

# MINUTES

## Lochinvar Reference Group Meeting 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010 – Eleventh meeting

1. **Meeting opened:** 4:10pm

**Present:**

Clr Henry Meskauskas (ClrHM)  
Clr Stephen Mudd (Clr SM)  
Alan Wells (AW)  
John Whittle (JW)  
Steve Barlow (SB)  
Ian Higgins (IH)  
Josh Ford (JF)

**Apologies:**

Leanne Harris (Group Manager – Service, Planning and Regulation)  
Monica Gibson (Manager, City Strategy)

2. **Business arising from previous meeting**

- Nil.

3. **Progress of Environmental Studies**

- AW provided an overview of the environmental studies for the Lochinvar Urban Release Area (URA) which are nearing completion.
- AW referenced information sourced from the Lochinvar Investigation Area link on Council's website (notably Map 3) to illustrate at a spatial level where the environmental studies occurred.
- AW identified that Council had previously resolved to rezone land within Lochinvar, and that the overarching environmental studies for those sites (being Greater Lochinvar and Lochinvar Green) would collate with studies prepared for St Helena, resulting in a complete set of studies for the whole of the Lochinvar URA.
- AW stated that the geotechnical, ecological and archaeological studies have been completed, meaning that the whole of the Lochinvar URA has been covered in respect to these particular types of studies.
- AW explained that an overarching set of environmental studies have been prepared that incorporate studies from the current investigations, along with the St Helena site, Greater Lochinvar and Lochinvar Green, as well as considerations relating to other planning strategies.

- AW anticipated that the environmental studies could be lodged by the end of this week (week ending Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2010), subject to discussion of the results with the landowners.
- AW highlighted that the fundamental principles underpinning the Lochinvar Structure Plan were accurate, and this was reflected in the outcomes of the environmental studies so far completed. This was particularly notable when observing the riparian corridors traversing the study area and noting the 'Environmental Protection' status afforded to these areas in the Lochinvar Structure Plan.
- AW explained that the contamination assessment had indicated areas of hydrocarbons in the study area, which will require remediation and monitoring to ensure those areas can accommodate residential occupation in the future.
- AW stated that Endangered Ecological Communities (EECs) and ecological values had been mapped in the environmental studies completed to date.
- The archaeological consultant (Mary Dallas) had mapped artefacts, including potential artefacts, within the study area.
- AW asked JF about the likely zones to be applied to the Lochinvar URA, with JF responding that the R1 General Residential and E2 Environmental Conservation zones were two of the zones likely to be applied to the Lochinvar URA as part of future zoning decisions for the land.
- IH expressed concerns about the proposed drainage areas and the likelihood that some of these drainage areas may flood in heavy storm events as allegedly occurs at present.
- AW explained that a Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) approach would be referenced in the studies which will illustrate surface hydrology and flow patterns for the study area, while detailed engineering information will follow at a later time if the rezoning progresses.
- AW highlighted that habitat areas have been mapped for the study area.
- Cllr HM advocated a drainage plan for the study area, given the historic flood issues associated with properties located west of Station Lane, adjoining Lochinvar Creek.
- IH suggested that future landscaping within the Lochinvar URA be limited to endemic flora species to reflect the character of the locality.
- AW provided an overview of the water and wastewater servicing strategies and discussed the outcome of a meeting with Hunter Water Corporation (HWC), namely:
  - Both studies are nearing completion, layouts have been modelled;

- HWC have stated that a significant upgrade of the existing wastewater pumping station in Lochinvar is required to support the URA, given that the entire area is not capable of accommodating gravity fed mains; and
  - A duplication of mains between Telarah and Branxton is proposed by HWC.
- IH asked the reference group if there was any option available for developers to harvest grey water and utilise this, which would reduce demands on the pump station. IH noted that a similar system has been supported at the St Helena site and this could possibly extend to the wider Lochinvar URA.
- AW has noted in the relevant environmental studies that Council is currently having a traffic study prepared which includes a specific focus on Lochinvar. Therefore, no traffic study was required to be prepared by the consultants for the Lochinvar URA. Council's study has been reviewed in response to the announcement of funding and a decision to construct the Hunter Expressway (F3 extension) as this is most likely to have an impact on the traffic modeling for the Lochinvar URA.
- AW noted in the relevant environmental studies that Council are currently having a flood study prepared which will inform the review of the subject studies for the Lochinvar URA. Therefore no flood study was required to be prepared by the consultants for the Lochinvar URA.
- IH asked the group about the layout and location of the proposed Lochinvar vehicle bypass. JF stated that no firm layout has been committed to and that the Lochinvar Structure Plan layout was subject to change as a result of the assessment of the environmental studies.
- IH stated that rail movements were set to increase dramatically as a result of construction of the Maitland to Minimbah 3<sup>rd</sup> Railway track. IH subsequently questioned what Council was preparing do to in order to ameliorate acoustic impacts from rail noise on existing and future residential dwellings.
- JF responded to IH by stating that the Maitland to Minimbah 3<sup>rd</sup> Railway track project falls under Part 3A of the NSW Environmental Planning & Assessment Act, as it is deemed to be a State Significant project under that legislation. JF explained that Council plays a small role in such projects, since the NSW Department of Planning - not Council - determine these types of applications. Full information regarding the progress of this application is therefore limited at this point in time.
- IH expressed concerns that the Lochinvar Structure Plan has been in place since October 2007 and now the Department of Planning may be approving a project that results in land use conflicts, largely regarding noise, which is contradictory to the outcomes of that established Lochinvar Structure Plan.
- AW explained that noise attenuation barriers would be required to address the issue of noise and that further investigations would be required to determine the capacity within which these barriers would exist.

- JF highlighted that the funding of noise attenuation barriers or similar acoustic amelioration devices would not likely be borne by Council since the 3<sup>rd</sup> Rail Track project would be the catalyst for requiring such infrastructure.
- IH suggested that a strategy should be developed for addressing acoustic impacts generated from the expansion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Railway Track. ClrHM and ClrSM explained that future investigations and discussions with the relevant authorities will take place to determine a suitable outcome for existing and future residents. Clr HM added that as soon as the LRG has further information the community can then be informed.
- ClrHM asked JF about the timing of the rezoning of the Lochinvar URA and when it would be presented to Council. JF stated that he was unable to confirm this as the timing would be (i) dependent upon when the necessary environmental studies were lodged to Council, and (ii) how much time the assessing planning staff and technical officers would require in order to make a thorough assessment and therefore a recommendation to Council.
- IH asked AW about timing of consultation with the landowners regarding the environmental studies and explaining the outcomes of those studies. AW stated that he expected to be able to discuss the studies with the relevant landowners this week prior to lodgement. Lodgment would be subject to the discussion of the results of the environmental studies with the landowners.

**4. General Business**

- Nil.

**5. Next meeting time**

- Next meeting to be held at 4pm on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2010 in the SP&R Meeting Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor - Council Administration Building.

**6. Meeting Closed: 5.20pm**