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Targeted Conversation #1: Neighbourhoods summary
Moreland City Council: Community Panel
6:30pm - 9pm Saturday 11 May, Zoom

Overview of the day

This session was the first of six targeted conversations with the Community Panel, focussed on the topic of '**neighbourhoods'.** To focus the discussion, the Panel was presented with a relevant problem and remit that had been developed by Council. The problem and remit for this session were:

> **Problem**: Moreland must accommodate population growth in a way that balances competing priorities including the climate crisis, competition for public space; changing neighbourhood character and heritage, traffic congestion and access to community facilities.

> **Remit**: What key categories should Council prioritise when making decisions for investing in neighbourhoods to meet current and future needs of our community

The session included:
- An introduction to the session and topic
- Presentations from Sunny Haynes and Dr. Laurel Johnson
- Making sense of the presentation information
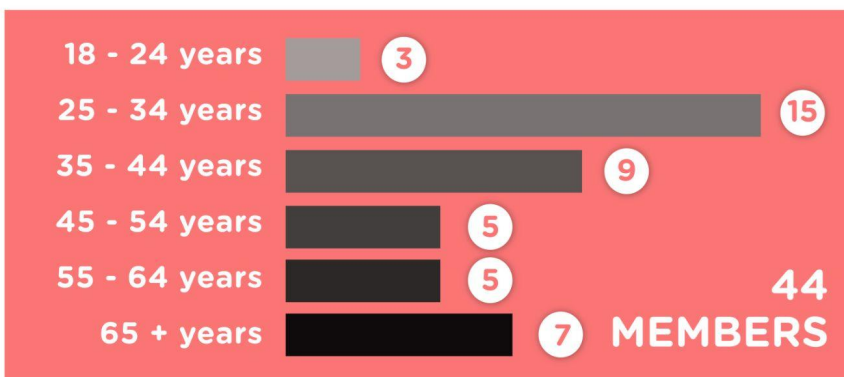- Prioritising criteria

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Community Panel

IMAGINE MORELAND
COMMUNITY PANEL

Moreland City Council

The Imagine Moreland Community Panel was randomly selected to form a representative sample of the community

Age	Count
18 - 24 years	3
25 - 34 years	15
35 - 44 years	9
45 - 54 years	5
55 - 64 years	5
65 + years	7

44 MEMBERS

21	21	1	1
Women	Men	Trans man	Agender

8 Brunswick
4 Brunswick East
6 Brunswick West
7 Coburg
1 Coburg North
2 Fawkner
7 Glenroy
4 Pascoe Vale/Oak Park
5 Pascoe Vale South

People with a disability **1**

22 CALD

LGBTIQA+ **6**

Year 10	Year 12	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor +	Other
3	3	2	7	28	1

27	16	1
Owners	Tenants	Other

Recruitment and stratification undertaken by Deliberately Engaging

The Community Panel is made up of members of the Moreland community. 36 members were present at this session.

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Introductions

The topic of **Neighbourhoods** was introduced, and a word-cloud poll was opened where participants could respond to the question: *What comes to mind when you hear the word 'neighbourhood'?*

This resulted in the following word cloud:

What comes to mind when you hear the word 'neighbourhood'?

helping each other | bushland
people where i live | character | people | meeting place
safe | home | kindness | houses
homely
friendly | proximity
community
connection | support | town
parks
look after one another | next door | local | inclusion
where i live | families | closeness
together | infrastructure
suburb
services | schools | connected | help | sharing | friends | living

Presentations

First presentation - Sunny Haynes, Moreland City Council
The first presentation was delivered by Sunny Haynes, Manager Property and Place at Moreland City Council. Sunny introduced the topic of neighbourhoods from a Council perspective. The presentation clarified the key ways that Council shapes neighbourhoods, including both projects that Council works on directly (such as libraries, local streetscapes) as well as projects that Council works on in partnership to deliver (such as the Brunswick Design District, in partnership with RMIT and Creative Victoria).

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Second presentation - Dr Laurel Johnson, Laurel Johnson Planning
The second presentation was delivered by Dr Laurel Johnson, urban planning expert and Principal at Laurel Johnson Planning. This presentation started with a discussion of how Council can prioritise community facilities, and how this topic is both technical and political. Laurel then gave an overview of the framework used to conduct the technical review into Council Community Facilities. The findings were discussed and the criteria used was explained.

Following the two presentations, the Panel had the opportunity to ask questions of the two presenters. Questions around best practice in prioritisation frameworks as well as methods of assessing facility usability were asked, as well as a question around whether Moreland can use struggling facilities for crisis housing.

Working session 1 - Sense-making

Panel members were split into four breakout rooms (each consisting of about 8-9 participants) for the first working session, which was used to consolidate the information from the two presentations. Each breakout room responded to the three questions:

1. *What stood out for you from the presentations?*
2. *What do you believe makes planning community facilities challenging for councils?*
3. *What would give the community (you) confidence in the way council plans community facilities?*

Following this, the groups then came back and reported their findings. The verbatim responses from the four groups are attached as appendices.

Working session 2 - Prioritising criteria

Following a short break, the Panel was split into new breakout rooms (which were made up of at least two people from each of the previous breakout rooms). In these groups, the Panel

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members worked together to refine the list of criteria from Council's prioritisation framework. This criteria is included below.

Overarching question	Categories	Further information
Is it needed?	Need from our community	Is there demand from our current and future population for this service and facility? We look at the numbers and age of population to assess how many facilities are needed.
	Condition of facility and designed for its purpose	Is the facility designed for its intended service? Different services have different facility requirements. Think of the design requirements of MCH service v Library.
		What is the physical condition of the facility? We have standards to what condition level a facility needs to be maintained to
	Capacity of current facility	How often is the facility being used compared to availability? We look at facilities that are used more by the community to be prioritised for investment?
	Location of the facility/project	Is it in the best location for maximum use by our community? We look at public transport access and walkability of the facility
Does it align with Council policy, plans, legal obligations?	Legal obligations	Is the project needed to deliver services and projects necessary for Council to meet its statutory obligations? We are legally required to deliver some of our community services and projects
	Capital Works Program	Is the project in the Capital Works Program (CWP), which has been signed off by Council? Has Council already committed to this project?
	Alignment with policy objectives	Is the project aligned with outcomes we are seeking for delivering community infrastructure? Community infrastructure policy outcomes are *facility integration, accessibility, place focused , future proofed and high quality.*
Is it wanted?	Community support	Is the project supported by the community?
Can it be funded by external sources?	Funding opportunities	Is the project eligible for external funding opportunities? We look at other opportunities to fund community infrastructure than are non- Council such as state government bodies.

Groups ranked the criteria, could add new criteria to the list, and were asked to provide a brief 'why?' statement for each.

The work from each group is included in the appendices below.

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Reporting back

The groups came back together to report their discussions. This discussion identified a sentiment generally held by the group: that the criteria document itself is too static; does not place enough value in the needs of the community; and that it does not weigh outcomes for short-term and long-term projects fairly.

Outcomes

Menti polling was used again to assess the Panel's support for each criterion, and finally to rank these criteria together. These polls are shown below (with the number of respondents shown in the bottom right corner of each):

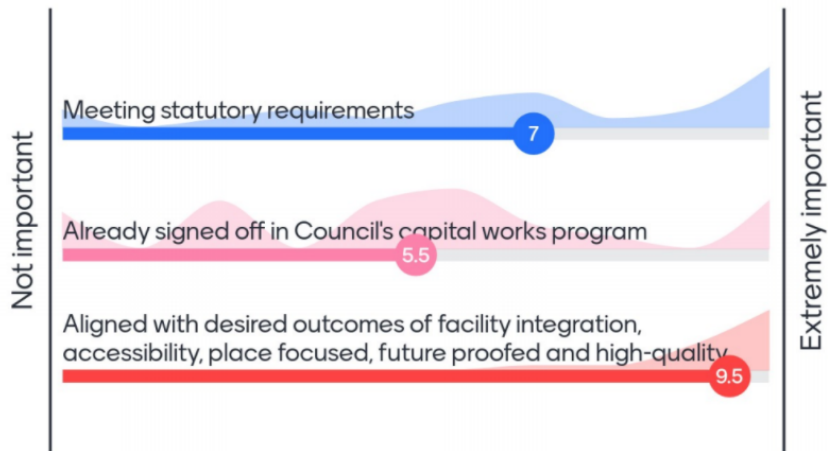How important do you believe each criterion is for planning community infrastructure? - NEED
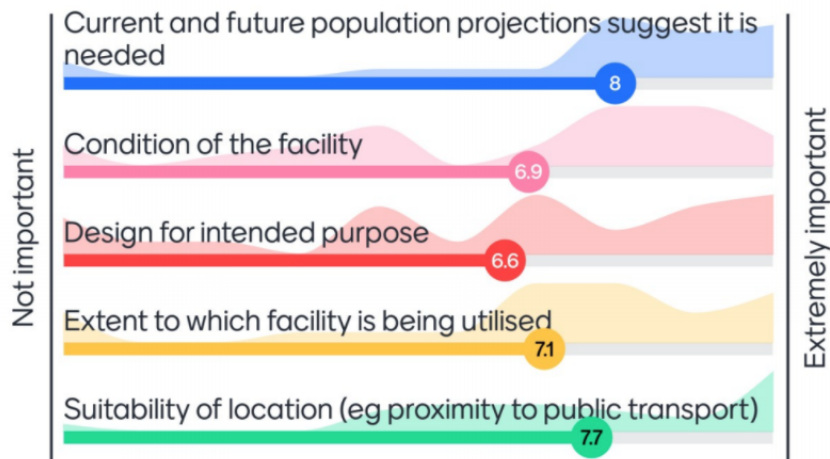
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How important do you believe each criterion is for planning community infrastructure? - ALIGNED

Not important | Extremely important

Meeting statutory requirements — **7**

Already signed off in Council's capital works program — **5.5**

Aligned with desired outcomes of facility integration, accessibility, place focused, future proofed and high-quality — **9.5**
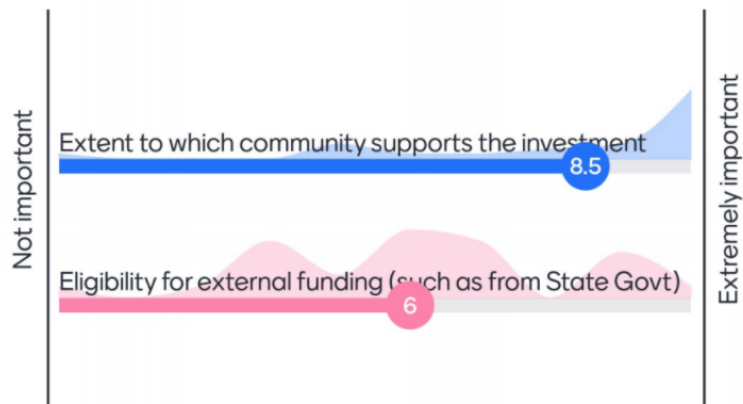
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How important do you believe each criterion is for planning community infrastructure? - WANTED and AVAILABiLITY OF FUNDING

Not important | Extremely important

Extent to which community supports the investment — **8.5**

Eligibility for external funding (such as from State Govt) — **6**

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How important do you believe each criterion is for planning community infrastructure? - WANTED and AVAILABiLITY OF FUNDING

- Value for money — 6.7
- Adaptable use over time — 7.5
- Benefit to community/mental health/health benefits — 8.8
- Accessible to more vulnerable members of community — 8.1
- Aligns with community vision — 8.7
- Separate funding for low cost, to blue sky higher cost/higher risk — 6.3
- Accessible spaces (re disability) — 8.5

(Not important ← → Extremely important)

25

How important do you believe each criterion is for planning community infrastructure? - WANTED and AVAILABiLITY OF FUNDING

- Bottom up/engagement/codesign — 7.7
- Benefit to majority, not just vocal minority — 7.8
- Environmentally friendly — 9.1
- Aesthetic appeal — 7.4
- Upfront cost and ongoing cost of maintaining — 7.6
- Potential for partnering — 6.7

(Not important ← → Extremely important)

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Rank criteria from most important down to least important

Rank	Criteria
1st	Community supports it
2nd	Current and future population projections suggest it is needed
3rd	Aligned with desired outcomes
4th	Suitability of location
5th	Extent to which facility is being utilised
6th	Design for intended purpose
7th	Condition of the facility
8th	Meets statutory requirements
9th	Eligible for external funding
10th	Already in capital works program

Rank most important down to least important (new ones)

Rank	Criteria
1st	Benefit to community/mental health/health benefits
2nd	Environmentally friendly
3rd	Aligns with community vision
4th	Accessible to more vulnerable members of community
5th	Bottom up/engagement/codesign
6th	Adaptable use over time
7th	Value for money
8th	Benefit to majority, not just vocal minority
9th	Upfront cost and ongoing cost of maintaining
10th	Aesthetic appeal
11th	Separate funding for low cost, to higher cost/higher risk
12th	Potential for partnering

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Finally, Panel members were asked to provide comments on the community infrastructure/facilities in their neighbourhood. 24 Panel members provided comments:

- Quite good facilities are available in walking distance
- Great parks and playgrounds. Keep em coming!
- Shape how facilities are being used on an app so we know what's going on… Use smart phone technology to communicate what's going on, what's available. Streamline the information on1 app. Include rating system for facilities: lighting, cleanliness.
- Don't understand the question: grammar?
- Brunswick East: requires additional care and cleaning. A bit more love as the suburbs seems not to be looked after properly
- I found it difficult to access the local MCHN centre we were assigned to as I couldn't access it via public transport. It is very important to consider the PT access particularly for vulnerable community and basic needs supports run by council
- If community facilities were better signed/advertised on site more people would be aware that they are there and then even if they don't need to use them they feel that the community and council are there for them
- Brunswick - Parklets are great, let's keep them!-More public toilets would be good-More bins
- Council should communicate on large facility projects occurring in neighbouring areas E.g Moonee Valley Park.
- Pascoe Vale - safety on streets, people drive fast! Riding our bike is not possible. We have been close to being run over on ohea street bike path. 'Little community building activities, if it exists we don't know about
- We need more outdoor equipment...people use the existing equipment a lot
- Better communication about community infrastructure/facilities in the local area. Centralised and modern (smart phone-based) way to tell council about things that need improvement in local area (eg. maintenance)
- More transparency about how developments are contributing to spaces in our neighbourhoods
- Bike dedicated path not just north-south but east-west
- I would love to see our facilities focus on becoming carbon neutral. Daggy now is cherished in ten years. So don't worry too much about aesthetics. Community makes it!

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- Inclusive, atheistically pleasing new developments that create community and include green spaces, kid-centric areas and create safe walking/bike paths. Value and prioritize pedestrians and cyclists over motor vehicles.
- I would like the facility to extend the opening hours, (even just an alternative week, for example). The hours coincide with regular working hours which means many residents working full time don't get to use the facilities even if they want to.
- More clarity about the values that underpin the decision-making, what the co-design entails and more communication with me about what's available in my neighbourhood
- Easier access for residents to be able to make contact with council to discuss any issues/ideas etc. On our local community facebook group this comment gets brought up a lot. People just don't know how to or who to get in contact with
- There should be polls on the council's website.. It's like a game.. And people love games :-)
- Could you please remind link to have access to the Portal
- Moreland app would be good! Tool for community engagement regarding infrastructure, needs / desires, and creating a dialogue that goes both ways
- The upfield bike path needs to be safer. Sometimes I'm riding my bike and it is so narrow, and there are pedestrians walking with headphones in who don't understand.
- Additional or extended opening hours for Brunswick Library and Brunswick Baths

Final notes

It was noted during the session that a feedback section may be useful on the Panel's portal. Panel members also noted that the use of live polls was fun and engaging, however a few Panel members found it difficult to keep up due to how fast each poll was being conducted. As it was the first online session, a few members of the Panel had difficulties with Zoom. These members will be contacted ahead of the next session to provide additional technical support.

What's coming up next?
The next session will take place at the same time on Tuesday 18th of May. It will focus on the topic of **Health and equity**.

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Appendix 1: Verbatim responses from Working session 1 - Sense-making

Group 1:
What stood out for you from the presentations?
Notes:
Difficulty of striking a balance
Number of Council-run facilities
State controls population growth - council needs to advocate
Importance of community

What do you believe makes planning community facilities challenging for councils?
Notes:
Cost of land
Politics + privatisation
Public sentiment
Parking facilities
Access from public transport

What would give the community (you) confidence in the way council plans community facilities?
Notes:
Transparency
Commitment
Engagement with the community
Co-design with community - consult the public throughout the whole process (at least at the hyper local level)
Follow up + keep communication going
Are facilities keeping up with modern needs? - updated for the 21st century and meeting needs of the community

Group 2:
What stood out for you from the presentations?
Notes:
Interested in the framework set out. Is this framework the same across other councils, e.g. City of Yarra?

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How much is spent per person, per year, compared to e.g. The City of Yarra?

What kind of facilities are provided by the Council versus privately owned/run facilities, e.g. gyms?

Codesign - interested in hearing about this more. Have the original land owners been involved in or consulted on for this? The word 'place' was used rather than the word 'land', which is interesting since we are utilising the original owners land.

How does the council choose what facilities they fund and provide? How much is spent on each facility and how is this decided? How does the council come up with the level of use that is required for a facility to be considered viable? Is it based on the revenue raised?

Does the council look at what other councils are providing, especially due to COVID and people not having the finances to be able to utilise the higher priced facilities, e.g. arts and music activities

What do you believe makes planning community facilities challenging for councils?
Notes:
Council can't do everything for everyone
How do you prioritise? Competing interests
Partnerships - offer the opportunity for less money and effort
Data on community input?
How does money coming in from developers get put into council use

(No response was provided by this group for Question 3)

Group 3:
What stood out for you from the presentations?
Notes:
Liked the way they considered all the areas that might be underutilised or not fit for purpose, the fact it seemed very thorough was good
The framework was very good for measuring the council property, left a sense that things are being checked properly
Interested in knowing how much land is owned by moreland and would be good to know where it all is located
A breakdown of area in terms of what council has located in those areas would be good

What do you believe makes planning community facilities challenging for councils?
Notes:
Is there scope for co-council projects with our neighbour councils?

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Very expensive to purchase new land or buildings for any new facilities that might be required
Limited funds for new facilities or upgrades to existing facilities
Many different groups required to agree before changes can be made
Public transport options for access to local facilities

What would give the community (you) confidence in the way council plans community facilities?
Notes:
Better communication of when improvements are being made to facilities
Open days so people in the community can visit council buildings and see how they are used
Visibility and inclusiveness on the process for new facilities

Group 4:
What stood out for you from the presentations?
Notes:
Emily: Why considering quantity, quality, fit for purpose, usage and accessibility. Are they equally important when assessing those community facilities? Have you considered other criteria?
Paola: What will happen after COVID…
Bonny: Some facilities are hard to access -Hard to get there without a car
Tian: Some contradictions for the aquatic facilities
Current facilities require work and are under utilised - this represents an opportunity
Morelands north require considerable investment.
Some facilities are underused… so why not repurpose them then

What do you believe makes planning community facilities challenging for councils?
Notes:
Conflicts with other stakeholders, such as the state government (Laurel mentioned it was also a political process besides a technical process)?
Little available opportunities for youth
Costly to keep leisure centres working
Sharing of existing facilities an issue
Community push back when facilities are proposed to be repurposed.

What would give the community (you) confidence in the way council plans community facilities?
Notes:

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I would like to know that we are taking care of our citizens basic needs as well as providing life enhancing services.

initial impressions, current facilities require work and are under utilised - this is an opportunity, morelands north require considerable investment.

:More meaningful community engagement - More communication with the community to reduce community pushback

Advertise more - More collaboration with stakeholders - Not reinventing the wheel - using what other councils are doing great

Run a parallel program active April -
https://www.getactive.vic.gov.au/about/

Creating partnerships with schools and involve students to design the facilities - targeted engagement with groups i.e. youth

Involve the users in the design of facilities, co-designing spaces

Community gardens for events and arts - vegetables - in area that was previously desolate

Appendix 2 - Verbatim responses from Working session 2 - Prioritising criteria

Group 1:
Is there anything missing from the list?
- Value for money, use understanding of previous facilities to measure against new facilities
- Benefit to the community (mental health benefits, physical health benefits, ect.)
- Accessibility to vulnerable community members (CALD, homeless ect.)
- Community support; does this include consultation? What level of support counts as a project being supported by community? Should there be a minimum level of input for something before it is classed as supported to prevent small minorities having sway over a majority not aware of the project
- Environmental impact, impact for actual construction and the ongoing impact with running the facility (prioritise buildings that are efficiently designed for how they operate)
- Aesthetic impact on the local community
- Is it feasible regarding the initial cost and ongoing cost

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Which of these categories should Council prioritise when making investment decisions? Why?

- Community benefit (health benefits, value for money, increased community pride, accessibility ect.)
- Need from our community
- Community support
- Alignment with policy objectives (environment)
- Funding opportunities
- Location of the facility/project
- Condition of facility and designed for its purpose (can buildings have flexibility of use built into their design)
- Legal obligations
- Capacity of current facility
- Capital works program (would assume every project goes through the above list before making it onto the CWP)

Group 2:

Is there anything missing from the list?

1. How does this integrate into the councils strategy? How may the vision, that has been developed by the panel come into this list, e.g. carbon neutrality, transport etc
2. What are the legal obligations of the council in regard to the items on the list?
3. If the council carried out their current tasks/roles, rubbish collection effectively and efficiently wouldn't they have more funds available for facilities
4. Prioritise what is achievable rather than 'blue sky' ideas
5. Allocation of funds to low cost projects and a separate allocation for high risk projects. To allow future planning and to realise higher risk projects in the future
6. Low cost projects in one 'box' and higher risk projects in a separate 'box'. Short-term and long-term?
7. Integrate with risk. Joining with a 'partner' - low and high- to realise projects, which brings in more collaboration and experience, environment specialists to realise projects, delivering the final project before the expected projects original completion date, on a lower budget ?
8. The document is very stagnant with no ability to evolve. Needs to be a living document that response to new needs, project completion. Respond to the potential of projects.
9. This document focuses on Feasibility and cost over viability

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Low risk, high risk. Short term, long term - will impact on priorities. Values and how this document integrates with strategy missing. Little room to grow with changing community needs and potential of projects.

Which of these categories should Council prioritise when making investment decisions? Why?
- Prioritise what is achievable - do what you can
- Environmentally friendly
- Once projects completed - needs of the community will change - kindergarten to older adults - need to be able to evolve

Group 3:
Is there anything missing from the list?
- How is this aligned with the 10 year vision?
- How does this modeling adapt with changing needs?
- Where are the deficits? What's the overall improvement plan?
- What's the best ROI for the community? Where do we spend our money compared to what we use the most.
- Accessible spaces?
- Partnerships with the commercial sector?
- Encouraging community to explore the different facilities around, i.e. by giving out "bonuses" if visiting a particular facility.

Which of these categories should Council prioritise when making investment decisions? Why?
- Need - because if there's something missing then the council should put the resources there.
- Location and access - put things where they are accessible
- Community support - Listen to community feedback
- Funding opportunities - If savings then redirect to other priorities
- Maximising capacity of facility - Before building something new…
- Condition of facility - if not in good condition then facility won't be used - Need update and be well maintained
- Share how facilities are being used on an app so we know what's going on… Use smart phone technology to communicate what's going on, what's available. Streamline the information on 1 app. Include rating system for facilities: lighting, cleanliness, state of faciltity

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Group 4:

Is there anything missing from the list?
- 'Is it understood?'
    Has there been community engagement? Where appropriate, has there been co-design?
- Under 'needed' category - is infrastructure being used to full-potential?
    Consider different uses of space day/night, and changing over time based on community needs/desires

Which of these categories should Council prioritise when making investment decisions? Why?
- Priority should be 'is it wanted' - the community should tell the Council what it wants (and needs) and Council should recognise this (as opposed to top-down government).

- Checks and balances must be considered however, stopping a minority of loud voices holding too much influence.
- Consider the demand of infrastructure and services.
- Key is meaningful community engagement throughout the process! Council must lead, but also involve the community.