

**ITEM 9.1            STRUCTURE PLAN AND QUALITY DESIGN GUIDELINES  
CONTEXT REPORT**

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**File No:**            16/25193

**Attachments:**    **1. Glen Eira Housing Opportunity**

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**PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to set the context for Items 9.2 - 9.5 of the Agenda for the 27 February 2018 Ordinary Council Meeting which seek the adoption of *Structure Plans* for Bentleigh, Carnegie and Elsternwick, and Item 9.5 which seeks adoption of the *Quality Design Guidelines*.

This report outlines the extensive community engagement and significant strategic work that has been undertaken to reach the current stage, and how the outcomes that have been achieved align with the vision and objectives that were set in the *Activity Centre, Housing and Local Economy Strategy 2017* adopted by Council in July 2017.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

- notes and considers this report and background information when considering adoption the *Structure Plans* and *Quality Design Guidelines*;
- acknowledges the extensive community input in the development to the *Structure Plans* and *Quality Design Guidelines*, and thanks those who have contributed to the more than 4,400 submissions and 980 appearances at community forums; and
- notes that the *Structure Plans* and *Quality Design Guidelines* demonstrate that the aspirations of the community can be met while still achieving the objectives of State Government.

**BACKGROUND**

In 2016, Council carried out extensive community engagement for the purpose of a Planning Scheme Review and the community's concerns were clearly expressed. It was clear that protecting valued heritage areas, and addressing overdevelopment and loss of neighbourhood character in Glen Eira's activity centres was – and still is – a clear priority for our community. Structure planning was also a prominent project called for in the feedback.

Since that time, Council has embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning program to ensure the aspirations of the community are achieved while also ensuring that our responsibility to uphold the objectives of the State Government with regard to the growth of Melbourne is fulfilled.

Glen Eira was the first Council to implement the reformed residential zones in 2013, securing maximum building heights across the majority of the municipality. Since that time, external pressures, including rapid population growth, the Melbourne housing boom and multiple level crossing removals have led to an increase in the rate of development in our commercial

areas. Change occurring at this rate can be unsettling, especially when the shared long-term vision for these areas is undetermined or unclear.

Previously, long-standing local policies have been sufficient tools to manage development in Glen Eira's activity centres. However, as the external pressures have increased, more contemporary strategic planning is required to ensure that a shared vision positively guides future change.

Following the 2016 Planning Scheme Review Council adopted an extensive and comprehensive work plan. The work plan aims to update Glen Eira's strategic vision which guides the future planning of the city, and to undertake a new focus on planning for Glen Eira's activity centres.

Council's July 2017 adoption of the *Activity Centre, Housing and Local Economy Strategy*, along with the subsequent development of the Bentleigh, Carnegie and Elsternwick *Structure Plans*, and *Quality Design Guidelines* are the first stage in achieving this objective.

#### Integrated Strategic Planning Program 2017

The end of 2016 marked a unique and golden opportunity for Council to work closely in collaboration with the community to visualise what Glen Eira will look and feel like in 2031. This community led process saw more than 5,400 submissions or forum attendees, and informed the preparation of new future vision of the City and of all of its 18 neighbourhoods.

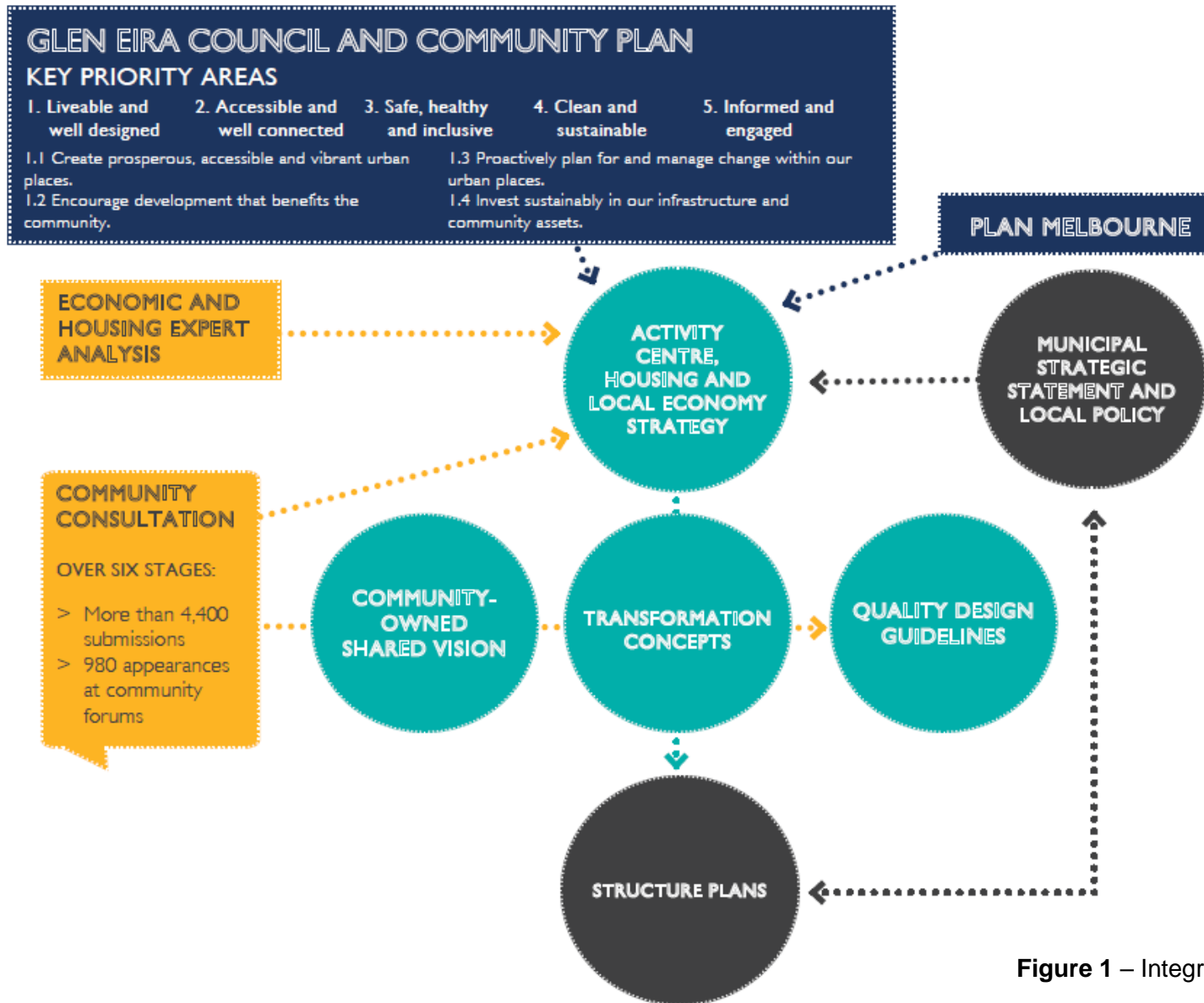


Figure 1 – Integrated strategic planning program

An integrated strategic planning program (Figure 1) was undertaken to deliver on this new community vision, including the following inter-linked projects:

1. *Activity Centre, Housing and Local Economy Strategy*
2. *Bentleigh, Carnegie and Elsternwick Structure Plans*
3. *East Village Structure Plan*
4. *Quality Design Guidelines*

1. Activity Centre, Housing and Local Economy Strategy

In July 2017, Council adopted the *Activity Centre, Housing and Local Economy Strategy* which sets a new vision for the future of the municipality and will inform the update to Council's Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS).

To help build strong local communities, it is important that local household growth is matched by local job growth. Glen Eira's activity centres are ideal locations to provide for growth in household and job numbers and are therefore considered to be areas for managed change.

The *Strategy* lays the strategic groundwork for Council's *Structure Plans* and *MSS* update by highlighting the correlations between the community's vision for Glen Eira and that of the State Government (*Plan Melbourne 2017-2051*):

- Community: seeking to better manage the impact of population growth and development on residential neighbourhoods.
- State Government: seeking greater urbanisation in Melbourne's inner suburban areas (such as Glen Eira).

The *Strategy* outlines how Glen Eira will proactively manage and accommodate population growth by considering the future needs of the community, including housing and social infrastructure needs, and the economic viability and accessibility of each centre. By establishing a long-term strategic framework which caters for the community's needs, the *Strategy* ensures the valued amenity and local character is maintained and respected.

The *Strategy*, which is underpinned by extensive economic research and consultation with local trader groups, promotes place-making in Glen Eira's shopping strips as a way of addressing the future impacts of digitalisation and online retailing. This can be achieved through facilitating a shift from pure retail experiences to a broader focus on facilitating greater community interaction and human experiences in our activity centres. The *Structure Plans* seek to deliver this through new community hubs, community markets, cultural precincts, public plazas and parks.

The *Strategy* also informs the development of *Structure Plans*, by outlining the strategic context, vision and objectives for each activity centre across Glen Eira and guides where to focus housing and commercial developments.

2. Bentleigh, Carnegie and Elsternwick Structure Plans

*Structure Plans* are critical to the future planning of our centres to ensure clear objectives are set for the community, businesses, landowners, Government and developers alike. A *Structure Plan* achieves this by setting a long-term shared vision for the local area. Without a clear shared future vision for a centre, changes can occur in an ad-hoc manner.

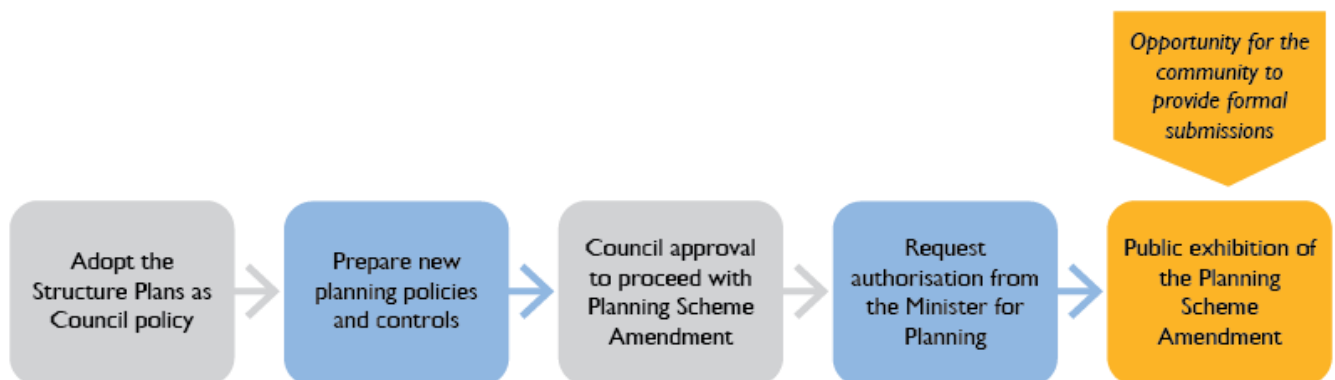
It guides future economic investment, population growth, development, land use, public realm upgrades, transport improvements and heritage protection, ensuring that proposed changes in the area are tested against and aligned with the future shared vision.

Importantly, the *Structure Plans* seek to leave a lasting legacy for the current and emerging communities by:

1. Harnessing development and population growth as a positive opportunity for our community, rather than a negative tension.
2. Transitioning our traditional retail centres to a broader community experience, with a focus on how we continue to provide opportunities for community connections and prepare for a less retail intensive future.
3. Proactively planning for the needs of our community including open space, transport and community uses.

The Bentleigh, Carnegie and Elsternwick *Structure Plans* have been developed based on themes that have emerged through early stages of engagement, with initiatives and projects undergoing further testing and refinement with each additional stage. The process undertaken has provided Council with an opportunity to work with local communities and stakeholders to discuss and carefully plan for the future. Each *Structure Plan* is explained in more detail in each of the relevant reports.

The process following Council consideration of the *Structure Plans* is outlined in the diagram below.



3. East Village

The East Village *Structure Plan* project has followed a similar community engagement process to the Bentleigh, Carnegie and Elsternwick *Structure Plans*. Once an important industrial area, the East Village precinct has seen the departure of many large-scale manufacturing businesses in recent decades. There is now an opportunity to renew the precinct and allow East Village to become an environmentally sustainable and innovative mixed-use area with a focus on employment, education and a diversity of housing that responds to community needs. Council officers are currently working closely with the Victorian Planning Authority to prepare the needed technical work before presenting a report to Council in coming months.

#### 4. Quality Design Guidelines

The *Quality Design Guidelines* were produced to:

- Respond to the aspirations of the Glen Eira community regarding neighbourhood character and to deliver on the vision for our neighbourhoods.
- Encourage a high level of architectural design in new developments.
- Provide clarity and certainty about Council's expectations for new developments.
- Support and supplement existing design guidance provided by the *Glen Eira Planning Scheme* and relevant State Government initiatives.

The implementation of the *Quality Design Guidelines* addresses the *Planning Scheme Review 2016 Work Plan* action to implement a *Neighbourhood Character Policy*.

### **ISSUES AND DISCUSSION – HOUSING OPPORTUNITY**

Local Government has a responsibility to align with and respond to State Government objectives on the accommodation of population growth. However, Local Government can influence how these broader State objectives are implemented in practice. This means that Council has the opportunity to place the right buildings in the right locations while also meeting State housing targets.

By implementing the entire strategic planning program across the City of Glen Eira, it is estimated that there would be a 5% increase in the municipal housing opportunity, which would come close to meeting the target of 28,000. Further detail can be found at Attachment 1 to this report.

Through the current strategic program, Council has worked closely with the community to develop a local plan that minimises adverse impacts on Glen Eira's existing community and upholds the principles and outcomes the community desires in terms of built form.

Put simply, the plans place the right buildings in the right locations, in a way that delivers the community's and State Government's objectives.

It is considered that the structure plans successfully deliver a plan that places 'the right buildings in the right locations', while being a significant step toward meeting our current housing requirements and addressing the key community concerns regarding development.

### **FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The majority of projects to be completed within the current financial year will be carried out in-house and within the existing budget parameters. However, some projects will require input from external specialists and will be taken into account during the upcoming Council budgeting process.

### **POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

The policy and legislative implications are outlined in each relevant report.

### **COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Traditionally, councils engage with the community separately on each individual project in a linear fashion. This approach can work well when there are limited projects occurring and when projects are tangible for the community, such as a public park upgrade.

However, with such significant strategic work being undertaken from a municipal-wide and place-based approach, a different process was undertaken where feedback was sought concurrently on multiple projects over the last 12 months with the following principles in mind:

- Foster an ongoing two-way conversation with the local community.
- Communicate in a way that makes sense to the community.
- Co-ordinate community feedback across all projects.
- Inform long-term thinking, not just immediate project needs.

Initially, a dedicated online community forum was established for each of Glen Eira's 17 shopping strips. As engagement progressed, further initiatives were undertaken for each round of engagement mentioned above, including:

- online forums and surveys;
- drop-in and pop-up engagement in each centre;
- workshops and information stands at key periods;
- print media for each round including *GE News*, social media and Council's website; and
- meetings with key stakeholders.

The engagement program has been specifically designed to ensure that community feedback can be harnessed to its full potential, in shaping and developing a number of inter-related projects occurring concurrently, including the documents that are presented for adoption – the *Bentleigh Structure Plan*, the *Carnegie Structure Plan*, the *Elsternwick Structure Plan* and the *Quality Design Guidelines*.

In total, more than 5,400 community submissions or forum attendees has provided valued input as outlined below:

**STAGE ONE: Tell us what you love about your shopping strip**

- Key aim: to determine the community's vision and objectives for each centre.
- More than 2,100 surveys completed for 17 activity centres.

**STAGE TWO: Transforming our neighbourhoods together**

- Key aims:
  - Test draft vision and objectives with the community.
  - Test concept ideas for major projects which were developed based on the feedback received in the first stage of consultation.
- More than 1,000 online surveys, 50 submissions, 150 people attended drop-in sessions.

**STAGE THREE: Activity Centre, Housing and Local Economy Strategy and early structure plan exploration**

- Key aims:
  - Seek feedback on the draft *Activity Centre, Housing and Local Economy Strategy*, which was developed based on previous feedback and external consultant input.
  - Further test visions for Bentleigh, Carnegie and Elsternwick.
- 64 submissions, 119 people attended community forums.

**STAGE FOUR: Quality Design Principles**

- Key aims:
  - Set clear building design principles.
  - Test and refine various building types to be applied across the municipality.
- 96 submissions.

**STAGE FIVE: Draft Concept Plans for Bentleigh, Carnegie and Elsternwick**

- Key aims:
  - o Test the proposed framework to locate the right buildings in the right locations.
  - o Seek feedback on building heights and building types as applied in these areas, as well as more detailed transformation projects.
- 473 submissions, 224 people attended community forums.

**STAGE SIX: Draft Structure Plans for Bentleigh, Carnegie and Elsternwick, and Quality Design Guidelines**

- Key aims:
  - o Seek feedback on draft *Structure Plans*, including refined content and additional movement sections.
- 692 submissions, 493 people attended community forums/drop-in sessions.

For further information on the extensive engagement that was undertaken, visit [www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/yourneighbourhood](http://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/yourneighbourhood)

**LINK TO COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY PLAN**

Theme one: *Liveable and well designed*

- Create prosperous, accessible and vibrant urban places.
- Encourage development that benefits the community.
- Proactively plan for and manage change within our urban places.
- Invest sustainably in our infrastructure and community assets.

**OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in this matter.

**CONCLUSION**

A significant amount of strategic work has been undertaken to address community concerns regarding development in Glen Eira. The documents proposed for adoption in the following agenda items later in this meeting Agenda – Bentleigh *Structure Plan*, Carnegie *Structure Plan*, Elsternwick *Structure Plan* and *Quality Design Guidelines* – have been produced through extensive community engagement. Should the documents be adopted, officers will commence the preparation of statutory implementation to achieve the objectives of the *Plans*.

It should be noted that further strategic work is to be undertaken for East Village and the remaining activity centres in Glen Eira, as well as a number of other projects that were adopted as part of the 2016 Planning Scheme Review. Implementation of this further work will be undertaken through a precinct-by-precinct approach as outlined in the *Activity Centre, Housing and Local Economy Strategy*. This place-based work is important to ensure the strengths and opportunities for each centre are considered when determining a future vision for these areas.