type and use of Shire of Merredin (the 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 March 2025 with the addition of a new Housing Reserve.

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 future redevelopment or replacement of the swimming pool. It is proposed that the parameters in relation to the Reserve are as follows:

Reserve Name:	<i>Swimming Pool Reserve</i>
Purpose:	To ensure adequate funds are available to finance future redevelopment or replacement of the swimming pool.
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 toward replacement or renewal of the Merredin swimming pool in accordance with the Shire of Merredin's strategic planning documentation.

The creation of this reserve will ensure that funds are available in future for Council to utilise to construct a new pool or redevelop the existing pool.

In line with the creation of a new reserve account, the policy has also been revised and amended to include the proposed new reserve, and remove the existing Cummings Street Units Reserve. The updated document is available at attachment 14.3A.

Policy Implications

Policy 3.18 – Financial Reserves

Statutory Implications

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

Strategic Implications

➤ Strategic Community Plan

Theme:	4. Communication and Leadership
Service Area Objective:	4.2.2 The Shire is progressive while exercising responsible stewardship of its built, natural and financial resources 4.2.3 The Council is well informed in their decision-making, supported by a skilled administration team who are committed to providing timely, strategic information and advice
Priorities and Strategies for Change:	Nil

➤ Corporate Business Plan

Theme:	Communication and Leadership
Priorities:	P4.3 Maximising the value of Shire Assets

Sustainability Implications

➤ Strategic Resource Plan

Nil

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 the adoption of this item at this time.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officers Recommendation

That Council;

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

Reserve Name:	Swimming Pool Reserve
Purpose:	To ensure adequate funds are available to finance future redevelopment or replacement of the swimming pool.
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 toward replacement or renewal of the Merredin swimming pool in accordance with the Shire of Merredin’s strategic planning documentation.
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3. **APPROVES** the deletion of the Cummings Street Units reserve account from Policy 3.18 – Financial Reserves;
4. **NOTES** that the Cummings Street Units Reserve will continue to be noted in the Annual Financial Statements for two years after its removal from the policy; and
5. **ADOPTS** the revised Policy 3.18 – Financial Reserves, as presented in attachment 14.3A.

14.4 2024/25 Annual Budget Adoption

<div>Corporate Services</div> <div>SHIRE OF MERREDIN INNOVATING THE WHEATBELT</div>	
Responsible Officer:	Leah Boehme, EMCS
Author:	As above
Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> <i>Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996</i>
File Reference:	Nil
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Attachments:	Attachment 14.4A – Draft 2025/26 Statutory Budget Attachment 14.4B – Draft 2025/26 Capital Budget Attachment 14.4C – Shire of Merredin 2025/26 Schedule of Fees & Charges – changes highlighted Attachment 14.4D – Shire of Merredin 2024/25 Schedule of Fees & Charges

Purpose of Report



Executive Decision



Legislative Requirement

For Council to consider and adopt the 2025/26 Annual Budget.

Background

The Draft 2025/26 Annual Budget has been compiled based on the objectives contained in the Strategic Community Plan (SCP) and Corporate Business Plan (CBP), and to reflect Council's priorities in the coming year, and is attached for consideration and adoption by Council. Supporting documentation with information on the Capital Budget has also been included as Attachment 14.4B.

The proposed fees and charges were approved in principle by Council at the April Ordinary Council Meeting held on 29 April 2025 (CMRef 83588). Proposed amendments that have occurred since the in principle adoption have been highlighted in Attachment 14.4C. Attachment 14.4D, Shire of Merredin 2025/26 Schedule of Fees & Charges, is the final copy for publication.

The proposed differential general and minimum rates were approved by Council at the Special Council Meeting held on 27 May 2025 and advertised for public comment, which closed on 20 June 2025. There were no responses received from the public during the period.

Council attendance fees were endorsed by Council at the April Ordinary Council Meeting held on 29 April 2025 (CMRef 83587) and have been included in the 2025/26 Annual Budget provisions.

Comment

Two briefing sessions were conducted with Council to discuss the budget in detail, answer questions that arose and address any concerns.

The main features of the 2025/26 Annual Budget include:

1. The budget has been prepared with a 7% increase in the rates revenue. This increase applies across all differential rate categories utilising the Gross Rental Valuation (GRV) and the Unimproved Valuation (UV) provided by Landgate. It should be noted that in some cases rates in the dollar charges are lower than previous years due to the revaluations received.
2. Fees and charges have been reviewed and generally increased by 3%, with rounding to the nearest 10c. A review of fees and charges at the Merredin Regional Community and Leisure Centre saw a number of changes in these areas. Charges set under Local Laws and where statutory regulations apply, were only changed where this met the requirements.
3. A capital works budget totalling \$8.53m has been included for investment in infrastructure, land and buildings, plant and equipment. This includes expenditure on road infrastructure totalling \$5.5m and \$1.2m towards improvements to recreation facilities.

The estimated brought forward balance is \$4,514,800. However, this is unaudited and may change once the annual 2024/25 accounts are finalised. The major influences on the brought forward balance are the receipt of a 50% advanced Financial Assistance Grants payments for 2025/26 of \$1,756,801, which were received prior to 30 June 2025 and capital carry forward of just over \$2 million.

The following is a summary of budgeted reserve movements for 2025/26:

Opening Balance 2025/26	Transfers to Reserve	Transfers from Reserve	Closing Balance 2023/24
\$7,416,402	\$735,000	(\$47,550)	\$8,103,852

Policy Implications

The Draft 2025/26 Annual Budget is based on the objectives contained in the SCP.

Policy 3.18 - Financial Reserves has also been considered.

Statutory Implications

Section 6.2 of the *Local Government Act 1995* requires that no later than 31 August in each financial year, or such extended time as the Minister allows, each local government is to prepare and adopt (by Absolute Majority), in the form and manner prescribed, a budget for its Municipal fund for the financial year ending on the next following 30 June.

Division 5 and 6 of Part 6 of the *Local Government Act 1995* refers to the setting of budgets and raising of rates and charges. The *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* details the form and content of the budget. The draft budget has been prepared to include information required by the *Local Government Act 1995*, *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* and Australian Accounting Standards.

	Strategic Implications
Ø	Strategic Community Plan

Theme: 4. Communication and Leadership
Service Area 4.2 Decision Making
Objective: The Shire is progressive while exercising responsible stewardship of its built, natural and financial resources
4.2.3 The Council is well informed in their decision-making, supported by a skilled administration team who are committed to providing timely, strategic information and advice
Priorities and Strategies for Change: Nil

Ø	Corporate Business Plan
Theme:	4. Communication and Leadership
Priorities:	Nil
Objectives:	Nil

	Sustainability Implications
Ø	Strategic Resource Plan

Nil

	Risk Implications
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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 moderate (8), which is determined by a likelihood of unlikely (2) and a consequence of major (4). This risk will be eliminated by the adoption of the Officer's Recommendation.

	Financial Implications
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Specific financial implications are as outlined in the 'Comment' section of this report and as itemised in the 2025/26 Annual Budget, provided as Attachment 14.4A.

	Voting Requirements
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Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officers Recommendation

That Council;

1. **ADOPTS** for the Shire of Merredin, the Annual Budget for the 2025/26 financial year, pursuant to the provisions of section 6.2 of the Local Government Act 1995 and Part 3 of the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996, as outlined in Attachment 14.4A which includes the following:
 - a. Budget Statement of Comprehensive Income (by Nature or Type);
 - b. Budget Statement of Cash Flows;
 - c. Budget Rate Setting Statement;
 - d. Notes to the Annual Budget including statement of Rating Information;
 - e. Schedule of Fees and Charges for 2025-26;
2. **IMPOSES** the following differential general and minimum rates on Gross Rental and Unimproved Values adopted for the purpose of yielding the deficiency disclosed by the Municipal Fund Budget in the Rate Setting Statement, pursuant to sections 6.32, 6.33, 6.34 and 6.35 of the Local Government Act 1995:

General Rates

Gross Rental Values	Minimum	Rate in \$
GRV	\$960	0.117150

General Differential Rates

Unimproved Value	Minimum Rate	Rate in \$
UV1 – Rural	\$1,190.00	0.011940
UV2 – Urban Rural	\$1,190.00	0.023880
UV3 – Mining	\$200.00	0.023870
UV4 – Power Generation	\$1,190.00	0.023150
UV5 – Special Use Airstrip	\$1,190.00	0.021315

3. **ADOPTS** the following due dates for the payment in full by instalments, pursuant to section 6.45 of the Local Government Act 1995 and Regulation 64(2) of the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996:

Full payment or 1 st Instalment due date	3 October 2025
2 nd Instalment due date	5 December 2025
3 rd Instalment due date	6 February 2026
4 th Instalment due date	10 April 2026

4. **ADOPTS** an instalment administration charge where the owner has elected to pay rates (and service charges) through an instalment option of \$13.90 for each instalment after the initial instalment is paid, pursuant to section 6.45 of the Local Government Act 1995 and Regulation 67 of the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996;

5. **ADOPTS** an interest rate of 5.5% where the owner has elected to pay rates (and service charges) through an instalment option, pursuant to section 6.45 of the Local Government Act 1995 and Regulation 68 of the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996;
6. **ADOPTS** an interest rate of 8.0% for rates (and service charges) and costs of proceedings to recover such charges that remain unpaid after becoming due and payable, pursuant to section 6.51(1) and subject to section 6.51(4) of the Local Government Act 1995 and Regulation 70 of the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996;
7. **ADOPTS** the 2025/26 Schedule of Fees and Charges for the Shire of Merredin removal and/or deposit of domestic and commercial waste included in Attachment 14.4D, pursuant to section 67 of the Waste Avoidance and Resources Recovery Act 2007;
8. **ADOPTS** the following annual fees for payment of Elected Members in lieu of individual meeting attendance fees, pursuant to section 5.99 of the Local Government Act 1995 and Regulation 34 of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996:

Shire President	\$8,790
Deputy Shire President	\$8,790
Councillors	\$8,790

9. **ADOPTS** the following annual local government allowances to be paid in addition to the annual meeting allowance, pursuant to section 5.98A of the Local Government Act 1995 and Regulation 33 and 33A of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996; and

Shire President	\$14,650
Deputy Shire President	\$3,660

10. **ENDORSES** that the level to be used in the Statement of Financial Activity in 2025/26 for the reporting of material variance shall be whichever is greater of 10% and \$10,000, in accordance with Regulation 34(5) of the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996 and the Australian Accounting Standards.

15. Officer's Reports – Administration

15.1 Elected Member Training and Development Register 2024/25

<div>Administration</div> <div>SHIRE OF MERREDIN INNOVATING THE WHEATBELT</div>	
Responsible Officer:	Craig Watts CEO
Author:	Meg Wyatt, EO
Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> <i>Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996</i>
File Reference:	Nil
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Attachments:	Attachment 15.1A – Elected Member Training and Development Register 2024/25

Purpose of Report



Executive Decision



Legislative Requirement

For Council to consider receiving a report on the training and development undertaken by Elected Members during the 2024/25 financial year.

Background

On 16 September 2019, with the introduction of new provisions contained within the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act), local governments must prepare a report for each financial year on the training completed by elected members in that financial year.

New sections 5.126 and 5.127 of the Act were introduced around elected member training and reporting, as follows:

"5.126 Training for council members

(1) Each council member must complete training in accordance with regulations.

(2) Regulations may –

a) prescribe a course of training; and

b) prescribe the period within which training must be completed; and

c) prescribe circumstances in which a council member is exempt from the requirement in subsection (1); and

d) provide that contravention of subsection (1) is an offence and prescribe a fine not exceeding \$5000 for the offence.

5.127 Report on training

(1) A local government must prepare a report for each financial year on the training completed by council members in the financial year.

(2) The CEO must publish the report on the local government's official website within 1 month after the end of the financial year to which the report relates."

The *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* prescribes the Council Member Essentials training as being the mandatory training (as per section 5.126(1) of the Act) that Elected Members must complete within their first 12 months of office. The Council Member Essentials training consists of the following modules:

- Understanding Local Government;
- Serving on Council;
- Meeting Procedures;
- Conflicts of Interest; and
- Understanding Financial Reports and Budgets.

To enable Elected Members to develop and maintain skills and knowledge relevant to their role, the Shire of Merredin (the Shire) also has Policy 1.20 – Councillor Training and Professional Development Policy which includes provisions around Elected Member attendance at conference and training events within Australia and overseas.

Comment

Local Government is a complex entity and makes significant decisions that affect the local governments continued sustainability and community outcomes. It is imperative that Elected Members have the appropriate skills to be able to undertake their roles to the best of their ability, these skills are enhanced through the training and development offered to them throughout their term of office.

The Minister for Local Government and the WA State Parliament recognise the need for Elected Members to undertake continual professional development in fulfilling their role of public office. The introduction of mandatory training requirements into the *Local Government Act 1995* and the need for local governments to adopt a policy in relation to Elected Member continual professional development support these views.

With the introduction of new provisions within the *Local Government Act 1995*, local governments must prepare a report for each financial year on the training completed by Elected Members in that financial year. The report must be placed on the Shire's website within one month after the end of the financial year in which the report relates.

The report as shown in Attachment 15.1A highlights the training and development undertaken by the Shire's Elected Members during the 2024/25 financial year, and details not only the mandatory training required under the Act, but also any conferences and training events attended by Elected Members under Policy 1.20 – Councillor Training and Professional Development Policy.

Mandatory training is required to be completed within a 12-month period by those Elected Members who were elected to office in the 2023 Local Government Elections. Other Elected Members can undertake the mandatory training if they so wish, however, they are not required to do so. The mandatory training is valid for five years once they have been

completed, meaning Elected Members are only required to undertake the training at every second election.

Elected Members can also undertake their own personal and professional development outside of the training and development offered by the Shire.

Policy Implications

Policy 1.20 – Councillor Training and Professional Development Policy.

Statutory Implications

Local Government Act 1995.

Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996.

Strategic Implications

Ø Strategic Community Plan

Theme:	4. Communication and Leadership
Service Area Objective:	4.2 Decision Making 4.2.2 The Shire is progressive while exercising responsible stewardship of its built, natural and financial resources
Priorities and Strategies for Change:	Nil

Ø Corporate Business Plan

Theme:	4. Communication and Leadership
Priorities:	Nil
Objectives	4.2 Decision Making

Sustainability Implications

Ø Strategic Resource Plan

Nil

Risk Implications

Should Council not note the report on Elected Member training, the Shire will not comply with the requirements in section 5.127 of the *Local Government Act 1995*. There is a compliance risk associated with this item, as the Shire would be contravening the *Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*. 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 attendance of conferences and other training events for Elected Members is accommodated for in the Shire's annual budget, for the 2024/25 financial year an amount of \$45,000 was originally allocated. The cost of elected member attendance to various

conferences and training events for the 2024/25 financial year as listed in Attachment 15.1A was \$19,345.66. However, the actual amount is higher than this as some of the amounts were prepaid in the previous financial year.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That Council;

1. **NOTES the training and development undertaken by Elected Members during the 2024/25 financial year, as detailed in Attachment 15.1A; and**
2. **NOTES the 2024/25 Elected Member Training and Development Register, as detailed in Attachment 15.1A will be placed on the Shire of Merredin website.**

15.2 Advertising of the Strategic Priorities of the Council Plan

<div>Administration</div> <div>The logo for the Shire of Merredin, featuring a stylized sun or starburst design with multiple colored segments (yellow, orange, red, blue, green) and the text "SHIRE OF MERREDIN" and "INNOVATING THE WHEATBELT" below it.</div>	
Responsible Officer:	Craig Watts, CEO
Author:	As above
Legislation:	Local Government Act 1995
File Reference:	
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Attachments:	Attachment 15.2A - Draft Council Plan Attachment 15.2B - Council Plan - Customer Service responses

Purpose of Report



Executive Decision



Legislative Requirement

For Council to consider advertising the Draft Council Plan, with a further final report to be provided to Council for adoption of the Council Plan at the August Ordinary Council Meeting. For Council to receive the Customer Service responses, and consider the advocacy priorities to be included within the adopted version of the Council Plan.

Background

The Shire of Merredin Strategic Community Plan 2020-2030 was adopted at the Ordinary Council Meeting held in April 2021. The Shire commenced a major review of this document, incorporating advertising to the community, liaison with stakeholders and government departments, an online community survey, and a combination of town hall meetings and stalls at community events to seek feedback. The Shire's Corporate Business Plan is also due for review, with the Shire Administration's intention to combine both of these documents into a single integrated Council Plan 2025-2035.

Comment

A major review of a Local Government's Strategic Community Plan is required every four years and a desktop review every two years. A major review of the Shire of Merredin Strategic Community Plan 2020-2030 and Corporate Business Plan 2022/23-2025/26 has been completed and will be replaced by one integrated Council Plan 2025-2035 (the Council Plan) whilst still meeting the requirements under the *Local Government Act 1995*. The development of the Council Plan has been community informed, Council led and sets a new direction for the Shire of Merredin for the next ten years.

The *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act) requires all local governments to produce a “plan for the future” compliant with Section 5.56(1) of the Act. In developing a plan for the future, the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework guides local governments to deliver the following outcomes:

1. A long term Strategic Community Plan that clearly links the community’s aspirations with the Council’s vision and long term strategy.
2. A corporate business plan that integrates resourcing plans and specific Council plans with the strategic plan.
3. A clearly stated vision for the future viability of the local government area.

To be statistically valid, at least 10 percent of the residential population must contribute to the Council Plan (320 residents). An extensive community engagement campaign was conducted by the Shire Administration between 20 February and 14 April 2025 promoted through social media, the Shire Website, the Shire Newsletter and the Phoenix newspaper. Opportunities for community participation and feedback included an online survey, questionnaire postcards, meetings with community groups, meetings with school students, engagement stalls/booths at the Merredin CRC Twilight Market and Merredin Show, three separate town hall meetings and a staff strategy breakfast. The online survey also included seeking feedback on the Shire’s Customer Service, including individual outstations. These Customer Service survey results are provided in Attachment 15.2B.

The Shire collected responses from over 560 people who provided the Shire with valuable insights into the needs and aspirations of Merredin residents and the wider community. These insights were then used to inform and guide the development of the major review of the Strategic Community Plan and the Corporate Business Plan which are included in the new Council Plan. A confidential strategic planning briefing involving the Elected Members and Executive Leadership Team was undertaken to consolidate the key Strategic Objectives, Priority Actions and Priority Projects, setting Merredin’s strategic direction for the future.

Furthermore, based on the feedback received from the community consultation, the following advocacy priorities have been identified for inclusion within the Council Plan:-

- 1) Provision of safer crossing at Great Eastern Highway, to link the northern and southern sides of the Merredin township.
- 2) Provision of affordable housing, both private and public, to meet the growing demands of the Community, which will support growth and economic development.
- 3) Provision of additional childcare services, including commercial day care, after school care and family day care options, to enable parents to return to work.
- 4) Upgrade and improvements to recreation facilities, including upgrades/improvements to playing surfaces at the MRCLC and development of a new aquatic facility.
- 5) Continue to improve community connectivity of the Shire’s sealed and unsealed road network, expanding the sealed network and installing footpath infrastructure to support pedestrian movements.
- 6) Continued support for economic development, including opening access to industrial land, to attract new businesses to the Shire and to enable existing businesses to grow.

These together with other community propriety initiatives are listed within the Council Plan.

Prior to adoption of the Council Plan, the Shire Administration recommends providing the community with a draft of the plan to confirm the Objectives, Actions and Projects are aligned

with community sentiment, and enable any final adjustments to be made prior to presentation of the final Council Plan document to the August 2025 Ordinary Council Meeting.

Policy Implications

Nil

Statutory Implications

All local governments are currently required to produce a plan for the future under S5.56 (1) of the *Local Government Act 1995*. Regulations have been made under S5.56 (2) of the Act to briefly outline the minimum requirements to achieve this. The *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* provide a brief outline of the minimum requirements to meet this requirement, which includes the development of a strategic community plan and a corporate business plan.

It should also be noted that advertising the Council Plan only requires a simple majority decision of Council, however when the final version of the plan is considered, this will be by an absolute majority decision.

Strategic Implications

Ø Strategic Community Plan

Theme: 4. Communication and Leadership

Service Area Objective:

4.1.1. The Shire regularly engages with its community and, in return, communicated the information gathered in a clear and transparent manner.

4.7.1. The Shire is committed to ongoing consultation to ensure that the reporting associated with the State's Integrated Planning Framework is in line with the community's vision for the town and its surrounds

Sustainability Implications

Ø Strategic Resource Plan

Nil

Risk Implications

There is a compliance risk associated with this item as by not undertaking a review of the Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan the Shire would be in breach of the *Local Government Act 1995*. Furthermore, there is a reputational risk as the broader community expects to have opportunity to be heard and have input into the Council Planning process. The risk rating is considered to be moderate (12), which is determined by a likelihood of likely (4) and a consequence of moderate (3). This risk will be eliminated by the adoption of the Officer's Recommendation.

Financial Implications

The development of the Council Plan 2025-2035 has been aligned with draft operational budget for 2025-2026. The Financial implications of Council Plan objectives, actions and projects will be detailed further when annual budget processes are presented to Council on an annual basis, together with the review of the Long Term Financial Plan.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officer's Recommendation

That Council:-

- 1) ENDORSES the Draft Council Plan 2025-2035, as shown in Attachment 15.2A, for the purpose of advertising to seek final public comment;**
- 2) NOTES that the final version of the Council Plan 2025-2035 will be presented to a later Ordinary Council Meeting for endorsement;**
- 3) NOTES the Customer Service responses as shown in Attachment 15.2B, to be included within the final version of the Council Plan 2025-2035; and**
- 4) NOTES the Advocacy Priorities as provided within the Officers Report, to be included within the final version of the Council Plan 2025-2035.**

15.3 Policy Review – 2.33 CEO Performance Review Policy

<div>Administration</div> <div>SHIRE OF MERREDIN INNOVATING THE WHEATBELT</div>	
Responsible Officer:	Craig Watts, CEO
Author:	As above
Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i>
File Reference:	Nil
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Attachments:	Attachment 15.3A – Policy 2.33 – CEO Performance Review Policy Attachment 15.3B – Policy 2.33 – CEO Performance Review Policy

Purpose of Report



Executive Decision



Legislative Requirement

For Council to consider a revised policy which provides guidance on the process to be followed in relation to the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) performance review.

Background

Policy 2.33 was adopted at a Special Council Meeting held 17 October 2023 (CMRef 83260). The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries recommended that Council develop a policy to guide the performance review process. The policy was to set out the performance review process to be followed, the roles and responsibilities of each party involved in the process, and the appointment of an independent consultant.

This Policy needed to be updated to ensure that it is still relevant.

Comment

At the May Ordinary Council Meeting held 27 May 2025, Council appointed an external consultant to conduct the CEO Performance Review (CMRef 83619). The external consultant has now completed a review of Policy 2.33 and made relevant changes, including;

- Updating section 4.2 Performance Review Committee to remove reference to a committee
- Updating section 4.3 Independent consultant to remove reference to a committee
- Updating section 4.4 Process to Assess Performance to remove reference to a committee

- Updating section 4.5 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to remove reference to Strategic Community Plan and replace with Council Plan
- Updating the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries to the new name Department of Local Government, Industrial Relations and Safety.

Policy Implications

Policy 2.33 – CEO Performance Review Policy

Statutory Implications

As outlined in the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Strategic Implications

Ø Strategic Community Plan

Theme: 4. Communication and Leadership
Service Area 4.2. Decision Making
Objective: 4.2.3. The Council is well informed in their decision-making, supported by a skilled administration team who are committed to providing timely, strategic information and advice
Priorities and Strategies for Change: Nil

Ø Corporate Business Plan

Theme: 4. Communication and Leadership
Priorities: Nil
Objectives: 4.2 Decision Making

Sustainability Implications

Ø Strategic Resource Plan

Nil

Risk Implications

If this Policy is not reviewed and the proposed changes adopted, the Policy will be outdated. 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

Nil

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Officers Recommendation

That Council ADOPT Policy 2.33 – CEO Performance Review Policy, as presented in Attachment 15.3B.

16. Motions of which Previous Notice has been given

Nil

17. Questions by Members of which Due Notice has been given

Nil

18. Urgent Business Approved by the Person Presiding or by Decision

Nil

19. Matters Behind Closed Doors

Nil

20. Closure

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