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14 March 2011

Dear Councillor/Sir/Madam

You are invited to attend an **STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE** of Ashfield Council, to be held at the Haberfield Library, 78 Dalhousie Street, Haberfield on **TUESDAY 22 MARCH 2011** at **6:30 PM** or at the conclusion of the Community Services Committee.

Yours faithfully

VANESSA CHAN  
General Manager

**SEE ATTACHED AGENDA**

**AGENDA**

- 1. OPENING**
- 2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LOCAL INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY**
- 3. APOLOGIES/REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE**
- 4. CONDOLENCE AND SYMPATHY MOTIONS**
- 5. MOMENT OF PRIVATE CONTEMPLATION**
- 6. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Disclosures to be made by any Councillors who have a pecuniary / non-pecuniary interest in respect of matters that are before Council at this meeting.  
(22/03/2011)

- 7. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF COUNCIL/COMMITTEES**

**NIL**

- 8. STAFF REPORTS**

8.1 Strategic Town Planning Issues - Australian Local Government Conference

- 9. GENERAL BUSINESS**

- 10. CLOSE**

# ASHFIELD COUNCIL

## STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 22 MARCH 2011

### 8 SUMMARY OF STAFF REPORTS

- 8.1 Strategic Town Planning Issues - Australian Local Government Conference. Ron Sim - Manager Strategic Planning & Projects. Report submitted.  
(10/03/11)

Urban Planning

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**SPC 8.1 Attached**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council note the contents of this report and consider making a resolution on one or more of the issues detailed in the report for the 2011 Australian Local Government Conference.**

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|--------------------|---|
| <b>Subject</b>     | <b>STRATEGIC TOWN PLANNING ISSUES - AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE</b>  |
| <b>File Ref</b>    | Urban Planning  |
| <b>Prepared by</b> | Ron Sim - Manager Strategic Planning & Projects   |
| <b>Reasons</b>     | For Council to consider making motions dealing with strategic town planning matters at the Local Government Conference (LGC). |
| <b>Objective</b>   | To inform Council of key strategic town planning matters as a basis for submitting motions to the LGC                         |

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### Overview of Report

**The Australian Local Government Conference is coming up shortly and Councils are required to submit their motions by early April.**

**Strategic Town Planning staff have provided some comment on issues Council may wish to consider for discussion at the Conference.**

### Background

The Australian Local Government Conference is an opportunity to inform the national political agenda on town planning issues that affect Ashfield and the wider metropolitan area.

The following areas are discussed for Council's consideration;

- Population
- Transport
- Housing
- Employment and productivity
- National Urban Policy
- Development Assessment
- Sustainability

#### Population

*Sustainability* should be a guiding principle for population growth. In relation to Sydney for example, this means:

1. Carefully regulating the amount and speed of population growth
2. Implementing critical infrastructure upgrades.
3. Expanding employment to be commensurate with increases in population.
4. Promoting renewable energy through more incentives.
5. Protecting productive agricultural land.

**Strategic Town Planning Issues - Australian Local Government Conference**

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6. Considering developing new regional cities as a “counter magnet” to Sydney.
7. Ensuring new buildings are “green”.

Transport

Major investment in public transport in Sydney is required.

The following extract is recent quote from Sydney Morning Herald -

*“Western Sydney will be choked by traffic congestion if substantial business investment and public transport are not introduced for its million extra residents by 2036. About 380,000 jobs will have to be created west of Homebush when Sydney's population grows to 6 million in 25 years. But with 80 per cent of full-time western Sydney workers currently using their cars to get to work and a third of workers leaving the region, there will still be 650,000 people driving to work. That is providing the 380,000 local jobs are created - if not, the number of drivers will reach a million.*

*Phillip O'Neill, of the University of Western Sydney's urban research centre, said Sydney was at capacity for its current level of infrastructure. He said the state government was well behind in planning for half of Sydney's population, or 3 million people, to be living in the city's west by 2036.*

*“To establish a proper public transport system takes 20 years, so every year you delay it there will be more congestion and more frustration,” said Professor O'Neill, adding the focus of Sydney's transport system needs to shift to regional centres. He is calling for an investment in amenities to make it desirable for firms to relocate to places such as Parramatta, Penrith and Liverpool. With most of the arterial roads at capacity, an orbital system linking all the freeways is also needed.*

*The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) said a big gap was the indecision on a second airport for Sydney.”*

Possible Options

- (a) Investment needs to be directed into getting more people off the roads and on to public transport in Sydney. An option could be to consider progressively implementing congestion taxes similar to London/Stockholm for non-essential vehicles whose destination for example is the Sydney CBD – a quid pro quo, however, is that public transport needs to also be upgraded to cope with increased patronage.
- (b) Do not permit employee car parking in association with new office space in city centres.
- (c) Improve public transport as a priority including construction of new & improved rail links + dedicated bus lanes along transport corridors. Provide more local commuter park and ride car parks, etc. This expenditure should arguably take priority over expenditure on roads?
- (d) Make a decision on a second Sydney airport as soon as possible as this will determine/clarify both regional and local transport options for Sydney.
- (e) Re - introduce tolls on the M4 Western freeway and use funds to finance improvements to public transport?
- (f) Promote the growth of regional centres so that traffic destination patterns are changed and pressure on arterial roads decreased.

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- (g) Build orbital rail and road links in Sydney to take the pressure of radial routes and change travel patterns.

Housing

- (a) State Government to reconsider ‘decentralisation’ policies to reduce/slow growth of major cities and urban areas.
- (b) Introduce legislative means for councils to “capture” a proportion of the increased value of land when “upzoning” occurs or uses that are otherwise prohibited are allowed via the Part 3A (State Government) Development application process. ‘Value capture’ to be expended on public infrastructure.
- (c) Allocate additional resources to increase the supply of affordable housing and allow mechanisms in local planning laws that permit Councils to offer development incentives for proposals that dedicate affordable housing to community housing providers.
- (d) Consider the introduction of “inclusionary zoning” (routinely practiced in UK and USA) whereby developers are legally required to provide a proportion of new dwellings as affordable housing – e.g. when land is rezoned or when larger developments are approved.
- (e) Better coordinate land supply releases for housing in new growth areas to reduce housing costs and improve the provision of community infrastructure in these areas.

Employment and productivity

- (a) Support flexible zoning policies that will encourage business investment e.g. enterprise zones where a wide range of compatible land uses are permitted.
- (b) Avoid creating artificial planning barriers to investment which are not justified by local circumstances (e.g. policies such as the Draft NSW Centres Policy). A “one size fits all” approach does not necessarily provide a good platform for encouraging investment in employment growth.

Development Assessment

- (a) Retain merit based development application assessments for larger, more complex applications that will have significant environmental impacts rather than expanding “tick the box” complying development processes promoted by the State Government which may result in poor development outcomes.
- (b) Note: The speed of determination of applications should not be the most important criteria - rather; it is timely processing **and** quality development outcomes that are important.
- (c) Review development assessment processes so that local communities are not “sidelined” by state processes that allow developments having significant local impacts to bypass local planning laws.

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*Examples:*

- (a) Introduce a mechanism in NSW requiring referral of development applications in NSW to Joint Regional Planning Panels (JRPP's) only where refusal of the application is contemplated by a Council.
  
- (b) Review value thresholds for development referred to JRPP's in NSW so that smaller developments having local impacts are dealt with by Councils.

**Sustainability**

Mandate more detailed and performance orientated policies for energy efficient buildings (i.e. go beyond the current basic BASIX provisions). Critically review the Building Code of Australia to assess whether additional energy efficiency measures for new buildings are desirable.

**Financial Implications**

None

**Other Staff Comments**

N/A

**Public Consultation**

N/A

**Conclusion**

Council has an opportunity to influence the State and National political agenda at the upcoming Australian Local Government Conference on issues canvassed in this report. Any motion made on these issues will assist in igniting debate on important strategic town planning matters that will also have ramifications locally for the quality of life in Ashfield and the wider Sydney region.

**ATTACHMENTS**

There are no supporting documents for this report.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council note the contents of this report and consider making a resolution on one or more of the issues detailed in the report for the 2011 Australian Local Government Conference.**

PHIL SARIN  
Director Planning and Environment