



HUME CITY COUNCIL

Draft Strategic Property Management Framework

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Draft Strategic Property Management Framework

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Strategic Property Management Framework outlines Hume City Council's approach to managing its portfolio of vacant and underutilised land to deliver the highest possible value to the community. It sets a clear vision and provides a structured, evidence-based methodology for assessing landholdings and making decisions that align with Council's long-term objectives and community needs.

The framework has been developed in response to the increasing complexity of land management in Hume—driven by rapid population growth, financial pressures, and the diverse and evolving needs of our communities. It provides a systematic approach with detailed implementation pathways, assessment criteria, and governance processes to guide effective and transparent decision-making.

Through this strategic lens, Council can unlock greater public value from its land assets by identifying opportunities for investment, development, retention, leasing, or divestment—each considered within a robust decision-making framework that prioritises place-based outcomes, sustainability, and fairness.

This Framework applies to vacant properties owned by Council and eligible for assessment under the defined methodology. It provides clear guidance on how Council will engage with the community, assess land value and potential, and ensure decisions are financially responsible, legally compliant, and aligned with broader Council strategies.

Key features of the Framework include:

- A structured evaluation methodology with defined stages, including property assessment, gateway reviews, engagement, and implementation.
- Clear decision pathways for retention, development, leasing, or disposal of land based on strategic alignment, financial viability, and community benefit.
- Integration with Council's broader goals, including social equity, environmental sustainability, financial resilience, and transparent governance.

- Commitment to community engagement at key decision points, guided by Council's Community Engagement Policy and Local Government Act 2020.

By embedding these principles and processes into everyday decision-making, the framework supports Council to proactively manage its land portfolio—not only to meet current needs but also to anticipate future opportunities. It strengthens Council's ability to respond to growth, manage risk, and deliver services and infrastructure where they are most needed.

Ultimately, this framework is a tool for long-term community value creation. It marks a shift from reactive land management to a forward-thinking, place-based strategy that positions Hume City Council to make smart, transparent and sustainable use of its land assets—now and into the future.

Introduction - Why is this framework needed?

Council has a significant portfolio of properties that may not be currently generating the best possible community outcomes. This policy provides a framework to guide Hume City Council in the proactive and systematic management of its portfolio of undeveloped landholdings, with the view to identifying land use opportunities that maximise place-based outcomes for the community, now and into the future.

A strategic decision-making framework can help Council more effectively use its vacant landholdings to deliver more and relevant objectives across Hume.

Application of this framework helps Hume City Council:

- Make informed and considered decisions about its vacant properties
- Build trust in decision-making processes
- Consider and achieve environmental, social, economic, financial outcomes
- Promote unique place-based outcomes across Council's various precincts
- Balance outcomes across Council over time – short, medium and long term

When does the framework apply?

Council's property portfolio consists of land which is:

- Owned by Council in freehold – Hume City Council is the registered proprietor of the land on the Certificate of Title. Council manages this land in accordance with its powers under the Local Government Act 2020.

- Owned by the Crown and for which the Council is appointed as the Committee of Management in accordance with the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978.
- Owned by the Crown and for which the Council is the Coordinating Road Authority. Councils manage this land in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 and with reference to the Road Management Act 2004.
- Land which Vests in Council – whilst the Certificate of Title might show a registered proprietor other than Council, the land is deemed to vest in Council and used for public purposes.

The framework will apply only to **vacant and underutilised land owned by Council in freehold** and deemed eligible for assessment within the framework methodology.

Vision and Principles

Council's vision for developing a strategic, systematic approach to decision-making about Council property:

Hume City Council takes a pragmatic, considered and place-based approach to making decisions about its landholding portfolio, considering the diverse and complex needs of both local places and the wider Council area.

Council proposes the following key principles when applying this framework:

- **Place-based** – strive to understand unique place needs across Council's diverse community and prioritise these in decision-making
- **Multi-beneficial and value for money** – prioritise the achievement of multiple objectives (e.g., financial, social, environmental, economic), and balance the assessment of costs and benefits in the context of Council's multiple commitments, including where benefits may not be quantifiable
- **Future-proofing** – decisions should consider how they meet current needs while giving Council more options in the future
- **Evidence-based approach** – decisions should be informed by multiple data and inputs from across Council and the community, where possible, and where information gaps exist, appropriate investigations are undertaken to improve understanding
- **Collaborative and complementary** – decisions should strive to align with parallel efforts and decisions elsewhere across Council, while reserving the right to introduce alternative solutions where there is a reasonable case to do so

- **Financially sustainable** – Council adopts sound financial management practice and decisions will consider short, medium and long-term financial strategy and budget and wider financial implications
- **Legal compliance** – strive for leading practice in all dealings with property, complying fully with statutory requirements and the law



Scope for the framework

Council's landholdings are important assets that can help to deliver community services and advance social, environmental, economic and financial objectives. The portfolio comprises properties used for:

- Direct service delivery by Council
- Recreation and sports
- Commercial activity
- Passive open space
- Environmental management
- Car parking

Council owns properties that are not currently assigned for any of the above defined purposes and could be managed to improve community outcomes. The Strategic Property Management Framework (the framework) focuses on identifying vacant or underutilised properties within Council's portfolio and exploring opportunities to improve community outcomes through appropriate management.

Property management options within the framework include:

- **Hold and Maintain**
Maintaining land to ensure it remains safe, secure, and fit for purpose, preserving the asset's value and potential for future use.
- **Strategic Investment**
Identifying and pursuing investment, partnership, and development opportunities that align with Council priorities and offer additional revenue or community benefits. This approach supports innovative uses and leverages the land to contribute to broader strategic outcomes.

- **Property Disposal**

Responsibly disposing of surplus land that is no longer required to deliver Council services is a critical tool for optimising Council's property portfolio. Proceeds from disposal are reinvested to support community outcomes.

- **Leasing or Licensing**

Enabling community or economic uses through appropriate lease or licence arrangements optimise land use without transferring ownership. These are guided by Council's Lease and Licence Policy,

Property Management Pathways

Depending on the outcome of the strategic property assessment, Council may pursue a range of tailored management options. The following table outlines common pathways under disposal and strategic investment categories. These pathways support Council to achieve the best use and community value of underutilised properties.

Table 1

Disposals	Strategic Investment
Open Market Sale: Selling property on the open market to maximise exposure and ensure a competitive sale price. Public Auction: Disposing of property through public auction, providing transparency and securing market-driven value. Expressions of Interest (EOI): Inviting expressions of interest from potential buyers to assess market interest and negotiate favourable terms. Tender Process: Conducting a competitive tender to identify buyers who align with Council objectives and support community benefit. Direct Sale to Adjoining Landowners: Selling property directly to adjoining landowners, typically for minor parcels that enhance usability or accessibility.	Direct Council-Led Development: The Council manages the entire development process to ensure direct alignment with community objectives and strategic priorities. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Partnering with private sector entities to co-develop properties, combining resources for projects that provide mutual community and economic benefits. Joint Ventures: Collaborating with public or private partners to jointly develop assets, sharing responsibilities, risks, and rewards. Community-Driven Initiatives: Working with local organisations or community groups on projects that address specific local needs, such as community facilities or housing.

Land Swaps: Exchanging land with other public or private entities to optimise strategic land use and enhance Council's property portfolio.	Development Agreements with External Partners: Negotiating with developers or other entities to establish development goals that align with Council's strategic objectives.
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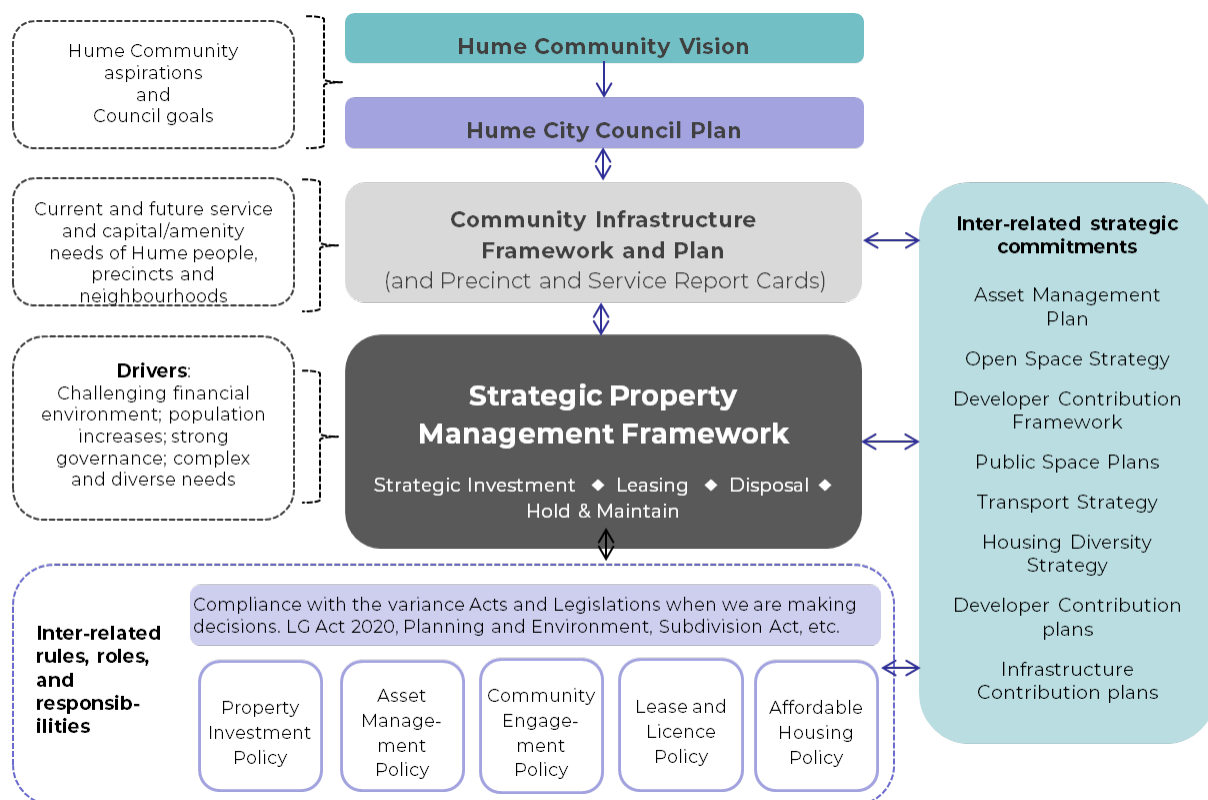
This framework applies only to vacant land owned by Council in freehold and deemed eligible for assessment within the methodology. It does not cover land acquisition, which is managed separately as part of Council's broader property lifecycle processes.

Strategic and Policy Alignment

HUME CITY COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2029

- Strategic Objective 1.1: Liveable places that are inclusive and accessible.
- Strategic Objective 4.1: A high performing organisation that prioritises continuous improvement, safety and accountability.

The interface between the framework and Council strategies, plans and policies is depicted below summarised in Appendix 1.



Overview of the Framework Methodology

The framework uses a staged process to assess Council's vacant land and determine the best outcomes—whether to retain, invest, or divest—based on clear criteria and governance steps.

The stages include:

1. **Assessment** – Identify and assess sites using strategic, functional, and community benefit criteria.
2. **Gateway Review** – Evaluate strategic fit, risk, and financial implications before progressing.
3. **Community Engagement** – Apply Council's engagement policy and scale activity to the site's value and impact. Further detail is provided in the following section.
4. **Decision Pathways:**
Based on assessment outcomes, Council determines the most appropriate course of action for each property, which may include:
 1. Retention and maintenance for future strategic use
 2. Strategic Investment, development or adaptive reuse to deliver community services or amenities
 3. Lease arrangements under commercial principles
 4. Disposal or divestment where surplus to Council needs or better outcomes can be achieved.
5. **Implementation and Monitoring**
Approved decisions are carried out (e.g., disposal, development, leasing) with communication strategies to keep stakeholders and the community informed. Outcomes are integrated into Council systems, and ongoing monitoring informs future reviews and strategy adjustments.

This method ensures property decisions are transparent, accountable, and aligned with long-term community value.

Fig 1 below presents a summary of the framework methodology. This is further detailed in appendix 1.



What Informs Decision-Making?

The Strategic Property Management Framework equips Council with tools to make informed decisions that balance a wide range of factors, ensuring alignment with Council's vision and community needs. This balanced approach supports identifying opportunities, managing risks, and delivering long-term benefits for the community, environment, and Council's financial sustainability.

Decisions are guided by the following key considerations:

- **Under / Over Utilisation:** Assessing whether properties are being used efficiently or have potential to better serve community needs.
- **Environmental or Heritage Value:** Recognising and protecting sites with ecological significance or heritage status.
- **Financial Performance:** Evaluating the cost, revenue potential, and economic impacts of property management options.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Ensuring decisions promote fair access and benefit diverse community groups.
- **Development Potential:** Considering opportunities for redevelopment or adaptive reuse to enhance community outcomes.
- **Risk and Legal:** Identifying and managing legal, regulatory, and operational risks.
- **Community Engagement:** Integrating community views and expectations into decision-making processes.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Ensuring decisions align with Council's broader strategies and objectives.
- **Community Need / Service Alignment:** Prioritising uses that respond directly to current and future community service demands.

By balancing these factors, the framework ensures decisions are consistent, transparent, and tailored to achieving the best outcomes for each property and the municipality as a whole.

Fig. 2 below represents the key considerations that inform the evaluation of properties within the framework. These are further detailed in appendix 1.



Community Engagement

Hume City Council is committed to transparency and inclusivity throughout the property management process. Community engagement is a vital part of decision-making for individual properties and for strategic direction.

- **When Community Engagement Occurs:**

Engagement will take place during key stages of property-specific decision-making, especially when proposals have significant local impact or where community input can shape outcomes.

- **How the Community Will Be Involved:**
Council will employ a range of engagement methods proportionate to the scale and impact of each proposal. These may include public notices, targeted surveys, community workshops, online feedback platforms, and direct consultation with affected stakeholders or interest groups.
- **Community Engagement Principles:**
Engagement activities will adhere to Council’s Community Engagement Policy and the Local Government Act 2020 requirements, ensuring that processes are fair, inclusive, accessible, and responsive.
- **Framework Feedback:**
The process to gather community feedback on the final draft of this Strategic Property Management Framework itself will occur via a separate, dedicated community engagement plan. This consultation, scheduled for September 2025, is designed to provide the community with the opportunity to review and contribute to the framework before its formal adoption.

Through meaningful community involvement, Council aims to foster trust, ensure decisions reflect community values, and enhance the social licence to manage Council land assets effectively.

Factors that have informed the framework

Factor	Implication
Strategic Need:	As our environment evolves, Hume City Council faces the challenge of meeting a spectrum of emerging needs within the community, including the critical demand for affordable housing among others. This necessitates a strategic approach in our property management to not only identify and utilise Council land for such pressing needs but also to ensure our property portfolio is adaptable and responsive to changing community requirements.
Population increases	Hume’s population is forecast to grow to over 397,000 by 2041, increasing by almost 60% on its current population (source: id profile). Changes in population and household structures will drive an increase in service delivery and infrastructure requirements. Council's decisions will need to adapt to accommodate the significant population growth, ensuring

Factor**Implication**

the expanding community's service delivery and infrastructure needs are effectively met.

Governance

Managing Council's landholdings needs to complement and enhance our service provision and planning across the many areas of Council and be applied under a framework informed by risk management principles. The framework is designed to serve as a navigational tool for managing the complex interactions between various Council departments involved in property management. It aims to streamline communication, decision-making, and coordination across these areas, ensuring that property strategies are aligned with the broader objectives and operations of the Council aligned to risk management principles.

Challenging financial environment:

Rising inflation and interest rates continue to increase living and input costs, impacting residents, businesses, and Council. The rate cap limits on general rates and municipal charges in Victoria also constrains funding streams. The sale of Council properties can be a 'quick way' to make money but if done without proper analysis of its potential to meet a variety of other Council objectives, comes at an irreversible cost. Conversely, the innovative use of properties can provide Council with additional funding streams to augment rates.

Complex and diverse needs

Hume community needs are varied and changing – representing the wonderfully diverse populations within, the expansive and diverse geography across Hume and the changing demands and expectations in a post-COVID world, including those of the younger generations. From education, sport, arts, housing, jobs, recreation, childcare and industry to climate change. Decision-making will include trade-offs between complex, unique and competing needs – at a regional and local level. Council needs a structured, evidence-based approach to make and explain these trade-offs, clear and simple communications and appropriate community engagement opportunities.

Conclusion

This framework, underpinned by a vision of pragmatic, considered, and place-based decision-making, is designed to navigate the complexities of property management in a way that maximises public value and supports the diverse needs of the Hume community.

By systematically applying the principles of place-based outcomes, multi-beneficial value, future-proofing, evidence-based decision-making, collaboration, financial sustainability, and legal compliance, we are setting a course for a future where Council assets are leveraged in the most impactful way. Through this approach, we aim to not only meet the immediate needs of our community but also to anticipate and prepare for future challenges and opportunities.

Moving forward, we'll continue to refine and adapt our strategies within this framework to meet the evolving needs of our community. It represents our commitment to transparency, accountability, and strategic foresight in property management. Designed to be flexible and responsive, the framework will direct our efforts in utilising our property resources intelligently and efficiently to align with the changing requirements of our community.

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