

**9.2 LATE REPORT: COMMUNITY BUDGET SUBMISSIONS 2018/19**

TRIM Ref: D18/28792  
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Attachments: Nil

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council ENDORSES the six key priorities below, arising from the *Imagine Vincent* community engagement campaign, as the basis for inviting Community Budget Submissions for 2018/19:

- **Enhanced Environment** – The natural environment contributes greatly to our inner-city community. We want to protect and enhance it, making best use of our natural resources for the benefit of current and future generations.
- **Accessible City** – We want to be a leader in making it safe, easy, environmentally-friendly and enjoyable to get around Vincent.
- **Connected Community** – We are a diverse, welcoming and engaged community. We want to celebrate what makes us unique and connect with those around us to enhance our quality of life.
- **Thriving Places** – Our vibrant places and spaces are integral to our identity, economy and appeal. We want to create, enhance and promote great places and spaces for everyone to enjoy.
- **Sensitive Design** – Design that ‘fits in’ to our neighbourhoods is important to us. We want to see unique, high quality developments that respect our character and identity and respond to specific local circumstances.
- **Innovative & Accountable** – The City of Vincent has a significant role to play in supporting our community to realise its vision. To achieve this, we will be an innovative, honest, engaged and responsible organisation that manages resources well, communicates effectively and takes our stewardship role seriously.

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To consider endorsing the six key priorities which arose from the *Imagine Vincent* Strategic Community Plan (SCP) engagement campaign conducted in the latter half of 2017 as the basis for inviting community budget submissions for 2018/19.

**BACKGROUND:**

Council previously invited community budget submissions to inform the early development of the 2016/17 and 2017/18 annual budgets. This approach was taken as an alternative to the City's past practice of advertising an already completed draft budget at the end of the budget preparation process, which typically yielded very little community feedback.

Both previous community budget submission processes were framed around annual priorities adopted by Council as an interim measure, pending the definition of clearer community priorities through the review of the City's current of the Strategic Community Plan 2013-2023. Further background on the origins of the community budget submission process is provided in reports presented to Council on 7 February 2017 (Item 9.5.1) and 19 April 2016 (Item 5.1).

The 2016/17 community budget submission process was framed around 10 priority areas adopted by Council at the time, while the 2017/18 submission process was framed around eight strategic priorities

Council last invited community budget submissions (for the 2017/18 budget) at its meeting on 7 March 2017 (Item 9.5.3). In response, the City received a total of 55 individual community budget submissions raising 64

proposals for consideration. This represented an improved response on the same exercise undertaken in 2016/17, which yielded 50 submissions raising 60 proposals.

When considering the 2017/18 community budget submissions at its meeting on 25 July 2017 (Item 13.2) Council:

- Supported (fully or partly) approximately 45% of all proposals for implementation in 2017/18 with an estimated value of \$400,000;
- Supported (fully or partly) or deferred consideration of more than 28% of proposals for financial years beyond 2017/18; and
- Did not support approximately 27% of proposals.

This represented a significant Council investment of more than \$10 on average for every person in the City of Vincent, towards delivering on community budget submissions in 2017/18 alone.

#### **DETAILS:**

The *Imagine Vincent* SCP engagement campaign was conducted in the latter half of 2017 and gathered vital community feedback to inform preparation of the City's new SCP. Six very clear community priorities have emerged from the feedback received through *Imagine Vincent*, as follows:

- Enhanced Environment – The natural environment contributes greatly to our inner-city community. We want to protect and enhance it, making best use of our natural resources for the benefit of current and future generations.
- Accessible City – We want to be a leader in making it safe, easy, environmentally-friendly and enjoyable to get around Vincent.
- Connected Community – We are a diverse, welcoming and engaged community. We want to celebrate what makes us unique and connect with those around us to enhance our quality of life.
- Thriving Places – Our vibrant places and spaces are integral to our identity, economy and appeal. We want to create, enhance and promote great places and spaces for everyone to enjoy.
- Sensitive Design – Design that 'fits in' to our neighbourhoods is important to us. We want to see unique, high quality developments that respect our character and identity and respond to specific local circumstances.
- Innovative & Accountable – The City of Vincent has a significant role to play in supporting our community to realise its vision. To achieve this, we will be an innovative, honest, engaged and responsible organisation that manages resources well, communicates effectively and takes our stewardship role seriously.

The SCP is in its final drafting stages and due to be presented to Council in April 2018 for the purpose of public advertising. This will enable the new SCP to be adopted and in place early in the new financial year.

It is intended that the abovementioned six community priorities form the basis for inviting community budget submissions in 2018/19. Whilst it is accepted that some of the words associated with these priorities might change as a result of Council's formal consideration of the draft SCP before or after public advertising, the nature and intent of the priorities has been directly derived from community feedback and is not expected to change materially.

#### **CONSULTATION/ADVERTISING:**

Community budget submissions will be invited during a three week period commencing in mid-March 2018 by way of:

- Promotion through the City's e-newsletter, website and social media channels;
- Publication in both local newspapers before and during the submission period; and
- Display of posters at the City's Administration & Civic Centre, Library & Local History Centre and Beatty Park Leisure Centre.

In order to lodge a submission, community members will need to summarise their proposal and explain how it would contribute to achieving one or more of the six key priorities derived from the *Imagine Vincent* community engagement campaign. In doing so, submitters will need to identify which single theme their proposal is most aligned to and which other themes it could incidentally benefit and why.

The submission process will be conducted entirely on-line via the City's Engagement HQ website, as used through *Imagine Vincent* and in other more recent engagement activities such as the Charles Veryard Reserve Dog Exercise Area Survey. City staff will be available to assist any community members in making a submission if they are unable to do so themselves via the website.

To streamline the evaluation process and standardise the volume and variability of information provided in submissions, it is proposed to apply the following word limits on the website lodgement page:

- Summary of the proposal, including its key elements and estimated funding impact – 300 words;
- Explanation of how the proposal would contribute to one of the six key themes from *Imagine Vincent* – 300 words;
- Explanation of how the proposal would contribute incidentally to other key themes (if) selected by the submitter – 150 words.

This approach will ensure greater parity between submitters with varying resources and will require submitters to clearly articulate their proposal and its benefits, thus enabling swifter and simpler consideration and reporting of submissions back to Council.

#### **LEGAL/POLICY:**

Nil.

#### **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS:**

**Low:** The invitation for community budget submissions provides all members of the Vincent community with a meaningful opportunity to contribute to development of the City's current and future annual budgets in order to assist with the achievement of Council's adopted Strategic Priorities for the year ahead.

It is proposed that the community budget submission process could be incorporated into the annual review of the City's Corporate Business Plan or the biennial review of the Strategic Community Plan, which is scheduled for adoption in mid-2018.

#### **STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:**

This is in keeping with the City's Strategic Plan 2013-2023:

*"4.1 Provide good strategic decision-making, governance, leadership and professional management;"* and in particular;

*4.1.2 Manage the organisation in a responsible, efficient and accountable manner;"*

#### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:**

Nil.

#### **FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

The community budget submission process has proven to be a worthwhile and well-received input into the early development of the City's Annual Budget. New community budget submissions will, if supported, have a financial impact in 2018/19 or beyond. Meanwhile, community budget submissions from 2017/18 that were scheduled for implementation or consideration in 2018/19 will also need to be re-evaluated in the context of new submissions received.

#### **COMMENTS:**

It is recommended that Council endorses the six community priorities raised through the *Imagine Vincent* community engagement campaign as the basis for inviting community budget submissions as an early input

to the budget development process, in lieu of advertising a draft budget at the end of the budget development process.