

OPERATIONAL PLAN 2025-26

QUARTER FOUR REVIEW

1 April to 30 June 2026

The *2025-26 Operational Plan* is developed by the Senior Leadership and Executive Leadership teams of Western Downs Regional Council, in response to the commitments of Council's *Corporate Plan 2021 - 2026*

A DIVERSE REGION AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE CHANGING WORLD

MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Advocacy - A Regional Voice

To actively seek and foster strategic partnerships | For a long term domestic and industrial water supply for our region | For health and social services that ensure 'Whole of Life' care for our residents |
For a safe and well maintained state and federal road network | For telecommunications and digital connectivity to support and advance our region

Risk Appetite Statement

Council has a high appetite for initiatives where there is good understanding of the risk, and there is confidence that the outcomes will lead to significant business improvements or service delivery

Culture Statement

Here at Western Downs Regional Council - *It's The People that Make It!*
We act as one, committed to empowering productive teams with our people enjoying high levels of personal job satisfaction.

Safety Statement

Council is committed to maintaining a safe working environment for all its employees, contractors and visitors. At work, our primary objective is to put health, safety and well-being first.

Managing Operational Risks

Section 175 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* requires that the Operational Plan include a statement as to how Council manage operational risk. The operational planning process includes management of Council's strategic and operational risks. Council's commitment to risk management is outline in the *Enterprise Risk Management Policy* and *Enterprise Risk Management Framework* and is guided by the *Risk Management Standards AS ISO 31000:2018*

Commercial Business Units

An annual performance plan for each commercial business unit of the local government is required to be included (where applicable) in the operational plan. In assessing Council operations in line with the annual expenditure threshold limits for significant business activities prescribed within the regulation; Council does not currently operate any commercial business units as defined within the legislation.

Review and Reporting

Council's *Corporate Plan 2021 - 2026* provides clear and concise strategic direction to guide operational activities. The plan identifies four strategic priorities (Strong Diverse Economy | Active Vibrant Communities | Quality Lifestyle | Sustainable Organisation) and outlines the success we are aspiring to achieve under each of the priority area. The operational plan is reviewed, assessed and reported to Council on a quarterly basis. An annual review of the corporate and operational plans is also presented to Council and the community in the annual report.

Quarterly Progress Legend

	On Track	Is progressing as scheduled towards being completed by the expected completion date
	Not Started	Not scheduled to commence until later in the Operational Plan cycle
	Needs Attention	Factors affecting the delivery
	Completed	100% complete within the expected completion date, no further reporting required
	Not Achieved	Will not be achieved
	Extended	Not delivered by the expected completion date but will be completed at a later nominated date



ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT Quarter Four 2025-26 STRATEGIC RISKS : Strategic Risks relate to the Whole of Council. These risks affect the longer-term interests of the Council and the Community, they affect service delivery, and they have an organisation wide focus											
Area of Risk	The Risk	Inherent Risk - Consequence	Inherent Risk - Likelihood	Inherent Risk - Impact	Mitigation / Control Measures currently in place	Residual Consequence	Residual Likelihood	Residual Consequence	Effectiveness of Current Measures	Treatment for Residual Risk level	Responsible Officer?
FINANCE Low Risk Appetite	Council's long term financial sustainability being impacted by long term operating deficits.	Major	Almost Certain	Extreme	- Long-term strategic planning, financial planning and annual budgets are aligned with Council's current Corporate Plan, Operational Plan and Financial Management and Investment Strategy. - Service levels are defined and used as a basis for annual budget development. Income and expenditure modelling is based on current service levels and includes conservative population growth forecasts - A strategic asset management plan (whole of Council) and individual asset management plans (per asset class) are aligned with Council's long-term financial forecasts and capital works programmes - Council's Financial Investment and Management Strategy is committed to capital preservation. Capital funding needs (including the use of debt) are incorporated into long-term financial planning - Progress against budget is monitored and reported to Council monthly with the requirement for budget reviews determined by Council's Budget Policy - A minimum of three audit and risk committee meetings are held per annum and a three year strategic internal audit plan developed - Procurement and contracting practices reflect sound contracting principles taking into account risk and value - Councillors, employees and contractors are trained in delegations (financial and non-financial) and procurement practices relevant to their roles - Sound procurement practice which is delivering real savings (proactive) - Workforce planning considers affordability of positions - Relevant insurance policies are regularly reviewed to mitigate against high risk events and replace high value assets	Minor	Unlikely	Low	Good	RETAIN the Risk	Chief Financial Officer
TECHNOLOGY Low Risk Appetite	Loss of system and data impacting on operations	Catastrophic	Almost Certain	Extreme	- Backup to new cloud backup infrastructure (Proactive) - Database replication (every 15 minutes to Azure) - Virtual server backups daily (and replicated to Azure) - Virtualised server environment (Proactive) - Change Management practices in place (Proactive) - Monthly security patching (Proactive) - Infrastructure Systems Monitoring for availability - Solarwinds (Proactive) - Daily audit reports available for Civica Authority (Reactive) - Continual improvement of Standard Work Practices (Proactive) - Response plans - Business Continuity Plan, Disaster Recovery and Incident Response Plan (Proactive) - Mobile device/storage encryption (Proactive) - Staff awareness program on cyber security (Proactive) - Endpoint security platforms in place (Proactive) - Data Loss Prevention (DLP) service in place (Reactive) - Ongoing security/penetration testing (Proactive) - Biannual Testing of Disaster Recovery - one Isolation disaster recovery test and one full disaster recovery test (Proactive) - Up to date Policies (Proactive) - Cyber security insurance (Reactive) - Identity and user access control - ensuring effective role-based security (Proactive) - OneDrive Data Sync (End User Devices: Documents, Desktop, Favourites folders)	Moderate	Possible	Moderate	Good	RETAIN the Risk	ICT Manager
BUSINESS CONTINUITY Low Risk Appetite	Council unable to continue to deliver critical business functions and services in a disruptive event.	Major	Almost Certain	Extreme	- Business Continuity Policy, and Business Continuity Framework reviewed and endorsed by Executive Management Team (Proactive) - Business Impact Analysis conducted to identify critical business functions/services required to operate during a disruptive event (Proactive) - Business Impact Analysis reviewed and endorsed by Executive Management Team (Proactive) - Business Continuity Plans developed and stored in the cloud for all critical functions/services identified by Business Impact Analysis (Proactive) - Business Continuity Plans endorsed by Executive Management Team (Proactive) - Business Continuity Plan Policy, Framework, Business Impact Analysis and Business Continuity Plans independently reviewed (Proactive) - Data backup and disaster recovery cloud based enabling access during a disruptive event	Moderate	Unlikely	Moderate	Good	RETAIN the Risk	General Manager Corporate Services
DISASTER RESILIENCE Low Risk Appetite	Business and community unable to effectively respond or recover in the event of a disaster	Major	Likely	Significant	- Effective contract management (Proactive) - Safety systems (Proactive) - Effective procurement policies/management (Proactive) - Effective management of Disaster Management Plan (Proactive) - Other providers available to do the work if the core supplier fails (in some instances) (Reactive) - Preferred Supplier Arrangements in place (Proactive) - IT Disaster Recovery (Reactive) - Coordinated internal and external corporate communications (Reactive) - Monitoring of weather forecasts (including flood alerts) (Proactive) - QERMF Risk Assessments on Natural Hazards (Proactive) - WDRG Guardian IMS and Disaster Dashboard	Moderate	Possible	Moderate	Fair	RETAIN the Risk	Disaster Management Officer
FRAUD & CORRUPTION Zero Risk Appetite	Significant misappropriation or theft of Council funds / assets / information. Exposure to fraud or corruption - damage to reputation, organisational culture and financial loss.	Major	Almost Certain	Extreme	- Separate Fraud Risk Register Established that identifies proactive and reactive controls (Proactive) - Risk owners and risk managers required to provide annual statements attesting to active identification and management of risk (Proactive) - Fraud and corruption Policy and Framework in place and reviewed regularly (Proactive) - Regular fraud and corruption awareness training program (Proactive) - Regular ethics training program (Proactive) - Employee code of conduct in place (Proactive) - Councillor code of conduct in place (Proactive) - Effective leave management in place (Proactive) - Systems in place for reporting suspected fraudulent or corrupt activity (Proactive) - Delegations of authority including financial delegations (Proactive) - Financial system controls (Proactive) - Controls in place for software system user access (Proactive) - Expenditure and payments system financial controls in place (Reactive) - Segregation of duties (Proactive) - Management accountability to actively monitor for fraud and corruption (Reactive) - System access control and forced revision of passwords (Proactive) - Action taken if theft/misappropriation occurs (Reactive) - Fraud risk routinely discussed as agenda item at all team meetings (Proactive) - Internal audit function overseen by Audit and Risk Committee (Proactive) - Budget approval and review process (Reactive) - Conflict of Interest declarations, secondary employment declarations (Proactive) - Police checks undertaken as part of pre-employment assessments for all relevant positions (Proactive) - Established and widely promoted organisational values (Proactive) - Independent Internal Audit oversight (Proactive) - External contract Internal Audit function provides broader experience and skill sets to audit (Proactive) - Ethics and Fraud LMS module (Proactive) - Focus on building positive organisational culture (Proactive) Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Procedure (Proactive) Leadership Guidebook (Proactive)	Moderate	Possible	Moderate	Good	RETAIN the Risk	Customer Support and Governance Manager

STRATEGIC ENTERPRISE RISKS - <i>Continued</i>											
Area of Risk	The Risk	Inherent Risk - Consequence	Inherent Risk - Likelihood	Inherent Risk - Impact	Mitigation / Control Measures currently in place	Residual Consequence	Residual Likelihood	Residual Consequence	Effectiveness of Current Measures	Treatment for Residual Risk level	Responsible Officer?
CULTURE High Risk Appetite	The work culture is inconsistent with the organisation's objectives	Major	Likely	Significant	- Established Organisational Structure (Proactive) - Council performance reporting (Reactive) - Corporate and Operational Plan Quarterly reporting (Reactive) - Employee Performance Agreements in place (Proactive) - Corporate Onboarding (Proactive) - Learning and Development Framework in place (Proactive) - Staff Risk appetite awareness (Proactive) - Staff Recognition and Length of Service programmes (Proactive) - Staff Mentoring programme - Internal Communication Systems (Intranet, staff meetings, messaging, localising, and engaging) (Proactive) - GROW@Work programme - Staff Leave management (Proactive) - Performance management (Proactive) - Staff values clearly communicated (Proactive) - WorkVibe (Proactive) 'We Are WDRC' Awards (Proactive) - Employee Wellness Programmes (Proactive) - Safety First (Proactive)	Moderate	Possible	Moderate	Good	RETAIN the Risk	General Manager Corporate Services
SAFETY Low Risk Appetite	Safety - injuring workers and decreased Community wellbeing	Major	Likely	Significant	- Established Workplace Safety Management System (includes consultation, training and awareness) (Proactive) - Risk assessments carried out and standard work practices in place for the delivery of essential services (Proactive) - Compliance with Standards/Legislation (Reactive) - Incidents are recorded in Beakon "incident management system" (Reactive). - Training is conducted for all relevant staff on the use of Beakon "incident management system"(Proactive) - Risk trends are identified in all Council areas and activities (Proactive) - There is a Safety audit program across Council - includes Safety Walk attended by Executive and WHS Representatives (Proactive) - Focus training is delivered to staff based on a needs analysis (Proactive) - A rehabilitation service is in place for early return to work of injured workers (Proactive) - Upskilling training is provided for WHS Advisors and IR&R(Proactive) - Tool box talks conducted with staff in high risk areas (Proactive) - Plant used by Council staff is 'fit for purpose' (Proactive) - Statewide workplace injury trends are monitored (Proactive) - Safety First culture is embedded across Council (Proactive) - In-house programs are delivered (ie. Mental Health/Wellbeing programs, 10,000 steps, flu vaccinations, job specific immunisations) (Proactive) - Pre-employment medicals/declarations and Fit for Work assessment - A fleet risk management plan has been developed with improvement actions identified. - Targeted training implemented for repeat incidents (Proactive)	Moderate	Unlikely	Moderate	Good	RETAIN the Risk	Chief Human Resource Officer
CLIMATE CHANGE High Risk Appetie	Infrastructure assets - accelerated deterioration, higher maintenance costs, lower asset useful life, impact on long-term asset management and planning. Increase in frequency and severity of weather events. Funding gaps in financial cost of recovery. Impacts to natural environment and culturally significant areas (implications for public health, recreation and amenity). Disruption to service delivery to community. Insurance costs - higher insured losses, increase in premiums. Public liability risks through failure to consider climate change impacts in planning and asset managment. Funding increase in operating costs - power, maintenance, irrigation. Potential increase in impact of compounding events e.g. multiple concurrent flood events.	Moderate	Likely	Significant	Resilience Design and Planning (Proactive) Carbon Charter (Proactive) Emissions reduction (Proactive) Transition to renewables (Proactive) Staff training and awareness (Proactive) Collaboration with other tiers of government on risk mitigation (Proactive) Flood modelling and mitigation (Proactive) Access to LGMS modelling tools (Swiss Re's Sustainability Compass) (Proactive) ALGA climate adaptation fund (Proactive) Insurance as a risk mitigation (Proactive)	Moderate	Possible	Moderate	Good	RETAIN the Risk	Executive Leadership Team
SMART Digital Project Low Risk Appetite	Project resourcing - financial, internal staff, external/vendor. Deliverables/Project benefit realisation - training, functionality, cost savings, efficiency, reporting. Implementation - internal/external user acceptance. Vendor Management & Vendor Resourcing.	Catastrophic	Almost Certain	Extreme	Project Executive Steering Group Meeting - held monthly CEO & SMART Project Manager meet fortnightly, report to Exec, Council & Audit Committee Weekly meetings with third party vendors Module champions BAU positions backfilled Risk registers and project governance in place. Risks reported up to project Executive. Regular budget monitoring and variation approval appropriate to financial delegation. External resourcing brought into project - xAmplify (previously Green Cloud Consulting). Organisation focused on project as key operational project. Regular, high-level meetings held with vendor to ensure project is appropriately resourced from vendor perspective. Functional Group Testing and User Acceptance Testing completed with approval gates in place to ensure deliverable requirements are met. Change management program and Change Manager in place to manage organisaitonal acceptance of new system. Project Sharepoint in place, regular project updates provided to senior staff and all staff emails to update on project status and targets. Development of SWP's for all processes. Training resources available via Tech One University. Data storage management via effective use of retention and disposal schedules. Testing and documentation of Go-Live processes. Maintenance of unmigrated data within legacy systems. Access to legacy systems is maintained or data is migrated to alternative storage that maintains access and data integrity. Program pause post Stage 3 to provide break for staff and to consolidate implementation. Acceptance of extended timeframes for rollout and consequential penalties. Project pause to clear backlog of implementation helpdesk tickets with vendor to ensure project benefit realisation.	Moderate	Possible	Moderate	Good	RETAIN the Risk	Chief Executive Officer

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: QUALITY LIFESTYLE (PLACE) 											
Success Drivers	Actions	Accountability	Expected Completion Date	Q1 Progress	Q2 Progress	Q3 Progress	Q4 Progress	Amended Completion Date	Measure of Success (a measurable outcome as direct result of this Action)	Quarterly Outcome	
Our residents are provided with modern infrastructure and quality essential services across our region Our recreational spaces and community facilities are attractive, safe and accessible We invest in safe, well maintained road networks to connect our region and support economic activities We attract families to live, work, prosper and play in our region We take pride in our natural assets, environment and heritage	Council's <i>Waste Infrastructure Strategy</i> is renewed to ensure that its portfolio of waste facilities continues to address community needs for waste disposal and recycling opportunities and to address ongoing State Government Waste Levy obligations	Planning and Environment Manager	31/03/2026					31/03/2026	A renewed <i>Waste Infrastructure Strategy</i> is approved by Council.	The project has progressed and consultant review completed. The matter was discussed at an Executive Leadership Team session on 25 May 2026 and at a Councillor information session on 4 August 2026. It is anticipated that the project will be completed by 30 September 2026.	

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION (PERFORMANCE) 											
Success Drivers	Actions	Accountability	Expected Completion Date	Q1 Progress	Q2 Progress	Q3 Progress	Q4 Progress	Amended Completion Date	Measure of Success (a measurable outcome as direct result of this Action)	Quarterly Outcome	
We are recognised as a financially intelligent and responsible Council We focus on proactive, sustainable planning for the future Our people are skilled and values-driven to make a real difference Our agile and responsive business model enable us to align our capacity with service delivery Our effective asset management ensures that we responsibly maintain our community assets	Capital works programme aligns with asset management plans and organisational capability.	Chief Executive Officer	30/06/2026						The 2026-2027 Capital Works Programme is developed and presented to Council with a focus on one-hundred (100) per cent delivery of the programme.	The 2026-27 Capital Works Programme was adopted by Council on 18 June 2026. The programme was developed with expectation of 100 per cent delivery and in alignment with asset management plans.	
	Progress Council's Digital Programme initiatives in accordance with the revised <i>Digital Roadmap 2022-2027</i> .	Digital Programme Manager	27/07/2026					10/05/2027	Phase Three of the Five year programme is delivered for go live on 27 July 2026. Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) delivered in accordance with the TechnologyOne Contract.	Phase Three has been delayed and has been rescheduled to be delivered for go live on 10 May 2027.	
	Continue multi-year project to build a new suite of local laws to ensure Council's laws consider the contemporary needs, expectations, and lifestyles of the Western Downs' communities and the organisation.	Customer Support and Governance Manager	30/06/2026						Complete local law drafting. Commence community consultation process.	Local law drafting progressing. The drafting cannot be completed until after the community consultation process. Community engagement 'Have Your Say ' commenced 12 May 2026.	
	Water supply business is reviewed considering full cost pricing model and water charges strategy developed.	Utilities Manager	31/12/2025					31/03/2026	<i>Water Charges Strategy</i> report is completed and presented to Council.	The Water and Wastewater Strategy has been presented and adopted by Council. The proposed increase to water charges to achieve minimum cost recovery was presented to Council and adopted during budget deliberations.	
	Secure new natural gas build supply contract and large commercial gas customer contracts.	Utilities Manager	31/12/2025					30/06/2026	31 December 2025 - new natural gas bulk supply contract is secured over five year term. 31 March 2026 - large commercial gas customer contracts are renewed, reflective of terms and conditions of bulk supply contract.	The natural gas bulk supply contract has been executed. The large commercial gas customer contract has been finalised and executed.	
	Develop Corporate Plan 2027 - 2031.	Customer Support and Governance Manager	31/12/2025					31/03/2026	<i>Corporate Plan 2027 - 2031</i> is adopted.	<i>Corporate Plan 2027 - 2031</i> adopted at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 15 January 2026.	

ADVOCACY - A REGIONAL VOICE 											
Success Drivers	Actions	Accountability	Expected Completion Date	Q1 Progress	Q2 Progress	Q3 Progress	Q4 Progress	Amended Completion Date	Measure of Success (a measurable outcome as direct result of this Action)	Quarterly Outcome	
To actively seek and foster strategic partnerships For a long term domestic and industrial water supply for our region For a health and social services that ensure 'Whole of Life' care for our residents For a safe and well maintained state and federal road network For telecommunications and digital connectivity to support and advance our region	Seek local business and industry support to amplify the advocacy efforts communicating the region's need for new bulk water supply.	Chief Executive Officer	30/06/2026						Alignment in advocacy 'ask' between Council and key business and industry stakeholders, exemplified by completed statements of commitment from key partners.	The Western Downs Critical Infrastructure Advocacy Roundtable was delivered in April 2026, attended by eighteen (18) participants.	