ITEM 7.1 **Adoption of the Draft Community Facilities Policy (CFP)**

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SUMMARY

- The draft Community Facilities Policy (CFP) establishes a consistent and transparent approach to the leasing and licencing of Council-owned and managed community and sporting facilities. It provides a standardised framework for the allocation, management and use of these assets, including processes for community access, terms of use, rental arrangements, maintenance responsibilities and compliance requirements.

- At its Ordinary Council Meeting on 22 November 2022, Council resolved to endorse the general principles guiding the development of the draft Community Facilities Policy and noted that a comprehensive consultation process would be undertaken.

- To ensure the Policy appropriately reflected the needs and expectations of key community groups, Council engaged an external consultant, The LKB Agency, to facilitate comprehensive face-to-face consultations across two phases. During the second phase of the consultation process, 150 community groups were invited to attend in-person information sessions in February and March 2026 . Four sessions were delivered across the LGA, engaging a total of 33 community representatives.

- Concurrent with the in-person engagement sessions, the draft Community Facilities Policy was placed on public exhibition from 2 February 2026 to 6 March 2026. During this period, Council received 24 submissions and 2 direct emails.

- The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the feedback received on the draft Policy, outline minor amendments made in response to community feedback and present the updated Policy to Council for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION That Council -

1. Adopt the Community Facilities Policy, as provided in Attachment 1.

2. Revoke the former Bankstown Community Facilities Policy following adoption of the new Policy.

3. Endorse the commencement of negotiations for new licence and lease agreements with existing holders following the adoption of the Community Facilities Policy; and

4. Public exhibition will be undertaken where required under the *Local Government Act 1993*, with a further report presented to Council outlining the outcomes of the exhibition of each proposed lease or licence agreement.

ATTACHMENTS Click here for attachments

1. Draft Community Facilities Policy
2. Public Exhibition Submission Table
3. Community Consultation Report for Draft CFP - The LKB Agency
4. Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes - 22 November 2022 - Item 6.1

INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING ALIGNMENT

- The draft Community Facilities Policy directly supports the objectives of Council's Community Strategic Plan, *CBCity 2036,* by ensuring Council's community and sporting facilities are managed in a fair, sustainable and community-focussed manner. The Policy contributes to the Leading and Engaged destination by promoting transparent decision-making, equitable access to Council assets and strong partnerships with community and not-for-profit organisations. By establishing clear criteria and processes for the allocation and use of facility, the Policy strengthens trust and confidence in Council's governance of community assets.

- The Policy complements the strategic directions of the Community Infrastructure Strategic Plan 2050 (CISP) by providing a policy framework for the management of Council's existing and future community facilities. By establishing clear rental arrangements, responsibilities and capital contribution pathways, the Policy supports long-term functionality, adaptability and financial sustainability of facilities identified in the CISP. It ensures that community infrastructure is maintained to an appropriate standard and remains flexible enough – by prioritising shared use and reducing reliance on under-utilised assets – to respond to evolving demographic needs and changes over time.

STRATEGIC IMPACT

- The Community Facilities Policy is intended to operate as a cost-neutral policy and is not anticipated to generate surplus income for Council. Rather, the Policy formalises Council's existing approach under the former Bankstown Community Facilities Policy in providing subsidised rental fees for community and not-for-profit organisations.

- The tiered rental fee framework ensures that fees are applied consistently and transparently contributing incrementally to operational costs such as asset administration, insurance, statutory compliance and preventative maintenance. The broader capital, renewal and long-term maintenance costs will continue to be funded through existing budgets and asset management programs.

- Approximately 120 community and sporting organisations will undergo renewed negotiations once the Policy is adopted. A staggered implementation approach is proposed to support an effective rollout of the Policy, minimising disruption to existing groups and allowing Council to manage change within existing staffing resources. Existing agreements will continue under their current terms until expiry, ensuring procedural fairness and continuity.

DETAILED INFORMATION

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the feedback received on the draft Policy, outline minor amendments made in response to community feedback and present the updated Policy to Council for adoption.

Background

- The City of Canterbury Bankstown manages a diverse network of over 120 Community Facilities used by not-for-profit groups, sporting organisations and community groups.

- Existing lease and licencing arrangements vary significantly in terms of rental, tenure, utilisation, maintenance obligations and accountability. A number of these arrangements have now expired, are nearing expiry, or are operating under historical or informal arrangements that no longer align with contemporary governance, legislative requirements or best practice asset management.

- The draft Community Facilities Policy (CFP) has been developed to provide a clear, consistent and transparent framework for the allocation, use and management of Council's Community Facilities. The Policy outlines how community organisations access spaces, terms of use, rental fees, maintenance obligations and compliance requirements.

Discussion

<u>Public Exhibition and Community Engagement Process</u>

- The draft Policy was exhibited for public comment from Monday 2 February 2026 to Friday 6 March 2026 to seek feedback from stakeholders and the broader community. Concurrently, information sessions facilitated by The LKB Agency, were held with community organisations holding existing occupancy agreements with Council to explain key elements of the Policy and encourage the submission of formal feedback via the Have Your Say platform.

- As part of the consultation process, a number of tools were used to engage with stakeholders including Councils *Have Your Say* webpage, distribution of promotional posted across selected community facilities, and direct emails inviting stakeholders to face-to-face information sessions.

- During the exhibition period, 353 unique visitors were noted suggestive of keen community interest. A total of 24 submissions and 2 direct emails were received.

- Face-to-face information sessions were concurrently facilitated by external engagement consultants, The LKB Agency, across the different wards. For this, 150 community and sporting groups were invited to attend in-person sessions conducted in February and March 2026. Four sessions were delivered across the LGA, engaging a total of 33 community representatives. Participants were provided with an overview of the draft Community Facilities Policy, offered clarification on key elements, and provided

the opportunity to ask questions. Participants were encouraged to formalise their feedback on the Policy via the *Have Your Say* webpage.

- The majority of submissions (99%) were positive and supportive of the Policy, acknowledging Council's commitment to transparency and noting the comprehensiveness of the Policy.

- Overall, feedback received primarily related to requests for clarification on maintenance obligations, capital investment, rental fees categories, and included minor suggestions to improve the draft Policy.

  - Council has acknowledged each submission received and provided a detailed response, offering clarity where required and acknowledging the need for minor amendments to the Policy. Responses to submissions are detailed in Attachment 2.
  - Council notes that many of the concerns raised in submissions are anticipated to be addressed through subsequent engagement with individual organisations, particularly as Council progresses discussions on proposed lease or licence agreements and is able to provide greater clarity on specific terms and conditions.

- One submission from Wolli Creek Preservation Society NSW did not support the principle that organisations should contribute to facility costs, arguing that modest access to Council facilities should be provided at no cost to volunteer-run charitable organisations delivering community benefit.

  - Council acknowledges the submission. The Policy is based on the principle that user organisations contribute to the cost of providing and maintaining community facilities, while access is supported through subsidised fees reflecting community benefit. This approach ensures transparency, equity and sustainable management of Council assets. No changes to the Policy are proposed based on this submission.

  - A direct response will be provided to Wolli Creek Preservation Society NSW to further understand their operational needs and requirements and to explore, where appropriate, solutions that may be available within the framework of the Community Facilities Policy (CFP).

<u>Amendments to the Community Facilities Policy (CFP)</u>

As a result of the feedback received during the public exhibition period and further internal review, the following amendments were made to the Policy:

- Clarification of ambiguous language in the Maintenance Schedule;
- Amendment to requirements for capital contributions to include past investments and inclusion of simplified table detailing standard of evidence required;
- Clarification of criteria considered by Council for the multi-purpose or shared use of facilities;
- Clarification for rental fees categories, including additional detail to explain how rental fees contribute to the ongoing operation, maintenance and management of facilities.

- Clarification of utility charges and shared-use adjustments, including how costs may be apportioned in shared facilities or where individual metering is not available.

Recommended Approach (if appropriate)

- The outcomes of the public exhibition and community consultation process demonstrate a strong level of community interest and support for the Policy.

- Council has reviewed all submissions and acknowledges that most feedback relates to requests for clarification rather than any substantiative objections to the Policy's intent or principles.

- Minor amendments have been incorporated where appropriate to improve clarity, while maintaining the core objectives and policy position.

- It is recommended that the amended Draft Community Facilities Policy (CFP) be adopted and the former Bankstown Community Facilities Policy be revoked following adoption.