

2025-26

ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN & BUDGET

DRAFT FOR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION



Kaurna Acknowledgement

Ngadlurlu tampinhi, ngadlu Kaurna
yartangka inparrinhi. Ngadlurlu
parnuku tuwila yartangka tampinhi.
Ngadlurlu Kaurna Miyurna yaitya
yarta mathanya Wama Tarntanyaku
tampinhi. Parnuku yaitya,
parnuku tapa purruna yalarra
puru purruna.

Kaurna Translation provided by
Kaurna Warra Karrpanthi

We would like to acknowledge that the
City of Unley is part of the traditional
lands of the Kaurna people and we
respect their spiritual relationship with
their country.

We acknowledge the Kaurna people as
the traditional custodians of the
Adelaide region and that their cultural
and heritage beliefs are still as important
to the living Kaurna people today.



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Community Consultation

The Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget can be viewed online via yoursay.unley.sa.gov.au. Printed copies are available for viewing at the Civic Centre, Libraries and Community Centres.

Submissions

Public Consultation opens Friday 2 May 2025

You can make a submissions via:

Visiting ***Your Say Unley*** at:

yoursay.unley.sa.gov.au

Writing a submission and sending it to:

2025-26 Budget Consultation
City of Unley
PO Box 1
Unley SA 5061

Emailing a submission to:

pobox1@unley.sa.gov.au

To be received not later than 11:59pm on Monday 26 May 2025.

Community Consultation Meetings

Three community consultation meetings will be held, and include an overview of the proposed 2025-26 Annual Business Plan and Budget, and an opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed **Annual Business Plan and Budget** and **Rating Policy** for 2025-26.

- **Monday 12 May 2025**
Clarence Park Community Centre,
4:30pm to 5:30pm
- **Tuesday 13 May 2025**
Fullarton Park Community Centre
4:30pm to 5:30pm
- **Monday 26 May 2025**
City of Unley Council Chambers,
4:30pm to 5:30pm

**Consultation closes at 11:59pm
Monday 26 May 2025.**

Elected Members

The Mayor and Elected Members are elected by the local community to represent **the interests and needs of the community**.

Elected Members provide community leadership and guidance and facilitate communication between the community and the Council.

They play an important policy-making role, requiring the identification of community needs, setting objectives to meet those needs, establishing priorities between competing demands and allocating resources.

There are 13 Elected Members on the Council of the City of Unley including the Mayor, Michael Hewitson AM.

MAYOR



Michael Hewitson AM

CLARENCE PARK Ward Councillors



Don Palmer



Rebekah Rogers

FULLARTON Ward Councillors



Jack Gaffey



Peter Hughes

GOODWOOD Ward Councillors



Chris Crabbe



Tony Roach

PARKSIDE Ward Councillors



Jennifer Bonham



Luke Doyle

UNLEY Ward Councillors



Stephen Finos



Jane Russo

UNLEY PARK Ward Councillors



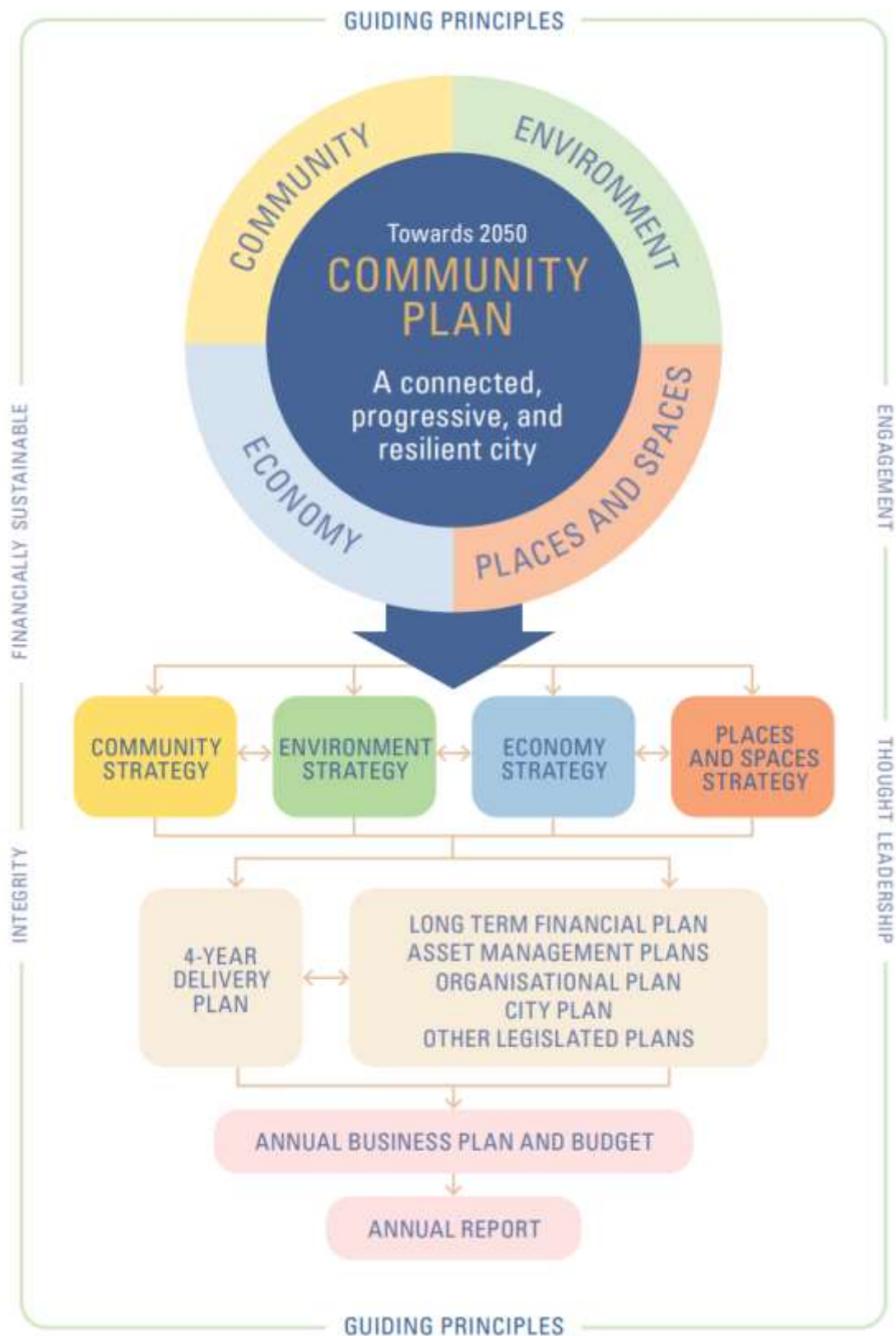
Monica Broniecki



Michael Rabbitt

Strategic Planning Context

Strategic Planning Framework



Explanation of the Framework

Our Strategic Planning Framework reflects how our organisational strategies and plans support the delivery of our Community Plan 'Towards 2050'.

Our Community Plan sets our strategic direction for the next 25 years, outlining key goals and objectives. It serves as the foundational structure for guiding our detailed strategies and plans. Our 4-Year Delivery Plan translates the Community Plan vision into action, outlining the steps we will take to achieve its goals and objectives in the short to medium term.

A new suite of overarching strategies, aligned to each theme of the Community Plan, will be developed in 2025-26. These lead strategies will serve as high-level frameworks that define our strategic priorities, identify key opportunities, and address potential challenges. By providing a clear and cohesive

direction, these strategies will guide decision-making, resource allocation, and program development, ensuring that our efforts are effectively aligned with the long-term vision and aspirations of our community.

We will deliver our strategies and plans through effective financial management, guided by our 4 Year Delivery Plan and Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP). Our LTFP will ensure resources are allocated effectively and efficiently.

This document, our Annual Business Plan and Budget sets out our priorities, activities, and budgets each year to demonstrate how your rates support community services, programs and infrastructure, whilst also being innovative to deliver best community outcomes.

Regular monitoring and reporting will be undertaken to keep us accountable, ensuring we meet our commitments and demonstrate the value we deliver to our community.





About this Plan & Budget

Background

Under Section 123 of the *Local Government Act 1999*, Council is required to have a budget for each financial year. The budget must be considered as part of the Council's Annual Business Plan.

Before a council adopts its Annual Business Plan it must prepare a draft Annual Business Plan and undertake a public consultation process. Consultation on this plan will be undertaken between 2 May to 26 May 2025.

All feedback collected during this period will be considered by the Elected Members of Council at a Budget Workshop in order to finalise Council's 2025-26 Annual Business Plan and Budget.

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the Annual Business Plan is to impart an understanding of:

- Annual objectives for the year in the context of Council's long-term objectives,
- Overview of the activities and services provided by Council,
- Key financial information relating to revenue and expenditure,
- Proposed new initiatives and projects,
- Rating context and impact of rates for 2025-26, and
- Council's Financial Planning Framework including Long-Term Financial Plan and Asset Management Plans.



Measuring Performance

Council measures its achievements and financial performance through the following processes:

- Regular financial reporting to Executive and Council,
- Quarterly corporate performance report to Executive and Council,
- Budget Reviews in accordance with legislation,
- Annual review of the Long-Term Financial Plan,
- Review and input from Council's Audit and Risk Committee,
- Production of an Annual Report including audited financial statements, and
- Community Engagement.



Budget Overview

Background

The Draft Business Plan and Budget for 2025-26 has been prepared in accordance with the priorities within our Community Plan Towards 2050 and the Draft 4 Year Delivery Plan 2025-26 to 2029-30, with due consideration of its key financial indicators.

Forecast rate income is based on the following assumptions:

- **General Rate increase (average)** **3.5%**
- **Increase from new rateable properties and improvements** **0.5%**

The General Rate increase for 2025-26 will be considered further by Council in June following feedback from Community Consultation.

Please note the information in this draft budget excludes:

- Council's equity accounted businesses, namely the Centennial Park Cemetery Authority, the Brown Hill Keswick Creek Stormwater Project and East Waste.
- Potential carry forwards for capital projects, noting the delivery timeframes of some 2024-25 projects have been impacted by supply issues.

Key Financial Targets

Council has reviewed its Key Financial Targets after considering its draft Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP). The Key Financial Targets are:

Operating Surplus Ratio

Adopted Target	Annual ratio 4% - 6% 5% average over the life of the LTFP
Draft Budget	3.5%

Net Financial Liabilities Ratio

Adopted Target	< 80%
Draft Budget	14%

Asset Renewal Funding Ratio

Adopted Target	100% average over the life of the LTFP
Draft Budget	101%

Asset Sustainability Ratio

Adopted Target	100% average over the life of the LTFP
Draft Budget	104%

Further information regarding the key financial targets are included on pages 39-43.



Rates Overview

This Draft 2025-26 Annual Business Plan and Budget has been developed based on an **average** increase in General Rates income of 3.5%, plus an additional 0.5% representing the estimated increase in revenue from new developments and capital improvements to existing properties.

The proposed average General Rate increase of 3.5% is 1% above Adelaide CPI for December 2024 of 2.5%.

The proposed increase in General Rates will be considered further by Council in June following feedback from community consultation.

The rates assessment (rates payable) for a specific property will be dependent upon the 2025-26 capital valuation for the property, as assessed by the Valuer General, and the movement in that valuation relative to all other properties with the same differential rate.

Council rates from new developments, and capital improvements to existing properties, will be confirmed by the Valuer General in early June, and included in the Annual Business Plan and Budget presented to Council for adoption in June.

Valuation Method

The Council uses the capital value method of valuing properties. This method values the land and all improvements on the land. It is the most widely used method across South Australian councils.

Minimum Rate

The proposed minimum rate for 2025-26 is \$1,028. This represents an increase of 3.5% compared to 2024-25.

It is estimated there will be approximately 3,855 assessments paying the minimum rate in 2025-26.

Differential General Rates

Council will declare three differential General Rates according to the land use category, as outlined in the table below.

Category 1	Residential
Category 2	Commercial Shop Industrial Light Industry Other Vacant Land Other
Category 3	Commercial Office Commercial Other

The proposed average increase by Land Use Category is provided on page 33.



Rating of short-stay rental accommodation

Council is proposing a change in land use classification for residential properties offering short-stay rental accommodation, commencing as of 1 July 2025.

If implemented, the change would increase the council rates for short-stay rental accommodation properties to match those of traditional tourist accommodation properties. This proposed change aims to:

- Address the limited availability of residential properties for long-term rental accommodation within the City of Unley; and
- To ensure fairness in rating between traditional tourist accommodation providers (e.g., hotels, motels) and short-stay rental accommodation businesses such as (but not limited to) Airbnb and Stayz.

The Commercial Other land use classification, if applied, would be reviewed annually and apply for the full financial year from July to June.

Further details of this proposed change is are provided on page 31.

Council is seeking feedback on this proposal as part of the community consultation on this Draft 2025-26 Annual Business Plan and Budget.

Separate Rate for Main Street Trader Associations

Council proposes to continue to raise a separate rate for the promotion of businesses and traders along major shopping strips (excluding Glen Osmond Road). Council collects the separate rate and contracts with the Main Street Trader Associations for the provision of marketing, street beautification and minor value-added infrastructure projects. Further details regarding the Separate Rate for the Main Street Trader Associations are provided on page 34.

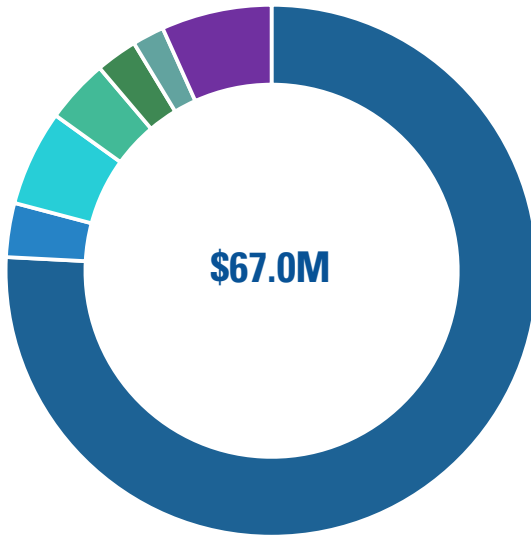


Financial Summary

\$'000	2024-25 Forecast	2025-26 Draft Budget
Income		
General Rates Income	48,849	50,804
Other Rates and Levies	2,243	2,240
Statutory Charges	1,904	1,655
User Charges	2,465	2,626
Grants, Subsidies & Contributions - Operating	3,812	3,870
Investment Income	315	50
Reimbursements	217	221
Other Income	1,310	1,049
Projects	40	10
Total Income	61,154	62,524
Expenditure		
Employee Costs	20,885	22,440
Materials, Contracts & Other Expenses	22,363	22,477
Depreciation, Amortisation & Impairment	12,247	12,731
Finance Costs	81	334
Operating Projects	2,966	2,322
Total Expenditure	58,542	60,304
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	2,612	2,220
Capital Renewal Expenditure (net)	13,922	12,866
New Capital Expenditure (net)	6,085	6,586
Total Capital Expenditure (net)	20,007	19,452
Add back Depreciation	12,247	12,731
Operating Surplus/(Deficit) less capital expenditure	(5,148)	(4,501)
Fixed Term Borrowings		
Cash Advance Debenture (CAD Borrowings)	2,994	7,495
Total Borrowings	2,994	7,495
Repayment of Fixed Term Borrowings	288	-
Repayment/(draw-down) of CAD	(2,994)	(4,501)
Net repayment/(draw down) of borrowings	(2,706)	(4,501)

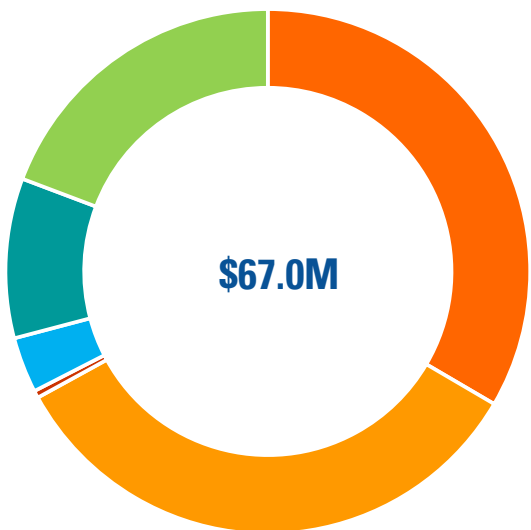
The draft Budgeted Financial Statements for the 2025-26 financial year exclude the Equity Accounted Businesses (Centennial Park Cemetery Authority, Brown Hill Keswick Creek Stormwater Project, and East Waste) for the purposes of community consultation.

Where our funding comes from



■ General Rates	\$50.8M	75.8%
■ Other Rates & Levies (including Landscape Levy)	\$2.2M	3.3%
■ Grants & Subsidies & Contributions	\$3.9M	5.8%
■ User Fees	\$2.6M	3.9%
■ Statutory Fees	\$1.7M	2.5%
■ Other Income	\$1.3M	1.9%
■ Drawdown of Borrowings	\$4.5M	6.8%

How we allocate our funding



■ Employee Costs	\$22.4M	33.4%
■ Materials, Contracts & Other	\$22.5M	33.6%
■ Finance Costs	\$0.3M	0.4%
■ Operating Projects (Net)	\$2.3M	3.4%
■ New Capital Projects (Net)	\$6.6M	9.9%
■ Capital Renewal (Net)	\$12.9M	19.3%

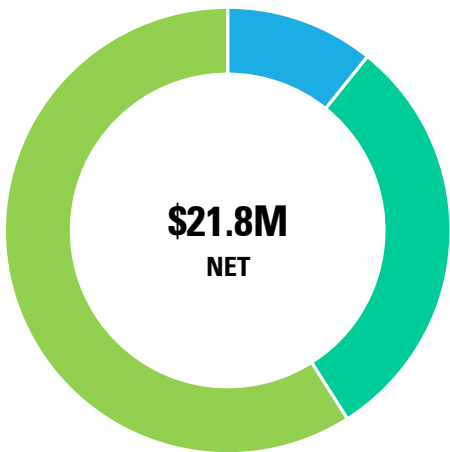
Project Priorities

Council’s proposed project priorities for 2025-26 stem from the themes outlined in Council’s Community and 4 Year Delivery Plan.

Council has undertaken a methodical and considered approach to determine its priorities for the upcoming financial year. These are the steps that were taken to determine the proposed projects for consultation:

- The Capital Works Program was guided by Council’s Asset Management Plans
- Council proposed projects that aim to assist in achieving the Strategic Themes in Council’s Community Plan and 4 Year Delivery Plan
- Elected Members submitted projects based on identified community need
- Projects were divided into three broad categories:
 - Operating Projects (including annual initiatives)
 - New Capital
 - Capital Renewal Program
- An Elected Member workshop was used to further prioritise, refine and finalise the proposed project list for community consultation.

Our Project Expenditure



■	Operating Projects (Net)	\$2.31M
■	New Capital (Net)	\$6.59M
■	Asset Renewal (Net)	\$12.87M

Further information regarding the projects is included on pages 52-65.



Operating Projects & Initiatives

Operating Projects and Initiatives are either one-off, short term projects or annual initiatives delivering environmental, cultural or economic benefits to our community.

These projects are funded by Council's rates income.

[The full list and further details of each project are included on pages 52-55.](#)

Key Highlights include

- Commence a Weekly Food Organics and Green Organics (FOGO) Trial \$250K,
- Continue the Accelerating Tree Planting Program \$550K planting an additional 440 trees across the City per annum,
- Deliver a series of community events including It's Unley Events Program \$110K and a Festival of Rice \$90K,
- Facilitate Street Meets \$20K by enabling residents across the Council to temporarily close their local street for neighbourhood gatherings,
- Complete the development of the City Plan 2050 \$110K,
- Develop a Local Area Traffic Management Plan for Highgate and Malvern \$50K, and
- Complete the implementation of the TechnologyOne Property and Rating platform \$800K.

New Capital Projects

New Capital projects are capital works to construct new or to significantly upgrade existing infrastructure and buildings.

These projects are expected to be funding from a combination of rates income, capital grants and \$4.5M of addition borrowings.

[The full list and further details of each project are included on pages 56-59.](#)

Key Highlights include

- Commencing the construction of the Unley Cultural Hub \$500K (net), to be completed in 2026-27,
- The Electrification of the Unley Swimming Centre Heat Pump to reduce carbon emissions,
- Council's contribution to the continuation of the Brown Hill Keswick Creek project \$840K,
- Year 2 of the City Wide Flood Mitigation Plan Implementation \$900K,
- Continuing the implementation of Council's Walking & Cycling Plan \$370K and Local Area Traffic Management Plan \$320K,
- The planning and design of the Ridge Park Junior Sports Hub \$330K,
- A \$400K contribution to the upgrade of the Tennis Facilities in the Goodwood Oval Precinct, and
- Continued upgrades and enhancements to our Parks and Reserves as part of the Open Space Improvement Plan \$250K.

Our Services

The *Local Government Act 1999* (the Act) prescribes a system of local government to enable councils to govern and manage areas at a local level.

All councils have basic responsibilities under the Act and other relevant legislation. These include:

- Regulatory activities, including voters' roll maintenance and Elected Members' support
- Determining longer-term strategic management plans, including a strategic plan, long term financial plan, infrastructure and asset management plans, and policies and procedures
- Setting rates, preparing an Annual Business Plan and Budget
- Management and maintenance of basic infrastructure including roads, footpaths, parks, public open space, playgrounds, street lighting and stormwater drainage
- Street cleaning and rubbish collection
- Development planning and control, including building safety assessment
- Provision of various environmental health services
- Management and maintenance of Council's urban forest in streets and parks, and
- Management and maintenance of Council owned Community Centres and other buildings.

A detailed list of Council's Operational Activities, including respective income and expenditure, is included on pages 48-51.

In response to community needs, Council also provides the following services and programs, over and above those listed to the left:

- Aged and Social Care
- Animal Management
- Arts & Cultural Development
- Community Centres Operations
- Community Development
- Community Engagement
- Community Event Programs
- Community Services
- Community Transport
- Community Grants
- Corporate Services
- Economic Development
- Environmental Management
- Library Services
- Museum
- Open Space Management
- Parking Control
- Sport and Recreation
- Sustainable Landscapes
- Volunteers
- Urban Policy and Planning
- Youth Development

The Council also maintains a number of facilities and services on a fee for service basis, some of which are subsidised and include:

- Unley Swimming Centre
- Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)
- Community Bus Service
- Halls for hire
- Ovals, courts, parks and reserves for hire.

Influences on the Budget

Significant Influences

Council is cognisant of the financial pressure many households and businesses are experiencing from high inflation and rising costs. While council is also experiencing increasing costs, especially in contractual services, it continues to carefully manage its budget and minimise increases in its expenditure budget while balancing its long term financial sustainability.

The Draft Budget is based on an average general rate increase of 3.5%, while maintaining an operating surplus ratio of 3.5%.

The proposed average General Rate increase of 3.5% is 1% above Adelaide CPI for December 2024 of 2.5%.

The proposed Operating Projects and New Capital Expenditure for 2025-26 are driven by the continued implementation of Council's plans and strategies. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A Weekly Food Organics & Green Organics Collection Trial,
- Completing the upgrade of Council's property, rating and customer request system,
- Commencing the construction of the Unley Cultural Hub (2 Year Project),
- Electrification of the Unley Swimming Centre Heat Pump, and
- Year 2 of the City Wide Flood Mitigation Plan Implementation.

Council is also committed to continue long-term major projects including the Brown Hill Keswick Creek Stormwater Management Project.

Other Influences on the Budget

There are also other annual items that we consider when setting rates and deciding on council's program of works. These include:

- Local Government Price Index increases on relevant goods and services;
- Provision for Enterprise Bargaining Agreements which, for most staff, determine conditions of employment and provide for annual salary and wages increases;
- Maintaining asset management (renewal) expenditure in line with Council's recently endorsed Asset Management Plans;
- Additional maintenance costs due to increased capital works, and the construction of new assets over recent years; and
- The Regional Landscape Levy, which Council collects and pays to the Green Adelaide Board.

Council has continued its review of service sustainability to minimise the burden on ratepayers.



Community

Our City offers an excellent quality of life and supports all people to thrive.

Strategic Objectives

- Objective 1: We foster a community where all people can feel safe, welcome, and included.
- Objective 2: We embrace and celebrate the history, heritage, and identity of our people, places, and Country.
- Objective 3: We support and encourage all people to be healthy, active, and socially connected.
- Objective 4: We foster creativity, cultural expression, and learning.
- Objective 5: We provide meaningful opportunities for people to participate in community and civic life.

Community

Objectives for 2025-26

Action	Measure
We will commence the redevelopment of the Unley Museum and neighbouring cottages to form the Unley Cultural Hub, which will include a new gallery and exhibition spaces, and a dedicated classroom space.	Construction of the Unley Cultural Hub to commence in 2025-26, and to be completed in 2026-27.
We will deliver a program of community grants to support opportunities for our community to belong and participate in social, cultural, economic and civic life.	100% of available grant programs are fully allocated. Applications score highly against the
We will finalise our current Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) and develop a new DAIP aligned to the new State based plan to be released in late 2025.	All actions from our current DAIP completed and a new DAIP established.
We deliver an events sponsorship program to support events that celebrate our diverse communities, foster connection and enhance cultural awareness.	100% of available event sponsorship funds are fully allocated. Applications score highly against the
We will implement a Street Meets program to encourage community participation, social connection and community safety.	The Street Meets Program implemented and promoted.
We will deliver a program of City-wide events, including Twilight Tunes, the Unley Spring Fling, the Festival of Rice and Australia Day celebrations.	The 2025-26 events program is delivered on time and within budget. Community attendance and satisfaction
We will commence a cultural mapping activity to deepen our understanding of our collective history and strengthening our connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.	Year 1 objectives, of our 2-year project, completed.



Environment

Our City is a progressive and innovative leader in sustainability and climate resilience.

Strategic Objectives

- Objective 1: We lead by example and innovate to grow our urban forest and make our City greener, cooler, and more biodiverse.
- Objective 2: We lead, promote, and incentivise local action on a carbon neutral and climate resilient future.
- Objective 3: We maximise sustainable resource recovery and advance a circular economy through innovation and technology.
- Objective 4: We seek nature-positive outcomes in the management of our natural resources.
- Objective 5: We partner, facilitate and advocate to overcome constraints and achieve our environmental ambition.

Environment

Actions for 2025-26

Action	Measure
We will continue to plant new trees on council land through our Accelerated Tree Planting Program, to progress our target of having a city-wide tree canopy of 31% by 2045.	The 2025-26 Accelerated Tree Planting Program delivered.
We will upgrade the Unley Swimming Centre pool water heating system with an energy efficient electric system.	The Unley Swimming Centre Heat Pump Electrification project commenced and on track for completion for the 2026-27 swimming season.
We will implement a weekly food organics green organics (FOGO) trial to reduce the amount of domestic waste going into landfill and increase organic recyclable materials.	FOGO trial implemented and an increase in tonnes of domestic waste diverted from landfill is realised.
We will continue our program of installing water wells (street tree inlets) to support new tree plantings by increasing moisture in the soil through capturing and retaining flows from the roadway.	New water wells to be delivered as part of the annual kerb and water table renewal program.
We will develop and promote an 'Adopt a Tree' program, to encourage community ownership of street tree watering and promote the benefits of trees.	Adopt a Tree program implemented.



Economy

Our City is a unique and vibrant destination that attracts and retains a diverse mix of businesses, industries, and opportunities.

Strategic Objectives

- Objective 1: We model and enable innovation and entrepreneurship to grow our economy, create jobs and serve our community.
- Objective 2: We generate vibrancy and economic vitality by activating and connecting thriving business precincts and innovation hubs throughout our City.
- Objective 3: We enhance and promote the local characteristics within our City that make us a desirable and exciting place to live, work, visit, invest and do business.
- Objective 4: We create partnerships, collaborate with others, and embrace new ideas to attract investment and enrich our City.
- Objective 5: We drive strong economic, cultural, environmental, and social outcomes through strategic investments in property, technology, facilities, and infrastructure.

Economy

Actions for 2025-26

Action	Measure
We will deliver a program of business networking events to facilitate collaboration, drive innovation and economic growth, attract investment, and enhance the city's competitiveness.	Annual program of networking events delivered.
We will explore the implementation of decorative lighting in business precincts to stimulate the evening and night-time economy.	The development of a Decorative Lighting Framework for the design, installation and maintenance of decorative lighting.
We will continue to enhance the amenity of Unley Road with the installation of new street furniture and greening.	New furniture and plantings installed.
We will investigate, plan and deliver the Business Precinct Revitalisation and Activation Program.	Revitalisation plan developed and activation program considered in the context of the LTFP and 2026-27 Annual Business Plan and Budget.
Continue to provide event sponsorship for Business Precinct Associations.	Event sponsorship program delivered.
We deliver the Unley Business Awards to recognise the vibrant and diverse business landscape within Unley and showcase the contributions these businesses make to the local economy and community.	2025 Unley Business Awards program delivered.
We facilitate a business advisory service to drive economic growth and deliver shared initiatives that create long-term value.	Business Advisory Service fully subscribed.



Places & Spaces

Our City offers an excellent quality of life and supports all people to thrive. Our City is well-planned and has great places and spaces that are designed, built, maintained, and activated to create a connected and vibrant community.

Strategic Objectives

- Objective 1 We invest in, revitalise, and expand our open spaces, recreation facilities and infrastructure to meet the needs of current and future communities and climates.
- Objective 2 We create and activate welcoming public spaces for all people to deliver memorable experiences that inspire connection, foster a strong sense of place, and strengthen our City's identity whilst enhancing its unique brand.
- Objective 3 We design our streets with people in mind to increase accessibility, active transport, and multi-modal transport options.
- Objective 4 We plan for future population growth with a City Masterplan that guides innovative and well-designed housing and development in the right places.
- Objective 5 We amplify the voice of our community by advocating for policies, partnerships, and funding that will enhance, future proof and attract investment in our places and spaces.

Places & Spaces

Actions for 2025-26

Action	Measure
We will develop a data-driven City Plan that leverages spatial analysis to strategically guide housing, economic development, and physical and social infrastructure development and investment in optimal locations.	2050 City Plan developed and adopted by Council.
We will continue to implement the Walking and Cycling Plan to support the ongoing transition to active transport modes for people living, working and visiting our City.	Year 3 of 5 of the Walking and Cycling Plan actions delivered.
We will expand the 40km/hr speed limits on our collector roads to improve community safety outcomes.	10 Collector Road speed limits reduced from 50km/hr to 40 km/hr.
We will improve the accessibility of our neighbourhoods by upgrading footpaths, installing safe pedestrian crossings, and supporting safe movement across our City.	Accessible streets program implemented and our transport asset management program plan delivered.
We will continue to enhance our open space and play spaces as part of the renewal of identified assets in our Open Space Asset Management Plan.	Complete enhancements to the Howard Florey Park, Leicester Park and Wayville Reserve (Stage 1) in 2025-26.
We will plan and design the Ridge Park Junior Sports Hub to revitalise the facility to meet the needs of current and future communities and climates.	Detailed planning and design works completed.
We will deliver a program of building and property renewals to ensure we deliver modern, engaging, and purpose suitable community facilities that foster community connection and deliver value.	Buildings & Property Renewal Program delivered.



Funding the Business Plan

Approximately 80% of Council's funding is generated from rates with the balance largely relating to fees and charges set by Council or statutory fees.

In setting the rates for 2025-26 Council proposes to continue with its current method of rating, which involves three differential rates with the application of a minimum rate, applied against the capital improved value of properties. Council considers this to be a fair and equitable method of rating for the City of Unley.

Rates income is used to deliver services. Rates are a form of property taxation, and property values determine how much each property contributes. This system of taxation means that the rates paid may not directly relate to the services used by each ratepayer.

Rate Statistics

Council has 19,805 assessments in 2025-26 including:

- 17,765 assessments within residential Category 1
- 903 assessments within non-residential Category 2 (including commercial shops, industrial, and vacant)
- 931 assessments within non-residential Category 3 (commercial offices and commercial – other)
- 206 non-rateable assessments.



2025-26 General Rates

This Draft 2025-26 Annual Business Plan and Budget has been developed based on an **average** increase in General Rates income of 3.5%, plus an additional 0.5% representing the estimated increase in revenue from new developments and capital improvement to existing properties.

The proposed average General Rate increase of 3.5% is 1% above Adelaide CPI for December 2024 of 2.5%.

The proposed increase in General Rates will be considered further by Council in June following feedback from Community Consultation.

The amount of rates payable for each property in 2025-26 will depend on its capital value, as assessed by the Valuer General, and how that

value has changed compared to other properties in the same rating category.

While the average rate increase is proposed to be 3.5%, the actual amount each ratepayer pays may be higher or lower. This is influenced by the individual property's valuation, the type of land use (such as residential or commercial) and whether there have been any new developments or improvements made to the property.

Council rates from new developments, and capital improvements to existing properties will be confirmed by the Valuer General in early June, and included in the Annual Business Plan and Budget presented to Council for adoption in June.

Council’s Rates

Valuation Method

The Council uses the **capital value** method of valuing properties. This method values the land and all improvements on the land. It is the most widely used method across South Australian councils.

Council considers this valuation method the most equitable method to spread the rates burden across the measure of wealth within the City. It equates to the taxation principle that people should contribute to community, social and physical infrastructure in accordance with their capacity to pay as measured by property wealth.

In determining how rates are applied, and in determining the rate in the dollar, Council uses the methodology explained on pages on pages 30 to 37.

Differential General Rates

Council will declare three differential General Rates according to the land use category. The land use categories are provided in the table below.

Council considers the principle of rate stability when assessing the rates distribution across the three categories. The change in capital value across the land use categories and the rates income provided by each category will also be considered.

Category 1 Income estimate \$40.2M	Residential
Category 2 Income estimate \$4.3M	Commercial Shop Industrial Light Industry Other Vacant Land Other
Category 3 Income estimate \$6.4M	Commercial Office Commercial Other



Rating of short-stay rental accommodation

As of 1 July 2025, Council is proposing a change in land use classification for residential properties offering short-stay rental accommodation. If implemented, the change would increase council rates for these properties to match those of traditional tourist accommodation providers. The following explains why this change is being considered, how the change in land use would be assessed and what it would mean for the council rates of such properties.

Why is this change being considered?

The Council is proposing this change to:

- Address the limited availability of residential properties for long-term rental accommodation within the City of Unley;
- To ensure fairness in rating between traditional tourist accommodation providers (e.g. hotels, motels) and short-stay rental accommodation businesses such as (but not limited to) Airbnb and Stayz.

What criteria would apply?

In identifying the land use of a property, Council must consider the predominant use of the property. To determine if a property is to be classified as tourist accommodation, Council will primarily consider:

- Whether the majority or the entire property is offered for short-stay rental accommodation, as opposed to just a room or section of the property; and
- Whether the property was available for short-stay rental accommodation for the majority of the preceding financial year.

Council may also give consideration to the following:

- Whether the property is consistently available for short-stay rental accommodation, rather than on a one-off occasion; and

- The nightly rate charged for the short-stay rental accommodation.

The change in land use classification for these properties would be applied for the entire rating year (July to June) and would be subject to an annual review.

What does this proposed change in land use mean for your council rates?

Properties identified as offering tourist accommodation on a commercial basis would pay the 'commercial – other' rate in the dollar rather than the 'residential' rate in the dollar.

In 2024-25 the 'commercial – other' rate was 2.57 times higher than the residential properties. For example, a property valued at \$1,000,000 and paying residential council rates of \$1,797 per annum would now pay commercial rates of approximately \$4,611 per annum.

The differential rates in the dollar have not been determined as yet, but are anticipated to be similar to those for the 2024-25 financial year.

For further information on how rates are calculated, please visit unley.sa.gov.au/rates-information.

How can you have your say?

Council is seeking feedback on the proposal as part of the consultation on this Draft 2025-26 Annual Business Plan and Budget. Further details of how to provide feedback are provided on page 4 of this Plan.

Council's Rates

Minimum Rate

Council has decided that there will be a minimum rate on every rateable property. Council considers it appropriate that all rateable properties make a contribution to the cost of administering the Council's activities and creating and maintaining the physical infrastructure that supports each property. The proposed minimum rate for 2025-26 is \$1,028, an increase of 3.5% from 2024-25.

There will be 3,855 assessments paying the minimum rate in 2025-26.

General Rate Revenue

General Rate Revenue is forecast to increase from \$48.8M to \$50.8M (\$48.9M to \$50.9M before discretionary rebates). This represents an increase of 4.00% (inclusive of a 0.5% increase from new developments and capital improvements) compared to the 2024-25 financial year, before estimated mandatory and discretionary rebates.

The average rates payable for each differential rate category, which are based on the land use categories, will increase as outlined in the table on the next page.



Estimated rate increase by land use category

The following average increases are estimates only as the final property valuations will not be received from the Valuer General until early June.

Differential Rate Category/ Land Use Category	Average Rates Payable \$		Estimated Increase	
	2024-25	2025-26 Estimate	\$	%
Category 1				
Residential	2,188	2,265	77	3.5%
Category 2				
Commercial - Shop	3,818	3,952	134	3.5%
Industrial Light	4,492	4,649	157	3.5%
Industry Other	7,422	7,682	260	3.5%
Vacant Land	5,178	5,359	181	3.5%
Other	10,232	10,590	358	3.5%
Category 3				
Commercial - Office	7,091	7,339	248	3.5%
Commercial - Other	6,071	6,283	212	3.5%
Minimum Rate Payable	993	1,028	35	3.5%

The rates assessment (rates payable) for a specific property will be dependent upon the 2025-26 capital valuation for the property, as assessed by the Valuer General, and the movement in that valuation relative to all other properties with the same differential rate.

Council's Rates

Separate Rate for Main Street Trader Associations

Council will continue to raise a separate rate for the promotion of businesses and traders along major shopping strips (excluding Glen Osmond Road). Council collects the separate rate and contracts with the Main Street Trader Associations for the provision of marketing, street beautification and minor value-added infrastructure projects.

The revenue generated by the separate rates for 2025-26 has been considered following consultation with the Main Street Trader Associations.

Unley Road

Currently there are approximately 470 ratepayers with a land use of Commercial Shop, Commercial Office and Commercial Other that pay the separate rate. The Unley Road Association has requested no increase for 2025-26.

King William Road

Currently there are approximately 125 ratepayers with a land use of Commercial Shop with addresses along King William Road between Greenhill Road and Commercial Road that pay the separate rate. The King William Road Traders Association has requested a 5.8% increase for 2025-26.

Goodwood Road

Currently there are approximately 110 ratepayers with a land use of Commercial Shop, Commercial Office and Commercial Other, with addresses along Goodwood Road between Leader Street / Parsons Street to the north and Mitchell Street / Arundel Avenue to the south that pay the separate rate. The Goodwood Road Business Association has requested a 6.0% increase for 2025-26.

Fullarton Road

Currently there are approximately 55 ratepayers with a land use of Commercial Shop, Commercial Office and Commercial Other, with addresses along Fullarton Road between Cross Road and Fisher Street that pay the separate rate.

Fullarton Road Traders pay a fixed amount. The Fullarton Road South Traders Association have requested no increase, with the fixed amount proposed to remain as \$300 for 2025-26.

Main Street Trader Associations	Separate Rate raised in 2024-25	Requested Separate Rate 2025-26	% Increase (Decrease)
Unley Road	\$146,440	\$146,440	Nil
King William Road	\$159,940	\$169,145	5.8%
Goodwood Road	\$60,658	\$64,297	6.0%
Fullarton Road	\$16,500	\$16,500	Nil



Council's Rates

Regional Landscape Levy (Formerly the Natural Resources Management Levy)

The Green Adelaide Board has advised the collection amount for 2025-26 is \$1.694M, a decrease of 1.2% compared with 2024-25.

Council does not retain this revenue, nor determine how the revenue is spent.



Discretionary Rebates

The Council may grant a discretionary rebate of rates under Section 166 of the *Local Government Act 1999*.

To ensure all ratepayers contribute an amount towards basic service provision, the maximum discretionary rebate is 75%.

Applicants seeking a discretionary rebate are required to submit an application form to the Council on or before 1 May prior to the rating year. When deciding an application for a discretionary rebate, Council considers whether the applicant:

- is not-for-profit
- provides services or activities that are aligned to Councils Community Plan and key strategies
- provides a direct benefit to the residents of the City of Unley
- allows access to the services or activities by the community and general public
- provides direct services to the community as distinct from administration or advocacy

Council's Rate Rebate Policy is available on the City of Unley website, www.unley.sa.gov.au.

Expected Impact on Rate Payers

To support the delivery of the strategic priorities and services outlined in the 2025-26 Annual Business Plan and Budget, Council requires a total General Rates income of \$50.8 million, or an increase in average general rates of 3.5% compared to 2024-25. This includes the application of discretionary rebates and incorporates a modest growth component of 0.5% attributed to new developments and capital improvements within the community.

Council acknowledges the ongoing financial challenges many households and businesses are facing due to the increased costs of living and economic uncertainty. In this context, Council has taken a fiscally responsible approach to budgeting, balancing the need to

maintain its quality of services and infrastructure with the economic realities confronting the community.

While Council is not immune to these cost pressures, particularly in areas such as contractual services, utilities, and materials, it continues to exercise prudent financial management. Through cost containment measures and careful prioritisation of capital works, Council has been able to limit the average rate increase, while still achieving a responsible operating surplus ratio of 3.5% (based on a 3.5% General Rate increase).

This approach ensures the continued financial sustainability of Council while delivering value for money to ratepayers and investing in the long-term wellbeing of the City.



Financial Sustainability

Council's Financial Sustainability is managed through its Financial Planning Framework and Long Term Financial Plan.

The following diagram illustrates the overall funding framework for the City of Unley and the use of the annual operating surplus and longer-term funding sources including strategic property divestment.



Long-Term Financial Plan

Council uses a Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) to guide its financial decisions to ensure it is diligent in its financial management and considers a longer-term view.

The LTFP has been reviewed and updated to reflect the most current information available. A summary is included on pages 72-73 of this document, and the full Draft LTFP is included as an attachment to this document.

In preparing the Long-Term Financial Plan, consideration has been given to:

- What services are to be provided,
- The level of those services,
- The rating imposed to avoid unexpected rate shocks,
- Income from other sources,
- Potential new assets and changes to service demands,
- The level of funding required from borrowings, and
- The ability to service those borrowings.

The key objective of Council's LTFP is to help ensure financial sustainability in the medium to long term, whilst still achieving the objectives detailed in Council's Community Plan.

Council uses the LTFP to guide the development of its Annual Business Plan and Budget, by setting the high level parameters and targets that will assist Council in maintaining the current level of services, without unplanned or significant increases to the rates paid by ratepayers, or unplanned cuts to services.

Key Financial Targets

Under the requirements of the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 2011*, Council's LTFP, Budget and Annual Financial Statements must include the following ratios:

- Operating Surplus Ratio
- Net Financial Liabilities Ratio
- Asset Renewal Funding Ratio

These ratios are to be presented in a manner consistent with the Financial Indicators required in the Model Financial Statements.

The Asset Sustainability Ratio is also monitored to assess renewal expenditure relative to depreciation.

These targets have been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee and Council as a part of the review of the draft LTFP.

Financial Indicator	Adopted Target
Operating Surplus Ratio *	Between 4% - 6% annually LTFP average of 5%
Net Financial Liabilities Ratio	Less than 80% of total operating income
Asset Renewal Funding Ratio	LTFP average 100% of recommended spend in the Asset Management Plans
Asset Sustainability Ratio	LTFP average 100% of depreciation

*(excluding equity accounted businesses)

ESCOSA's Review

In 2024 the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA) undertook a review of the City of Unley's 2024-25 to 2033-34 Long-Term Financial Plan and Asset Management Plans to assess the Council's financial performance and sustainability.

The advice published by ESCOSA stated the following:

"The Essential Services Commission finds the City of Unley's current and projected financial performance sustainable, considering the Council's average expected growth in properties of 0.3 percent per annum over the next 10 years, the planned average rate increases of 2.8 percent per annum per property over this period, and the effective management of assets."

ESCOSA identified that the City of Unley was sustainable for each of the following:

- Past 10 Years: Sustainable
- Current: Sustainable
- Projected: Sustainable.



Source: ESCOSA's report [Local Government Advice City of Unley February 2025](#)

ESCOSA identified one risk impacting sustainability:

"If operating costs are not contained within forecasts, the forecast operating surplus may not be achieved. "

Council's response to this is as follows:

Cost pressures and savings are monitored on a quarterly basis and advised where required as part of the ABP&B process or Quarterly Budget Reviews.

Longer term cost pressures are considered as part of the review of the LTFP. The work being undertaken to review and monitor costs associated with the delivery of services will assist in understanding what options the Council has to manage cost pressures over the medium to long term.

ESCOSA made four recommendations to Council as provided on the following page, along with Council's response to the recommendations.

ESCOSA's Recommendations

Recommendations	Council response
Publish a comprehensive review of the Long-Term Financial Plan annually, to improve transparency for stakeholders.	<p>A comprehensive version of the Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) was adopted by Council in June 2024 and is published on the Council's website. At the time, the Administration committed to review, update and publish a comprehensive version of the LTFP annually in conjunction with the Annual Business Plan and Budget (ABP&B) process. The continuation of this process (established in 2024-25) has been incorporated as part of the 2025-26 ABP&B process.</p> <p>The comprehensive LTFP document has been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee in April. It will be included as an appendix to the Draft ABP&B in</p>
Continue to review its inflation forecasts in its budget and forward projects at least annually.	<p>The inflation forecasts continue to be monitored on a regular basis. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considered as part of the initial review of the LTFP by the Audit and Risk Committee in November/December each year. • presented to an Elected Member briefing prior to the commencement of the draft ABP&B; and • discussed as part of the budget workshop in March, and the workshop to consider council rate increases before the adoption of the ABP&B in late May/early June. <p>The Finance Team also monitors the forecasts on a quarterly basis.</p>
Continue to monitor cost growth in its budgeting where possible, and report savings in strategic documents.	<p>Cost pressures and savings are monitored on a quarterly basis and advised where required as part of the ABP&B process or Quarterly Budget Reviews.</p> <p>An exercise to review and monitor costs associated with the delivery of services is being undertaken in the 2025-26 financial year and will assist to inform the 2026-27 ABP&B process. The monitoring of cost savings in</p>
Continue to minimise further average rate increases above inflation, to help reduce any emerging affordability risk in the community.	<p>The proposed annual rate increases are considered as part of the Annual Business Plan & Budget process in the context of forecast and actual Adelaide CPI, the cost of maintaining the services to the community, and strategic initiatives.</p> <p>Council aims to minimise any proposed rate increases, however at the same time it also needs to consider the impact of annual decisions on its ongoing</p>

A copy of ESCOSA's report has been attached to this Draft Annual Business Plan and Budget. It can also be accessed from ESCOSA's website: www.escosa.sa.gov.au.

Financial Ratios

Operating Surplus Ratio

Operating surplus as a percentage of operating income.

This ratio measures the Council's ability to cover annual operational costs and have capacity to fund new and upgraded assets, repay its borrowings, or fund new services.

Council is forecasting an Operating Surplus Ratio of 3.5% for the 2025-26 financial year, based on an average General Rate increase of 3.5%.

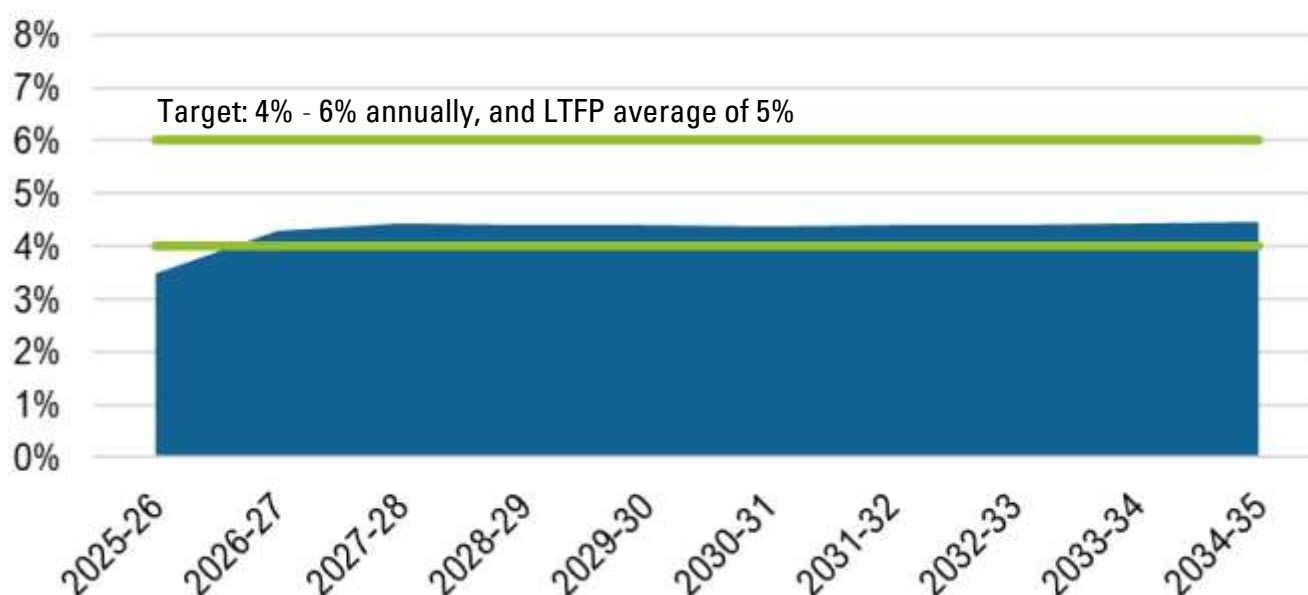
This is below the target range of between 4% and 6% per annum, which is due to:

- The TechnologyOne Property and Rating Project \$800K (equivalent to 1.3% of the operating surplus); and

- The additional funding for Operating Projects and Initiatives and interest expense on the additional New Capital Projects, which combined is equivalent to 0.5% of the operating surplus.

The Operating Surplus Ratio in the LTFP is forecast to range between 4.3% and 4.5% from Year 2 of the LTFP, and average 4.3% across the life of the Plan. This is within the annual target range of 4% to 6%. However it is below the long-term average of 5% due to the additional interest expense for significant co-funded New Capital Projects proposed for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 financial years as detailed in the Draft LTFP on pages 8 and 29.

Years 1-3			Years 4-6			Years 7-10			
2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
3.5%	4.3%	4.5%	4.4%	4.4%	4.4%	4.4%	4.4%	4.4%	4.5%



Net Financial Liabilities Ratio

Net financial liabilities as a percentage of operating income.

This ratio measures Council's net debt relative to its operating income, and Council's ability to repay what it owes (debt, creditors, etc) at the end of a financial year compared with its income for the year.

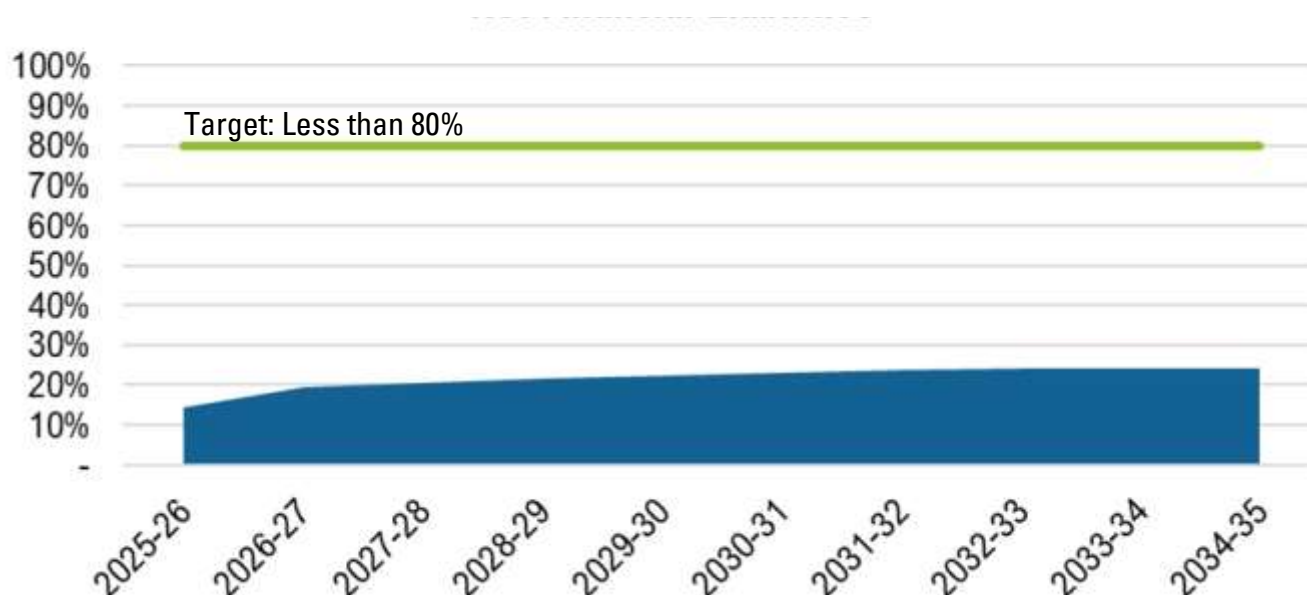
An increase in this ratio indicates that Council requires more of its operating income to fund its financial obligations. A drop in this ratio indicates that Council's capacity to meet its financial obligations is strengthening.

Council is forecasting a Net Financial Liabilities ratio of 14% for the 2025-26 financial year, well within the less than 80% target.

Council is forecasting an average net financial liabilities ratio of 22% for the LTFP, commencing at 14% and peaking at 24% in 2031-32 to 2034-35, which is well within the target range of less than 80%. The increase in the ratio for the first two years of the LTFP, 2025-26 and 2026-27, is due to the proposed investment in significant co-funded New Capital Projects.

Borrowings are forecast to increase to \$18.0M by 2034-35, well within Council's capacity and scope of existing debt facilities which are cash advance debentures with the Local Government Finance Authority.

Years 1-3			Years 4-6			Years 7-10			
2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
14%	19%	21%	22%	22%	23%	24%	24%	24%	24%



Financial Ratios

Asset Renewal Funding Ratio

Capital renewal expenditure as a percentage of recommended expenditure in the Asset Management Plans.

The Asset Renewal Funding Ratio represents the level of capital expenditure on the renewal of assets relative to the level of such expenditure identified as warranted in Council's Asset Management Plans.

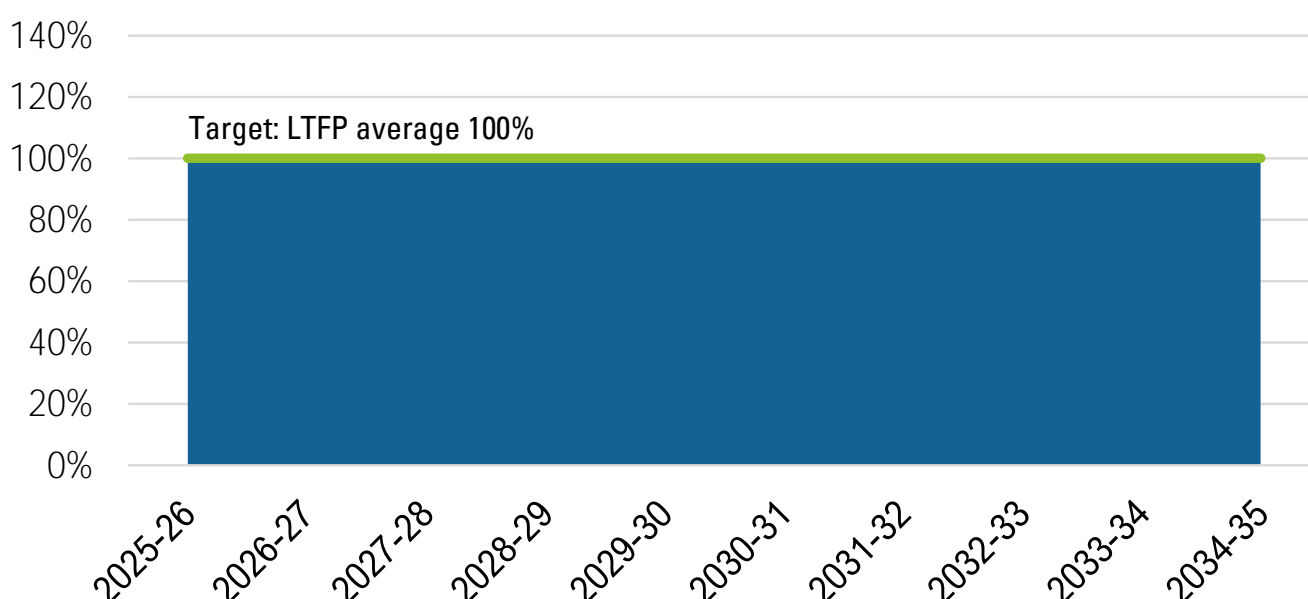
The recommended expenditure by the Asset Management Plans has been 'smoothed' over the 10 years to assist in managing resources. Associated risks have been considered to ensure the assets are managed in a sustainable manner.

Council is forecasting an Asset Renewal Funding Ratio of 101% for the 2025-26 financial year.

The Asset Renewal Funding Ratio is forecast to be 100% for the duration of the LTFP, as the expenditure in the LTFP is in line with the proposed funding required in the Asset Management Plans.

While the expenditure has been smoothed within the Asset Management Plans, condition inspections may impact the actual spend in each year over the 10 year life of the LTFP.

Years 1-3			Years 4-6			Years 7-10			
2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
101%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



Asset Sustainability Ratio

Capital renewal expenditure as a percentage of depreciation.

This ratio compares capital renewal expenditure relative to the consumption of the asset over its life.

The Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA) monitor the Asset Sustainability Ratio as council rates are used to fund depreciation.

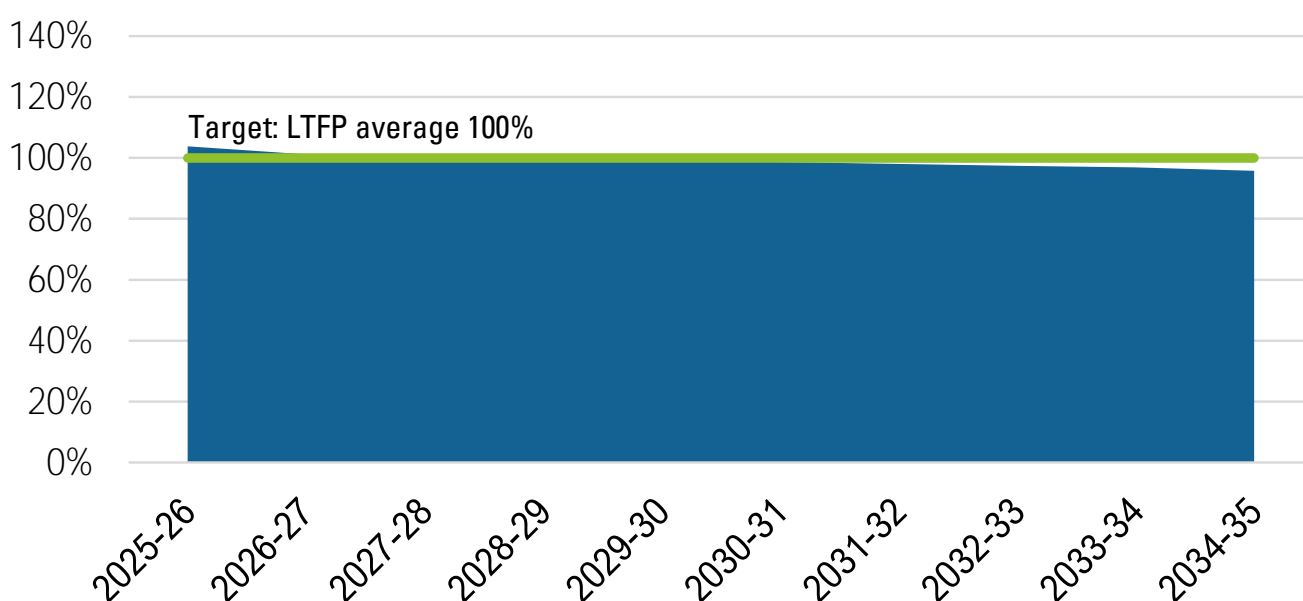
Council uses this ratio to monitor that the life of an asset is appropriate to its physical use.

Council is forecasting an Asset Sustainability Ratio of 104% for the 2025-26 financial year.

The Asset Sustainability Ratio is forecast to average 99% in the LTFP. A proportion of Council's infrastructure assets have useful lives in excess of 50 years, and are in good condition, and the Asset Management Plans do not require proposed capital renewal expenditure to match depreciation over the life of the Plan.

While the expenditure has been smoothed within the Asset Management Plans, condition inspections may impact the actual spend in each year over the 10 year life of the LTFP.

Years 1-3			Years 4-6			Years 7-10			
2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
104%	101%	101%	100%	99%	99%	98%	97%	97%	96%



Budget Framework

The Budget Framework formalises changes in respect to the approved Annual Business Plan and Budget as a result of responding to opportunities, emergencies or other unforeseen events at the time of setting the budget.

Operating Budget (excluding projects)

The core operations of the Council are detailed by Operating Programs on pages 48-51. Council approval will be required where total operating expenditure varies from its approved budget as presented in the Statement of Comprehensive Income on page 67.

Operating Projects

Operating projects and initiatives have been developed in consultation with Council, and are detailed on pages 52-55.

Council approval will be required where a change in individual project expenditure is required unless the projects are linked to an identical outcome and delivered by the same program.

For these projects, a reallocation between projects can be undertaken without the need for separate Council approval.

In addition, where a project has been approved by Council and the project is allocated to sub projects, the budget can be reallocated across sub projects without Council approval. However, Council approval is required to increase or reduce the overall budget previously approved.

Where a new operating project is to be considered or deferred, this will require Council approval.

New Capital Projects

A list of new capital works projects has been developed in consultation with the Council and is detailed on pages 56-59.

Where changes to the individual new capital project expenditure budget are necessary, Council approval is required. Further, where a new project is to be considered or an existing project deferred, this will also require Council approval.



Capital Renewal

These programs and the list of priority projects have been developed with reference to Council's Asset Management Plans based on condition, levels of service and Council's ongoing commitment to operating and maintain its asset portfolio.

Where changes to the relevant asset category expenditure budget are necessary, Council approval is required.

The individual program summary for Capital Renewal has been provided on pages 61-65.

When grant funding is received with equivalent income and expenditure, the budget can be adjusted to account for the grant without the need for separate Council approval.

In situations where grant funding requires matching or additional funding from Council, this represents an increase in net expenditure and Council approval is required.

Accounting Reclassification

Where a project requires reclassification between the operating and capital budget to reflect accounting principles, the reclassification will occur when practical and the relevant details will be provided to Council at the following budget review.

It is noted that transfers between operating and capital budgets have no cash impact on the overall budget.



Operating Activities

Operating Programs	Income	Expenditure	Net Expenditure
	\$'000		
Animal Management Promote community safety through education, awareness and compliance with the legislation relating to the Dog and Cat Management Act and Local Government Act.	190	282	91
Arts & Cultural Development Provision of Art and Cultural Development programs to support a vibrant and active community.	-	183	183
Asset Management Provides sustainable strategic management of Council's asset portfolio.	50	1,343	1,293
Assets & Sustainability Management Provides general management, executive support and leadership to the services provided by Assets & Sustainability and to Elected Members.	-	421	421
Business Precincts The collection and forwarding of separate rates for the four Main Street Traders Associations.	396	396	-
Business Systems & Solutions Manages and maintains Council's Information and Communication Technology infrastructure, applications, and supporting systems to provide high levels of secure service that support business operations and performance.	3	3,903	3,900
City Operations Provides maintenance services to Council's infrastructure, property, open space, street and park trees, plant and equipment assets.	1,552	17,945	16,393
City Shaping Management Provides general management, executive support and leadership to the services provided by City Shaping and to Elected Members.	-	276	276
Community & Organisational Development Management Provide general management, executive support and leadership to the services and programs provided by Community & Organisational Development and to Elected Members.	-	417	417
Community Bus Program A community transport service within the City of Unley provided by fully trained and accredited volunteer drivers, aimed at improving mobility plus connection to more city services.	10	135	125
Community Centres Management and provision of a thriving network of community centres that promote social inclusion, belonging and connection.	600	1,183	583
Community Connections Management Provide management, support and leadership of the projects, programs and services provided by the Community Development and Community Wellbeing teams.	-	194	194

Operating Programs	Income	Expenditure	Net Expenditure
	\$'000		
Community Development Provision of social planning and community development including the coordination of Age Friendly City and Welcoming City initiatives and responding to social issues (homelessness and suicide prevention).	-	202	202
Community Events Efficient and effective coordination of Council run community and cultural events and activities, as well as the successful facilitation and attraction of external events into the City of Unley to encourage place activation, cultural celebration and vibrancy.	-	229	229
Community Grants Funding for community organisations, groups and individuals to implement programs and initiatives that promote community connectivity, belonging, participation and cultural diversity.	-	146	146
Community Support Coordination, administration and support for community based services and projects aimed at facilitating independence and promoting social inclusion.	1,405	1,405	-
Corporate Activities The accumulation of corporate costs including leave on-costs, treasury management, levies and taxes and insurances.	2,747	3,069	322
Corporate Support Management Provides general management, executive support and leadership to the services provided by Corporate Support and supports Elected Members.	-	402	402
Customer Experience Coordinate and manage the City of Unley brand through customer service, provision of frontline customer service plus resolve customer enquiries and build goodwill within the City of Unley community.	1	718	717
Development Services Planning and building control within the City in accordance with the Development Act and Regulations and other legislative requirements.	580	2,008	1,429
Economic Development Manage the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of economic development activities and strategic initiatives within the City of Unley.	5	470	465
Environmental Initiatives Drive improved environmental sustainability through policies, strategies, programs and projects.	-	350	350
Finance & Procurement Delivers accounting, financial, procurement, risk management and treasury management services required to support Council's operations, including statutory and financial reporting obligations.	51,046	1,590	(49,456)

Operating Activities

Operating Programs	Income	Expenditure	Net Expenditure
	\$'000		
Governance, Risk and Strategy Undertakes administration of legislative and corporate governance requirements.	-	505	505
Human Resources Provides support in recruitment, change management, employee relations, injury management, occupational health & safety and welfare.	-	1,698	1,698
Library Services Provision of library services, programs and facilities to encourage literacy, lifelong learning and social inclusion and connection.	350	2,660	2,310
Marketing & Communications Coordinate and manage the City of Unley reputation and brand in digital and printed communications and media relations.	-	847	847
Office of the CEO Organise and manage the governance of the City of Unley, including support for Elected Members and Civic Functions.	400	1,526	1,126
Parking Enforcement Promote community safety through education, awareness and compliance with the legislation relating to the Road Traffic Act and Local Government Act and By Laws.	1,124	840	(284)
Property & Facilities Provides sustainable strategic management of Council's building and property asset portfolio.	752	3,842	3,090
Public & Environmental Health Promote community health and safety through education, awareness and compliance with the legislation relating to the Environment and Protection Act and the Local Government Act.	53	468	415
Strategic Projects Facilitates delivery of major strategic initiatives from the 4 Year Delivery Plan and Community Plan.	30	36	6
Transportation & Traffic Provides coordination, administration and support to provide an effective, safe and equitable management of transport spaces for all modes, ratepayers and visitors to improve local accessibility and safety.	-	669	669
Unley Museum Provision of the Unley Museum to showcase the cultural heritage and history of the area through the provision of collection, exhibitions and programs.	6	219	213
Unley Swimming Centre Provision of a premier outdoor swimming facility, encouraging community health, wellbeing and water safety.	962	1,410	448

Operating Programs	Income	Expenditure	Net Expenditure
	\$'000		
Urban Design (incorporating Recreation and Sport) Development and management of high-quality public realm and open space. Coordination, administration and support to provide an effective, safe and equitable management of movement spaces for all modes, ratepayers and visitors to improve local accessibility and safety.	-	210	210
Volunteer Development Provide coordination, administration and support for community-based volunteer services and projects.	-	159	159
Waste Operations Collection and disposal of general waste, kerbside recycling, green waste and a hard rubbish collection service.	254	5,514	5,260
Youth Development Engage and empower young people in the community by identifying, developing and providing activities, programs and events.	-	114	114
Total (before Operating Projects & Initiatives)	62,514	57,983	(4,532)
Operating Projects & Initiatives	10	2,322	2,312
Total including Operating Projects & Initiatives	62,524	60,304	(2,220)



Operating Projects & Initiatives

Operating Projects & Initiatives	Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure
Environmental Initiatives			
Carbon Accounting & Communications	25,000	-	25,000
City Wide Greening Verges	60,000	-	60,000
LiDAR Canopy Mapping	10,000	-	10,000
Sustainability Projects Officer (Year 1 of 3)	125,000	-	125,000
Accelerated Tree Planting Program	180,000	-	180,000
Weekly Food Organics Green Organics (FOGO) Collection Trial	250,000	-	250,000
Tree Offset Fund Stakeholder Engagement	10,000	-	10,000
	660,000		660,000
Events			
Australia Day 2026	25,000	(10,000)	15,000
It's on in Unley Events Program	115,000	-	115,000
Festival of Rice	90,000	-	90,000
Street Meets	20,000	-	20,000
	250,000	(10,000)	240,000
Economic Development Initiatives			
City Plan 2050 Year 2	110,000	-	110,000
Event Sponsorship to Support Business Precinct Activation	40,000	-	40,000
SAHT MoU - Stage 2	50,000	-	50,000
Unley Business Awards	10,000	-	10,000
Decorative Lighting in Business Precincts - Plan and Specification Development	30,000	-	30,000
	240,000	-	240,000
Other Projects			
Development of Four Lead Strategies	50,000	-	50,000
Active Ageing Strategy	20,000	-	20,000
Clarence Park Community Centre Partnership Agreement	15,000	-	15,000
Cultural mapping	35,000	-	35,000
Future Caretakers - School Summit	20,000	-	20,000
Highgate & Malvern Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) Plan	50,000	-	50,000
Unley Parking Management Implementation Plan (Year 2 of 2)	35,000	-	35,000
Royal Adelaide Show Traffic Management (Year 1 of 3)	27,200	-	27,200
TechnologyOne Property and Rating	800,000	-	800,000
Cyber Security Improvement Program	120,000	-	120,000
	1,172,200	-	1,172,200
Total Operating Projects	2,322,200	(10,000)	2,312,200

Operating Projects & Initiatives

Net Expenditure

Environmental Initiatives

Carbon Accounting & Communications

The licensing of a carbon accounting tracking system to monitor Council's emission reduction actions, and to communicate greenhouse emissions inventories, sustainability reporting and benchmarking.

25,000

City Wide Greening Verges

The conversion of Council verges from dolomite to loam which are then planted and maintained by residents. The program has enabled the conversion of over 560 verges and a total area of approximately 10,000m² across the City in the last 8 years.

60,000

LiDAR Canopy Mapping

A contribution to the State Government Light Image Detection and Ranging mapping exercise to enable Council to access tree canopy cover data.

10,000

Sustainability Projects Officer

Resourcing to assist with the implementation and delivery of the actions arising from Council's Climate & Energy Plan, Greening Verges Program, and Waste Management & Resource Recovery Plan.

125,000

Accelerated Tree Planting Program

The planting of 440 new trees across the City in 2025-26 as part of Council's Tree Strategy and commitment to increase canopy cover on Council owned land.

180,000

Weekly Food Organics Green Organics (FOGO) Collection Trial

A weekly food and green organics collection trial, commencing in Autumn 2026, to increase diversion of general waste from landfill and increase organics recycling. The trial will be supported by an education campaign for the trial area.

250,000

Tree Offset Fund Stakeholder Engagement

Resourcing to conduct workshops and discussions with peak industry bodies and stakeholders in the South Australian building and property industry as part of the Tree Offset Fund Community Engagement project.

10,000

Total Environmental Initiatives

660,000

Operating Projects & Initiatives continued	Net Expenditure
Events	
Australia Day 2026 A community event to celebrate Australia Day to be held in conjunction with a Citizenship Ceremony and Australia Day Awards presentation.	15,000
'It's on in Unley' Events Program It's on in Unley will deliver a series of community events that focus on engaging our community through free-to-the-public open space activations throughout 2025-26.	115,000
Festival of Rice This event will be an exploration of how rice shapes traditions, cultures and identities around the globe, whilst promoting diversity, awareness and the sharing of cultural expression and connection through food.	90,000
Street Meets An initiative to allow residents across the Council area to temporarily close their local streets to facilitate activities such as children's play and neighbourhood gatherings.	20,000
Total Events	240,000
Economic Development Initiatives	
City Plan 2050 Year 2 Year 2 of the project is to finalise a draft of the City Plan, undertake community consultation and finalise for adoption by December 2025. The project will also involve the preparation of an implementation plan to address priorities for progressing the actions included in the Plan.	110,000
Event Sponsorship to Support Business Precinct Activation Financial support for the Business Precincts to deliver an event or activation within their precinct that stimulates the visitor economy and activates the public realm.	40,000
SAHT MoU Stage 2 The progression of a Memorandum of Understanding with the South Australian Housing Trust to investigate the redevelopment potential of key sites within the City.	50,000
Unley Business Awards The City of Unley Business Awards Program celebrates businesses and professionals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, innovation, sustainability and community engagement. The Program highlights the diversity and vibrancy of businesses within the City, and the contributions they make to the City's economic development.	10,000
Decorative Lighting in Business Precincts – Plan and Specification Development The Plan will provide a clear framework for the design, implementation and maintenance of decorative lighting to support business precincts and strengthen the City's identity after dark.	30,000
Total Economic Development Initiatives	240,000

Operating Projects & Initiatives continued	Net Expenditure
Other Projects	
Development of Four Lead Strategies The development of a lead strategy aligned to each theme of the Community Plan: Community, Environment, Economy and Places & Spaces. The strategies will articulate our priorities and aspirations to support the delivery of our Community Plan Towards 2050.	50,000
Active Ageing Strategy The 2025-26 Active Ageing Project will fund a series of initiatives developed in consultation with Council's Active Ageing Alliance which foster inclusion of older people, social connections, participation in community life, and retaining Council's Age Friendly City status.	20,000
Clarence Park Community Centre Partnership Agreement An annual contribution to support "The Shed Program" at the Clarence Park Community Centre and contribute to the salary of the Shed Coordinator.	15,000
Cultural Mapping (Year 1 of 2) Cultural Mapping aims to enhance our understanding of our collective history, strengthen connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and inform future programming and place naming. It is a key action in the Cultural Plan 2021-2026 and the Reflect Reconciliation Plan.	35,000
Future Caretakers – School Summit Future Caretakers is a forum series for young people addressing key global megatrends and inspiring local engagement. Successful past events covered Wellbeing, AI, and community citizenship. The School Summit Series will involve 100 Year 10 students from 7 schools, engaging in discussions on five megatrends.	20,000
Highgate & Malvern Local Area Traffic Management Plan A study to deliver an evidence based LATM Plan for the Highgate and Malvern local areas, bounded by Wattle Street, Fullarton Road, Cross Road and Unley Road. The study will consider a holistic approach to identifying and addressing transport matters including vehicular volumes and speeds, on-street parking, walking and cycling, and other safety matters.	50,000
Unley Parking Management Implementation Plan Year 2 Implementation of the Year 2 priorities contained within the Unley Parking Management Plan which was adopted in 2024. The Plan provides a framework for Council to effectively and efficiently manage on-street parking City-wide for residents, businesses, and visitors.	35,000
Royal Adelaide Show Traffic Management Council's financial contribution to the cost of traffic management for the 2025 Royal Adelaide Show.	27,200
TechnologyOne Property and Rating (Year 2 of 2) To complete the implementation of the TechnologyOne Property and Rating platform that supports the following functions of Council: Rating, accounts receivable, regulatory, building and planning, customer experience (including customer requests), and name and address register.	800,000
Cyber Security Improvement Program Resourcing to support Council's cyber-security program to optimise its systems to identify, mitigate and prevent cyber security threats to the Council's information technology infrastructure.	120,000
Total Other Projects	1,172,000
Total Operating Projects	2,312,200

New Capital Projects

New Capital Projects	Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure
Brown Hill Keswick Creek (BHKC) City of Unley Contribution	840,000	-	840,000
City Wide Flood Mitigation Plan Implementation 2025-26	900,000	-	900,000
Collector Roads 40km/h Speed Limit Implementation	65,000	-	65,000
Goodwood Oval Precinct Stage 1 - Tennis Facilities Upgrade	400,000	-	400,000
Walking & Cycling Plan Implementation (Year 3 of 5)	370,000	-	370,000
Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) Plan Implementation	320,000	-	320,000
Ridge Park Junior Sports Hub - Planning and Design	330,000	-	330,000
Unley Road Streetscape Improvements	50,000	-	50,000
Unley Cultural Hub (Year 1 of 2)	1,000,000	(500,000)	500,000
King William Road Upgrade (Greenhill Rd - Mike Turtur Bikeway)	1,280,000	(640,000)	640,000
Unley Swimming Centre Heat Pump Electrification	2,140,000	(1,055,000)	1,085,000
Accessible Streets Pilot	50,000	-	50,000
Glen Osmond Road Streetscape Upgrade (Stage 1)	80,000	-	80,000
Open Space Improvement Plans	250,000	-	250,000
Millswood Bowling Club Detailed Design	60,000	(30,000)	30,000
Sturt Bowling Club Detailed Design	100,000	(50,000)	50,000
Concept Design for Broughton Arts Society Building	30,000	-	30,000
Unley Park Sports Club Cool Room	60,000	(25,000)	35,000
Sub-total	8,325,000	(2,300,000)	6,025,000
Overhead Allocation	561,000	-	561,000
Total New Capital Projects	8,886,000	(2,300,000)	6,586,000



New Capital Projects

Net Expenditure

Brown Hill Keswick Creek (BHKC) Stormwater Project Contribution

The City of Unley together with the Cities of Burnside, Mitcham, West Torrens, and Adelaide have collaborated to develop a catchment-based approach to mitigating flood risk and use of stormwater where feasible in the Brown Hill and Keswick Creek catchment. The City of Unley contributes 21% of the Board's capital costs as identified in its Stormwater Management Plan.

840,000

City Wide Flood Mitigation Plan Implementation 2025-26

To deliver year 2 of the on-ground works as identified in Council's Plan. The Plan sets out a 10-year priority program for the delivery of new capital works to address local flood risks within the City. The planned works for 2025-26 are:

- Construction of new pipe and pits in Tennant Street.
- Construction of new pipe and pits in Alma Road.
- Construction of new side entry pits in Milton Avenue.
- Construction of new stormwater system to prevent flooding in Beaconsfield Street.
- Design of various future works.

900,000

Collector Roads 40km/h Speed Limit Implementation

Implementation of the reduced speed limit from 50 km per hour to 40 km per hour along 10 of Council's collector roads, subject to approval by the Department for Infrastructure & Transport.

65,000

Goodwood Oval Precinct Stage 1 – Tennis Facilities Upgrade

A contribution towards the proposed upgrade of the tennis facilities at Goodwood Oval, forming Stage 1 of a broader proposed precinct upgrade. The upgrade is subject to Tennis SA securing additional grant funding.

400,000

Walking & Cycling Plan Implementation (Year 3 of 5)

The continued implementation of priorities as endorsed by Council in its Walking & Cycling Plan 2026-2027. The proposed projects to be delivered in 2025-2026 are:

- Wood-Weller Bikeway Stage 5 – Wood Street to Cross Road connection (construction phase 1).
- Young Street Neighbourhood Bicycle Route Stages 2 & 3 – Unley Road to Glen Osmond Road (detailed design).
- Charles Walk Intersection Improvements (consultation).
- Wattle Street Neighbourhood Bicycle Route Stage 3 – Unley Road to Fullarton Road (consultation).
- Bicycle End of Trip Facilities (installation of up to 5 bicycle racks).
- Data Collection (installation of 1 permanent bicycle counter and Super Tuesday count).

370,000

Local Area Traffic Management Plan Implementation

Continued implementation of recommendations and actions resulting from adopted Local Area Traffic Management Plans. The proposed projects to be delivered in 2025-2026 are:

- Haslop Reserve Walking and Cycling Improvements – Construction.
- Commence Delivery of Endorsed High Priority Actions – Detailed Design.
- Duthy Street/George Street Priority Pedestrian Crossings - Concept Design.

320,000

New Capital Projects continued	Net Expenditure
Ridge Park Junior Sports Hub – Planning and Design In line with the Ridge Park Master Plan, Council will undertake planning and design for a Junior Sports Hub with reconfigured sports facilities and a new Community Hub. This includes design and documentation for the oval, multi-sport courts, and the Community Hub.	330,000
Unley Road Streetscape Improvements The continued delivery of Council's Unley Road Public Realm Streetscape Upgrade, enhancing the amenity of Unley Road with new street furniture and greening to complement the ongoing planned streetscape renewal works. This is to include street furniture such as seating, bins, bike racks and fencing, bollards, new tree planting, planting beds, and way-finding signage.	50,000
Unley Cultural Hub (Year 1 of 2) The redevelopment of the Unley Museum encompasses the extension of the existing Museum and an expansion across the rear of the cottages located at 78 and 84 Edmund Avenue. The project will include refurbishment of the existing cottages and additional floor spaces to include new gallery and exhibition spaces, storage rooms, kitchens, accessible public toilets, and office and studio spaces for staff and volunteers. Council has secured a grant through the Thriving Communities Program to support the redevelopment costs.	500,000
King William Road Upgrade - Greenhill Road to Mike Turtur Bikeway To undertake an upgrade of Council's road and footpath infrastructure between the western kerb of King William Road and the eastern property boundary. The key deliverables of this project are to remove the existing road carriageway paving and replace with new paving, and to remove the existing footpath and replace with new paving. The works will include improved pedestrian safety, accessibility and connectivity. This project is subject to Council receiving grant funding.	640,000
Unley Swimming Centre Heat Pump Electrification The electrification of the Unley Swimming Centre Pool Heat Pump is a key initiative outlined in Council's Climate & Energy Plan, designed to replace the existing gas boilers with a more sustainable solution. Council has been informed it is to receive a grant from the Community Energy Upgrade Fund to support the purchase and installation of the heat pump.	1,085,000
Accessible Streets Pilot Two key residential streets will form part of the Accessible Streets Pilot, which will involve design and construction, including minor re-grading of road levels, new footpath paving, and additional inroad kerbing as required, to provide new features that integrate with the renewal of assets to create more accessible streets. This project is subject to Council's endorsement of the Accessible Streets Guidelines which is currently being developed.	50,000
Glen Osmond Road Streetscape Upgrade (Stage 1) Stage 1 will be to develop a detailed design for the upgrade of the section of Glen Osmond Road that is located between Greenhill Road and Fullarton Road, with the aim to enhance safety, greening, amenity, accessibility and economic activation.	80,000
Open Space Improvement Plans This project involves several minor park enhancements to be undertaken with the renewal of identified assets, in accordance with Council's Open Space Asset Management Plan. The four parks for review and enhancement in 2025-26 are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Howard Florey Park (Stage 2): New planting beds and irrigation to define park edges. Leicester Park: Improvements to play space, green spaces, and pedestrian connections. Wayville Reserve (Stage 1): Enhancements to play space and park frontage. Souter Park: Planning for future renewal and minor additions to address community concerns. 	250,000

New Capital Projects continued	Net Expenditure
Millswood Bowling Club Detailed Design Detailed design, co-funded by the Club, for a building extension and reconfiguration to improve efficiency. Key improvements include unisex toilets, upgraded bar facilities, expanded function/bar area, and enhanced storage and office spaces.	30,000
Sturt Bowling Club Detailed Design Detailed design, co-funded by the Club, for a building extension and reconfiguration to improve efficiency. Key improvements include improving the female changerooms and toilet facilities, enhancements to the kitchen, cool room, bar areas to cater for more frequent and a broader range of functions, and improvements to male toilets.	50,000
Concept Design for Broughton Arts Society Building Developing a concept design to extend the building that currently hosts the Broughton Arts Society, by investigating an alternative teaching and workshop space for arts groups and local artists.	30,000
Unley Park Sports Club Cool Room The installation of cool room, co-funded by the Club, to provide a safer and more functional bar to improve the ability to host functions and support the revenue stream for the Club.	35,000
Capitalised Project Delivery Costs	561,000
Total New Capital Projects	6,586,000





Asset Management Plans

The City of Unley is responsible for the management, operation and maintenance of a diverse asset portfolio that provides services and facilities for City users. Asset Management Plans were adopted by Council in 2024.

The development of the Asset Management Plans demonstrate Council's ongoing commitment to operate and maintain its asset portfolio efficiently to both meet strategic and legislative requirements, and to deliver the required levels of service for the community.

Asset management is driven from a service perspective. Council has implemented an agreed level of service for property, bridge, road and footpath asset classes.

The asset system collects real time data coupled with ongoing regular condition audits, to allow more accurate predictive modelling in regard to treatments and life expectancy of each asset class.

Over the next few years the management of assets will balance the target levels of service for each specific asset with the long-term costs.

The Asset Management Plans provide the basis for the Capital Renewal Program included in Council's LTFP and is refined as part of the Annual Business Plan and Budget process. In 2024-25 the Capital Renewal Program has a projected net expenditure of \$12.9M.

Capital Renewal Program

Capital Renewal Program	Expenditure	Income	Net
Buildings			
Building & Property (includes swimming facilities)	1,543,000	-	1,543,000
	1,543,000	-	1,543,000
Open Space			
Reserves & Open Space	1,526,000	-	1,526,000
	1,526,000	-	1,526,000
Stormwater			
Drainage & Stormwater	685,000	-	685,000
	685,000	-	685,000
Transport			
Road Program	1,956,000	-	1,956,000
Kerb & Water Table Program	2,970,000	-	2,970,000
Footpath Program	1,470,000	-	1,470,000
Lighting Renewal Program	50,000	-	50,000
Traffic Facility Renewal Program	150,000	-	150,000
Car Parks Program	110,000	-	110,000
	6,706,000	-	6,706,000
Plant, Fleet and Equipment			
Plant and Equipment	834,000	234,000	600,000
Light Fleet	267,000	110,000	157,000
	1,101,000	344,000	757,000
ICT Assets			
ICT Asset Renewal	574,000	-	574,000
	574,000	-	574,000
Sub-total	12,135,000	344,000	11,827,000
Capitalised Project Delivery Costs	1,075,000	-	1,039,600
Total	13,210,000	344,000	12,866,600

Capital Renewal Program

Capital Renewal Program

Property Program (includes swimming facilities)

Facility	Component Renewal
Unley Swimming Pool	Renewal of sand filters.
Clarence Park Community Centre	Renewal and reconfiguration of adult and children's toilets, and kitchen upgrade.
Goodwood Community Centre	Removal of evaporative air conditioning and replacement with refrigerated air conditioning.
Goodwood Library Public Toilets	Design for the renewal and reconfiguration of the internal and external public toilets.
Various	Small project designs.

Open Space Renewal Program

Location	Suburb	Scope
Leicester Street Playground	Parkside	Renewal of playground and soft fall.
Wayville Reserve	Wayville	Renewal of playground and soft fall.
Soutar Park	Goodwood	Renewal of playground and soft fall.
Page Park	Clarence Park	Reconstruction of 2 tennis courts.
Orphanage Park	Millswood	Resurfacing of 1 tennis court.
Unley Oval	Unley	Renewal of cricket nets.
Scammel Reserve	Myrtle Bank	Renewal of irrigation.
Fern Avenue Reserve	Fullarton	Renewal of irrigation.
Katherine Street Reserve	Fullarton	Replace solar lighting.
Various	Various	Irrigation design, furniture renewal and playground soft fall repairs.

Capital Renewal Program continued

Drainage & Stormwater Renewal Program

Location	Suburb	Works
Miller Place	Unley	Reconstruction and upgrade of stormwater pipe.
Gully Street	Hyde Park	Install double side entry pits.
Palmer Avenue	Myrtle Bank	Install 2 side entry pits and connect to creek.
Simpson Parade	Unley	Upgrade side entry pits and pipe to creek.
Various	Various	Side entry pit renewals as per 2025 condition audit.
Various	Various	Stormwater renewal designs for the construction of stormwater renewals.
Various	Various	CCTV pipe & culvert inspections to inform the 5-year renewal program.

Road Renewal Program

Road Name, Suburb	To/From	Scope
Collins Street, Parkside	Campbell Rd/ Dudley St	Reseal road surface.
Belgrave Court, Parkside	Unley Rd/ End	Reseal and pavement patching.
Ramage Street, Unley	Mary St/ Arthur St	Reseal and pavement patching.
Queen Street, Unley	Mary St/ Arthur St	Reseal and pavement patching.
Barr-Smith Avenue, Myrtle Bank	Glen Osmond Rd / Riverdale Rd	Reseal road surface.
Beaconsfield Street, Hyde Park	Unley Rd/ End	Permeable pavers.
Miller Place (Laneway), Unley	Young St/ Park Ln	Reseal following new spoon drain.
Nelly Lane (Unsealed), Parkside	St Helen / Olive St	New seal.
Dover Street, Malvern	Duthy St / West Tce	Reseal surface.
Charra Street, Hyde Park	Esmond St/ Commercial Rd	Reseal surface.
Avondale Street, Clarence Park	Francis St/ End	Reseal surface.
Sheffield Street, Malvern	Duthy St/ West Tce	Reseal surface.
Wood Lane, Wayville	Goodwood Rd/ Cotham St	Reseal surface.
Rose Lane, Wayville	Short St/ Cotham St	Reseal surface.
Davenport Lane, Wayville	Short St/ Cotham St	Reseal surface.
Cotham Street, Wayville	Rose Ln/ Wood Ln	Reseal surface.
Duthy Street, Malvern	Fisher St/ Dover St	Reseal and pavement patching.

Capital Renewal Program

Capital Renewal Program continued

Kerb and Water Table Renewal Program

Road Name, Suburb	To/From	Scope
Unley Road, Parkside	Whittam St/ Frederick St	New Kerb (Stage 3)
Unley Road, Unley	Greenhill Rd/ Hughes St	New Kerb (Stage 4)
Barr-Smith Avenue, Myrtle Bank	Glen Osmond Rd/ Riverdale Rd	Kerb Renewal
Short Street, Wayville	Young St/ Rose Tce	Kerb Renewal
Queen Street, Unley	Mary St/ Arthur St	Kerb Renewal
Charra Street, Hyde Park	Esmond St/ Commercial Rd	Kerb Renewal
Avondale Street, Clarence Park	Francis St/ End	Kerb Renewal
Dover Street, Malvern	Duthy St/ West Tce	Kerb Renewal
Miller Place (Laneway), Unley	Young St/ Park Ln	New Spoon Drain
Nelly Lane (Unsealed), Parkside	St Helen St/ Olive St	New Spoon Drain
Sheffield Street, Malvern	Duthy St/ West Tce	Kerb Renewal
Marion Lane, Unley	Windsor St/ Duthy St	End treatments only
Blackett Street, Goodwood	Louisa St/ End	Kerb Renewal (Bluestone)
Alexander Avenue, Millswood	Mitchell St/ End	Kerb Renewal
Wood Lane, Wayville	Goodwood Rd/ Cotham St	New Spoon Drain
Rose Lane, Wayville	Short St/ Cotham St	New Spoon Drain
Davenport Lane, Wayville	Short St/ Cotham St	New Spoon Drain
Fullarton Road, Highgate	Cheltenham St/ Invergowrie Ave	Kerb Renewal
Cedar Avenue, Unley Park	Elm St/ Nanthea Nth Tce	Kerb Renewal
Duthy Street, Malvern	Fisher St / Dover St	Kerb Maintenance
Collins Street, Parkside	Campbell Rd/ Dudley St	Kerb Maintenance for road reseal
Belgrave Court, Parkside	Unley Rd/ End	Kerb Maintenance for road reseal



Capital Renewal Program continued

Footpath Renewal Program

Location	To/From	Works
Unley Road, Parkside	Whittam St/ Frederick St	Full Replacement (East side)
Unley Road, Unley	Greenhill Rd/ Hughes St	Full Replacement (West side)
Winchester Street, Malvern	Cambridge Tce/ Rugby St	Full Replacement (North Side)
Dover Street, Malvern	Cambridge Tce/ Rugby St	Full Replacement (Both Sides)
Hatherley Avenue, Hyde Park	King William Rd/ Wood St	Full Replacement (Both Sides)
Glen Osmond Road, Parkside	Greenhill Rd/ Fullarton Rd	Renewal & Upgrade (partial)
Cross Road, Clarence Park, Kings Park	South Rd/ Jellicoe Ave	Lift and Relay (major works)
Fullarton Road, Highgate	Cheltenham St/ Invergowrie Ave	Renewal & Upgrade
Pram Ramps, Various	Various	DDA Upgrades

Lighting Renewal Program

Scope

Renewal of Lighting across parks and reserves.

Traffic Facility Renewal Program

Location	Description
Young Street, Unley	Engineering for construction design drawings for three roundabouts along Young Street, at its intersections with Roberts St, Palmerston St and Salisbury St.
Various	Renewal and replacement of the traffic signal control box for TS-182 that has reached the end of its useful life.

Car Park Renewal Program

Location	Scope
King William Road	On-street Car Parking Bays Stage Two – reconstruction of on-street car parking bays including new concrete and mortar base and interlocking pavers.

Plant, Fleet & Equipment

Plant & Equipment Renewal	Renewal of major and minor plant.
Light Fleet Renewal	Replacement of three vehicles scheduled for replacement.

ICT Assets

Replacement and renewal of various ICT assets, including multi-function devices, handheld devices, network hardware and infrastructure.

Budgeted Financial Statements

Uniform Presentation of Finances

\$'000s	2024-25 Forecast	2025-26 Draft Budget
Income		
General Rates Income	48,849	50,804
Other Rates and Levies	2,243	2,240
Statutory Charges	1,904	1,655
User Charges	2,465	2,626
Grants, Subsidies & Contributions - Operating	3,812	3,870
Investment Income	315	50
Reimbursements	217	221
Other Income	1,310	1,049
Operating Projects	40	10
Total Income	61,154	62,524
Expenditure		
Employee Costs	20,885	22,440
Materials, Contracts & Other Expenses	22,363	22,477
Depreciation, Amortisation & Impairment	12,247	12,731
Finance Costs	81	334
Operating Projects	2,966	2,322
Total Expenditure	58,541	60,304
Subtotal	2,613	2,220
Equity Accounted Businesses - Gain / (Loss)	498	-
Operating Surplus / (Deficit) before Capital Amounts	2,115	2,220
/less Net Outlays on Existing Assets		
Capital Expenditure on Renewal & Replacement of Existing Assets	(14,753)	(13,210)
/less Depreciation, Amortisation and Impairment	12,247	12,731
/less Amounts received specifically for Replacement of Existing Assets	300	-
/less Proceeds from the Sale of Replaced Assets	532	344
Net Outlays on Existing Assets	(1,675)	(135)
/less Net Outlays on New and Upgraded Assets		
Capital Expenditure on New and Upgraded Assets	(7,480)	(8,886)
/less Amounts received specifically for New and Upgraded Assets	1,395	2,300
/less Proceeds from Sale of Assets	-	-
Net Outlays on New and Upgraded Assets	(6,085)	(6,586)
Net Lending / (Borrowing) for the Financial Year (inclusive of Equity Accounted Businesses (for 2024-25 Forecast) *)	(5,645)	(4,501)
/less Equity Accounted Businesses	498	-
Net Lending / (Borrowing) for the Financial Year excluding Equity Accounted Businesses	(5,147)	(4,501)

Statement of Comprehensive Income

\$'000s	2024-25 Forecast	2025-26 Draft Budget
Income		
General Rates Income	48,849	50,804
Other Rates and Levies	2,243	2,240
Statutory Charges	1,904	1,655
User Charges	2,465	2,626
Grants, Subsidies & Contributions - Operating	3,812	3,870
Investment Income	315	50
Reimbursements	217	221
Other Income	1,310	1,049
Operating Projects	40	10
Total Income	61,154	62,524
Expenditure		
Employee Costs	20,885	22,440
Materials, Contracts & Other Expenses	22,363	22,477
Depreciation, Amortisation & Impairment	12,247	12,731
Finance Costs	81	334
Operating Projects	2,966	2,322
Total Expenditure	58,541	60,304
Operating Surplus / (deficit) before Equity Accounted Businesses	2,613	2,220
Equity Accounted Businesses - Gain / (Loss)	498	-
Operating Surplus / (Deficit) inclusive of Equity Accounted Businesses *	2,115	2,220
Asset Disposal & Fair Value Adjustments	532	344
Amounts received specifically for new, upgraded or replacement assets	1,695	2,300
Capital Receipts	2,227	2,644
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	4,342	4,864
Share of Other Comprehensive Income – Equity Accounted Council Businesses	2,192	-
Total Comprehensive Income	6,534	4,864

* The draft Budgeted Financial Statements for the 2025-26 financial year exclude the Equity Accounted Businesses (Centennial Park Cemetery Authority, Brown Hill Keswick Creek Stormwater Project, and East Waste) for the purposes of community consultation.

Budgeted Financial Statements

Statement of Financial Position

\$'000s	2024-25 Forecast	2025-26 Draft Budget
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash & cash equivalents	1,655	1,655
Trade & other receivables	3,538	3,662
Other financial assets	-	-
Total Current Assets	5,193	5,317
Non-current Assets		
Financial Assets	-	-
Equity accounted investments in Council businesses	37,023	38,319
Infrastructure, Property, Plant & Equipment	792,342	826,795
Total Non-current Assets	829,365	865,114
Total Assets	834,558	870,432
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Trade & Other Payables	4,910	5,082
Borrowings Fixed Term	-	-
Provisions	4,014	4,154
Total Liabilities Assets	8,924	9,236
Non-current liabilities		
Borrowings	2,993	7,495
Provisions	216	224
Total Non-current Liabilities	3,209	7,719
Total Liabilities	12,133	16,955
Net Assets	822,426	853,477
Equity		
Accumulated Surplus	188,664	193,528
Asset Revaluation Reserves	633,469	659,656
Other Reserves	293	293
Total Equity	822,426	853,477
Net Financial Liabilities	6,940	11,638

* The draft Budgeted Financial Statements for the 2025-26 financial year exclude the Equity Accounted Businesses (Centennial Park Cemetery Authority, Brown Hill Keswick Creek Stormwater Project, and East Waste) for the purposes of community consultation.

Statement of Cash Flow

\$'000s	2024-25 Forecast	2025-26 Draft Budget
Cash Flows from Operating Activities		
Receipts		
Operating Receipts	60,839	62,474
Investment Receipts	315	50
Payments		
Operating Payments to suppliers and employees	(46,214)	(47,239)
Finance Payments	(81)	(334)
Net Cash provided by (or used in) Operating Activities	14,859	14,951
Cash Flows from Investing Activities		
Receipts		
Amounts specifically for new or upgraded assets	1,395	2,300
Amounts received specifically for Replacement of Existing Assets	300	-
Proceeds from Sale of Surplus Assets	-	-
Sale of replaced assets	532	344
Repayments of loans by community groups	-	-
Payments		
Expenditure on renewal/replacement of assets	(14,753)	(13,210)
Expenditure on new/upgraded assets	(7,480)	(8,886)
Net purchase of Investment Securities	-	-
Capital Contributed to Equity Accounted Council Businesses	-	-
Distributions Received from Equity Accounted Council Businesses (Loss)	-	-
Net Cash provided by (or used in) Investing Activities	(20,006)	(19,452)
Cash Flows from Financing Activities		
Receipts		
Proceeds from borrowings	2,993	4,501
Payments		
Repayments of borrowings	(288)	-
Net Cash provided by (or used in) Financing Activities	2,705	4,501
Net Increase/(Decrease) in cash held	(2,442)	-
Plus: Cash & cash equivalents at beginning of period	4,097	1,655
Cash & cash equivalents at end of period	1,655	1,655

* The draft Budgeted Financial Statements for the 2025-26 financial year exclude the Equity Accounted Businesses (Centennial Park Cemetery Authority, Brown Hill Keswick Creek Stormwater Project, and East Waste) for the purposes of community consultation.

Budgeted Financial Statements

Statement of Changes in Equity

\$'000s	Accumulated Surplus	Asset Revaluation Reserve	Other Reserves	Total Equity
2025-26 Draft Budget				
Balance at end of previous reporting period	188,664	633,469	293	822,426
Net Surplus/(Deficit) for Year	4,864	-	-	4,864
Other Comprehensive Income				
Gain/(loss) on revaluation of Infrastructure and Assets	-	26,187	-	26,187
Share of Other Comprehensive Income – Equity Accounted Council Businesses	-	-	-	-
Other Comprehensive Income	-	26,187	-	26,187
Total Comprehensive Income	4,864	26,187	-	31,051
Balance at end of period	193,528	659,656	293	853,477
2024-25 Forecast				
Balance at end of previous reporting period	182,143	633,469	280	815,892
Net Surplus/(Deficit) for Year	4,342	-	-	4,342
Other Comprehensive Income				
Gain/(loss) on revaluation of Infrastructure and Assets	-	-	-	-
Share of Other Comprehensive Income – Equity Accounted Council Businesses	2,192	-	-	2,192
Other Comprehensive Income	2,192	-	-	2,192
Total Comprehensive Income	6,534	-	-	6,534
Transfer between reserves	(13)		13	-
Balance at end of period	188,664	633,469	293	822,426

* The draft Budgeted Financial Statements for the 2025-26 financial year exclude the Equity Accounted Businesses (Centennial Park Cemetery Authority, Brown Hill Keswick Creek Stormwater Project, and East Waste) for the purposes of community consultation.



Long Term Financial Plan

\$'000	2024-25 Q2 Forecast	2025-26 Draft Budget	2026-27 LTFP Year 2
Income			
General Rates Income	48,849	50,804	52,455
Other Rates and Levies	2,243	2,240	2,301
Statutory Charges	1,904	1,655	1,700
User Charges	2,465	2,626	2,698
Grants, subsidies & contributions - Operating	3,812	3,870	3,898
Investment Income	315	50	15
Reimbursements	217	221	227
Other Income	1,310	1,049	1,078
Operating Projects	40	10	-
Total Income	61,154	62,524	64,373
Expenditure			
Employee Costs	20,885	22,440	23,113
Materials, Contracts & Other Expenses	22,363	22,477	23,195
Depreciation, Amortisation & Impairment	12,247	12,731	13,253
Finance Costs	81	334	555
Operating Projects	2,966	2,322	1,500
Total Expenditure	58,542	60,304	61,616
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	2,612	2,220	2,757
Capital Renewal Expenditure (net)	13,922	12,866	13,093
New Capital Expenditure (net)	6,085	6,586	6,415
Total Capital Expenditure (net)	20,007	19,452	19,508
Add back Depreciation	12,247	12,731	13,253
Operating Surplus/(Deficit) less capital expenditure	(5,148)	(4,501)	(3,499)
Fixed Term Borrowings	-	-	-
Cash Advance Debenture (CAD Borrowings)	2,994	7,495	10,994
Total Borrowings	2,994	7,495	10,994
Repayment of Fixed Term Borrowings	288	-	-
Repayment/(draw-down) of CAD	(2,994)	(4,501)	(3,499)
Net repayment/(draw down) of borrowings	(2,706)	(4,501)	(3,499)
Operating Surplus Ratio (Target 4-6%)	4.3%	3.5%	4.3%
Net Financial Liabilities Ratio (Target <80%)	7%	14%	19%
Asset Renewal Funding Ratio (Target 100% average over 10 years)	116%	101%	100%
Asset Sustainability Ratio (Target 100% average over 10 years)	120%	104%	101%

* The draft Budgeted Financial Statements for the 2025-26 financial year exclude the Equity Accounted Businesses (Centennial Park Cemetery Authority, Brown Hill Keswick Creek Stormwater Project, and East Waste) for the purposes of community consultation.

2027-28 LTFP Year 3	2028-29 LTFP Year 4	2029-30 LTFP Year 5	2030-31 LTFP Year 6	2031-32 LTFP Year 7	2032-33 LTFP Year 8	2033-34 LTFP Year 9	2034-35 LTFP Year 10
54,029	55,650	57,319	59,039	60,810	62,634	64,513	66,448
2,359	2,418	2,478	2,540	2,604	2,669	2,735	2,804
1,743	1,786	1,831	1,877	1,924	1,972	2,021	2,072
2,765	2,835	2,905	2,978	3,053	3,129	3,207	3,287
4,195	4,281	4,369	4,459	4,552	4,646	4,744	4,843
15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
233	239	244	251	257	263	270	277
1,105	1,133	1,161	1,190	1,220	1,250	1,282	1,314
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
66,444	68,356	70,323	72,349	74,433	76,579	78,787	81,060
23,807	24,521	25,257	26,014	26,795	27,599	28,427	29,279
23,777	24,373	24,984	25,610	26,252	26,910	27,585	28,276
13,671	14,102	14,546	15,004	15,475	15,961	16,461	16,976
694	762	826	886	942	991	1,035	1,068
1,538	1,576	1,615	1,656	1,697	1,740	1,783	1,828
63,487	65,334	67,229	69,171	71,161	73,201	75,290	77,428
2,957	3,022	3,095	3,178	3,272	3,378	3,497	3,631
13,421	13,756	14,100	14,453	14,814	15,184	15,564	15,891
4,360	4,469	4,581	4,695	4,813	4,933	5,056	5,183
17,781	18,225	18,681	19,148	19,627	20,117	20,620	21,074
13,671	14,102	14,546	15,004	15,475	15,961	16,461	16,976
(1,153)	(1,102)	(1,040)	(966)	(879)	(779)	(663)	(466)
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12,146	13,248	14,288	15,253	16,133	16,911	17,574	18,041
12,146	13,248	14,288	15,253	16,133	16,911	17,574	18,041
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(1,153)	(1,102)	(1,040)	(966)	(879)	(779)	(663)	(466)
(1,153)	(1,102)	(1,040)	(966)	(879)	(779)	(663)	(466)
4.5%	4.4%	4.4%	4.4%	4.4%	4.4%	4.4%	4.5%
21%	22%	22%	23%	24%	24%	24%	24%
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
101%	100%	99%	99%	98%	97%	97%	96%



Civic Centre

181 Unley Road, Unley
South Australia 5061

Postal PO Box 1, Unley
South Australia 5061

Telephone (08) 8372 5111

Email pobox1@unley.sa.gov.au
unley.sa.gov.au



Advice

Local Government Advice

City of Unley

February 2025

Enquiries concerning this advice should be addressed to:

Essential Services Commission
GPO Box 2605
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Telephone: (08) 8463 4444
Freecall: 1800 633 592 (SA and mobiles only)
E-mail: advice@escosa.sa.gov.au
Web: www.escosa.sa.gov.au

City of Unley

AT A GLANCE

OVERVIEW

The Essential Services Commission finds the City of Unley's current and projected financial performance **sustainable**, considering the Council's average expected growth in properties of 0.3 percent per annum over the next 10 years, the planned average rate increases of 2.8 percent per annum per property over this period, and the effective management of assets.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE



Past 10 years
Sustainable



Current
Sustainable



Projected
Sustainable

RISKS IMPACTING SUSTAINABILITY

⚠ If operating costs are not contained within forecasts, the forecast operating surplus may not be achieved.

KEY FACTS

- ▶ Population in 2023 was **39,929** residents
- ▶ Council covers **14.4 square kilometres**
- ▶ 19,399 rateable properties in 2023-24
- ▶ **\$48.9 million** of rate income in 2023-24
- ▶ Value of infrastructure assets held in 2023-24 equals **\$782.0 million**

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1 Executive summary

1.1 Summary of observations

The Essential Services Commission of South Australia finds the City of Unley's current financial position to be **sustainable**. The City of Unley faces low risks in achieving its operating surplus and effectively managing its assets over the forecast period.

The City of Unley has managed its operating surplus conservatively during the 10-year historical period from 2013-2014 to 2022-2023, achieving an average operating surplus ratio of 7.5 percent. It has forecast an operating surplus ratio for the period from 2024-25 through to 2033-34 of 5.2 percent on average.

Rates are the main source of income for City of Unley over both the historical period and the forecast period, and they are increasing as a percentage of total income.

Over the historical period, the main contributors to expenses were 'materials, contracts and other' expenses and depreciation, which increased at an annual average rate of 3.7 percent and 5.2 percent per annum respectively. Looking forward, 'materials, contracts and other' costs are forecast to increase in line with forecast inflation, while depreciation expenses are forecast to grow by 3.1 percent per annum on average between 2024-25 and 2033-34. Depreciation expense as a proportion of total expenses has increased from an average of 17.2 percent in 2013-14 to 22.1 percent in 2023-24, while employee expenses have declined from 38.7 percent to 34.9 percent over the same period.

The City of Unley is taking a pro-active approach to managing its assets and has been transparent with the Essential Services Commission and other stakeholders via its strategic documents about asset management practices. However, stakeholders may benefit from a more detailed annual publication of the Long-Term Financial Plan.

1.2 Summary of Recommendations

The Essential Services Commission recommends that the City of Unley:

1. **Publishes** a comprehensive version of the Long-Term Financial Plan annually, to improve transparency for stakeholders.
2. **Continue** to review its inflation forecasts in its budget and forward projections at least annually.
3. **Continue** to monitor cost growth in its budgeting where possible, and report savings in strategic documents.
4. **Continue** to minimise further average rate increases above inflation, to help reduce any emerging affordability risk in the community.

2 About the advice

2.1 Background

State Parliament has tasked the Essential Services Commission (**Commission**), South Australia's independent economic regulator and advisory body, to provide advice on material changes proposed by local councils in relation to elements of their Strategic Management Plans (**SMP**), and on the proposed revenue sources, including rates, which underpin those plans.¹

A primary purpose of the Local Government Advice Scheme (**Advice or the Scheme**) is to support councils to make financially sustainable strategic decisions in their annual business plans and budgets, in the context of their Long-Term Financial Plans (**LTFP**) and Infrastructure and Asset Management plans (**IAMP**)². The LTFP and the IAMP are both required as part of a council's SMP.³ Financial sustainability encompasses intergenerational equity,⁴ program (service level) and rates stability in this context.⁵ The other main purpose is for the Commission to consider ratepayer contributions in the context of all revenue sources, as outlined in the LTFP.⁶ In addition, the Commission has discretion to provide advice on any other aspect of a council's LTFP or IAMP it considers appropriate, having regard to the circumstances of that council.⁷

The first cycle of the scheme extends over four years from 2022-23 to 2025-26, and the Commission has selected 17 councils for advice in the third year (2024-25) of the Scheme, including the City of Unley (**Council**).

This report provides the Local Government Advice for the Council in 2024-25.

The Council is obliged under the *Local Government Act 1999* (**LG Act**) to publish this advice and its response, if applicable, in its 2025-26 Annual Business Plan (including any draft Annual Business Plan) and in subsequent plans until the next cycle of the Scheme⁸. The Council is not compelled under the LG Act to follow the advice.

The Commission thanks the City of Unley for meeting with Commission staff and for providing information to assist the Commission in preparing this advice.

2.2 The Commission's approach

In providing the Advice for the Council, the Commission has followed the approach it previously explained in the Framework and Approach – Final Report (**F&A**).⁹

The Commission has considered the SMP documents (set out in the box below), with a particular focus on its performance and outlook against three financial indicators: the Operating Surplus Ratio (**OSR**),

¹ Amendments to the LG Act (s122(1c) to (1k) and (9)) specify the responsibilities for the Commission and local councils for the Local Government Advice Scheme. The Commission must provide advice to each council in accordance with the matters outlined in s122(1e), (1f) and (1g).

² Commonly referred to as asset management plans.

³ The objectives of the advice with reference to a council's LTFP and IAMP are presented under LG Act, s122(1g). LG Act s122(1) specifies the requirements of a council's SMP, including the LTFP and IAMP.

⁴ 'Intergenerational equity' relates to fairly sharing services and the revenue generated to fund the services between current and future ratepayers.

⁵ Commission, *Framework and Approach – Final Report*, August 2022, pp. 2-3, available at www.escosa.sa.gov.au/advice/advice-to-local-government.

⁶ LG Act s122(1f)(a) and (1g)(a)(ii).

⁷ LG Act s122(1f)(b) and (1g)(b).

⁸ LG Act s122(1h).

⁹ Commission, *Framework and Approach – Final Report*, August 2022, available at www.escosa.sa.gov.au/advice/advice-to-local-government.

the Net Financial Liabilities Ratio (**NFLR**) and the Asset Renewal Funding Ratio (**ARFR**).¹⁰ Analysis of these three indicators captures financial and service sustainability, in addition to cost control and affordability risk.¹¹

City of Unley – Strategic Management Plan Documents

- ▶ 2024-25 to 2033-34 City of Unley Long-Term Financial Plan adopted 24 June 2024
- ▶ 2024-25 City of Unley Annual Business Plan and Budget adopted 24 June 2024
- ▶ 2023-24 City of Unley Annual Business Plan & Budget
- ▶ City of Unley Building Asset Management Plan 2023
- ▶ City of Unley Open Space Asset Management Plan 2023
- ▶ City of Unley Stormwater Asset Management Plan 2023
- ▶ City of Unley Transport Asset Management Plan 2023
- ▶ Economic Development Growth Strategy 2021-2025
- ▶ City of Unley Four Year Delivery Plan 2021-2025

Given that the Commission must, in providing its advice, have regard to the objective of councils maintaining and implementing their IAMP (often termed AMPs) and LTFP,¹² it has also considered the Council's performance in that context. Findings regarding the content of the Council's AMP, and the alignment between its LTFP and AMP,¹³ are discussed in section 5.3.

The Commission has also reviewed the Council's template data, which contains the following:

- ▶ 2024-25 LTFP forecasts for 2024-25 to 2033-34
- ▶ 2023-24 LTFP forecasts
- ▶ historical financial data
- ▶ number of rateable properties, and
- ▶ Council staff (Full Time Equivalent (**FTE**)) numbers from 2013-14 onwards.^{14 15}

All charts and tables in the Advice are primarily sourced from these datasets. In addition, the Commission has reviewed the Council's audit committee reports, and other public information, as appropriate.

The Commission has reported estimates in nominal terms, for consistency with the Council's plans and actual rate levels, but it has compared estimated inflation impacts to these trends as a guide to identify

¹⁰ The three financial indicators are specified in the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 2011. Since 2011, each council has been required to refer to these three indicators in its plans, annual budget, mid-year budget review and annual financial statements. The councils can adopt their own target range for each ratio, but the Commission has adopted the previously suggested Local Government Association (**LGA**) target ranges as a basis for its analysis, which were established and agreed during the development of the LGA Financial Sustainability Papers (2006-2011).

¹¹ The F&A listed 29 analytical questions that the Commission has answered in assessing the Council's performance against these indicators to determine affordability, cost control and other sustainability risks.

¹² LG Act s122(1g)(a)(i).

¹³ As required under s122(1b) of the LG Act.

¹⁴ Sourced from the Local Government Grants Commission (including data reported by the Office of the Valuer-General) and the Council's data.

¹⁵ The Council's estimates for the 2023-24 financial year, relied on at the time of preparing this advice, were unaudited.

'real' rather than 'inflationary' effects. In the charts, the Consumer Price Index (**CPI**) line shows the cumulative growth in the CPI (Adelaide) series from 2013-14, and then projections of this series from 2024-25 based on the Reserve Bank of Australia (**RBA**) (Australia-wide) inflation forecasts to the December quarter 2026, and the midpoint of the RBA target range (2.5 percent) thereafter.

The Council approved its 2024-25 LTFP in June 2024. The previous formally adopted version of its LTFP was in 2020. While the Council reviews its LTFP each year with an update included in the Annual Business Plan and Budget (adopted each June), this update is a subset of the comprehensive data normally available in the LTFP and does not include detail about sources of revenue, or capital expenditure. Sustainability ratios (asset renewal funding ratio or net financial liabilities ratio) cannot be determined from the level of information published in reviews.

The limited data published between the 2020 and 2024 LTFP does not include sufficient information to provide the transparency that would enable ratepayers or other stakeholders to understand sources of revenue or the relationship between capital expenditure and the asset management plans. The Council's practice of undertaking a major refresh every four years, with minor updates in the intervening years (as published in the Annual Business Plan), limits information flows between the Council and the community it serves. To include financial projections from the AMP in the LTFP assists with developing stakeholder's understanding of the risks, benefits and community value related to delivering capital infrastructure and services,¹⁶ in addition to encouraging alignment between strategic documents (which is a requirement under the LG Act.).

For this reason, the Commission recommends that the Council:

1. **Publish** a comprehensive version of the Long-Term Financial Plan annually, to improve transparency for stakeholders.

Finally, in formulating this Advice, the Commission has had regard to the circumstances of the Council, including its location as a metropolitan council, its income level (\$57.2 million¹⁷) and the size of its rates base (more than 19,399 ratepayers¹⁸).

Legend:  Low-risk  Moderate-risk  High-risk

¹⁶ Australian Local Government Association, (**ALGA**) 2024 National State of the Assets report, p. 64.

¹⁷ Based on the estimated total income in 2023-24.

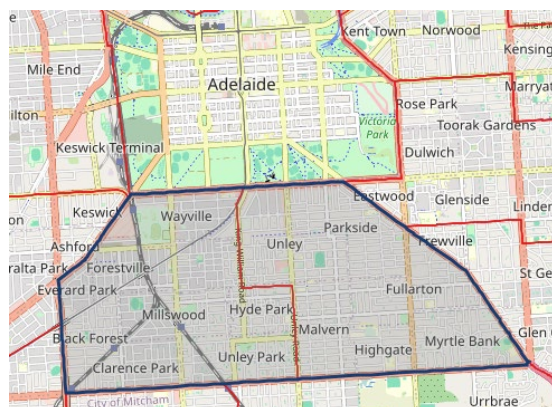
¹⁸ Based on the estimated number of property assessments in 2023-24.

3 Council profile

The Corporation of the City of Unley is classified by the Commission as an 'Urban Development and Urban City Centre' council and is one of 16 in this category in South Australia.¹⁹ The Council is in the inner south of Adelaide comprising 1,439 hectares.²⁰ It has an estimated resident population of 39,929 and approximately 19,399 rateable properties.²¹

The City of Unley was proclaimed a city in 1906, because of its population reaching 22,000.²²

Figure 1: Council area



The Council region also has the following attributes:

- ▶ stable rateable property growth of approximately 0.7 percent per annum²³
- ▶ population density of 2,798 persons per square kilometre²⁴
- ▶ 171 kilometres of sealed roads and laneways, with minimal unsealed roads²⁵
- ▶ its largest employment sectors are in construction (17.0 percent), healthcare and social assistance (25.2 percent),²⁶ and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (13.4 percent), and
- ▶ a median population age of 42 years.²⁷

¹⁹ Commission, *Fact Sheet - Local Government Advice Scheme – Schedule of Councils*, May 2023, available at <https://www.escosa.sa.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/21947/20240731-Advice-ScheduleOfCouncils-FactSheet.pdf.aspx?Embed=Y>.

²⁰ Refer to the Department of Infrastructure and Transport - Local Government Grants Commission, *2022-23 Database Reports*, available at: <https://www.dit.sa.gov.au/local-government/grants-commission/publications#database>.

²¹ Based on the Council's Financial Reporting template provided to the Commission.

²² Refer to <https://www.unley.sa.gov.au/Events-programs-facilities/Facilities-venues/Unley-Museum/Unleys-history/Proclamation>.

²³ Based on the Council's Financial Reporting template provided to the Commission.

²⁴ Refer to Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Data by region*, available at <https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?lyr=lga&rgn=47980>.

²⁵ Refer to the Department of Infrastructure and Transport - Local Government Grants Commission, *2022-23 Database Reports*, available at: <https://www.dit.sa.gov.au/local-government/grants-commission/publications#database>.

²⁶ Unley Economy, available at <https://app.remplan.com.au/unley/economy/summary>.

²⁷ Refer to Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Data by region*, available at <https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?lyr=lga&rgn=47980>.

4 Material plan amendments in 2024-25

The Council has made various amendments to its 2024-25 draft budget and forward projections, for revenue and spending initiatives. The material amendments to some of its main financial forecasts are listed in Table 1 (in nominal terms).²⁸ To ensure a comparable analysis of estimates between the 2023-24 draft LTFP and 2024-25 LTFP, the Commission has reviewed the nine overlapping years' statistics: 2024-25 to 2032-33 and identified material amendments accordingly.

4.1 Key points



Council has adopted the good practice of annual indexation of infrastructure asset values.



Council's inflation assumption slightly exceeds RBA forecasts.

Table 1: Historical and forecast financial items

Selected Financial Item	Sum of 2024-25 to 2032-33 estimates in draft 2023-24 LTFP (\$ million)	Sum of 2024-25 to 2032-33 estimates in 2024-25 LTFP (\$ million)	Change in 2024-25 estimates (\$ million)	Change in 2024-25 estimates (percent)
Total operating income	607.9	611.3	+3.4	+0.6
Total operating expenses	556.7	579.9	+23.2	+4.2
Operating surplus/(deficit)	51.2	31.4	-19.8	-38.7
Capital expenditure on renewal of assets ²⁹	98.5	127.3	+28.8	+29.2
Capital expenditure on new and upgraded assets ³⁰	34.1	40.6	+6.5	+19.0

4.2 Changes to operating performance

The Council has budgeted (2024-25 LTFP) a decline in its operating performance, with a projected surplus of \$31.4 million, compared to a surplus of \$51.2 million in the 2023-24 LTFP. In aggregate, the projections in the Council's current and previous LTFP (that is, over the nine-year comparative period to 2032-33, as shown in Table 1) indicate the Council's cumulative operating performance is expected to decline by \$19.8 million. This result partly reflects the Council's change in practice of including annual indexation of infrastructure asset values (previously the LTFP only included forecasted depreciation

²⁸ Table 1 shows only selected financial items to demonstrate the material amendments made by the Council in its 2023-24 estimates. It excludes various financial items and individual items do not sum to totals.

²⁹ The capital expenditure estimates are based on the 2022-23 LTFP estimates provided by the Council to the Commission (in an Excel template).

³⁰ The capital expenditure estimates are based on the 2022-23 LTFP estimates provided by the Council to the Commission (in an Excel template).

increases associated with new assets)³¹ which provides a more comprehensive perspective on the forecast depreciation expense.

The increase in its revenue estimates by up to 0.6 percent over the 2024-25 to 2032-33 forecast period, compared with the same estimates in its 2023-24 LTFP, is largely due to a changed business model for the Goodwood Community Centre, increased waste management income, and decline in investment income from lower cash reserves. While increases in income are estimated to be lower than inflation assumptions, the expense forecasts are higher, mainly due to the increased depreciation expense (further discussed in Assets Renewals Expenditure section 5.3).

For the 2024-25 LTFP, the Council notes the declining operating surplus (compared to the previous LTFP) is a result of a 4.2 percent/\$23.2 million increase in operating expenses, partially offset by a 0.6 percent increase (or a \$3.4 million increase) in income.³² Some of the amendments, compared to the previous LTFP, include:

- ▶ higher depreciation, amortisation and impairment estimates resulting from updated asset values and subsequent changes in depreciation forecasts, further discussed in section 5.1
- ▶ a 6.1 percent increase in user charges related to a change in business arrangements, and
- ▶ a 12.2 percent increase in other income related to waste management services.

The Council's historical and projected operating performances are discussed further in section 5.1.

4.3 Indexation adjustments

The Council applies inflation adjustments to its cost and revenue estimates as detailed in its LTFP. It assumes CPI inflation increases of 3.75 percent in 2024-25, 3.5 percent in 2025-26, and 3.0 percent in 2026-27 with 2.5 percent per annum thereafter.³³

The Council's inflation forecasts are slightly above the current RBA forecasts - CPI (Australia-wide) which suggest growth of 2.6 percent per annum on average between 2024-25 and 2033-34.³⁴

The Commission notes that the Council's stated assumptions for indexation in its 2024-25 LTFP are transparent and based on its annual review of these forecasts. However, in a period of decreasing inflation, it may be appropriate to use a more current inflation forecast when preparing budgets. Notwithstanding the need for the Council to endeavour to find savings and reduce any inflationary impact on its community, the Commission recommends that the Council:

2. **Continue** to review its inflation forecasts in its budget and forward projections at least annually.

4.4 Increase to capital expenditure estimates

The Council's 2024-25 LTFP indicates an increase in capital expenditure for asset renewals (by \$28.8 million or 29.2 percent), and for new and upgraded assets (by \$6.5 million or 19.0 percent),

³¹ Material amendments reasons in the 2024-25 LTFP estimates provided by the Council to the Commission (in an Excel template).

³² Table 1 shows only selected financial items to demonstrate the material amendments made by the Council in its 2023-24 estimates. It excludes various financial items, and individual items do not sum to totals.

³³ City of Unley 2024-25 to 2033-34 Long-Term Financial Plan, p. 22; Inflation assumptions based on Adelaide CPI forecast (SA Treasury) at 30 June of the preceding year used to inform budget.

³⁴ The forecast average annual growth in the CPI from 2024-25 to 2033-34 is estimated to be 2.6 percent based on the RBA forecasts for the CPI (Australia-wide) to June 2027 (and the Commission's calculations of average annual percentage growth) and the midpoint of the RBA's target range (2.5 percent) from 2025-26.

compared to the previous year's LTFP (for the period from 2024-25 to 2032-33). From the nine-year projections in the 2024-25 LTFP, the Council has factored in a total of \$127.3 million in capital renewal and replacement works and \$40.6 million in new and upgraded capital works, accounting for 76.0 percent and 24.0 percent of the total capital expenditure program respectively.

The Council's recent review of asset management plans in 2023-24 updated data underpinning capital renewal and operational management costs. The work identified a requirement for significant increases in capital renewal expenditure for Transport and Kerbing costs, partly due to updated design and safety standards, and additional assets were included in the Open Space asset category.³⁵ Assets, the asset management plans, and the Council's capital expenditure outlook are discussed further in section 5.3.

4.5 Changes between 2023-24 LTFP and annual business plan

The Council adopted its 2024-25 Annual Business Plan and Budget in June 2024, together with its 2024-25 LTFP. The Commission notes that the Council's LTFP identifies the risks to its estimates after it is adopted (due to economic factors, for example) and that the Annual Business Plan also includes its 2024-25 estimates (aligned with the LTFP). While there is no current regulatory requirement for it to publish its LTFP projections with its annual business plan and budget, the Commission notes the good practice of the Council in aligning the strategic documents (which is a legislative requirement).

³⁵ City of Unley correspondence – Asset Management Plans – Explanation of Significant Variances, 30 September 2024.

5 Financial sustainability

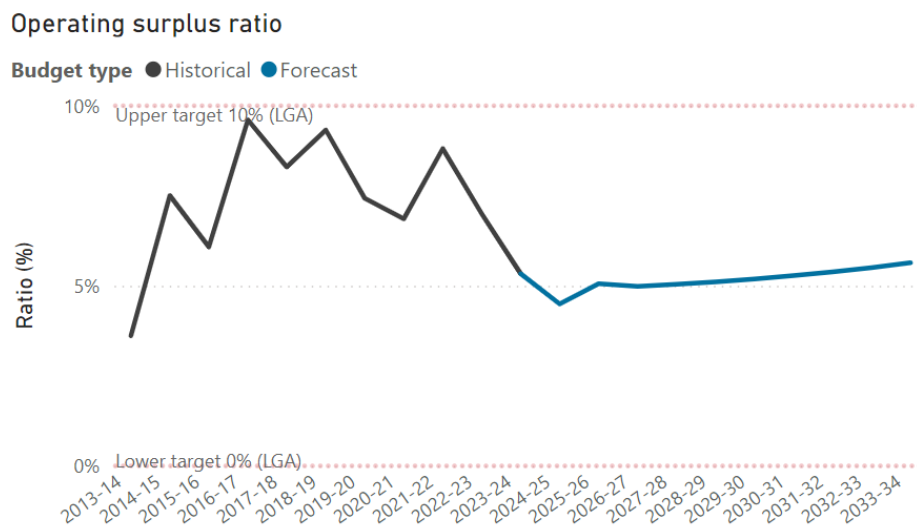
5.1 Operating performance

5.1.1 Key points

- ✓ Council has historically achieved operating surpluses, and forecasts continued surpluses.
- ✓ Growth in rates per property between 2013-14 and 2022-23 was closely aligned to inflation.
- ✓ Growth in expenses per property was below inflation between 2013-14 and 2022-23.
- ⚠ Depreciation grew by 5.2 percent per annum between 2013-14 and 2022-23 and is forecast to increase by 3.1 percent per annum between 2024-25 and 2033-34.

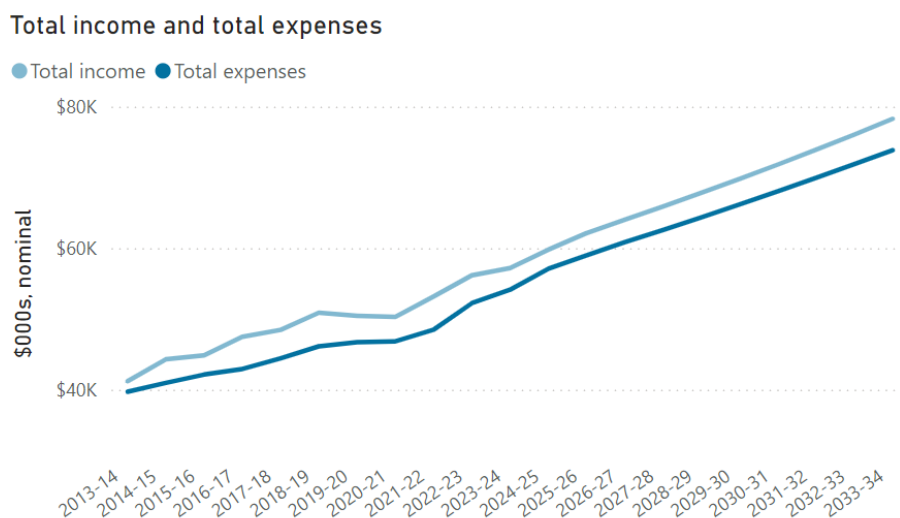
5.1.2 Operating Surplus Ratio

Figure 2: Operating surplus ratio – historical and forecast



The Council has continuously run operating surpluses from 2013-14 to date, with an average surplus of 3.7 percent per annum and an average OSR of 7.5 percent, which is within the LGA target range of zero to 10.0 percent. The Council's forecast indicates annual growth in the OSR, to reach a maximum of 5.6 percent in 2033-34, remaining within the LGA recommended range for the ratio.

Figure 3: Total income and expenses – historical and forecast



5.1.3 Income

Rates revenue increased from 2013-14 to 2022-23 by an average of 3.4 percent per annum and total income increased in the same period by 3.5 percent per annum. Rateable properties increased from 18,351 in 2013-14 to 19,507 in 2022-23 – a growth rate of 0.7 percent per annum.

Rates per property increased by an average of 2.7 percent per annum which is closely aligned to CPI inflation increases for the same period (2.6 percent³⁶) but above the rate of expenses growth per property at 2.4 percent.

As a percentage of total income, between 2013-14 and 2022-23, both rates and grants decreased while investment income and reimbursements increased. Grants income was 'lumpy' over the period, mostly reflecting the timing of Federal Government Financial Assistance Grants (FAG). A three-year average in grants of \$3.8 million in 2022-23 compares with the three-year average of \$3.3 million in 2015-16, which reflects an increase in dollars but a decrease in value in real terms when adjusted for inflation.

Looking forward, all categories of income are expected to grow between 2024-25 and 2033-34, increasing total income by 3.0 percent per annum, or just above forecast inflation of 2.6 percent.³⁷ The Council is projecting average annual rates revenue growth of 3.1 percent to 2033-34, (rates are discussed in more detail in section 6). Grants income is anticipated to average \$3.4 million per annum over the forecast period, compared to the historical average of \$3.7 million per annum. The average growth in annual rates revenue is slightly above forecast expense growth.

5.1.4 Expenditure

Over the historical period 2013-14 to 2022-23, total operating expenses increased by an average of 3.1 percent per annum. Accounting for the increase in rateable properties over time, expenses per property increased by 2.4 percent on average, slightly below CPI inflation. Employee costs as a percentage of total expenses declined between 2013-14 and 2022-23, while depreciation and materials/contracts costs both increased due to inflation in contracts and materials, and updated asset

³⁶ ABS historical time series, available at: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/consumer-price-index-australia/sep-quarter-2023#capital-cities-comparison>.

³⁷ The forecast average annual growth in the CPI from 2024-25 to 2033-34 is estimated to be 2.6 percent based on the RBA forecasts for the CPI (Australia-wide) to June 2027 (and the Commission's calculations of average annual percentage growth) and the midpoint of the RBA's target range (2.5 percent) from 2025-26.

data. Depreciation grew by an average of 5.2 percent per annum and materials and contracts expenses grew by an average 3.7 percent per annum between 2013-14 and 2022-23.

Operating expense forecasts indicate employee numbers will increase by 21 FTE in 2024-25 and remain at that level until 2033-34. The higher FTE represents the Council's establishment (approved staffing numbers), and the Council's intention is to fill all vacant positions in 2024-25.³⁸

The Council forecasts that depreciation will grow by 3.1 percent per annum between 2024-25 and 2033-34, while depreciation as a proportion of total expenses is projected to grow from an average of 18.6 percent between 2013-14 and 2022-23 to 22.1 percent in 2023-24. The Council forecasts average growth in materials, contracts and other expenses that approximately aligns with RBA inflation forecasts. Finance costs are forecast to exhibit an annual average growth of 8.0 percent between 2024-25 and 2032-33, as borrowings grow.

Figure 4: Expenses by category – proportions

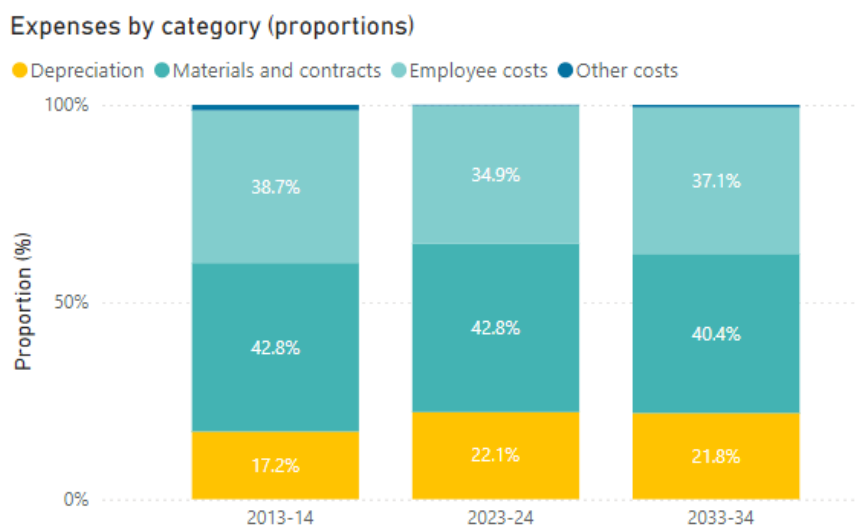


Figure 4 shows the proportions for each type of expense historically and forecast while Figure 5 shows the increase in actual expenses over time.

³⁸ Advised by General Manager, Corporate Support, in conversation, 29 October 2024.

Figure 5: Expenses by category – historical and forecast

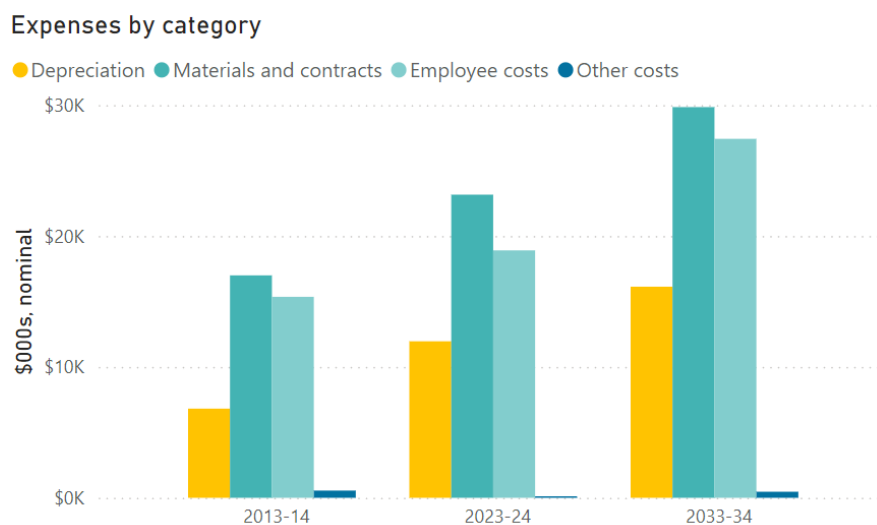
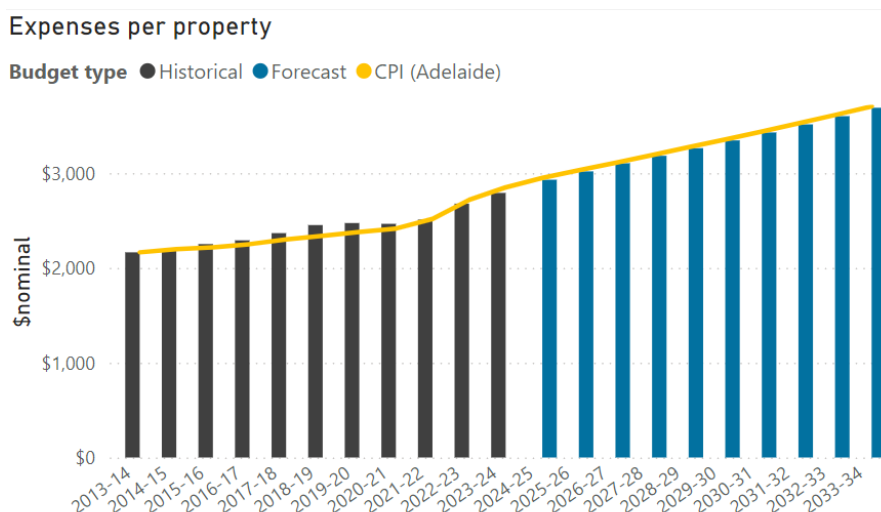


Figure 6: Expense by rated property - historical and forecast



Expenses per property (a metric that also accounts for growth) are expected to increase by an average of 2.6 percent per annum over the forecast period, which aligns with current inflation projections.

The forecast expenditure reflects contained growth, and is a positive trend, noting that the Council's ongoing financial sustainability outlook does rely on continued rate increases and cost constraints.

The Commission notes the Council's ongoing financial sustainability benefits from its geographical location and relatively affluent community. Notwithstanding recent economic shocks, the Council works in a relatively stable low rateable property growth environment, due to a high population density and limited free land. The Council's focus on asset renewal is conducive to effective operation with minimal risk. Expenses have historically run slightly higher than CPI and ratepayers may benefit from the Council closely considering its cost base and productivity while maintaining service levels.

The Commission has observed the current good practice of the Council in conducting regular service level reviews of its operations, including community consultation and reporting process and outcomes.³⁹

³⁹ 2024-25 City of Unley Annual Business Plan & Budget, p. 12.

5.1.5 Commission's recommendations on operating performance

To ensure the Council is positioned to achieve the real-terms reduction in its cost base that it has forecast, and to improve its operating performance (without the need for further rate increases above inflation), the Commission recommends that the Council:

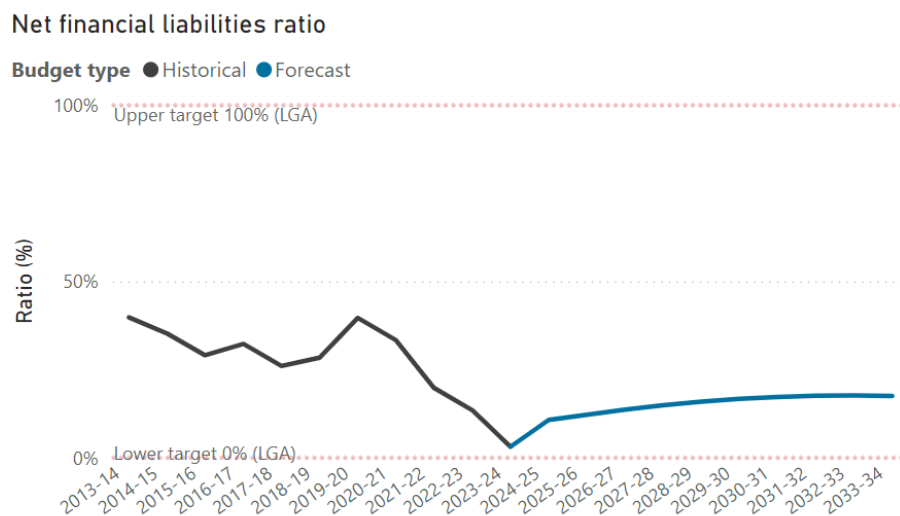
3. **Continue** to monitor cost growth in its budgeting where possible, and report savings in strategic documents.

5.2 Net financial liabilities

5.2.1 Key points

- ✓ The net financial liabilities ratio averaged 29.7 percent between 2013-14 and 2022-23.
- ✓ The net financial liabilities ratio is forecast to average 15.4 percent between 2024-25 and 2033-34.

Figure 7: Net financial liabilities ratio – historical and forecast

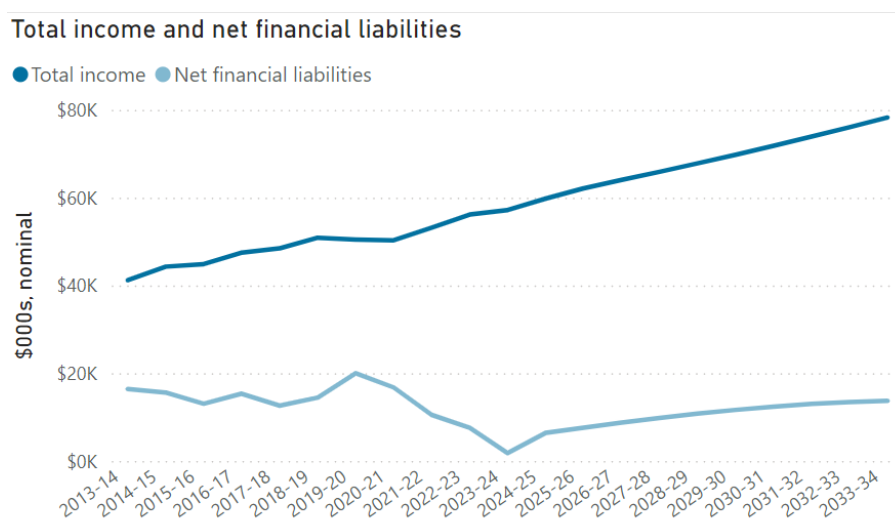


The Council's net financial liabilities ratio trended downwards between 2013-14 and 2022-23 from 40.0 percent to 14.0 percent, with an average net financial liabilities ratio of 29.7 percent over this period. It has been maintained within the suggested LGA target range for the indicator of between zero and 100.0 percent and is at a level that demonstrates the Council is only accumulating liabilities that its operating income can reasonably service.⁴⁰

The forecast net financial liabilities ratio is expected to grow at an average of 5.6 percent per annum and have an average of 15.4 percent between 2024-25 and 2033-34. The forecast ratio trend is upwards because of increasing borrowings as discussed below.

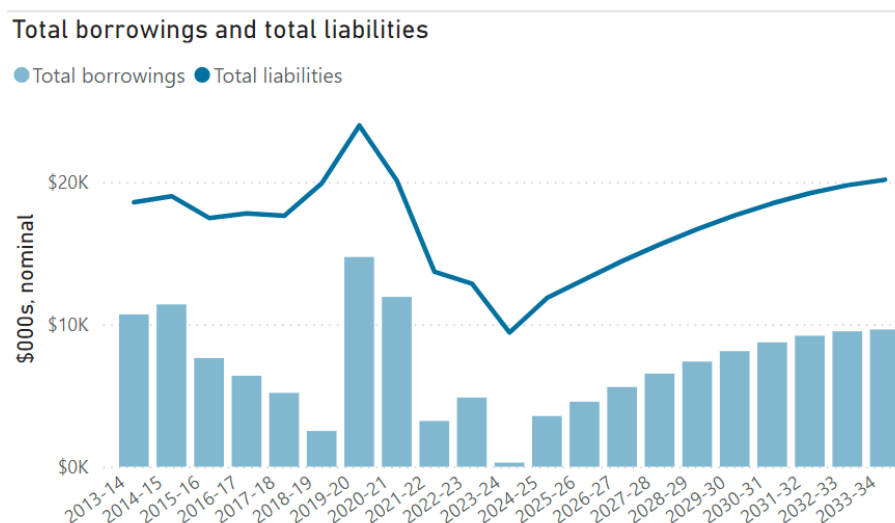
⁴⁰ The net financial liabilities ratio is defined as: Net financial liabilities ÷ Total operating income. This ratio measures the extent to which a council's total operating income covers, or otherwise, its net financial liabilities. The suggested LGA target range is between zero and 100.0 percent of total operating income, but possibly higher in some circumstances (LGA SA Financial Indicators Paper, pp. 7-8).

Figure 8: Total income and net financial liabilities – historical and forecast



The upward trend of total income compared to net financial liabilities indicates that the Council can easily cover its obligations.

Figure 9: Total borrowings and total liabilities – historical and forecast



The Council used loans to fund its renewal of existing assets and acquisition of new and upgraded assets in 2019-20.⁴¹ Total borrowings decreased between 2013-14 and 2018-19 followed by new borrowings in 2019-20 and 2022-23. As a percentage of total liabilities, borrowings decreased from 58.0 percent (2013-14) to 38.0 percent (2022-23). In accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Policy, it utilises Cash Advance Debentures (**CAD**) through the Local Government Finance Authority (**LGFA**) to support short term cash flow variability.⁴²

The Council has indicated that it will continue to use borrowings to fund major capital infrastructure projects and utilise CAD to facilitate cash flow.⁴³ Based on the Council's projected borrowings, the net

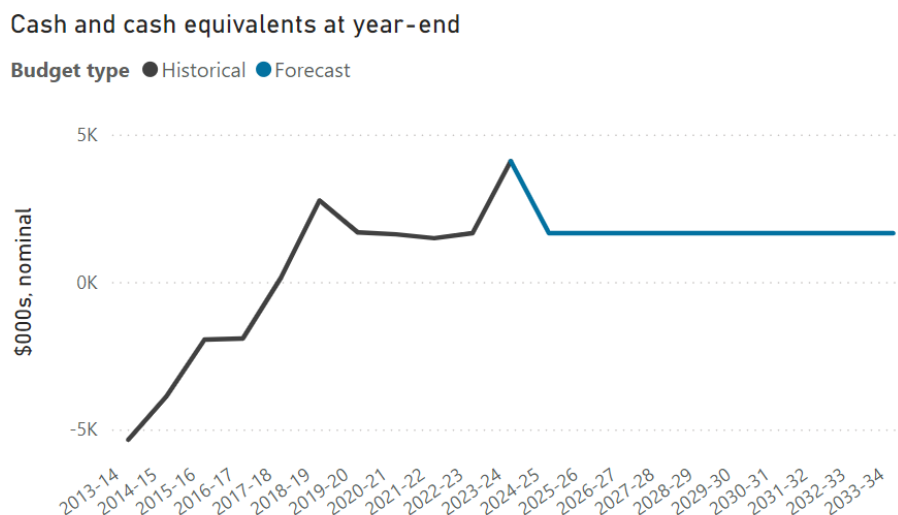
⁴¹ City of Unley *Long-Term Financial Plan*, June 2024.

⁴² City of Unley, Responses to ESCOSA Questions 22 April 2024.

⁴³ Meeting with City of Unley, 13 June 2024.

financial liabilities ratio is expected to grow by an average of 5.6 percent per annum to a maximum of approximately 18.0 percent by 2033-34. The Council has not identified any repayment plan for borrowings in the LTFP as the long-term repayment of the CAD is based on net cash movements and it intends to maintain borrowings for some projects in the interests of intergenerational equity.⁴⁴

Figure 10: Cash and cash equivalents at year end – historical and forecast



Over the period from 2013-14 to 2022-23, cash held at year end increased, and total liabilities decreased by an average of 4.0 percent per annum. The Council's net cash flows after operating and investing (that is, capital-related) activities averaged \$0.5 million annually between 2013-14 and 2022-23. Cash held at the end of each year, including financing activities, moved from deficit positions between 2013-14 and 2016-17 to a positive cash position between 2017-18 and 2022-23 (see Figure 10). Looking forward, cash is anticipated to remain at a steady level as CAD are used to facilitate cash flow.⁴⁵

5.3 Asset renewals expenditure

5.3.1 Key points

- ✓ Asset management plans are comprehensive and regularly updated.
- ⚠ The gross asset renewal funding ratio was 114.7 percent, which is above the LGA recommended range, indicating an overspend on asset renewal.
- ✓ The forecast gross asset renewal funding ratio is 100.0 percent, which is within the LGA recommended range indicating asset renewal spending that meets renewal requirements.
- ✓ Forecast capital expenditure is focused on renewal of assets rather than acquisition of new assets.

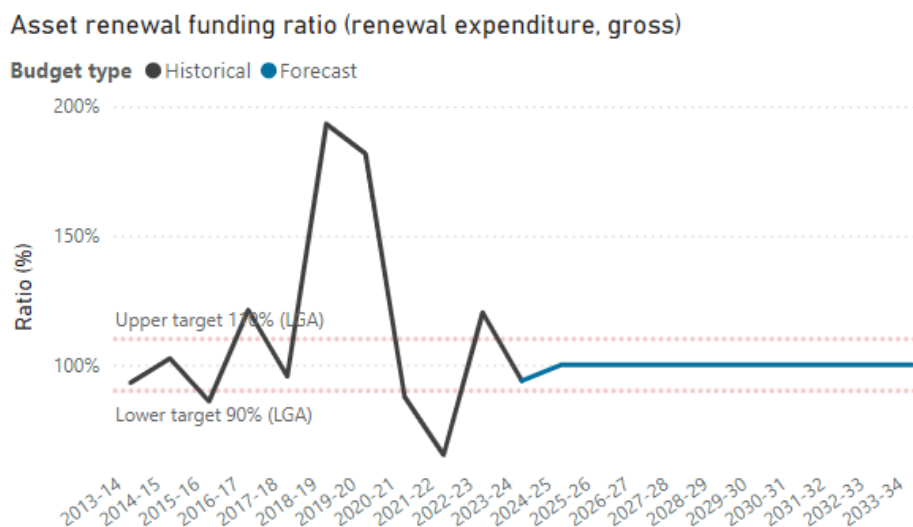
The Commission notes that the Council's asset base is covered by its existing AMP, and asset valuations for those assets have been carried out within the last four years. The Council's transport assets (mainly road assets) represent the largest asset class, and is a major focus of its renewal

⁴⁴ Correspondence with City of Unley, General Manager, Corporate Support, 4 November 2024.

⁴⁵ Correspondence with City of Unley, General Manager, Corporate Support, 4 November 2024.

investment, projected to account for 60.0 percent (or \$86.0 million) of the total asset renewal budget over the next 10 years.⁴⁶

Figure 11: Asset renewal funding ratio (renewal expenditure gross) – historical and projected



The Council has met or exceeded the recommended gross asset renewal funding ratio⁴⁷ target between 2013-14 and 2022-23 with significant volatility during the period as per Figure 11. The significant capital renewal expenditure between 2018 and 2020 was due to the renewal and upgrade of a major asset (King William Road).

Between 2013-14 and 2022-23, the gross asset renewal funding ratio (under the 'IAMP-based' approach) averaged 114.7 percent⁴⁸ signifying an overspend on the renewal and rehabilitation needs of its asset stock over this period. The Council's spending on renewal and rehabilitation of assets averaged \$8.5 million each year (over this period). A new asset management approach has been developed in the latter five years to work towards a consistent and smoothed approach to asset renewal funding.⁴⁹ This approach may include bringing forward or deferring expenditure to align projects and reduce overall expenditure, eg undertaking kerb and road surface renewal together.⁵⁰

From 2024-25 to 2033-34, the ratio is forecast to average 100.0 percent, reflecting ongoing expenditure that will meet renewal requirements.

⁴⁶ City of Unley 2024-25 to 2033-34 Long-Term Financial Plan, p. 34.

⁴⁷ The IAMP-based method is the current industry standard whereby asset renewal/replacement expenditure is divided by the recommended expenditure in the IAMP (or AMP). Ideally, this will show the extent to which a council's renewal or replacement expenditure matches the need for this expenditure, as recommended by the plan. The suggested LGA target range for the ratio is 90.0 to 110.0 percent (LGA SA Financial Indicators Paper, p. 9).

⁴⁸ The quoted averages for the ratio are based on 'gross asset renewal expenditure' (before the sale of replaced assets) rather than 'net asset renewal expenditure'.

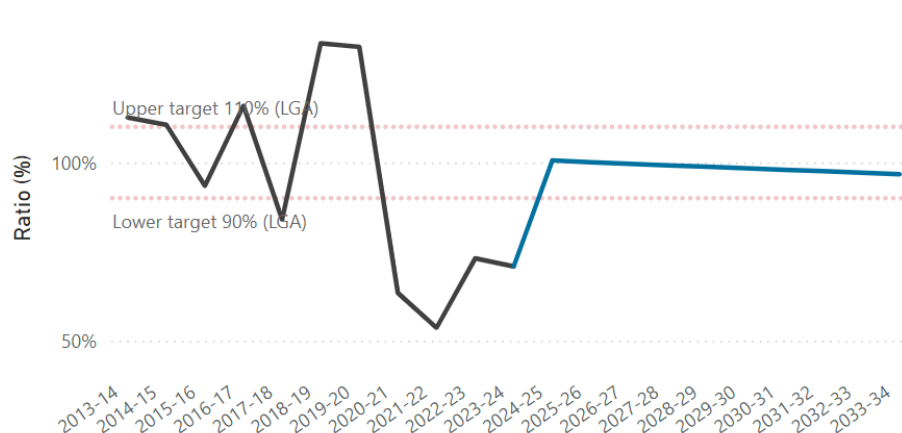
⁴⁹ Meeting with City of Unley, 13 June 2024.

⁵⁰ Meeting with City of Unley, 13 June 2024.

Figure 12: Asset renewal funding ratio (depreciation based) – historical and forecast

Asset renewal funding ratio (depreciation based)

Budget type ● Historical ● Forecast

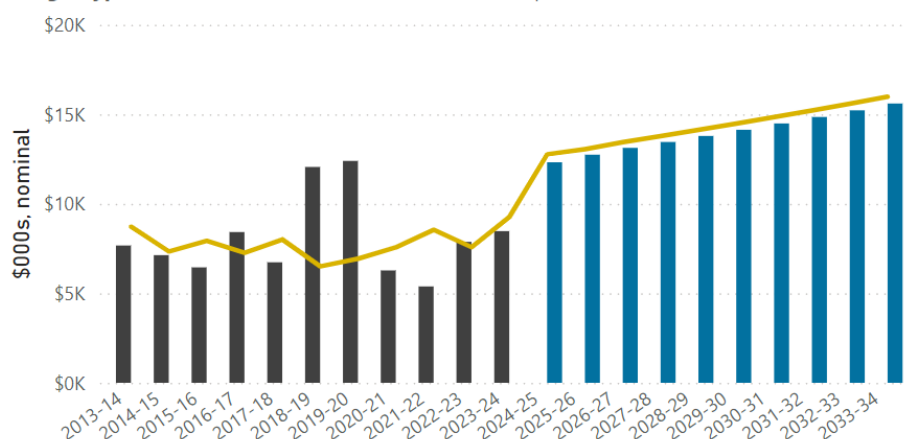


Asset renewals can also be evaluated by the depreciation-based asset renewal funding ratio,⁵¹ which is forecast to track above the recommended minimum level (for the IAMP-based ratio) of 90.0 percent, averaging 98.6 percent per annum to 2033-34. This is marginally above the average historical depreciation-based asset renewal funding ratio of 97.3 percent between 2013-14 and 2022-23. The volatility in the depreciation-based historical asset renewal funding ratio aligns with volatility in gross asset renewal funding ratio, however over time, the average ratio for both is within the LGA's recommended ranges. Both historical and forecast ratio averages indicate a consistent approach to renewal of assets over time, with forecast expenditure anticipated to be smoother than within the historical period.

Figure 13: Net asset renewal and IAMP renewal expenditure – historical and projected

Net asset renewal and IAMP renewal expenditure

Budget type ● Historical ● Forecast ● IAMP renewal expenditure



Annual spending on renewal or rehabilitation of assets is projected to average \$14.3 million between 2024-25 and 2033-34, compared to average annual expenditure of \$8.5 million between 2013-14 and 2022-23. Expenditure on new capital assets is projected to average \$4.6 million per annum, which is slightly below the average historical expenditure between 2013-14 and 2022-23 of \$4.8 million per

⁵¹ The Council's asset renewal funding ratio by the depreciation-based method (where asset renewal/replacement expenditure is divided by depreciation expenses). This ratio shows the extent to which capital expenditure on the renewal and replacement of assets matches the estimated rate at which these assets are used or consumed.

annum. These forecasts suggest that the Council's focus will be on renewal and replacement of assets rather than the acquisition of new assets.

The Council has noted several factors that contribute to the increase in proposed asset renewal expenditure arising from its asset data review, condition assessments and update of asset unit rates, useful lives and valuations. Predominantly, increased expenditure is driven by increased costs for road surfaces/bases and kerbing.⁵² The Council's planned renewal expenditure in 2024-25 is mainly attributed to transport assets (including roads, pathways, kerbing, car parks, street lighting and traffic control devices), which accounts for approximately 58.0 percent of the capital renewal program in 2024-25.⁵³

Figure 14: Total capital expenditure by category – historical and projected

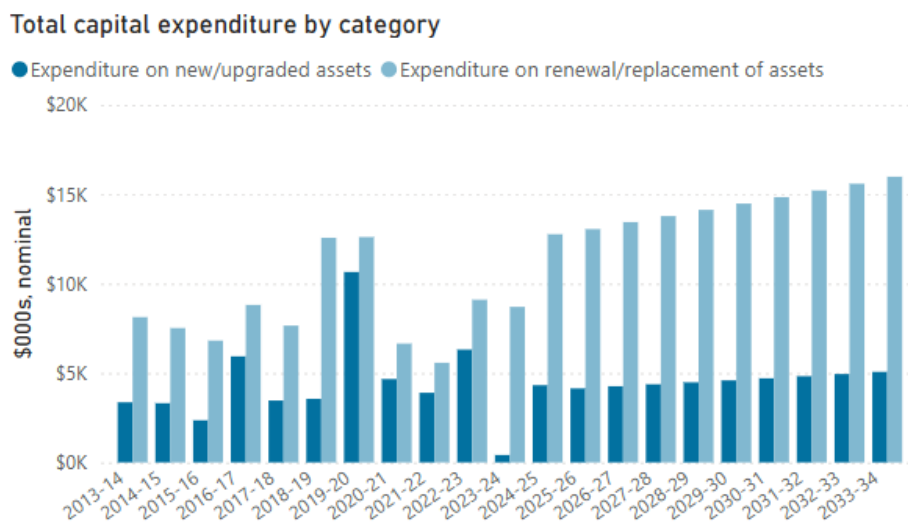
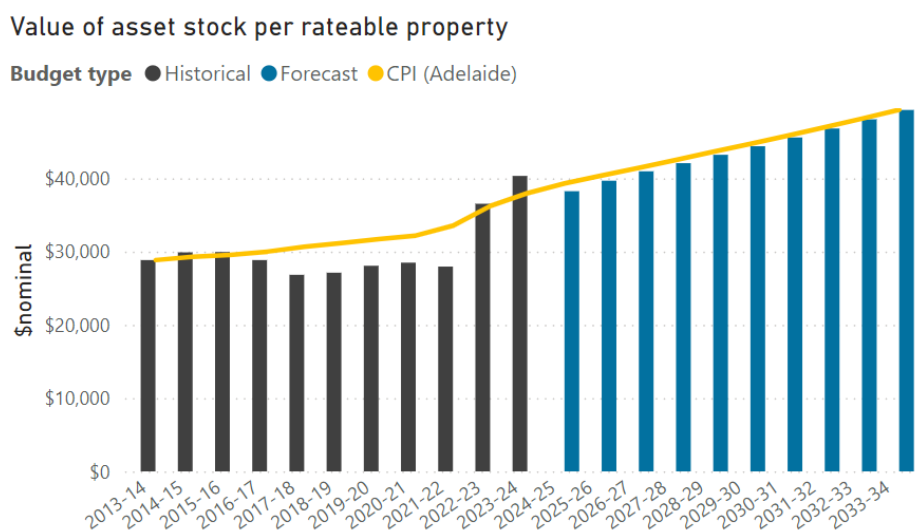


Figure 14 shows the historical and forecast renewal capital expenditure per annum compared to new capital expenditure.

Figure 15: Value of asset stock per rateable property – historical and projected



The Council's asset base has grown between 2013-14 and 2022-23 by an average of 3.4 percent per annum. This has led to an average increase in the value of the asset stock per property of \$854 or

⁵² Correspondence with City of Unley, "AMP Explanation of significant variances", 30 September 2024.

⁵³ City of Unley 2024-25 Annual Business Plan & Budget, p. 50.

2.7 percent per annum (see Figure 15). By implication, this indicates the Council's asset stock has almost exactly kept pace with inflation.

The Council currently has individual AMP for transport, buildings, open space and stormwater assets. These cover the Council's asset base and reflect asset valuations that have been carried out within the last four years. In formulating its AMP, the Council has considered several matters such as customer levels of service, utilisation and demand of its assets, life cycle management, and risk management planning. These matters (among others) have informed the Council's planned operating and maintenance budgets, and asset renewal needs over the period to 2033-34. The Commission's review of the AMP has found that the Council's strategic planning processes aligns with good practice for a council of its size and complexity.

6 Advice on current and projected rate levels

6.1 Key points

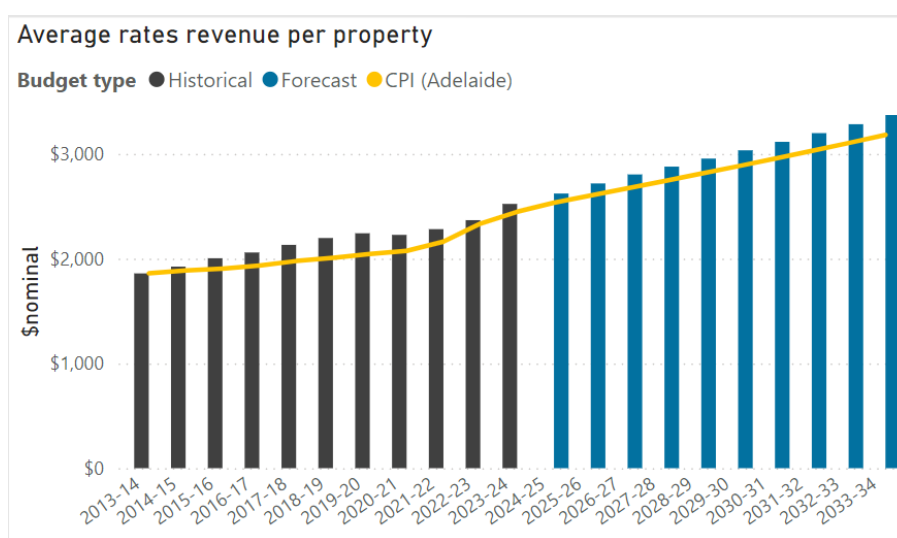


Rate revenue per property increased broadly in line with inflation between 2013-14 and 2022-23.



Rate revenue per property is forecast to grow at 2.8 percent per annum between 2024-25 and 2033-34 which is slightly above forecast inflation of 2.6 percent per annum over the same period.

Figure 16: Average rates revenue per property – historical and projected

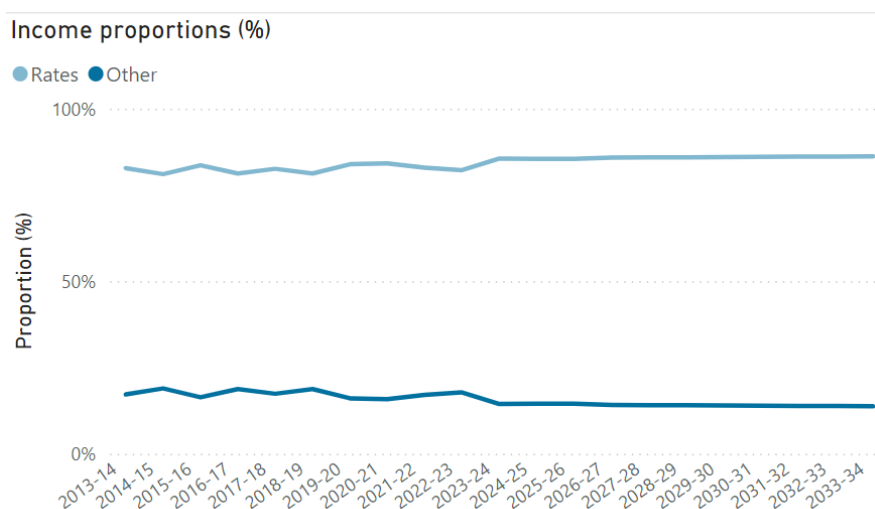


The Council's historical rate revenue per property growth has averaged 2.7 percent or \$56 per annum across all properties over the past 10 years,⁵⁴ to reach an estimated average of \$2,367 per property in 2022-23. This increase was broadly in line with the CPI growth, at an average of 2.6 percent per annum over the same period.⁵⁵ Rateable property numbers grew by an average of 0.7 percent per annum between 2013-14 and 2022-23. Current rate levels partially reflect the Council's recent history of spending growth in 'materials, contracts and other' expenses and increases in depreciation.

⁵⁴ From 2013-14 to 2022-23.

⁵⁵ CPI Adelaide, available at: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/consumer-price-index-australia/jun-quarter-2024>.

Figure 17: Income proportions (percent)



The Council remains reliant on its rate base for its operating sustainability. As Figure 16 indicates, rates revenue has averaged 82.6 percent of total operating income between 2013-14 and 2022-23 with a forecast that rates will account for 85.9 percent of operating income per annum on average between 2024-25 and 2033-34.

6.2 Proposed rate increases for 2024-25

The Council has budgeted for an average residential rate revenue increase of 4.19 percent across all properties based on its inflationary estimates, using the Adelaide CPI for March 2024 (of 4.3 percent).⁵⁶ This increase is above the RBA forecast of 2.8 percent to June 2025.⁵⁷

Differential rate categories apply to different land uses within the Council area and all rate categories are estimated to increase differently, reflecting the Council's recognition of current financial pressure experienced by many households and businesses.⁵⁸ Notably, rates will increase on vacant land by 18.3 percent⁵⁹ following a decrease of 9.9 percent in 2023-24.⁶⁰ The Council raises separate rates from specific business precincts, in consultation with traders for promotion and projects in those areas.⁶¹

On a proportional revenue basis, residential ratepayers account for around 79.0 percent of 2024-25 budgeted rates revenue, followed by commercial office and other (13.0 percent), and commercial shop and industry ratepayers (8.0 percent).⁶²

Other than 'general rates' revenue, the Council collects income from statutory and user charges, grants, investments and reimbursements.

6.3 Projected further rate increases

Over the forward years of its LTFP, the Council is projecting annual average rate revenue increases of 3.1 percent from 2024-25 to 2033-34. When accounting for forecast growth in the numbers of rateable property, this represents an increase of 2.8 percent growth per annum per property.

⁵⁶ Current inflation rate plans developed; 2024-25 City of Unley Annual Business Plan & Budget, p. 27.

⁵⁷ RBA data – forecast time series, available at <https://www.rba.gov.au/publications/smp/2024/aug>.

⁵⁸ 2024-25 City of Unley Annual Business Plan & Budget, p. 27.

⁵⁹ 2024-25 City of Unley Annual Business Plan & Budget, p. 27.

⁶⁰ 2023-24 City of Unley Annual Business Plan & Budget, p. 23.

⁶¹ 2024-25 City of Unley Annual Business Plan & Budget, p. 28.

⁶² 2024-25 City of Unley Annual Business Plan & Budget, p. 26.

In total, the LTFP effectively projects a cumulative increase averaging \$83 per annum per existing ratepayer (to an estimated \$3,371 per annum) by 2033-34, which is consistent with the Council's assumed inflation growth over this period but is also above the RBA-based inflation forecast of an average of 2.6 percent per annum.⁶³

6.4 Affordability risk

Affordability risk among the community for these further rate increases appears to be low, on balance, when considering:

- ▶ the Council's relative average socio-economic indexes for areas (SEIFA) economic resources ranking for the City of Unley area⁶⁴
- ▶ the current average rates (across most ratepayers) without significant forecast increases above inflation for ratepayers
- ▶ the effect of cumulative increases in rates per existing ratepayer of approximately 2.8 percent per annum in the period 2024-25 to 2033-34, close to the forecast rate of inflation, and
- ▶ the overall financial sustainability risks of the Council and its forecast LTFP trend of consistent operating surplus to 2033-34.

However, as the current economic environment continues to exert pressure on most communities' capacity to pay for further rate increases, including those of the Council, the Commission recommends that the Council:

4. **Continue** to minimise further average rate increases above inflation, to help reduce any emerging affordability risk in the community.

⁶³ The forecast average annual growth in the CPI from 2024-25 to 2033-34 is estimated to be 2.6 percent based on the RBA forecasts for the CPI (Australia-wide) to June 2027 (and the Commission's calculations of average annual percentage growth) and the midpoint of the RBA's target range (2.5 percent) from 2025-26.

⁶⁴ The City of Unley area is ranked 60 among 71 South Australian 'local government areas' (including Anangu Pitjantjatjara and Maralinga Tjarutja Aboriginal community areas and 'unincorporated SA') on the Australian Bureau of Statistics SEIFA Index of Economic Resources (2016), where a lower score (eg, 1) denotes relatively lower access to economic resources in general, compared with other areas, available at <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/socio-economic-indexes-areas-seifa-australia/latest-release>.

7 The Commission's next advice and focus areas

In the next cycle of the Scheme, the Commission will review and report upon the Council's:

- ▶ ongoing performance against its current LTFP estimates
- ▶ the identification and reporting of opportunities for cost savings
- ▶ the planned asset renewal and replacement expenditure versus actual expenditure
- ▶ the Council's efforts to minimise any emerging affordability risks, and
- ▶ financial and planning preparedness to optimise outcomes for ratepayers of current and potential urban infill developments, including the economic, social and environmental implications that will be generated by the higher densities.

8 Appendix: Glossary of terms

Item	Explanation
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AMP	Asset management plan (also called an IAMP)
ARFR	<p>Asset Renewal Funding Ratio</p> <p>Since 2013, the asset renewal funding ratio has been defined as:</p> $\text{Asset Renewal Expenditure} \div \text{IAMP Renewal Expenditure}$ <p>Where IAMP Renewal Expenditure is that required according to the IAMP.</p>
Commission	Essential Services Commission, established under the <i>Essential Services Commission Act 2002</i>
CPI	Consumer Price Index (Adelaide, All Groups)
Council	City of Unley
F&A	Local Government Advice: Framework and Approach – Final Report
IAMP	Infrastructure and asset management plan (also called an AMP)
LG Act	<i>Local Government Act 1999</i>
LGA SA Financial Indicators Paper	Local Government Association of South Australia, Financial Sustainability Information Paper 9 - Financial Indicators Revised May 2019
LTFP	Long-term financial plan
NFLR	<p>Net Financial Liabilities Ratio</p> <p>Net Financial Liabilities are defined as:</p> $\begin{aligned} &\text{Total Liabilities} \\ &\text{LESS Current Assets (Cash and Cash Equivalents)} \\ &\text{LESS Current Assets (Trade and Other Receivables)} \\ &\text{LESS Current Assets (Other Financial Assets)} \\ &\text{LESS Non-Current Assets (Financial Assets - excluding equity accounted} \\ &\text{investments in council businesses)} \end{aligned}$ <p>The net financial liabilities ratio is:</p> $\text{Net financial liabilities} \div \text{Total Operating Income}$
OSR	<p>Operating Surplus Ratio</p> <p>The Operating Surplus (Deficit) is defined as:</p> $\text{Total Operating Income LESS Total Operating Expenses}$ <p>The Operating Surplus Ratio is defined as:</p> $\text{Operating Surplus (Deficit)} \div \text{Total Operating Income}$

Item	Explanation
Regulations	<i>Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 2011</i>
RBA	Reserve Bank of Australia
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SMP	Strategic management plan
The scheme or advice	Local Government Advice Scheme



The Essential Services Commission
Level 1, 151 Pirie Street Adelaide SA 5000
GPO Box 2605 Adelaide SA 5001
T 08 8463 4444

E escosa@escosa.sa.gov.au | W www.escosa.sa.gov.au