

FAQs

Why is Future Hepburn being undertaken?

Future Hepburn will address planning for our future infrastructure needs, allowing our communities, businesses and people to thrive well into the future.

Our strategic planning challenges include planning for climate change impacts, managing appropriate growth and development, and protecting biodiversity, cultural heritage, significant agricultural land, landscapes and environmental features,

Why have town boundaries been examined as part of the structure planning process?

A town boundary defines the allowable extent of a town's development and represents the future growth expectations for a town. Determining town boundaries provides many benefits including safeguarding environmental areas, landscapes and agricultural land, limiting 'urban sprawl' and land use conflicts at the interface between rural and residential living.

How do rates and associated taxes relate to the Future Hepburn projects?

In short, strategic planning does not consider rates, taxes or property value impacts as part of the future planning process. In fact, past Panels appointed by the Minister for Planning to review a council's strategic work have clearly stated that a Council must not consider these impacts when undertaking strategic planning. The strategic planning process will not increase Council's **overall** rates income as rate increases are set by the State Government through the Fair Go rates system.

Council cannot guarantee that there will not be rate variations for individual properties as a result of potential future rezonings. The valuation of a parcel of land or property is a key factor in determining the rates levied. This means that for an individual, if the valuation rises, then so will rates and vice versa. For more information on how rates work please watch this [short video](#).

Why have investigation areas been applied to past landfill sites?

Council draft documents have nominated investigation areas around former landfills and transfer station sites in Daylesford, Trentham, Creswick and Clunes. Victoria's

Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has recently updated planning guidance regarding landfill sites (former and active) and transfer stations, and how to manage potential impacts on surrounding soil, air and groundwater. The EPA expects to publish its fully updated guidance document in the coming months. Council will be responsible for applying these guidelines. Typical impacts under consideration include odour and dust, seepage of composted material into the soil and methane emissions.

The Investigation Areas shown in structure plans represent the default maximum extent where EPA suggests impacts might occur. Council would use these areas as the starting point for assessing impacts. This investigation will inform whether any further planning policies or controls are needed around each former landfill or transfer station site.

Typically, Council would engage external environmental engineers to take air, soil and groundwater samples across the investigation area and report back on any impacts requiring action. Funds have been provided in the 2024-2025 financial year to continue with this work.

Prior to any investigations commencing Council will contact landowners advising of the upcoming testing and if land access is needed. A copy of the letter sent to landowners who fall within the nominated investigation areas is available for viewing on the Future Hepburn Technical Studies and Reports page on Participate Hepburn. We encourage you to reach out if you have any further questions by emailing us at strategicplanning@hepburn.vic.gov.au.

Council obligation is to provide as much transparency as possible in the planning scheme for current and future landowners. Acknowledging the recent community feedback, Council will consider how to best describe, graphically or through words, the investigation areas. Note that this work is already flagged in Hepburn's Planning Scheme as strategic work to be completed.

Why did we not speak to impacted landowners individually prior to commencing public consultation?

There are seven key strategies that make up Future Hepburn project: the five township structure plans (Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford/Hepburn, Glenlyon and Trentham), the draft rural strategy, and the Integrated Transport Strategy.

Each draft strategic document outlines several proposals across the whole Shire including investigation areas for current and past landfill sites, the identification of a major hazard facility, multiple proposed zoning and overlay changes and the adjustment of town boundaries in our townships. As this is a whole of Shire strategy, it would not have been possible to contact every landowner in person before the release

of the strategic document for community feedback. Council also sought to ensure everyone across the Shire was starting from the same position in terms of commenting on the draft work.

Since the release of the Future Hepburn projects for community feedback, Council has endeavoured to reach out to all residents and ratepayers through multiple avenues, with the purpose of raising their awareness, and encouraging them to investigate if the property is affected. We have provided, and continue to provide, multiple opportunities for community members to ask questions and seek additional information.

We encourage anyone who is interested in the overarching proposal and or its recommendations to reach out by emailing the Strategic Planning team at strategicplanning@hepburn.vic.gov.au. Alternatively, to ask a more general question about a Future Hepburn project you can use the Participate Hepburn tool 'Ask a Future Hepburn question' at <https://participate.hepburn.vic.gov.au>.

What is the purpose of the Rural Hepburn strategy?

Council's draft Rural Strategy complements the State Government's 'Planning for Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land Action Plan' and the draft township structure plans. The strategy seeks to identify and protect what the community values about living in rural areas, guiding appropriate development that is consistent with those values. It will determine future agricultural needs and requirements, ensuring that we protect our strategically important and most productive farmland from further fragmentation and incompatible uses.

Does the proposal to require a planning permit to establish a dwelling on a Farming Zone lot below 80 hectares mean I cannot build a house?

The introduction of minimum subdivision sizes within the draft rural strategy does not prohibit houses in Farming Zones. It simply sets out a clearer policy direction, requiring a permit for houses on properties under 80ha in a Farming Zone. This proposal aims to ensure that our prime agricultural land is not further fragmented, and that any dwellings are directly linked to a legitimate agricultural use. For further information see page 32 of the strategy and the map on page 41.

Rural Activity Zone: what is it, where would it apply and when?

The Rural Activity Zone (RAZ) has not been applied to land in Hepburn Shire previously.

The RAZ is a focused zoning that allows for farming and other land uses to co-exist. It supports the continuation and growth of farming but also provides the opportunity for non-farming uses such as farmgate sales, farm stays, and other value-add activities. These activities would be considered in appropriate locations that are compatible with the area's agricultural, environmental and landscape characteristics.

The RAZ is proposed to apply to land currently zoned Farming in Policy Area 2 (red shaded area) and would be subject to a separate detailed assessment before rezoning would apply.

How do the Structure Plans and Rural Hepburn strategy work together?

The draft Future Hepburn documents work together as a whole of Shire settlement strategy. A settlement strategy seeks to review and plan for all the Shire's main land uses in a way that allows each area to maximise its opportunities. For example, separating homes from farming and industrial areas maximises the potential for quiet and healthy home environments while enabling farmers and factories to operate their business without causing disruption to others. A settlement strategy enables Council to better plan for future services, make bids for state and commonwealth funding based on sound planning, and guide utility infrastructure providers to plan for the future.

How can I make a submission?

The submission period is currently closed.

Watch this short video on how to make a [submission](#).

What process was undertaken to identify potential areas for increased housing availability?

The Shire's settlement pattern predominantly relies on the two key townships of Daylesford and Creswick to accommodate population growth. When determining where appropriate growth should be, we firstly focused within the town centres to accommodate as much infill as possible without impacting the established character of our towns. There are a number of informing expert reports such as a bushfire study, biodiversity study, Urban Design and Character Precincts, Land Demand & Supply Study and others which help us determine where appropriate growth should be channelled.

What are the next steps now that the draft Structure Plans and Rural strategy have been adopted

The next step would involve Council planners working through the **Planning Scheme Amendment process** over an approximate two year period including:

1. Amendment preparation: Working with State government agencies to prepare draft planning scheme maps and written planning controls reflecting the Council decision; and
1. Exhibition and review: Recommending to Council to publish these drafts for public input and requesting review of all submissions by a panel of independent experts appointed by the Minister for Planning; and
1. Decision to adopt, makes changes or abandon the planning scheme amendment: After considering submissions and the independent review, recommending whether the Council should adopt, change or abandon the amendment or parts of the amendment.

Should Council adopt or change the amendment, it is then submitted to the Minister for Planning, for approval. The Minister makes the final decision on whether the amendment is approved, changed, or refused.

I have found errors in some of the maps within the structure plans. What should I do?

Some mapping errors that have been identified by the community. Your comments have been noted and our consultants will be making amendments to our plans and reports once the public consultation period ceases. If anyone notes any additional errors, could you please contact us via email at strategicplanning@hepburn.vic.gov.au or include it in your submission.

What happens to the community submissions?

All community and stakeholder submissions will be reviewed by Council officers and Councillors following the close of the engagement period on 26 June 2024.

Following that review, Council intends to decide whether to adopt the Future Hepburn strategy documents including deciding on any changes arising from engagement submissions.

Copies of individual submissions will not be shared with the broader community as they contain information of a personal nature. Council will report back to the

community on what we have heard in line with our community engagement commitments as outlined in the Community Engagement Policy.

What was the Township Community Panels' role in developing the Structure Plans?

The Township Community Panels' role was to develop a shared vision and a key objective for each of the six identified key themes for the township structure plan. Recommendations were considered adopted by the Panel where there was over 75 percent of agreement. Further information about the Panels' work and role can be found in the Township Community Panel Handbook 2023, available on Participate Hepburn.

At the close of the Community Panel process, an Engagement report was sent to Panel members, prior to being presented to Councillors. A copy of this Engagement report can be found on Participate Hepburn, on the appropriate township pages, under the 'Draft structure plan project documents' section.

While it was not the role of the Panel to deliberate on the strategies and actions contained within the township structure plans, we did share all information gathered with Councillors, other Council staff and external consultants to inform all elements of the Future Hepburn project.