

IN2 - Update on the Wollondilly Open Space, Recreation & Community Facilities Strategy

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the implementation of the Wollondilly Open Space, Recreation & Community Facilities Strategy adopted by Council in May 2014.
- The report includes recommended minor amendments to update the Strategy; an attachment that provides status updates on the Strategy's Implementation Plan; and a recommended method for reporting on the Strategy through the quarterly report process.
- This report recommends that:
 - Council endorse the proposed amendments to the Open Space, Recreation & Community Facilities Strategy for appending to the Strategy and that these amendments be addressed as part of the work that GLN Planning is currently undertaking for Council in their preparation of draft development contributions plans for both the Wilton Priority Growth Area (WPGA) and the wider Wollondilly Local Government Area.
 - Council adopt the proposed minor amendments to the Open Space, Recreation & Community Facilities Strategy (as per recommendation 1) through its future adoption of the development contributions plans for both the Wilton Priority Growth Area (WPGA) and the wider Wollondilly Local Government Area.
 - Council note the Implementation Plan and Strategic Actions Status Updates tables and that these tables be appended to the Open Space Strategy to enable annual status updates.
 - Council consider the outstanding Strategic Actions during the development of the 2019/20 Operational Plan.
 - A status review of the Implementation Plan and Strategic Actions be undertaken on an annual basis and reported to Council.
 - Council note the efforts of the organisation to deliver on the Implementation Plan and Strategic Actions in the midst of competing priorities.

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REPORT

BACKGROUND

Adopted by Council in May 2014, the Wollondilly Open Space, Recreation & Community Facilities Strategy (the Strategy) has helped to guide the planning, delivery and management of public open space, recreation and community facilities across the Wollondilly Shire.

The Strategy provides a strategic framework to ensure the provision of open space, recreation and community facilities reflects the current needs of the community and meet the future growth expectations, having been prepared based on a review of the Shire's current and predicted demographics and the Wollondilly setting.

In summary, the Strategy identifies ten best practice Guiding Principles that principally focus on accessibility, quality, multi-functionality, co-location, visibility and sustainability. It also provides an Implementation Plan which is underpinned by four Strategic Themes of:

- Making More of What We've Got
- Ensuring That All Members of the Community Benefit
- Achieving Value for Money
- Matching Provision to People.

The Implementation Plan that is contained within the Strategy focuses on the upgrade, extension or creation of high level open space, recreation and community facilities.

While Council continues its work towards the high level recommendations (which often require larger capital project budgets), it should be noted that many on-the-ground works that have occurred since the Strategy adoption, led by the Guiding Principles and Strategic Themes, are at the lower neighbourhood and local level. Projects that sit at these local levels are not explicitly identified in the Strategy and, therefore, cannot be a clear measurement of the Strategy's implementation.

Large scale implementation of the Strategy has been tempered since its introduction in 2014 with Council undertaking a major campaign of asset maintenance and renewal, structuring its capital works programs around asset renewal, particularly in the Transport related assets.

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However, the allocations for both Open Space and Buildings has grown so that more significant renewal works can be undertaken plus major development growth within the Shire is leading to challenges and opportunities with development and funding of new infrastructure and embellishment of existing facilities. Recent examples include the roll out of the first of the public amenity replacements as well as the construction of a multi-use facility at Willis Park, Oakdale and an Inclusive Play Space at Warragamba (keeping to the themes set out in the Strategy).

Although the life of the Strategy was developed with the intent of it being a 10-15 year Strategy, these influencing factors mean it is timely to undertake a preliminary review the Strategy to maintain its relevancy and to continue tracking its implementation.

At its meeting on 16 April 2018, Council resolved:

'That a report come to Council in relation to the 2014 Wollondilly Open Space, Recreation & Community Facilities Strategy by the 16 July 2018 Ordinary Council Meeting that addresses the following:

1. *Status update on the overall strategy and any changes that need to be addressed and the progress on implementation against the recommendations in the Implementation Plan.*
2. *Recommendations for opportunities to prioritise delivery of the recommendations in the Implementation Plan including:*
 - a. *Early priorities for delivery within the Implementation Plan.*
 - b. *Acquisitions, consolidation and rationalisation and method for undertaking this process (as outlined in the strategy).*
 - c. *Identified opportunities for funding.*
3. *A reporting process for progress of implementation, including an action plan with timeframes, that can be considered for inclusion in the Quarterly Report process'.*

The following section of this report is provided in response to this Council resolution.

PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF STRATEGY

A preliminary review of the Strategy has been undertaken and the ten Guiding Principles and four Strategic Themes remain relevant and most appropriate for guiding Council's planning, delivery and management of open space, recreation and community facilities.

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Attachment 1 identifies a number of recommended amendments to the Strategy which do not propose to significantly alter the direction or intent of the Strategy. It is proposed that these recommended amendments be addressed as part of the work that GLN Planning is currently undertaking for Council in their preparation of draft development contributions plans for both the Wilton Priority Growth Area (WPGA) and the wider Wollondilly Local Government Area.

STATUS UPDATE AND PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Guiding Principles and Strategic Themes identified within the Strategy continue to be integral to all of the planning, delivery and management of open space, recreation and community facilities that Council undertakes.

As noted previously in this report, Council has undertaken a number of projects since the adoption of the Strategy that are not at the higher level (e.g. regional and district) and, therefore, are not identified in the Strategy's Implementation Plan. These projects have been planned and delivered in accordance with the Strategy's Guiding Principles and Strategic Themes and include the:

- renewal of public amenities
- installation of outdoor exercise equipment
- installation of public water stations
- renewal of local playgrounds
- construction of a BMX pump track
- establishment of a RV Friendly trial site
- development and adoption of master plans at Picton Sportsground, Wilton Recreation Reserve and Douglas Park Sportsground.

The Strategy supports the development of master plans to ensure that the provision of open space, recreation and community facilities involves a comprehensive and holistic planned approach rather than a series of isolated, one-off decisions. As such, a total of 22 master plans have been identified and a priority program aligned to funding the top six priorities has recently been identified and incorporated into the 2018/19 Operational Plan.

The Strategy also provides an Implementation Plan for the major high level regional and district facilities proposed for open space. A status update on the items listed within the Implementation Plan is provided as Attachment 2 to this report.

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In addition to the Implementation Plan, the Strategy recommends that Council pursue the following nine broad scale strategic actions:

- A Landscape Character Study
- Tree Replacement Strategy
- Corridors and Trails Strategy
- Open Space Planning and Design Guidelines
- A Shire-wide Sports Strategy
- An Acquisition and Rationalisation Strategy
- Update of the Section 94 Open Space Contributions Plan
- A Play and Youth Strategy
- Integration of Open Space with Council's Tourism Strategy.

Attachment 3 provides an update on these strategic actions and a proposed delivery program for developing the strategies. Those identified as high priorities are currently being undertaken; however, it should be noted that many of these recommended strategies are not currently identified in Council's Delivery Program and are hence currently not funded.

It is recommended that consideration be given to identifying these strategic actions including resourcing and funding within the 2019/20 Operational Plan.

The final section of the Strategy suggests a means for delivering the Implementation Plan and is summarised as:

- Early Priorities in Delivery
- Acquisition, Consolidation and Rationalisation
- Funding the Plan.

In response to 'Early Priorities', it is recommended that Council:

- Undertake the recommended Strategy updates (which includes updating the asset inventory list) in accordance with Attachment 1.
- Pursue the development of master plans in accordance with a master plan priority list. This will result in a total of six high priority master plans being funded and undertaken in 2018/19. The resulting master plans will enhance Council's chances of obtaining external grant funding for their implementation and provide a documented plan to direct future capital works budget through the annual planning process.
- Continue to pursue the strategic actions that are identified in Attachment 3 and include in future Operational Plans (noting the top three high priorities are currently underway).

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In response to 'Acquisition, Consolidation and Rationalisation', it is proposed that the preparation of a Consolidation Strategy be undertaken as per the estimated timeframe in Attachment 3 and that the approach follow the 'Checklist for Acquisition and Consolidation' contained within the Wollondilly Open Space, Recreation & Community Facilities Strategy.

In response to 'Funding the Plan', the implementation of the Strategy will continue to be undertaken in accordance with the following funding mechanisms (as recommended in the Strategy):

- Section 94 contributions
- Council rates/loans/revenue
- State and Federal government programs and funding
- Levies and special charges
- Joint venture arrangements with private organisations and other authorities
- Sponsorship.

Lastly, the final aspect of the 16 April 2018 Council resolution requests that a reporting process be proposed for 'inclusion in the Quarterly Report process'. To address this, it is recommended that the tables provided as Attachments 2 and 3 be updated and reported annually.

CONSULTATION

This report has been prepared in consultation with the Infrastructure Strategy & Planning team.

The Wollondilly Open Space, Recreation & Community Facilities Strategy was developed in conjunction with an extensive community consultation program.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposal to undertake minor amendments to the Wollondilly Open Space, Recreation & Community Facilities Strategy, via incorporating this into the project scope for the current work that GLN Planning is undertaking on the draft development contributions plans for both the Wilton Priority Growth Area (WPGA) and the wider Wollondilly Local Government Area, may result in a financial variation to the existing contract. This is considered to be of minimal financial impact.

Should Council wish to progress any of the strategic actions that are not currently already being undertaken by Council staff, to a timeframe that is ahead of the 2019/20 Operational Plan, consideration will need to be given to funding an external consultant to undertake the work.

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ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED IN A SEPARATE BOOKLET

1. Proposed amendments to the Wollondilly Open Space, Recreation & Community Facilities Strategy
2. Status Update on the Wollondilly Open Space, Recreation & Community Facilities Strategy Implementation Plan
3. Strategic Actions Status Update.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Council endorse the amendments to the Open Space, Recreation & Community Facilities Strategy (refer Attachment 1) for appending to the Strategy and that these amendments be addressed as part of the work that GLN Planning is currently undertaking for Council in their preparation of draft development contributions plans for both the Wilton Priority Growth Area (WPGA) and the wider Wollondilly local government area.
2. That Council adopt the proposed minor amendments to the Open Space, Recreation & Community Facilities Strategy (as per recommendation 1) through its future adoption of the development contributions plans for both the Wilton Priority Growth Area (WPGA) and the wider Wollondilly Local Government Area.
3. That Council note the Implementation Plan and Strategic Actions Status Update (as per Attachment 2 & 3) and that these tables be appended to the Open Space Strategy to enable annual status updates.
4. That Council consider the outstanding Strategic Actions during the development of the 2019/20 Operational Plan.
5. That a status review of the Implementation Plan and Strategic Actions be undertaken on an annual basis and reported to Council.
6. That Council note the efforts of the organisation to deliver on the Implementation Plan and Strategic Actions in the midst of competing priorities.