

FILE NO: XXX
4. A WELL RUN COUNCIL

ITEM NO:

COMMITTEES OF MANAGEMENT (S86) CONSULTATION - PROGRESS REPORT

RECOMMENDATION

That council

- Note the consultation activity and feedback received to date
- Endorse the proposal for further consultation with the committees to confirm a set of principles to guide the future stages of the Section 86 committee review.

1. Executive Summary

This report seeks council's support to extend the first phase of the Section 86 Future Directions consultation program through to 30 June 2019.

- The extension will enable further discussions with committee representatives with the goal of confirming a set of principles to guide the next phase of the review.

Council released the Section 86 Future Directions Discussion Paper to the community and committees in March for a two-month feedback period that will conclude 31 May.

- The discussion paper described 13 principles that are broad enough to enable fit for purpose future management models – it does not provide a one size fits all model for management committees.
- Council has received limited feedback on the primary question of whether the principles as described in the discussion paper provide a fair and reasonable starting point from which to develop future management models and commence discussions with individual committees.

Confirming an accepted set of principles is a critical first stage that will:

- ensure the review of so many committees with such diverse responsibilities and potential outcomes is consistent, fair and reasonable from the outset, and
- provides the framework for developing a range of future management options for consideration by committees.

The proposed extension and engagement options described in the report are a prudent step in further informing and understanding existing committee views and is consistent with our goal to have a shared understanding of how council and the 35 individual committees can move forward under the changes proposed for the Local Government Act.

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2. Background and Options

Committees of Management (Section 86)

Across the shire, local communities have and continue to enjoy facilities that are above and beyond council's financial capacity because of the significant contribution over many years by local volunteer committees – known as Section 86 committees.

More than 35 committees support the operation, maintenance and use of a diverse range of community assets including town halls, sports grounds and club rooms and natural environments such as the Yarrawonga Foreshore.

Future Directions Discussion Paper

Proposed changes to the Local Government Act will require changes to the existing management arrangements for committees. With so many committees and such a diverse range of responsibilities council has commenced discussions with all committees simultaneously via a discussion paper with the goal of developing management arrangements that can moderate the compliance and regulation demands on local committees while promoting the safe ongoing contributions from current and future volunteers.

This discussion paper seeks community, user group and committee feedback on whether the principles provide a fair and reasonable set of 'riding instructions' to guide the next phase of the review.

The discussion paper does not propose a *one size fits all* model for management committees and hence does not describe specific outcomes or transitional arrangements for individual committees or types of committees.

The principles are broad and their application provides scope to ensure future management models are fit for purpose and consistent with council's commitment to local communities and their capacity and appetite to manage local community assets.

The next phase will involve developing a range of future management options that reflect the principles. The management models will be shared with individual committees as part of a process of confirming a preferred future management model.

Project timelines

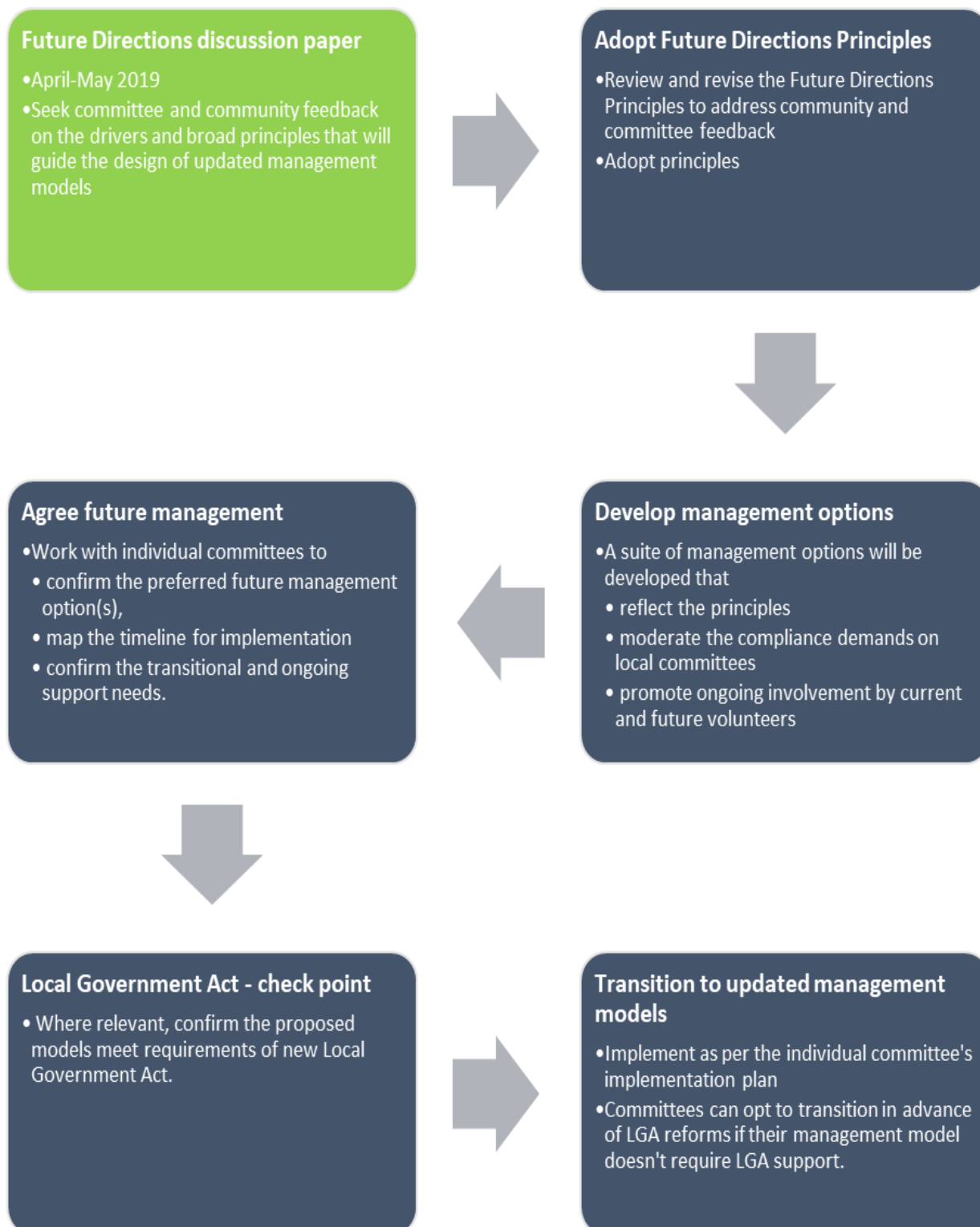
Council has not set a deadline for implementation. Our goal is to have an agreed approach ready for when the new Local Government Act is approved by the Victorian Parliament – but this does not prevent committees moving to a new management model earlier if they chose.

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We are taking this approach because Moira Shire has a large number of committees compared to other Victorian councils. This approach will provide time for considered and informed discussions and should avoid committees and council being rushed to implement reforms.



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Consultation progress

Following the March council meeting

The discussion paper was distributed to all council committees along with supporting explanatory [Questions and Answers](#). Committees were asked to consider the discussion paper and to identify further information and questions they would like council to answer or provide. Committees could also request a council officer attend their meeting to discuss the proposals in greater details. This process was proposed to occur across a two-month period to enable committee discussions to fit into the regular meeting cycle.

A dedicated section was created on council's [website](#) to enable committee, user group and community access to the discussion paper and to ensure timely and transparent publishing of answers to questions and requests.

Feedback received

Council has received four responses with one request for an officer to attend a forthcoming community meeting.

The responses are constructive with several identifying overlaps and duplication in compliance, administration and management that they would like to see addressed in any future management model.

Council has received little feedback on the primary question of whether the principles provide a fair and reasonable starting point from which to develop future management options.

- Anecdotal feedback indicates many committees would like clarification of what the Future Directions paper and in particular the principles mean for individual committees.
 - At this stage in the review process, (described above) this information does not exist because the future management models cannot be developed until the principles are confirmed.

Next Steps

Council's commitment to a set of principles is critical to providing the community, user groups and committees with assurance that the next phase of the review will be conducted fairly and consistently even though the outcomes for each committee may vary. The principles will also provide the framework for developing a suite of management models to suit the future role and needs of existing committees.

To maximize committee participation, during June council will invite committee representatives to participate in further consultation activities including round table discussions with the goal of

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confirming a set of principles that will be presented to council for consideration and potential adoption at the June Council meeting.

3. Financial Implications

The principles outlined in the discussion paper emphasise the importance of maintaining existing funding arrangements during the review and subsequent transition process, with scope to address funding needs where anomalies exist.

4. Risk Management

The review of committees recognizes and seeks to provide assurance to current and prospective committee members that council remains committed to supporting their safe, ongoing involvement.

5. Conflict of Interest Considerations

There are no officer conflicts of interest associated with the preparation of this report.

6. Conclusion

The initial two months of consultation have yielded limited feedback on the primary questions posed in the discussion paper. A set of agreed principles is important to ensuring the review proceeds in a consistent, reasonable and fair manner and to provide the framework for council to develop future management models that could meet the future needs of our local communities. It is recommended council extend the current consultation phase to enable further discussions with committee representatives.

Attachments

Nil