

## **2.4 DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES - BULLSBROOK, GIDGEGANNUP AND UPPER SWAN**

(Gidgegannup and North) (Community Planning)

### **KEY ISSUES**

- The WAPC meeting on 29 September 2009 considered a request to rezone the Gidgegannup Townsite from Rural to Urban under the MRS. The WAPC decided to request the City of Swan to provide a “formal resolution of Council” as to its views and priorities for development within the City generally and the provision of information pertaining to Gidgegannup specifically.
- The WAPC further resolved that decisions relating to the rezoning of land to Urban or Urban Deferred in Bullsbrook, Gidgegannup and Upper Swan will be made in the context of the Urban Development Program, the Urban Growth Management Plans and Structure plans for the North-Eastern Sub-Region currently being prepared by the Commission.

It is recommended that Council advise the WAPC that the City's priorities for development remain as enunciated in the City's Urban Growth Policy endorsed on 24 May 2006. Further, the City will support the development of Bullsbrook, Gidgegannup and Upper Swan when it is satisfied that constraints in these areas can be overcome and necessary infrastructure can be provided. In this regard the City provides no priority order for urban development in rural areas.

### **BACKGROUND**

The WAPC Meeting on 29 September 2009 considered a request to rezone the Gidgegannup Townsite from Rural to Urban under the MRS. The WAPC decided to request from the City of Swan a “formal resolution of Council” as to its views and priorities for development within the City generally and the provision of information pertaining to Gidgegannup specifically.

In order to establish a view on future development of Bullsbrook, Gidgegannup and Upper Swan, it is necessary to consider the following aspects for each of the areas:

- a) The strategic planning context;
- b) The availability of infrastructure;
- c) Economies of scale required to ensure the viable provision of infrastructure; and
- d) Mitigation of constraints on the land.

The overall strategic context includes the Urban Growth Policy adopted by Council on 24 May 2006. This policy outlines priority areas for urban growth within the City of Swan as:

*“3.2 Priority areas for urban growth will be:*

- a) *Areas that contribute to urban consolidation, infill development and rejuvenation of existing urban areas;*
- b) *Areas zoned "Urban" under the Metropolitan Region Scheme and for which substantial planning has commenced or been endorsed by the City of Swan and the W A Planning Commission and appropriate Town Planning Scheme urban zones have been applied or have been initiated at the time of adoption of this Policy; and*
- c) *Areas within the urban growth corridor between Caversham and Ellenbrook.*

*3.3 Other areas identified for urban growth will be subject to the timeframes and planning requirements stated in the respective regional planning strategies".*

The Council report of 26 May 2006, which led to Council adopting the Urban Growth Policy also notes that "The City does not have the authority or ability to determine the sequence of development beyond that which is set out by the identification of future urban areas in WAPC Regional Planning strategies and application of MRS Urban and Urban Deferred zones". (p.5).

In terms of rural priorities, Bullsbrook, Gidgegannup and Upper Swan have been identified as areas for urban growth within the North-East Corridor Extension Strategy (NECES) and North Eastern Hills Settlement Pattern Plan (NEHSPP).

The NECES suggests Bullsbrook and the Upper Swan are not envisaged for urban expansion until 2021.

The NEHSPP projects an increase in population in the proposed Hinterlands (which includes Gidgegannup) by approximately 11,642 people by 2026.

The NECES was endorsed by the WAPC in 2003 and the NEHSPP in 2002. In August 2009 the State's draft spatial framework, *Directions 2031*, closed for public comment. The City outlined within its submission the lack of direction the document provided for rural priorities.

In October 2008 the WAPC released a Media Statement on the North East Corridor which indicated support for the consolidation of existing settlements – Bullsbrook first, then Gidgegannup on the basis of consolidated, tight, urban development to improve the infrastructure of the area and public transport to Midland. The statement indicated that proponents for townsite development in Gidgegannup would be required to investigate the use of sustainable design practices, identify opportunities to create local employment, provide opportunities for diverse and affordable housing and pursue feasible and appropriately funded public transport systems to reduce reliance on private vehicle trips.

An implementation method of *Directions 2031* is the preparation of growth management strategies to provide more detailed planning and guide future development within each sub-region. It is anticipated that this document will supersede the existing WAPC endorsed strategies identified above and may potentially change the State's growth priorities.

In this regard, Council needs to be aware that this potential change in State direction may have an impact on future development of the City generally and on rural zoned areas particularly.

## **REPORT**

Considering the aforementioned background, each of the three rural areas is addressed in more detail:

### **Bullsbrook**

The development of the Bullsbrook area is currently guided through the State Government's NECES and the more recently published draft spatial framework, *Directions 2031*, as well as the Council endorsed *Bullsbrook Townsite and Rural Strategy*. Each of these documents and their impact on future development are discussed below:

#### **North East Corridor Extension Strategy (July 2003)**

In July 2003 the Commission published the NECES to provide guidance on land use planning within the north-eastern region spanning from Upper Swan to Chittering.

As part of the Strategy the Bullsbrook townsite area was identified for future urban development, with expansion to occur "northwards to approximately Wandena Road" that takes "into account the existing urban fabric, the wastewater treatment plant, the golf course and the noise from the RAAF Base Pearce" (pg.31). It was recognised, however, that constraints may limit the development of the townsite northwards, and "consideration should be given to locating (development) east or possibly south of the townsite" (pg.32).

The study also indicated the need to provide for a strategic general industrial site/employment node south of the RAAF Base Pearce (pg.4).

The strategy recommends that the development of the townsite should be facilitated by the City of Swan through "a review of its 1998 Town and Environs Plan to show how, in conceptual terms, Bullsbrook can be expanded northwards to accommodate some 10,500 people in total" (pg.32).

A reference on page 30 states that land for 30,000 people should be ready for development "about" 2021. The NECES also provides for the rate of development to be brought forward if certain matters are addressed, including the provision of local employment. In this context it should be noted that the City is keen to pursue employment growth in the town through the appropriate zoning of industrial areas for expansion of the town's industry base.

#### **Bullsbrook Townsite and Rural Strategy (City of Swan 2009)**

As an implementation method of the NECES the City prepared the *Bullsbrook Townsite and Rural Strategy* which was endorsed by Council in September 2008. The Rural Strategy identified an area of land surrounding the existing townsite for potential future urban development.

The review will be completed through current work being undertaken by the City in the preparation of a Townsite Planning Context Report. This report will:

- Comprehensively assess the opportunities and constraints for urban and industrial development within the Bullsbrook townsite area, including infrastructural and environmental constraints;
- Consider the viability of servicing and developing the existing urban zoned land compared to the potential benefits the inclusion of the proposed industrial area and future urban area to the south (of which the extent will have to be determined) may have on feasibility and the sustainability of the area; and
- Provide guidance on the required economies of scale to ensure the feasible provision of essential services.

The report will therefore encourage the development of the existing townsite, and industry commercial area to the south of the RAAF Base, as a first step. The investigations will include the larger townsite area to determine the extent of appropriate urban development based on a comprehensive analysis of opportunities and constraints.

The local constraints to the future development of an urban area include buffer zones of an existing and proposed resource extraction area, as well as significant water, sewage and electricity infrastructure shortfalls. Therefore, the only way to ensure that the development pressures in Bullsbrook result in the optimal outcome for the community and the City is through a comprehensive planning process described above.

### **Directions 2031 – Spatial Framework for the Perth and Peel Regions (July 2009)**

The draft *Directions 2031* spatial framework indicates that the City's population is projected to grow by approximately 40,000 people over the next 25 years. Whilst internal population projections are significantly higher than this, the intent of the State's draft policy to control the release of urban land to meet population demands and achieve strategic objectives should be recognised.

In response to *Direction 2031* City officers have completed detailed calculations of the proposed dwelling yield associated with existing urban zoned land within the City of Swan. Based on these calculations it appears that the City has sufficient urban zoned land to accommodate the population increase projected in *Directions 2031* if the population projections are accurate and the land becomes available at times to meet market demand.

The adoption of *Directions 2031* may therefore impact on the expected timeframe for development within the area.

### **Gidgegannup**

The primary strategic documents currently in place for this area include the North Eastern Hills Settlement Pattern Plan (WAPC 2002), the Gidgegannup Rural Strategy (City of Swan 2006) and the Gidgegannup Brigadoon Place Plan (City of Swan 2004). In addition to these the Commission is currently considering *Directions 2031* as a spatial framework for the Perth Metropolitan Area, which will have implications on the development of Gidgegannup area.

### **North Eastern Hills Settlement Pattern Plan (WAPC 2002)**

The NEHSPP indicates that “the hinterland of Gidgegannup appears suitable for the expansion of the Gidgegannup townsite” (pg.34). This document also indicates that the small townsite option considered appropriate for Gidgegannup would support a total population “in the order of 4,000 persons (to) ensure such settlements are more sustainable than rural-residential or village style settlements” (pg.29).

The NEHSPP further notes “Growth should initially be directed to the existing townsites, including Gidgegannup, in order to increase their sustainability, utilise the metropolitan infrastructure network, and increase the use of existing community facilities and services” (pg.37). The NEHSPP then goes on to note that the appropriate staging of development will be dependent upon the time at which the existing town sites are nearing sustainability, the proposed development is sustainable, the development will not exceed infrastructure capacity and economic, social and environmental impacts are acceptable to key stakeholders. The report further notes that the staging of development may be brought forward if defined issues can be adequately addressed.

### **Gidgegannup Rural Strategy (City of Swan 2006)**

The Gidgegannup Rural Strategy (GRS) indicates a specific precinct south of Toodyay Road that was deemed suitable for the expansion and development of the Gidgegannup townsite. The land allotments within this precinct are now primarily owned by Port Bouvard and are the focus of proposed future development.

The GRS provides a vision and a series of objectives for the Gidgegannup Townsite Precinct. These objectives are primarily focused on the sustainable, co-ordinated and integrated development of the townsite precinct and strong recognition of the surrounding environmental values.

### **Gidgegannup/Brigadoon Place Plan (City of Swan 2004)**

The Gidgegannup/Brigadoon Place Plan is a strategic document that was developed in consultation with the local community to create a picture of what is important to the Gidgegannup community and to assist in greater understanding of the local social, economic and environmental issues, opportunities and priorities.

The community consultation that was undertaken as part of this document indicated “strong support for the development of the Gidgegannup townsite with provision of basic infrastructure.”

### **Infrastructure Provisions**

#### *Proposed Waste Water Management*

Port Bouvard have proposed to manage wastewater within the Gidgegannup townsite through a self-contained wastewater treatment facility that will service only their development. It is proposed that this facility will be constructed at the cost of the developers, but will be owned and operated by a private company licensed to do so by the Economic Regulatory Authority.

The proposal for wastewater management has not been clearly articulated in Port Bouvard's “Gidgegannup Masterplan”. Without a clear indication of the financial, operational and managerial implications of the proposal, and whether or not these are acceptable to the relevant authorities, the City cannot take an informed view on

whether those proposals are appropriate. Irrespective of this, the City does not intend to assume responsibility for the provision or operation of such a facility.

#### *Scheme Water Availability*

Port Bouvard has proposed to connect the Gidgegannup townsite area to scheme water through a connection to the Perth-Kalgoorlie pipeline via Mt Helena. It is understood that the Gidgegannup townsite is not included within the Water Corporation's Capital Investment Programme and as such any works will be required to be pre-funded by the developers.

The City of Swan has advised Port Bouvard through their representatives that a Developer Contributions Area would be required over the subject site as part of any amendment to Local Planning Scheme 17. The subsequent developer contributions plan will need to address the apportionment of soft and hard infrastructure costs and may need to include the provision of scheme water to the Gidgegannup townsite area if this is not achieved through a condition of subdivision.

#### *Electricity Infrastructure Upgrades*

Port Bouvard have proposed to upgrade the transmission and distribution network to the Gidgegannup area, as major reinforcements are required and the system is already beyond capacity. Port Bouvard's representatives have advised that the costs of the proposed reinforcement of electricity infrastructure will be funded by the developer.

### **Upper Swan**

The strategic direction for Upper Swan is guided by the same documents as Bullsbrook being the NECES, *Directions 2031* and *Bullsbrook Townsite and Rural Strategy*. Each of these documents and their impact on future development of Upper Swan are discussed below:

#### ***North East Corridor Extension Strategy (July 2003)***

The NECES conceptually identifies land in the Upper Swan for urban development. The strategy does not provide a definitive extent of the proposed urban area and would therefore be determined by a more detailed future strategy or structure planning exercise. The strategy suggests that rezoning for the Upper Swan area would not be considered until 2020 unless there are demonstrated commitments to the development of employment opportunities in the vicinity.

#### ***Bullsbrook Townsite and Rural Strategy (City of Swan 2009)***

The Bullsbrook Townsite and Rural Strategy study area consisted of approximately 290 square kilometres and encompassed the Bullsbrook and Upper Swan town sites. The strategy outlined a number of constraints for development within Upper Swan, namely:

- The sensitivity of the surrounding environment, including the Ellen Brook catchment area and the Ellen Brook Nature Reserve
- The majority of the precinct has been identified as an Indigenous Heritage Site under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972

- The area contains a number of sites identified as of Heritage Significance under the City of Swan Municipal Inventory
- Sewerage is not currently available
- Northern sections of the precinct have a moderate-low capability for on-site effluent disposal
- South-western sections are susceptible to flooding, wind erosion, water logging, salinity and phosphorous export
- The Ellen Brook Nature Reserve is deemed to have an extreme Bush Fire Risk
- There are a number of resource extraction areas within and adjacent to the precinct.

***Directions 2031 – Spatial Framework for the Perth and Peel Regions (July 2009)***

The draft version of *Directions 2031* identified Bullsbrook and Gidgegannup as areas for further investigation, however Upper Swan was not. Within the City's submission, further information was requested on the reasoning behind this position.

A request for an MRS amendment was received by the City in late 2007 to rezone the land from rural to urban. In March 2008 Council made a recommendation to the Commission supporting the amendment on the grounds that it would "*facilitate the start of the rezoning process whilst recognising that the process would involve further investigation on environmental and planning issues*"

On 29 September 2009 the WAPC reviewed the proposal and resolved that a decision relating to the rezoning of land will be made in context of the Urban Development Program and Urban Growth Management Strategies once finalised.

It is also noted that *Directions 2031* provide little guidance about the future development of rural and rural residential land. The City has provided this comment to the Department of Planning as part of the consultation process.

**Conclusion**

Considering the aforementioned information it is clear that all three rural areas are considered to form part of the future urban area within the municipal jurisdiction of the City. The "prioritisation" of these areas for development is however mainly determined by factors outside the control of the City, namely:

- The availability of essential infrastructure;
- Market demand; and
- Mitigation of constraints.

It is not the role of the City of Swan to assume responsibility for providing or operating infrastructure which is traditionally provided by the State Government, such as public transport, effluent treatment, potable water provision, electricity and the like. The City requests the State to provide clear policy directions and frameworks which encourage and facilitate alternative infrastructure provision where corporatised State entities are unable and/or unwilling to provide a financially feasible solution.

Unless State Government ensures alignment between their own Urban Development Program, infrastructure and transport planning and delivery, and provide the legislative framework for sustainable alternative servicing methods, there will always be uncertainty about development priorities for future development areas.

The City will therefore support development when:

- The development is consistent with the City's priorities for growth and policy direction;
- Infrastructure is confirmed as being available and the provision therefore is agreed between developers and service providers;
- Development constraints (including bush fire risks, environmental constraints, transportation issues etc) have been mitigated satisfactorily; and
- Any such proposal has due regard for State Government policy.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Western Australian Planning Commission Decision Sheet 165.12.1 Proposed MRS Amendment – Gidgegannup Townsite Rural to Urban.

## **STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS**

The content of this report in its totality addressed the strategic implications of development in Bullsbrook, Gidgegannup and Upper Swan.

## **STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT**

Nil

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Council resolve to inform the Western Australian Planning Commission that:

- 1) The City's priorities for development remain as enunciated in the Urban Growth Policy as follows:

*"3.2 Priority areas for urban growth will be:*

- a) Areas that contribute to urban consolidation, infill development and rejuvenation of existing urban areas;*

- b) *Areas zoned "Urban" under the Metropolitan Region Scheme and for which substantial planning has commenced or been endorsed by the City of Swan and the W A Planning Commission and appropriate Town Planning Scheme urban zones have been applied or have been initiated at the time of adoption of this Policy; and*
- c) *Areas within the urban growth corridor between Caversham and Ellenbrook.*

*3.3 Other areas identified for urban growth will be subject to the timeframes and planning requirements stated in the respective regional planning strategies."*

- 2) The City will support the development of Bullsbrook, Gidgegannup and Upper Swan when it is satisfied that development constraints have been mitigated and necessary infrastructure will be provided, having due regard to existing regional planning strategies;
- 3) The City provides no priority order for development between Bullsbrook, Gidgegannup and Upper Swan;
- 4) It is not the responsibility of the City to provide infrastructure or services traditionally the responsibility of the State, including public transport, waste water treatment, potable water reticulation or electricity supply; and
- 5) State Government is requested to develop co-ordinated approaches across Government to facilitate and encourage innovative, cost effective and timely infrastructure provision where State agencies are unwilling or unable to do so.

