Engagement outcomes report for revised Long Term Financial Plan and Delivery Program

January 2024

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Executive summary

Between 30 November 2023 and 14 January 2024, Council exhibited a revised *Long Term Financial Plan 2023-2033* (LTFP) and changes to its *Delivery Program 2022-26* (Delivery Program).

These documents were prepared and exhibited to reflect a decision made at Council's 27 November 2023 meeting to support a preferred 15% rate increase in the financial year 2024/25 (including a 5% rate peg and 10% Special Rate Variation).

Awareness-raising activity included:

- Sending an email notification, or posted letter, to 1,873 community members who had either completed the online survey, or lodged an email or posted letter, in relation to the rate rise option engagement activity between September-November 2023
- Sending an email to all 8,777 registrants to Council's Have Your Say database, which outlined all Council projects out for consultation during December, including this project
- Issuing a media release about Council's decision and the commencement of the exhibition on the LTFP and Delivery Program.
- Placing a public notice in the North Shore Times
- Issuing a Council News newsletter, which mentioned the exhibition, to 1,904 subscribers
- Issuing a Council social media post.

39 participants generated some 61 separate comments, including 56 Have Your Say survey comments, four emailed comments and one posted letter.

Most participants made general comments about the quantum of the proposed rate increase contained in the LTFP and Delivery Program, rather than referring to specific sections of the two documents.

Of the 39 participants, some 26 (or 67%) made comments in general opposition to the proposed 15% rate increase. The other 13 participants either supported some form of a Special Rate Variation or did not make specific comments in favour or against a Special Rate Variation.

Two specific comments were made on the LTFP, namely:

- Concern about increasing cash levels and surpluses during the life of the LTFP
- A query on the additional revenue to be gained from the rate increase

Four specific comments were made on the Delivery Program, namely:

- One comment in support, and one in opposition, to additional street tree planting to be funded by the proposed rate increase
- The need for tree planting to better consider street tree species
- A query on what extra services will be received under the proposed rate increase and whether this represents 'value for money'

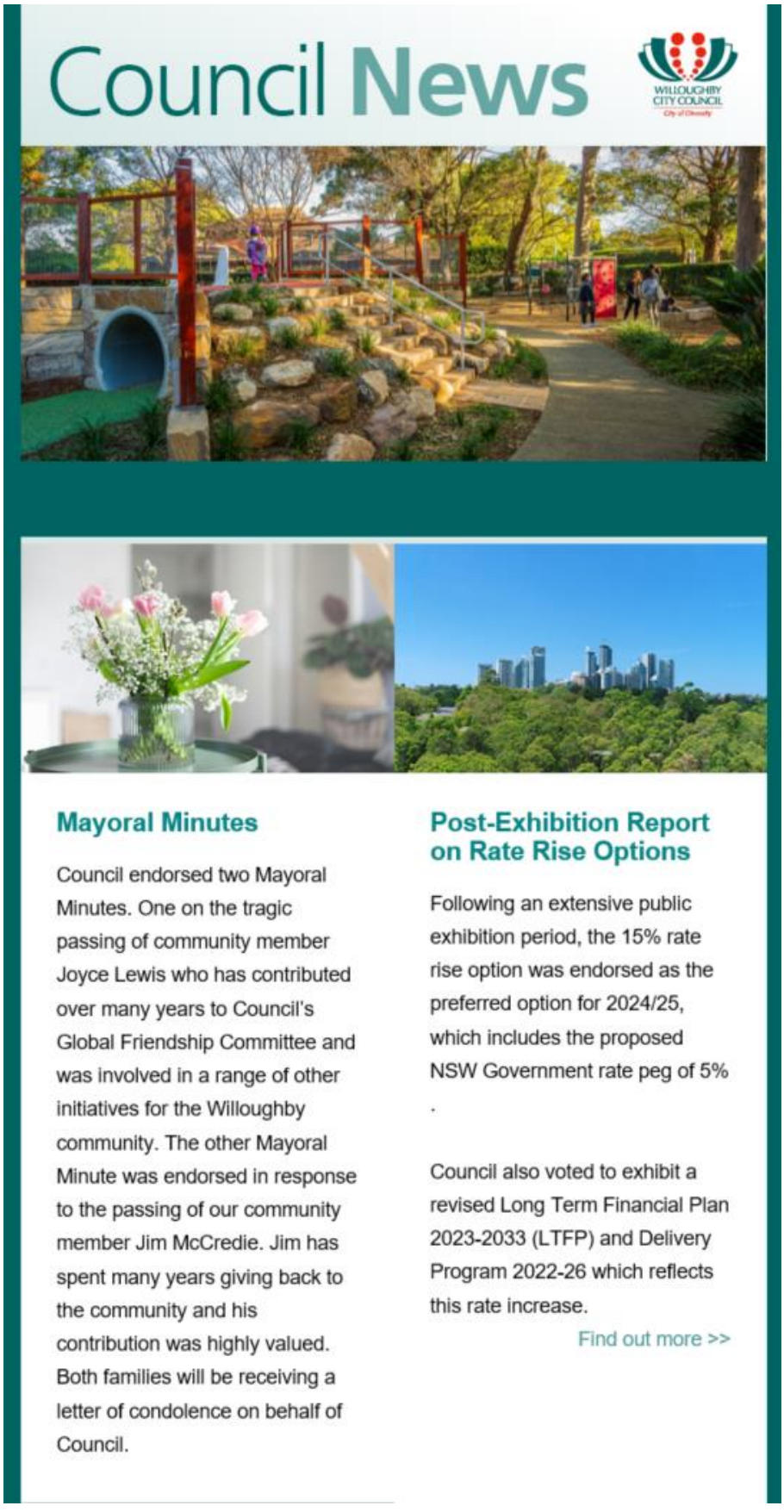
Awareness-raising and engagement activity

On 27 November 2023, Council endorsed the exhibition of a revised *Long Term Financial Plan 2023-2033* (LTFP) and changes to its *Delivery Program 2022-26* (Delivery Program). The exhibition commenced on 30 November 2023 and concluded on 14 January 2024.

Council undertook the following activities to raise awareness of this exhibition:

- On 29 November 2023, issuing a media release about Council's preferred 15% rate increase decision at its November 2023 meeting and the complementary commencement of the exhibition on the LTFP and Delivery Program. This release is available at **Attachment A**.
- On 30 November 2023:
    - Sending an email notification to 1,826 community members who had completed the online survey in relation to the exhibition of rate rise options between September to November 2023 (available at **Attachment B)**.
    - Sending 37 emails to people who had emailed Council directly in relation to the above rate rise options.
    - Issuing a Council News enewsletter, which mentioned the exhibition, to 1,904 subscribers (see Figure 1 below)
    - Notifying Progress Associations and Chambers of Commerce
- Posting letters, dated 1 December 2023, to ten participants who had originally sent letters providing feedback on the rate rise options
- On 4 December 2023, sending an email to all 8,777 registrants to Council's Have Your Say database, which outlined all Council projects out for consultation during December, including this project
- On 7 December 2023, placing a public notice in the North Shore Times (see Figure 2 below) and issuing a Council social media post (see Figure 3 below)

Figure 1 – Reference in Council News newsletter



Council News

WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL

Mayoral Minutes

Council endorsed two Mayoral Minutes. One on the tragic passing of community member Joyce Lewis who has contributed over many years to Council's Global Friendship Committee and was involved in a range of other initiatives for the Willoughby community. The other Mayoral Minute was endorsed in response to the passing of our community member Jim McCredie. Jim has spent many years giving back to the community and his contribution was highly valued. Both families will be receiving a letter of condolence on behalf of Council.

Post-Exhibition Report on Rate Rise Options

Following an extensive public exhibition period, the 15% rate rise option was endorsed as the preferred option for 2024/25, which includes the proposed NSW Government rate peg of 5%

.

Council also voted to exhibit a revised Long Term Financial Plan 2023-2033 (LTFP) and Delivery Program 2022-26 which reflects this rate increase.

Find out more >>

Figure 2 – Public notice in North Shore Times on Thursday, 7 December 2023



WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL

Exhibition of revised Long Term Financial Plan and Delivery Program

Between September and November 2023, Willoughby City Council conducted community engagement on four rate increase options. After considering this engagement, Council has selected a 15% rate increase as its preferred 2024/25 option (incorporating a 10% Special Rate Variation and 5% NSW Government rate peg).

The rate increase will help deliver increased public area maintenance, and a stronger Council budget with greater capacity to renew community assets and infrastructure.

Council is now seeking community feedback on updated corporate planning documents which reflect this proposed rate increase.

You can view a revised *Long Term Financial Plan*, and changes to the *Delivery Program 2022-26*, at **haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au** or at Council's Customer Service Centre at 31 Victor St, Chatswood.

Have your say before **Sunday 14 January 2024** by:

- Filling out an online survey, or uploading a submission, at **haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au**; or
- Sending a letter to Willoughby City Council, PO Box 57, Chatswood NSW 2057, Australia (please state whether you support your name being published alongside this letter in a publicly-available report).

You can talk to Council staff at a drop-in session to be held from 6-8pm on Tuesday 12 December 2023 at Council's Customer Service Centre (31 Victor St, Chatswood).

For queries please call (02) 9777 1000 or write to **email@willoughby.nsw.gov.au**

Please note that Council's Customer Service Centre will be closed between Saturday 23 December 2023 and Sunday 7 January 2024. Queries regarding this matter will be addressed following this period.

PO BOX 57, Chatswood NSW 2057 **Debra Just, Chief Executive Officer**

Figure 3 – Social media post



Engagement activity

Summary and level of engagement activity

For this activity, Council:

- Established a Have Your Say project page
- Accepted comments and uploaded submissions in a survey on this page
- Accepted emailed and posted submissions
- Held, on 12 December 2023, a drop-in session at Council's Customer Service Centre to help inform people who were considering making a submission (as distinct to receiving feedback). One person attended this session.

Some 34 participants filled out the Have Your Say survey, in doing so supplied 56 comments (including 32 comments on the Long Term Financial Plan available at **Attachment C** and 24 comments on the Delivery Program available at **Attachment D**). No submissions were uploaded to the Have Your Say survey.

Four emails (available at **Attachment E**) and one posted letter (available at **Attachment F**) were also received.

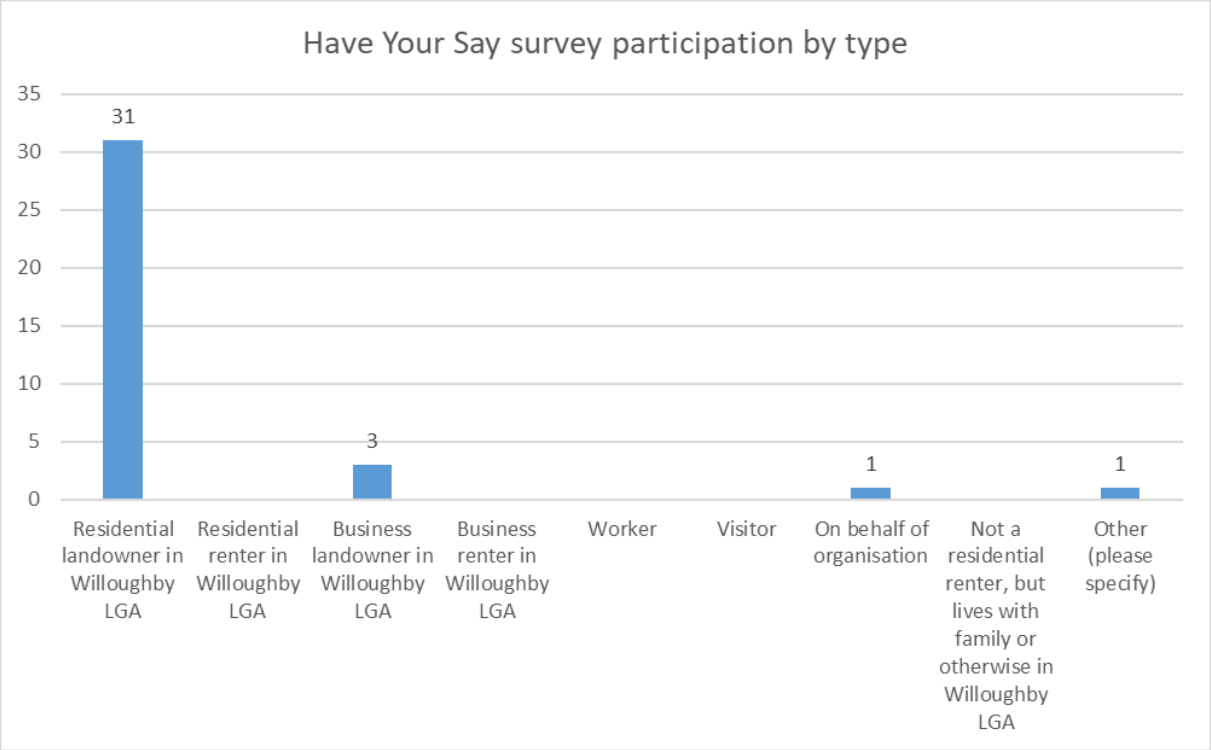
This means that, in total, there were 39 participants who supplied 61 separate comments.

Participant type for Have Your Say survey participants

Respondents to the Have Your Say survey were asked to state the primary capacity in which they were completing the survey. Participants were allowed to choose up to three options.

As shown below, 31 (or 92% of all) of these participants were completing the survey as residential landowners. Participant type information is not available for the five participants who either submitted emails or posted letters.

Figure 4 – Capacity in which participants filled out survey (up to three options allowed)



The person who participated on behalf of an organisation stated they were participating on behalf of “five businesses” (as well as being a residential landowner).

The person who stated they were participating as an “other” nominated the “other” as being the “family home”.

Location of Have Your Say participants

Respondents to the Have Your Say survey who indicated they owned property, or rented a business or home, in the Willoughby LGA were asked to state the relevant suburb. Chatswood was the most represented suburb among all respondent types.

Figure 5 – Location of participants

Suburb	Number of residential property owners from this suburb who filled out survey	Number of business property owners from this suburb who filled out survey
Artarmon	3	0
Castle Cove	0	0
Castlecrag	2	0
Chatswood	4	2
Chatswood West	1	1
Lane Cove North	3	0
Middle Cove	0	0
Naremburn	2	0
Northbridge	4	0
North Willoughby	4	0
Roseville	0	0

Suburb	Number of residential property owners from this suburb who filled out survey	Number of business property owners from this suburb who filled out survey
St Leonards	3	0
Willoughby	4	0
Willoughby East	1	1
I own properties in multiple suburbs	0	0
TOTAL	**31**	**3**

Overall sentiment

Of the 39 participants (including the Have Your Say survey participants and those who submitted email comments or posted letters):

- 26 (or 67%) made comments opposing the proposed 15% rate increase
- 3 (or 8%) made comments in support of the proposed 15% rate increase
- 9 (or 23%) participants asked questions or made comments which did not specifically express a view on the rate increase.
- 1 (or 3%) participant supported a 12% increase (this increase was not supported by Council at its November 2023 meeting, and therefore was not included in the LTFP and Delivery Program).

Key feedback themes

All comments, emails and posted letters were analysed to ascertain the number of times certain themes were mentioned.

The most common feedback theme (mentioned 18 times) was that Council should reduce services and find efficiencies, and or find alternative revenue, to do away with or reduce the size of the proposed rate increase.

The next most mentioned themes related to concerns about cost of living impacts caused by the rate increase or that the proposed rate increase was not supported by community feedback. Below is an analysis of the key feedback themes across all comments, emails and submissions.

Figure 6 – Number of times key themes were mentioned in comments, emails or submissions [1]

Theme	Number of times raised
General comments about the proposed rate increase	
Proposed rate increase will cause cost of living pressures	9
Proposed rate increase should be as low as possible	6
Council should reduce services and find efficiencies and/or alternative revenue to do away or reduce the size of the rate increase	18
Proposed rate increase not supported by community feedback	9
Proposed rate increase will cause inflation	4
Ask NSW Government for funding to help recover from COVID-19 impacts	2

[1] Noting that some comments, emails or submissions mentioned multiple themes, and some did not mention any themes

Theme	Number of times raised
Sell off lazy assets	1
15% rate increase supported	3
12% rate increase supported	1
Specific comments on Long Term Financial Plan	
Can you please confirm that the additional rates amount to $9 million	1
Concern that rate increase will generate $43.94m in total surpluses over nine years and see an increase in Council's cash and cash equivalents from $153m to $211m over the same period.	1
Specific comments on Delivery Program	
Tree planting supported	1
Need for tree planting to better consider street tree species (contention that wrong species planted under overhead wires in Chatswood West)	1
We don't need any more street trees, as they are a hazard for people and cars and ratepayers are bearing the burden of cleaning up after them	1
Query on what extra services will be received and whether this represents value for money	1

Attachment A – Media release

WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL
City of Diversity

MEDIA RELEASE

29 November 2023

2024/25 RATE INCREASE DELIVERS MAINTENANCE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND BUDGET BENEFITS



Increased public area maintenance, and a stronger Council budget with greater capacity to renew community assets and infrastructure, will be among the benefits of a Willoughby City Council rate rise decision.

At its meeting on 27 November 2023, Council selected a 15% increase as its preferred rate rise option for 2024/25, which includes the NSW Government rate peg of 5%.

Council also voted to exhibit a revised *Long Term Financial Plan 2023-2033* (LTFP) and *Delivery Program 2022-26* which reflects this rate increase.

The proposed rate increase will assist Council to:

- Recover from the financial impacts of high inflation outstripping Council's average rates by 15.3% between 2021 and 2023;
- Continue to deliver highly-valued services to the community;
- Increase Council's ability to absorb future financial, extreme weather and growth shocks; and
- Provide capacity to maintain and renew community assets.

The proposed rate rise will allow Council to allocate an additional $2 million a year in additional cleaning, care and beautification projects in parks, cycling and walking routes and town centres, and for tree planting and maintenance programs.

The rate increase would result in average residential rates rising by $163.15 in 2024/25, or $3.14 a week. Average business rates in the Chatswood Town Centre area would increase by $1,170.42 in 2024/25 or $22.51 a week, while average business rates outside the Chatswood Town Centre would increase by in $978.56 in 2024/25, or $18.82 a week.

Following this one-off rate increase in 2024/25, rates would rise in line with the NSW Government rate peg in future years.

Council will now commence preparing a Special Rate Variation application to the NSW Government in line with the preferred rate rise. The application will need to be approved at a Council meeting scheduled for 30 January 2024, before being lodged with the NSW Government.

Willoughby Mayor Tanya Taylor said Council's 27 November 2023 decision followed extensive engagement with the community on four rate rise options between September-November 2023, under the promotional banner *Securing Willoughby's Future*.

"Council ensured any decision on the rate rise options was well-informed by extensive awareness-raising and engagement," Mayor Taylor said.

"Nearly half of Willoughby's residents said they were aware of the options, which is well above average awareness levels across other Sydney councils, and there was strong overall support for a special rate increase."

Around 1,900 people filled out a Have Your Say survey and more than 400 responses were gathered to a separate representative survey which was designed to represent the gender and age characteristics of the Willoughby adult population.

Some 64% of respondents to the Have Your Say survey, and 74% to the representative survey, selected a special rate increase of at least 12% as their highest ranked option.

Mayor Taylor said, in selecting a preferred 15% rate rise, Council also voted to ensure that clear and accessible information was available about options available to ratepayers having difficulty paying their rates.

"While Council currently has one of Sydney's lowest percentage of outstanding rates, we want to make sure people are aware of our hardship policy and options should they need it," Mayor Taylor said.

Council is required to amend the LTFP and *Delivery Program 2022-2026*, if it intends to proceed with a SRV application to the NSW Government.

The revised LTFP illustrates how the rate increase will influence Council's ten-year financial forecast, by delivering average annual surpluses of $4.77m between 2024/25 and 2032/33. These surpluses will allow Council to withstand future financial shocks and, if these shocks do not eventuate, instead use these surpluses for community services and projects.

The LTFP also confirms that Council will be seeking to deliver a $2m efficiency target as part of the development of its 2024/25 Operational Plan, which will be met through savings, efficiencies and new non-rate revenue.

This target reflects a continuation of Council's existing approach to run an efficient operation and has also been designed to reduce the impact of any rate increase on ratepayers.

Without this $2m target, Willoughby's rate rise would need to be 3.7% higher (equivalent to $40 for the average residential ratepayer).

The *Delivery Program 2022-26* is proposed to be amended to state that, as part of the implementation of the rate rise, Council will:

- Increase annual programs for street tree maintenance and tree planting
- Apply additional resources to maintenance, cleaning and beautification of parks, cycling and walking routes and town centres
- Facilitate a volunteer ParkCare program for community involvement in our local parks

Consultation on the LTFP and *Delivery Program 2022-26* commences on Thursday 30 November 2023 and closes on 14 January 2023. Feedback will be reported to a Council meeting to be held on 30 January 2024.

Find out more at www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au

Ends

For media enquiries, please contact:
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P: P +61 2 9777 1057 | M: 0418 296 579

Attachment B – Email sent, on 30 November 2023, to participants who commented on the rate rise options between September-November 2023

Dear Have Your Say participant -

Between September and November 2023, Willoughby City Council conducted extensive community engagement on four rate rise options to potentially apply in the 2024/25 financial year. Thank you again for your feedback during this period.

At its meeting of 27 November 2023, Council considered the results of this engagement, and other information.

Council selected a 15% rate increase (incorporating a 10% Special Rate Variation and 5% NSW Government rate peg) as its preferred option to inform the preparation of an application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).

The proposed rate increase will assist Council to:

- Recover from the financial impacts of high inflation outstripping Council's average rates by 15.3% between 2021 and 2023
- Continue to deliver highly-valued services to the community
- Increase Council's ability to absorb future financial, extreme weather and growth shocks; and
- Provide capacity to maintain and renew community assets

The proposed rate increase will also allow Council to allocate an additional $2 million a year in additional cleaning, care and beautification projects in parks, cycling and walking routes and town centres, and for tree planting and maintenance programs.

Council is now seeking community feedback on updated corporate planning documents which reflect this proposed rate increase.

You can view a revised *Long Term Financial Plan 2023-2033*, and changes to the *Delivery Program 2022-26*, at www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au or at Council's Customer Service Centre at 31 Victor St, Chatswood (outside of the Christmas closedown period between Saturday 23 December 2023 and Sunday 7 January 2024).

Have your say by:

- Filling out an online survey, or uploading a submission at this link; or
- Sending a letter to Willoughby City Council, PO Box 57, Chatswood NSW 2057, Australia (address the letter to Special Rate Variation Project Manager and state whether you support your name being published alongside this letter in a publicly-available report).

You can also talk to Council staff at a drop-in session to be held from 6-8pm on Tuesday 12 December 2023 at Council's Customer Service Centre (31 Victor St, Chatswood) - no registration is required and you can just turn up.

Feedback closes at midnight on **Sunday, 14 January 2023**.

Council will consider feedback received on the revised corporate planning documents, and whether to submit a Special Rate Variation (SRV) application to IPART, at a Council meeting to be held on Tuesday, 30 January 2024.

Attachment C – Comments received on Long Term Financial Plan

Location of participant	Comment
CASTLECRAG	Yes Councils plan to increase rates by 15% is highly inflationary and will ultimately inflict more pain on its constituents. To curb inflation we must all do our part and cut expenditure, otherwise your constituents will continue to be hit by higher interest rates. I completely oppose the increase.
CHATSWOOD	We think the minimum increase option should apply.
ST LEONARDS	Yes, the decision to go with the 15% increase was not in line with the maintain or reduce recommendation. The council should reconsider given the cost pressures residents are feeling due to inflation.
NORTHBRIDGE	stop all unnecessary spending
NAREMBURN	I would like visibility and regular updates on what the Council is doing to run as efficiently as cost-effectively as possible. Can the Council consider ways to reduce costs, eg red bin or landfill collection by allowing residents to put organic waste in their green bins (bring it forward from 2030).
NORTHBRIDGE	I absolutely reject the enormous in rates decided upon by Council??Given the current economic dilemmas affecting the population, how can Council justify this decision??Are you saying this had the majority support of the Willoughby residents who opted to have their say???
WILLOUGHBY	I don't want a 15% increase in council rates. This should be linked to CPI only.
CHATSWOOD	So disappointing that Council wasted everyone's time asking for feedback and then didn't listen and chose to do whatever they wanted
CASTLECRAG	It is abhorrent and morally irresponsible, particularly given the economic conditions at present, that the LTFP estimates a $43.94M total surplus at the end of the nine years in 2032/33 and that Council will simply grow their cash and cash equivalents from $153M to $211M over the same period. The purpose of an SRV is absolutely not to sure up Council's financials. Council have not justified the SRV beyond the standard rate peg, and it clearly shows in the financial projections that there is, and never has been a justification for any SRV, particularly a 15% rate rise (and the compounding effect of that rise indefinitely). We hope that IPART wholly rejects the SRV request after reviewing Council's actual position.
CHATSWOOD	Better budgeting and suppliers to reduce the cost
ARTARMON	It seems to be unreasonable option
LANE COVE NORTH	The Council's decision to implement a 15% rate increase suggests a lack of consideration for the concerns voiced by Willoughby residents. This unilateral move appears to place the entire burden on ratepayers, without exploring alternative avenues such as engaging with the state government or seeking additional sources of revenue. The community's input seems to have been disregarded, and a more inclusive and balanced approach to addressing financial challenges should be pursued.
ARTARMON	I strongly oppose rhe 15% increase in council rates at a time when households are under enormous financual stress

CHATSWOOD WEST	Cut cost like everyone else, and sell off lazy assets that is not the councils prime business.
NORTHBRIDGE	Pull your heads in, stop doing woke virtue signalling plans and get the rate increases down below inflation. Looking forward to the next opportunity to vote
WILLOUGHBY EAST	Very supportive of the proposed approach
WILLOUGHBY	Cut your costs as WCC have not been able to keep within its means and struggles to meet basic services. Cut the "frills" and extra "services" and just dpo the basics properly
WILLOUGHBY	Ask the state government for funding due to they locked us up .we still paid the rates.no relief only emergency workers were allowed out.so what losses did Willoughby occur I ask.less staff doing things and what was it wanted on at that period to justify the losess.we ask be a bit more fair and not hit the people with high rates it will only damage people .I hear alot are not happy with the rate rise.
WILLOUGHBY NORTH	The increase is too high
ST LEONARDS	I am very disappointed that the council fails to control its spending and increase the rate which is significant higher than the inflation rate and wage growth.
WILLOUGHBY	Spend as little of ratepayers money as possible. Don't waste money on frivolous projects and "causes".
ST LEONARDS	Enlightened and appropriate guve fibacial constraunts
NAREMBURN	I don't agree with 15% increase in rates from next year. We're already under a lot of financial stress with inflation, interest rates increase and stagnant salaries / income levels. Having known that more than 90% of families across Australia are under such stress, this decision of the council is extremely absurd and should be put on hold until FY25-26.
WILLOUGHBY	Supported
CHATSWOOD	The selected option is not the one suggested by the analysis. The analysis points to the maintain services option. What is the point of running the survey if you are just going to choose a predetermined option that is not supported by the data?
CHATSWOOD	A 15% rate hike is too aggressive, especially when the cost of living remains high. We can leave some service improvements for later
NORTHBRIDGE	Can you please confirm that the additional rates amount to $9 million
ARTARMON	First of all, I would like to register a protest about the option three rate rise. We were opposed to this and said so. The majority of ratepayers supported either no rise or option two. This community opinion was completely ignored and Council decided on the least favoured option. Why go thru the charade of consultation when the outcome is predetermined?
LANE COVE NORTH	The preferred option of a 15% rate rise is excessive at current economic environment and is against the interest of most community members. Given the high cost of living pressure faced by the average residents, the Council should aim only to maintain the services within the current financial constraints. This is what we normal people do when the rate of inflation outstrips the wage rise. Unlike the Council who can force rate payers to contribute more, we cannot force our employers to pay us higher wages. I hope the Council can intelligently come up ways to deliver the program without using a 10% special rate variation. Live within your means please. Just maintain the current service levels would be good enough.
WILLOUGHBY NORTH	You will need some fiscal discipline to keep your budget in check
LANE COVE NORTH	We are all battling inflation driven cost rises from interest rates, insurance, groceries, government taxes and rates. As a resident and local business owner these are unsustainable and so I request the council to manage rate rises to low single digits and seek to manage spending to this level through eliminating waste

	(eg the council pay a mowing service to mow behind my house 18 times a year, this year they have come 3 times), through user pay fees as needed and careful choices on larger council expenditure and investments
CHATSWOOD	Not really - considering that Council asked ratepayers for our opinions about rate increases and you ignored the majority of responses, why would i think you would listen this time? This is highly disappointing. If Council is going to do what they want, then don't waste money you clearly don't have, setting up surveys - you can use the money to actually help rate payers.

Attachment D – Comments received on Delivery Program changes

Location of participant	Comment
CHATSWOOD	Poor decision on local rate increases. A 15% increase was NOT supported by community consultation. You can guarantee a change in council members at the next election.
CASTLECRAG	Yes. Councils plan to increase rates by 15% is highly inflationary and will ultimately inflict more pain on its constituents. To curb inflation we must all do our part and cut expenditure, otherwise your constituents will continue to be hit by higher interest rates. I completely oppose the increase.
CHATSWOOD	We think the minimum increase option should apply.
ST LEONARDS	Same as above.
NORTHBRIDGE	stop all unnecessary spending
NAREMBURN	Consider enabling residents to pay for services they use or benefit from, rather than a one-size-fits-all rate. This can reduce costs whilst rewarding the right behaviours, eg if no red bin collection for 6 months then discount or voucher. Consider ways to reduce costs in the long term like a private company, eg bring forward allowing residents to put organic waste in their green bins to reduce red bin or landfill collection.
NORTHBRIDGE	The delivery program needs to be curtailed and the Council should seriously review its decision to decide on the maximum rate increase. There are many pensioners living in the Willoughby Municipality who cannot afford this extravagant increase in rates, notwithstanding whatever pensioner-based discounts are provided.
WILLOUGHBY	I don't think it is appropriate in the current economic environment.
CHATSWOOD	A two digit increase on levy not in line of average income increases % by the community residents. We only need the most essential and basic services from the council, please cancel those optional or fancy items
LANE COVE NORTH	What is the value of leaving comments if there is no genuine effort to listen to the perspectives and concerns of the ratepayers?
ARTARMON	I strongly oppose rhe 15% increase in council rates at a time when households are under enormous financual stress
CHATSWOOD WEST	I note increase 'street tree maintenance and tree planting' - how about be more wise what and where inappropriate large trees are planted on the verge (especially under wires, plenty of examples in Chatswood West lately).
WILLOUGHBY EAST	I am keen to see more tree planting to ensure a net positive canopy outcome over the life of the program
WILLOUGHBY	Cut the excess services and keep to the basics.
WILLOUGHBY	Put it up 3%,only.what losess did council have for that 6 months we were all shut down. Goverment still paid the workers and council still were accepting online projects.plus on that survey why.was there no option 5 none of the above but force to number them or can not finish survey. Plus we attended the meeting on the 27th with my brother who spoke .we left in shock that council is voting for 15% rise all we said was ask the state government for the funds,as we were leaving and didn't swear as Mr rozos accused us of as

	we watched the replay on video of council.rozos tells mayor to report us ....why when we never swore and walked out. My brother only said outside in foyer far out no one cares . So i ask mr rozos to get his facts right.cause council is not on the peoples side with this rate rise.the people as citizens who voted for them to consider and actully listen to people with all the rate rises at the moment it's hard .council should at least pause till people get back up. Atleast one council member understood and was on the peoples side.pls in future correct your surveys online to allow other options.plus if you own or have property or intrest in the local area are you actully.alllowed to vote on matters ,we ask.pls let the people recover from covid to get back on there feet.look at the other councils like burwood,marrikville,etc there area looks alot more nicer than here in Willoughby. There needs to be more public notice with letters and more gathering on matters like this,so people are more aware,think about the older generation they don't have emails or a computer.
WILLOUGHBY NORTH	The increase is too high
ST LEONARDS	I am very disappointed that the council fails to revise the Delivery Program under the period of high inflation and increasing burden of the residents.
WILLOUGHBY	Which Councillors voted for rate increases.
ST LEONARDS	no
WILLOUGHBY	Supported
CHATSWOOD	Please don’t pursue all these programs and service improvements during this difficult time.
NORTHBRIDGE	Can you please confirm that in return for an additional taxes on ratepayers, in return the community gets: better street tree maintenance and some extra trees planted additional cleaning of parks and footpaths the opportunity to volunteer to weed the parks? If so, do you believe the community genuinely sees this as value for money?
ARTARMON	As we have said before, Council has core responsibilities such as maintenance of infrastructure and open space, and sanitation. Then there are the frills such as festivals and so-called 'community events'. In our opinion the former is neglected in favour of the latter. As an example, the maintenance of public open space in Artarmon has been disgracefully neglected.
LANE COVE NORTH	Need tighter fiscal controls to run the council at low single digit rate increases. Rate payers are not flushed with infinite funds to pay into council.

Attachment E - General emailed comments received

As part of this engagement process, three emailed comments were received.

An additional email received for a separate engagement process (amendment to Planning Fees and Charges) but which appeared to comment on the proposed rate increase.

These emailed comments are below:

Location of participant	Comment
NORTHBRIDGE	As a long-term resident and rate payer of Willoughby Council – more than 10 years – and raising a family of four active children - our family's very strong preference is for Council to either retain current rates or look to reduce them – certainly not to increase them. We are very comfortable if this means REDUCING "services". Can you make sure our feedback is communicated to your GM, Councillors and to IPART. Happy to provide specifics if someone wants to get in contact.
UNKNOWN	Your e-mail seeking feedback of Council rate increase for 2023/24, requires that I register, etc., in order to leave a comment. I pay your rates and I object to having to register like a dog. Your rate increase by the way, at more than double inflation and with struggling families, stinks!..
UNKNOWN	Can you please relieve the people vote results? The statement below is blunt . What is "other information " and how did they weight against people say? At its meeting of 27 November 2023, Council considered the results of this engagement, and other information
NAREMBURN [2]	I DO NOT want or agee to have services cut. Willoughby must keep pace with the north shore LGA areas surrounding it. Not be the poor relation. Quality Services maintain property values and prices. If it costs a 12% p.a. increase then that is what is necessary. The area must be clean and offer good amenities. Willoughby haa many tenanted properties, and the clean-ups for the high turn-over of tenants already leaves our streets looking un-loved too many times as rubbish is dumped and there is no way to investigate the people involved. Lane Cove Council is a shining example of clean public space and great facilities for all generations. Willoughby is already behind in standards. I vote for the 12% inclrease.

[2] This comment was received on a separate engagement process (amendment to planning fees and charges) which was on exhibition at the same time as the revised Long Term Financial Plan and Delivery Program

Attachment F – Letter received from North Willoughby resident (permission not given for name to be included)

[redacted]

MARK SKELSEY
WILLOUGHBY COUNCIL.

12 DEC '23 9:23

GREETINGS.
YOU HAVE DONE IT AGAIN - CREATED "SRVRM" - ANOTHER NON PRODUCTIVE MANAGER. WHY?
HOW MANY HAVE YOU GOT NOW?
HAS ANYONE CARRIED OUT AN INTERNAL AUDIT? (AS I SUGGESTED)
I AM SURE THE COUNCIL WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO CUT DOWN ON TOO MANY NON PRODUCTIVE DESK JOBS.
TREES!!
WE ALREADY LIVE IN WILLOUGHBY FOREST.
RATE PAYERS ARE ALREADY CLEANING UP LEAVES - 7 DAYS A WEEK.
& WITHOUT HELP FROM THE COUNCIL (UNLESS IN GUTTERS)
TREES PLANTED ON NARROW NATURESTRIPS ARE VERY OFTEN A HAZARD FOR WALKERS & ALSO FOR SOME CARS.
WE DON'T NEED ANYMORE TREES.
WE DON'T WANT ANY RATE INCREASES.!!

ALL THE BEST FOR RATE PAYERS

[redacted]

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