

DIRECTOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT

13 February 2007

DSDS2

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROGRAM

FILE: 584 RBP

{ Folio No. * }

SUMMARY:

Reporting on the progress of strategic planning projects for 2006/07.

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Internal Reorganisation

To address the restricted capacity of Council to deliver a comprehensive strategic planning program increasingly being expected by Council and the community, it was reported to Council in November 2006 that the resignation of the Planning Manager presented the opportunity to reorganise the Department with the objective of providing increased resources for strategic planning.

To achieve this objective, a six (6) month interim measure, the Department was reorganised by separating Strategic Planning from Development Control Planning under two acting managers. The reorganisation was seen as an interim measure as its success depended upon recruitment of a suitable Coordinator Strategic Planning and Natural Resources. Unfortunately after 6 months of advertising, no suitably experienced and qualified applicants were attracted.

In order to attract the necessary skills and experience, it is proposed revert to the previous structure and seek to appoint a Manager Planning and Natural Resources. Having regard to the apparent lack of strategic planners which is being experienced industry wide, it is proposed to appoint a Town Planner responsible for both development control and strategic planning functions with the existing planners also to be responsible for both functions.

Progress and Recommended Priority of Strategic Planning Projects

It is recommended that the current priorities be endorsed, pending appointment of the Manager Planning and Natural Resources and Town Planner. Upon appointment to the positions, a revised program will be presented to Council for endorsement.

South Kempsey Industrial Land Local Environmental Study and Local Environmental Plan (Current 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. The developer has agreed to fund a Noise Study and quotes are currently being sourced from suitable consultants.
- Land east of the highway is also currently being reviewed by consultants and a draft of the Local Environmental Study is expected to be presented to Council for internal review in February 2007.
- 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)

- A report was submitted to Council in January 2007, whereby Council resolved to proceed with the amendment to the Local Environmental Plan, listing unopposed heritage items which have been forwarded to the Department of Planning seeking an authority to exhibit the draft plan.

Residential Land Release Strategy (Current 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.
- At this stage it is unclear what the affect the guidelines for preparing Local Growth Management Strategies, required under the Mid North Coast Regional Planning Strategy, will have on the format and timing of the review.

Urban Land Capacity Document (Current Priority: High)

- This document provides the basis for determining the current supply of residential land. A consultant has been engaged, a draft of the

Urban Land Capacity Report was received in November with the final report expected in February 2007.

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

- An Action Plan for implementation has been developed including: -

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

The consultants review concerning options relating to the opening of the mall to traffic has been received. Additional information has been requested on traffic volumes for consideration of the Town Centre Master Plan Committee.

Heritage Study Implementation (Current 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.

LEP amendments have been sent to the NSW Department of Planning.

It is intended to seek EOIs from consultants to prepare a DCP relating to all items identified in the Heritage Study, included those to be listed in the LEP.

South West Rocks Structure Plan Review (Current 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.

- 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)

- 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.
- At this stage it is unclear what the affect the guidelines for preparing Local Growth Management Strategies, required under the Mid North Coast Regional Planning Strategy, will have on the format and timing of the review.
- Upon appointments been made to fill current vacancies, 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)

- At the November 2006 meeting, Council endorsed the Draft ESD Strategy for the purposes of public exhibition. The draft strategy has been on public exhibition which will close 15 February 2007.
- A final ESD Committee meeting is scheduled for 22 February 2007, with a final report to be submitted to Council at the March 2007 meeting.
- Ongoing monitoring and coordination will be required from the planning section for the implementation of the strategy.

Population Projection Document (Current Priority: High)

- This internal working document provides the basis for quantifying the demand for land for residential growth and is a component of both the residential and rural residential land release strategies.
- A draft report has been submitted to the planning section for review.

Saltwater LES and Draft LEP (Current 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.
- The draft LES has been reviewed by the Strategic Planning Group and other Council technical offices. Comments on the draft have been forwarded to the consultants for review prior to presenting the draft LES to Council to adopt for the purposes of public exhibition.
- This project remains a high priority given the expectations of the developer and the community.

Spencerville to New Entrance Investigation (Current 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.
- 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.
- A Landscape Ecology Specialist Study brief has been prepared in consultation with the property owners. Expression of Interest will be invited to undertake the study in February 2007.

Standard LEP (Current 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.
- Council has been working to the Department of Planning's schedule and a draft Standard LEP has been reviewed with comments provided back to the consultants. A second draft is expected in March 2007.
- Having regard to delays in obtaining the requirements of government departments, the Department may consider reviewing the March 2007 deadline.

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

- The Department of Planning has forwarded approval to exhibit a draft LEP. It is expected that this plan will be placed on exhibition early 2007 which will include the need for a public hearing.

Vegetation Mapping of the Shire (Current 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.
- Stage 2 of the Vegetation mapping of the Shire has been progressed with an invitation to provide Expressions of Interest to undertake the works currently being advertised. Closing date for submissions is 15 February 2007. A consultant is expected to be engaged March 2007.

Rural Residential Land Release Strategy (Current 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.
- This strategy has not progressed due to position vacancies.
- At this stage it is unclear what the affect the guidelines for preparing Local Growth Management Strategies, required under the Mid North Coast Regional Planning Strategy, will have on the format and timing of the review.

Rural Roads Contribution Plan Review (Current 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 is currently under review by the joint Section 94 Project Officer with the review to be prioritised in consultation with Nambucca and Bellingen Councils.

South West Rocks Contributions Plan (Current 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.
- This plan is currently being considered by the joint Section 94 Project Officer with the plan to be prioritised in consultation with Nambucca and Bellingen Councils.

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, subject to the plans of Nambucca and Bellingen being given equal consideration.

Beranghi Community Title LEP (Current 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.
- Due to staff vacancies this project has been delayed.

Comprehensive DCP Review (Current 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.
- Due to staff vacancies this project has been delayed.

South West Rocks Place Based DCP (Current 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.
- Due to staff vacancies this project has been delayed

Crescent Head Expansion (Current 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.
- A letter requesting the Department of Land's intentions was forwarded in November 2006. Council was advised by letter in December 2006 that the General Manager Crown Land will be liaising with Council on this matter. No further advice has been received and it is intended to press for a reply.

Bypass Strategy (Current 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)

- 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: Low)

- 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), 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 note the report and endorse the recommended priorities attached to each project.

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R B Pitt
DIRECTOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES