

Report of Planning and Economy to the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday 19 December 2016

PE6 – Draft South West District Plan

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TRIM 9035

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The purpose of this report is to advise Councillors of the public exhibition of the Draft South West District Plan, provide a brief outline of its contents and make recommendations for the discussion of the plan with Councillors with a view to the making of a formal submission.
- The draft District Plan has been prepared by the Greater Sydney Commission is on exhibition until the end of March, 2017.
- Council will need to consider the content of the Draft District Plan in the review of its Community Strategic Plan and can use some feedback from the community to assist in the preparation of a submission.
- Under legislation, a person who makes a relevant planning application or public submission is required to disclose any reportable political donations. The disclosure requirements extends to any person with a financial interest in the application or any associate of the person making a public submission. No disclosure of political donation has been made in association with the draft plan or any potential submission.
- It is recommended:
 - That Council note the exhibition of the Southwest district plan and welcome this new way of planning which genuinely involves local government in district level planning, invite the District Commissioner, Sheridan Dudley, to address Council and the community on the content of the district plan at the February community forum.
 - That a workshop be held to discuss the district plan and what should be incorporated into Council's submission on the plan.
 - That Council staff commence preparation of a housing strategy using existing budgets where possible, noting that this will have implications on the delivery time for other projects.

REPORT

In December 2014 the New South Wales government released A Plan for Growing Sydney. This plan included a commitment from the government to work with local council's to prepare six district plans. Wollondilly Council is located in the south west district along with the councils of Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield and Liverpool.

Early in 2016, the Greater Sydney Commission was established to provide a link between metropolitan level planning undertaken by the Department of Planning and Environment and local level planning undertaken by councils.

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During the course of 2016 several council staff participated in technical working groups which were used by the Greater Sydney Commission to provide input into the preparation of the draft district plans. The technical working groups were also attended by staff from the Department of Planning and Environment, Transport for New South Wales, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Industry for New South Wales and other government agencies were included in the technical working group process when matters relevant to them were discussed.

The Greater Sydney Commission also undertook a substantial community engagement program which included a meeting with the previous council of Wollondilly Shire as well as particular community groups and general engagement with the community through social media, community events and meetings with industry associations.

The draft district plan translates and tailors metropolitan level planning for each district by giving effect to the four goals of a plan for going Sydney:

- Goal 1: A competitive economy with world class services and transport.
- Goal 2: A city of housing choice, with homes that meet our needs and lifestyles.
- Goal 3: A great place to live with communities that are strong, healthy and well connected.
- Goal 4: A sustainable and resilient city that protects the natural environment and has a balanced approach to the use of land and resources.

To do this, the draft plan interweaves these goals by describing proposed priorities and actions for the district in terms of 'A Productive City' (Goal 1), 'A Liveable City' (Goals 2 & 3) and 'A Sustainable City' (Goals 3 and 4).

The Southwest district plan has been prepared as a living document to better navigate the issues influencing greater Sydney until 2036. To do this the draft district plan has been prepared with a 40 year vision (i.e. until 2056) in mind. This aspect of the draft district plan requires an amendment to A Plan for Growing Sydney which is on exhibition alongside the draft district plan so that feedback around the concept of greater Sydney as a metropolis of three cities can inform the review of A Plan for Growing Sydney. Further to this, Transport for New South Wales will develop the Future Transport Strategy and Infrastructure New South Wales will review the State Infrastructure Strategy to align with a plan for growing Sydney. This approach will not only allow for a better and more integrated outcome for greater Sydney but also a more transparent approach for stakeholders.

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For local government the draft plan will inform the preparation of local environmental plans, inform assessments or planning proposals and guide strategic land use, transport and infrastructure planning across areas. The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 requires local environment plans to be updated to give effect to each district plan as soon as practical after a district plan is made. This process may require a comprehensive review to reflect the local government area priorities identified in each district plan and to allow for more targeted engagement of these priority areas. The plan says that this approach will also help councils to manage resources.

While the draft plan is on public exhibition until the end of March the draft district plan will not be finalised until at least the end of 2017 to allow it to be aligned with the review of A Plan for Growing Sydney.

One key focus of the draft district plan is around the significant game changer in terms of city structure and implementation found in the proposed western Sydney airport. The draft district plan discusses the potential opportunities arising from the Western Sydney City Deal which aims to bring the Australian, New South Wales and local government's together with a common purpose to have a measurable impact on the productivity, liveability and sustainability of the South West District.

It is difficult to summarise the 161 page draft district plan into a short Council report. Highlights for Wollondilly include the recognition of productive agricultural lands, the recognition of Wilton New Town as a declared growth area, recognition of the need for improved road transport infrastructure in the South West district and of the need for improved public transport services.

At the October Council meeting Council resolved as part of its submission on the Greater Macarthur Priority Growth Area highlighted the need for an additional road between Campbelltown and Camden. The draft district plan includes an action to build the Badgally transport connection and a separate action to prioritise the planning of Spring Farm Parkway. Both of these projects will relieve traffic pressure on Narellan Road and reduce the amount of traffic using Wollondilly roads to avoid Narellan Road.

Council has also regularly advocated for the need to provide public transport services at the same time as growth occurs. The Draft District Plan includes an action for the New South Wales government to prepare a threshold for Greenfield Dwelling numbers based on transport provision. This means that a threshold limiting the number of houses that can be erected prior to the provision of public transport would be applied to growth areas if this requirement remains in the final plan.

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The draft district plan includes a specific action to facilitate jobs growth in Wilton New Town in line with population growth. The plan says that "Wilton New Town has the capacity for more than 8,000 new jobs once it is fully developed with the capacity for more than 7,300 new jobs planned in a centre at Wilton Junction. We need to create jobs in a range of industries including retail, education, trades and services industries and light in the street with in the Wilton New Town. To help create these jobs, growth must be supported by infrastructure provided at the right time with the right level of capacity in line with population and economic growth. Some of the major transport infrastructure improvements that have been identified to support Wilton New Town include the widening of sections of Picton Road and the M 31 Hume motorway, upgrading the Picton Road/M 31 into change and new rapid bus services to Campbelltown MacArthur." It is noted that the job numbers quoted in the draft District Plan are significantly below Council's long held goal of 1 job per dwelling.

The draft district plan includes a section on retaining and growing the agricultural, horticultural and rural industry. This section acknowledges the range of agricultural and rural activities occurring and the importance of their proximity to Sydney markets. The plan also notes that residents of the South West district identify strongly with both their rural visual landscape and its remaining agricultural use which provide a sense of belonging.

The liveability chapter outlines numerous liveability priorities and actions for the South West District. These include improving housing choice, improving housing diversity and affordability, coordinating and monitoring housing outcomes and demographic trends, creating great places (not just building houses), fostering cohesive communities and responding to people's need for services.

One particular action that will impact all Council's is a requirement that councils will need to prepare local housing strategies. These local housing strategies will need to consider:

- The planning principles and directions in A Plan for Growing Sydney.
- Capacity to support the five year housing target.
- Capacity to support the strategic housing needs of the local government area for the next 20 years.
- Local demographic and socio-economic characteristics.
- Local housing market including the feasibility of development for different housing types.
- Development staging and market take up rates and how these align with demand.
- Challenges and opportunities relating to infrastructure provision.
- Urban form and place making.
- Accessibility of housing to employment opportunities.

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- Ways to address housing diversity that respond to the needs of the existing and future local housing market leading opportunities for, and blockages to housing diversity and adaptability.
- Opportunities to improve housing affordability.
- The prospective displacement of existing affordable housing.
- Opportunities for additional capacity around strategic and district centres and other areas with good transport connectivity and service provision.
- Specific local market complexities including addressing ways to incentivise the provision of larger group homes, smaller homes for singles and couples, intergenerational homes and medium density housing required by the local community.
- Consider ways to provide adaptable housing in accordance with design guidelines by Liveable Housing Australia.

This action in the Draft District Plan more clearly enunciates the requirements of A Plan for Growing Sydney. It appears very likely that this action will remain in the finalised District Plan and it is therefore recommended that council staff commence scoping the resources required and work involved with the preparation of a housing strategy prepared in accordance with the requirements of the draft district plan. It must be noted that there is currently no budget allocation for the preparation of a housing strategy and its preparation will negatively impact on the assessment and processing of planning proposals. Alternatively Council may wish to consider the allocation of additional resources to undertake this task.

The draft district plan also includes discussion on how councils are to increase housing capacity across the district. The draft district plan includes the following specific item applying to the Wollondilly local government area. It says.

The (Wollondilly) council will:

- Monitor the delivery of Wollondilly's five year housing target of 1,550 dwellings recognising proposal's progressing in Picton, Tahmoor and Thirlmere.
- Should the need for additional housing capacity be identified investigate local opportunities to address demand and diversity in and around local centres and infill areas.
- Continue to progress work on the Greater Macarthur Priority Growth Area in partnership with Campbelltown Council and the Department of Planning and Environment.
- Continue to progress work on the Wilton New Town priority growth area in partnership with the Department of Planning and Environment.

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It is not known why this section of the draft plan does not acknowledge other residential growth already in progress at Silverdale, Warragamba, the Oaks, Oakdale, Bargo, Menangle and Appin.

The draft District Plan proposes the implementation of affordable rental housing targets to be secured by the relevant planning authority and passed on to registered community housing providers to manage. In this regard the commission encourages the New South Wales government to bring forward its own land to maximise affordable housing. The draft plan also include separate actions to increase social housing provision.

The draft Districts Plan includes actions to create great places and encourage design lead planning Better Places (October 2016). This policy seeks to deliver design excellence and a safe, equitable and sustainable built environment. The Draft District Plan also proposes actions to plan for safe and healthy places and enhance walking and cycling connections. It seeks to reinforce the need to conserve and enhance environmental heritage including Aboriginal, European and natural heritage. The draft plan also sets out a plan to meet the demand for school facilities. The draft plan acknowledges that the districts 172 government schools are characterised by high utilisation rates and a significant amount of demountable classrooms. The draft district plan outlines ways in which it is proposed to support planning for health facilities and services, emergency services and cemeteries and crematoria.

This sustainability chapter of the draft District Plan outlines a list of sustainability priorities including, but not limited to, enhancing the South West in its landscape, protecting the natural beauty of the visual landscape and improving protection of ridgelines and scenic hill scenic landscapes. There are also detailed actions on protecting and enhancing biodiversity, minimising impacts on biodiversity and protecting, enhancing and extending the urban canopy.

The draft plan includes the expected types of actions in regards to monitoring and protecting the water quality within the streams and rivers of the South West district. Of particular note is the action S5 to monitor water levels and water quality in Thirlmere Lakes. There is a commitment from the office of the environment and heritage to develop a program of research and monitoring changes in water levels at Thirlmere Lakes, the effects of water levels on the world Heritage values of Thirlmere Lakes and explore and evaluate any remedial action.

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The draft district plan includes a significant section on managing the metropolitan rural area. The metropolitan rural area has a range of environmental, social and economic values, landscapes, habitat and biodiversity, mineral and energy resources, water supply catchments, tourism and cultural assets and areas of productive agriculture. It also supports small rural villages and areas of low intensity residential development providing opportunities for people to live in a rural setting. The draft plan notes that there is widespread support for the continuation of agricultural production in the metropolitan area. For this to be achieved it is important to recognise existing and potential conflicts between the different land uses and activities and the various pressures on continuing agricultural production. The draft District Plan takes the approach of recognising the pressures as a dynamic force that can be harnessed and redirected to achieve social, economic and environmental and benefits. The plan recognises that it is not a matter of planning to avoid tensions between activities - these activities are already interspersed - it is instead of a challenge to manage these interactions and develop approaches to distribute costs and benefits equitably, in the context of defined outcomes. The conclusion of the draft District Plan is that given the complexity and variation across the area a design lead response is likely to be more appropriate than relying on generic criteria for managing the multiple interests and values, activities and conflicts that vary from locality to locality. Design lead planning is a proactive, consultative planning process that identifies a desired outcome for each project.

The draft District Plan also seeks to discourage urban development in the metropolitan area. It says that in general urban development in the metropolitan area will not be supported unless the relevant planning authority has undertaken strategic planning in accordance with sustainability priorities seven and eight. Sustainability priority 7 is to consider environmental, social and economic values when planning for the metropolitan area. Sustainability priority 8 is to provide for rural residential development while protecting the values of the metropolitan area. The plan provides more detail on each of these priorities.

There are many more individual strategies and a considerable amount of information included in the draft plans. A full list of actions identified in the plan is attached to this report.

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

There is some overlap between the issues discussed in the Draft District Plan and Council's Community Strategic Plan which will be reviewed next year. Ideally these plans should educate each other to further align planning. Council will be able to use much of the feedback from community engagement on the Community Strategic Plan to assist in the preparation of its submission on the Draft District Plan.

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CONSULTATION

No formal consultation has been undertaken in regard to this report. The Greater Sydney Commission is seeking feedback on the Draft District plan. Including feedback from Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No funding has been allocated for any of the tasks allocated to Council under this plan. From a quick review it would appear that the tasks for Council are able to be delivered by existing staff resources, however this will cause some delays to other strategic planning work, particularly the assessment and progression of planning proposals.

ATTACHMENTS IN A SEPARATE BOOKLET

1. List of implementation and monitoring actions, productivity actions, liveability actions and sustainability actions.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council note the exhibition of the Southwest district plan and welcome this new way of planning which genuinely involves local government in district level planning.
2. That Council invite the District Commissioner, Sheridan Dudley, to address Council and the community on the content of the district plan at the February Community Forum.
3. That a Workshop be held to discuss the district plan and what should be incorporated into Council's submission on the plan.
4. That Council staff commence preparation of a housing strategy as required by the draft district plan, using existing budgets where possible, noting that this will have implications on the delivery time for other projects. Should additional funds be required that they be requested through the December quarterly review.