

<p>Neighbourhood Forum 5</p> <p>Wollongong's Heartland</p> <p><i>Collaborating with Council on community aspirations, visions, needs & concerns</i></p>		<p>Coniston, Figtree, Gwynneville, Keiraville, Mangerton, Mount Keira, Mount St Thomas, North Wollongong, West Wollongong, Wollongong City.</p>
---	--	--

Minutes of meeting held 7.00pm on 6th March 2024 by open ZOOM Link:

The acting Convenor, John Riggall, made an acknowledgement to First Nations and welcomed those present.

- 1 Presentation David Winterbottom was thanked for the presentation on NF5 Locality Plans (see Attachment)
- 2 Apologies Cllr Tania Brown, Harold Hanson, Jenny Bayly, Alanni Sherry
- 3 Minutes of meeting of 7th February and matters arising were adopted.
- 4 Comments Noted
5. Caveats Noted
- 6 Responses
 - 6.1 State Planning takeover:**
It was noted the government states it aims to enable better planning that is lead locally. NF5 looks forward to continuing to make improvements to the planning system in collaboration with Council and DPIE planners.
 - 6.2 Insurance:**
It was noted that we look forward to the current General Manager's positive decision following a requested review of a 2014 report, in which officers rejected the request by NF representatives for Insurance coverage by Council, as happens. Whereas similar community groups in some other areas are covered by Councils (eg Shoalhaven).
 - 6.3 Planning Controls:**
It was noted that NF have to the requested a meeting with Ward Councillors and relevant staff re improvements to controls for medium density developments

7	Reports	<p>7.1 NF5’s Locality Plans: It was agreed that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 the revised NF 5’s Locality Plans be adopted; 2 Council be requested bring forward the revision of the “desired future character” statements in the Development Control Plan as a matter of urgency. <p>7.2 Sustainable Guides for Apartments: Sydney City Council’s guides were noted</p>
8	Planning	<p>8.1 Planning noted</p> <p>8.2 DA-2024/96 Dual Occ 74 Grey Street Keiraville It was agreed that a submission of support be lodged.</p> <p>8.3 DA-2024/100 13 houses, 4A Arter Ave. Figtree There was considerable discussion on concerns, particularly about the history of geotechnical problems in the area, which was included in NF5 submission, that closed on 28 Feb . Also about the relatively short notification period of 14 days. It was pointed out that is standard in accordance with notification periods listed in Council’s 2023 Community Participation Plan It was agreed that the NF5 submission of objection be endorsed.</p> <p>8.4 DA-2024/87 warehouses, 39-41 Montague St. N.W’g It was agreed that a submission of support be lodged.</p> <p>8.5 DA determinations: It was noted that most of the listed DAs were determined similar to NF submission. About a quarter were approved contrary to NF5 objections whilst in a smaller number of cases, Council had refused when the Forum had recommended conditional approval.</p>
9	General Business	<p>9.1 DA Notifications It was agreed that submissions to Council be made:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 seeking additional time for residents to respond to significant applications; 2 again requesting the re-instatement of the requirement for on-site notices of development applications. <p>9.2 Planning Panels It was agreed that local MP Paul Scully (Minister for Planning) be requested to ensure that the Wollongong Local and Southern Regional Planning Panels be held in person asap to enable residents to make public representations.</p>

9.3 NSW Short Term Rental Review

It was noted that the Owners Corporation Network (OCN) has advised that:

“The NSW government is seeking feedback on the planning policy and regulatory framework for short-term rental accommodation and on options to encourage the supply of long-term rental accommodation and improve housing affordability in NSW.”

You could complete the questionnaire or make a submission **before 14 March**.

Link

is: <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/draftplans/exhibition/discussion-paper-short-and-long-term-rental-accommodation>

9.4 Recognising Trees as Natural Assets

It was noted that the Owners Corporation Network (OCN) has also advised that:

“In response to reports of illegal tree killing and vandalism massively increasing across Sydney in 2023 with more than 1,000 reports of trees being damaged or killed (SMH article, Dec 27, 2023) an e-petition has been set up. The petition needs 20,000 signatures to be presented to the NSW Parliament. Any NSW resident can sign the petition.”

It is understood that vandalism to trees is also a significant problem in the Wollongong Council area.

A key goal of Council is to double the average tree canopy cover from the current 17% up to a 35% target, as occurs in some similar Council areas.

If you're concerned about the loss of trees you could sign the e-petition. The link is:

https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/la/Pages/ePetition-details.aspx?q=spDO_eQ0f3NWSj0g5VtjWw

9.5 Proposed Illawarra Off-shore Windfarm Area

Prior to the meeting a member enquired of the Federal Government's proposed offshore windfarm area, since public submissions closed in November.

The DECCW website link is:

https://www.dcceew.gov.au/energy/renewable/offshore-wind/areas/illawarra#toc_5

It includes in Next Steps, ie “The Minister for Climate Change and Energy (Mr Bowen) will consider the previous public submissions to help inform his decision whether the proposed area is suitable for offshore wind development.

A summary of submissions and the consultation will be posted on the Illawarra consultation platform once a decision is made regarding the proposed area. The declaration of an offshore wind area is the first stage of the regulatory process. If the area is declared by the Minister, developers will then be invited to apply for feasibility licences.

After Feasibility Licencing, there will be opportunists for community consultation/feedback for the next steps ie Environmental and other approvals, then Management plan development, Commercial Licence application, and finally Construction, Operation and Decommissioning

There was considerable discussion after a presentation by a representative of a locally based group with concerns about the Government’s proposals and processes, in particular that thorough relevant environmental studies need to precede and inform the Minister’s considerations and decision

It was agreed that representations be made through local MP Alison Byrnes requesting the Hon Chris Bowen, Minister for Climate Change and Energy not to declare the area off the Wollongong coast as suitable for offshore renewable energy infrastructure until all the environmental studies of “the potential impacts of the construction, installation, commissioning, operation, maintenance or decommissioning of offshore renewable energy infrastructure in this area on other marine users and interests” have been completed, published and adequately assessed.

9.6 Cycleway priorities

It was agreed that Council be requested to urgently review the need for raised thresholds on shared paths and hold lines where vehicles access public and private carparks (eg Towradgi Beach carpark etc etc),and develop an Implementation Plan including adequate resources and timing per location

9.7 North Wollongong Commuter Parking

It was noted that land at eastern Porter Street near North Wollongong Station has been unused for some years, adjoins Fairy Creek and as shown by the 2022 rain events is flood prone.

Given the pressure on parking on nearby streets, it was agreed to write to local MP Paul Scully requesting him to make representations to the relevant Minister seeking acquisition and construction of an urgently-needed commuter carpark.

This would be essential to support the Government's Transport Oriented Development SEPP which is proposed to include North Wollongong Station.

10 Snippets Noted

Current active membership of Neighbourhood Forum 5 : 408 households

**Next Meeting & AGM 6pm Wednesday 3rd April
Hopefully in the Library Theatre.**

Attachment

Presentation on the Background to the NF 5 Locality Plans

You will have received with the agenda the promised revised Locality Plans so I am not going to go over them now.

In 2009 – 15 years ago – the Forum adopted a series of planning principles in relation to local development so that it had a firm and consistent basis on which to comment on development applications and on Council or State proposals to change statutory provisions. These principles were:

- 1 Change should be gradual and incremental.
- 2 Change should be constrained by the context of individual sites.
- 3 Relatively intensive development should be in places of high accessibility.
- 4 There should be a few clear statements to encourage or prevent particular development in particular locations within each Precinct (these locations were subsequently termed Transition Areas) and
- 5 Precincts (subsequently termed Localities) should be relatively large, easily identifiable areas.

From these the Locality (Precinct) boundaries were selected and the Plans developed. I should add that these have been reviewed every year and updated as new policies or legislation emerges, but despite annual opportunities, no substantial opposition to the principles or the plans has ever been raised.

Council uses post codes as surrogates for suburbs which, as noted in the Policy, are all over the place. Council then has “desired future character” statements for each suburb in the Development Control Plan. These are virtually useless as a basis for controlling development because they include terms like “some limited potential for medium density housing”, or “within reasonable walking distance to bus stops”.

Council now permits most forms of residential development in the Residential low density zone which covers 90% of residential areas. It also requires wider lots for other than dwelling houses. The problem is that most lots near places of high accessibility have narrow frontages and more remote areas towards the escarpment have wider ones. Now guess where the more intense development is going? So, more car journeys, longer car journeys, more pollution, more greenhouse gases and a less sustainable city.

Actually there is a double whammy in all this because not only is a much intensive development going to relatively remote areas but bulky new development is intruding into the otherwise single dwelling house character of most streets and gets the neighbours upset.

The failure to accommodate higher densities near centres and to conserve the character of most residential areas are flat contrary to Council’s avowed aims. We could and should do better. We then proposed a threefold strategy:

- 1 all dwellings facing the street outside the transition areas to have the appearance of single dwellings;
- 2 medium density in transition areas to be increased and facilitated;
- 3 medium density elsewhere be restricted to 0.3:1 (about the same amount of building construction and the same number of people as dwelling houses).

So the Forum identified areas near places of high accessibility (that is local centres, rail stations, the Uni and the Hospital) and, taking into account the extent to which an area already had a significant admixture of medium density development, defined them as Transition Areas. It then joined with all the other Forums to identify such areas across the city in response to Council’s draft Housing Strategy. We had expected Council to engage with us all to inform their final Strategy as a basis for changes to their statutory documentation, but this did not happen.

Now the State government has introduced a mass of mandatory controls and is currently proposing what they think of as a developer's paradise – except the last thing developers really want is uncertainty which is what they now will get with long arguments about what is the public good, for example, and massive community opposition. The only glimmer of opportunity is that the State controls require conformity to the “desired future character” of an area. The only place this is defined is in the Development Control Plan, the provisions of which are entirely in the control of Council. However, their Housing Strategy gives a low priority to their revision.

In addition, to compensate for the theoretical drop in opportunities, dwellings in Transition Areas should have a modest increase in allowable floor space ratios and, more importantly, have a sliding scale allowing medium density housing on narrower lots. This latter is crucial because simply upping the allowable density does not seem to have much impact on sites being amalgamated which is the only way it can happen. Whilst changes in density require changes to the Local Environmental Plan, the lot width provisions are in the Development Control Plan.

In conclusion, the Forum has long and consistently promoted:

- 1 all types of residential development in all residential areas but with a consistent density of building and people in each zone (that is separating medium density dwelling types from the concept of medium density development);
- 2 promoting denser housing in nominated areas near accessible locations by increasing floorspace ratios and relaxing lot width requirements.

The Locality Plans try to show how this can be done to achieve better outcomes in social, environmental and economic terms.