



City of
Greater Geraldton
a vibrant future



Long Term Financial Plan 2026-2036



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The City of Greater Geraldton Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) 2026-2036 is a high-level informing strategy that outlines the City’s approach to delivering infrastructure and services to the community in a financially sustainable and affordable manner.

It also demonstrates the City’s commitment to managing its operations in a way that avoids unsustainable rate increases for ratepayers. The Plan is aligned to other core planning documents by which the City is accountable to the community including the Strategic Community Plan (SCP) and the Corporate Business Plan (CBP).

The LTFP is a dynamic tool which analyses financial trends over a 10-year period on a range of assumptions and provides the City with information to assess resourcing requirements to achieve its strategic objectives and to allow the City to ensure its future financial sustainability.

The LTFP covers the period 2026-27 to 2035-36. The City undertakes a broad review of its Strategic Community Plan every two years and a full review every four years. This LTFP will be reviewed every year in

conjunction with Corporate Business Plan reviews. As Annual Budgets are developed from the LTFP, there may be some annual variations between both, which will be explained in the Annual Budget process.

Across successive iterations of the LTFP, the quality and maturity of the underlying data have improved significantly. This includes stronger alignment between the Plan and its key variable assumptions, Corporate Business Plan actions, more detailed recognition of cyclical requirements in individual years—such as Council elections, asset revaluations and GRV valuations—and better capture of major existing and planned projects, including their impacts on depreciation and finance costs. The revised LTFP also gives greater weight to valuation-related changes in non-current assets, particularly road assets to factor in the strong likelihood of higher cost movements to unit rates.

Ross McKim, CEO City of Greater Geraldton



Our Integrated Planning Framework

In 2025 the City engaged the community in development of a new Strategic Community Plan 2025-2035 adopting the vision of Growing Greater Geraldton Together.

In conjunction with this, a new four year Corporate Business Plan has been developed to identify the actions the City will take to deliver on the Community's vision, goals and priorities.

This Long Term Financial Plan outlines the resourcing requirements and financial capacity of the City to achieve these goals and priorities.

The following diagram shows how the components of the Integrated Planning Framework work together to inform and provide resources for achieving the goals of the Strategic Community Plan.



Key statistics

The following shows key statistics for the City of Greater Geraldton.

Replan data as at May 2026

TOTAL AREA

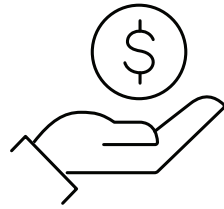
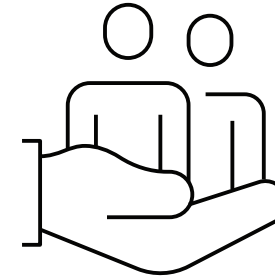
City of Greater Geraldton

9,908km²



RESIDENT POPULATION

42,882



GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT

Greater Geraldton

\$4.4B

Midwest

\$9B

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES

City of Greater Geraldton 3,235



TOP THREE INDUSTRY SECTORS

BY EXPORTS

Mining \$1,242M

Manufacturing \$307M

Agriculture, Forrestry & Fishing \$303M

BY OUTPUT

Mining \$1,439M

Construction \$1,183M

Manufacturing \$694M

BY EMPLOYMENT

Healthcare & Social Assistance 3,126

Retail Trade 2,069

Education & Training 2,054



Greater Geraldton is one of Australia's regional capitals and encompasses the communities of Geraldton, Greenough, Mullewa and Walkaway with an enviable mix of coastal and rural lifestyles. The area offers beautiful places to live, work, study and play with opportunities backed by strong industry sectors that continue to grow.

The City and Midwest region are recognised as having one of the State's most diverse economies, supported by mining, fishing, aquaculture, agriculture, manufacturing, construction, retail, tourism and global exports through Geraldton Port. The region is well positioned to attract projects that build on these strengths and support new and innovative enterprises.

Within easy driving distance of Perth, Geraldton offers the major services expected of a city, including cultural, retail and sporting facilities, while maintaining a relaxed regional lifestyle.

Geraldton Airport is part of the Inter Regional Flight Network, connecting Geraldton with Karratha, Port Hedland and Broome, and providing daily flights to Perth through Nexus and Qantas Airlines.

The Airport has also undergone a green transformation through the installation of a renewable energy microgrid, reducing the City's carbon footprint and improving operational resilience by enabling the Airport to operate independently from the main power grid during emergencies.

The Midwest's renewable energy sector continues to gain momentum, with land allocated in the Oakajee Strategic Industrial Area to support commercial-scale green hydrogen and ammonia production. This reinforces the region's role in the global clean energy transition.

Education is supported at all levels through public and private schools and tertiary institutions, including Central Regional TAFE, the Batavia Coast Maritime Institute, Geraldton Universities Centre and the Western Australian Centre for Rural Health.

The region also offers high-quality cultural and recreational facilities, including the Museum of Geraldton, Geraldton Regional Art Gallery, Geraldton Regional Library, Queens Park Theatre, QEII Seniors and Community Centre, Geraldton Aquarena, and a wide range of community arts and cultural groups.

Recent and continued investment has transformed Greater Geraldton's foreshore through projects such as the Beresford Foreshore Enhancement Project, Eastern Breakwater and Geraldton Multi-Purpose Centre, creating places for people to connect and enjoy the City's coastal setting.

Geraldton is increasingly recognised as a coastal lifestyle destination, supported by a growing food and beverage scene that includes waterfront cafés, seafood restaurants and boutique bars appealing to both residents and visitors.



The City provides an extensive range of services to the community including:

Community & Culture

Community & Cultural Development
Libraries, Heritage & Gallery
Mullewa District Office
Sport and Leisure

Corporate Services

Communications & Vibrancy
Corporate Compliance
ERP
Finance
Geraldton Airport
ICT Services & Cybersecurity
People, Safety & Wellbeing

Development Services

City Growth
Customer & Business Engagement
Property Services
Regulatory Services

Infrastructure Services

Climate, Environment & Waste
Fleet Services
Maintenance Operations
Project Delivery & Engineering





In recent years, the City of Greater Geraldton's financial position meant that many community needs and aspirations were unlikely to be delivered within the short term, without significant increases in rates or reduction in expenses.

The City has long recognised that the most effective responses to these challenges are developed collaboratively by Council, the community and staff, guided by the principles of engagement and deliberative democracy. This approach has given staff clearer direction in service delivery and provided the community with greater certainty about the services Council will deliver in coming years.

In November 2024, the City commenced the Your Voice Our Future project to engage the community in developing the Strategic Community Plan 2025–2035. A draft SCP was prepared and community feedback sought before it was presented to Council for endorsement at the June 2025 meeting. Alongside the SCP, the City developed the Corporate Business Plan 2025–2029, which outlines the actions required to deliver the community's vision for the future. This LTFP reflects the goals and aspirations identified in the SCP.



The City has developed a strategic approach to asset management and developed a strategic asset management plan based on the total life cycle of assets.

Individual Asset Management Plans are being reviewed and updated to assist Council in better predicting infrastructure consumption and asset renewal needs and identify at a more mature level the cost required to renew or preserve the assets (renewal gap). This renewal gap is being addressed in the LTFP and will continue to be the focus of future annual budgets.

The continued allocation of funding towards the renewal of assets and funding for maintenance and upgrades will result in a positive investment for the community into the future. Asset acquisitions and capital works projects are funded from general revenue, sales of existing land/property assets, government grants or external borrowings.



Rate increases

As a result of community needs and population growth, it is predicted that future budgets will be impacted by an increasing demand for services, increased expenditure to renew existing assets and new infrastructure.

Post-Covid local governments continue to experience pressure from global price shocks, supply-chain disruptions, elevated inflation and wage growth, all of which contribute to ongoing cost escalation. Over an extended period, Council has faced significant increases in goods and services costs across its operations, and financial planning assumes these pressures will continue for the majority of the 2026-27 financial year.

Council's long term financial planning, informed by RBA projections,

assumes lower fuel prices will place downward pressure on inflation, with headline inflation expected to fall to around 2.25% by mid-to-late 2027.

Over the last five years, annual rates revenue movements have been between 0% and 5% with the average movement over the last fourteen years being 3.11%.

Despite ongoing cost pressures, the City has applied rate increases with restraint. Over the life of the plan, proposed rate increases range from 3% to 3.5%, plus 0.5% growth. Achieving this outcome depends on annual cost increases being contained to 2.5% to 3.5% for employment expenses, 2.5% for materials and contracts, 5% for insurance and 3.5% for utilities.

The following graphs provide useful representation of cost pressures and projections when compared to previous LTFP iterations:

—●— 2017/18 LTFP —●— 2026/27 LTFP

Rate comparison

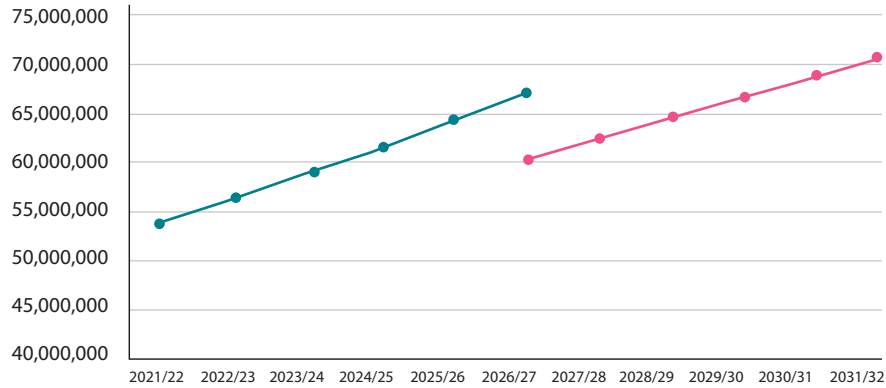


Figure 1 – Comparative between 2017-27 LTFP rate revenue projections and 2026-36 LTFP, showing significantly lower rate revenue.

Employee costs

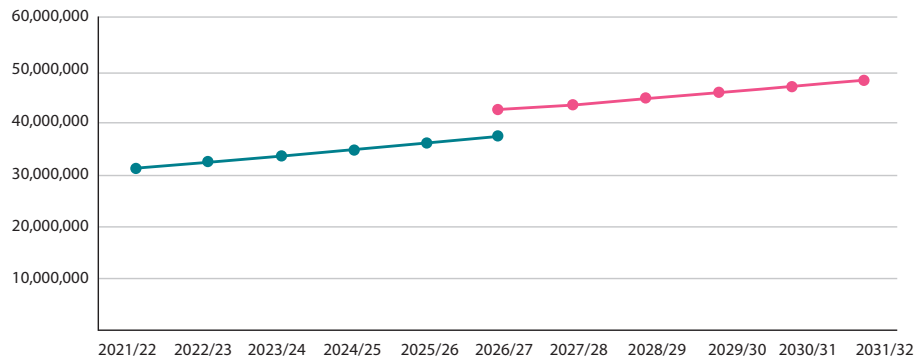


Figure 2 – Employee Costs. Impacts of inflationary pressures and Industrial Relations Commission decision on employee costs.

Material and contracts

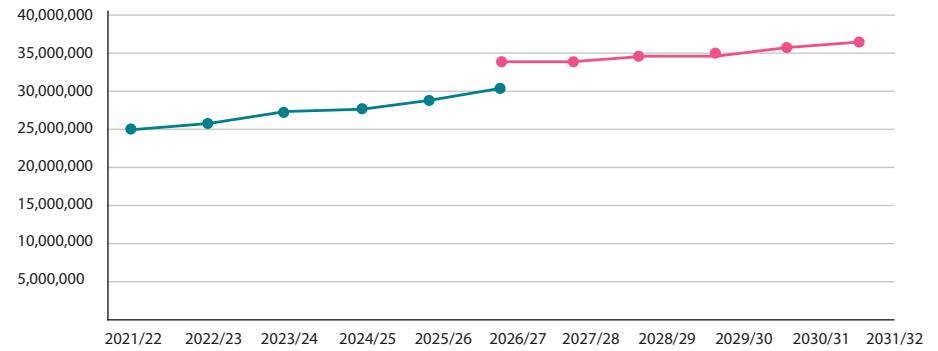


Figure 3 – Materials and Contracts. Demonstrates careful management has resulted in minimal increases despite recent significant service contract increases.

Utilities

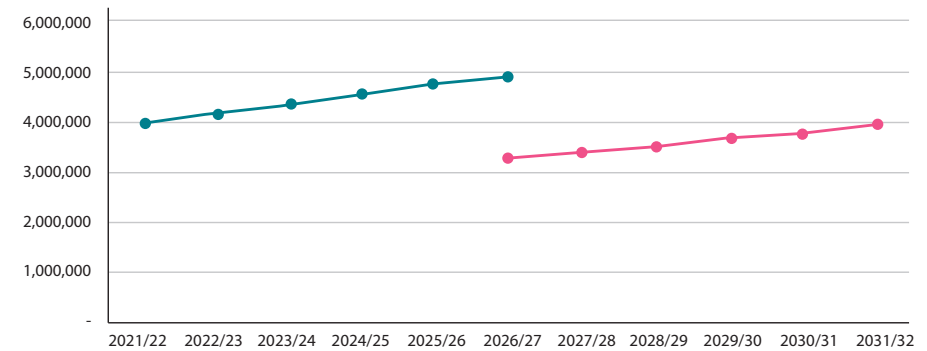


Figure 4 – Utilities. Illustrates the positive results of investments by the City in solar systems and measures to reduce water usage.



During budget deliberations, Council reviewed several rating models against forecast expenditure, revenue requirements and the net operating position. Council adopted the following proposed rates model for 2026–27 as part of its response and recovery strategy to return the City’s budget to a small operating surplus:

- New Landgate valuations for UV properties effective 1 July 2026.
- Increasing GRV revenue by 4.5%
- Increasing UV revenue by 10%
- 0.5% growth across GRV properties (\$300k for interim rates)
- Increasing the minimum payments from \$1,300 to \$1,360

The table below summarises the amount to be levied by rating categories in 2026-27.

Rating Category	Proposed Rates Billing to be levied 2026-27	Number of Rateable Properties
CGG GRV - Residential	\$40,980,959	17,954
CGG GRV - Non-Residential	\$14,253,945	1,506
CGG UV	\$4,471,354	1,100
Total	\$59,706,258	20,560

Due to rate exemptions applied in 2025-26 for Murchison Region Aboriginal Corporation (MRAC) and a backlog of interim revaluations still to be processed by Landgate, the City experienced negative rate growth in 2025-26. Rate growth for 2026-27 is forecast at \$300,000, or 0.5%.

Budget surpluses

The revised Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) shows the City moving from an operating deficit in 2025–26 to a small surplus in 2026–27, with that surplus position forecast to continue over the remainder of the plan period.

Cost recovery of services

Discretionary fees and charges revenue is based upon a unit rate increase of 5% per every triennial period and 1% increase in-between. An activity growth factor of 0.5% is also applied per annum.

Where appropriate, changes will be made on a per annum basis due to the following:

- Service no longer provided so no fee or charge applicable;
- New service being provided;
- Cost of service has changed and
- Change to service delivery requiring an alteration to the fee or charge structure.

The City does not currently recover the full cost of providing all of its services as a number of these services are sub vented as they are community and socially based.

Within function areas relating to building licences, planning and development approvals and health approvals the City is limited by statutory regulations and capping on fees and/or charges applied, preventing full cost recovery of these services.

Prudent use of debt finance

This LTFP proposes new borrowings to deliver capital projects. The purpose and timing associated with the use of loan finance is aligned to the following principles:

- To support major capital projects which will have significant community and/or economic benefits.
- Development of revenue producing infrastructure.
- Maintain or improve delivery service levels in consideration of growth and the requirements of being a regional centre.
- Intergenerational equity in relation to services and infrastructure provided by the City.

The impact of these borrowings is:

- Interest expense will increase from \$613k in 2026-27 to \$1.5m in 2035-36.
- Annual Principal payments will peak at \$3.16m with an average over the life of the plan of \$2.4m pa.
- Overall Debt Liability will range from \$18.6m to \$30.1m during the life of the plan and is proposed to peak at \$42.7m.

Cash reserves

The establishment of reserves, like other savings plans, are mechanisms for accumulating cash for future capital outlays, meeting liability provisions and other allowable purposes. Part of any overall savings achieved in any financial year are channelled into reserves for the above-mentioned purposes. The 2026-36 LTFP strategy is to use reserve funds for key capital projects while maintaining reserve levels between \$20m and \$30m. This supports funding for proposed major capital initiatives and provides capacity to respond to unforeseen capital needs or leverage opportunities as they arise.

The practice of planning and systematically saving for capital acquisitions and other contingencies is considered prudent management. Saving for future capital needs can reduce interest and other costs associated with debt issuances. Similarly, certain reserve

funds can be utilised to help protect the budget against known or new emergent risks. An important concept to remember is that a reserve fund should be established with a clear intent or plan in mind regarding the future purpose, use and, when appropriate, replenishment of funds from the reserve. The establishment of reserves is not a “parking lot” for excess cash but established with a clear purpose and plan in respect to the application of unspent funds and/or unbudgeted revenue and are used within the LTFP as a mechanism to regulate the cyclical nature of capital expenditure requirements.

Land Development

Currently, the City has a property disposal portfolio estimated to be around \$15m. This LTFP incorporates a planned program of land disposals to increase cash reserves for future and proposed major projects.

In addition to the planned disposal program, the City will continue to pursue property sales over the life of the plan, with timing dependent on market conditions. Any proceeds will be used to build or replenish cash reserves, increase capital renewal or replacement expenditure, or fund new and high-priority emergent capital projects and major initiatives.

Where opportunities arise for the City to acquire land parcels for strategic purposes and in future proofing services, this can be accommodated without raising new capital via funds appropriated from land sales and restricted for such purposes.

In addition to the disposal of property and how this is treated per the above, the LTFP has been updated to reflect initiatives to develop housing stocks (Olive St Precinct) as a source of recurrent revenue derived from a rent and then sell model.



The new Workforce Plan 2026-2030 will propose a range of initiatives to attract, develop and retain employees. It will also propose building the City's leadership capability, focusing on succession planning and ensuring a commitment to workforce dynamics, including flexibility and diversity so that the City has the necessary skills to deliver the required level of service now and into the future.

Key Assumptions Underpinning the Long Term Financial Plan

The following overarching assumptions and strategies underpin the development of this LTFP:

- Rate increases contained at 3% to 3.5% per annum over the life of the plan.
- 0.5% per annum growth in the annual rate base.
- The City moving from an operating deficit in 2025–26 to a small surplus in 2026–27, with that surplus position forecast to continue over the remainder of the plan period.
- Maintaining a sustainable liquidity position for the life of the plan (measured by Current Ratio).
- Renewing assets when required to maintain capacity of performance and associated levels of services.
- Utilisation of debt to deliver key capital investments whilst maintaining debt service levels within benchmark levels.
- Reserves to be either established or retained where there is a legal or statutory requirement to do so and are mechanisms for accumulating cash for future capital outlays, managing cyclical expenditure and meeting liability provisions.
- Interest rates for investment funds will be around 3.0% to 5.0% over the life of the plan with the dollar return adjusted according to the annual cash available for short-term investment.
- Interest rates for new borrowing will be approximately 5% over the life of the plan and within this range, consideration given to the loan term.
- Continue the focus on renewal of the City's current assets.
- Achievement of all financial and sustainability ratios. Continue to achieve a financial health indicator above benchmark score.

Income and expenditure are based on the following assumptions as per table below:

City of Greater Geraldton Long Term Financial Plan 2026-2036									
Variable Assumptions Underpinning the Plan									
	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031	2031/2032	2032/2033	2033/2034	2034/2035	2035/2036
	\$000s	\$000s	\$000s	\$000s	\$000s	\$000s	\$000s	\$000s	\$000s
Operating Revenues									
Rates	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%
Fees & Charges	1.0%	1.0%	5.0%	1.0%	1.0%	5.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%
Operating Grants	3.5%	3.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Interest Earnings (Investment) based on a cash rate between 3.0% and 5.0% during the life of the plan.									
Rates - Growth in Rate Base	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Operating Expenses									
Employee Costs	3.5%	3.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Materials & Contracts	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Insurance	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Utility Charges	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%
Interest Borrowing Costs (Loans) based on assumed interest rate of 4% - 5.25% according to the term and year loan is taken.									

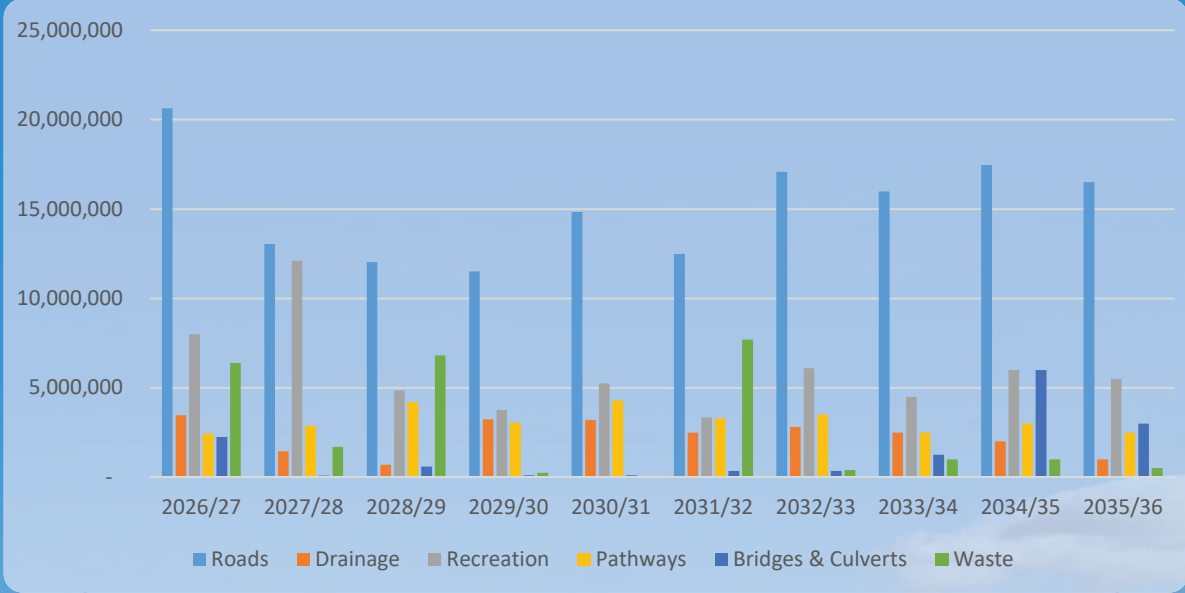
The City's 10 year Capital Plan

- Incorporates the City's Project Management Framework delivery strategy in relation to initiation, planning and design phases. This enables the City to establish a bank of projects that have progressed to the detailed design phase and are "shelf ready" to go when opportunity presents in relation to available funding both internally and externally.
- In years two to 10, the nature and type of capital expenditure are only indicative figures; however, the Capital Plan underpins the level of expenditure in relation to both resource capabilities and asset renewal demand profiles per asset category.
- In years two to 10, the amount of funding sourced from Non-Operating (Capital) grants and contributions are in the main based on confirmed funding agreements and/or known sources of recurrent funding. There are capital projects that have been included and are represented by unsecured funding. The actual delivery of such projects will be dependent on such funding being secured. The LTFP assumes that the current level of funding will continue to be available for the life of the plan in relation to road related grants such as Roads to Recovery and Main Roads.
- During the life of the LTFP, the City's debt level is such that it provides the ability and capacity to undertake major capital initiatives, manage unexpected peaks in capital expenditure that may result from emergent works or other capital funding opportunities.

The following table profiles planned capital infrastructure expenditure over the next ten years:



Capital Expenditure



The LTFP is assessed against these KPIs and will be compared with KPIs measured from the Annual Budgets and Annual Financial Statements to provide clear targets for the City to report its progress to the community each year.

The KPIs, target rates and results measured from the LTFP are tabled below:

Current ratio

This is a measure of a local government's liquidity and its ability to meet its short-term financial obligation out of unrestricted current assets. It is measured as:										
CURRENT ASSETS LESS RESTRICTED ASSETS										
Current Liabilities less Current Liabilities associated with Restricted Assets										
Target - greater than or equal to 1:1										
	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Forecast	0.88	1.06	0.84	0.97	1.15	1.24	1.24	1.41	1.37	1.43

The target of greater than or equal to 1:1. Improving the City's liquidity position has been a keen focus of Council over several years.

Operating surplus ratio

This is an indicator of the extent to which revenues raised cover operational expenses only or are available for capital funding purposes. This is measured as:										
NET OPERATING SURPLUS/DEFICIT										
Own Source Revenue										
Target - between 0% and 15%										
	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Forecast	0.27%	1.94%	0.21%	1.77%	0.54%	0.43%	0.60%	0.59%	0.19%	1.52%

As per the base principles and assumptions adopted in previous and now in this LTFP, the City has undertaken a fiscally responsible approach to return to a surplus position within a manageable timeframe.

Rates coverage ratio

This is an indicator of a local government's ability to cover its costs through its own tax revenue efforts. This is measured as:										
TOTAL RATES REVENUE										
Total Expenses										
Target – greater than or equal to 40%										
	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Forecast	54.44%	55.52%	55.10%	55.82%	55.64%	55.96%	55.82%	56.25%	56.42%	56.86%

The LTFP trend is for this ratio to remain fairly constant throughout the life of the plan. This indicates that the City's rating strategy as outlined, allows the City to raise an acceptable level of funds through its rating efforts (no rate shocks) to financially sustain annual operational costs.

Debt service cover ratio

This is an indicator of a local government's ability to produce enough cash to cover its debt payments. This is measured as:										
OPERATING REVENUE LESS OPERATING EXPENSES EXCEPT INTEREST EXPENSE AND DEPRECIATION										
Principal and Interest Expense										
Target – greater than or equal to 2 (advance standard greater than 5)										
	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Forecast	7.67	8.04	8.14	9.50	6.39	9.17	9.54	9.90	10.00	10.79

This ratio currently indicates that during the life of the LTFP the City's debt level is such that it provides the ability and capacity to manage unexpected peaks in capital expenditure that may result from emergent works or react to capital funding opportunities.

Own source revenue coverage ratio

This is an indicator of a local government's ability to cover its costs through its own taxing and revenue efforts.										
OWN SOURCE OPERATING REVENUE										
Operating Expense										
Intermediate Target – between 60% and 90%										
	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Forecast	88.42%	89.50%	88.05%	89.34%	88.38%	88.20%	88.51%	88.54%	88.20%	89.32%

The City achieves the higher end of the target band for the life of the LTFP. This indicates the City is not overly dependent on external recurrent funding for operational activities. However, any significant reduction to external funding would still require a review of existing range and level of services.





The City continues its recovery from the unprecedented economic conditions caused by the COVID-19 crisis, volatile and changing political conditions and their impact on inflationary movements in recent years.

This LTFP assumes that inflationary pressures on wages, goods and services will ease over the life of the plan. The risk of not achieving annual operating surpluses will increase if these pressures persist or take longer than expected to moderate.

Annual rate base growth has been set at 0.5% for the life of the LTFP, reflecting an expected increase in activity following zero growth in 2025-26.

The City's extensive road renewal program relies significantly on recurrent external funding from Roads to Recovery and Main Roads. If this funding is reduced or unavailable, the timing and scope of related works will need to be reassessed. This LTFP assumes external road funding will remain consistent over the life of the plan.

The financial projections in this LTFP are developed in a format that conforms to the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996 and Australian Accounting Standards.

This format has been chosen as it allows projections to feed into the statutory format of the Annual Budget and key performance measures in the LTFP to be compared with Annual Budgets and Annual Financial Reports. The statements include:

- Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) and Equity Statement
- Statement of Comprehensive Income
- Statement of Cash Flows
- Statement of Financial Activity

The Statement of Comprehensive Income shows what is expected to happen during the year in terms of revenue, expenses and other adjustments from all activities. The LTFP continues the cycle of budgeting moving to an annual surplus position that will improve financial sustainability.

The Statement of Financial Position is a snapshot of the expected financial position of the City at the end of the financial year. It reports what is expected to be owned (assets) and what is expected to be owed (liabilities). The bottom line “Net Assets” represents the net worth of the Council. The assets and liabilities are separated into current and non-current. Current means those assets or liabilities, which will fall due in the next 12 months. Non-current refers to assets and liabilities that are either recoverable or which fall due over a longer period than 12 months.

The Statement of Cash Flows shows what is expected to happen during the year in terms of cash. The net cash provided by operating activities shows how much cash is expected to remain after paying for the services provided to the community. This can be used to fund other activities such as capital works and infrastructure. The information in this statement assists in the assessment of the ability to generate cash flows and meet financial commitments as they fall due, including debt repayments. Reflective of the current ratio, the City maintains the ability to meet all operating and capital commitments during the term of the LTFP.

In the LTFP, rates assessed and determined are within the accepted range of 90 to 110% and reflect cyclical movements in cash flow from year to year.

The statements are supported by schedules of:

- Loan borrowings and repayments
- Capital works
- Cash reserves
- Depreciation calculations
- Assumptions used in the LTFP
- Schedule of KPIs

Implementation and review of the LTFP

Council considered the LTFP when preparing the 2026-27 Annual Budget and will continue to use it to inform future budgets, with the expectation that adopted budgets will closely align with its proposals, principles and assumptions.

The LTFP will be reviewed annually as budgets are developed, taking into account performance information and changing circumstances.

The City is confident the LTFP will support priority setting within available resources, help manage inflationary pressures and enable the sustainable delivery of community assets and services in a fiscally responsible manner.







City of
Greater Geraldton
a vibrant future



For further information

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www.cgg.wa.gov.au

