



KEMPSEY
Shire Council

DIRECTOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT

14th March 2006

DSDS6 ESD COMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORT
FILE: 298 NDH

SUMMARY:

Reporting to Council on the progress of the ESD Committee.



Background

At its meeting of 14th December 2004, Council resolved to seek expressions of interest from members of the community wishing to join the Agenda 21 Team (now known as the ESD Committee) to comprise of:-

- Nine (9) Community representatives
- One (1) representative of the Aboriginal Community
- Two (2) Councillors
- The Director of Sustainable Development Services or his nominee

Council finalised the appointment of the committee members in May 2005. The Committee consisted of 10 community representatives (including 1 representative of the Aboriginal Community), 2 Councillors and 2 Council staff.

The community members represent a wide range of backgrounds, bringing with them experience and expertise in environmental management, science, education, health, development, planning, agriculture and business.

The community representatives appointed were Roger Gammon, Riitta Kytola, Robert Barnett, Alison Brown, John Jeayes, Jenny

Sproule, Barry Ramke, Douglas Head, Kevin Hill and Gerald Hoskins. Councillors on the committee are Betty Green and John Bowell. The committee is facilitated by Planning Manager Tony Blue and ESD Officer Nathan Hegerty. Kevin Hill has recently resigned from the committee. The committee resolved not to seek a replacement at this stage.

The Committee first met in September 2005 and has met three times since, in October 2005, November 2005 and February 2006. The key outcomes of each of these meetings are detailed below.

27 September 2005

The aim of this meeting was to provide an introductory session for all members of the Committee and formalise a draft set of Committee objectives. A 20-minute introductory video was shown, explaining some of the basic concepts and illustrating ways in which other councils have adopted an ESD culture. A brainstorming session was undertaken to identify key environmental, social and economic issues within the Shire. A list of these key issues are included with the minutes of this meeting in [\(Appendix J\)](#).

25 October 2005

The Draft Committee Objectives were adopted with some changes. One of the main objectives of the committee is to provide advice to Council on the development of a sustainability strategy. The final Committee Objectives are presented with the minutes of this meeting in [\(Appendix K\)](#).

A working draft discussion paper was tabled at the meeting, detailing the issues raised in the first meeting, cross referenced with the 4 key areas in which Council can implement ESD. A draft list of current Council plans, policies and strategies relating to ESD were then compiled and slotted into the matrix where applicable. The aim of this matrix was to identify where deficiencies in Council policies, plans and strategies exist and whether the policies etc. chosen are acceptable in their current condition or require some redirection or modification to suit ESD principles. It was agreed that this working paper be reviewed by the Committee and internal Council staff over the coming months to allow for identification of plans and policies that may have been missed in this initial working draft. A copy of this matrix table is presented in [\(Appendix L - Part 1 and Appendix L - Part 2\)](#).

During this meeting, the Committee put forward a request to determine the possibility of developing a regional approach to sustainability and to investigate the use of the Environmental Levy for funding various functions of the Committee.

22 November 2005

A list of 6 preliminary visions for a sustainability strategy was circulated with the agenda for this meeting for members to review and discuss at this meeting. The discussion resulted in two possible vision statements with a final to be adopted at the next meeting. A copy of these visions are included with the minutes of this meeting in [\(Appendix M\)](#).

A second discussion paper was table at this meeting that provided a draft list of goals, objectives, indicators, targets and actions for each core sector - Environment, Social and Economic, to provide a starting point for the development of a sustainability strategy. This document was put together using some material from a number of other sustainability strategies from other councils and adapted to suit conditions unique to the Kempsey Shire. Committee members were asked to review this document and provide comments at the next meeting.

21 February 2006

The Committee invited a guest speaker to this meeting – Valerie Thompson. Valerie, a regional planner for the Total Environment Centre, has been recently working within a multidisciplinary, technical advisory group for the North Coast Regional Strategy. Valerie gave an informal talk on her experience in implementing ESD principles, practices and strategies into many organisations including local government. This talk was very well received by the Committee and provided additional information on how to go about developing a sustainability strategy. The key notes to come from her talk are provided with the minutes of this meeting in [\(Appendix N\)](#).

Confirmation was provided as to the use of the Environmental Levy. A letter from the Department of Local Government stated that the approval of the Environmental Levy did not require an endorsement of the projects to be undertaken with the additional revenue raised. It also stated that if Council wishes to amend its Environmental Works Program it may do so providing the proper process is undertaken, that the changes are consistent with the rest of the works program and that the community is supportive of the changes.

Discussion for much of the remainder of this meeting concerned the funds available to the Committee from the Environmental Levy, and more specifically that additional funds be provided to strategic planning projects.

Comments on the two discussion papers prepared by Council staff were moved forward to the next meeting. Although there were many positive remarks on these discussion papers, particularly discussion paper 2 – the working draft sustainability strategy, it seems at the closure of this meeting there was a general feeling among the Committee that there was a need to back track a step and develop a series of major community goals/aspirations before proceeding further with this draft strategy.

During this meeting, the Committee resolved that the Director of Sustainable Development Services report to Council on the progress of this Committee, including that the Committee recommends the provision of adequate funding to undertake strategic planning in the 2006-07 Management Plan and 5 year rolling program.

Kevin Hill submitted his resignation to the February meeting. The Committee resolved not to request Council to fill the vacancy.

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- ***Environmental***

By providing a progress report on the functioning of the ESD Committee and ultimately the production of a sustainability strategy, Council will be informed about the problems facing the natural environment in the Shire and the actions required to manage and rectify these problems.

- ***Social***

The ESD committee will strive to build a healthy and vibrant community whereby the community embraces and takes ownership of the principles of ESD. A community that is fully aware and embraces ESD principles are likely to live more harmoniously and sustainably within the Shire.

- ***Economic (Financial)***

Council will need to appropriately resource the ESD Committee program that will include, but not be limited to,

providing public education and promoting the principles of ESD. In the longer term Council should expect significant cost savings from the increased efficiencies resulting from application of ESD principles, while realising sustainable economic development for Kempsey Shire.

- *Policy or Statutory*

Council is charged with applying ESD principals to its activities under the provisions of the Local Government Act. The ESD Strategy is intended to provide direction to the Council's Management plans to produce sustainable activities.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Council note the progress of this Committee; and
2. That the provision of adequate funding be made to undertake strategic planning in the 2006-07 Management Plan and 5 year rolling program.
3. That Council endorse the Committee's recommendation not to fill the vacancy on the Committee caused by the resignation of Kevin Hill.

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R B Pitt
DIRECTOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES