

9.4 Strategic Plan - Alstonville and Wollongbar

Delivery Program Strategic Planning

Objective To outline a process for the preparation of a place-based strategic planning framework for the urban areas of Alstonville and Wollongbar.

Background

The local strategic planning framework for the urban centres of Alstonville and Wollongbar is currently addressed in Council's Ballina Shire Local Growth Management Strategy (2012), the Ballina Local Environmental Plan 2012, the Ballina Local Environmental Plan 1987 and the Ballina Shire Development Control Plan 2012. However, the centres are not currently subject to place-based strategic plans (similar to those prepared for Lennox Head, Wardell and Ballina).

As part of our broader program of preparing locality based strategic plans for our urban areas in Ballina Shire, it is proposed that Council prepares strategic plans for Wollongbar and Alstonville during 2016 and 2017.

Council's current Delivery Program and Operational Plan include a task to review the planning framework for Alstonville (Action HE3.1.2b), and the Ballina Shire Growth Management Strategy identifies a number of strategic actions for these centres including:

- Investigation of opportunities for seniors living and aged care.
- A review of planning controls for the Alstonville commercial centre following the construction of the Alstonville Bypass.
- Maintaining the urban buffer / inter-urban break between Wollongbar and Alstonville,

To address the above, it is proposed that Council prepares individual strategic plans for Alstonville and Wollongbar. Although the Delivery Program and Operational Plan for 2015/16 does not specifically reference Wollongbar, it is suggested that it is appropriate to consider both urban areas during a similar timeframe from an overall Plateau planning perspective, and also given the historic relationships between the two areas (including the application of the Alstonville-Wollongbar urban buffer).

Importantly, the proposed projects are not intended to directly address the concept of the third plateau village or rural planning issues on the Alstonville Plateau (outside the immediate interface with the villages and the existing urban buffer). Rather, it will be more focused on the identity and composition of the existing urban areas.

This report outlines a proposed approach to the strategic plan projects and seeks Council's direction on the delivery of the proposed program during 2016 and 2017.

Key Issues

- Establishment of place-based strategic plans for urban areas in Ballina Shire.
- Community engagement
- Identification of community identity, character, aspirations and desired outcomes
- Review of key aspects of the local planning framework as they relate to Alstonville and Wollongbar over the forthcoming planning period.

Information

It is proposed that the preparation of strategic plans for Alstonville and Wollongbar will follow a similar model to that employed in preparing the Wardell Strategic Plan during 2015 and 2016. It will also draw on elements of the process underpinning the recent Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy.

In summary, the following approach is proposed:

- Preparation of individual strategic plans for Alstonville and Wollongbar (whilst there are shared relationships between the centres, each community will have the opportunity to define its own character and identity as well as aspirations).
- Engagement with each community in relation to elements including significant locational factors, key issues and opportunities, and future aspirations.
- Preparation of a planning and environmental study (for each place) to gather key information to support engagement with the community and preparation of a strategic planning document.
- Preparation of a strategic plan that identifies the vision for the future of each community and key strategic actions to be potentially undertaken by Council and other agencies over the coming 10 to 20 year period.

As a guide, the following matters are likely to be key factors for consideration in preparing the plans:

- There is anecdotal evidence that the urban populations of Alstonville and Wollongbar are undergoing significant change in terms of their demographic characteristics.

New residents moving into these centres appear to have a younger demographic profile than was previously the case. It is noted the Australian Bureau of Census and Statistics is scheduled to undertake the Federal Census later this year, which would verify this. However, it is not known whether that data will be available during the anticipated project period.

- Alstonville and Wollongbar are surrounded by State and regionally significant farmland which also has high scenic and environmental values.

The Alstonville-Wollongbar urban buffer is associated with a significant planning history in relation to its establishment and ongoing application. As such, it forms part of the identity and character of the Plateau centres.

- There is potential for infill development to occur in parts of Alstonville and Wollongbar, subject to the adequacy of services and infrastructure being assessed. There may also be interest from landholders outside the existing centres in relation to “greenfield” urban development.

It is proposed that the plans will be prepared based on a conventional visioning process which considers the key questions:

- Where are we now? (taking stock of existing circumstances)
- Where are we going? (looking at trends)
- Where do we want to be? (identifying community vision and aspirations)
- How do we get to where we want to be? (identifying actions to achieve desired outcomes).

Sustainability Considerations

- **Environment**
Environmental, social and economic issues of relevance to both the Alstonville and Wollongbar communities will be considered in detail in the proposed planning and environmental studies.
- **Social**
As above
- **Economic**
As above.

Legal / Resource / Financial Implications

It is anticipated that the delivery of the proposed strategic planning program (including the community engagement program) for Alstonville and Wollongbar will incur a total cost of approximately \$20,000. It is anticipated this cost can be accommodated within the existing resources of the Strategic and Community Facilities Group during 2016 and 2017.

It is proposed that the delivery of the strategic plans will be staggered, commencing with Alstonville in July or August of 2016, with Wollongbar commencing thereafter as resources permit. Both projects are planned to be substantially completed by the end of June 2017.

Consultation

The following community engagement elements are proposed as part of the preparation of the strategic plans.

- Key community individuals and groups will be engaged to provide an early opportunity for these stakeholders to provide information about their community.
- The broader community will be engaged in relation to the planning and environmental studies and the strategic plans utilising various engagement techniques which may include surveys, web based information, structured workshop forums, street stalls, postcards and the like.

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- Formal public exhibition of the draft strategic planning documentation, including associated community and stakeholder feedback mechanisms.

Options

Confirmation is sought from Council with respect to the initiation of the proposed strategic plan preparation program as outlined in this report.

By way of options, it is open to Council to proceed with this project, place it on hold for a period to be nominated, or not proceed. It is recommended that Council initiate the project on the basis that the work is consistent with both the existing and draft Delivery Programs and Operational Plans. The project forms part of an ongoing program to engage our shire communities and compile place-based strategic plans. Moreover, the preparation of the plans can be completed within the existing resources of Council's Strategic and Community Facilities Group, with input from our other Groups.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council proceed with the preparation of place-based strategic plans for the urban areas of Alstonville and Wollongbar as per the contents of this report.

Attachment(s)

Nil

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280416/1 RESOLVED

(Cr Ben Smith/Cr Paul Worth)

That Council proceed with the preparation of place-based strategic plans for the urban areas of Alstonville and Wollongbar as per the contents of this report.

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.