

DIRECTOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT

14th November 2006

DSDS11	STRATEGIC PLANNING PROGRAM
	FILE: 584 RBP

SUMMARY:

Reporting on the progress of strategic planning projects, an internal reorganisation to address the Shire's strategic planning needs and seeking Council's endorsement for revised priorities for 2006 / 07.



Internal Reorganisation

Council would be aware through advice provided in the process of determining the 2006/07 and longer term budgets of a lack of capacity to expand Council's strategic planning functions. This constraint is due to a lack of funding being allocated for additional strategic planning staff.

The ongoing under funding of strategic planning has resulted in a lack of strategic planning strategies needed to underpin future land releases.

Reports to Council in September 2005, March 2006 and July 2006 on the Strategic Planning Program have highlighted the extent to which Council's and the community's expectations and appreciation of the need for a comprehensive program have grown exponentially. With only one designated Strategic Planner, this has resulted in a backlog of projects with allocated funds being continually revoted.

The resignation of the Planning Manager has presented the opportunity to reorganise the Department with the objective of providing increased resources for strategic planning and to ensure that greater focus is placed on integrating strategic landuse planning with Council's Economic Development functions.

To achieve this objective, as a six(6) month interim measure, it is proposed to reorganise the Department by separating Strategic Planning from Development Control Planning under two(2) acting managers. The reorganisation is seen as an interim measure as its success will depend upon recruitment of a suitable Coordinator Strategic Planning and Natural Resources which may be difficult.

Progress and Recommended Priority of Strategic Planning Projects

The following priorities are recommended on the assumption that Council is successful in filling the vacant strategic planning positions to provide the resources necessary to assign a higher priority. Until such time as the positions are filled, the current assigned priorities should prevail.

South Kempsey Industrial Land Local Environmental Study and Local Environmental Plan (Current Priority: High – Recommended Priority: High)

- This study is to investigate land identified in Council Industrial Land Strategy, leading to the rezoning for future industrial economic growth.
- Land west of the highway was previously the subject of a report following a decision of the Land and Environment Court to approve a dwelling house in Sandy Creek Road. The developer was advised that Council would defer further investigation until the developer was able to produce a report indicating the feasibility of the rezoning having regard to the potential impact of noise on the dwelling. No response has been received.
- Consultants have been appointed for preparation of a Local Environmental Study, the owner has indicated his agreement to meet the cost and an inception meeting has been held.
- It is intended to assist with the provision of information and coordination of input from Council as a matter of high priority.

Heritage Study (Current Priority: High – Recommended Priority: High)

- Council resolved at its February 2006 meeting to proceed to exhibition of the Study which was undertaken from 14 June to 12 August 2006.
- Submissions have been received, both in support and opposing listing of several items.
- Following receipt of advice from the Heritage Office criticising the format and level of documentation supporting several proposed listings, the Study requires additional work which is being undertaken by Council staff and is nearing completion.
- A consultant has been engaged to finalise the study, including obtaining advice from the Heritage Office and preparation of the report to Council with recommended means of protection.

- As consistently advised to Council as agreed by the Heritage Committee, listing of items in the LEP will not be recommended against the wishes of landholders.
- The report is expected to be submitted to Council in November 2006.

Residential Land Release Strategy (Current Priority: Medium – Recommended Priority: High)

- This project is required to ensure that an adequate supply of land is maintained to support the expansion of the Shire's towns and villages and to accurately determine the expected future population limits on which the planning for infrastructure will rely.
- A consultant has been engaged to complete this project which is now considered to be a high priority in order to report the draft strategy to Council in early 2007.

Urban Land Capacity Document (Current Priority: High – Recommended Priority: High)

- This document provides the basis for determining the current supply of residential land. A consultant has been engaged to complete this project which is expected to be completed in November 2006.

Kempsey Town Centre Master Plan Review (Current Priority: High – Recommended Priority: High)

- An Action Plan for implementation has been developed including: -
 - i) Development Control Plan Design Guidelines
DCP has been adopted.
 - ii) Incentives Policy
A draft discussion paper has been prepared.
 - iii) Revised Landscape Design Principles
 - iv) Directional Signage Scheme
A Scheme has been prepared by the DSS in consultation with the RTA.
 - v) Review of DCP for signs in the town centre
 - vi) Preparation of Precincts Plans (6 precincts)
 - vii) Town Centre Structure Plan
 - viii) Comprehensive Town Centre DCP
 - ix) Traffic and Pedestrian Plan
 - x) Consultants appointed to review options relating to opening the mall to traffic

Heritage Study Implementation (Current Priority: Medium – Recommended Priority: Medium)

- Implementation of the Heritage Study will involve the preparation of a draft LEP and DCP to list the items and to provide guidelines for development of items. Assuming Council does not resolve to list items against the wishes of owners, the urgency to remove current uncertainty will cease following Council's decision to prepare a draft LEP for other items.
- Other aspects of implementation including processing applications for heritage assistance and planning for next years Heritage Festival will continue as required.

South West Rocks Structure Plan Review (Current Priority: Medium – Recommended Priority: High)

- Effective planning for facilities, infrastructure and reviews for South West Rocks requires the 1995 Structure Plan to be reviewed. The Parsons Brinkerhoff report previously commissioned by Council identified that considerable investigations are needed to update the plan to meet current requirements.
- Investigations that are either currently being undertaken or have been completed that are required to complete the review include:-
 - The Local Environmental Studies for Saltwater and former Shell site;
 - the Spencerville to New Entrance Investigation Area (see below);
 - Saltwater Creek EMP;
 - Saltwater Creek Flood Study
 - SWR Open Space Strategies
 - Preparation of a Stormwater Management Strategy
 - Traffic study
- Upon completion of these investigations, it is proposed to integrate them into an overall review of the Structure Plan that may be required by the Department of Planning prior to proceeding to rezone additional land for residential purposes. Having regard to the expectations of developers and the community this should assume a higher priority than has currently been assigned.

Rural Land Capacity Report (Current Priority: Medium – Recommended Priority: High)

- This document provides the basis for determining the current supply of rural residential land. It was anticipated this project

would commence in August 2006, however, due to vacancies, has not progressed.

- This project should be assigned a high priority due to the considerable interest expressed by people wishing to subdivide and a recent increase in rural residential subdivisions.

ESD Strategy (Current Priority: High – Recommended Priority: High)

- A draft report has been completed which has been referred to the Strategic Planning Group in order to ensure that the draft presented to Council for public exhibition is costed and achievable.
- This requires considerable input from the planning section, as well as other sections of Council and should remain a high priority due to the expectations of the Committee and the community.

Population Projection Document (Current Priority: High – Recommended Priority: High)

- This document provides the basis for quantifying the demand for land for residential growth. A draft has been prepared, utilising census data, building approvals and commencements over the last 6 years that was to be reported to Council in August 2006.
- Due to current vacancies, a consultant has been engaged to complete the report this project which is expected in November 2006.

Saltwater LES and Draft LEP (Current Priority: High – Recommended Priority: High)

- Consultants have been commissioned to prepare the Local Environmental Study. Following Council's adoption of the Saltwater EMP, a draft LES has now been received. Prior to reporting to Council the process will involve a review by Council staff to ensure that all issues have been adequately covered.
- This project should remain a high priority given the expectations of the developer and the community.

Spencerville to New Entrance Investigation (Current Priority: Medium – Recommended Priority: High)

- This land has been identified for long term release in the Residential Land Release Strategy.

- Habitat assessment has been undertaken using vegetation mapping completed in November 2005. A meeting was held with landowners, and with the DEC to determine options.
- The Masterplan for the precinct will then form part of the South West Rocks Structure Plan review which, due to the progression of related projects should assume a high priority.

Standard LEP (Current Priority: High – Recommended Priority: High)

- This plan is required to implement the new LEP template prepared by the State Government as a part of its planning reforms. Council has received grant funding for this project of \$25,000 in the current year with a further \$50,000 to follow over the next 2 years. This funding is conditional upon a draft LEP being prepared for exhibition by March 2007. External consultants have been engaged to help progress this project and an inception meeting was held in October 2006 with a draft LEP expected to be provided by November 2006 for a comprehensive review.
- In order to meet the Department's timeframes, it is necessary to continue to assign a high priority to this project.

Reclassification of Community Land: South West Rocks and Frederickton (Current Priority: Medium – Recommended Priority: High)

- Preparation of the LEP has been pending a detailed analysis of open space needs in South West Rocks and Frederickton. This is necessary to demonstrate where the proceeds of sale of land are to be spent.
- Council has now resolved to place the plans of Management on exhibition which will be carried out concurrently with the draft LEP's pending receipt of Department of Planning approval to exhibit the draft LEP's.

Vegetation Mapping of the Shire (Current Priority: Medium – Recommended Priority: Medium)

- It is proposed to complete mapping all vegetation communities across the Shire over the next 2 years. Stage 1 relating to the coastal strip east of the highway where development pressures are greatest has been completed.
- A medium priority should be maintained as this mapping will provide an information layer for the Standard LEP and also provide a basis for Council's revised TPO. It will also form part of a Sustainable Settlement Strategy (Strategic Land Use Plan) over about a 5 year period.

Rural Residential Land Release Strategy (Current Priority: Medium – Recommended Priority: Medium)

- Council cannot rezone land for rural residential development except in accordance with a Department of Planning endorsed strategy. Council's current Shire wide strategy indicates that there is sufficient zoned land to satisfy the Shire needs. A revised strategy identifying locality-based demand/supply is being developed. Progress on this strategy will follow after the Rural Residential Land Capacity Report is prepared which is reflected in revision of the priority from Medium to High.
- Following completion of the Land Capacity Report, this Strategy should be assigned a high priority due to the considerable interest expressed by people wishing to subdivide and a recent increase in rural residential subdivisions.

Rural Roads Contribution Plan Review (Current Priority: Medium – Recommended Priority: Medium)

- This plan provides significant income for maintaining and upgrading Councils rural roads. However, the plan is complex and difficult to apply, and commits Council to an ongoing maintenance obligation that is not recouped through the plan.
- This plan will be reviewed by the joint section 94 officer.

South West Rocks Contributions Plan (Current Priority: Medium – Recommended Priority: Medium)

- The ongoing growth of South West Rocks, together with the prospect of additional land being zoned for residential development through the Saltwater and former Shell terminal site, gives rise to the need to provide a range of facilities and infrastructure to service the area. It is proposed to commence preparation of specialist study briefs during the exhibition of the LESs with a view to having a contribution plan ready for exhibition upon adoption of any LEP to release additional land, with the Contribution Plans to be in place prior to gazettal of the rezonings.

Other Section 94 Plan Reviews (Current Priority: Medium – Recommended Priority: High)

- All of Councils existing plans require review, and there may be opportunity to levy additional contributions which should assume a higher priority upon appointment of a Contributions Officer.

Beranghi Community Title LEP (Current Priority: Medium – Recommended Priority: Medium)

- This is to facilitate a Community Title subdivision that contains sensitive habitats and archaeological relics. A draft LEP has been prepared and will be reported to Council in November 2006.

Comprehensive DCP Review (Current Priority: Medium – Recommended Priority: Medium)

- Recent changes to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act will require that only one Development Control Plan may apply to any parcel of land, following adoption by Council of the new Standard LEP. All of Council's Development Control Plans will need to be reviewed and brought into compliance with this requirement.

South West Rocks Place Based DCP (Current Priority: Medium Recommended Priority: Medium)

- Recent changes to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act will require that only one Development Control Plan may apply to any parcel of land, following adoption by Council of the new Standard LEP. All of Council's Development Control Plans will need to be reviewed and brought into compliance with this requirement.
- It is likely that the LESs for the rezoning of land in South West Rocks will require implementation of detailed planning guidelines to ensure that development of these lands is carried out in an ecologically sustainable manner. These guidelines would most appropriately be contained within a place based DCP for the area.

Crescent Head Expansion (Current Priority: Low – Recommended Priority: Low)

- The Lands Office has agreed to Council acquiring Land to provide road access, and the applicant has been in regular contact to progress this proposal. Council resolved to prepare this LEP in August 2003, and a number of circumstances have changed since that time, including the decision of the Department of Lands not to proceed with the development of Stages II to V of the Goolawah Estate at this time.
- The draft LEP was referred to the LEP Review Panel. The Panel advised of its refusal to authorize exhibition of the plan.
- It is intended to make representations to the Department of Lands to determine whether they wish to progress the Goolawah subdivision.

Bypass Strategy (Current Priority: Medium – Recommended Priority: Low)

- Whilst actions have commenced, including the Town Entrance Statements project and review of the Kempsey Town Centre Master Plan, funding of an overall coordinated strategy has not been included in the budget. The RTA have not yet released the EIS for the preferred route and given the likely timeframe for construction of the Bypass, and other priorities, it is not proposed to progress this project in the current year.
- Given the intention to elevate other more pressing projects to higher priorities, it is necessary to allocate a lower priority to longer term projects.

Parking Study Review (Current Priority: Low – Recommended Priority: Low)

- Council commenced this review a number of years ago with preliminary findings suggesting that little change to current charges is likely to be necessary. It was proposed to progress the review in August 2006, with possible report to Council in November 2006, however, given staff vacancies and the low priority, no further action has been taken.

Oil Terminal LES and Draft LEP (Current Priority: High – Recommended Priority: Low)

- The draft was presented to Council in September 2006 with Council resolving not to proceed with exhibition until the land has been remediated. On this basis, the project should be assigned a low priority until Council agrees to proceed with exhibition.

Tree Preservation Order Review (Current Priority: High – Recommended Priority: High)

- The revised TPO has been exhibited. Legal advice indicates that some provisions may conflict with the Native Vegetation Act and amendments are needed.
- With additional staff this project should assume a high priority, however, given the extent of the current program and the fact that the existing TPO remains in force, this project should be assigned a low priority until vacancies are filled

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- ***Environmental***

Effective strategic planning is essential to ensure decisions are made to achieve desired environmental outcomes. There are many additional environmental projects that could be pursued, but not able to be resourced.

- *Social*

Social sustainability for future communities requires effective strategic planning. Current resources limit Council's ability to ensure preferred outcomes for future social infrastructure.

- *Economic (Financial)*

Economic development of the Shire requires the preparation of a range of strategies to allow timely release of land and provisions of infrastructure and facilities.

If Council wishes to increase the priority of projects, without reducing others, it will be necessary to provide additional resources to strategic planning.

The current priorities for release of residential land at South West Rocks (Saltwater and former Shell site), industrial land at South Kempsey, combined with demands at Frederickton create a demand for substantial funding of water and sewerage infrastructure within the next 5 years if all 3 areas are to be provided adequate services. The current program does not provide for this.

- *Policy or Statutory*

The purpose of this report is to determine as policy, the priority of all strategic planning projects currently underway. Council continues to receive requests for new projects and if these are to be given priority, other projects will be delayed.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council notes the report and endorse the priorities attached to each project.

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R B Pitt
DIRECTOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES