



Ordinary Council

LATE REPORTS

Business Paper

date of meeting: Thursday 20 March 2025

location: Council Chambers, 17 Burrawan Street, Port
Macquarie
Wauchope Country Club

time: 2:00 PM

Community Vision	A sustainable high quality of life for all
Community Mission	Building the future together People Place Health Education Technology
Council's Corporate Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Sustainability ★ Excellence in Service Delivery ★ Consultation and Communication ★ Openness and Accountability ★ Community Advocacy
Community Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Leadership and Governance ★ Your Community Life ★ Your Business and Industry ★ Your Natural and Built Environment

Under Clause 3.23 Statement of ethical Obligations in the Code of Meeting Practice as adopted by Council at the Extraordinary Meeting of Council held on 23 June 2022 (Item 6.04), business papers for all ordinary and extraordinary meetings of the council and committees of the council must contain a statement reminding councillors of their oath or affirmation of office made under section 233A of the Act and their obligations under the council's code of conduct to disclose and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.

Councillors are reminded of the oath or affirmation which was taken by each of them.

Oath Of Councillor

I swear that I will undertake the duties of the office of Councillor in the best interests of the people of Port Macquarie-Hastings local government area and the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and that I will faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in me under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act to the best of my ability and judgment.

Affirmation Of Councillor

I solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm that I will undertake the duties of the office of Councillor in the best interests of the people of Port Macquarie-Hastings local government area and the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and that I will faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in me under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act to the best of my ability and judgment.

Councillors have the opportunity to declare any interests in items on the agenda and inform the Council and public if they will be leaving the Chambers during the debate and voting on the item.

Ordinary Council Meeting

Thursday, 20 March 2025

LATE REPORTS

Items of Business

Item	Subject	Page
	Your Natural and Built Environment.....	<u>4</u>
13.13	Strategy Review - Environmental Sustainability Strategy - Post Public Exhibition	<u>5</u>

4 Your Natural and Built Environment

What we are trying to achieve

A connected, sustainable, accessible community and environment that is protected now and into the future.

What the result will be

We will have:

- Effective management and maintenance of essential water, waste and sewer infrastructure
- A community that is prepared for natural events and climate change
- Sustainable and environmentally sensitive development outcomes that consider the impact on the natural environment
- Accessible transport network for our communities
- Infrastructure provision and maintenance that meets community expectations and needs
- Well planned communities that are linked to encourage and manage growth
- Accessible and protected waterways, foreshores, beaches and bushlands
- An environment that is protected and conserved for future generations
- Renewable energy options that are understood and accessible by the community

How we will get there

- 4.1 Provide (appropriate) infrastructure and services including water cycle management, waste management, and sewer management
- 4.2 Aim to minimise the impact of natural events and climate change, for example, floods, bushfires and coastal erosion
- 4.3 Facilitate development that is compatible with the natural and built environment
- 4.4 Plan for integrated transport systems that help people get around and link our communities
- 4.5 Plan for integrated and connected communities across the Port Macquarie-Hastings area
- 4.6 Restore and protect natural areas
- 4.7 Provide leadership in the development of renewable energy opportunities
- 4.8 Increase awareness of issues affecting our environment, including the preservation of flora and fauna



Item: 13.13

Subject: STRATEGY REVIEW - ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
STRATEGY - POST PUBLIC EXHIBITION

Presented by: Community, Planning and Environment, Melissa Watkins

Alignment with Delivery Program

4.8.1 Ensure all Council operations comply with environmental standards and regulations.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Note the Engagement Report detailing submissions on public exhibition of the draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy and the recommended changes.
2. Adopt the draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy as amended subject to graphic design and updated data to align with draft Integrated Planning and Reporting documents.
3. Thank all who provided feedback during public exhibition.
4. Determine that if adopted, the Environmental Sustainability Strategy will repeal the Long-Term Energy Strategy.

Executive Summary

On 14 November 2024 at the Ordinary Meeting of Council (Item 13.02), a Notice of Motion was adopted by Council to endorse placing the draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy (draft Strategy) as presented to Council in April 2024 on public exhibition for a period of not less than 28 days. A further report was to be presented following the public exhibition period that detailed the submissions received and any recommended changes to the draft Strategy by no later than the March 2025 Ordinary Meeting of Council.

The draft Strategy (Attachment 1) was placed on public exhibition from 13 January 2025 to 14 February 2025 with the Engagement Report (Attachment 2) detailing the submissions received and the recommended amendments to the draft Strategy.

The draft Strategy has now been updated (Attachment 1) and is being presented to Council to consider for adoption.

Discussion

Council at its meeting on 14 November 2024 (Item 13.02) considered a Notice of Motion on the draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy and resolved as follows:

“That Council:

1. *Endorse the draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy as presented to Council in April 2024 (Item 13.05) for the purposes of public exhibition and place the draft Strategy on public exhibition for a period of not less than 28 days.*
2. *Note that a further report will be presented to Council, following the public exhibition period, detailing the submissions received and any recommended changes to the draft Strategy for consideration by Council, no later than the March 2025 Ordinary Meeting of Council.*

Council previously considered the draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy in April 2024 (Item 13.05) and as an outcome of this consideration the draft Strategy was not adopted by Council.

Council has a statutory obligation to protect the environment and incorporate the principles of Ecological Sustainable Development into its decision making, as contained within the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. For example, the *Local Government Act 1993* mandates that Council must properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment for which it is responsible in a manner consistent with the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development. This includes having regard to long-term and cumulative impacts, responsible and sustainable infrastructure, and social justice. There are also non statutory obligations in respect of environmental sustainability considerations under Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and the 'Shaping Our Future 2040' Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS).

The draft Strategy responds to these obligations and will assist Council achieving the vision of the CSP to become "*the most liveable, sustainable and innovative place in Australia*". Furthermore, the draft Strategy is aiming to ensure that as the region grows, and our built and natural environment is managed to maintain our quality of life and prosperity into the future for subsequent generations.

The draft Strategy seeks to provide high level direction and set key strategic objectives for Council for the decade ahead. It describes the current strategic context and environment, including challenges and opportunities to guide planning, decisions and actions, to achieve the relevant objectives in the CSP. There are four priority areas of focus of the draft Strategy:

1. Natural Areas, Waterways and Biodiversity,
2. Environmental Change and Community Resilience,
3. Leading by Example, and
4. Sustainable Living, Transport and Infrastructure.

The draft Strategy consolidates actions and focusses efforts to achieve more while delivering an integrated and simplified planning approach, aligns with the existing Council Sustainability Policy and Climate Change Response Policy, and subsumes the existing 2017 Long Term Energy Strategy (the main target of which requires Council to source 100% of its energy from renewable sources by 2027, which is on-track). Delivery of projects that can further improve Council's sustainability performance will be backed by supporting Action Plans to align with Council's Delivery Program and annual Operational Plan.

This Report recommends adoption of the draft Strategy, as amended post public exhibition and as shown at Attachment 1. A detailed summary of feedback and

subsequent amendments is contained within the Engagement Report as shown at Attachment 2.

A total of 20 survey responses and 8 email submissions were received with a summary of the changes made shown in Appendix A of the Engagement Report. The Engagement Report notes that

“Overall, the feedback highlights appreciation for the draft ESS, based on deep concerns about environmental protection, cultural respect, and governance transparency. Respondents seek a more actionable, enforceable, and community-driven strategy that aligns with sustainability and heritage values. Engagement by the community through the public exhibition period on the draft ESS can be summarised as active and predominantly constructive”.

Strategy amendments made

Acknowledgement of Country updated to version approved for Council’s strategic documents.
References to Cities Power Partnership removed as it is no longer active. Replaced with Mid North Coast JO as project partner in Strategic Objective 2.
Updated “Challenges facing our environment and opportunities” to include council partnering with local community groups.
Cities Power Partnership is no longer active. MNCJO added as assisting PMHC.
NSW Department of Planning and Environment Projections replaced with REMPLAN projections.
2022 PMH LGA Environmental Condition Report replaced with 2023 Report.
Summary of key North Coast regional environmental conditions updated to include data to 2024.
PMH 2020-21 Municipal Emissions Snapshot replaced with 2022-23 Report.
“Council’s Role” - Sub-headings will be updated to align to the 2025 review of the CSP, if adopted before publishing.

The draft Strategy has also been updated to reflect Council’s updated document style/design standards. This will be further refined prior to publishing.

The focus areas and strategic objectives proposed in the draft Strategy are considered consistent with the current CSP as follows:

AREA	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE
<p>NATURAL AREAS, WATERWAYS & BIODIVERSITY</p>	<p>Protect and enhance our biodiversity, natural waterways, aquatic habitats, ecological communities and areas of high environmental value</p>
<p>ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE & COMMUNITY RESILIENCE</p>	<p>Increase our community’s resilience to the impacts of natural hazards and environmental change</p>
<p>LEADING BY EXAMPLE</p>	<p>Lead by example to reduce energy, water, waste and emissions from Council operations</p>
<p>SUSTAINABLE LIVING, TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	<p>Improve the environmental sustainability of our built environment</p>

There are several individual supporting strategies within the four areas of the draft Strategy, as shown below, that work toward meeting each of the Strategic Objectives identified above. These strategies will then inform Action Plans with the specific works costed and services developed to align with Council’s Delivery Program and Operational Plans.



STRATEGIES

- 1.1 Identify, protect and encourage restoration of natural areas and biodiversity corridors which support threatened ecological communities and species
- 1.2 Protect and improve the health of our coastline, waterways, aquatic habitats and riparian areas
- 1.3 Integrate land use planning to manage growth sustainably and protect areas of high environmental value

- 2.1 Minimise the impacts to our environment, infrastructure, life and property from floods, bushfires, storms, erosion and other hazards through planning and design, and education
- 2.2 Enhance emergency management planning and response systems to climate-related emergencies from floods, bushfires and extreme weather events
- 2.3 Work with other levels of government to grow the community's capacity and capability to understand and adapt to environmental change
- 2.4 Monitor and reduce emissions from Council operations in transitioning to net zero carbon emissions

- 3.1 Reduce energy, water, waste and emissions from Council operations
- 3.2 Collaborate with local stakeholders and organisations to explore, research and implement sustainable technology
- 3.3 Ensure environmental sustainability principles in procurement, working with contractors and suppliers
- 3.4 Reduce carbon emissions through transitioning our plant and fleet to renewable and low carbon energy resources
- 3.5 Undertake education programs to increase awareness of environmental sustainability solutions

- 4.1 Design buildings and places that respond to our climate, built and cultural heritage, natural environment, and improve liveability
- 4.2 Design, plan and build community infrastructure which is environmentally sustainable and resilient to a changing climate
- 4.3 Plan for green infrastructure and public space that enhances biodiversity, connects the community and improves health and wellbeing
- 4.4 Facilitate active and sustainable transport opportunities that connect key local destination and open spaces

Options

Council has the following options available to it:

1. Council has the option not to adopt the draft Strategy. This would potentially limit Council's ability to fully deliver on both its statutory and non-statutory obligations, and potentially inhibit the Council delivery on the key vision of the CSP.

This is **not the preferred option**.

2. Council has the option to endorse the draft Strategy.

This is **not the preferred option**.

3. That Council adopt the draft Strategy as final, subject to final graphic and editorial changes and the updating of relevant datasets, with the final document then published on Council's website.

This is **the preferred option**.

Community Engagement and Internal Consultation

Development of the draft Strategy has occurred over an extended period of time and included consultation with several areas across Council as well as the Staff Sustainability Working Group.

The draft Strategy was also informed by Councillor workshops in February 2023 and March 2024.

Public Exhibition ran from 13 January 2025 to 14 February 2025. Given that this was within the summer school holiday period and in order to ensure adequate engagement, public exhibition commenced slightly before the official consultation period, which ran from 13 January 2025 to 14 February 2025. 20 survey responses and 8 email submissions were received.

A detailed summary of feedback, and Council staff response, is in the Engagement Report at Attachment 2.

Planning and Policy Implications

This draft Strategy considers and integrates with Council's Community Strategic Plan and Integrated Performance and Reporting Framework and will inform and guide decision making across the organisation, including within other strategies and actions plans.

If adopted this Strategy would also result in repeal of the existing Long Term Energy Strategy as this would be incorporated into this Strategy.

Financial and Economic Implications

There are no direct financial and economic implications in relation to this Report. However, successful implementation of this draft Strategy and the strategic objectives, will trigger the development of 4-year costed Action Plans for Sustainability and Biodiversity Management. This will ensure appropriate human and financial resources are directed to delivery of the actions through Council's Delivery Program, Operational Plan and budgeting processes.

Attachments

1.  draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy
2.  Engagement Report - draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy

