

SERVICE REVIEW OUTCOMES – 2004/05

PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

DETAILS OF SERVICE

Planning and Sustainability a service unit within the City Development Directorate.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Planning & Sustainability Department service Team consists of 17.6 Equivalent Full Time staff and is responsible for the following services and strategic directions:

Statutory Planning

- Administering the Maroonah Planning Scheme
- Development assessment review and approval (or refusal)
- Administration of canopy tree planning provision
- Assessment of canopy tree removal applications
- Subdivision of land and buildings
- Enforcement of planning scheme and permit requirements
- Comment and advice on liquor licence and gaming matters
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Strategic Planning & Sustainability

- Strategic planning for land use, infrastructure and environmental issues.
- Cities for Climate Protection – ICLEI campaign
- Development and land use policy formulation
- Transport advocacy and strategy
- Environmental advocacy, education and policy
- Water conservation
- Heritage policy and issues
- Developing and enhancing the Maroonah Planning Scheme

SERVICE STANDARDS

Note: The following is a summary of the activity and outcomes of the Best Value Service Review

Best Value Principle	Key Performance Indicator	Performance Result 2004-05	Target 2005-06	Target 2006-07
Cost Standard	Operate within Annual Financial Administration Budget 2004-05 Budget \$403,439 (net)	The performance to budget saw the unit come in within budget by 17 % *	Performance to budget	Performance to budget
Quality standard	Town Planning Policy and Approval rating #	60 Indexed Mean	60 Indexed Mean	60 Indexed Mean

* A larger than anticipated public open space contribution and staff vacancies contributed to the 17% reduction in forecast expenditure for the financial year.

Department for Victorian Communities, Annual Community Satisfaction Survey

Consideration of Best Value Factors in setting Cost and Quality standards

Factors

Consideration Comments

Best on offer 208C(a)

The sector comparison indicator is the Department for Victorian Communities, Annual Community Satisfaction Survey, Town Planning Policy and Approval rating. This is a comparative measure of community satisfaction against the mean result of like local government councils.

The survey compares Maroondah's results with 15 inner Councils. In this grouping the Town Planning Policy and Approval scored above the group average with a average performance score of 3.0. This is in the context of a median score of 2.8, within a range of 2.41 to 3.12. This result demonstrates a relatively high level of community satisfaction for the service area, particularly when measured against other Councils in the region.

Value for money 208C(b)

The Planning & Sustainability unit operated at a net cost to Council in 2004/05 of \$403,439.

This represents excellent value for money when assessed against the broad range of services provided by the unit, administration of the Maroondah Planning Scheme, strategic/environmental policy development, and the comparison against "private" sector costs of town planning and policy services.

Consideration of Best Value Factors in setting Cost and Quality standards

Factors

Community expectation and values 208C(c)

Consideration Comments

The broader community has high expectations for the protection and maintenance of the liveability of their communities and neighbourhoods, whilst providing opportunities for appropriate development to occur.

The primary role of the unit is to ensure that the community expectations are met in a manner consistent with the broad objectives of Council for the as set out in the Council Plan 2004 -08:

Natural Environment – Maroondah will advocate for a provide a sustainable environment that enriches the community’s quality of life by conserving and actively managing our natural environment though innovative approaches and education.”

Urban Design and Development – Maroondah will foster the development of distinct urban forms with a variety of land uses, visual designs and housing types which offer and attractive environment, value the municipality’s diverse heritage and assist in creating the community’s sense of place.

Transport – Maroondah will facilitate the safe, effective and efficient movement of people and goods using all modes of transport as appropriate, whilst achieving a balance between the costs and benefits of travel in a manner which addresses the community’s social, environmental and economic values.

The mechanisms for achieving these goals for the Planning and Sustainability unit are through the administration of the Maroondah Planning Scheme and the development and implementation of strategic policy on environmental, urban design and transport issues. This provides Council and the unit with the ability to influence, guide and regulate development in a manner consistent with the objectives of Maroondah 2025, the Council Plan and the Maroondah Planning Scheme. All of which have been development with extensive community input.

In addition to the administration of existing planning controls and policy, the Strategic Planning and Sustainability team are engaged in a range of policy development programs that work closely with community representatives and groups.

This two level engagement with the community allows the planning and policy framework within Maroondah, and the operations of the unit, to be closely aligned with community expectations and values.

Consideration of Best Value Factors in setting Cost and Quality standards cont.

Factors

Consideration Comments

Affordability and Accessibility 208C(d)

The majority of the functions of the Planning and Sustainability unit are undertaken the auspices of the Planning and Environment Act, 1987 and the Subdivision Act, 1988. In the administration of these Acts and the Maroondah Planning Scheme there are a range of fees and charges set out. These fees and charges are set by State government regulation and apply across Victoria.

In addition to the statutory fees, the unit charges a fee for service for:

- advertising of planning applications. (Maroondah average \$95) (local government range \$60 to \$165).
- Planning information request - \$30 (local government range \$30 to \$55)
- Extension of time for planning permit - \$90 (local government range \$70 to \$365)

The fee structure places Maroondah at the lower end of the scale for non-statutory fees. This represents an affordable provision of service to the community and an equitable partial cost recovery.

Access to information about the planning system in Maroondah can be obtained through the Maroondah website, the DSE website and in “hard copy” on particular topics through the Council customer service outlets and the main office at Ringwood.

In addition to the provision of statutory information, the unit provides officer contact at the Ringwood office to discuss planning and policy matters, planing applications and consultation meetings for planning applications. In the development of strategic policy community workshops and information sessions are an integral component of the development of strategic policy directions.

Local Employment 208C(e)

Maroondah’s Best Value Supporting Local Suppliers policy is a demonstration by Council of its commitment to supporting and promoting local businesses as a means of sponsoring local employment opportunities. A Council wide KPI relating to the policy is the target of 25% of purchasing activity to be directed to local suppliers of goods and services. The initiative also extends to the local advertisement of vacant positions and appropriate tenders.

Best Value Principle

Actions Taken

Responsive to Community Needs

The Planning & Sustainability unit is directly involved with the community through the administration of the Maroondah Planning Scheme. The planning process is an open process that in 90% of applications provides for community input.

Community consultation by the unit occurs through a range of means:

- Advertising of planning applications
- Community consultation meetings on planning applications,
- Maroondah Environmental Consultative Committee
- Community consultation of strategic policy development
- The establishment of community working groups/steering committees for major policy development and projects

In addition to the ongoing community involvement the unit undertook a targeted survey of the most recent applicants for planning permits. The objective of the survey was to establish the level of customer satisfaction with the statutory planning service.

The results of the survey showed that 65% of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they were provided by the Statutory planning unit. This figure is consistent with the relatively high level attained in the DVC survey on Town planning approval and policy.

Accessible

Access to the service and related information is also achieved between normal business hours, Monday to Friday from 8.30 am to 5.00 pm via telephone on 1300 882 233, via email: maroondah@maroondah.com.au or in person at one of Council's three Customer Service outlets. Council information is available 24 hours, seven days a week from Council's Web site, <http://www.maroondah.vic.gov.au>

Continuous Improvement

During the period of the best value review of the service the following service improvements were identified and implemented:

- A restructure of the service areas resulted in Strategic Planning and Sustainability and Statutory Planning becoming one service unit. This provides for a closer alignment of the policy development function and the administration/development assessment functions of Council.
- A change to the Significant Landscape overlay control to better align the planning control with community expectations.
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Best Value Principle

Actions Taken

Continuous Improvement cont.

- The introduction of neighbourhood character statements and areas in the Maroondah planning scheme to recognise the important character elements of Maroondah.
- Introduction of height limits on neighbourhood centres to protect residential amenity.
- Development of a Water Sensitive Urban Design program for Maroondah
- Development of the Maroondah Bicycle Strategy
- The commencement of the Maroondah Urban Design Framework to protect and enhance the urban areas of Maroondah

Consultation

While significant community consultation took place during the establishment of the 'Maroondah 2025 strategy' and annual Council Plan which providing part of the strategic focus for the service area's activities, the service unit is also an active participant in partnership with the broader community through:

- Ongoing public notification of planning and development applications,
- Community consultation meetings for development applications.
- Maroondah Environmental Consultative Committee
- Policy development including:
 - Croydon Town Centre Structure Plan
 - Maroondah Urban Design Framework
- Officer attendance and presentations at community group meetings eg: Monastery Ridge Group Inc., Maroondah Bushlinks, and Croydon Conservation Society.

Reporting

A copy Maroondah's Best Value Annual Community Report of key findings and key performance target and results will be available to the community via the following methods and access points;

- Council's community web page for public access,
- At each of our three Customer Service Centres for public viewing,
- At each of Council's Public Libraries for public viewing.

Performance reporting against key service indicators is undertaken on a monthly basis and the results documented in Council's monthly performance report. This report is tabled before Council on a quarterly basis and is a publicly available document. Each service area has an annual business plan, which is strategically aligned with Maroondah's Council Plan, and our overarching strategic community plan Maroondah 2025. Annual performance and key achievements of the strategies in these plans is reported in Council's Annual Report.