Town of Port Hedland

Project Uplift Implementation Plan

June 2026

Version 2

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Port Hedland (the Town) has received a Forward Improvement Plan (FIP) in response to the organisational health check undertaken across the organisation.

The health check identified a range of interconnected issues relating to governance, leadership, financial management, procurement, asset management, workforce capability, information systems and organisational culture.

The FIP proposes a coordinated, organisation-wide approach to addressing these matters by stabilising critical risks in the short term, strengthening governance frameworks and control environments in the medium term, and embedding sustainability, discipline and assurance maturity over time.

The Town is establishing a significant improvement program to deliver the FIP. This organisation-wide program of work is called Project Uplift.

Project Uplift will be an organisational priority. The program is anticipated to take approximately two years to complete and will be delivered in three phases:

- Phase 1 Stabilise (0–6 months)
- Phase 2 Control Strengthening (6–12 months)
- Phase 3 Integration and Capability (12–24 months)

This Implementation Plan intentionally focuses on Phase 1 – Stabilise, being those actions identified in the FIP as critical and requiring immediate attention.

The immediate focus of Phase 1 is to establish the governance, reporting and communication arrangements required to support Project Uplift and to commence the highest priority workstreams identified in the FIP.

The former Temporary Chief Executive Officer (T/CEO) identified four important priority areas to start as soon as possible:

1. Develop a communications and engagement plan
2. Establish a CEO led Project Uplift Steering Group
3. Commence the Enterprise Resource Planning system end-to-end review
4. Initiate the recruitment of a new fixed-term Director role, focused on delivering organisational transformation

These priority areas were considered as foundational to the success of Project Uplift, and early progress in these areas critical to enabling and informing many of the remaining FIP actions.

The Town's new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) commenced on 11 May 2026. For this reason, Phases 2 and 3 have intentionally not been developed in detail at this stage. Instead, they will be scoped, designed and led by the CEO, with support from a Steering Group, once the critical Phase 1 actions are underway.

The FIP makes clear that delivering Project Uplift is not discretionary. Investing in Project Uplift should therefore be viewed as an investment in rebuilding the Town's governance, capability and long-term sustainability, and in ensuring the organisation is better equipped to meet the expectations of Council and the Hedland community.

BACKGROUND

The FIP was prepared in response to an organisational health check. The high-level assessment of governance arrangements, systems, processes and organisational capability identified several consistent themes across the organisation that require addressing.

The FIP proposes a coordinated, organisation-wide approach to addressing these matters by:

- Stabilising critical risks in the short term
- Strengthening governance frameworks and control environments in the medium term
- Embedding sustainability, discipline and assurance maturity over time

The Town is establishing a large program of work to deliver the FIP. The organisation-wide improvement program to deliver this body of work is called *Project Uplift*.

Project Uplift will be an organisational priority. The project will be delivered over three phases and is anticipated to take approximately two years. At the completion of the project, the organisation will return to business as usual.

Importantly, this initial version of the implementation plan intentionally focuses on Phase 1 Stabilise (0–6 months), with the immediate focus being to establish the governance, reporting and communications arrangements required to support Project Uplift and to commence the highest priority workstreams identified in the FIP.

This includes:

- Developing the communications and engagement plan
- Establishing a CEO led Project Uplift Steering Group (SG)
- Commencing the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system end-to-end review
- Initiating the recruitment of a new fixed-term Director role, focused on delivering organisational transformation
- Reinforcing immediate financial controls
- Commencing the highest priority governance and leadership reforms

While all critical actions identified in the FIP are important to progress, the T/CEO identified several important priority areas that should start as soon as possible. These workstreams are foundational to the success of Project Uplift and early progress on these workstreams is critical to enabling and informing many of the remaining FIP actions.

CEO ownership of the overall implementation program is crucial. For this reason, Phases 2 and 3 have deliberately not been developed in detail at this stage. Instead, they will be scoped, designed and led by the CEO, with support from the SG, once the Phase 1 actions are underway.

APPROACH TO DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

Project Uplift will be delivered using a structured organisational change approach designed to ensure that improvements are embedded in organisational culture, behaviours, decision-making, systems, policies and procedures.

This approach will be based on the following principles:

- Organisation-wide ownership and collective responsibility, with the CEO, SG, Executive Leadership Team (ELT), managers (SLT), and over time, the wider organisation all contributing to delivery
- Visible leadership and clear accountability, including defined responsibilities and performance measures

- Regular monitoring, assurance and adjustment, including reporting, feedback, risk monitoring and periodic review
- Phased implementation, commencing with stabilisation of critical, high-risk issues, followed by strengthening of controls and, finally, embedding and assurance
- Integration with existing operations, so that Project Uplift outcomes become part of how the Town operates rather than a separate or temporary exercise
- Engagement and co-design, ensuring Elected Members and, where appropriate, the community are involved in shaping and implementing improvements
- Active staff involvement, engagement and regular communication so that everyone understands the purpose of Project Uplift, and can contribute to solutions and support successful implementation
- Targeted use of external specialist support where capability, capacity or independence is not immediately available internally, with a focus on transferring knowledge and building internal capability

Initially, parts of Project Uplift are likely to be delivered by external specialists, with the SG providing strategic oversight and support with delivery where required.

Over time, and under the guidance of the CEO, the Town's leadership team will play a greater role in planning and delivering workstream progress.

PROJECT GOVERNANCE

As outlined in section 5.41 of the Local Government Act 1995, the CEO is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the Town. Delivering the benefits of Project Uplift will therefore be the responsibility of the CEO, who will be accountable for the project's delivery.

ARIC will receive regular progress reporting on Project Uplift to ensure governance oversight, transparency and assurance of project delivery. While ARIC is not a decision-making body, it will provide governance oversight and make any necessary recommendations to Council as identified in the FIP.

As the project's senior responsible officer, the CEO will have KPIs assigned by Council linked to successful project delivery.

Project Uplift Governance Framework

To support the CEO with project delivery and oversight, an appropriate governance framework will be established.

Without this approach there is a risk that:

- Workstreams operate in isolation
- Resources are stretched across competing priorities
- Project dependencies are unmanaged
- Project delivery slows due to unclear decision pathways
- Intended organisational benefits are not realised

The CEO will chair a Project Uplift SG. Initial membership of the SG will include:

- CEO – Chair
- Director Transformation
- Monitor (observer status only)

Not all Town Directors are proposed to form part of the initial SG. As Project Uplift progresses and the organisation moves beyond the initial stabilisation phase, the CEO may determine that Directors should progressively take a greater role in supporting and leading individual workstreams.

The purpose of the SG is to:

- Provide strategic oversight
- Assist in advancing individual workstreams
- Make decisions within the CEO's delegation
- Monitor project progress and provide guidance
- Monitor project risks and dependencies
- Provide regular reporting to ARIC and Council
- Ensure Project Uplift is communicated effectively to internal and external stakeholders

The SG will act as the central coordinating body for Project Uplift, and during Phase 1 will operate as both the project oversight body and active coordination forum for all critical workstreams.

Project Uplift's success will be underpinned by organisation-wide ownership and collective responsibility. Over time, all Town employees will contribute to delivery and embedding the project's transformational changes.

A small group of Town employees will be selected by the CEO, via an internal EOI, to form a Change Champions Advisory Group (CC). The CC will provide insight, advice and guidance to the SG as required, specifically relating to organisational change.

The Town's Monitor is expected to participate as an observer and adviser to both Council and the CEO.

Collective Responsibility

Initially, parts of the project are likely to be delivered by external specialists, with the SG providing strategic oversight and support. The CEO may also invite external specialists onto the SG as required.

Over time, and under the guidance of the CEO, it is anticipated that the Town's leadership team will play a greater role in planning and delivering workstream progress while continuing to provide high-quality services to the community.

Success Measures

Success in delivering Project Uplift will be measured not only by completion of workstream actions, but by demonstrable improvement across governance, controls, leadership, organisational culture and performance.

Progress should be assessed through:

- Reduction in overdue actions, policy reviews and unresolved audit findings
- Improvement in staff survey results relating to leadership, trust and culture
- Reduction in CEO memoranda, bypass approvals and delegation exceptions
- Reduction in repeat control failures, audit findings and compliance breaches
- Improved Council confidence, community sentiment and organisational reputation

Alignment with Corporate Documentation

Both the OHC and the FIP were completed before the commencement of the current CEO. As part of the development of the PUIP, an assessment of recent audit and corporate review documentation was undertaken to understand the extent to which the findings, recommendations and broader themes identified within those documents were considered and reflected in the OHC and subsequently translated into the FIP.

A copy of the review and the associated documents is attached at Appendix 1.

While the review concluded that there is strong alignment and traceability between the broader themes and systemic issues identified in the supporting documentation, the OHC and the FIP, it is important that oversight of the specific findings, recommendations and actions identified within the underlying corporate documentation is maintained to ensure any required remediation activities continue to be appropriately monitored and addressed.

DELIVERY PHASES

Project Uplift will be delivered over approximately two years, in three phases.

Phase 1 Stabilise (0–6 months)

Purpose: Address the issues identified as being most critical.

Outcome: Delivery of critical priority actions to address immediate control weaknesses and establish foundational governance, financial and system controls.

Phase 2 Control Strengthening (6–12 months)

Purpose: Address issues of high priority.

Outcome: Implementation of core frameworks, procedures, registers and reporting mechanisms across key business functions.

Phase 3 Integration and Capability (12–24 months)

Purpose: Address the issues necessary to ensure long-term sustainability.

Outcome: Alignment of systems, planning, workforce and assurance processes to support integrated decision-making.

At the conclusion of Phase 3, the CEO will focus on embedding, validating and assuring the outcomes of Project Uplift, and returning the organisation to business as usual.

While the broad intent of all three phases is outlined above, the immediate focus of this plan is Phase 1 Stabilise. Phases 2 and 3 are described at a high level only and have intentionally not been developed in detail at this stage.

Most of Project Uplift will be delivered during FY 2026/27 and FY 2027/28.

To support practical delivery and sequencing, Phase 1 Stabilise will broadly occur in three stages:

Stage	Timing	Focus
Stage 1	May – July 2026	• Develop and implement a communications and engagement plan • Commence ERP system end-to-end review • Establish SG and confirm CC membership • Reinforce immediate financial controls • Progress recruitment of new fixed-term Director role
Stage 2	August – October 2026	• Complete ERP system review and consider implementation of review report recommendations • Progress Asset Management review • Commence risk, payroll, procurement and records management workstreams

Stage	Timing	Focus
		• CEO to consider the establishment of Major Projects and Specialist Advisory Body
Stage 3	November – December 2026	• Embed revised controls, validate completed actions, address residual issues • Prepare recommendations and planning assumptions for Phase 2

PHASE 1 / STAGE 1: PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS

Communications and engagement

A comprehensive communications and engagement plan will support Project Uplift, ensuring internal and external audiences are kept informed, understand the purpose for change, and support progress.

Project Uplift Steering Group

The CEO will establish the SG to provide oversight and coordination of Project Uplift.

ERP

ERP stabilisation is foundational to the success of Project Uplift as it directly affects financial integrity, payroll, procurement, information security, records management, long-term financial planning and organisational confidence. An ERP system end-to-end review process has been commenced, which will make a comprehensive assessment of both the corporate and technical aspects of the project's lifecycle.

Recruit a new Director

The FIP identifies a significant program of work to strengthen governance, risk management, accountability and organisational performance and confidence across the Town.

The FIP also identifies the need to strengthen the effectiveness and cohesion of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and establish a stronger 'one organisation' approach, supported by clear roles, behaviours, accountability and leadership alignment.

Given the scale and complexity of Project Uplift, the CEO, ELT and Council will require appropriate support during the next phase of organisational reform.

To support delivery of Project Uplift and priority governance reforms, the FIP recommends establishing a new Director role to lead organisational transformation, coordinate reforms, and provide dedicated executive-level oversight of the work program.

The CEO is progressing the recruitment of a fixed-term executive level resource to fill the role of Director Transformation, who will lead the implementation and coordination of Project Uplift and the broader organisational change program identified in the FIP and any additional outcomes and recommendations that evolve as the transformation program progresses.

Any proposed changes to the organisational structure would be undertaken by the CEO in accordance with their responsibilities under the Local Government Act 1995 and having regard to the Town's Industrial Agreement and relevant policies.

PHASE 1 / STAGE 2: PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS

Completion of the ERP system end-to-end review

The final review report is anticipated to identify system weaknesses, governance gaps, implementation issues, stabilisation requirements and future improvement priorities. Consideration will be given to how and when report recommendations will be implemented.

Progress the Asset Management review

Noting work is already underway across the organisation to support improvements in asset management, further work will be done to ensure there is alignment between asset planning, infrastructure priorities, lifecycle costing and long-term financial planning.

Commence risk, payroll, procurement and records management workstreams

Commencement of key governance and operational improvement workstreams focused on strengthening organisational controls, compliance, accountability and operational discipline across the Town. This includes uplift activities relating to risk management, payroll controls, procurement practices and records management, together with the development and implementation of improved frameworks, procedures, governance controls and reporting mechanisms across key business functions.

Major Projects and Specialist Advisory Body

The FIP identified weaknesses in project governance, procurement, contract management, business case development, asset planning and financial oversight. These issues increase the risk of project cost escalation, scope change, poor value for money, inadequate planning and reduced confidence in the Town's decision-making processes.

In addition to the SG, the CEO may, from time to time, and on a case-by-case basis, establish a Major Projects and Specialist Advisory Body (Advisory Body).

The Advisory Body would support the CEO and Council by providing independent specialist advice, challenge, review and assurance in relation to major projects, significant procurements and other matters involving substantial financial, legal, governance or delivery risk.

The Advisory Body would provide a disciplined, transparent and evidence-based approach to major projects and strategic procurements by ensuring proposals are appropriately scoped, independently tested and supported by robust business cases, realistic cost estimates, appropriate procurement processes and consideration of operational and lifecycle costs. The Advisory Body would also support improved project governance by reviewing matters at key decision points before significant procurement or financial commitments are made.

The Advisory Body would also help reduce the Town's reliance on multiple external consultants working in isolation by providing a more coordinated and accountable source of independent expertise.

The Advisory Body may comprise the following members:

- CEO – Chair
- one or more persons with significant expertise in the delivery of large-scale capital works, infrastructure, or technology projects
- an independent legal adviser with expertise in construction, procurement, and local government matters
- a person with significant expertise in financial management, commercial analysis, and lifecycle costing associated with major infrastructure, capital works, or technology projects

- a person endorsed or nominated by the State Government or the Pilbara Development Commission
- Any other additional specialist advisers considered necessary by the CEO

Importantly, the Advisory Body would not replace the role of Council or management. Rather, it would provide an additional layer of assurance to support better decision-making, strengthen governance, manage risk and improve public confidence that major projects are being planned and delivered in the best interests of the Town and community.

At a time when the Town is implementing significant organisational reform and rebuilding community confidence, having the option for the CEO to establish an Advisory Body is considered an important and practical step in demonstrating the Town's commitment to greater transparency, accountability and value for money.

As part of Project Uplift, the CEO is to determine whether to progress this initiative.

Advisory Body establishment framework

An Advisory Body would be established under section 5.41 of the Local Government Act 1995 (LGA) to provide specialist advice and support to the CEO in discharging responsibilities under regulation 5 of the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996.

Section 5.41 of the LGA provides that the CEO is responsible for implementing Council decisions and managing the day-to-day operations of the local government. In exercising those functions, the CEO may establish an internal and/or external advisory body to support Project Uplift, provided the body is advisory only, has no delegated powers and cannot bind the Town.

The Advisory Body would not be a committee established under sections 5.8 to 5.10 of the LGA, would have no delegated powers and could not bind the Town. Accordingly, an Advisory Body would:

- Report to the CEO and, where appropriate, ARIC and Council
- Be established by the CEO on a case-by-case basis
- Be governed by written Terms of Reference approved by the CEO
- Operate solely in an advisory capacity
- Have no delegated powers or authority to bind the Town

PHASE 1 / STAGE 3: PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS

Embed revised controls, validate completed actions, address residual issues

Embed revised controls, validate completed actions and address residual issues by integrating improved governance, financial and operational controls into business-as-usual practices, testing the effectiveness of implemented changes and resolving any remaining gaps, issues or dependencies identified through earlier workstreams.

Prepare recommendations and planning assumptions for Phase 2

A review of Phase 1 will be completed. Recommendations and planning assumptions for Phase 2, including future workstream sequencing, governance arrangements, resourcing and budget requirements, and organisational capability needs will be prepared.

BUDGET

Successfully delivering Project Uplift and achieving the improvements identified in the FIP will require a significant, organisation-wide commitment over the next two years.

Further work has been undertaken to confirm the scope, timing, delivery model and resourcing requirements for Phases 1 and 2 to develop a considered budget proposal for FY 2026/27. This is anticipated to be approximately $1 million, which is inclusive of the employment costs of the additional Director role.

The FIP makes clear that delivering Project Uplift is not discretionary. The issues identified across governance, financial management, procurement, ERP, asset management, workforce capability and organisational culture are significant and interconnected. Without sustained investment to address these issues, the Town will remain exposed to ongoing control weaknesses, increased organisational risk, inefficient service delivery and reduced community confidence.

Investing in Project Uplift should therefore be viewed as an investment in rebuilding the Town's governance, capability and long-term sustainability, and in ensuring the organisation is better equipped to meet the expectations of Council and the Hedland community.

PROJECT UPLIFT WORKSTREAMS – PHASE 1 STABILISE

Notes on delivery

- The FIP is Project Uplift's primary source document
- Only high-level details of each workstream have been outlined below. Greater detail contained in the FIP is to be used for reporting purposes
- The CEO may revise the Project Uplift delivery plan, including resources, timelines and priorities. Any rephasing, rescoping or deferment will be documented, the risk implications assessed, and the change approved through the appropriate governance pathway

The workstreams outlined below have been identified in the FIP as having a critical priority status.

Workstream theme and high-level actions	Delivery oversight/notes	Tasks	Delivery	Start
ERP stabilisation	CEO			
Initiate and progress end-to-end review	This workstream requires urgent progress. The project is currently under procurement action.	Select provider to undertake review	Out-source via RFQ	Last quarter FY 25/26
Identify and repair information security and privacy weakness	Progression of a number of other Phase 1 workstreams, including payroll, procurement, records management, long-term financial planning and information security, is dependent on the findings and stabilisation actions arising from this workstream.	Identify and repair information security	In-house/ contract specialist	First quarter FY 26/27
Communications and Engagement	CEO		In-house	

Develop a Project Uplift communications and engagement plan including audience segmentation and appropriate key messages Publish regular Project Uplift progress updates for internal and external audiences and ensure visible reporting of completed actions and outcomes Establish regular staff forums, updates and feedback mechanisms to support understanding, ownership and participation	Manager Public Affairs is developing a plan, with the initial focus on providing high level information to staff and the community.	Plan to be developed and implemented		Last quarter FY 25/26 On-going
Asset Management Asset Management Framework Improve asset data integrity	CEO Progression of the Long-Term Financial Plan, workforce planning, capital prioritisation and several other Phase 1 workstreams is dependent on the findings and improvement actions arising from this workstream.	Develop and implement asset management framework Develop data integrity improvement plan	Out-source via RFQ Out-source via RFQ	First quarter FY 26/27 First quarter FY 26/27
Risk Risk Management Framework	CEO	Review framework, update and embed	Out-source via RFQ	First quarter FY 26/27

Risk register		Review register, align to framework, update, embed and ensure sustainable processes		
Establish Major Projects and Specialist Advisory Body	Consideration to be given to establishing a Major Projects and Specialist Advisory Body to manage risk, improve project governance and delivery, and demonstrate the Town's commitment to greater transparency, accountability and value for money.	CEO is to consider the establishment of a Major Projects and Specialist Advisory Body		First half FY 26/27
Leadership and Governance	CEO Note: this workstream is intended to inform Phase 2 and will be further developed by the CEO.			
Progress the recruitment of a Director Transformation				Last quarter FY 25/26
Develop and embed ELT charter and leadership alignment		Develop an ELT charter and leadership alignment framework and embed across organisation	In-house	First quarter FY 26/27
Initiate organisational culture and safety review		Scope organisational review	Out-source via RFQ	Second quarter FY 26/27
Reinforce delegation controls and decision-making accountability		Review and reinforce controls	In-house In-house	First quarter FY 26/27

Strengthen Conflict of Interest governance, disclosure and oversight		Review and strengthen		First quarter FY 26/27
People Strategic workforce plan (SWP) Industrial and employment compliance review	CEO Manager HR is progressing this procurement process.	 Develop plan Desk-top compliance review	 Out-source via RFQ In-house	 Last quarter FY 25/26 First quarter FY 26/27
Financial management Reinforce financial delegation controls Review financial IOPs and SOPs and embed across organisation Implement compliance checks	CEO	 Review and reinforce IOPs and SOPs currently under review by external specialist Implementing compliance checking	 Out-source via RFQ Current In-house	 First quarter FY 26/27 TBC First quarter FY 26/27
Information security Review and refresh information security frameworks Identify and report key information security risks Identify and implement cybersecurity controls Provide security awareness training	CEO Note: Interdependency with ERP	 Review and refresh framework, identify and report risks, implement controls, provide training	 Out-source via RFQ	 First quarter FY 26/27

Corporate compliance and control	CEO Note: Interdependency with ERP			
Records management framework		Develop and implement records management framework	Out-source via RFQ	First quarter FY 26/27
Payroll compliance, controls, repair		Review payroll compliance, controls and make repairs	In-house	First quarter FY 26/27
Procurement compliance and repair - including documentation and audit trails		Review procurement compliance, identify repairs	In-house	First quarter FY 26/27

PHASE 1 EXIT REVIEW

Prior to the completion of Phase 1, the CEO and SG will undertake a formal review of Project Uplift progress and determine readiness to proceed to Phase 2.

This review will consider:

- Completion of critical actions and evidence of implementation
- Any incomplete or deferred actions that should carry into the next phase
- Residual risks and whether the Town is sufficiently stable to progress to high priority actions
- Organisational capability, resource requirements and budget implications
- The proposed scope, sequencing and priorities for Phase 2

REPORTING

Council has directed the CEO to report project progress to ARIC regularly, as outlined in the FIP. This will include using a dashboard and narrative report that highlights timelines and risk management.

It is important to note that oversight for the FIP is a shared responsibility between CEO, ARIC and Council.

Reporting cadence

Director Transformation will support monthly reporting to the SG, aligned to the reporting framework in the FIP. This will include:

- The status of each workstream using a red /amber/green (RAG) rating
- Progress against key milestones and timeframes
- Overdue actions and reasons for delay
- Budget, resourcing and procurement status

- Emerging risks, issues and interdependencies
- Benefits realised and completed actions, including evidence of implementation
- Decisions required from SG or ARIC/Council

The CEO will report regularly to ARIC, aligned to the Reporting Framework in the FIP and include:

- Overall status by workstream theme
- RAG status by action and theme
- Completed actions and evidence
- Overdue actions and reasons for delay
- Delivery risks and dependencies
- Any proposed changes to scope, sequencing or timing
- Matters requiring ARIC or Council decision

ARIC meetings are currently scheduled for 11 August and 24 November 2026. Future dates are yet to be confirmed.

Where appropriate, under their Terms of Reference, ARIC may make necessary recommendations to Council as part of their governance and oversight role.

The SG, via the CEO, should provide a Project Uplift overview report to Council at least quarterly, and/or workshop as required. Quarterly reporting should be aligned to the FIP Reporting Framework, and include strategic progress, key milestones, resourcing issues, and matters requiring Council decision or endorsement.

Council will provide any guidance back to the SG, via the CEO. The CEO and SG will in turn provide guidance to the organisation.

CLOSURE

Across the duration of Project Uplift, the SG will report workstream closures when there is sufficient evidence that the intended control, framework, process or governance change has been implemented and is operating in practice.

A comprehensive closure and validation report will be completed at the conclusion of Project Uplift for ARIC notation and Council endorsement.

Appendix 1: Review of Alignment: Organisational Health Check dated 25 May 2026 and the following relevant corporate documentation:

1. Regulation 17 Internal Audit Review - June 2024
2. Regulation 5 Financial Management Review - October 2025
3. CONFIDENTIAL [Financial Statements Management Letter - 30 June 2025]
4. IT General Controls (ITGC) Management Letter - 30 June 2025
5. Auditors Closing Report - 30 June 2025