

7. COUNCIL REPORTS

7.1 HOSKEN RESERVE MASTERPLAN REFRESH - ENGAGEMENT REPORT AND OPTIONS

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Community Wellbeing

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Thanks local residents, club members and other community members for their involvement and input into the Hosken Reserve Refresh community engagement process;
2. Notes the Background Report and Engagement Summary Report by the independent consultants; and
3. Resolves on the following directions:
 - a) [Surface Treatment option]
 - b) [North Oval Sporting Infrastructure option]
 - c) [North Oval Access and Use option]
4. Resolves on the following next step:
[Process option]

REPORT

Executive Summary

Following a December 2020 Council resolution, a refresh project commenced of the Hosken Reserve 2009 Masterplan. An extensive community engagement process commenced in February and this phase of engagement formally concluded in March 2021. The formal methods of engagement had a reach of 5,082 page visits to Conversations Moreland project page, 467 surveys completed, 216 Q&A contributions, 13 submissions, 6 stakeholder interviews, and 4 on-site pop up sessions held with 153 unique engagements.

During the engagement process it was clear that Hosken Reserve is a much loved reserve by both the residents and the sporting clubs that use this reserve.

A range of local and broader issues were raised. The engagement process was complex and at times divisive. Useful feedback on a whole range of elements for the Hosken Reserve was captured.

Local residents value the use of the ovals at Hosken Reserve for passive recreation, exercise and dog walking. Local residents have significant concerns about synthetic turf, additional sporting infrastructure, and existing and future hours of access. Pascoe Vale Football Club and other formal clubs are committed to continuing use of ovals for matches, training and the future development of sport.

The independent consultants' Background Report and Engagement Summary report are attached here for consideration.

The next step in the process was intended to be for a group of community representatives (including local residents and sports club participation) to be appointed, to review community feedback and make recommendations to Council for consideration as part of the master plan research.

After conducting the consultation process so far, the consultants advise that the “[i]ssue of synthetic is deeply divisive: we believe we are unlikely to achieve a resolution through the refresh group on the use of synthetic, grass or hybrid surface.” (page 48, Attachment 1).

If the refresh group process and master plan review is to go ahead, and be effective, then Council needs to first set some direction around the surface, sports infrastructure and sports use of the reserve.

Depending on directions set, a refresh group may or may not be the appropriate next phase of engagement, to ensure the best possible community outcomes for the reserve.

An options table has been included in this officer report for Councillor consideration. It is recommended that Councillors choose a way forward, so that the Hosken Reserve masterplan refresh process can proceed.

Previous Council Decisions

Hosken Reserve Synthetic Playing Field – 9 December 2020:

That Council:

1. *Conducts an independent, robust and broad community engagement process in 2021 on a refresh of the Hosken Reserve Master Plan.*
2. *Receives a report by May 2021 on the outcomes of the Hosken Reserve community engagement with options to determine future action.*

1. Policy Context

The 2017-2021 Council Plan establishes priorities and sets an agenda for this Council term while keeping sight of long-term future challenges and opportunities. To achieve this vision, three strategic objectives have been set: Connected Community; Progressive City; and Responsible Council. These three strategic objectives guide a range of priority actions which Council will implement during this term. This report supports the ‘Connected Communities’ and ‘Responsible Council objectives of:

- Set a clear vision and strategy for aquatics, leisure and sporting facilities to meet ongoing community needs; and
- Maintain and match our infrastructure to community needs and population growth.

The Hosken Reserve Masterplan Refresh project is informed by a range of policies and strategies including, but not limited to:

- Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-21
- Sports and Active Recreation Strategy
- Open Space Strategy
- 2009 Hosken Reserve Redevelopment Plan
- North West Region - Football Venue Strategic Review and Feasibility Study
- Park Close to Home: A Framework to Fill Open Space Gaps
- Hybrid and Synthetic Sports Surface Needs Study
- Zero Carbon Moreland Climate Emergency Action Plan
- Urban Heat Island Action Plan
- Urban Forest Strategy
- Integrated Transport Strategy

2. Background

The history and background to the December 2020 Council decision to refresh the masterplan and engage in community consultation is set out at length in the December 2020 Council agenda. This can be accessed at

<https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/about-us/your-council/council-and-committee-meetings/council-meetings/council-meeting-minutes/>

This officer report focuses on the engagement process and consultant's report that has occurred since December 2020.

This report provides an overview of the Hosken Reserve Master Plan Refresh project to date, outlines community engagement findings, and discusses options and directions.

3. Issues

A Background Report (Attachment 1) has been prepared that covers a range of project related issues and findings. An excerpt of key issues from this report is provided below.

Process

Council appointed a group led by the CommunityCollaborative. to project manage the Masterplan Refresh. They are supported by Conversation Caravan leading engagement activities and Pollen Studio providing landscape design. The project aims to provide a strategic document to guide the planning, provision, promotion and advocacy of sport and informal recreation at Hosken Reserve. In order to achieve this, the following methodology was planned:

- Step 1 – Project Establishment (Dec/Jan 2021)
- Step 2 – Engagement Phase 1 – Public Engagement (Feb/Mar 2021)
- Step 3 – Background Report (April 2021)
- Step 4 – Council Report (May 2021)
- Step 5 – Engagement Phase 2 – Refresh Group (May/Jun 2021)
- Step 6 – Design Development (Jun 2021)
- Step 7 – Council Report (Jul 2021)
- Step 8 – Engagement Phase 3 – Public Exhibition (Jul/Aug 2021)
- Step 9 – Council Report (Sep/Oct 2021)

Demand for sport and recreation facilities and open space

Council has 56 turf sports grounds available in the City of Moreland. These are currently very well utilised by a variety of user groups including sports clubs, Sports Associations, schools and residents. The demand on these facilities is ever increasing, with club membership growing annually, and Council also supporting growth through inclusive participation policies.

Council and state sporting association planning documents state that there is a shortage of tennis courts (North West Metro Regional Tennis Strategy) and football pitches (Football Victoria State Facilities Strategy) in Moreland. A state government investigation found that Moreland had the third lowest level of public open space provision on a m² per person basis (Metropolitan Open Space Network: Provision and Distribution). In the 32 metropolitan Melbourne councils, Moreland ranks 20th by size (area) of parks and gardens, and 29th by area of sportsfields and organised recreation. Coburg North has the highest provision of open space per person in Moreland - more than 4 times the Moreland average.

This is a significant issue with respect to often competing demands between formal and informal use. Ideally, the appropriate mix is to facilitate equitable access for all, but this can be challenging to achieve and is the subject of much community discussion.

While Council would like to have facilities available to meet all needs, this is becoming more difficult with the increasing demands and the very limited opportunity for expansion.

Use of synthetic surfaces

In response to the challenges of supply and demand, Moreland has invested significantly in the use of warm season grasses, improved water management, the construction of three synthetic pitches and altering horticultural practices. However, Moreland is continually looking for more sustainable solutions to help local sport thrive in the face of weather extremes and increasing participation.

The conversion of existing sports grounds to synthetic grass surfaces within Moreland has been previously included in Council strategies and forward programs as an important strategy for achieving sustainable use of grounds across the municipality, in the context of growing population. Synthetic surfaces have been extensively used by councils and other levels of government across Victoria, and nationally, to meet the increasing demand in recognition of their ability to increase capacity.

As the community engagement report shows, there is significant local concern around the use of synthetic turf in terms of community amenity and environmental impact. See the attachments for more detail.

Community engagement

Engagement Stage 1 was undertaken between Thursday 25 February to Sunday 28 March 2021 including a Conversations Moreland project page, community survey, on-site pop-up sessions, stakeholder interviews and online Q and A forum. In addition to the above formal engagement process, stakeholder engaged with Councillors, Council CEO and staff via a number of written submissions and emails, Council meeting questions and on-line channels.

The Engagement Summary Report (Appendix 6 in **Attachment 1**) sets out what was heard during the engagement process.

Future options

The research, site analysis and consultation outcomes noted in the Background Report (Attachment 1) have highlighted a range of complementary items that are generally supported by most stakeholders that can be appropriately integrated into a new master plan design such as:

- completing the pedestrian path network around the oval
- addressing parking congestion, particularly within existing carpark and in residential streets
- creation of new entry to site off Bakers Rd
- possible nature-based play extension
- new sports courts (basketball, futsal etc.)
- public safety lighting improvements
- a range of additional tennis/football sporting infrastructure upgrades (pavilion, tennis court and fence upgrade etc.)

However, there are three specific issues which have arisen that have conflicting design outcomes and opposing views. The consultants suggest that these issues need to be resolved before the refresh group (and the master plan refresh process) can move forward:

- North Oval Surface type (whether synthetic, hybrid or natural turf)
- North Oval infrastructure (whether a formalised pitch for the northern oval with low permeable fencing, or another option)
- North Oval access and use (prioritisation of sporting and general access uses).

In addition, there are options around future process.

Options for consideration

Issue 1 Surface Treatment

<i>Option</i>	<i>Positives</i>	<i>Negatives</i>
1.1 Install a synthetic surface on the North oval and retain grass on the South and East fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported by PVFC and the School • Supports growth and additional use of North oval • Sport and Active Recreation Strategy and Synthetic Sports Surface Study support use of synthetic at Hosken Reserve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not supported by residents • Environmental concerns of synthetic use • Conflicting council policy exists (Zero Carbon Moreland, Waste and Litter Strategy, Urban Heat Island Action Plan) • Hosken Reserve is a local level facility, surrounded by residential properties and narrow streets. This is not an ideal location for a high use synthetic surface from a design perspective.
1.2 Retain the North oval and East field as natural grass and consider installation of a hybrid surface on the South field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of acceptance by PVFC • Enables additional use of South field • Level of acceptance by residents • Publicly accessible North oval remains natural turf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental concerns of synthetic use (albeit low volumes)
1.3 Retain all three playing surfaces as natural grass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported by residents • Reconstruction of fields will enable limited scope for additional use of fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not supported by PVFC and the school • Provides limited scope for additional use of any fields

Issue 2 North Oval Sporting Infrastructure

<i>Option</i>	<i>Positives</i>	<i>Negatives</i>
2.1 Install a low-level black chain mesh fence to formalise a football pitch on North Oval that meets Football Victoria standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported by PVFC • Supports growth and additional use of North oval • Stated requirement by governing body (Football Victoria) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not supported by residents • Limits site flexibility and alternative uses of North Oval

<i>Option</i>	<i>Positives</i>	<i>Negatives</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides positive OHS/ risk outcomes for ball entrapment and off-leash dogs • Designates smaller area of formal sport use, providing additional circulation space around field for informal recreation activities 	
2.2 Do not formalise a football pitch on North Oval with a fence and retain as open grassland area that is line marked for sporting activity only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported by residents • Provides flexibility of site use • Football Victoria exemptions for fencing are applied at other venues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not supported by PVFC • Does not provide positive OHS/ risk outcomes for ball entrapment and off-leash dogs

Issue 3 North Oval Access and Use

<i>Option</i>	<i>Positives</i>	<i>Negatives</i>
3.1 Prioritise access to the North oval for formal sporting use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported by PVFC • Supports growth and additional use of sports fields • Council and state sporting association planning documents state that there is a shortage of football pitches in Moreland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not supported by residents • Community have requested defined public access times • a state government investigation found that Moreland had the 3rd lowest level of public open space provision on a m2 per person basis
3.2 Prioritise access to the North oval for general public use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported by residents • Community have requested defined public access times • A state government investigation found that Moreland had the 3rd lowest level of public open space provision on a m2 per person basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not supported by PVFC • Sporting use is already at capacity • Reduction in site usage by PVFC would result in increased use of alternative venues • Coburg North has the highest provision of open space per person in Moreland - more than 4 times the Moreland average

Issue 4 Process

<i>Option</i>	<i>Positives</i>	<i>Negatives</i>
4.1 Provide direction on key issues and proceed to Engagement Stage 2 - 'Refresh Group'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceeds with publicly stated process • Provides scope to work collaboratively with defined group to refine design changes and produce master 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If key conflicts (synthetic surface and fencing) are not resolved by Council to acceptable levels according to stakeholders, the

<i>Option</i>	<i>Positives</i>	<i>Negatives</i>
	plan option acceptable to a majority of stakeholders	Refresh Group will not be able to operate effectively <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community concerns have been raised on the efficacy of the Refresh Group process
4.2 Provide direction on key issues and proceed straight to Engagement Stage 3 - 'Public Exhibition'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removes any community concerns of Refresh Group process Advances timeframe for delivery of final master plan for Council consideration, while allowing for further engagement on the master plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alters publicly stated process Proposes significant design changes to Hosken Reserve master plan that have not yet been tested with stakeholders

Human Rights and Gender Consideration

The implications of this report have been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and the engagement undertaken supports Sections 12 and 18 of the Human Rights Charter which relate to freedom of movement and taking part in public life.

Moreland is a leader within the Victorian Local government sector in increasing women's and girls' participation in sport, increasing participation from 5% to 23% in the last ten years. The Hosken Reserve Masterplan may also have other gender impacts including for women with children using the reserve for non-sporting uses.

A gender impact assessment will be undertaken during the design phase of this project.

4. Community consultation and engagement

The engagement process being undertaken is documented in the Engagement Summary Report (attachment X).

Engagement Stage 1

Engagement Stage 1 was undertaken between Thursday 25 February to Sunday 28 March 2021 including a Conversations Moreland project page, community survey, on-site pop-up sessions, stakeholder interviews and online Q and A forum. Key statistics include:

- 5,082 page visits to Conversations Moreland project page
- 467 surveys completed
- 216 Q&A contributions
- 13 submissions
- 6 stakeholder interviews
- 4 on-site pop up sessions held (153 unique engagements)
- Distributed 2,000 letters + engagement plans to residents within 800m of Hosken Reserve
- Reached around 10,000 people through social media posts
- My Moreland EDM newsletter article circulated

- Mayor spoke about Hosken Reserve Master Plan Refresh on 98.9 NorthWest FM on 19/03
- Provided a Hosken Reserve Master Plan Refresh update for Inside Moreland (to be printed/distributed in May)

Specific groups that have participated in the engagement include:

- Keep Hosken Reserve Accessible resident's group
- Australian International Academy
- Merlynston Tennis Club
- Pascoe Vale Football Club
- Moreland Local Soccer Clubs (6)
- Football Victoria
- Tennis Victoria
- Climate Action Moreland
- Neighbours United for Climate Action

In addition to the above formal engagement process, stakeholders engaged with Councillors and Council staff via a number of written submissions and emails, Council meeting questions and on-line channels.

Engagement Stage 2

Dependent on the outcome of this report, the next stage on engagement would include the establishment of a Refresh Group which an independently selected group of 25 participants will meet three times to deliberate on proposed master plan elements and provide recommendations back to Council.

It is suggested that this process enables analysis in further detail than could be done as part of broad engagement activity to advise on workable solutions for the whole community.

Engagement Stage 3

Depending on the outcome of this report and on Engagement stage 2, the outcomes of the Refresh Group process above will then be tested again with the community as part of Engagement Stage 3 between 19 July to 15 August 2021.

It is recommended that a draft master plan, developed in partnership with the refresh Group, would be publicly exhibited for community feedback before Council considers it for endorsement (anticipated for consideration in September/October 2021).

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

In line with the Hosken Reserve Master Plan (2009), Council has included the following items in the 5-year capital budget plan (2020-2025):

- Hosken Reserve- synthetic soccer- \$615,000 (2020/21)
- Hosken Reserve – Sportsfield Lighting - \$200,000 (2020/21)
- Hosken Reserve - Merlynston Tennis Club pavilion- \$566,000 (2021/22)
- Hosken Reserve - tennis club - court refurbishment - \$100,000 (2021/22)
- Hosken Reserve - soccer/football pavilion - \$221,500 (2021/22)

- Hosken Reserve – south soccer pitch reconstruction - \$600,000 (\$300,000 in 2021/22 and \$300,000 in 2022/23)
- Hosken Reserve - east carpark - \$425,000 (2023/24)

A new five year capital works program 2021-26 is currently under consideration by Council. A draft will be endorsed for exhibition in May and a final version will be adopted in June.

Depending on the outcome of the community engagement and Master Plan refresh review, any of the above allocations can be changed by Council in future.

In a refresh of the master plan, officers would continue to seek external funding contributions to projects identified to support implementation, subject to Council approval. Delivery of each stage of works would be subject to approval in Council's annual capital works budget process.

7. Implementation

Dependent on the outcome of this report, Council officers will proceed with the next stage of the project process, namely the undertaking of Engagement Stage 2 – Refresh Group or proceed straight to Engagement Stage 3 – Public Exhibition.

Attachment/s

- 1 [↓](#) Hosken Reserve Master Plan Refresh - Background Report (including Hosken Reserve Engagement Summary Report) D21/166081