

Year 2
Integrated Council Plan
Action Plan 2026/27



Introduction

The **Integrated Council Plan 2025–2029**, including the **Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP)**, is a shared roadmap for the future and guides our work over the 4 year Council term. This integrated approach recognises the strong connection between Council’s strategic priorities and the health and wellbeing of the community. It sets the direction for Council as we respond to change and continue building a resilient and future-ready organisation.

Each year, Council prepares an annual action plan outlining the key initiatives that will deliver the objectives of the Integrated Council Plan and respond to the evolving needs of our community.

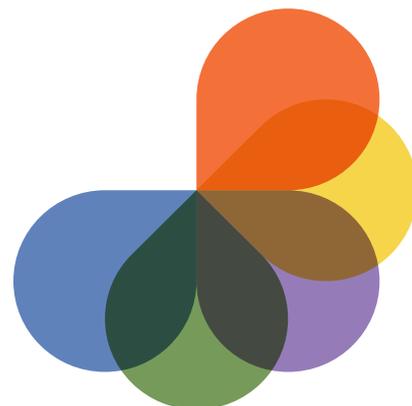
The Year 2, Integrated Council Plan Action Plan 2026/27 should be read alongside the Integrated Council Plan 2025–2029.

Actions that relate to the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan are identified with a heart (♥+) symbol.

Actions with this icon (MI) indicate a connection to a Major Initiative listed in the Integrated Council Plan 2025–2029 and the Budget 2026/27.

The Integrated Council Plan 2025–2029 and Year 2, Integrated Council Plan Action Plan 2026/27 meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)*, which requires councils to develop a Council Plan every 4 years following Council elections.

This plan is accurate at the time of printing and Whitehorse City Council reserves the right to make changes.



Strategic Direction 1

Community



Community is about making sure people can easily meet and connect with others and feel they belong. It's about being active, having fun, making people feel welcome and respected.

We foster these connections through recognising our shared experiences and unique differences. Our community thrives when people feel safe, healthy, and valued. Through partnerships and thoughtful initiatives, we build connection, promote wellbeing, and create the foundation for a city where everyone can participate, contribute, and find their place.

Integrated Council Plan Actions 2026/27:

Deliver the inaugural Whitehorse Acquisitive Art Prize project

- The Whitehorse Acquisitive Art Prize is a new opportunity open to all Victorian artists, for art inspired by the natural environment. An expert judging panel will select the winning artwork which will be acquired into the Whitehorse Art Collection, with an exhibition of finalists held at Artspace in 2027. This new platform creates opportunities for artist exposure and acquisition, while elevating public understanding and appreciation of the Whitehorse Art Collection as a rich cultural asset for the community.

Deliver an Intergenerational Social Connections Program whereby young and older people come together to work on shared interests, encouraging social support and meaningful connections

- A partnership program whereby young and older people come together to work on shared interests, social or environmental issues, encouraging social support and meaningful connections.
Year 1 of 3.

Implement Year 2 of the Community Funding Accelerator Program Pilot to increase education on grants for community

- Implement Year 2 of the pilot program to increase education and uptake of grants for the Whitehorse community. This will include identifying grant opportunities and targeting eligible organisations, a broad community communications campaign, and running training sessions on grant-writing for community members.

Engage with the newly established Multicultural Advisory Committee to provide culturally diverse perspectives to help shape and improve Council's services, policies and plans

- The newly established Multicultural Advisory Committee will assist Council to identify enablers to social and cultural inclusion and create solutions that reduce potential barriers and ways to celebrate our multicultural community.

Deliver targeted initiatives in priority locations and for priority population groups to strengthen local food systems and improve access to fresh, nutritious food 🍏

- Using the mapping and data gathering insights gained in its first year around priority locations and population groups, the North Eastern Local Food System Collective will tailor interventions to where it's needed most. This action builds on and scales the foundational work that has been developed and delivered in recent years through the North Eastern Public Health Unit's (NEPHU) inaugural Population Health Catchment Plan.

Partnering with NEPHU, Deakin University Student Union, Burwood Neighbourhood House and healthAbility.

Year 2 of 3.

Deliver local initiatives in support of the National Dementia Action Plan 2024-2034 to reduce the stigma, minimise risks and support carers 🍏

- The recent launch of the National Dementia Action Plan 2024-34 outlines 8 priorities to address dementia in Australia. Priority 2 (tackling stigma, improve awareness and promote inclusivity), Priority 3 (empower individual and communities to minimise risk) and Priority 6 (support carers of people living with dementia) are the most pertinent for local government.

Partnering with healthAbility, Eastern Health, Eastern Community Legal Centre and Dementia Australia.

Year 2 of 4.

Contribute to the planning and achievement of Together for Equality and Respect Strategy priority initiatives to implement collaborative projects relevant to the Whitehorse community 🍏

- Contribute to the planning and development of an evaluation framework for collective impact by the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) Together for Equality and Respect (TFER) Partnership over the period 2025-2029. Implement collaborative projects relevant to the Whitehorse community annually.

Partnering with FVREE, Women's Health East, AMES, Migrant Information Centre and Eastern Health.

Year 2 of 4.

Deliver initiatives to counter ageism and prevent elder abuse 🍏

- Working in partnership with community agencies to deliver a range of educational and awareness raising initiatives in line with World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and Ageism Awareness Day, and connecting people to appropriate services.

Partnering with Eastern Community Legal Centre, Seniors Rights Victoria COTA and Eastern Elder Abuse Network.

Year 2 of 4.

Pilot a Mental Health Champions program to increase the capacity of community members to identify and respond to others facing mental wellbeing challenge 🤝

- This multi-year project builds on the scoping and researching phase in Year 1 into a Pilot Stage in Year 2. A Mental Health Champions program in Whitehorse aims to increase the capacity of community members to identify and respond to others facing mental wellbeing challenges. Partnering with healthAbility, Women's Health East, Whitehorse Manningham Libraries, and Eastern Health.
Year 2 of 2.

Adopt and implement key priorities of the Whitehorse Community Safety Plan

- Council's Community Safety Plan is a strategic document outlining how Council and Victoria Police will address safety concerns. The Plan will be adopted early in 2026/27 and officers will commence implementation of key priorities **M**.

Work with Victoria Police to implement mobile community safety CCTV trailers to address safety concerns, reduce crime and create a safe environment

- Council has secured funding for 2 mobile CCTV trailers in December 2025, which will be used by police to support crime prevention and reduce criminal activity across Whitehorse. The trailers are expected to be operational by Victoria Police by March 2026 **M**.

Strategic Direction 2

Built



The spaces we create shape how we live, move, and interact. Our built environment reflects our values of accessibility, safety, and sustainability. Through thoughtful design, we craft public spaces that invite activity and connection while providing infrastructure that makes daily movement easier for everyone. We focus on doing the basics well, like fixing roads, filling potholes, and maintaining footpaths, while preserving important open spaces where everyone can feel safe.

We look beyond today, planning for growing populations and changing needs, creating versatile facilities that serve multiple purposes, are highly used and adapt over time. The character of our neighbourhoods, the functionality of our shared spaces, and the resilience of our infrastructure all contribute to a city that works for its people now and into the future.

Integrated Council Plan Actions 2026/27:

Continue upgrades of pedestrian and cycling paths across the municipality to encourage active transport uptake by the Community

- Design and implement pedestrian and cycling path improvements including Nelson Road Safety Improvements, Gawler Chain Pedestrian Crossing Improvements and shared path (cycling and pedestrian) connections from the Box Hill to Ringwood Shared Use Path and Whitehorse Road **M1**.

Establish a Community Outreach Program to maximise off-peak access to Aqualink facilities, improve equity of participation, and enhance community activation across the municipality

- Aqualink facilities continue to experience strong participation, with peak periods operating at or near capacity due to sustained membership growth and record attendance. As is the norm for large aquatic and leisure centres, utilisation patterns vary across the day and week, resulting in surplus capacity during off-peak times.

Pursue the purchase of new open space in line with the Whitehorse Open Space Strategy

- The Open Space Strategy 2025 proposes to create new open spaces in locations where there are either significant gaps in the existing open space network, or where there is forecast to be moderate to significant change. The expansion to existing open spaces will address existing gaps in the open space network by establishing additional entry points into them, will improve permeability from the surrounding street network and broaden out their walking catchments, making them accessible to more people **M1**.

Continue development of Council's Housing Strategy to ensure currency and alignment with the Plan for Victoria

- Continue the review of the 2014 Whitehorse Housing Strategy to ensure currency and alignment with the Plan for Victoria, and implementation of housing targets by local government. Year 2 will continue the development prior to adoption in year 3.

Continue to advocate for community needs on the implementation of the Suburban Rail Loop precinct structure planning and State Government activity centres program processes to ensure that the future needs of our community are considered

- Council needs to ensure that the future needs of our community are considered and advocated for during the implementation of Suburban Rail Loop Structure Planning process **MI**.

Deliver Council's stormwater management program

- The existing gully within a section of Bellbird Dell bushland reserve has become dry and eroded. The project includes redirecting stormwater, adding moisture to soils and rehabilitating the vegetation in the area to encourage vegetation growth and regenerate the natural bushland.

Implement streetscape improvements across the municipality to provide a desirable and well maintained City

- Implement streetscape improvements as determined in the 2026/27 capital works program.

Graffiti Service Initiative

- Introduce a dedicated graffiti removal role to support a strategic, programmed approach to maintaining high-exposure locations. This initiative reduces reliance on community reports, improves response times, and reinforces a strong standard of urban presentation.

Strategic Direction 3

Economy



A thriving economy creates opportunity, fosters innovation, and builds prosperity. Local businesses and industry form the backbone of our economic landscape: they create jobs, provide essential services, and give our area its unique character. We understand that economic health requires both stability and adaptability, supporting established businesses while nurturing new ventures and encouraging investments.

Through education, employment pathways, and strategic investment, we contribute to an economy that's resilient to change and accessible to everyone. When we strengthen our local economy, we create a community where people can live, work, study, volunteer and fulfil their aspirations close to home. This is how we position ourselves to thrive in tomorrow's economy.

Integrated Council Plan Actions 2026/27:

Enable new, emerging and established Trader Associations to thrive through a Business Precinct Program

- Establish a Business Precinct Grant Program to support emerging and newly-established groups to incorporate and enable eligible associations to deliver activities that enhance precinct vibrancy **MI**.

Implement priority streetscape improvements at Vermont South and Mont Albert Village to support clean, safe and welcoming shopping strips

- Following the development of a streetscape prioritisation assessment matrix developed in 2025/26, Council will identify and implement priority improvement projects to upgrade our busy shopping precincts. Construction of the streetscape upgrade at Mont Albert Village to be completed in the 2026/27 financial year.

Enhance the visitor experience and encourage greater use of local accommodation

- Proactively identify and progress initiatives that enhance the visitor experience, encourage greater use of local accommodation and contribute to the overall visitor economy.

Partner with Business and Trader Associations and key stakeholders to deliver training which supports navigating disruption/change

- Run trader engagement initiatives to support change management and help businesses navigate disruption, including holding regular stakeholder meetings to respond to impacts associated with the Suburban Rail Loop and identify and implement relevant support.

Work with the State Government to monitor and provide strong support for businesses, employees and customers displaced and impacted by Suburban Rail Loop

- Working in partnership with key organisations, advocate to the State Government to support businesses impacted during the Suburban Rail Loop construction period. In addition, develop placemaking opportunities aimed at boosting the visitor economy and increasing foot-traffic in disrupted areas **M**.

Increase awareness of Councils apprenticeship and traineeship program

- Council is investing in the future workforce by establishing an apprenticeship and traineeship program. This initiative aims to provide a structured, paid employment pathways across a range of Council departments. The program will offer hands on experience, nationally recognised training, and professional development opportunities to help participants build skills, confidence, and long-term career prospects while also supporting a more diverse and future ready Council workforce **M**.

Collaborate with Deakin University to encourage talent pathways and graduates for mutual benefit

- Council will continue collaborating with Deakin University to expand opportunities at Whitehorse for students and graduates **M**.

Provision of public library services that support equitable and inclusive access to and use of information and knowledge systems, and community spaces

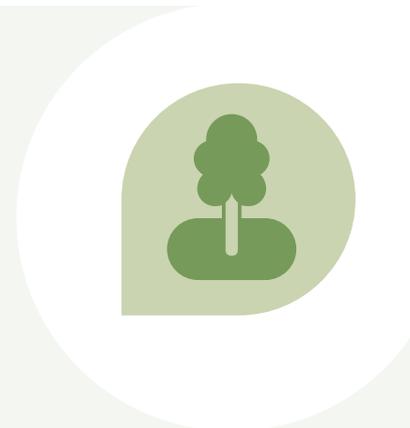
- In 2026/27, we will continue to deliver programs that foster connection, learning, and wellbeing across our community. We strengthen our practices to ensure welcoming and secure spaces for everyone, including a review of child safety practices.

Through Council's Business Permit Support service, proactively lead process improvements that streamline workflows and deliver a clear, accessible, and positive customer experience in navigating the building permit application processes

- This project is a collaboration with Macedon Ranges Shire Council with support from the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions. The project examines the current building permit process from a business perspective, identify barriers and inefficiencies, and develop clear recommendations to improve the overall experience. The project will outline practical improvements within Councils responsibilities and operations. Where recommendations require changes beyond Council control, the project will provide a basis for joint advocacy to State Government to support broader systems improvements.

Strategic Direction 4

Natural



Our natural spaces provide more than beauty. They sustain life, clean our air, cool our streets, and nourish our wellbeing. We recognise that healthy ecosystems and biodiversity are essential partners in creating a liveable city, which becomes increasingly important with a growing population.

Trees, waterways, parks, and wildlife corridors form a green network that supports both nature and people. We face environmental challenges that require both immediate action and long-term planning. By protecting and enhancing our natural environment, we create a more climate resilient, sustainable city where both community and nature can flourish together for generations to come.

Integrated Council Plan Actions 2026/27:

Gardiners Creek Trail biodiversity expansion through Council and community plantings

- Council is currently completing a corridor plan for the area in line with the Urban Forest Strategy. This plan will direct biodiversity priorities including planting opportunities that will increase habitat and attract specific local fauna. Planting will be undertaken by Council and in conjunction with community groups where possible including Kooyong Koot Alliance, Friends of Gardiners Creek, and Urban Guerillas .

Commence development of the Climate Response Plan 2027-2030

- Commence development of the Climate Response Plan 2027-2030 with a focus for 2026/27 including phase 1 of engagement and consultation.

Establish a Climate and Health Working Group with health and environmental sectors to leverage our community strengths in achieving improved health outcomes and reduced climate impacts

- Through the Climate & Health Working Group under the Health & Wellbeing Steering Committee, gather insights into community needs related to climate and health; and prioritise and scope potential community projects through external partnerships.
Year 1 of 3.

Implement cost effective actions to reduce Corporate Emissions

- Corporate emissions reduction is a key activity in aspiring for net zero corporate emissions. This will be achieved by implementing actions to replace gas appliances with lower emission alternatives and revising forward works programs to embed lower emission outcomes.

Provide HomeCycle program for the collection and repurposing of unwanted household items

- HomeCycle is a free service for residents for easy access home pick-up to donate second-hand furniture and other household items in good condition for reuse. The program partners with Eastern Emergency Relief Network and other local providers to re-distribute reusable items as emergency aid to local families or individuals requiring basic living support in the community **MI**.

Strategic Direction 5

Governance



Good governance is the foundation that supports everything we do as a Council. It means making decisions openly, managing resources wisely, and always being accountable to the community we serve. We understand that effective governance requires both listening and acting. Hearing diverse community voices and translating that feedback into meaningful outcomes.

Services that are accessible, adaptable, and deliver real value reflect our commitment to continuous improvement. Through responsible and sustainable financial management and strong advocacy, we secure the resources for today and the future, needed to fulfil community priorities. Good governance isn't just about following rules. It's about earning trust through actions that consistently put community interest first.

Integrated Council Plan Actions 2026/27:

Deliver technologies that improve process and the customer experience

- To improve technology and customer-centred processes through improved customer experience, more efficient services, and uphold strong cyber security **MI**.

Enhance customer experience on website platforms through use of AI tools

- Implement AI Web Search tools on customer-facing websites to enhance usability and ease access to information.

Review Council services to ensure that they meet the changing needs of the community and explore collaborative service delivery options, including with regional partners

- Review Council services to assess and recommend Council's responsiveness to evolving community needs, while actively exploring opportunities for shared services with regional partners **MI**.

Strengthen community's trust in decision-making with a focus on 'closing the loop' on engagement projects

- Create a series of social media content to cover key Council Meeting decisions to increase transparency and trust. Create an improved processes on 'closing the loop' on engagement projects including developing a community database for each project, ensuring key milestones are regularly communicated, and ensuring at regular intervals and at the end-of-year project, the community participants are notified of any upcoming decisions or outcomes. This will be done through targeted email newsletters and letterbox drops.

Implement Council's Strategic property framework to support Council in making strategic property site decisions to improve the utilisation and management of its property portfolio

- A program to support Council in making decisions to improve the utilisation and management of its property portfolio, with community consultation to inform decision making on strategic property sites **(M)**.

Continue to proactively advocate to all levels of government on Council's priorities to enhance community outcomes

- Develop a targeted advocacy program that engages key State and Federal Government representatives. Informed by community sentiment and forward project planning, the program will aim to ensure we represent the needs of our community and advocate for key local issues and community projects.

Monitoring and reporting

To facilitate transparency and accountability, the actions listed in this annual Action Plan will be reported back to the community on a quarterly basis in the Whitehorse Quarterly Performance Report (QPR).

Strategic Indicators will be reported on in the Quarter 2 QPR and in the Annual Report. While the Annual Report is prepared at the conclusion of each financial year and available online after formal Council adoption, each QPR is made available on Council’s website after being presented to Council for each quarter of the financial year.

You can find all of Council’s Quarterly Performance Reports here: whitehorse.vic.gov.au/performance-reports

