

ANNUAL PLAN

2026/27

The best of country living

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

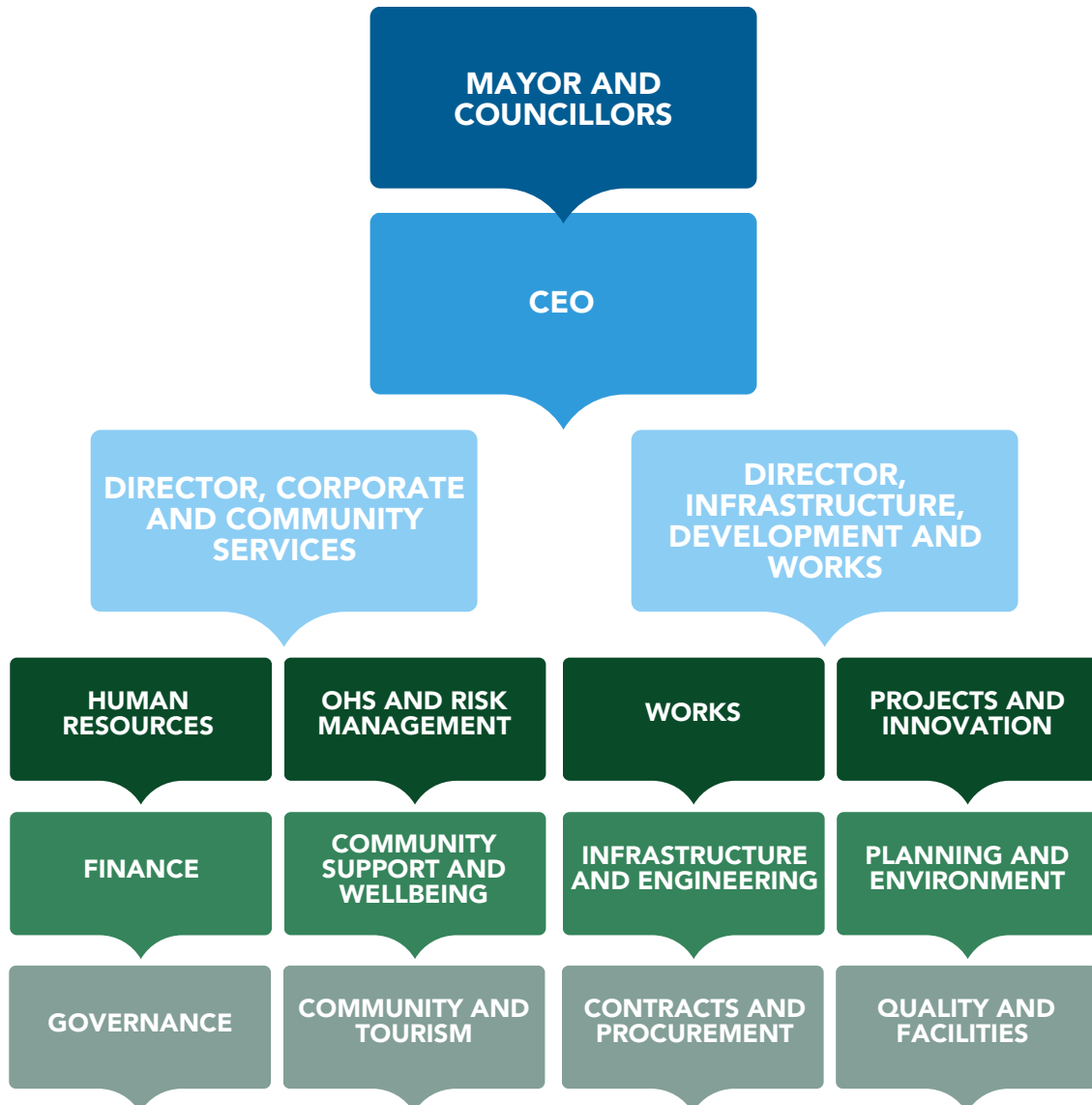
Organisational Chart West Wimmera Shire Council	3
Message from the Mayor and CEO	4
About the Annual Plan	5
Our Planning Framework	5
Our Shire Services	6
Our Values & Community Vision	8
Council Goals	9
Strategies	10
Budget Information	11
Key Focus Areas 2026-27.....	12

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

West Wimmera Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, and pays respects to their elders, past, present, and emerging.

ORGANISATIONAL CHART WEST WIMMERA SHIRE COUNCIL

Council is the governing body that appoints a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO has responsibility for the day-to-day management of operations in accordance with the strategic directions of the Council Plan. Two general managers/directors and the CEO form the senior management group.



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR AND CEO

It is with great pride that we present the 2026-27 Annual Plan, a roadmap for the year ahead that reflects our ongoing commitment to the sustainability, liveability and long-term prosperity of West Wimmera Shire.

Over the past year, Council has continued to deliver key infrastructure and community-focused projects across the region. Through careful and responsible financial management, we have taken a conservative approach to our budget, ensuring long-term sustainability while also creating capacity to reinvest in priority areas for our community.

Importantly, this approach has enabled Council to reinstate a number of road and footpath projects that were deferred in the previous year. Maintaining and improving our local road network and pedestrian connections remains a core focus, supporting safety, accessibility and connectivity across the shire.

Significant progress has been made across a number of key projects. The final stage of the reconstruction and widening of Mooree Road are due to be completed by June 2026. The redevelopment of the football change rooms at Edenhope Recreation Reserve is expected to be completed by July 2026, with the Goroke Oval upgrade also due for completion by May 2026. Major upgrades at the Kaniva Bowling Club are anticipated to commence by mid-2026, and we have recently completed the Serviceton Silo Art project and the new dog park in Kaniva, further enhancing community spaces and visitor appeal.

Council has also undertaken significant strategic planning to guide the future of key assets, including the Kaniva Recreation Reserve and the Goroke Pool. In addition, we are currently awaiting funding outcomes for a number of important infrastructure projects, including upgrades at the Kaniva Pool, Goroke and Edenhope Kindergartens, Apsley Hall, Lake Wallace Jetty Handrail, Harrow Recreation Reserve and Kaniva Hall.



Looking ahead, Council will continue to prioritise investment in essential infrastructure. We will be seeking funding to expand and improve footpaths across Edenhope, Goroke and Kaniva. Major road projects will continue, including the reconstruction and widening of Kadnook–Connewirricoo Road and Brooks Road, along with pedestrian crossing upgrades in the Kaniva main street. These works are in addition to the reinstatement of Council's shoulder resheeting, road resheeting and reseal programs, which are critical to maintaining our extensive road network.

Council remains committed to supporting population growth and economic development. This includes progressing housing initiatives, advocating for improved services, and working in partnership with government and industry to create opportunities that attract and retain people in our region.

We thank our Councillors, staff and community members for their continued dedication and collaboration. Your contributions help ensure West Wimmera remains a strong, welcoming and forward-looking place to live. We invite you to read this Annual Plan and share your feedback as we work together toward the year ahead.

Mayor Tim Meyer and CEO David Bezuidenhout

ABOUT THE ANNUAL PLAN

The Annual Plan sets out the activities that Council will undertake during the year to deliver the outcomes of the Council Plan 2025-2029. The annual plan works in conjunction with the Annual Report and the Budget for financial year 2026-27.

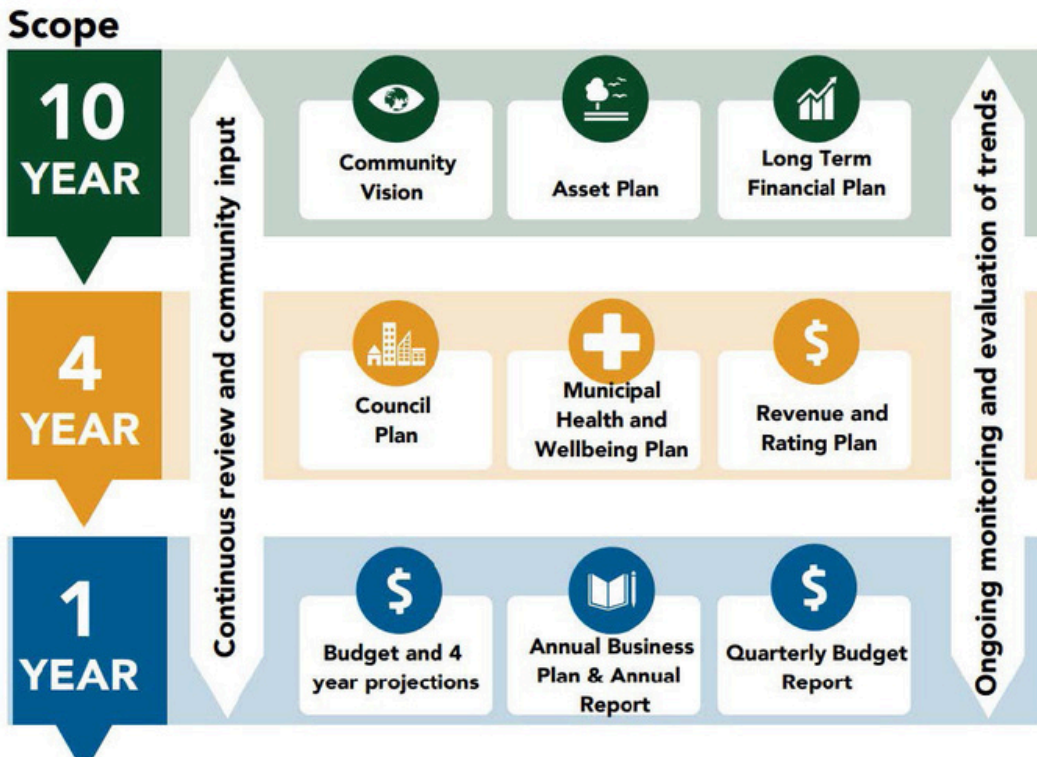
Together, the following integrated documents form the local government’s system of financial management:

- Council Plan 2025-29 incorporating community vision
- Long-term financial plan and yearly budget
- Annual Report and Annual Plan

The Chief Executive Officer presents a written quarterly progress report to Council outlining progress towards implementing the Annual Plan. Council may amend the Annual Plan during the year by resolution.

OUR PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Our planning framework comprises the key plans that guide our work and decision-making and connects to long-term community needs and aspirations. The Council Plan is aligned with the 2041 Community Vision. The Annual Plan sits within our one-year scope and is an annual document Council develops to ensure that we are moving towards our goals.



Our core services

Council delivers a wide range of business-as-usual services that keep our shire running, meet statutory requirements, and support community wellbeing. These are our ongoing responsibilities and differ from the special initiatives listed in this plan.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING



Engineering

- Strategic and technical asset management
- Civil design and engineering support
- Road, bridge and drainage planning
- Delivery of the capital works program
- Maintenance of Council buildings, halls, and public facilities

Operations

- Maintenance of 2,759 km of local roads, bridges, footpaths and drainage
- Parks, gardens, recreation reserves, and public amenities upkeep
- Fleet and plant management

Waste management

- Operation for transfer stations across the shire
- Management of roadside collection service

Quality and facilities

- Management of Councils DEECA Committee of Management requirements
- Cleaning of Council buildings
- Quality plans for service standards
- Management of leases and hire of Council facilities

Contract and procurement

- Purchasing, contracts and tenders
- Supplier compliance and probity management

Projects and innovations

- Delivery of capital works program
- Project management and design coordination
- Innovation in service delivery and infrastructure renewal
- Strategic development projects

Planning and development

- Statutory planning and building permits
- Local laws administration
- Environmental health and compliance (food safety, septic, housing health)

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES



Human resources

- Workforce planning, recruitment, and training
- Payroll, employee relations, and staff wellbeing
- Organisational culture development



Occupational health and safety

- Workplace safety management
- Risk assessments and incident response
- Compliance with WorkSafe and legislative standards



Community support services

- Early years services (childcare, kindergarten, playgroups)
- Youth engagement and inclusion programs



Community development and tourism

- Community and business grants and event support
- Tourism marketing, visitor information and regional partnerships
- Emergency management coordination and recovery



Finance and transactions

- Financial planning, budgets and audits
- Rates and property valuation
- Treasury, accounting and reporting



Governance and compliance

- Council meetings, decision-making and records management
- Policy, risk and audit oversight



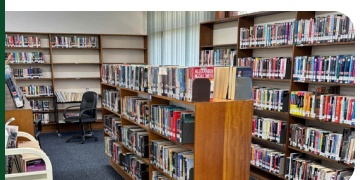
Communications

- Website Management
- Media Releases
- Newsletters
- Social Media Management
- Community engagement



Customer service

- Customer service (phone and in person)
- VicRoads agency
- Centrelink agency
- Hosting court



Library

- Open access library services across Edenhope, Kaniva, Goroke and Harrow

OUR VALUES

Innovative

We will proactively respond to change, are optimistic about our future and pursue continuous improvement in everything we do

Accountable

We will be responsible, take ownership of our actions and are committed to good governance, excellence, transparency, achievement of goals and advocating for our community.

United

We will do everything within our ability to encourage and form trusting relationships, to work together as one team to achieve our goals and advocate for "One West Wimmera".

Collaborative

We will actively and openly consult with you and work constructively with community organisations, agencies, the business community and other levels of government to our community's benefit

COMMUNITY VISION

In 2041 West Wimmera is a great place to live, work and play. We are growing and we are known for our natural environment, resilience and sense of community. We are proud of our heritage and are building new economic capacity based on innovation and tourism, which is creating local employment. Our towns are vibrant and welcoming, offering the services and facilities that meet the needs of our community and visitors. We are a confident community and will empower everyone to be part of our future.



Photo: Serviceton Silo Art & Serviceton Community

OUR GOALS

The Council Plan 2025-29 includes four high-level goals.



Each of these goals includes several strategies and more specific initiatives to be implemented over the next four years:



OUR STRATEGIES

1 Healthy, Inviting & Connected Community

- 1.1 Support the provision of early years, education and childcare services within the shire
- 1.2 Identify opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and community safety
- 1.3 Create recreation, sport and active lifestyle opportunities for the community
- 1.4 Provide community development opportunities and volunteer support
- 1.5 Support youth engagement
- 1.6 Maintain and enhance community infrastructure and streetscapes

2 Diverse & Growing Economy

- 2.1 Maintain and renew assets and infrastructure
- 2.2 Increase housing availability and improve township amenity
- 2.3 Implement planning changes and regulatory reform
- 2.4 Invest in tourism and arts and cultural development
- 2.5 Encourage economic development and industry diversification

3 Resilient & Sustainable Environment

- 3.1 Manage outcomes from flood management and planning initiatives
- 3.2 Deliver waste and resource management solutions
- 3.3 Facilitate pest, weed and wildlife management solutions
- 3.4 Share education and information
- 3.5 Facilitate emergency management and community preparedness

4 Operational Excellence

- 4.1 Strengthen community consultation, engagement and trust, ensuring a diversity of perspectives across the shire
- 4.2 Provide a responsive service to the West Wimmera community
- 4.3 Explore opportunities to reduce red tape and support the community through challenging government processes
- 4.4 Secure funding and influence change through effective advocacy
- 4.5 Strive for long-term financial sustainability
- 4.6 Maintain the focus on continuous improvement
- 4.7 Ensure employee safety and manage risks effectively
- 4.8 Improve organisational efficiency

BUDGET INFORMATION

2021-25 Council Plan goals	FY26/27budget (\$'000)
Goal 1: HEALTHY, INVITING & CONNECTED COMMUNITY	\$20,674
Goal 2: DIVERSE & GROWING ECONOMY	\$1,305
Goal 3: RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT	\$2,439
Goal 4: OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE	\$5,559

KEY FOCUS AREAS 2026-27

* Major Initiatives in 2026-27 budget

GOAL 1: Healthy, Inviting & Connected Community

Council Plan Initiative	2026/27 Action	Action Type
1.1.1	Investigate opportunities with service providers to implement a childcare service in Goroke	Partner / Support
1.1.2	Investigate partnership opportunities with Parents Groups and Community to ensure the long-term sustainability of kindergarten services within the shire	Partner / Support
1.1.2	Planning & Delivery of increased Pre-Prep (4 year old) Hours from Feb 27 (16-20hrs)	Deliver
1.1.2	Deliver Bush Kinder Program in Kaniva	Deliver
1.1.2	Deliver Toy Library Pilot (pending funding)	Deliver
1.1.3	Delivery of (subject to funding) Goroke Kinder Building Upgrades & Edenhope Kinder Playground Upgrades.	Deliver
1.1.4	Continue to deliver supported playgroups at Harrow and Goroke, and support other community playgroups as required.	Deliver/Partner / Support
1.2.1	Advocate for and support mental health and wellbeing providers through regular engagement with regional partners	Advocate
1.2.10	Advocate to health service providers to maintain service levels, support telehealth, and achieve the best possible outcomes for the community	Advocate
1.2.11	Advocate for GP access across the shire	Advocate
1.2.2	Identify partnership opportunities to address health and wellbeing issues associated with social isolation	Partner / Support
1.2.3	Identify partnership opportunities to reduce tobacco and vaping use across the shire	Partner / Support

GOAL 1: Healthy, Inviting & Connected Community (Continued)

Council Plan Initiative	2026/27 Action	Action Type
1.2.4	Identify partnership opportunities to reduce harm from alcohol and other drugs across the shire	Partner / Support
1.2.5	Explore partnership opportunities to increase cancer prevention screening at a local community level	Partner / Support
1.2.6	Support health and wellbeing partners delivering active ageing programs	Partner / Support
1.2.7	Incorporate healthy eating where possible in current Council run programs	Deliver
1.2.8	Support and/or deliver the 16 Days of Activism program in partnership with local organisations	Partner / Support
1.2.9	Provide support to organisations delivering programs to improve gender equity and reduce family violence within the shire	Partner / Support
1.3.1*	Delivery Kaniva Bowling Club Upgrade, Edenhope Changerooms Upgrade	Deliver
1.3.1	Progress delivery of Kaniva Tourism & Wellbeing Precinct Project (pending funding) , Harrow Scoreboards Project (pending funding), Lake Wallace Jetty Handrail (pending funding), Edenhope Early Years Yard Upgrade (pending funding), Goroce Kinder Building Upgrade (pending funding), Apsley Hall upgrade (pending funding), Kaniva Hall toilet upgrades(pending funding) & Edenhope Park Run Shelter (pending funding)	Deliver
1.3.1	Partner with Wimmera Sports Assembly to deliver the “Partners in Place” program (subject to funding)	Partner / Support
1.3.4	Seek funding to upgrade the Kaniva and Goroce swimming pools and amenities	Seek / Explore
1.3.5	Seek funding to plan and upgrade the Edenhope swimming pool and amenities	Seek / Explore
1.3.6*	Deliver Toilet Upgrade & Seek funding to progress the Edenhope Lions Park Development	Deliver/Seek
1.3.7	Delivery of the Serviceton Bowling Club Facility Upgrade (subject to funding)	Deliver

GOAL 1: Healthy, Inviting & Connected Community (Continued)

Council Plan Initiative	2026/27 Action	Action Type
1.4.2	Seek funding for Town Community Plans	Seek / Explore
1.4.3	Continue to deliver community grant program	Delivery
1.4.4	Continue to support community events through Council grant programs	Partner / Support
1.4.5	Continue to implement and promote our community & business grants	Deliver
1.4.6	Advocate for better community transport options within the shire (Kaniva - Horsham bus service, The Overland stopping at Kaniva)	Advocate
1.5.1	Continue to fund and partner with Western Bulldogs Community Foundation to support delivery of youth services programming within the shire	Partner / Support
1.5.1	Partner with Kaniva and Harrow Neighbourhood houses to deliver School Holiday Programs in Edenhope, Harrow, Kaniva and Goroke (pending funding)	Partner / Support
1.6.1	Advocate for traffic calming initiatives (and appropriate speed limits) within township main streets	Advocate
1.6.1	Advocate for Rail Crossing signals at Serviceton	Advocate
1.6.2	Advocate for continued TAC funding to implement the Safer Local Roads and Streets Program action plan	Advocate
1.6.3	Seek funding for Dergholm ablution block	Seek / Explore
1.6.4	Seek funding for the Edenhope, Apsley, Goroke and Harrow structure plans	Seek / Explore
1.6.5	Seek funding for Harrow, Apsley and Goroke streetscape planning	Seek / Explore
1.6.6	Seek funding to maintain Council Buildings and Infrastructure to support community need.	Seek / Explore
1.6.6	Ensure agreements in place for all Councils managed Assets and Land	Deliver
1.6.6	Maintain and facilitate access to Council facilities for community and commercial use	Deliver

GOAL 2: Diverse and Growing Economy

Council Plan Initiative	2026/27 Action	Action Type
2.1.1*	Deliver Council 2026–27 Annual Road Maintenance Program	Deliver
2.1.1*	Deliver Council 2026–27 Capital Road Works Program	Deliver
2.1.1	Develop of Council 2027–28 Capital Road Works Program	Deliver
2.1.2	Seek funding to implement streetscape plans for Kaniva and Edenhope – including Kaniva intersection improvements	Seek / Explore
2.1.3	Progress implementation of a schedule to clean signs and replace ageing signs across the shire	Deliver
2.2.1	Explore opportunities to support improved housing quality in West Wimmera townships, including renovations, to ensure homes are fit for purpose (ie Harrow housing opportunity)	Seek / Explore
2.2.2	Seek funding for West Wimmera key housing projects – e.g. Kaniva- Kelly Street housing development, Edenhope - Langford Street development	Seek / Explore
2.3.1	Implement actions from Business Friendly Councils Program	Deliver
2.3.2	Seek funding to incorporate the Kaniva Structure plans and associated actions in the West Wimmera Planning Scheme	Seek / Explore
2.4.1	Seek funding for signage review	Seek / Explore
2.4.2	Review West Wimmera Signage Strategy and update rules/guidelines based on community feedback	Deliver
2.4.3	Seek funding to scope and plan for the Harrow Discovery Centre upgrade	Seek / Explore
2.4.4	Advocate for a Kaniva stop for The Overland Train	Advocate
2.4.5	Subject to agreement with Vic Rail, seek funding to restore and activate Serviceton Railway Station	Seek / Explore
2.4.6	Explore free & freedom camping opportunities in the shire	Seek / Explore
2.5.2	Seek funding to increase activity in industrial areas in Kaniva and Edenhope	Seek / Explore
2.5.3	Progress implementation & advocacy of Digital Connectivity Plan	Deliver

GOAL 3: Resilient & Sustainable Environment

Council Plan Initiative	2026/27 Action	Action Type
3.1.1	Complete Action Plan for Flood Studies	Deliver
3.1.2*	Complete West Wimmera Planning Scheme amendments to incorporate Harrow and Chetwynd flood studies.	Deliver
3.2.1	Seek funding to develop and implement the West Wimmera Waste Management Strategy	Seek / Explore
3.3.1	Review and implement Corella Management Plan	Deliver
3.3.2	Maintain Website and social media with updates on kangaroo and deer management options	Partner / Support
3.3.3*	Undertake roadside pest and weed control, subject to annual funding	Deliver
3.3.5	Seek additional funding and partner with other organisations to control pests and weeds across the shire	Seek / Explore
3.3.5	Management of Weeds at Lake Wallace	Partner / Support
3.4.1	Continue to share opportunities with our community on info sessions, grants and changes to land use. (i.e. carbon farming, drought funding and support)	Partner / Support
3.5.1	Support the planning and coordination of emergency management activities in partnership with relevant agencies	Partner / Support
3.5.2	Advocate for (and support) multi-agency centres for CFA and SES in Kaniva and Goroke and upgrades for CFA sheds across the shire.	Advocate
3.5.3	Work with relevant organisations to optimise emergency planning, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery to support our community	Partner / Support

GOAL 4: Operational Excellence

Council Plan Initiative	2026/27 Action	Action Type
4.1.1	Review of Community Forums and creating opportunities for engagement with Councillors and Community	Delivery
4.1.1*	Delivery of Business Acceleration Fund - Website & Open Forms Upgrade	Delivery
4.1.2	Continue to build awareness of the innovation platform for community ideas and ensure community members are updated on project status	Delivery
4.1.3	Continue to engage with BGLC and other Indigenous groups as per community engagement and procurement policy	Partner / Support
4.2.1	Review current CRM System and explore opportunities to improve the customer experience	Seek / Explore
4.2.2	Partner with service providers across the shire to support improved community outcomes	Partner / Support
4.4.1	Develop an advocacy document	Deliver
4.4.2	Maintain alliance with neighbouring councils to advocate to state and federal governments	Advocate
4.5.3	Provide monthly reports on Council's financial performance	Other
4.5.3	Internal Audits 2026–27 Project Management, business continuity and disaster management	Other
4.5.3	Development of 2027–28 Budget	Deliver
4.5.3	Development of 2025/26 Annual Financial & Performance Statement	Deliver
4.5.3	Development of 25/26 Annual Report	Deliver
4.6.1	Explore plant and equipment upgrades that improve outcomes for the West Wimmera community	Seek / Explore

GOAL 4: Operational Excellence

Council Plan Initiative	2026/27 Action	Action Type
4.6.10	Coordinate Professional Development for Councillors as required under Local Government Regulations	Deliver
4.6.10	Roll out of new Governance Rules/Council Meeting Policy as per LGV review	Deliver
4.6.2	Provide professional development support for operations staff to optimise the use of Council equipment & resources	Deliver
4.6.3*	Delivery of Business Acceleration Fund - Digitisation of building and planning records	Deliver
4.6.3	Develop System integration and recording of plant and capital salaries	Deliver
4.6.3	Undertake Microsoft security and maturity review	Deliver
4.6.3	Progress implementation of the Reliansys Compliance Module	Deliver
4.6.5	Consider shared services model for building services and other services	Other
4.6.6	Progress upgrade current asset management system to improve depreciation management	Other
4.6.8	Continue to explore opportunities for AI Road Condition Assessments	Seek / Explore
4.6.9	Ongoing LMS Training - Online training for all staff (Code of Conduct, cultural awareness training)	Other
4.7.1	Risk Assessment on Lone Workers	Other
4.7.4	Complete Risk Assessment & Review incident reporting and investigation processes	Deliver
4.7.4	Develop an operation risk register in reliasys	Deliver
4.7.6	Risk Assessment on handling and risk management processes for hazardous materials	Other

GOAL 4: Operational Excellence

Council Plan Initiative	2026/27 Action	Action Type
4.8.1	Complete annual workforce plan inline with annual plan and budget	Deliver
4.8.2	Progress implementation of Training Matrix	Deliver
4.8.4	Progress Implementation of Quality Plan	Deliver
4.8.4	Progress Review and Update of Contracts Register	Deliver





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