

DIRECTOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT

18th July 2006

DSDS3	STRATEGIC PLANNING PROGRAM
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SUMMARY:

Reporting on the priority and program of strategic planning projects for 2006 / 07, having regard to available resources.



DESCRIPTION:

Background

Council considered a report on the Strategic Planning Program at its meeting of 14th March 2006. That report provided an outline of the 28 projects in the program, and allocated a priority of High, Medium or Low. This report recommends Council's adoption of a revised program based on progress of existing projects, new projects and Council's adopted 2006 / 07 Management Plan.

Summary

The program recommended in this report provides the following changes from the March 2006 report:

- a) Completed Projects: 2 (2 High Priority)
 - DCP Crescent Head
 - DCP Kempsey Town Centre Design Guidelines

- b) New Projects: 4 (2 High, 2 Medium Priority)
 - ESD Strategy (High Priority)
 - TPO Review (High Priority)
 - South West Rocks Contributions Plan (Medium Priority)
 - South West Rocks Development Control Plan (Medium Priority)

- c) Changed Priority Projects: 3
 - Urban Land Capacity Report (from Medium to High)
 - Standard LEP (from Medium to High)
 - Rural Residential Land Release Strategy Review (from Low to Medium)

- d) Discontinued Projects
- 153 Macleay St, Frederickton LEP (Medium)
 - 145 Old Station Rd LEP (Medium)
 - Old School House, South West Rocks (Medium)

The following table summaries the changes:

	March 06	July 06
High	8	10
Medium	15	14
Low	5	3
Total	28	27

The following provides a description of high, medium and low priority.

High Priority projects are given concerted attention to progress each step and stage of the project.

Medium Priority projects have longer timeframe allowances between steps and stages, with progress being made as time and resources allow.

Low Priority projects are identified as unlikely to receive staff time or resources within the next 6 months.

Staffing

Currently, there is one full time strategic planner position, who under the following recommendations will have carriage of 4 high priority and 5 medium priority projects. The Strategic Planner has at the time of writing this report submitted his resignation to travel overseas. Since September 2005, the duties of 2 development planners were increased to include strategic planning projects.

One of these positions is currently vacant, and is proposed to be replaced with a Planning Co-ordinator in order to increase guidance required for less experienced staff.

The Town Planning Compliance Officer position has also been vacant since March 2006 which has necessitated urgent compliance matters being allocated to the development planners. A new Compliance Officer commenced duties 24th July. The vacant positions are resulting in delays to a number of projects.

The ESD Officer has carriage of the ESD Strategy (High Priority).

If Council wishes to increase the priority of any project, it will be necessary to drop the priority of another project (comparable in work load). Alternatively, Council will need to increase staff resources.

Proposed Strategic Planning Program 2006 / 07

1. STRATEGIES

(a) ***Heritage Study (Priority: High)***

Council resolved at its February 2006 meeting to proceed to exhibition of the Study. The exhibition period is from 14 June to 12 August and has involved significant staff time, including letters to owners, responding to enquiries and holding of four separate community workshops. There is likely to be many submissions, and consequent time to assess and report to Council, which is anticipated to be in October 2006.

To assist implementation of the Heritage Study, a number of Heritage Protection activities have been progressed. Approval of 6 applications for heritage assistance totaling \$10,000 has been granted, with applications to be called for the next round in October 2006. Planning for next years Heritage Festival will commence in September 2006. As a direct consequence of the MIDGOC Strategic Alliance, it is proposed to seconde the Heritage Officer from Port Macquarie Hastings Council again to assist this process.

(b) ***Kempsey Town Centre Masterplan Review (Priority: High)***

The Review document has been prepared by consultants. Following consideration of the document, the project has been transformed into an action plan comprising:

- i) Development Control Plan Design Guidelines
DCP has been adopted.
- ii) Incentives Policy (Priority: High)
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) Clyde Street Mall Options Paper (Priority: High)
Awaiting determination of the Coles DA
- xi) Post By Pass Planning: Smith Street
- xii) Funding: Special Rates Levy

Progress on these actions has stalled following the resignation of a development planner. It is anticipated that items ii) and x) will be progressed over the next 6 months, with the other actions dependent upon staff resources.

(c) Residential Land Release Strategy (Priority: Medium)

The North Coast Regional Environmental Plan provides that Council must release land for residential development in accordance with a Department of Planning endorsed Strategy. Council's current strategy was adopted in 1997, and is currently under review.

The Strategy review will follow on from preparation of the Population Profile, Population Projection Document and the Land Capacity Report (see below). Timelines have been developed for each of these, indicating a Draft Residential Land Release Strategy scheduled to be presented to the Council meeting in February 2007, to enable public exhibition.

(d) South West Rocks Structure Plan Review (Priority: Medium)

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. 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 and the SWR Open Space Strategies are providing the information needed to progress the Structure Plan review.

Preparation of a Stormwater Management Strategy has been commissioned to identify methods of ensuring future development has a net positive impact on water quality in Saltwater Lagoon. It is proposed to undertake a traffic study in the near future to feed into a review of the Structure Plan.

Following review of the Structure Plan, a place based DCP or Masterplan for South West Rocks, together with a

Contributions Plan will need to be prepared to guide development and ensure recovery of costs for the provision of services.

(e) *Bypass Strategy (Priority: Medium)*

Potential impacts of the Kempsey Bypass require Council to be well placed in its planning for this event. 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.

(f) *Vegetation Mapping of the Shire (Priority: Medium)*

It is proposed to complete mapping all vegetation communities across the Shire over the next 2 years. Stage 1 is the coastal strip east of the highway where development pressures are greatest. Consultants were commissioned with a draft report reviewed in June / July and final report to be submitted in August 2006. 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.

(g) *Parking Study Review (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 is proposed to progress the review in August 2006, with possible report to Council in November 2006.

(h) *Rural Residential Land Release Strategy (Priority: Medium)*

Council cannot rezone land for rural residential development except in accordance with a Department of Planning endorsed strategy. Progress on this strategy will follow after the Rural Residential Land Capacity Report is prepared which is reflected in revision of the priority from Low to Medium (see below).

(i) *ESD Strategy (Priority: High)*

Council resolved in July 2004 to prepare an ESD Strategy, with a committee first meeting in October 2005. Preparation of this strategy is resource intensive, being undertaken by the ESD

Officer, and has required considerable input from the planning section, as well as a range of other sections of Council.

2. STUDIES

(a) *Population Projection Document (Priority: High)*

This document provides the basis for quantifying the demand for land for residential growth. A draft has been prepared, utilizing census data, plus building approvals and commencements over the last 6 years. It is anticipated the document will be reported to Council in August 2006.

(b) *Urban Land Capacity Document (Priority: High)*

This document provides the basis for determining the current supply of residential land. A preliminary draft has been prepared, with an information report to Council anticipated in September 2006.

(c) *Rural Land Capacity Report (Priority: Medium)*

This document provides the basis of determining the current supply of rural residential land. It is anticipated this project may commence in August 2006, with a draft to be potentially reported to Council in December 2006, depending on the current planning vacancy being filled.

3. STATUTORY PLANS

(a) *Saltwater LES and Draft LEP (Priority: High)*

Consultants have been commissioned to prepare the Local Environmental Study. Additional studies were identified as being necessary in September - October 2005. These Studies are Wallum Froglet habitat analysis and the climatic monitoring / noise and odour study for determining an appropriate buffer to the Sewerage Treatment Plant. A report to Council to go to exhibition will follow Council adoption of the Saltwater Estuary Management Plan. This is anticipated for September 2006 following endorsement of the EMP by government agencies.

(b) *Oil Terminal LES and Draft LEP (Priority: High)*

Consultants have been commissioned to prepare the Local Environmental Study. The Local Environmental Study will be reported to Council following adoption by Council of the Saltwater EMP. It is anticipated that the LES will be reported to the September 2006 meeting.

(c) *Heritage LEP (Priority: Medium)*

Following exhibition and adoption of the Heritage Study, implementation of its recommendations requires preparation of a draft LEP and DCP, for public exhibition. Preparation of the draft LEP is not expected to commence until after September 2006.

(d) *Spencerville to New Entrance Investigation (Priority: Medium)*

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. These include "bio-banking", proceeding to detailed flora and fauna assessments, and potential for land dedication to National Park. No written response has been received from DEC as yet, and this will be pursued over the next month. It is difficult to determine the timing of this project; however, there is sufficient information now to provide an upper and lower estimate for the potential dwelling yields for this area that can be used for the Residential Land Release Strategy. The Masterplan for the precinct will then form part of the South West Rocks Structure Plan review.

(e) *South Kempsey Industrial Land Local Environmental Study and Local Environmental Plan (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 is the subject of separate report on the future of this project following a decision of the Land and Environment Court to approve a dwelling house in Sandy Creek Road.

A study brief has been prepared for land east of the highway, for preparation of a Local Environmental Study. Expressions of interest will be sought from consultants in July 2006. It will then be necessary to seek agreement from the landowner to meet the cost of preparation of the LES.

(f) *Standard LEP (Priority: High)*

This plan is 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. It is proposed to utilize external consultants to help progress this project with a draft brief to be prepared in July 2006.

4. SECTION 94 PLANS

Council has endorsed the employment of a joint section 94 planner with Bellingen and Nambucca Councils. It is anticipated that an appointment will occur by October 2006. It is intended to liaise with the other 2 councils to determine a priority order for preparation of new section 94 plans, and a timeline.

(a) *Rural Roads Contribution Plan Review* (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.

(b) *South West Rocks Contributions Plan* (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.

(c) *Other Section 94 Plan Reviews* (Priority: Low)

All of Councils existing plans require review, and there may be opportunity to levy additional contributions. Priority for these is low and will follow after preparation of the above plans.

5. MINOR LEPS

(a) *Reclassification of Community Land: South West Rocks and Frederickton* (Priority: Medium)

Preparation of the LEP is 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.

(b) *Beranghi Community Title LEP* (Priority: Medium)

This is to facilitate a Community Title subdivision that contains sensitive habitats and archaeological relics. A draft LEP has been prepared and is likely to be exhibited during August 2006.

(c) *Crescent Head Expansion (Priority: Low)*

The Lands Office has agreed to Council acquiring the road, 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. It is proposed to refer the proposal to the LEP Review Panel to determine if it is supported by the Department, having regard to Council's Residential Release Strategy and the need to leapfrog land owned by the Department of Lands to reach this land. It may be necessary for progress on this rezoning to await review of the Residential Land Release Strategy.

6. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLANS

(a) *Comprehensive DCP Review (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 (see 3(g)). All of Council's Development Control Plans will need to be reviewed and brought into compliance with this requirement.

(b) *South West Rocks Place Based DCP (Medium)*

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.

7. OTHER PROJECTS

(a) *Tree Preservation Order Review (High Priority)*

Council resolved in April 2005 to undertake a review of the Tree Preservation Order. Following Stage 1 of the Vegetation Mapping Project, a review of the TPO was undertaken and reported to Council in June 2006. The revised TPO is on exhibition and is expected to be reported to Council in September 2006.

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