



Sustainability Advisory Committee

**Tuesday 6 February 2024
6.00pm
Council Chambers
209 Comur Street, Yass**

SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

NOTICE OF MEETING

A meeting of the Sustainability Advisory Committee will be held in Council Chambers 209 Comur Street, Yass, on Tuesday 6 February 2024, commencing at **6.00pm**

AGENDA

Page No.

Acknowledgement of Country

Yass Valley Council recognises the Ngunnawal people, the Traditional Custodians of the land, water, and sky. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and future emerging leaders. We extend our respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live in the Yass Valley Local Government Area.

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interests

3. Confirmation of Minutes - Nil

Meeting Notes of Sustainability Advisory Committee held on 28 November 2023

4. Member Reports

4.1 Draft Open Space Strategy - Possible Submission6

4.2 FOGO Collection Service - Outstanding Data Request.....7

4.3 Crago Mill - Sustainability In Design Issues8

5. Reports

5.4 Community Strategic Plan Survey10

5.5 Green Waste Management and Recent Asbestos Incident Update11

5.6 Electric Vehicles and Chargers Update 12

6. Next Meeting – 7 May 2023



Meeting Notes of the Sustainability Advisory Committee

Tuesday 28 November 2023

6.00pm

Council Chambers

209 Comur Street, Yass

Table of Contents

1.	Apologies	2
3.	Declarations of Interest.....	2
4.	Confirmation of Minutes	2
4.	Staff Reports.....	2
4.1	Policy Review Schedule	2
5.	Next Meeting.....	2

Present

Cr Adrian Cameron (Chair), Alex Tewes, Luke McAlary, John Connelly, Caitlin Nelson (Teams)

Also Present

Chris Berry (Chief Executive Officer), Shirree Garland (Corporate Executive Officer)

1. Apologies

Peter Davidson, Nicole Elliott, Ania Wardle and Alison Elvin

NOTE: *As there was no quorum the meeting was adjourned until the next scheduled meeting. Due to the lack of a quorum these are notes only.*

3. Declarations of Interest

Nil

4. Confirmation of Minutes

COMMITTEE DECISION

No Quorum – minutes not confirmed.

4. Staff Reports

4.1 POLICY REVIEW SCHEDULE

REPORT

To present an update on the Committee's policy review schedule.

The CEO provided an overview of report, covering the Housing Strategy, Development Control Plan (DCP), Draft Open Space Strategy and the Procurement Policy.

It was noted that staff would recommend there be an extended exhibition period and opportunity provided for community groups to seek briefings on the DCP.

The Procurement Policy is due for review following the next Council election, the CEO advised that the review would take into consideration other Policies including the ACT Government, Albury and Bega.

Caitlin Nelson arrived at the meeting in person at 6.30pm

FOGO

The CEO advised that due to the departure of the Manager the bin audit and FOGO would be on hold. There has been an Acting Manager appointed to this position. It was also reinforced that the Committee is only advisory in nature, focus group sessions are required to have Council endorsement. The Committee only has an advisory function. It does not have delegation to run focus group sessions. Committee members are able to engage the community to assist with members bringing forward ideas/comments for consideration at Committee meetings.

5. Next Meeting

Tuesday 6 February 2024, at 6.00pm in Council Chambers 209 Comur Street, Yass

The meeting closed at 7.16 p.m.

4.1 DRAFT OPEN SPACE STRATEGY - POSSIBLE SUBMISSION

SUMMARY

The draft *Open Space Strategy* was placed on public exhibition on 29 January 2024. The draft Strategy sets out the rationale and recommendations for planning and provision of public open space to meet the needs of the Yass Valley community in its towns, villages and rural areas to 2036.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee review the contents of the draft Open Space Strategy and circulate comments out of session in order that a possible submission may be drafted for future consideration.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

POLICY & LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- Operational Plan

REPORT

As its December 2023 meeting Council resolved to place its draft *Open Space Strategy* on public exhibition for an extended period of 42 days commencing 29 January 2024. A limited briefing on the draft Strategy was provided to the Committee in October 2023.

The draft Strategy sets out current volumes of open space in the Local Government Area, considers the levels of demand for open space, describes a vision for open space in Yass Valley and sets out some 197 specific recommended actions across towns, villages and rural areas.

ATTACHMENTS: A. Draft Open Space Strategy (*Under Separate Cover*)

4.2 FOGO COLLECTION SERVICE - OUTSTANDING DATA REQUEST

SUMMARY

At its September 2023 meeting the Sustainability Advisory Committee recommended that Council conduct a bin audit, consistent with the guidelines issued by the EPA, in order to collect the necessary data to assist in the design of a future Food Organic/Garden Organic (FOGO) collection service.

It was also decided that the Committee should start engaging with the community on a future GOGO collection service, adapting materials from other local councils as appropriate.

It also further identified the need for Council staff to provide a definitive set of accurate and current data to the Committee, given the inconsistencies, contradictions and errors within the data publicly reported by Council to date. In the absence of such a dataset the Committee cannot provide appropriate advice.

RECOMMENDATION

That it is recommended that Council direct senior staff to expedite the conduct of a bin audit and the compilation of an accurate and current dataset. This would enable the Committee to provide meaningful advice on the design of a future FOGO collection service consistent with its responsibilities under the Sustainability Policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The introduction of a FOGO service will have financial implications for Council which needs to be identified as part of the design of a scheme.

POLICY & LEGISLATION

- Sustainability Policy

REPORT

Papers provided by Council to the Committee to date - including the September 2023 Committee briefing paper, the Business Paper report of 25 March 2020 and Council's own annual reporting to the EPA - are inconsistent and contradictory in their reporting of relevant waste and financial data.

A definitive set of accurate and up-to-date data will be required in combination with bin audit results if the Committee is to provide useful advice to Council on the design of a future FOGO service.

Accurate and up-to-date data will be valuable in the conduct of agreed focus group sessions, and will be essential for future grant applications. At a minimum the required dataset should cover:

- Volume and weight of actual green waste collected at transfer stations (averaged over a number of years and major variations explained)
- Number of current weekly residual waste (red bin) collections and estimated growth
- Current and estimated capacity of the existing collection vehicles (including major variations in daily and seasonal patterns)
- Current and anticipated landfill costs per tonne
- FOGO processing gate fees per tonne at regional facilities
- Estimated transport costs to regional facilities
- Existing and future anticipated capacity of regional processing facilities
- Equipment and labour costs (eg. it is unclear why the March 2020 report references both outright purchase and leasing costs for vehicles)
- Available surplus funding from the Waste Services Business, given existing and anticipated commitments

Additional data may also be sought by the Committee.

ATTACHMENTS: Nil

4.3 CRAGO MILL - SUSTAINABILITY IN DESIGN ISSUES

SUMMARY

In June 2021, the Climate Change and Natural Disaster (CCND) Risk Assessment recommended several actions relating to the proposed new Administrative Building and Library, including that the design of the Crago Mill Precinct should incorporate a community heat refuge, operate with separate or stand-alone power supply, and follow best practice energy efficiency design principles.

As part of the negotiation of the contract with the preferred tenderer for the Crago Mill Precinct a series of changes to the design have been agreed, however, these have not been publicly communicated.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council communicate to the Yass Valley community:

- *Whether the redesigned Crago Mill Precinct is fully responding to the recommendations made in the Climate Change and Natural Disaster Risk Assessment; and*
 - *How the adopted changes to the design – including amendments to lighting, ceilings, landscaping, roof and subfloor specifications – may or may not impact on the environmental standards of the buildings and the project's overall environmental sustainability.*
-

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Delivery Program and Operational Plan provide resources for the Crago Mill Precinct project.

POLICY & LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 1993*

REPORT

1. Background

At the first meeting of the Sustainability Advisory Committee in June 2022, the then Director of Infrastructure & Assets indicated that the Committee's input into the sustainable design of the Crago Mill Redevelopment would be appropriate and welcomed.

To date, the Committee has not been afforded the opportunity to provide its advice on this matter.

Given that issues of design appear now effectively 'locked in', the best advice the Committee can arguably now give to Council is that it properly communicates to the Yass Valley community: how environmental and sustainability standards are being built into the Crago Mill Project; and how the project is responding to the recommendations of the June 2021 *Climate Change and Natural Disaster Risk Assessment*.

Such communication should go beyond the generalities provided to date and state concrete details on what is being done, how it has changed during the negotiations and how it is responding to environmental and sustainability needs.

2. Summary of Relevant CCND Risk Assessment Findings

The June 2021 recommendations of the *Climate Change and Natural Disaster Risk Assessment* identified the following climate change impacts for Yass Valley:

- Increased daily average temperature, daily minimum and daily maximum temperatures
- More extreme temperatures
- Increased and longer heatwaves
- Likely changes in seasonal rainfall
- Increased intensity of rainfall during storms
- More droughts

- An increase in number of severe fire weather days in summer and spring

Twenty eight climate induced risks were considered to have potentially significant consequences for Yass Valley Council, including:

- Damage to energy infrastructure leading to loss of reliable power supply
- Damage to, accelerated deterioration of, transport infrastructure
- Reduced water storage and damage to water treatment facilities
- Increased demand for community services including aged care facilities and libraries
- Increased use of power for council facilities and community centres
- Reducing the sewerage system's ability to cope causing contamination
- Trapping people in floods and fires leading to death and injury
- Need for evacuation centres for community in fire and flood zones
- Loss of industry leading to ratepayers defaulting on rates and businesses moving away
- Increased dispersion of pests and weeds
- Over burdening of the stormwater system, watercourses and flood sinks

Amongst opportunities for Council identified in June 2021 report were:

- Better resource efficiency e.g. energy efficiencies in buildings, water efficiency, storage, collection, treatment and reuse for resilience against future droughts
- More efficient technology and business practices
- Local renewable energy generation, increased energy efficiency, ongoing climate and natural disaster action
- Building resilience through taking action on climate change
- Incorporating climate and natural disaster risks into business and development plans, strategies and infrastructure designs

In particular, the 2021 report recommended that Council should:

- Design its assets and facilities to better withstand severe weather events
- Install backup generators at all critical infrastructure sites
- Explore alternative renewable power sources
- As part of redevelopment of the administrative building/library:
 - Establish a Heat Refuge for the community in extreme conditions
 - Design the centre such that it need not connect to a reticulated gas supply.

These last recommendations were put forward because of the likelihood that critical infrastructure could lose power supply under differing natural disasters and extreme circumstances. It was also suggested that in addition to installing standalone solar capacity, that battery storage be incorporated into the design.

It is unclear whether, and how, the current design for the Crago Mill Precinct responds to these imperatives.

ATTACHMENTS: Nil

5.4 COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN SURVEY

SUMMARY

As part of the community engagement a survey for Yass Valley residents is being undertaken to ensure the *Towards 2042 Community Strategic Plan* is an accurate representation of our future.

RECOMMENDATION

That the members of the Sustainability Advisory Committee complete the survey and encourage their peers and fellow residents to do the same, prior to 15 March 2024.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

POLICY & LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- Office of Local Government IP&R Guidelines

REPORT

Council is one of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO) councils who do a Regional Community Strategic Plan (CSP). This year we are undertaking a survey to ensure the CSP accurately represents the community perspective of the Yass Valley future.

The CSP will be updated in 2025 after the Council elections in September 2024.

This survey will allow us to continue to plan our Delivery Program and Operational Plan in accordance with the Towards 2042 Regional CSP.

The survey is open from 1 February to 15 March 2024 and can be completed by the following methods:

- Online link found on council's website
- QR code on council's website
- Hard copies are available at the Administration Office, Yass Valley Information Centre, or Yass Library.

Council Executive Team and Councillors are attending most village community meetings to present the survey (refer **Attachment A**) and encourage as many in the community to have their say.

ATTACHMENTS: A. CSP Community Engagement Presentation (*Under Separate Cover*)

5.5 GREEN WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECENT ASBESTOS INCIDENT UPDATE

SUMMARY

To provide an update on green waste management and the recent asbestos incident at the Yass Transfer Station.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report on the green waste management and recent asbestos incident be noted.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Resources for green waste management and asbestos removal include in Operational Plan.

POLICY & LEGISLATION

- Local Government Act 1993
- Safework Guidelines

REPORT

1. Green Waste Management

Currently green waste dumped at the transfer station is turned into mulch and reused. This process is normally undertaken by a contractor. The contractor removes waste from the site at no cost to Council. Council currently does not have the infrastructure or machinery to process the mulch correctly due to contaminants ie wood, nails, plastic, weeds etc. All contaminants must be treated and killed and/or removed before selling.

2. Asbestos Incident

The recent asbestos incident at the Yass Transfer Station was the result of a mixed load of waste being received at the site. There was no observable evidence of asbestos in the load and the waste was placed in the pit. The vehicle then proceeded to leave the site. An inspection of the pit by a staff member identified black plastic and what appeared to be asbestos sheets. The transfer station was immediately closed so that another load was not placed in the pit. Waste staff organised appropriately qualified water staff to attend the site. The assessment was that the asbestos sheeting was not friable, and the quantity was less than 10m² so the material was triple bagged and remove to a safe storage area at the water treatment plant.

ATTACHMENTS: Nil

5.6 ELECTRIC VEHICLES AND CHARGERS UPDATE

SUMMARY

To present an update on electric vehicles in the Council fleet and provision of new charging stations.

RECOMMENDATION

That the update report on electric vehicles and chargers be noted.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The capital costs for Council of electric vehicles remain significantly higher than conventional vehicles.

POLICY & LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- Procurement and Disposal Policy

REPORT

In July 2022 a report was presented to the Committee on electric vehicles. The Committee supported the Council decision to closely monitor the domestic electric vehicle market, the range of vehicles offered, price and infrastructure upgrades, to ensure that future decisions made consider fit-for-purpose and providing value-for-money.

Since the report Council's *Car Leasing Administration Policy* has been revised to provide for electric vehicles to be added to the fleet. The latest advice is that the capital cost of electric vehicles remains significantly higher than standard vehicles and if implemented would extend the turnover period for other vehicles fleet (and reduce the return currently received for these vehicles).

The State Government have established a Destination EV Charging Program (Round 2). There is \$20M of funding available to eligible NSW regional based Councils and businesses to apply for 75% of the cost to purchase and install EV chargers.

While the program appears attractive the ongoing operating and maintenance costs become the responsibility for Council. This will also add further administrative costs to Council. Council does not have the resources for this service.

With the current EV chargers presently in Yass Valley the providers (i.e. Tesla, NRMA, Evie) are responsible for operating and maintaining the chargers. The current approach with these electric vehicle chargers means that the facilities are provided for residents and tourists without cost to Council. Council staff will continue to engage with these providers for the installation for further EV chargers.

ATTACHMENTS: Nil