

**ITEM-123                    CCL 28/11/17 - ADOPTION OF DRAFT WICKHAM MASTER PLAN**

**REPORT BY:                PLANNING AND REGULATORY**  
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**PURPOSE**

This report provides Council with the outcomes of the public exhibition of the Wickham Master Plan (Master Plan) and recommends Council adopt the final plan provided as **Attachment A**.

**RECOMMENDATION**

- 1     Council resolves to adopt the Wickham Master Plan as per **Attachment A**.

**KEY ISSUES**

- 2     The Master Plan provides the blue print for guiding the future redevelopment of land within the northwestern part of the Newcastle City Centre. This includes Council's vision for the area over a 25 year horizon.
- 3     The vision within the Master Plan is:
  - i)     "Wickham Master Plan area will continue to evolve into a diverse and dynamic mixed-use neighbourhood.
  - ii)    Redevelopment will support increased residential densities as well as economic and employment generating uses that compliment and support the adjoining emerging commercial core of the Newcastle City Centre located within Newcastle West.
  - iii)   Urban renewal within the area is envisaged to build on the existing urban structure to deliver greater connectivity, improved public domain amenity, and a built form reflecting the envisaged function and character."
- 4     The vision is further elaborated through description of the envisaged future character of the following six identified interconnecting urban precincts:
  - i)     rail edge precinct
  - ii)    village hub
  - iii)   harbour edge precinct
  - iv)    emerging industry quarter
  - v)     park edge precinct
  - vi)    Wickham Park

- 5 The Master Plan seeks to implement the vision through strategies and actions, which are focused on three key objectives:
  - i) Improve accessibility and connectivity within Wickham and to adjoining areas.
  - ii) Create safe, attractive and inclusive public places.
  - iii) Ensure built environment is functional, responsive and resilient.
- 6 Preparation of the Master Plan involved an extensive program that involved:
  - i) Facilitated consultation with stakeholders, including:
    - a) Land owners
    - b) Business operators
    - c) Community groups
    - d) Design professionals
    - e) State agencies.
  - ii) Expert studies including:
    - a) Traffic and transport assessment, undertaken by Bitzios Consulting.
    - b) Economic and market analysis, undertaken by AEC group.
  - iii) Development of an interactive 3D model to undertake analysis of potential future built form and development densities.
- 7 The Master Plan was exhibited for eight weeks from 26 April to 21 June 2017, which included a consultation program outlined in paragraph 28.
- 8 A summary of submissions received is provided as **Attachment B**.
- 9 The results of a survey carried out by Council during the exhibition is provided as **Attachment C**.
- 10 Council prepared and exhibited a Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) plan for Wickham concurrently to the Master Plan, which is being reported separately for Council endorsement.

## FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 11 Implementation of the Master Plan will include the preparation of new planning controls, technical manuals and concept design for public domain areas of Wickham. Such work will be undertaken by Council staff or consultants within the current work program and budget.
- 12 The Master Plan also identifies further actions which are envisaged to be funded by s94A developer contributions or by agreement during redevelopment, through an incentives mechanism in exchange for bonus building height and / or Floor Space Ratio (FSR) on certain identified land.

- 13 The incentives mechanism proposed within the Master Plan would require an amendment to Council's LEP to enable Council and proponents of a DA, on certain identified land, to enter into a planning agreement to allow additional building height and / or FSR, where a predetermined quantifiable community benefit is provided. The intention is for the community benefit to be cost neutral to Council and provide incentives for developers on land identified as having a potential for increased density and scale of built form.
- 14 Items to be investigated for an incentives mechanism will initially include:
- i) Acquisition of land for road widening and areas identified for public domain activation.
  - ii) Public domain improvements not otherwise provided through conditions of development consent or s94A developer contributions.
  - iii) Public car parking provided within redevelopment of private land.
- 15 Should the Master Plan be adopted by Council, individual projects will be submitted in the budget planning process each year where approval is required.

#### **COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT**

- 16 The Master Plan aligns with the *Connected City and Liveable and Distinctive Built Environment* strategic directions of the Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/IMPLICATIONS**

- 17 The implementation of the vision outlined within the Master Plan will be achieved through various Strategies and Actions (identified within the plan) over the short and longer terms. These actions will inform Council's four-year delivery plan.
- 18 Actions identified as high priority to commence within one year of adoption include:
- i) Preparation of a new area specific DCP for Wickham to guide the design outcomes of proposed development consistent with the identified vision for each character precinct.
  - ii) Amendments to Council's LEP to identify land to be acquired by Council for road widening and public domain works when such land becomes available through sale or redevelopment.
  - iii) Public domain planning of works to be implemented as part of redevelopment of adjacent land or when funding becomes available through developer contributions or other means.
  - iv) Inclusion of additional items into the schedule of works within Council's s94A Developer Contribution Plan.

- v) Liaison with the Department of Planning and Environment and industry representatives on the mechanism for introducing development incentives and bonuses linked to the provision of identified community benefits on certain land.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION**

- 19 No risks are associated with the adoption of the Master Plan. Subsequent actions, including the preparation of new and amended planning documents, as well as future works, will all be subject to further Council decisions and community involvement.
- 20 The implementation of a development incentives mechanism, whereby additional building height and / or FSR are provided as a bonus on certain land in exchange for a community benefit, has been identified as having a risk of not being implemented. This would result in redevelopment not taking up the additional development potential and also the community not receiving the envisaged benefits.
- 21 Hence community benefits should only be items that are considered as a bonus from what would otherwise be achieved through redevelopment or that may bring forward unfunded works or acquisitions. Council's economic consultants have advised on the level of incentives required to attract the uptake in additional development potential. However, further assessment of this is proposed prior to implementation of this action.
- 22 Risk assessments for individual projects will be undertaken in accordance with Council's risk management framework.

### **RELATED PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

- 23 Council resolved at the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 28 March 2017, to place the Master Plan on public exhibition for a period of eight weeks.

### **CONSULTATION**

- 24 The Master Plan was prepared following extensive stakeholder consultation and feedback and rigorous testing and assessment of options and scenarios. The program included field surveys, targeted consultation with local landowners and business operators, as well as analysis of trends and influences impacting on Wickham to assist with the development of a discussion report.
- 25 The discussion report identified the challenges and opportunities applicable to the area. This report was presented to Wickham landowners, state agencies and Council officers in well attended, facilitated workshops. Feedback obtained in the workshops was used to identify key issues to be addressed by the Master Plan.
- 26 A Councillor Workshop was held on 14 March 2017 to provide Council with an overview of the Master Plan.

- 27 The Master Plan was exhibited for eight weeks from 26 April to 21 June 2017. Council staff consulted stakeholders through a variety of mediums, including:
- i) Notification through public notices in newspapers, magazines, media releases, correspondence to landowners and state government agencies, and social media including Council's webpage, Facebook, and Newcastle Voice.
  - ii) Face to face consultation was held with a total of 86 people during a local drop in session on 3 May 2017. Staff also briefed both business and interest group meetings and met with numerous individual landowners, development industry representatives and design professionals.
  - iii) Feedback on the Master Plan was provided to Council through participation in an online survey by 66 respondents and also by receipt of 30 written submissions.
- 28 A summary of submissions to the public exhibition of the Master Plan is provided as **Attachment B**. This document includes a response to each issue raised and also identifies where changes are recommended.
- 29 The results of the online survey are provided as **Attachment C**.
- 30 A Councillor Workshop was held on 15 November 2017 to provide Council with an overview of the final Master Plan, which incorporates changes proposed as a result of considering the outcomes of the public exhibition.

## OPTIONS

### Option 1

- 31 The recommendation as at Paragraph 1. This is the recommended option.

### Option 2

- 32 Council not adopt the Master Plan as per **Attachment A**. This is not the recommended option.

## BACKGROUND

- 33 In 2012 the NSW State Government released the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy (NURS). This strategy was updated in 2014 and advocates a strategic shift of the commercial core of the Newcastle City Centre from Newcastle East to Newcastle West. The NURS identified that Council should undertake further work to develop appropriate planning controls for Wickham consistent with the objectives of the NURS. As a result Council officers have prepared this Master Plan.

**REFERENCES**

**ATTACHMENTS**

**Attachment A:** Wickham Master Plan

**Attachment B:** Summary of submissions to public exhibition of the Wickham Master Plan

**Attachment C:** Wickham Master Plan survey results and verbatim

**Attachments A to C are distributed under separate cover.**