

Script – IPC Consultation – St Leonards South Planning Proposal

Overview (slide 1, slide 2 and slide 3)

Good afternoon Commissioners.

Thank you for the opportunity to brief the Commission.

My name is Brett Whitworth, I am the Deputy Secretary of Planning and Design at the Department of Planning and Environment.

Today **I will provide background to assist the Commission in it's preparation of advice to the Minister for Planning** regarding the St Leonards South Residential Precinct.

Throughout this presentation when I make reference to the "Draft 2036 Plan", I am referring to the Department's exhibited draft plan for the entire St Leonards and Crows Nest Planned Precinct. When reference is made to the exhibited Planning Proposal I am referring to Lane Cove Council's Planning Proposal for the St Leonards South Residential Precinct.

Let me start first with the charter to the Commission on this issue.

Based on the references in the Department's Draft 2036 Plan and the letters to the Commission, **the Minister's request** is for advice on:

- **Consistency of the planning proposal with the vision, principles and criteria** of the Draft 2036 Plan;
- **Consistency of the planning proposal with the conditions of the Gateway Determination** issued by the Department; and
- **The need for the planning proposal in the context of the housing targets** for the Lane Cove Local Government Area, set by the Greater Sydney Commission including whether any staging of the rezoning may be appropriate.

The request for advice has arisen in response to Council proposing in early 2018 that an independent review of the planning proposal be undertaken.

To give some broader context I'd like to start with the Draft 2036 Plan for St Leonards and Crow's Nest.

The **Department has been undertaking strategic planning investigations for the St Leonards and Crows Nest area since 2016**. In late 2018, the Department exhibited a **draft planning package which** included:

- The **Draft 2036 Plan**, which provides a framework for land use and infrastructure delivery
- A **Draft Local Character Statement**, reflecting what's important to the community
- A **Draft Green Plan**, identifying strategies to increase open space and tree canopy
- A **Draft Special Infrastructure Contribution Framework (SIC)**, and
- A **Draft Rezoning Proposal for the Crows Nest Sydney Metro Station Site**

During the preparation of the draft 2036 Plan, the Department undertook **significant community and stakeholder consultation including** an online survey with more than 1,900 response, facilitated workshops and walking workshops with local community group representatives. During this consultation, it was **evident that there are divergent views about the St Leonards South Planning Proposal**.

These views were reiterated responses to exhibition of the Draft 2036 Plan where the Department received **approximately 1,000 submissions** from around 925 individual submitters.

The Department's analysis of feedback to the entire draft 2036 plan indicates that across the broader area:

- The **community were pleased to have a local character statement**, and generally felt comfortable with what it said.

- The community **generally agreed with the principles in the Draft 2036 Plan** but expected the principles to produce different planning outcomes such as lower heights and densities.
- Many submitters were **concerned about the impact of tall buildings** including direct effects such as overshadowing, wind tunnels and traffic.
- Many felt that providing **gradual transitions from high to low density was the best way** of managing or mitigating these direct amenity impacts.
- **Many in the community believe that there is enough housing in the area already** and want to see the planning package 'do more' to support local jobs growth.

So as not to pre-empt the outcomes of independent advice of the Commission, the **Draft 2036 Plan reflected the Council's exhibited planning proposal for St Leonards South.**

The planning proposal was also used in infrastructure planning when preparing the draft planning package.

Strategic Context (slide 4)

(Why is the Department undertaking Planning for St Leonards and Crows Nest?)

The Greater Sydney Region Plan and North **District Plan identify St Leonards as a Strategic Centre.**

The North District Plan identifies a **collaboration area around the Royal North Shore Hospital** and notes that the **Department is leading broader strategic planning for the area.** The **District Plan includes several actions for planning for the area**, which include:

- leverage the new Sydney Metro Station at Crows Nest to deliver additional employment capacity
- grow jobs in the centre
- reduce the impact of vehicle movements on pedestrian and cyclist accessibility
- protect and enhance Willoughby Road's village character and retail/ restaurant strip

- e. deliver new high-quality open space, upgrade public areas, and establish collaborative place-making initiatives
- f. promote synergies between the Royal North Shore Hospital and other health and education-related activities, in partnership with NSW Health
- g. retain and manage the adjoining industrial zoned land for a range of urban services.

The St Leonards and Crows Nest investigation area (slide 5 and slide 6)

Being clear about the area we are working with, our planning **takes in the walking catchments of both the existing St Leonards Train Station and the future Crows Nest Sydney Metro Station**. The boundary also includes the Artarmon industrial area.

In total it covers approximately 275 hectares **across three Council areas of North Sydney, Lane Cove and Willoughby**.

You can see the form of development envisaged by the Draft 2036 Plan in our 3D model.

You can also see modelled urban form.

St Leonards South is within this investigation area.

(we can bring the model to public meeting if it will assist the Commission)

The relationship between the St Leonards South Planning Proposal and the Draft 2036 Plan (slide 7 and slide 8)

As indicated, the **Gateway Determination for the Council's planning proposal requires consistency with the Department's Draft 2036 Plan**.

This condition reinforces that the strategic plan that **should inform the planning proposal**.

On 19 March 2018 **Lane Cove Council deferred formal consideration of submissions made to the exhibited planning proposal until after release of the Draft 2036 Plan**.

Council has not publicly released these submissions.

Council undertook an urban design review in July 2018, the **outcomes of Council' review have not been made publicly available**. The Department understands that a community group has obtained a redacted copy of submissions through a request under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act)*.

The **Department's understanding of community perspectives related to the planning proposal** are from **public consultation undertaken during both preparation and exhibition of the Draft 2036 Plan**.

It likely **the Commission's own consultation may therefore uncover issues that the Department is not aware of**.

[About the Department's Draft Planning Package for St Leonards and Crows Nest \(slide 9 and slide 10\)](#)

The **Department has identified Local Character, Open Space and Infrastructure as key considerations when planning for change and growth**. This is reflected by the **inclusion of a Local Character Statement, Green Plan and Draft Special Infrastructure Contribution** in the exhibition package that accompanied the draft 2036 Plan.

[More about St Leonards and Crows Nest Draft Local Character Statement \(slide 11\)](#)

The **Department recognises that plans for areas undergoing change should be grounded in an appreciation of what is important to the local community**.

The **Department undertook local character consultation in March 2018** with the community and Councils and **this is captured in the Draft Local Character Statement**.

The **Draft Local Character Statement notes that there are mixed views about the exhibited Planning Proposal for St Leonards South**, however most agree that the leafy streets are a significant part of its character which should be retained.

For the broader St Leonards and Crows Nest precinct, the Draft Local Character Statement identifies the **village character of Crows Nest, new schools, more open space and gradual transitions between low-rise and high-rise development as important to the community.**

The Local Character Statement directly informed the Vision, Design Criteria and Principles in the **Draft 2036 Plan.**

Planning for infrastructure is a fundamental component of the Draft 2036 Plan (slide 12 and slide 13)

To identify and deliver infrastructure we have proposed a levy. The Draft Special Infrastructure Contribution is **a levy on new dwellings to fund state and regional infrastructure to support planned growth.**

The Department is preparing Special Infrastructure Contributions across many Precincts and Growth Areas of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong.

For each Special Infrastructure Contribution Area, **the Department undertakes analysis to determine the average capacity to pay, which determines the rate of the levy** applied to each new dwelling.

Consistent with actions in the North District Plan and feedback to the Department's community consultation **the Draft Special Infrastructure Contribution for St Leonards and Crows Nest funds open space, new school places and active transport links.**

Draft Special Infrastructure Contribution items which cater to St Leonards South (slide 14)

There are a number of infrastructure items in the Draft Special Infrastructure Contribution for St Leonards and Crows Nest which cater to St Leonards South.

These items include improvements to three pedestrian crossings on Pacific Highway, a new regional cycling connection along Canberra Avenue and improvements to a pedestrian crossing at the intersection of River Road and Canberra Avenue.

Other infrastructure items including new school places and improvements to the cycling path along River Road also benefit St Leonards South.

The infrastructure planning work undertaken for the Draft 2036 Plan incorporated the development proposed in the exhibited Planning Proposal.

About the Draft 2036 Plan Vision, Design Criteria and Design Principles (slide 15 and 16)

The Vision for St Leonards and Crows Nest sets the framework for the design criteria and principles that will guide future development in the area. *(page 4 of the Draft 2036 Plan)*

The Vision has been informed by the Draft Local Character Statement, North District Plan and recommendations from technical studies.

The design criteria provide considerations for assessing proposed development including overshadowing controls based on solar access to public open space and important public places. *(page 10 of the Draft 2036 Plan)*

Specific design principles have been developed for St Leonards South as a focus for the independent review in response to feedback on the proposal. *(page 63 of the Draft 2036 Plan)*

About the St Leonards South Planning Proposal (slide 17 and slide 18)

The Department understand that Lane Cove Council commenced preparation of a Master Plan for St Leonards South in August 2014 in response to the policies of the Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney.

The study area was bounded by Pacific Highway, Greenwich Road and River Road and the rail line south of St Leonards Station.

The master planning process included community workshops, opportunities and constraints analysis and development of different options for renewal.

Lane Cove Council exhibited five options for renewal.

Exhibition outcomes were reported to Council on 13 July 2015.

The Council report recommended land bound by Canberra Avenue, River Road, Berry Road and Marshall Avenue be rezoned for increased density residential development.

Council resolved to include the area between Berry Road and Park Road, excluding commercial zoned land fronting Pacific Highway in the area to be rezoned. The commercial core zoned land located along the Pacific Highway has been excluded from the exhibited Planning Proposal.

About Gateway Conditions for the St Leonards South Planning Proposal (slide 19)

On the 19 May 2016 Lane Cove Council submitted a request to the Department for a Gateway Determination for a Planning Proposal to implement the adopted St Leonards South Master Plan.

The Gateway Determination was issued on 2 September 2016.

A condition of the Gateway requires the proposal to be amended to be consistent with the findings of the Departments investigations for St Leonards and Crows Nest. ([condition 8](#))

It reads: “Prior to finalisation, the planning proposal is to be amended to demonstrate consistency with any available findings of a draft or final strategic planning review for the St Leonards and Crows Nest Station Precinct.”

A condition requiring satisfactory arrangements for state and regional infrastructure was also included. This condition foreshadows implementation of the Special Infrastructure contribution. (Condition 1g)

The Gateway also established the Department as the local plan-making authority for this proposal.

Since the Gateway was issued, Council has sought an extension to the timeframe for completing the planning proposal.

An extension was granted to 2 June 2019.

Council has written to the Department seeking a further extension. It is likely that this extension will be granted.

About the St Leonards South Residential Planning Proposal (what changes are proposed to the LEP) (slide 20, side 21, slide 22 and slide 23)

Lane Cove Council exhibited the St Leonards South Residential Precinct Planning Proposal from **30 October 2017 to 5 January 2018**.

Key changes proposed to *Lane Cove Local Environmental Plan 2009* in the exhibited proposal were to rezone the site and include new development control for maximum heights and floor space ratios.

Most of the area is proposed to be rezoned from R2 Low Density Residential to R4 High Density Residential, the exceptions are the areas proposed for open space.

Incentives were included to encourage lot consolidation to facilitate new through site links and the transfer of land from a rear lane between Berry and Park Roads to form a transition space along Park Road.

These incentives include, increased maximum heights of between 15 and 65 meters and increased maximum floor space ratios (FSR) of between 2.75:1 and 4:1.

Existing maximum heights are 9.5m and existing maximum floor space ratios (FSR) varies between 0.5 and 0.6:1

About developer-led proposals and concept development applications lodged with Council for St Leonards South area recently (slide 24)

The Department understand that Lane Cove Council received two separate planning proposals and three associated Concept Development Applications for sites in St Leonards South in February and March of this year.

Council has not submitted these planning proposals to the Department for Gateway Determination.

The Concept Development Applications appear largely consistent with Council's exhibited Planning Proposal for St Leonards South.

One of the Commission's terms of reference is to consider St Leonards South in the context of housing targets (slide 25 and slide 26)

The North District Plan includes a 5-year housing target for Lane Cove Local Government Area of 1,900 new dwellings by the year 2021.

Development approvals suggest that Lane Cove Council is on track to exceed its 5-year housing target.

This was confirmed in a letter from the Greater Sydney Commission to Lane Cove Council on 16 May 2018.

The same letter from the Greater Sydney Commission noted the exhibited St Leonards South Planning Proposal could contribute to housing growth beyond 2021.

The North District Plan does not include housing targets for Local Government Areas beyond 2021. The Sydney Region Plan has housing targets for each region in Sydney to 2036.

Councils will use their Local Strategic Planning Statements to address issues of year 6 to 20 year housing needs.

It is important to note that performance of the three Councils in the St Leonards and Crows Nest area is consistent with performance in the wider Sydney Region. Around 75% of the Local Government Areas in the Sydney Region are on track to meet or exceed their 5-year housing targets.

About approved developments which will contribute to the 5-year housing target (slide 27 and slide 28)

The exhibited St Leonards South Planning Proposal is not expected to contribute to the initial 2017 to 2021 *5-year housing target*, simply because the dwellings are not expected to be built before 2021.

All Councils in New South Wales are currently reviewing the Local Environmental Plans and preparing Local Strategic Planning Statements.

Most Councils are also preparing Housing Strategies as part of this process.

Housing strategies can inform future Local Government Area housing targets.

The Department expects that Lane Cove Council will update the Commission on their Local Environmental Plan Review and development of their Local Strategic Planning Statement including any related housing analysis.

There are already projects in the broader St Leonards area approved and under construction that will contribute to the 5 year housing target.

These include:

- recent completions on Marshall Avenue,
- two mixed use developments under construction at 496-520 Pacific Highway and 472-494 Pacific Highway, that will contribute 390 and 520 dwellings each.

A project that is currently under construction at 75-79 Lithgow and 84-90 Christie Street, known as JQZ will contribute approximately 650 dwellings.

Feedback to Exhibition of Draft 2036 Plan which relates to SLS Planning Proposal – from the public (slide 29 and slide 30)

These are a range of issues the community have raised during exhibition regarding the St Leonards South Planning Proposal:

- The boundary should be expanded or reduced
- The overshadowing impacts are unacceptable and are exacerbated by the topography
- The proposal does not meet the design principles in the Draft 2036 Plan
- There is not enough open space to serve the new population
- The area will not cope with the additional traffic and demand for parking
- There will be an oversupply of housing

- Some people feel they have not been well informed on what is happening
- 10 site specific submissions generally support the proposal and are concerned the IPC review would cause a delay

Feedback to Exhibition of Draft 2036 Plan which relates to SLS Planning Proposal – from community groups (slide 31)

Several community groups made detailed submissions and representations to the Department during exhibition of the Draft 2036 Plan.

The Department has made all submissions available for the Commission's review.

Matters raised by Community Groups in submissions include:

- Heights and transitions proposed are inappropriate for the area.
- Increase in population will have negative impact on essential services and infrastructure and road network.
- Housing targets for the area are unclear.
- The planning proposal extended to include properties between Park Road and Greenwich Road.
- The proposal in its current form fails to meet the design principles in the Draft 2036 Plan.
- The Draft 2036 Plan has neglected to identify infrastructure in St Leonards South area to be funded through the SIC.

**Feedback to Exhibition of Draft 2036 Plan which relates to SLS Planning Proposal –
from Council (slide 32)**

Lane Cove Council made a submission to exhibition of the Draft 2036 Plan. Council made two key comments related to St Leonards South Residential Precinct Planning Proposal:

- Council noted that the Draft 2036 Plan has included the heights and densities exhibited and is supportive of this approach.
- Council would like the St Leonards South Residential Precinct Planning Proposal area excluded from the Special Infrastructure Contribution area.