

SHIRE OF YORK: COVID RECOVERY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

STRATEGY

The Shire of York's COVID-19 Recovery Strategy Outlines Council's overall approach to responding and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Shire of York developed a Business Continuity Plan - COVID-19 Pandemic Response to guide operations during the 'State of Emergency'. The aim of this strategy is to detail how the Shire will facilitate the recovery of its community following the COVID-19 pandemic. The strategy will seek to:

- define Council's goals through three impact phases
- identify Council's priority in achieving those goals
- outline how priorities will be implemented

What we know

Globally, COVID-19 is resulting in serious and widespread illness, deaths and the disruption of society's normal functions. The pandemic has had, and continues to have, serious global, national, state and local implications, made more challenging by the complexity of its on-going nature.

As a result, COVID-19 has affected the world unlike anything we've seen in modern times. There have been border closures, shutting down of arts and sports, rapid and large-scale adoption of remote working arrangements, social distancing, 'stay at home' orders, closure of public places and trading restrictions that have seen many businesses physically close their doors.

During these unusual, uncertain and trying times, the Shire has been diligent in doing its part to help stop the spread by following guidance and advice from the Government of Western Australia. However, the impacts of this pandemic are much more than ending its spread – even when life returns to 'normal' there will be long-lasting impacts on life as we know it and our own community here in York. Unlike a natural disaster where impacts can be seen in the physical and built world, this pandemic will largely affect our social and economic ecosystems. Social distancing measures, even after they're lifted, will continue to impact our interactions and it may take much longer than the reopening of trading for the economy to fully recover.

In a typical emergency, local government is responsible for managing recovery affecting the community by:

- assisting recovery at a personal, community, economic and environmental level.
- ensuring that recovery activities are community led.
- ensuring that available government and nongovernment support to affected communities is targeted.
- assisting communities to rebuild in a way that enhances social, economic and environmental values where possible.
- improving resilience of the relevant communities.
- ensuring that lessons learned through the recovery process are captured and available to managers of future recovery processes.
- Understanding the challenges of COVID-19 and its distinct difference to traditional emergencies, this strategy outlines the Shire's goals for each of the impact phases, in the short, medium and long term, with a focus on social and economic outcomes.

What we'll do

During these unprecedented times, we will be guided by our Strategic Community Plan 2020 - 2030, along with its vision and mission, to set strategic goals and initiatives that will help us get through to emerge stronger from this pandemic. In setting these goals and initiatives we commit to:

Reflect Reflect on the impacts on our community and local economy.	Learn Learn from decisions made, both good and bad.	Grow Grow as a community, aiming for a better, brighter future.
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Our goals and initiatives

The goals and initiatives identified by the Shire have been categorised into three phases.

Endure - 27 February 2020 to 30 June 2020 This is the short-term, immediate crisis response phase. It focuses on providing relief to the community and surviving the pandemic.	Renew - 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 This phase focuses on medium term initiatives and is dedicated to guiding the Shire through recovery from the pandemic.	Prosper - 1 July 2021 and beyond The third and final phase captures the long-term view and focuses on coming out of the pandemic situation together.
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ENDURE

This is the short-term, immediate crisis response phase. It focuses on providing relief to the community and surviving the pandemic.

E1. Maintain the social fabric of our community

In a time of uncertainty, restrictions and the dissolution of normal life, we are committed to maintaining the community's social fabric and responding to its new and emerging needs.

E1.1	Lead through crisis by making clear decisions and communicating about them early, simply and often.
E1.2	Bring the community together in working through adversity so that no one gets left behind.
E1.3	Assist local groups in providing for the unique needs of the vulnerable, and newly vulnerable in our communities.

How we'll know we've succeeded

Our community understands the rules, observes safety measures and is helping each other get through this time of crisis.

E2. Maintain our local economy

In a time of financial instability and the threat of economic decline, we are committed to instilling confidence in and maintaining the local economy.

E2.1	Make it easy for local businesses to stay open through promotion, support and guidance.
E2.2	Champion local businesses as they explore new and creative ways to continue serving the community.
E2.3	Invest in the local economy by providing financial relief to our sporting and community groups, ratepayer and local businesses.

How we'll know we've succeeded

Our local businesses feel supported and able to stay open, and we are doing our part to give back while easing financial burden on our community.

RENEW

This phase focuses on medium term initiatives and is dedicated to guiding the Shire through recovery from the pandemic.

R1. Reconnect our local community

As social restrictions are lifted, and our public places come back to life, we are committed to reconnecting our local community to positively move towards a new future.

R1.1	Stimulate social activity and create opportunities for connection and interaction.
R1.2	Inspire optimism about the future and prioritise public safety.
R1.3	Support a community-led approach to allow recovery to start from sideways and bottom-up.

How we'll know we've succeeded

Our community feels safe in reintegrating back into social life and is optimistic about its future. There are many opportunities to interact through community events and the reopening of public places.

R2. Reactivate the local economy

As rules relax, businesses open their doors and people return to work, we are committed to reactivating the local economy by doing our part in helping get people back on their feet.

R2.1	Invest in the local economy by creating new opportunities.
R2.2	Make it easy for local businesses to adapt and evolve.
R2.3	Position York as a leading place to engage and do business.

How we'll know we've succeeded

Business is picking up and people are investing back into the local economy. New and existing businesses find it easy to work with the Shire.

PROSPER

The third and final phase captures the long-term view and focuses on coming out of the pandemic situation together.

P1. Re-imagining the community

The 'new normal' is now taking shape, it is a time for reflection, learning - but more importantly, growth. In this time, we are committed to leading the community in thinking big and embracing this new world.

P1.1	Celebrate big wins, small wins and everything in between.
P1.2	Grow stronger together by learning from our past and moving forward.
P1.3	Empower our community to remain active, curious and united.

How we'll know we've succeeded

The community is engaged, positive and actively participating in shaping our new plan for the future. We have moved past the crisis but have looked back to reflect and learn from each other and have moved into a brighter future.

P2. A new and revived local economy

Businesses are flourishing; people from far and wide are exploring what the Shire has to offer. In this time, we are committed to strengthening our local economy by supporting diversity, growth and innovation.

P2.1	Look after the stability of our local economy.
P2.2	Be open to different possibilities, opportunities, people and views.
P2.3	Become a hub for innovation, where new ideas can be pursued and explored.

How we'll know we've succeeded

New and existing businesses are opening up in the town because new ideas are embraced and welcome. The Shire of York is a leading destination, where businesses and people go out of their way to come to work, play and live.

ACTION PLAN

Acronyms

SP – Shire President CEO – Chief Executive Officer EMCCS – Executive Manager, Corporate & Community Services EMIDS – Executive Manager, Infrastructure & Development Services
 EMG – Executive Management Group EEDO – Events & Economic Development Officer PO – Projects Officer FM – Finance Manager

No.	Goal or objective	Actions needed (list the steps needed)	Resources needed (List the resources needed)	Actioned by	Timeframe	Status
ENDURE – Short-term, immediate crisis response phase focused on survival and providing relief to the community.						
E1 Maintain the social fabric of our community						
E1.1	Lead through crisis by making clear decisions and communicating about them early, simply and often.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Continuity Plan to be developed Council to be informed and make decisions regarding facilities and services. Council to provide regular updates to the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 Leadership Group Special Council meeting to adopt BCP Weekly updates provided via broadcast media (local radio) Update in Community Matters Working from Home policy and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEO CEO/EMCCS SP EMCCS 	April 2020 SCM Weekly (Fridays) Monthly April 2020	Complete Complete On-going? On-going Complete
E1.2	Bring the community together in working through adversity so that no one gets left behind.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call for volunteers to assist and check in on at-risk residents Shire to provide regular updates to the community Establish Isolation Support Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call out via social media, website, public notices, local media Updates provided daily via social media, weekly via Shire president interviews on local media, monthly via Community Matters Redeployed staff to administer YorKIND 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEDO/PO/CEO EMG/EEDO/PO 	April 2020 April/May 2020 April/May 2020	Complete Complete Complete
E1.3	Assist local groups in providing for the unique needs of the vulnerable, and newly vulnerable in our communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Social Isolation Support Network Connect those in need with appropriate and relevant services KINDcalls to residents 65+ Return calls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated phone line Guiding principles and procedures Promotion of YORKIND via social media, website, Community Matters, local radio Redeployed staff to administer YorKIND 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> York Visitor Centre EEDO PO EMG/EEDO/PO 	April 2020 April 2020 April/May 2020 April/May 2020	Complete Complete Complete Complete
E2 Maintain our local economy						
E2.1	Make it easy for local businesses to stay open through promotion, support and guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place on hold any new planning and building compliance follow-up Provide assistance to local businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updates provided to staff Staff with knowledge of updated information available to provide assistance Regular Open for Business Updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMIDS EMG EEDO/PO 	22 April 2020 April/May 2020 April-June 2020	Complete Complete On-going

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the use of local suppliers Suspend accrual of penalty interest on outstanding rates and charges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special Council Meeting Synergysoft amendment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEO/SP FM 	<p>21 April 2020</p> <p>April 2020</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>
E2.2	Champion local businesses as they explore new and creative ways to continue serving the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise regularly with local businesses to keep informed of issues and achievements Promote local businesses and provide updates as to those businesses that are open for business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Survey Regular Open for Business Updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEDO EEDO/PO 	<p>May???</p> <p>April-June 2020</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>On-going</p>
E2.3	Invest in the local economy by providing financial relief to our sporting and community groups, ratepayers and local businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify funds and actions available to assist and provide relief during COVID Recovery Council to agree to proposed assistance activities Review Reserves for potential repurposing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income and Expenditure to date reviewed (3rd Qtr FACR) Project briefs reviewed for relevance Modelling to determine budget impacts of assistance activities Special Council Meeting Report to May OCM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FM EMG FM SP/CEO FM 	<p>May 2020</p> <p>May 2020</p> <p>May 2020</p> <p>21 April 2020</p> <p>26 May 2020</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>

No.	Goal or objective	Actions needed (list the steps needed)	Resources needed (List the resources needed)	Actioned by	Timeframe	Status
RENEW – Medium-term response to guide the Shire through recovery from the pandemic.						
R1	Reconnect our local community					
R1.1	Stimulate social activity and create opportunities for connection and interaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events to support locals return to normality Shop local – support local business Fees and charges to support local groups 	At the point of writing this plan, the State of Emergency is current and the situation with COVID-19 unstable, therefore longer term responses will be determined as the situation evolves and assessment made as to the best response for the Renew and Prosper phases.	Council & EMG	Ongoing	Current
R1.2	Inspire optimism about the future and prioritise public safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the brand - Yorkind Communication Support for the community – COVID-19 safety plans Staff in office to support resident requests 		Council & EMG	Ongoing	Current
R1.3	Support a community-led approach to allow recovery to start from sideways and bottom-up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planting – Avon Park Cemetery clean up Increased funding for community lead activities and support (Grants) 		Council & EMG	Ongoing	Current
R2	Reactivate the local economy					
R2.1	Invest in the local economy by creating new opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events to support return of people to the town Shop local PROGRAM \$30k in draft budget to be allocated to Business Grant Funding Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event Recovery Calendar Business Grant Guidelines Event Recovery Operational Plan 	Council & EMG	Ongoing	Current
R2.2	Make it easy for local businesses to adapt and evolve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplify processes Environmental Health Officer support 	At the point of writing this plan, the State of Emergency is current and the situation with COVID-19 unstable, therefore longer term responses will be determined as the situation evolves and assessment made as to the best response for the Renew and Prosper phases	Council & EMG	Ongoing	Current
R2.3	Position York as a leading place to engage and do business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Branding Promotion – social media + Visitor Centre promotion of open for business Partner with the York Business Association with the Shop Local activity. 		Council & EMG	Ongoing	Current

No.	Goal or objective	Actions needed (list the steps needed)	Resources needed (List the resources needed)	Actioned by	Timeframe	Status
PROSPER – Long-term view focusing on coming out of the pandemic situation together.						
P1	Re-imagining the community					
P1.1	Celebrate big wins, small wins and everything in between.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avon park – official opening and celebrations Town Hall upgrades Celebrate business success 	At the point of writing this plan, the State of Emergency is current and the situation with COVID-19 unstable, therefore longer term responses will be determined as the situation evolves and assessment made as to the best response for the Renew and Prosper phases	Council & EMG	Ongoing	Current
P1.2	Grow stronger together by learning from our past and moving forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a generic BCP Diversity of our economy – Trails for community use and enjoyment Improve open operation of the Shire 		Council & EMG	Ongoing	Current
P1.3	Empower our community to be active, curious and united.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use International Association for Public Participation framework to develop community empowerment Provide the building blocks e.g. town hall speakers Evolve our communication to include all forms of platform. Be agile. 		Council & EMG	Ongoing	Current
P2	A new and revived economy					
P2.1	Look after the stability of our local economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity of our economy – Trails Local business first...procurement 	At the point of writing this plan, the State of Emergency is current and the situation with COVID-19 unstable, therefore longer term responses will be determined as the situation evolves and assessment made as to the best response for the Renew and Prosper phases	Council & EMG	Ongoing	Current
P2.2	Be open to different possibilities, opportunities, people and views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with ideas to support new business Someone has to be the first! 		Council & EMG	Ongoing	Current
P2.3	Become a hub for innovation, where new ideas can be pursued and explored.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore an area for innovation...sustainability and/or arts? 		Council & EMG	Ongoing	Current

Adapted from Local Recovery Toolkit: A resource guide for local communities recovering from an emergency, Office of Emergency Management, NSW Government