

Active Facilities Policy and Procedures – Outdoor Sports and Recreation

The draft Active Facilities Policy and Procedures contain a number of proposed changes that may affect sporting clubs, schools, community groups, casual users and commercial operators. This summary highlights the key changes and explains why they are being proposed. It should be read alongside the draft Policy and Procedures.

What is proposed to change and why?

Proposed Change	Current (Sporting Facilities Guide 2019)	Description of Proposed Change
Introduce separate Active Facilities Policy and Active Facilities Procedures documents	Single Sporting Facilities Guide containing governance positions, operational procedures, fees, responsibilities and forms, endorsed by Council.	The current Guide will be split into a Policy and Procedures document. This aims to make the documents easier to understand and use, while allowing operational processes to be updated more efficiently when required.
Introduce a Club Partnership Framework	No Club Partnership Framework existed.	Council is proposing a framework that recognises clubs for good governance, inclusion, compliance, participation growth, community contribution and care of facilities. Partnership outcomes may be considered when assessing allocations where demand exceeds supply and when calculating affiliation fees. The framework aims to encourage positive club behaviours and recognise clubs that make a strong contribution to the community.
Introduce a formal hierarchy of user group priorities for facility allocation decisions.	Allocation priorities largely managed through operational practice and officer judgement.	Council is proposing a formal priority hierarchy and clearer decision-making framework to guide allocation decisions when multiple groups want access to the same facility. The aim is to improve transparency and consistency when demand exceeds available capacity.

Introduce a weighted allocation assessment framework to resolve competing allocation requests.	Facility clashes assessed through officer consideration of multiple factors without a documented weighting system.	Council is proposing a weighted assessment process that considers factors such as Club Partnership Levels, participation, community benefit, inclusion and demonstrated need when competing requests are received. The aim is to improve consistency and transparency in allocation decisions.
Clarify how participation growth is considered	Not explicitly stated.	The draft Policy clarifies that participation growth is one factor considered in planning and allocation decisions, but does not automatically result in additional access, facility upgrades or investment. This reflects increasing demand for facilities across the municipality.
Simplify sports field and pavilion classifications into a streamlined A-B-C classification framework.	Five sports field categories (AA-D) and four pavilion categories (AA-C) existed.	Sports fields and pavilions will move to a simpler classification system. The new approach aims to make facility standards easier to understand and create a more consistent framework for maintenance standards, user contributions and facility planning.
Introduce a new user contributions fee framework.	Seasonal tenant fees were largely based on flat seasonal charges linked to facility type. Casual and commercial users were generally charged daily rates, regardless of the duration of use.	Council is proposing a new user contribution framework that more closely reflects how facilities are used. This includes a move towards fees based on the actual duration of facility use, as well as consideration of facility standards and, for seasonal clubs, Club Partnership outcomes. The aim is to create a fairer and more transparent approach to user contributions across sporting clubs, schools, casual users and commercial operators.
Introduce a dedicated affiliation fee linked to Club Partnership Levels.	No equivalent fee component existed.	Part of a club's contribution would come through a dedicated affiliation fee linked to their Club Partnership Level. This aims to

		recognise and encourage good governance, inclusion, compliance and broader community outcomes.
Introduce subsidised fees for pre-season sports field use.	Pre-season use was provided free of charge.	Clubs would contribute towards the cost of maintaining sports fields during the pre-season period. The aim is to help manage the impact of increased year-round use and support long-term facility sustainability.
Manage pre-season access through defined access periods	Broad pre-season access available subject to operational considerations. No defined time periods.	Council is proposing staggered access periods and managed availability during pre-season (four months of senior preseason, three months of junior preseason). This aims to protect sports field quality and ensure facilities are ready for competition seasons.
Introduce fees for Whitehorse school use of sports fields.	Whitehorse schools generally received access free of charge. Non-Whitehorse schools paid community rates.	Schools would contribute towards the cost of maintaining and renewing community sporting infrastructure. The aim is to improve consistency across user groups who benefit from community facilities.
Introduce fees for finals that charge admission, entry donations or gate takings.	Finals use of sports fields was generally provided free of charge, regardless of whether admission fees, entry donations or gate takings were collected by the event host.	A facility fee would apply where admission charges, gate takings or entry donations are collected. The aim is to ensure revenue-generating events contribute towards the cost of providing and preparing facilities.
Introduce a dedicated synthetic sports field pricing category.	No dedicated synthetic field pricing existed.	Synthetic sports fields have significantly higher construction, maintenance and replacement costs than natural turf. A dedicated fee category is proposed to better reflect these costs.

Increase and formalise the Pavilion Maintenance and Utilities Levy applied to casual pavilion bookings (which is reimbursed to tenant clubs for utilities etc).	A lower levy existed and was managed operationally (2026/2027 - \$4.10 per hour reimbursement amount applied).	The levy would be updated to \$7.00 per hour (reimbursed back to tenant clubs) to better reflect the costs of utilities, consumables and building use associated with casual bookings.
Transfer responsibility for renewing kitchen fixtures to seasonal clubs	Council generally renewed kitchen fixtures when they reached the end of their life to a domestic standard.	Seasonal tenant clubs would become responsible for replacing kitchen fixtures and appliances. These facilities are primarily used to support club operations, events and fundraising activities. Depreciation of assets due to occasional shared community use is supported through the increased reimbursement to tenant clubs.
Introduce Council-funded sanitary bin servicing in A classified shared sporting pavilions.	Clubs responsible for providing and funding sanitary bin services.	Council would fund sanitary bin servicing in A-class shared sporting pavilions. This supports equitable access and aims to improve the experience of women and girls using sporting facilities.
Formalise Child Safety requirements as a condition of seasonal facility access.	No dedicated Child Safety framework within the Sporting Facilities Guide.	Child Safety requirements would become a formal condition of access to Council facilities as is the current operational position. This supports compliance with Child Safe Standards and helps create safer environments for children and young people.
Introduce a structured Club Sanctions Framework	Simplified Ask / Tell / Enforce escalation approach.	Council is proposing a clearer sanctions framework outlining how non-compliance may be managed. The aim is to provide greater transparency, consistency and understanding of expectations and consequences.