



Signe Westerberg for Liverpool

Monday 29th May, 2017

The Chief Executive Officer
Ms Kiersten Fishburn
Liverpool City Council
Locked Bag 7064
LIVERPOOL BC 1871

Delivered VIA EMAIL TO lcc@liverpool.nsw.gov.au

Reference: 2016/2702

Dear Kiersten,

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my concerns and show support for some aspects of this year's Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2017-2018. My congratulations to the staff for the many hours they have invested in presenting this to the community.

I have addressed these in an 'as read' fashion they are not in priority order, however there is a recurring theme to my concerns. Insufficient detail is provided on too many occasions and as I have suggested in previous years it would be practical to provide more detailed information to those who request it and to retain the limited information as is available now to those who are less likely to want the additional detail. A CD would suffice for those requesting the additional information thereby reducing the costs and paper wastage. The information is clearly available from staff and supplying to those who request on a disk might eliminate some of the questions and concerns raised. I also acknowledge Staffs offer to spend time with me to provide the additional information however time did not permit me availing myself of the offer.

I applaud the council for the few improvements in the Delivery Program.

Congratulations on providing past figures for comparison, this has been requested for many years and it is pleasing to see this has been provided, even if only the previous fiscal year.

Congratulations on the interactive map on the Liverpool Listens site, I think this is a good inclusion for the many residents (& some councillors) who aren't aware of the LGA and where things/roads are, what is being addressed and provides a visuals for some who may not be confident about the LGA and its layout.

The larger font, while I think it a bit of an overkill (11 or 12 size would be fine), I know others have asked for this in the past.

The delivery program mostly contains activities that are the day to day operations of all councils, and in many ways duplications of past years, however it would be helpful if new items were highlighted in another colour or font type to show additional actions. Highlighting innovations would be a positive and proactive step in my opinion. Much of what is shown is not new nor sufficiently detailed. Thereby if the summary of the information, i.e. SRV, Section 94 etc. were up front the request for a broader style spreadsheet could be produced across two

20 Eureka Crescent, Sadleir NSW 2168

P: 0412 920 057

E: swesterberg@iinet.net.au

pages with two blank columns on the fold line. This would allow for the requests I've made above and further in this submission and alleviate some/many of the duplications.

Below, I outline some particular concerns and in most instances, I have indicated the page to which I am referring.

I understand there are approximately 30 positions vacant in council and I applaud any measures being brought forward (although not indicated) that will provide additional staff, particularly if those staff are in the areas providing direct service to the community, ie parks maintenance, customer service etc.

I would also like to see the long awaited and promised community nursery and enviro centre reach fruition, also not clearly visible in this budget. This particular aspect of the original application for the Environment Levy has been examined, determined, postponed and tinkered with for way to long. The funds are available, the site investigations done, the NSW Govt approval provided, hence the approval and inclusion of the levy with the promise of this community facility and the only thing stopping it going forward is a change of heart in some of the staff tasked with its provision. So much so that conflicting reports by consultants are again being used to delay the process and imo sway the outcome. Sadly, this was in my opinion brought about by short sighted thinking of a previous CEO, one who had showed no insight into the idea of bringing the community together and merely that of the possibility of finances being redirected to other areas. It is important to note at this point not only is there a formal position within the original request and approval for the levy but a social license taken to the community to provide an interactive, positive and hands on facility that over time could provide a portion of the councils need for plants and the communities need for inclusion, involvement, experience and area prioritised plants.

To the budget at hand:

The overview is long and wordy however it does clarify some of the terms and information residents are not usually aware of, describing different aspects of the upcoming fee increases should be informative. Outlining the different fees is beneficial although I wonder how many people actually read it. Having outlined the specifics, it would have been nice to see the same level of detail included in the financial summary as I address it further in my comments.

Some of the fee increases are petty or excessive (e.g. an additional \$1 for a bounced cheque on top of institutional charges) and will in the end affect those who are in a poorer position to absorb them than those who simply write them off. P29 & again P102 & p103

It would be interesting to know if things like Bus hire are fully booked or if the costs are prohibitive and render the vehicles 'parked' instead of used.

A welcome addition to the charges and fees is Category D for the hire of larger venues, although for smaller facilities the modest increase is noted.

Will the Trainers of Fitness Groups using Passive Parks using the equipment council has installed be liable for the seasonal fee? Pg 64. Several individual trainers are using council facilities to earn an income and is this policed? While it is advantageous and desirable that people have the opportunity to get fit, for those earning an income it seems fair that they contribute to the upkeep of facilities.

I will be lobbying the present council to return to its ban on Exotic animal circuses in the LGA, however for the most part they don't use council facilities and use the catholic club premises etc. Ph68

20 Eureka Crescent, Sadleir NSW 2168

P: 0412 920 057

E: swesterberg@iinet.net.au

P80 - Section 94 is planned at \$33m with so much being developed presently why is this less than both the actual and proposed 2016/17?

Fees and charges:

It would be a sign of good service and community support if parking fees remained stable into the coming budget period, raising parking by 50c isn't much however when so much money has been spent on an entrance to Westfields (aka the Mall) and many people are staying away from Liverpool because of parking costs, is it really worth the 50c? A campaign showing the community that they are wanted in Liverpool would be far better received if it could be done without raising additional revenue, especially when that revenue is well above the CPI and the majority of our residents have not had pay increases in several years. The cost of policing those meters cannot really justify the increase and certainly the undermining of good will. The Public Relations boost from letting the community know there would be no increase in parking costs would be in my opinion welcomed and appreciated.

\$82.9M borrowing on top of present debt of \$33.1M. Plus, the infrastructure backlog means we are accruing extensive debt and no guarantee that rental of space will cover the cost of the expenditure. What written commitment do we have with the universities to ensure our outlay will be covered and recouped? Would it not be prudent to delay work on the Civic Centre, reign in some of our debt and utilise the millions in upgrades spent on No33? Sadly another 'glamour project' that will do very little to enhance business opportunity in Liverpool and create few actual jobs.

Operational:

Last year I raised sincere concerns that \$3 million expenditure in 'other' was excessive, residents are entitled to see where their dollars are being spent, this year the item 'other' is shown to be \$12,432,305.00...seriously this is NOT good enough, we are not all unable to understand a budget and the arrogance of such an enormous figure as 'other' is insulting and excessive. Using the data from page 78 may have added a few lines to the chart but it would have been clearer and more informative, allowing the residents an opportunity to see where the higher costs are being achieved and perhaps where they could be reigned in.

\$6,155,400 for disposal of what assets? If these have already been through the public exhibition process, they should be identified, if they are vehicular assets it should say so, if they are proposed items such as the Hilda M Davis centre it is arrogant that this be included when the approval from the community is not assured. Listing the unwanted would be a minimum requirement. I think the community and council have entirely different views in what is unwanted or excess to need.

Pg 80 what is included in other revenues, is this where costs of renting premises permanently to organisations and business is calculated, if so why is the actual in 2016 \$20,142,310 and the proposed for 17/18 only \$8.65M? If not what is it?

I was also unable to find detailed information in relation to Line Item Less: Grants and contributions for Capital purposes to the value of \$73,721,726 which is half of the 2016 amount. Why?

P81 Nett changes in reserves goes from \$4,780,817 (\$11,624,064) to \$28,447,856 why?

While I don't object to upgrades and improvements, every new CEO has capital expenditure, \$20,000 may not be as high as the TWO previous CEO's is this really on new desks and filing cabinets, electronics etc and are they truly necessary? Character/aesthetic improvements shouldn't be so expensive and if they are structural or

20 Eureka Crescent, Sadleir NSW 2168

P: 0412 920 057

E: swesterberg@iinet.net.au

operational they should be listed as such. No one would consider upgrading essential equipment as excess however a bundle of money without description is disappointing.

Again Pg 82 'Other' expenses \$3.856M on economy and growth, \$2.5m on community and culture, \$2.7m on city corporate, \$2.3m on city presentation and almost a \$M on CEO, clearly a investigation shows what makes up these figures and indicating them as 'other' is not acceptable when as mentioned above adding a few line items to a spreadsheet would remove the need to add additional pages of information that is difficult to manoeuvre.

On the list on Pg 86 and 87, (repeated on P98) it would be advantageous to see what of the costs would be in the form of grants etc., Croatia avenue for instance, my understanding is the \$9.5M or \$19.5M part of a funding program with the RMS (even if only partially) All the Edmondson Park improvements could indicate whether Section 94 or from General revenue on one chart rather than duplicating them over numerous pages. Another example would be the Cycleways, Casula, I believe they are a joint project at least in funding, indicating which and how much should not be that difficult and would certainly show the community the successes in grant funding, the use of Section 94 and that of rate payers dollars. (similar set up to that on pages 90 & 91) Although it 'appears' that no local road works would have been achieved if not for the SRV or that all funds that would normally have been spent on roads is being redirected elsewhere and the SRV removing the need for additional road works. Clarification would be appreciated

Pg92 \$630,000 being spent on Lurnea Hub design, is this the cost of consultants or does this include in house staff time (which I would have thought was in staff costs)? Having participated in the community engagement and being aware that assets are being proposed for sale in Phillips Park what is the money being spent on? What is the proposed return from the sale and how will these moneys be used to support the upgrades?

Why is the Vacant possession of DoCS costing us a Million dollars?

The sale of 31 Shepherd St, is costing \$110,000 do we not factor in the costs into the sale price? This and the promised \$550,000 to the Men's shed group for relocation makes this an expensive sale. Does this form part of the "disposal of assets from previous pages?

The \$20,000 for Equipment replacement in council chambers, is that for Council use or University and if so why aren't the Universities covering some of the upgrades. Who has paid for all the changes in the chambers to date to enable those facilities to be used by the universities? Or is this all part of the 'encouragement' to have the universities in Liverpool and if so are the residents aware they are paying to have the universities in Liverpool? (this is not a lack of support of the universities, just an enquiry as to the real costs)

Pg 95 indicators like Bush regeneration, if this is from the Levy, it should be shown as such, allowing the residents to see where their money is being used is a positive thing and surely not such an arduous task considering the staff would be well aware of the financial source.

The \$400,000 works on the Shed in Bigge park, are we recouping this with licence/rent fees to the organisation who runs it and is making the profit, is it a shared expense or a gift? By detailing the source of funds not only the cost, the community could see where their money is being spent and how wisely the expenditure is or is not.

Pg 100 Sale of McLean street has now been in a couple of budgets, I know most of the community don't read the detail but seriously this has been on the books for quite a while now, have we not actually sold it, is there more of it to be sold and will it show up again next year?

20 Eureka Crescent, Sadleir NSW 2168

P: 0412 920 057

E: swesterberg@iinet.net.au

Again, if an extra column were included to show how much of this expenditure is being paid for through Section 94 and what was general funds it would be clearer to the community that council were managing our rates effectively. Having them over several pages makes it less clear and could be easily remedied by adding a column here and there.

Pages 96 and on appear to be a duplication of pages 86- 87 can someone explain why there is a need to duplicate this or is it to appear that more is being done?

All in all, the information provided is detailed, it is on too many occasions repeated where it could have been set out better indicating more detail on the chart rather than used in additional tables over several pages. Some things could be clearer however overall the document presents what appears to be a reasonably detailed budget. I confess my understanding and appreciation for the investment portion is limited and it appears at least to conform to regulatory requirements and isn't losing money.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment and ask questions. I do think there are ways to streamline the presentation and to enhance the information being provided. I am however pleased that on the whole detail has been included and as mentioned in opening past figures supplied.

Sincerely,



Signe Westerberg
Resident.

20 Eureka Crescent, Sadleir NSW 2168

P: 0412 920 057

E: swesterberg@iinet.net.au