



CUMBERLAND
CITY COUNCIL

State of our City Report

2021-2024

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Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

Cumberland Council acknowledges the Darug Nation and People as Traditional Custodians of the land on which the Cumberland Local Government Area (LGA) is situated and pays respect to Aboriginal Elders past, present and future.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Peoples of Australia.

Cumberland Council also acknowledges other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples living in the Cumberland Local Government Area and reaffirms that we will work closely with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to advance reconciliation within the area.



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Tabla Drums at Nowruz Festival

Welcome

Welcome to Cumberland's State of our City Report 2021-2024.

This report provides an overview to the Cumberland Community of how effective Council has been in delivering against the objectives set out in the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2017-2027 over the December 2021 - September 2024 Council term.

Conveyed in this document is a summary of what has been delivered, challenges experienced and the current status.



Our Elected Representatives

Cumberland City Council was served by 15 elected representatives across five Wards during the Term of Council. Councillors have the responsibility of representing their community to identify priorities, services and standards.

Councillor Lisa Lake served as Mayor for the full Council term.

Please note, the following Councillors served as Deputy Mayor during the Council term:

Councillor Kun Huang - 12 January 2022 to 28 September 2022

Councillor Suman Saha - 28 September 2022 to 27 September 2023

Councillor Ola Hamed - 27 September 2023 to 13 September 2024.

Granville Ward



**Councillor
Steve Christou**



**Councillor
Ola Hamed**



**Councillor
Joseph Rahme**

Greystanes Ward



**Councillor
Dr Diane Colman**



**Councillor
Greg Cummings**



**Councillor
Eddy Sarkis**

Regents Park Ward



**Councillor
Kun Huang**



**Councillor
Sabrin Farooqui**



**Councillor
Helen Hughes**

South Granville Ward



**Councillor
Glenn Elmore**



**Councillor
Paul Garrard**



**Councillor
Mohamad Hussein**

Wentworthville Ward



**Councillor
Suman Saha**



**Councillor
Lisa Lake**



**Councillor
Michael Zaiter**



The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework

Under the *NSW Local Government Act 1993*, councils are mandated to adopt a robust approach to planning and decision-making through the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework. The IP&R framework is central to all council plans, guiding how councils provide leadership, plan for the future and make decisions about services and resources. The framework emphasises that IP&R should be at the core of all council plans, activities, resourcing decisions and improvement strategies.

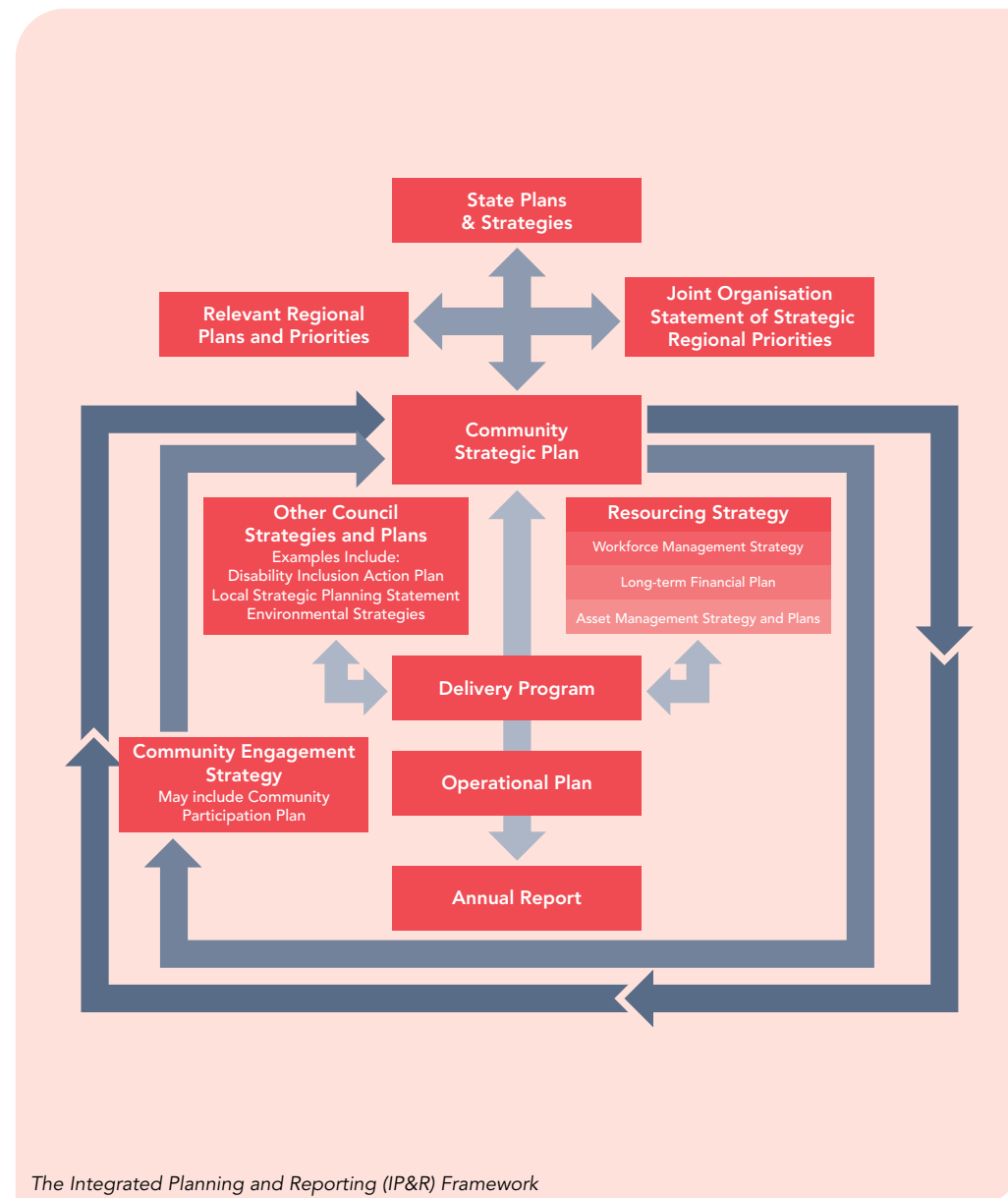
All councils in NSW use the IP&R framework to guide their planning and reporting activities. The framework provides a clear picture of the council's direction and how it plans to achieve its goals, through various plans and strategies. These include the:

- Community Strategic Plan
- Resourcing Strategy
 - » Asset Management Strategy and Plans
 - » Workforce Management Strategy
 - » Long Term Financial Plan
 - » Digital Strategy (whilst not a requirement under the *Local Government Act* and Regulations, the development and adoption of a Digital Strategy is an invaluable part of councils' resource planning and is considered best practice)
- Delivery Program
- Operational Plan.

This framework of documents is designed to ensure that NSW councils are undertaking long term planning for the future of their communities, and that planning is based on thorough community engagement. The framework is a cascading set of plans, strategies and reports designed to translate high level community hopes and aspirations into actionable activities for Council. Plans within the IP&R Framework ensure that Council's activities are aligned with community priorities, are sustainably resourced and all progress is measured and reported.

The community is at the heart of the IP&R Framework. Engagement with the community is critical in understanding the community's priorities and vision for the future. Involving the community in each stage of the IP&R process ensures decision making is evidence based and is representative of the views of the community, rather than specific interests or assumptions. Council's role in engagement is to:

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve
- Collaborate
- Empower.





Reporting Obligations

Councils are accountable for ensuring progress is measured.
Cumberland reports performance and progress through:

- Six-monthly Performance and Progress Reports
- Annual Reports
- State of our City Report.



Reporting Methodology

The reporting methodology follows the structure of the CSP by reporting on progress towards the four strategic goals that underpin the community's high-level vision. Each CSP goal has benchmark data built in and this will be complemented by additional Council and community progress data Council has acquired during the term of office.

There are 50 indicators with baseline targets to indicate progress towards or away from the community's strategic goals.

Within each of the goals there are measures to demonstrate whether we as a community have moved towards or away from the goal. These measures are a mixture of objective movements such as NSW crime statistics and perceived movement from wellbeing data, where 1,952 residents provided feedback on:

- What the community value most in their ideal neighbourhood
- Place Experience: How people rate their current neighbourhood
- Strengths and Priorities: Attributes that are valued and performing well or poorly
- Community Ideas: Suggestions for improving the neighbourhood.

Cumberland's Shared Vision, Values and Aspirations

Our shared vision statement summarises what the residents of Cumberland City want for the area now and into the future. It captures what the community values most about Cumberland City from the Community Engagement Program, as part of the Cumberland Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027.

OUR VISION:

Welcome
Belong
Succeed

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

To achieve this vision, the Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 sets out four Strategic Goals:



Supporting Community Health, Safety and Wellbeing



Enhancing the Natural and Built Environment



Delivering Sustainable Infrastructure and Services



Providing Local Leadership

Measuring the Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027

The CSP sets the broad strategic direction for Council with goals, objectives, strategies and indicators to understand if we are moving towards or away from the community's vision.

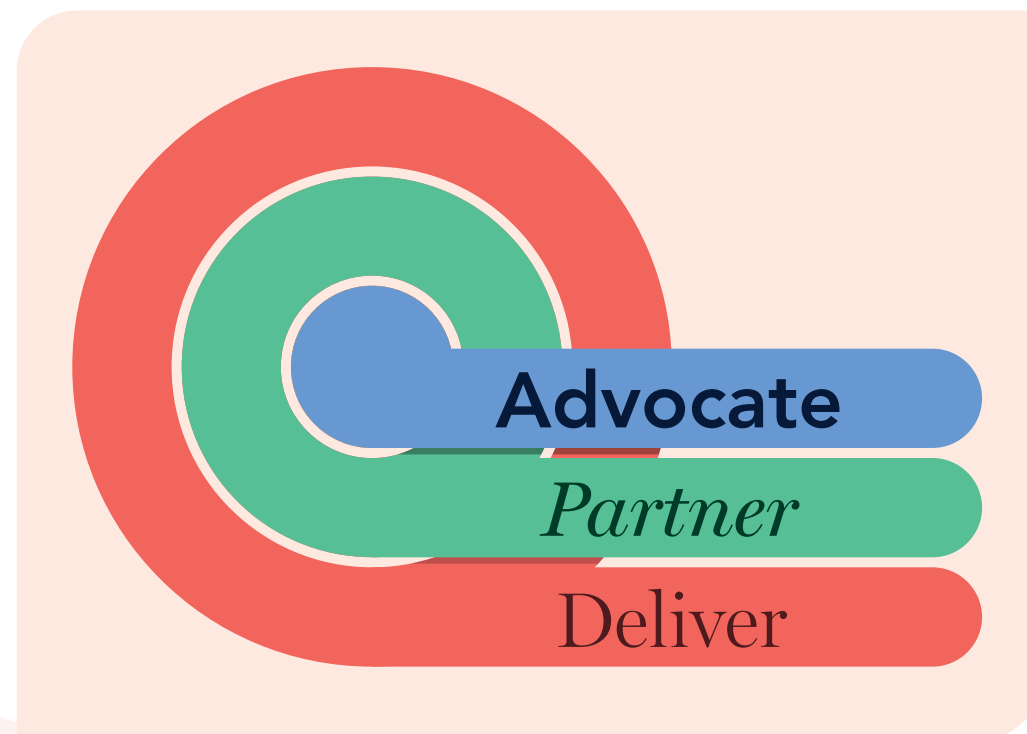
It is necessary to report the progress of the CSP and to undertake a review every four years. This State of our City Report covers the four-year term of Council and should objectively track progress against the CSP. However, this term was shorter than four years, due to postponement of the 2020 elections in response to the risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Wellbeing Survey and Community Satisfaction Survey are undertaken by an independent third party on a regular basis to provide valuable insights into our community's perceptions based on indicators outlined in the CSP. The data obtained from these surveys assess if the community is better off as a result of what Council delivered.

Constant annual measurement in statistically valid surveys carried out by independent third parties have consistently reaffirmed that the community considered Cumberland City Council's services to be central to their capacity to achieve the CSP's vision and goals. The data from these reports outlines that anything Council does is considered by the community to be highly likely to contribute in some degree to the quality of life the community desires.

Role of our Partners

It is acknowledged that Council cannot deliver everything needed to help the community achieve their vision for the future set out in the CSP. The CSP 2017-2027 identified the key partners who play critical roles in contributing to the desired outcomes in the CSP, particularly contributing to movement in the high-level wellbeing and satisfaction indicators.





Performance and Progress

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The Term in Review - Summary

Cumberland City Council measures performance against community values, place experience, importance and satisfaction. Council does this through two separate independent surveys undertaken biennially. This report provides community sentiment and perception, coupled with importance and satisfaction of Council services.

Statistics from reputable sources as well as Council performance data on the delivery of its services is included to understand objective performance.

Overall, community values and perception has remained consistent since 2022, with satisfaction with Council services increasing.

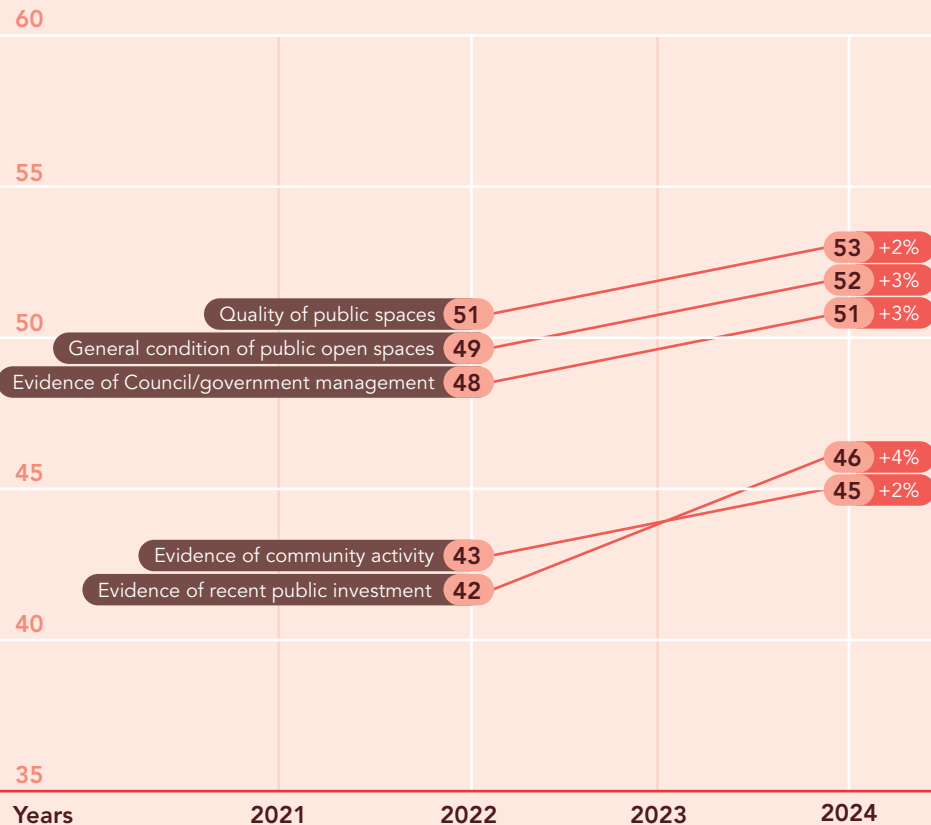


RAAF Stores Park

Highlights

The most significant performance increases between 2022 and 2024, contributing to a positive performance trend are set out in the chart below.

2022-2024 Comparison



Out of the five most significant performance increases, four indicators relate to Strategic Goal 3 Delivering Sustainable Infrastructure and Services. Evidence of recent public investment had the highest individual increase of 4%, reaching 46% in 2024. The highest overall performance result is quality of public spaces at 53%.

Improvements in community perceptions from the indicators above is supported by the reduction in average pothole response times and an increase in the number of potholes repaired. Average pothole response times reached 3.95 days in 2024, compared to an average of 7.59 days in 2021. Furthermore, Council repaired significantly more potholes in 2024 than 2021 with 3,539 and 1,994 respectively. Moreover, 10,426 scheduled park maintenance works were completed in 2024, which supports improvement in community perception that natural recreational facilities are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the community now and into the future.

How Council Contributed

-  **New construction works**
-  **Community Development programs**
-  **Providing clean public spaces and safe areas for enjoyment**
-  **Availability of open and green spaces**
-  **Maintenance for Council's extensive network of parks, sportsgrounds, playgrounds, bushland, habitat corridors and recreation areas**
-  **Providing cleaning services for our public domains, including Town Centres**

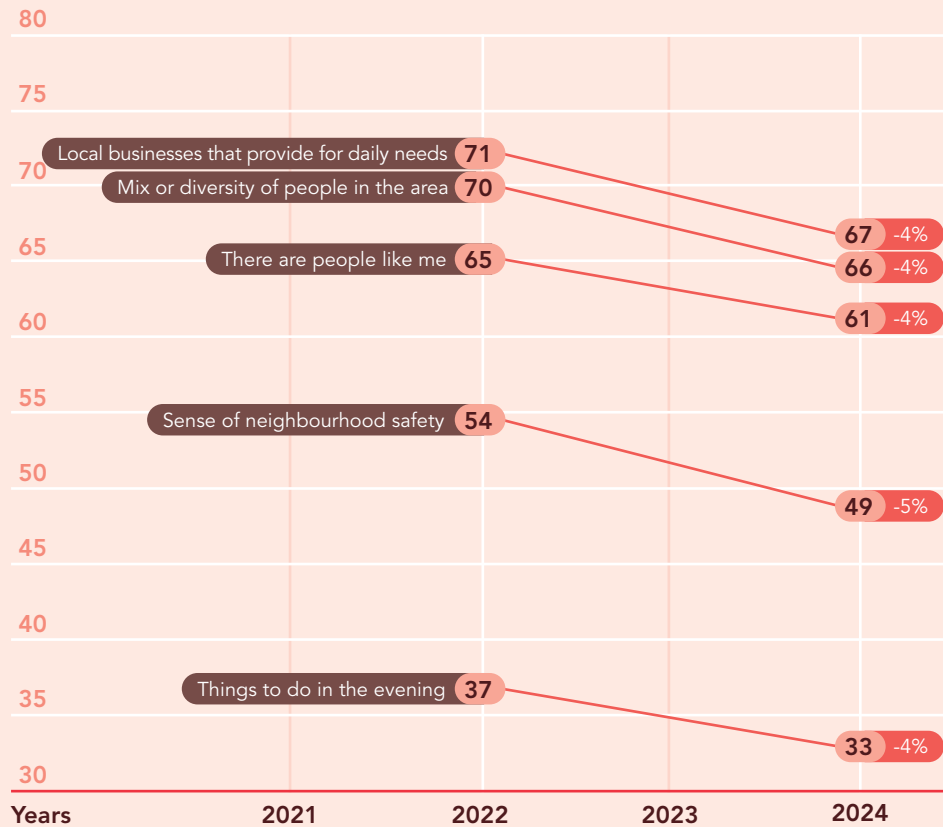


Sydney Cherry Blossom Festival

Challenges

The most significant performance decrease between 2022 and 2024, contributing to a lower performance trend are set out below.

2022-2024 Comparison



In 2024, sense of neighbourhood safety decreased by 5% and things to do in the evening decreased by 4% resulting in the lowest outcome across Council.



Safer Cities: Her Way Program

COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 global pandemic was a significant event continuing during this term. This event permanently altered community priorities and the way Council delivered some services and ultimately community progress towards its vision and goals. The pandemic posed unprecedented challenges to service delivery in Cumberland. Lockdowns, health restrictions and safety protocols required the temporary closure of some public facilities including libraries, community centres and recreational venues. Some administrative processes experienced delays and challenges due to the rapid shift to remote work. Despite these disruptions, Council adapted quickly and effectively; moving many services online and reallocating resources to support local health measures.

Council remained open throughout the pandemic to provide essential services and support its local businesses and vulnerable community members. Essential services were modified where required to ensure community safety.

To continue to assist the community in moving towards its vision for the future, Council provided a wide range of support and financial packages to accommodate for those in need during those unprecedented times. Specific support included:



Delivery for COVID-19 Food Hampers



Emergency relief



Food and care packages



Financial assistance and material aid



Homelessness services and crisis accommodation



Education and care to the children of essential workers living in and outside the Cumberland area



Welfare checks and one on one wellbeing calls



Specific support programs for vulnerable seniors



Increased service levels that focused on sanitising touch points around CBDs



Transition to online services where possible



Translation of NSW Health advice into community languages



Strategic Alignment

Strategic Goal 1



Supporting Community Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Strategic Goal 2



Enhancing the Natural and Built Environment

Strategic Goal 3



Delivering Sustainable Infrastructure and Services

Strategic Goal 4



Providing Local Leadership

Quadruple Bottom line

Social

Objective 1.1

A strong community and culture

Strategies

- 1.1.1 Build a rich local culture through access to cultural activities and events
- 1.1.2 Enhance our sense of community through valued community spaces and places
- 1.1.3 Build an inclusive community by encouraging participation in youth, children and indigenous services and support for seniors and disability services

Objective 1.2

A safe, healthy and active community

Strategies

- 1.2.1 Provide access to services that improve health and wellbeing
- 1.2.2 Build capacity within our community to live happier and healthier lives

Environmental

Objective 2.1

Celebrate our diverse built and natural environments

Strategies

- 2.1.1 Prepare land use plans and controls that value our heritage, encourage economic development, facilitate local infrastructure improvements and create vibrant precincts
- 2.1.2 Protect and improve our natural environment and ensure development has a positive impact on our City

Objective 2.2

Places and spaces that are vibrant and connect us

Strategies

- 2.2.1 Activate and support our centres, local areas and local businesses to be vibrant places that connect people

Environmental

Objective 3.1

We have public spaces that are welcoming, inclusive and promote pride in the area

Strategies

- 3.1.1 Our physical infrastructure is sustainably planned and managed to meet our changing needs
- 3.1.2 Our community pride is reflected in the cleanliness and upkeep of our valued public spaces and streetscapes

Objective 3.2

We have recreational assets that enhance the liveability of our community

Strategies

- 3.2.1 Our valued natural recreational spaces and facilities are fit for purpose and encourage active lifestyles
- 3.2.2 Our assets provide a range of opportunities for participation in active and entertaining activities

Objective 3.3

A clean and safe place to live

Strategies

- 3.3.1 Enforce local laws and regulations for the benefit of all people in Cumberland
- 3.3.2 Monitor and regulate to make Cumberland a safe place to live
- 3.3.3 Provide access to sustainable waste services that keep our community clean and tidy

Economic and Civic Leadership

Objective 4.1

The community is proud to be served by a sustainable and transparent Council organisation

Strategies

- 4.1.1 Provide a governance framework that is transparent and builds public trust in local leadership
- 4.1.2 Council operates in a safe and sustainable way to deliver great services and facilities that offer value for money
- 4.1.3 Council places the customer at the heart of everything it does

Objective 4.2

An informed community included in decision making and long-term planning

Strategies

- 4.2.1 Council regularly engages with and informs the community
- 4.2.2 Council conducts long-term planning based on community engagement



Strategic Goal 1 Supporting Community Health, Safety and Wellbeing

"By 2027 Cumberland will have a strong sense of community and connection. Residents will share an appreciation for the access to culture, events and activities that promote pride in our community. Cumberland will be known as a safe and healthy community that values inclusiveness and friendliness."

What the Community Has Told Us

Community surveys have been undertaken to understand community values, place experience, importance of and satisfaction with Council services.

The community have told us Strategic Goal 1 Supporting Community Health, Safety and Wellbeing is the highest performing strategic goal between 2022 and 2024.

When asked to provide what the most loved aspects of Cumberland are, community responses included:



Sense of community



Diversity / Multiculturalism



Safe area / Family orientated area



Schools / Education

The community have told us what is important to them, including:



Community safety programs



Community centres and facilities



Aged care and / or support for people with a disability

The community has a high level of satisfaction with the following services:

- 👍 Library Services
- 👍 Childcare services and programs
- 👍 Festival and Events programs
- 👍 Programs and support for newly arrived migrant communities
- 👍 Support and programs for volunteers and community groups
- 👍 Community education programs
- 👍 Children and Youth programs
- 👍 Aged Care and / or support for people with a disability
- 👍 Quality of community centres and facilities.
















Library Services is a key driver of overall satisfaction of Council.



Paramedics to the Rescue Storytime



Term In Review - Metrics

Metrics	CSP Strategy
 Capacity building programs delivered increased from 329 in 2021 to 979 in 2024	1.2.2
 Major art gallery events remained consistent with 3 in 2021 and 3 in 2024	1.1.1
 Participants in gallery programs increased from 3,200 to 3,500	1.1.1
 Cultural events delivered by Council increased from 3 in 2021 to 10 in 2024	1.1.1
 Children and Families programs increased from 47 in 2021 to 78 in 2024	1.1.3
 Youth Programs increased from 27 in 2021 to 69 in 2024	1.1.3
 Approved places for Long Day Care (LDC) increased from 371 in 2021 to 389 in 2024. Approved places for Out of School Hours (OOSH) care decreased from 678 in 2021 to 493 in 2024	1.1.3
 Registered Family Day Care educators decreased from 35 in 2021 to 20 in 2024	1.1.3
 Number of hours of programs and services provided under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) increased from 22,410 in 2021 to 46,729 in 2024	1.1.3
 Meals provided to seniors and people with disabilities under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), decreased from 44,007 meals in 2021 to 36,064 meals in 2024	1.1.3
 Criminal activity decreased from 19,510 in 2021 to 16,659 in 2024 (Source: https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au)	1.2.2
 Number of schools and educational institutions within Cumberland increased from 280 to 285	1.1.3
 Volunteers, under Seniors and Disability, increased from 179 in 2021 to 204 in 2024. Additionally, volunteers involved in Environment Programs increased from 30 in 2021 to 210 in 2024	1.1.3

Term In Review - Council’s Contribution

Service Activity	CSP Strategy
Delivering an exciting program of Major Cultural Events and Gallery Exhibitions	1.1.1
Presenting vibrant Cultural and Art Studio programs	1.1.1
Implementation of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)	1.2.2
Access to eight Libraries with extensive library programs, activities, collections and technology	1.1.2
Providing programs for the health and wellbeing of our children and youth	1.1.3
Implementation of the Children and Families Strategy and Cumberland City Youth Strategy	1.1.3
Delivery of extensive seniors and disability services, programs, events and information sessions	1.1.3
Implementation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)	1.1.3
Implementation of the Homelessness Action Plan	1.2.2
Opening of the Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Hub	1.2.2
New Crime Prevention Podcast Building Confidence and Safety	1.2.2
Providing education and care centres to children aged 0 to 14 years	1.1.3
Access to one stop shop multipurpose community centres	1.1.2
Delivering capacity building programs	1.2.2
Delivery of the Community Grants Program	1.2.2
Providing the Volunteer Program	1.1.3



8
Libraries



12
Education and
Care-based Services



21
Community Centres



1
Family Day Care Service



Strategic Goal 2 Enhancing the Natural and Built Environment

"By 2027 Cumberland will have a natural and built environment that improves quality of life, respects our heritage elements and protects our parks and gardens, supported by planning strategies and controls. Cumberland will be regarded as a community that actively promotes and implements good environmental practices, supported by environmental strategies and programs."



What the Community Has Told Us

Community surveys have been undertaken to understand community values, place experience, importance of and satisfaction with Council services.

The community have told us Strategic Goal 2 Enhancing the Natural and Built Environment has consistently performed well between 2022 and 2024.

When asked to provide what the most loved aspects of Cumberland are, community responses included:



The natural environment



Public Transport



Roads, cycleways and footpaths



Affordable area / Housing



Heritage of the area



Shopping Centres, Restaurants and Businesses



Green Open Spaces / Parks and Wildlife

The community have told us what is important to them, including:



Environmental education / recycling



Protecting green open spaces and the natural environment



Support for local jobs and businesses



Protection of low-rise residential areas

The community has a high level of satisfaction with the following services:

- Protection of heritage buildings and items
- Protecting green, open spaces and the natural environment
- Environmental education programs and encouraging recycling
- Public spaces planning and design.











Protection of low-rise residential areas is a key driver of overall satisfaction of Council.

The largest increase in community value is associated with access to neighbourhood amenities (cafes, shops, health and wellness services etc.) with 9% more respondents choosing this as important to them in 2024 compared to 2022.



Term In Review - Metrics

Metrics	CSP Strategy
 Landmarks and heritage sites increased from 309 in 2021 to 325 in 2024	2.1.1
 Planting of new trees increased from 5,124 in 2021 to 8,205 in 2024	2.1.2
 Businesses across key sectors increased from 3,419 to 3,826, with growth observed in following areas:	2.2.1
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail trade increased from 1,654 to 1,730 	2.2.1
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Care and Social Assistance increased from 1,220 to 1,454 	2.2.1
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial and Insurance Services, increased from 545 to 642 	2.2.1
 Complying Development Certificates assessed and determined (Council specific and private certifiers) have decreased from 812 in 2021 to 732 in 2024	2.1.1
 Recycling decreased with 10,280 tonnes collected in 2021 compared to 9,187 in 2024 and garden waste decreased with 9,259 tonnes collected in 2021 compared to 7,286 in 2024	2.1.2



Mobile Community Recycling Service

Term In Review - Council's Contribution

Service Activity	CSP Strategy
Delivery of environmental strategies and educational programs	2.1.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litter and Illegal Dumping Prevention Programs 	2.1.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity Strategy 	2.1.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Tree Strategy 	2.1.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability Action Plan 	2.1.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asbestos Management Strategy and Programs 	2.1.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste and Resource Strategy and Programs 	2.1.2
Problem Waste Collection Service	2.1.2
Tree Planting	2.1.2
Streetlights upgraded to LED	2.1.2
Smart Places Program	2.2.1
Place Development Program	2.2.1
Place Activation Program	2.2.1
Economic Development Program	2.2.1
Business Support Program	2.2.1
Heritage Program	2.1.1
Cumberland Centres and Corridors Program	2.1.1
Stormwater and Flood Management Program	2.1.1
Local Traffic and Transport Program	2.1.1
Strategic Infrastructure Design Program	2.1.1
Local Infrastructure Design Program	2.1.1
Open Space and Recreation Strategy Implementation Program	2.1.1
Local Spaces and Places Program	2.1.1



Strategic Goal 3 Delivering Sustainable Infrastructure and Services

"By 2027 Cumberland will have sustainably managed infrastructure assets and waste services that contribute positively to quality of life and meet expectations of the community. Our infrastructure will meet our targets for a City that is easy to move around and is well connected to our wider region."

What the Community Has Told Us

Community surveys have been undertaken to understand community values, place experience, importance of and satisfaction with Council services.

The community have told us Strategic Goal 3 Delivering Sustainable Infrastructure and Services has consistently performed well between 2022 and 2024.

When asked to provide what the most loved aspects of Cumberland are, community responses included:



**Sports and
Recreational activities
and facilities**



**Cleanliness
of the area**



**Good waste
services**



**Well serviced
area**

The community have told us what is important to them, including:



**Maintaining local
roads**



**Council's street
lighting**



**Removal of illegally
dumped rubbish**



**Traffic management
and road safety**



**Maintaining
footpaths**

The community has a high level of satisfaction with the following services:

- Swimming pools and swimming pool programs
- Availability and maintenance of local ovals, grounds and facilities
- Maintenance of local parks and playgrounds
- Stormwater management
- Maintenance and cleaning of town centres
- Streetscapes and public tree maintenance
- Provision of premium venues.











Within Strategic Goal 3 Delivering Sustainable Infrastructure and Services, the community have identified Council's core strengths with high importance and high satisfaction including:

- Household garbage collection**
- Public Health and Safety standards**
- Safe, secure and clean Council buildings, properties and facilities**

Maintaining local roads, household garbage collection, maintenance of local parks and playgrounds and Council's response to unauthorised and illegal works are key drivers of overall satisfaction of Council.



Term In Review - Metrics

Metrics	CSP Strategy
 Capital Expenditure investment increased from \$57,190,620.12 in 2021 to \$75,488,620.20 in 2024	3.1.1
 Playgrounds increased from 287 in 2021 to 295 in 2024	3.2.1
 Amount of public spaces (footpaths, verges, parks etc.) remained consistent with square footage data for footpaths (1.22 square kilometres), parks (10.43 square kilometres) and operational open space grass (0.62 square kilometres)	3.2.1
 Parking spaces remain consistent with 2,102 in 2021 and 2024	3.3.1
 Potholes repaired increased from 1,994 in 2021 to 3,539 in 2024	3.1.2
 Average pothole response times decreased from 7.59 days in 2021 to 3.95 days in 2024	3.1.2
 Footpath renewals expenditure increased from \$1,705,410 in 2021 to \$3,865,136 in 2024	3.1.1
 Signage repairs decreased from 1,967 in 2021 to 1,521 in 2024	3.2.1
 Council swept 95,965 kilometres of town centre streets in 2024	3.1.2
 Number of trees pruned and / or actioned to be removed decreased from 2,788 in 2021 to 2,745 in 2024	3.1.2

Term In Review - Council's Contribution

Service Activity	CSP Strategy
Provision of domestic waste, commercial waste and street and park waste services	3.3.3
Availability of open and green spaces	3.2.1
Maintenance for Council's extensive network of parks, sportsgrounds, playgrounds, bushland, habitat corridors and recreation areas	3.2.1
Assessment of street lighting requests	3.1.1
New construction works	3.1.1
Providing premium venues, stadiums and facilities	3.2.2
Learn to Swim Program	3.2.2
Water Safety Program	3.2.2
Providing clean public spaces and safe areas for enjoyment	3.1.2
Providing cleaning services for our public domains, including Town Centres	3.1.2
Garden beds in town centres regularly maintained	3.1.2
Renovation of Greens at golf courses	3.2.1
Companion Animals Program	3.3.1
Investigating and regulating unauthorised and illegal works	3.3.1
Hosting an NSW Fire Safety Summit	3.3.1
Swimming Pool Barrier Program	3.3.1



Projects Delivered



Merrylands Civic Square Project

The Merrylands Civic Square (MCS) Project was funded by the NSW Government through its NSW Public Spaces Legacy Program in association with Cumberland City Council. The initial concept for the MCS was drawn from the community's feedback which included a public space for civic events and celebrations, a meeting place for the whole community, a flexible place for small groups and families as well as for large gatherings and events, a space that is safe, day and night, a place for locals that means 'Cumberland' and a unique landmark in the city centre with colour and shelter.



Civic Park and Pendle Hill Wetland Improvement Project

Civic Park, Pendle Hill is now open. New inclusive and accessible nature play spaces, play equipment and outdoor fitness zone, picnic areas, a half-court basketball court and all new amenities are just some of the new features of Civic Park. In addition to Civic Park, the project also included the Pendle Hill wetlands upgrade which includes construction of new pedestrian bridges, installation of gabion walls along the creek embankment, stormwater quality improvement devices such as gross pollutant traps and a water aeration pump, reconstruction of a weir wall and improved connections through the carpark to Pendle Hill Town Centre.



Merrylands CBD Drainage Work

The Merrylands CBD Drainage Project has consolidated the drainage infrastructure to enable the most cost-efficient method of controlling floodwaters in the Merrylands CBD. The project includes upgrades to the stormwater drainage systems at the following locations:

- The extension of Dressler Court, between Neil Street and Holroyd Gardens
- Along Merrylands Road, between Addlestone Road and Cambridge Road
- Merrylands Civic Square
- Main Lane, Merrylands.

This project enables development within the Merrylands CBD to be less encumbered by stormwater infrastructure. Without this important infrastructure upgrade the Merrylands Civic Square Project would not have happened.

Works on the downstream side of the culvert have been completed including:

- Drainage works along Neil Street
- Drainage works along Main Lane and on Treves Street.

In addition, the works on the upstream side of the culvert, which includes Merrylands Road, Cambridge Street and Burford Street have been completed.



Parramatta Road Urban Amenity Improvement Project

The NSW Government provided a grant to Cumberland City Council to improve public spaces, improve pedestrian accessibility and enhance Cumberland as a place to live, shop and do business. The grant formed part of a wider program to revitalise public spaces along the Parramatta Road corridor.



Jack & Jill Reserve, Regents Park Playground Upgrade

Council has completed the complete renewal of Jack and Jill Reserve, Berala. Works included new modern playground and equipment, a BBQ area and shelter, landscaping and park furniture.



Phillips Park Upgrades

Council completed upgrades to Phillips Park Playground, improving both play equipment and loop paths. These upgrades included installation of new play equipment, shade structures, trees and water access to mitigate heat. Additionally, a dedicated loop for children on smaller bicycles and scooters was added, along with a walking loop and new facilities for social spaces. The park upgrade was funded by Council and the Commonwealth (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts).



Ruth Street Park Upgrade

Council upgraded Ruth Street Park in Merrylands West. These upgrades involved installation of play space facilities, picnic area, drinking water fountain and furniture, pedestrian footpath, fencing upgrade and landscape planting to deliver an enhanced experience for park users in the Cumberland City Community. The park upgrade was partially funded by the NSW Government in association with Cumberland City Council.



Granville Park Field Works

The condition of playing fields 3, 4 and 5 at Granville Park were not fit-for-purpose to sustain heavy use all year-round for formal sporting events and recreational use. The field surface was substandard, requiring an upgrade to the irrigation system to meet sport playing standards.

The high demand for the fields also required provision of floodlighting so that the fields could be made available for longer hours. This project was jointly funded by Council and the NSW Government through its Greater City Sports Facility Fund.



Strategic Goal 4 Providing Local Leadership

"By 2027 Cumberland will be a community that has confidence in the integrity of local leadership and be involved in decision making. The community will be served by a Council that is progressive, innovative and makes knowledge-driven decisions in the best interest of the community. Council will be a sustainable and efficiently run organisation that goes beyond service delivery and actively advocates on behalf of the community it serves."



What the Community Has Told Us

Community surveys have been undertaken to understand community values, place experience, importance of and satisfaction with Council services.

The community have told us Strategic Goal 4 Providing Local Leadership metrics have significantly increased between 2022 and 2024.

When asked to provide what the most loved aspects of Cumberland are, community responses included:



**Council
as a whole**



**Accessibility /
Central Location**



**Quality and
variety of services
and facilities**



**Good place
to live**

The community have told us what is important to them, including:



**Delivering improved
community
outcomes**



**Delivering efficient
and better quality
services**



**Collaboration and
communication
between Council
and the community**

The community has a high level of satisfaction with the following services:

- Council's Customer Service
- Provision of information to the community
- Accessibility to Council and its services
- Outdoor Dining.

Importance and satisfaction has significantly increased from 2022 for Council's Customer Service. Satisfaction has significantly increased from 2023 for the provision of Council information to the community.














Council's Customer Service, provision of Council information to the community, long term planning for the Cumberland area and financial management are key drivers of overall satisfaction of Council.



Craft activity for children at Berala Sprint Fair



Term In Review - Metrics

Metrics	CSP Strategy
 Compliments received has increased from 272 in 2021 to 1,020 in 2024	4.1.3
 Tier 1 complaints have increased from 419 in 2021 to 781 in 2024	4.1.3
 Facebook followers have increased from 27,019 in 2021 to 30,585 in 2024	4.2.1
 Instagram followers have increased from 3,044 in 2021 to 5,355 in 2024	4.2.1
 LinkedIn followers have increased from 3,893 in 2021 to 6,518 in 2024	4.2.1
 Digital mail (eNews) subscribers have increased from 4,868 in 2021 to 5,530 in 2024	4.2.1
 Website page views have increased from 2,511,919 in 2021 to 2,859,050 in 2024	4.2.1
 Capital expenditure has increased from \$40,278,000 in 2021 to \$75,343,000 in 2024	4.1.2
 Unrestricted cash has increased from \$21,795,000 in 2021 to \$35,664,000 in 2024	4.1.2
 Rates and annual charges outstanding have increased from 5.62% in 2021 to 6.37% in 2024	4.1.2
 Recurring result excluding capital has increased from \$5,161,000 in 2021 to \$7,555,000 in 2024	4.1.2

Term In Review - Council's Contribution

Service Activity	CSP Strategy
Delivering efficient customer service through various channels catering for our diversity	4.1.3
Responding to webchats and customer requests	4.1.3
Resolution of complaints	4.1.3
Efficient management of Council records	4.1.3
Sound financial management	4.1.2
Effective communications, marketing and media	4.2.1
Measuring community wellbeing and satisfaction with Council services	4.2.2
Undertaking transparent long-term planning for the future of Cumberland	4.2.2
Embedding long-term community planning through community engagement	4.2.2
Delivering high quality civic events contributing to the civic leadership of our community	4.1.1
Completion of Government Information Public Access (GIPA) applications helping ensure open, transparent and accountable local leadership	4.1.1
Robust risk management and business continuity planning for Council operations	4.1.1



Customer Service helping a community member



How we are Changing

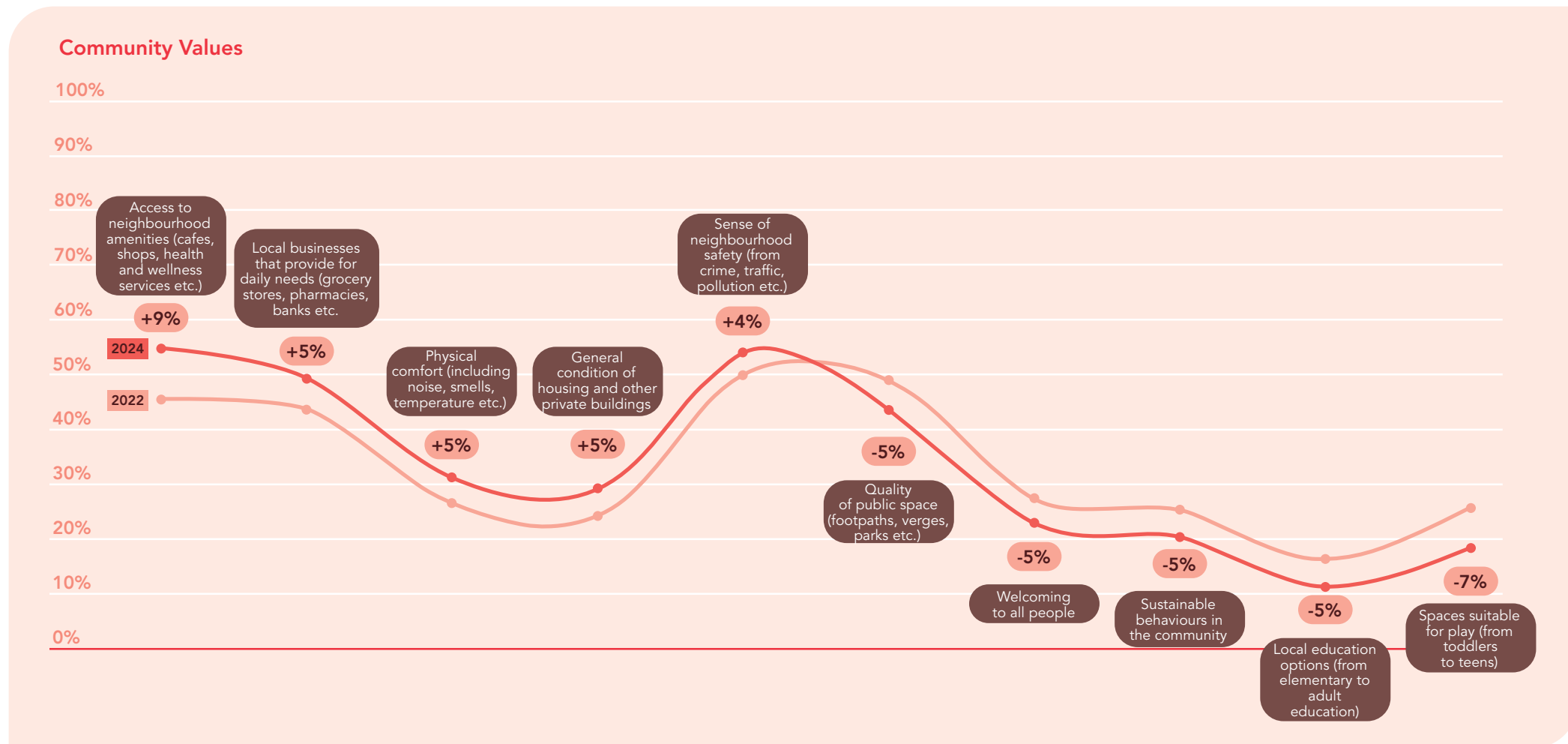
As part of the Wellbeing Survey, Council asked the community to select the attributes that are most important to them in their ideal neighbourhood. A higher percentage reflects greater alignment of community values. The following table is the shared values for the Cumberland community.

Rank	Community Values	CSP Objective	2024	2022
1	General condition of public open spaces (street trees, footpaths, parks etc.)	3.2	72%	68%
2	Elements of natural environment (natural features, views, vegetation, topography, water, wildlife etc.)	2.1	60%	59%
=3	Sense of neighbourhood safety (from crime, traffic, pollution etc.)	3.3	55%	51%
=3	Access to neighbourhood amenities (cafes, shops, health and wellness services etc.)	2.2	55%	46%
5	Sense of personal safety (for all ages, genders, day or night)	1.2	54%	52%
6	Walking/jogging/bike paths that connect housing to communal amenities (shops, parks etc.)	2.2	52%	49%
7	Local businesses that provide for daily needs (grocery stores, pharmacies, banks etc.)	2.2	49%	44%
8	Landscaping and natural elements (street trees, planting, water features etc.)	2.1	45%	43%
=9	Quality of public spaces (footpaths, verges, parks etc.)	3.2	44%	49%
=9	Access and safety of walking, cycling and/or public transport (signage, paths, lighting etc.)	3.3	44%	42%
=9	Sense of belonging in the community	1.1	44%	41%
12	Evidence of Council/government management (signage, street cleaners etc.)	3.3	38%	39%
13	Connectivity (proximity to other neighbourhoods, employment centres, shops etc.)	2.2	37%	33%
14	Spaces suitable for specific activities or special interests (entertainment, exercise, dog parks, BBQs etc.)	3.2	36%	40%
=15	Sustainable urban design (water sensitive design, transport-oriented design, sustainable building design, density etc.)	2.1	35%	37%
=15	Protection of the natural environment	2.1	35%	35%
=15	Evidence of recent public investment (roads, parks, schools etc.)	3.1	35%	39%

- The number one shared value is general condition of public open space (street trees, footpaths, parks etc.), selected by 72% of respondents.
- Strategic Goal 2 Enhancing the Natural and Built Environment and Strategic Goal 3 Delivering Sustainable Infrastructure and Services demonstrate a high level of importance.
- Two safety metrics are in the top five, with more of the community selecting them as important in 2024 compared to 2022.

Community Values

Significantly increased and decreased community value metrics between 2022 and 2024 are set out below.



- The largest increase in community value is associated with access to neighbourhood amenities (cafes, shops, health and wellness services etc.) with 9% more respondents choosing this as important to them in 2024 compared to 2022.
- The decrease in community values is associated with spaces suitable for play (from toddlers to teens) with 7% less respondents choosing this as important to them.



Effectiveness of the Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027

Council's assessment of its current state, through identifying the effectiveness of the CSP 2017-2027, serves to ensure the next iteration of the CSP is better equipped to meet community needs and improve overall liveability. Through identifying both strengths and priorities, Council can effectively address areas that require improvement, while continuing to nurture its strengths.

Strengths

Strengths are attributes and areas in which the community thinks Council has performed well and are highly valued by the Cumberland community. The independent surveys identified key strengths that contribute significantly to local liveability and should be nurtured over the next term. The overall satisfaction with Council demonstrates that the community generally supports Council's performance and actions.

Key drivers of this satisfaction are attributed to:

- Accessibility to Council and its services
- Provision of Council information
- Council's customer service/community engagement.

High levels of satisfaction in financial management and opportunities to participate in local decision-making indicates a well-informed community aware of Council and NSW State Government services that are available. These strengths also highlight Council's long-term plans, reflect sustainable resource allocation and are aligned with the community's aspirational goals.

Priorities

Priorities are attributes that are highly valued but not performing well. The Wellbeing Survey has identified nine areas for Council to prioritise. These are attributes that are most important to the community but are currently underperforming.

- Sense of belonging in the community
- Sense of personal safety (for all ages, genders, day or night)
- Sense of neighbourhood safety (from crime, traffic, pollution etc.)
- Elements of natural environment (natural features, views, vegetation, topography, water, wildlife etc.)
- Landscaping and natural elements (street trees, planting, water features etc.)
- Walking/jogging/bike paths that connect housing to communal amenities (shops, parks etc.)
- General condition of public open spaces (street trees, footpaths, parks etc.)
- Quality of public spaces (footpaths, verges, parks etc.)
- Access and safety of walking, cycling and/or public transport (signage, paths, lighting etc.)

How did the Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 Perform?

Assessing the effectiveness of the current CSP through the strengths and priorities has indicated some movement away from the vision and goals.

Liveability in Cumberland has remained stable since 2022. However, the recent survey results reveal a growing gap between community values and place performance. In 2024, no metrics associated with three Strategic Goals are seen to be contributing positively to liveability (highly valued and performing well) from the perspective of the community. As such, there are significant opportunities for Council to provide a comprehensive and consolidated approach to improving the lived experience of communities in Cumberland.



Strategic Goal 1 Supporting Community Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Of the attributes associated with this Strategic Goal, only two are in the top 15 shared values:

- Welcoming to all people is the best performing liveability attribute
- Landmarks, special features or meeting places is the lowest performing liveability attribute.

There are two metrics that are highly valued by the community but are underperforming:

- Sense of personal safety
- Sense of belonging in the community.



Strategic Goal 2 Enhancing the Natural and Built Environment

Of the attributes associated with this strategic goal eight are in the top 15 most valued place attributes as selected by the community. Two attributes have seen the most significant increase in community value (9% and 5% respectively):

- Access to neighbourhood amenities
- Local businesses that provide for daily needs.

Connectivity (proximity to other neighbourhoods, employment centres, shops etc.) is the best performing attribute.

There are five metrics that are highly valued by the community but are underperforming:

- Elements of natural environment
- Landscaping and natural elements
- Walking/jogging/bike paths that connect housing to communal amenities
- Access to neighbourhood amenities
- Local businesses that provide for daily needs.



Strategic Goal 3 Delivering Sustainable Infrastructure and Services

Of the attributes associated with this strategic goal, seven are in the top 15 most valued place attributes as selected by the community, including two in the top three. In addition, four of the 15 attributes have seen an increase in the number of people who selected them as important:

- Sense of neighbourhood safety
- Physical comfort
- Amount of public spaces (footpaths, verges, parks etc.) is the best performing liveability attribute
- Evidence of recent public investment (roads, parks, schools etc.) is the lowest performing liveability attribute.

There are four metrics in this Strategic Goal that are highly valued by the community but are underperforming:

- General condition of public open spaces (street trees, footpaths, parks etc.)
- Sense of neighbourhood safety (from crime, traffic, pollution etc.)
- Quality of public spaces (footpaths, verges, parks etc.)
- Access and safety of walking, cycling and/or public transport (signage, paths, lighting etc.).



Strategic Goal 4 Providing Local Leadership

Community satisfaction with Strategic Goal 4 Providing Local Leadership has increased since 2022 with two key themes emerging:

- Ensuring Council staff and elected members focus on delivering improved community outcomes.
- Working towards improved collaboration and communication between the Council and the community.

Summary

The highest number of community priorities overall are aligned with Strategic Goal 3 Delivering Sustainable Infrastructure and Services while a decrease in community perceptions of performance is associated with Strategic Goal 2 Enhancing the Natural and Built Environment.

Community priorities relate to increased quality and maintenance, integration and protection of nature and vegetation, and improving the perception of neighbourhood and personal safety.

The priority level for investment remains the same for Strategic Goal 3 Delivering Sustainable Infrastructure and Services in 2024 as in 2022, with the focus on neighbourhood safety, accessibility, quality and maintenance of public spaces as the top liveability priorities.

The development of the Community Strategic Plan 2025-2035 provides Council with an opportunity to focus on what is important to meet the vision and values of Cumberland's diverse community. In addition, it allows Council an opportunity to translate the community vision and values into CSP objectives and strategies with outcomes and indicators. In its current form there are challenges with linking Services reported in the Operational Plan to CSP outcomes and the correlation between Service indicators and CSP indicators. This will be a key area of focus for the upcoming review of the CSP and other documents within the IP&R suite.

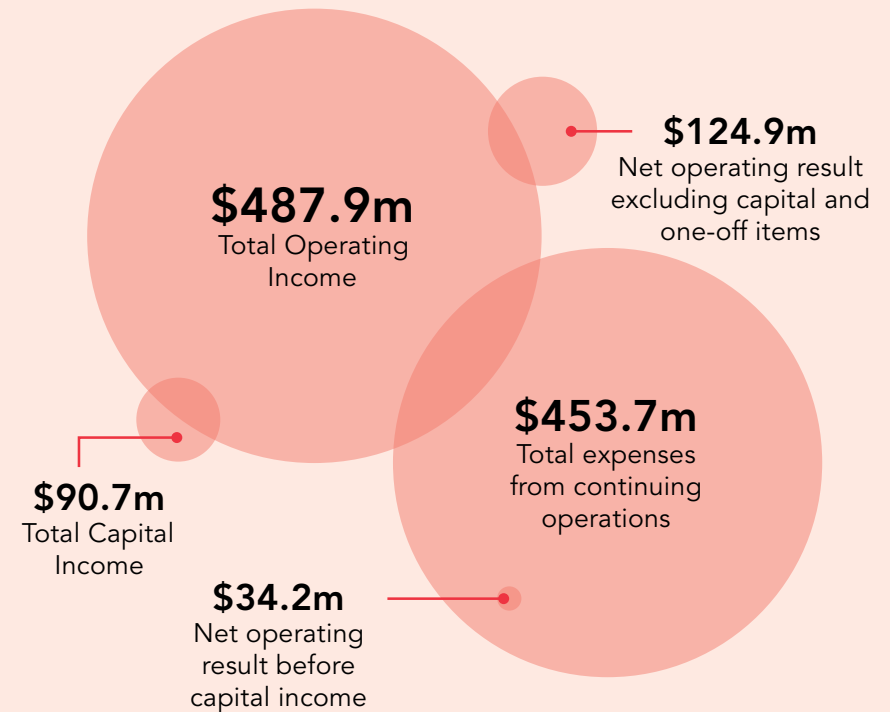
Financial Highlights

Council outperformed most financial metrics as set in the 2022-2023 Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP), including the operating performance ratio, unrestricted current ratio and asset renewal ratio.

The one indicator Council did not meet was rates and charges outstanding percentage, which measured 6.37% against the 4% target set in the LTFP.

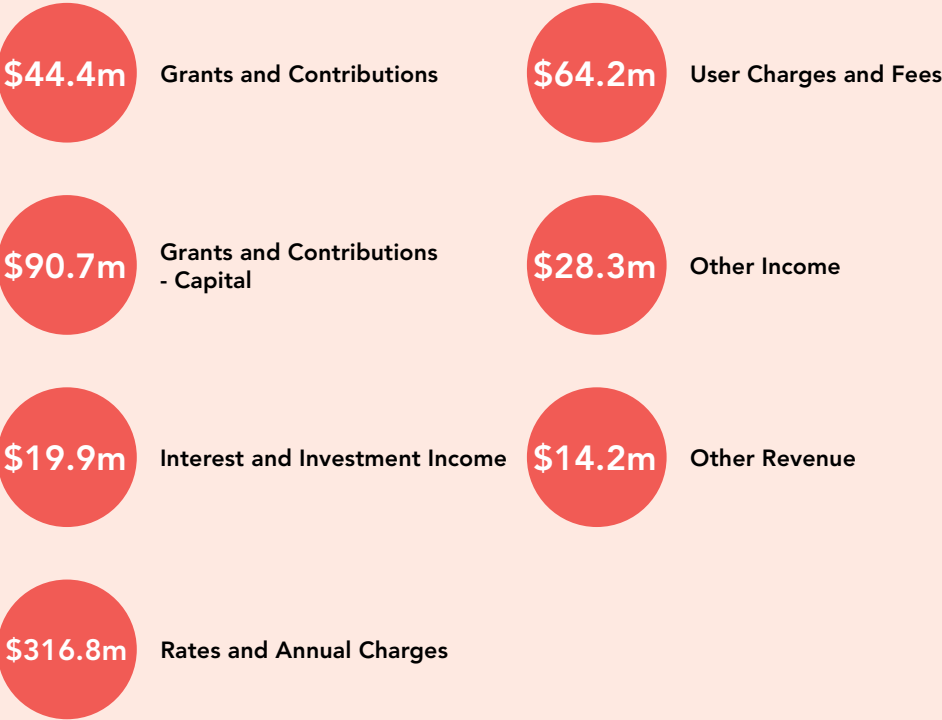
Council was able to deliver additional operating surpluses totalling \$18m and additional capital expenditure of \$25m, when compared to the amounts set in the 2022-2023 LTFP.

Profit and Loss Highlight





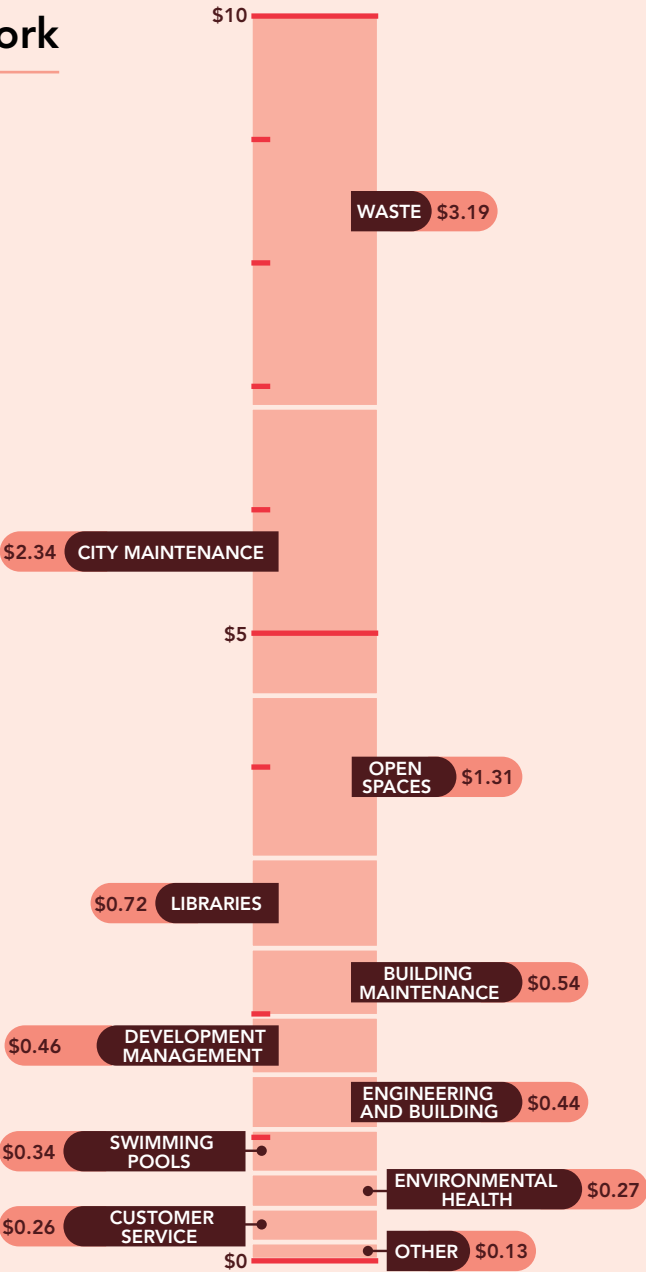
Sourcing our Revenue



Capital Works Programs Highlights

- \$144.5 million spent on total capital expenditure
- \$97.5 million spent on renewal of assets
- \$47.0 million spent on new assets

Rates at Work





Next Steps



Next Steps

This report demonstrates the progress the Cumberland Community has made towards their high-level vision and goals for the future. To keep us on track, Council will commence a review of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2017-2027. This review will:

- Check if our vision for the future has changed
- Set new objectives to work towards to achieve the vision
- Set new indicators to help us know if we've arrived at our goals.

Following the Local Government elections in September 2024 and the election of a new body of Councillors, Council will respond to the new CSP with a new four-year Delivery Program, setting out the priority areas of focus for the new political term. This will be paired with a new Resourcing Strategy to show how Council plans to resource the commitments in the planning documents.

CSP Review

Cumberland's CSP outlines the future direction and priorities for the area over a 10-year period. The upcoming review offers an opportunity for the incoming Council to review and assess the CSP's objectives and strategies. This section offers evidence-based recommendations to guide the CSP review process, prioritising areas for community investment and aligning with community needs and values.



Strategic Goal 1 Supporting Community Health, Safety and Wellbeing

The Wellbeing survey highlighted the community want for more community events and activities such as street fairs, festivals, and community gardens to bring people together. In addition, the community want to see the local neighbourhoods made safer for women.

Action: Review opportunities towards building local community and cultural networks, education and social groups that encourage connection and trust in addition to increasing safety.



Strategic Goal 2 Enhancing the Natural and Built Environment

The Wellbeing survey highlighted the community want for increased tree coverage. Concerns arise over the impact of higher density developments on issues such as parking, and lack of infrastructure and amenities to support these developments.

Action: Review how to provide an increased focus on the retention and increased integration of natural environment and tree planting, as well as neighbourhood active transport networks that connect housing to local shops, services and other shared amenities.



Strategic Goal 3

Delivering Sustainable Infrastructure and Services

The Wellbeing Survey emphasised the community need for enhanced safety measures, including increased surveillance and police presence, especially at night. Additionally, the community want to see footpath upgrades, better verge management, and clean ups of unattended street rubbish.

Action: Review enhancing the quality and maintenance of public spaces, improve neighbourhood safety in regard to external factors such as traffic and crime, and investigate opportunities to improve local networks for active and public transport.



Strategic Goal 4

Providing Local Leadership

The Wellbeing Survey highlighted three key themes:

- Ensuring Council staff and elected members focus on delivering improved community outcomes
- Council to focus on delivering efficient and better quality, services and infrastructure
- Working towards improved collaboration and communication between the Council and the community.



Playground upgrade as part of Civic Park and Pendle Hill Wetland Improvement Project



CUMBERLAND
CITY COUNCIL

State of our City Report 2021-2024

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