



Deliberative Community Engagement Report



Interpreter service

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MANNINGHAM

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1. CONTEXT

1.1. Background to deliberative process

The Local Government Act Victoria 2020 states in section 55 that Councils must adopt a community engagement policy that includes deliberative engagement practices to inform the development of their strategic plans including the Community Vision, the Council Plan, the Long-Term Financial Plan and the Asset Plan. Council adopted the Community Engagement Policy at the March 2021 Council meeting.

Manningham Council followed best practice in deliberative engagement for the Community Panel:

- The community panel should be selected using a random, stratified process. Stratification involves creating 'strata' or groups of participants, for example age group and gender, and selecting proportionate numbers to ensure that the panel matches the key demographics of the municipality and provides a cross-section of the community. The random process means that people cannot self-select, or be identified by Council staff for any particular purpose to participate on the panel.
- The random stratification process allows Council decision makers to have a high level of comfort in the legitimacy of the process and the eventual recommendations that are developed, because the panel is comprised of 'everyday' people who are broadly representative of the community. This is more valuable than knowing only what interest groups and highly articulate and invested people are lobbying for.
- Deliberation is designed and facilitated by an independent professional facilitator with experience in deliberation. Facilitation enables individuals to work through a designed set of activities (conversations) to collectively and productively produce an outcome (recommendations). Facilitators ensure that all group members are given equal opportunity to participate. Deliberation isn't about the group being led to a predetermined result (A short guide to Deliberative engagement for Victorian Councils: vlga.org.au/sites/default/files/Deliberative_Engagement_For_Victorian_Councils_EBOOK.pdf)

A series of deliberative community panels was convened in March 2021, and the deliberative process was managed by Deliberately Engaging, an independent Consultancy in the design, recruitment and facilitation of deliberative processes and workshops.

This report was co-authored by Council and Deliberately Engaging.

1.2. Remit and commitment from Council

A lead-in comment briefly explaining why we had a remit/commitment, and why this is necessary – e.g. deliberative engagement principle, setting expectations of panel, clear understanding of role

Following best practice, Council adopted a remit before establishing the Panel. This remit was a promise shared with the Community Panel to establish a clear understanding of both the role of the Panel and expectations for the outcomes achieved.

<p>Panel remit</p>	<p>Imagine Manningham in 2040.</p> <p>What Vision should guide Council's planning for the next 20 years?</p> <p>How do Council balance priorities and investments to shape the future of Manningham up to 2025?</p>
<p>Promise to panel</p>	<p>The Vision you share with us will guide our strategic planning.</p> <p>If we make any changes to your Vision, we will tell you why. Council will give weight to and incorporate your deliberations to the greatest extent possible in our strategic plans.</p> <p>We will report back to you about the outcome, and where a recommendation is not implemented, we will provide a response and explanation to the panel.</p>



Manningham Councillors with some members of the Community Panel.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMUNITY PANEL

2.1. Vision

Manningham is a peaceful, inclusive and safe community. We celebrate life with its diverse culture, wildlife and natural environment. We are resilient and value sustainable and healthy living, a sense of belonging and respect for one another.

2.2. Council Plan recommendations

- Plan for new developments responsibly. Maintain principles of protecting our environment, green and open space, environmentally sustainable (through use of materials) and maintaining a balance of city and country
- Provide ways for people to connect:
 - inter and intra-generational connections, in the physical/built environment and online, deliver events, festivals, markets and activities
 - provide infrastructure (paths, trails, street furniture)
 - accessible transport options
- Communications/marketing/advertising to support awareness of initiatives/services/activities/programs (particularly local) to connect our community and on the environment
- Plan for equitable and accessible services and infrastructure for prominent issues, such as mental health and social isolation. Council to consider the specific identified needs of ALL our community including young people, older people, culturally and linguistically diverse, people with a disability and those not engaged in community. Decision making on evidence-based data on population growth, trends, and community input¹
- Consider core principles of biodiversity and protecting wildlife in all that we do
- Partner, support, develop relationships with library, community groups, neighbourhood houses, volunteering groups to deliver on outcomes
- Educational and awareness programs/workshops/classes (environment, mental health, family violence, for our culturally diverse community, skills sharing) to support a connected and healthy community and waste management, compost, climate changes and biodiversity

¹ Council adopted recommendation with minor changes to broaden the reach

- Celebrate and promote our arts and culture to support a healthy community and local economy
- Expand or better utilise our current facilities (e.g. stadiums) or spaces (e.g. reserves), or develop new facilities. These facilities to become community hubs, with activities and events for all
- Advocate to government and business on environmental issues:
 - to the state government to improve planning overlays e.g. biodiversity overlay
 - for supermarkets to only offer non-light plastics bags.
 - for reduced emissions at a state and federal levels through MAV
 - for changes in planning legislation that specifies and caters towards strict environmental outcomes with clear measureable targets.
 - Advocacy - e.g. waste tax incentive to lower waste levels for businesses. Increase green rooftops in new developments to provide cooling effects
- Council work with other Councils (e.g. Hobsons Bay, Mornington Pen) to find ideas on sustainability and gain inspiration through their initiative Support local businesses (where they demonstrate alignment with our community values, provide services to the community, or are partnering with local community organisations and services)²
- Council to measure and demonstrate success of its services, and achievement of social, environmental and economic outcomes against community need. Set targets and report back on environmental progress³

² Council adopted recommendation with minor changes to broaden the reach

³ Council adopted recommendation with minor changes to broaden the reach

3. OVERVIEW OF DELIBERATIVE PROCESS

3.1. Recruitment approach and stratification goals and outcomes

Council undertook recruitment of the panel using an EOI process.

In February 2021, an open registration of interest process was held inviting Manningham community members to register to be considered for the panel.

An open invitation process was used to support opportunities for a broad range of people to get involved.

Several channels were used to promote this opportunity widely, including:

- a specialised wrap on the February Manningham Matters print magazine, distributed to every household and a key avenue to disseminating the invitation to a random audience
- targeted and boosted social media campaigns
- placement of posters (with QR codes) in prominent places
- signage placed in key locations and at community events: community houses, local markets, pop-up spaces and activity centres, libraries, neighbourhood houses, medical centres
- calling on Officers to activate and leverage contacts, networks and groups (youth, recreation, business traders, culturally diverse community groups, and more)

Following the expression of interest process, community panel members were randomly selected from a 'pool' of participants and stratified, in order to ensure representativeness of the Manningham community in terms of where they live, their age, gender, and background. This was based on the most recent census data available.

This random selection process aimed to limit any bias (meaning people could not self-select, or be identified for any particular purpose to participate), and to represent the diverse voices of our community and their priorities for the area.

After the stratified selection was undertaken, contact and briefing of panel members was handled by Deliberately Engaging, a recruitment specialist who ensured panel members were briefed and that any specific support they required to participate in the engagement was identified.

3.2. The deliberative process

The 44⁴ member Community Panel met four times to develop a Community Vision and make recommendations to the Council to consider for its key strategies.

Over four sessions (18 hours), the community panel weighed up information, data and evidence to agree on its final recommendations to Council. These were handed to Council at the end of the last session on 28 March and are available via the public Your Say Manningham page, [here](#).

Sessions were held on two evenings mid-week and two Sundays and focused on different topics as shown below:

Session 1: Wednesday 17 March, 6.00pm to 9.00pm. This session covered a review of Generation 2030 community Vision to create a 2040 Community Vision

Session 2: Sunday 21 March, 10.00am to 4.00pm. This session introduced a four year view to discussions covering the local economy and business, shopping and activity centres, balance of city and country, inviting places and spaces, getting from place to place and parks, open space and streetscapes.

Session 3: Wednesday 24 March, 6.00pm to 9.00pm. This session covered a four year view for health and wellbeing, safe and resilient, supporting community connections and inclusive of all.

Session 4: Sunday 28 March, 10.00am to 4.00pm. This session covered a resilient environment and biodiversity, financial scenarios, and the final Community Vision and recommendations.



⁴ 44 people were recruited however only 40 attended all sessions

3.3. Process design

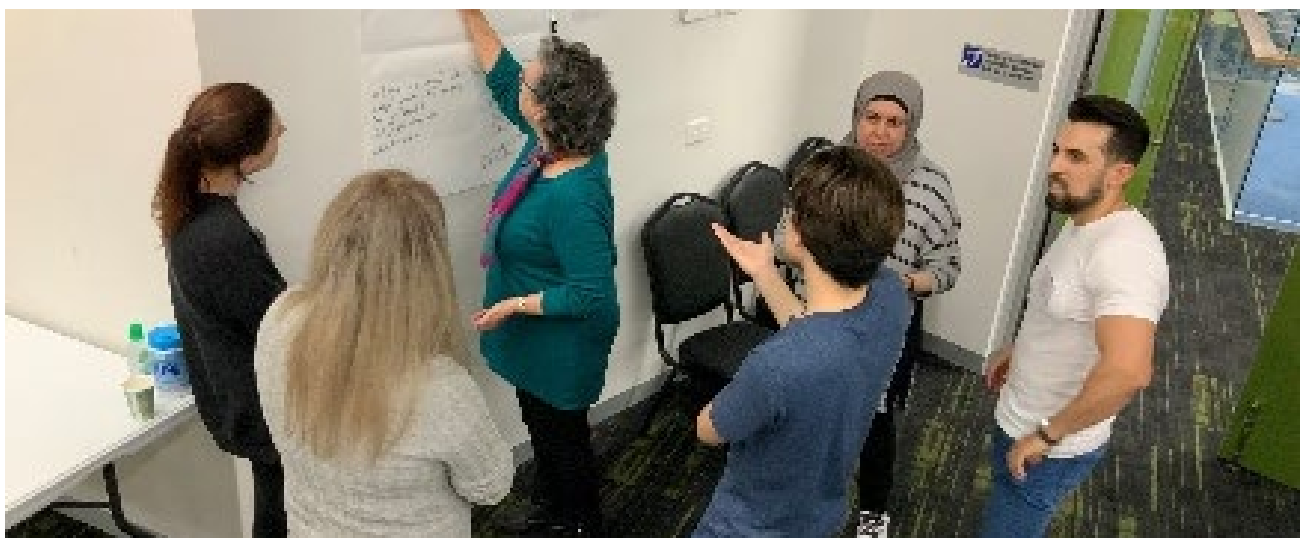
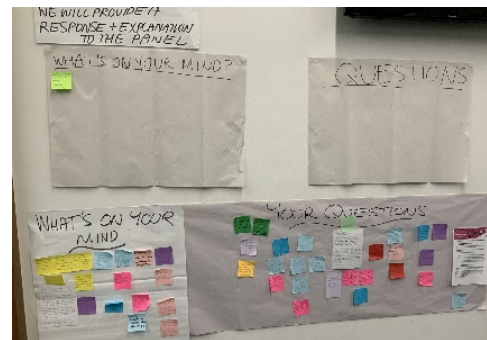
Each session opened with activities designed to help Panel members connect with each other to help them work together effectively over the day.

Deliberative sessions were framed with activities to model how to work effectively together, so that everyone's contributions could be heard and responded to in an appreciative manner.

At each session Panel members learned about the high-level challenges and opportunities for each topic from Council experts. They spent time digesting and clarifying what they had learned, asking questions of the expert speakers.

Panel members posted any unasked questions on a 'graffiti wall' and these were answered by experts at the session, or Council provided written responses in the following session. This 'graffiti wall' was also available at each session for Panel members to post their questions or respond to the question, 'What's on your mind?'. A comprehensive set of questions and responses was built up over the four sessions and provided a useful running commentary on Panel's member's learning over the process.

The main work at each session was to consider the topic (see above) and arrive at a set of priorities and recommendations for Council. This was done in different ways for each topic both to help keep Panel members interested and to suit different ways of working. Processes to arrive at a final set of recommendations included solo reflection, brainstorming at tables, discussing responses to specific questions different groups, ranking and prioritising and drawing.



Tools that the Panel used to help with their deliberation included:

- Information pack with statistics, data and context provided by Council.
- Feedback from recent community surveys.
- A decision-making criteria matrix as shown below:

Criteria to help you consider actions and recommendations

VISION	Fully aligned	Somewhat aligned	Not aligned	
URGENCY	High	Med	Low	Unknown
Council influence	High	Med	Low	Unknown

3.4. Community Vision

This was an iterative process. The Panel began its work on the Vision in session 1, developed a draft in session 2 and voted anonymously on the final Vision in the fourth session.

In session 1, Panel members were provided with a big picture of the future, with a focus on demographics, by external consultancy, ID.

A plenary discussion about ‘Vision’ then followed (inspirational, overarching, easy to remember, a magnet that pulls people towards it). They then drew, or wrote, their own response to the following question: It’s 2040. Imagine Manningham is everything you hoped it would be. What is happening? What are you observing? What are you doing? What are others doing?

They shared their individual pictures of Manningham in small groups, identifying what they had in common, and where they might differ. They then compared their work with the Vision from the Gen2030 Plan, and were asked to consider what they would strengthen, tweak, change, delete or change, towards developing their own Vision.

Groups worked separately at nine tables and produced three re-worked or draft Visions, and content for consideration in the final Vision.

This work was combined in between session by the Facilitators and the process we undertook presented at Session 2 for the Panel’s consideration. A draft vision that blended their work in Session 1 was presented to them for ranking by a show of hands. The majority either ‘really liked it’ or ‘liked it’, but the Panel thought it needed some finessing. Volunteer Panel members worked on a

small editorial committee to finesse the words of the draft Vision, working with the words provided and not introducing any new or their own personal ideas.

The editorial group's work was again ranked by the Panel and the majority supported the draft Vision. Panel members were invited to test the draft with family and friends in between sessions, and complete an anonymous online survey via their private Your Say page. Four Panel members provided largely editorial feedback – related to the wording, not the spirit of the Vision.

Panel members ranked the draft again in session 4. Numbers were more evenly spread across the rankings, and the Panel agreed for a new editorial group to finesse the wording for the Panel's final consideration. This editorial group both finessed the original draft and provided an alternative. The Panel voted on version 1 and version 2 anonymously and the second version received the clear majority of votes.





Session 2 - To identify priorities for Everything We Need is Local and Liveable Places and Spaces.

Key question: What should Council prioritise?

Process: The Panel deliberated on the two topics simultaneously, with five tables working on Everything is Local and four on Liveable Places and Spaces. Tables compared priorities with other tables, amending or adding their own accordingly. All tables for each topic in their own plenary discussions themed the priorities, combined duplicates and considered them from the point of view of people whose voices may not have been in the room.

Outcome: Draft Community Vision agreed, with a number of priorities for the two topics identified.



Session 3 - To identify priorities for Healthy Communities.

Key question: What should Council do to address social disconnection, vulnerability and physical inactivity in our community?

Process: Volunteer Panel members hosted a discussion for each question. Panel members moved between the three questions, building on each other's work as they progressed.

Outcome: Several priorities identified under Healthy Communities.

The Panel identified 134 priorities under three topics in sessions two and three. These were distilled to ten broad, overarching recommendations ahead of session four, for the Panel's consideration. The process used Nvivo, a qualitative data analysis software, and was explained to the Panel at session 4, including how the recommendations encompassed the specific priorities that had been developed.



Session 4 – to identify priorities for environment, finance and wrap up



Key questions: 1: What actions do you want to see the Council take over the next four years to reduce residential waste and divert food and garden material from landfill?

2. How might Council work with the community to protect our natural environment and biodiversity?
3. What progress do you hope to make on climate change in four years' time – in advocacy, mitigation and adaption?

Process: Volunteer Panel members hosted a discussion for each question in Open Space format. Panel members were free to join any discussion that interested them. An editorial group from the Panel themed and distilled the priorities for Resilient Environment.

Outcome: Added two environmental focussed recommendations to the existing set of distilled recommendations (10)

Purpose: To provide the opportunity for all Manningham residents and businesses to share their views on how Council should allocate its financial resources while continuing to be financially sustainable.

Process: A Community Panel was formed representing a cross-section of the Manningham community. Over 40 community members actively engaged in the Community Panel over four sessions in March 2021.

The Community Panel provided important feedback and input for Council in the development of this 10 Year Financial Plan.

Outcome: The Community Panel emphasised the importance of being a well-governed Council that is financially sustainable. The Community Panel also provided input on several revenue and funding strategies that helped shape the Financial Plan and also Council's Budget and Revenue and Rating Plan.

Some of the key feedback provided by the Community Panel on revenue and funding strategies to assist in ensuring ongoing financial sustainability are included in the table below.

Feedback from the Community Panel on financially sustainable revenue and funding strategies

FUNDING STRATEGY	FEEDBACK
Government grants	Seek grants and advocate to other levels of government for funding
User Fees and Charges	Full user pays for commercial, but not for community use (Council to provide a subsidy or part-subsidy for community/not-for-profit or where benefit for the whole community can be demonstrated)
Commercial or not-for profit co-contributions / Partnerships for funding community infrastructure	Council to consider this where alignment can be demonstrated with community values
Charge rental income for tenants	Full charge for commercial tenants, subsidised for other tenants
Loan Borrowings	Council to consider loan borrowings as a source of funding if specific criteria are met (e.g. low interest rates, positive financial return, for major community infrastructure)
Asset Sales	Council to prioritise renewal of assets, rather than selling assets to fund major projects

The panel were invited to comment on any of the recommendations over the day.

Words were added to some of the recommendations reflecting the Panel’s work on Resilient Environment.

A further two recommendations were also added. The Panel indicated where the Council should focus its resources among the final set of 12 recommendations.

Outcome: Final vision and 12 recommendations handed to Council, with the Panel indicating where it would like Council to focus its resources among the recommendations.

4. OVERVIEW OF BROADER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

4.1. Key elements of earlier community engagement around Vision and Plans

We engaged the community over 12 months in conversations and workshops to inform the deliberative engagement process and pursue the community recommendations:

4.1.1. The Plan 21+ Community Survey

Purpose: To provide the opportunity for all Manningham residents and businesses to share their views on what Council should focus on over the next four years. Information gathered informed 2021-2025 Council Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, the Annual Budget, Long Term Financial Plan and Asset Plan.

Process: The Plan 21+ survey covered a broad range of Council services including parks, transport, housing and development, community participation, council leadership, advocacy, roads, environment, local goods and services, local business. The survey was distributed through Council's magazine Manningham Matters to all households and businesses and was featured on Council's online engagement portal Your Say Manningham.

Outcome: The survey was open for 6 weeks and a total of 2412 responses were received (print and hard copy versions). Data analysis presented Council with a clear understanding of the broad priorities to be further investigated.

4.1.2. Targeted Conversations

Purpose: To further explore priorities identified in the community survey and to better understand the needs and ideas from specific community groups including people with a disability and their carers, young people, young families, cultural groups, representatives from Council's Advisory Committees including Access and Equity Advisory Committee, Healthy City Advisory Committee, Heritage Advisory Committee, Liveability Innovation and Technology Committee, Manningham Arts Advisory Committee and Open Space and Streetscape Design Advisory Committee

Process: A series of one on one and group workshops were held with focus areas community health and wellbeing, environment, planning for our places and spaces.

Outcome: We learnt about lived experiences across the topics and where Council is best placed to either directly provide support or to partner with others, particularly in areas of health and wellbeing and community connections.

4.1.3. Staff and Councillor Workshops

Purpose: To share and explore community feedback and to discuss ways to deliver maximum public value in the priority areas across the four years and beyond.

Process: A series of one on one and group workshops to consider community feedback, legislative requirements, commitments in existing strategies, data and evidence for now and the future.

Outcome: Gained a better understanding of priorities to meet our community needs in a fair and equitable manner with available resources.

Please note: The 2040 Community Vision is a review of Generation 2030 Community Plan. Community consultation for the review started in 2019/20 with Imagine Manningham 2040, an extensive community engagement project that captured inputs from across a wide range of our diverse and varied community. We reached residents, traders, community groups, children, our Chinese community, CALD groups and a variety of interest groups. The consultation timeline was reviewed to align with the consultation activities for the development of the 2021-2025 Council Plan.



5. Next Steps

The recommendations were unofficially presented to the Councillors in attendance at the end of session 4 and the Mayor reiterated the promise made at the start of the process:

The Panel were invited to attend a forthcoming Council meeting at which time the recommendations would be formally receipted.

The Vision you share with us will guide our strategic planning.

If we make any changes to your Vision, we will tell you why. Council will give weight to and incorporate your deliberations to the greatest extent possible in our strategic plans. We will report back to you about the outcome, and where a recommendation is not implemented, we will provide a response and explanation to the panel.

Following Council consideration, the recommendations will be integrated into key strategic plans.

For updates on Council's progress on the recommendations and strategic plans visit the website manningham.vic.gov.au/council-plan and updates in our print and digital community magazine *Manningham Matters*.

6. How to stay informed

If you have any questions reach out to us via communityengagement@manningham.vic.gov.au

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