

Attachment 1

Action Plan

Bellingen Shire Housing Strategy 2020-2040

Bellingen Shire Council acknowledges the Gumbaynggirr people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and learn. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

DOCUMENT HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL

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DISCLAIMER

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information within this publication, Bellingen Shire Council disclaims any liability to any person in respect of anything done or not done as a result of the contents of this Plan.

The Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the Housing Strategy and relevant legislation. This Plan does not constitute legal or planning advice and should not be relied upon as such. It should not be used by anyone as a basis for investment or other private decision-making purposes about land purchase or land use. Landowners are encouraged to speak to Council about development proposals.

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Homes for Our Future Vision

Bellinghen Shire offers **housing choices** by providing a variety of housing types in different sizes and configurations, with varied features and characteristics.

New housing is located mostly **in and around existing town centres**. Shops, services, parks and community facilities are close by, encouraging **walking and cycling**.

We strive for greater opportunity and **affordability** in the housing market. Our homes cater for a wide range of people and households, including for all incomes, people with a disability, and for our ageing population.

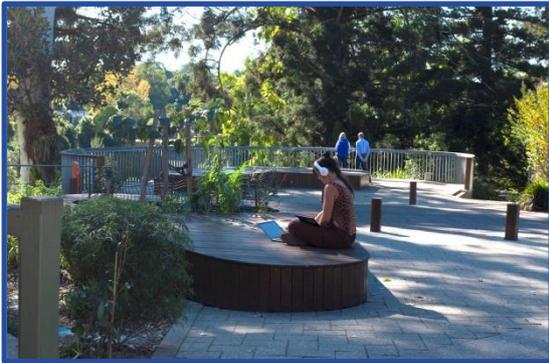
High quality **design** of housing and public space encourages **community connections**, and enhances **neighbourhood character** whilst respecting our shared history and heritage.

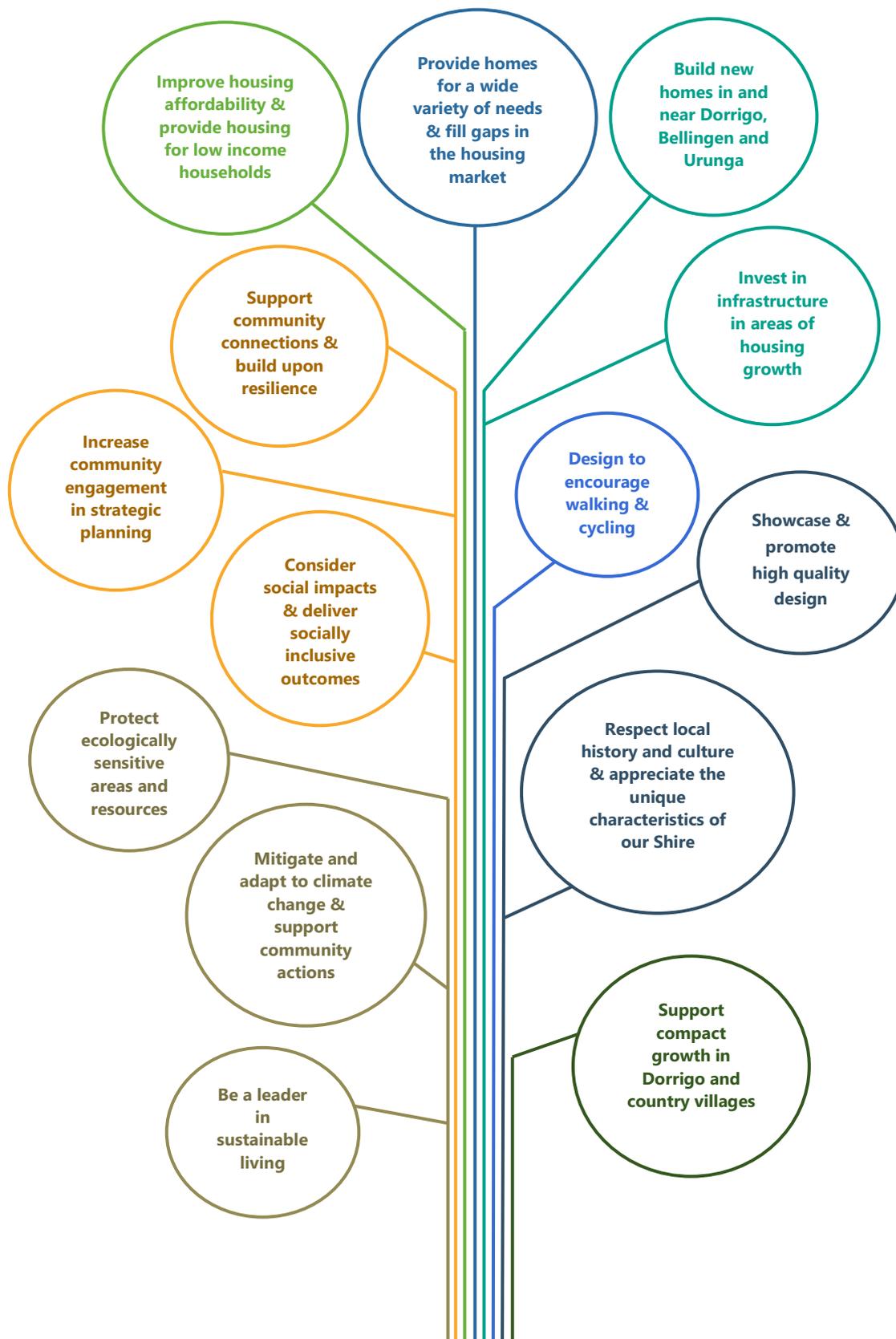
Our housing reflects the **environmental ethos** of the community, respecting our precious natural environment and supporting eco-conscious lifestyles and habits.

The **farmland** and **rural character** of the Shire is protected, and offers **regenerative and innovative** farming opportunities, supporting our country towns and villages.

What do you love about your neighbourhood?

Some photo competition entries





**Bellingen Shire
Homes for Our Future
Summary of Strategies Factsheet**

Strategy 1

Housing Choices

Vision

Bellingen Shire offers housing choices by providing a variety of housing types in different sizes and configurations with varied features and characteristics.

Strategies

Ensure new homes in residential areas provide for a range of household needs.

Encourage new supply to fill identified gaps in the housing market.

Actions

1.1 Set housing diversity targets

Housing diversity targets for residential areas are for growth to deliver at least **50% diverse housing types** (including: granny flats, dual occupancies, townhouses, villas, flats and houses on lots smaller than 600m²) to provide housing choices to meet the needs of the community.

Regular monitoring of housing approvals and completions by housing type and size will be required to ensure policies remain on track to deliver housing diversity.

1.2 Enable more housing types by changing planning controls

A greater variety of housing types and sizes will better meet the needs of a wide range of people (young people, families with children, older people wanting to age in place or downsize), and households (single people, couples and multigenerational families).

A Planning Control review, including additional built form and feasibility testing, will look at changing planning controls to encourage a wider range of well-designed housing types. Controls proposed to be reviewed include:

a) **Reduce minimum lot size required for subdivision**

It is proposed to allow land in the R1 Zone to be subdivided into lots measuring 500m² in town areas.

b) **Review controls relating to small lot subdivision**

Review planning controls that allow small lot subdivision (lot sizes <500m²), to encourage provision of smaller lots for well-designed homes including:

- Small footprint, low-impact single homes; and
- a greater variety of housing types (e.g. townhouses, terraces, semi-detached, villas etc)

in suitable locations.

c) **Review Chapter 3 Subdivision of DCP**

Review design and planning controls to promote high-quality design, including passive design, and beneficial built form and character outcomes for lots of all sizes.

d) **Review Chapter 2 Multiple Dwelling Construction in DCP (Development Control Plan)**

Provide planning and design controls to facilitate and encourage diverse housing types in appropriate locations, whilst protecting amenity and character.

e) **Review landscaped area controls**

Landscaping controls provide homes and neighbourhoods with green space on private land. New landscaped area objectives, controls and definitions will be introduced to limit overall density and built up area/building footprints, whilst allowing for a range of housing types and sizes. The 40% control proposed in the draft Local Housing Strategy will be reviewed to determine feasibility across a mix of dwelling sizes and yield. This may result in an adjustment down or a less streamlined approach to ensure privacy and environmental benefits while retaining development feasibility.

1.3 Enable greenfield housing diversity

Ways to encourage more housing diversity in greenfield areas will be investigated. Greater variety of lot sizes and housing types, sizes and designs will deliver beneficial character, affordability and social outcomes. Council will support proposals for housing diversity in greenfield areas (existing zoned areas) where consistent with the Housing Vision and where physical and environmental constraints do not preclude more homes.

1.4 Encourage smaller homes

There is a gap in the market for smaller homes, especially 1 and 2 bedroom homes to cater for changing needs of our community. Actions to encourage smaller homes include:

- clarifying planning controls and simplifying approval pathways
- reducing minimum lot sizes
- investigating incentive-based controls
- education about the affordability and environmental benefits of smaller homes

Useful and inspirational guides for homebuilders and buyers will be produced, providing good examples of well-designed and space efficient homes.

1.5 Promote Universal Design

Universal Design means designing homes so they can be accessed and used by all people regardless of age or ability. Council introduced planning controls to increase supply of adaptable and accessible homes in 2017 to meet an identified need. A review of these controls is proposed to ensure they are effective, feasible and user-friendly. The move towards more accessible dwellings is a necessary change for the housing industry. Council is committed to additional research, policy refinement and ongoing advocacy and education on the importance of Universal Design and accessible housing.

1.6 Housing choices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Council recognises that improved access to local housing will allow Gumbaynggirr people to live on Country and connect to Country.

Council will support initiatives by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, community groups, local Land Councils and Aboriginal housing providers to increase investment in, and supply of, housing that meets Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents' needs. Council will encourage partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and Community Housing Providers, State Government, housing advocacy groups and others to facilitate housing projects, such as development of land holdings owned by Local Aboriginal Land Councils for Aboriginal housing.

1.7 Encourage a variety of tenure types

Provide housing choices for purchase and for rent (short-term and long-term). Currently, the rental market within the Shire is relatively expensive with a low supply of rental dwellings and high levels of rental stress. Ways to encourage additional rental dwelling supply and increased rental security will be investigated.

There are a variety of alternative/hybrid tenures and models that could provide greater housing choice and affordability. For example, Council will work with proponents to support not-for-profit or capped profit housing; Community Land Trusts; co-operatives/co-housing/baugruppen; new-generation boarding houses; rent-to-buy and build-to-rent projects and pilots (e.g. tiny house village) in suitable residentially-zoned locations and where significant community and environmental benefits can be proven.

In addition, a prospectus will be prepared to invite to new residents to the Shire and attract ethical impact investors and financial support for these alternative housing models.

1.8 R5 Large Lot Residential Zone review

Whilst the focus of this Housing Strategy centres on land zoned R1 General Residential, in the medium-longer term it is proposed to undertake a review of land within the R5 Large Lot Residential zone and housing and food production potential and challenges in these areas. Some of these challenges and potential responses will also be explored in the Rural Lands Strategy.

As a result of this review, planning controls may be changed where land is assessed as suitable and only where infrastructure can be provided cost-effectively.

There are significant tracts of land currently zoned R5 and able to be subdivided (~669ha); therefore, this review applies to existing R5 land only, and does not propose to rezone any additional land to R5 Large Lot Residential.

OBJECTIVES

More people can find a home that meets their needs and budget.

Bellingen Shire communities are diverse and inclusive.
Linked to Strategy 5

Increased housing supply and diversity provides for local people who want to stay in the Shire, and attracts new residents.

There are homes and housing opportunities for everyone, and fewer people struggle to find safe, secure and affordable shelter.
Linked to Strategy 4

Bellingen Shire offers choice in housing tenure, including increased rental supply and security.
Linked to Strategy 4

Bellingen Shire offers a wide variety of comfortable, healthy and efficient homes that save residents' energy, water and money.
Linked to Strategies 4 and 7

Home designs are sensitive to place and local character but are also adaptable, able to be personalised and contribute to variety in the streetscape.
Linked to Strategy 6

Improved investment and developer confidence leads to increased housing supply with focus on attracting ethical investors and providing long-term community benefits.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

↑ % diverse housing types
↑ supply 1 & 2 bedroom homes
↑ # inclusive homes (UD)
↓ % of people in housing stress

Census population data

↑ % diverse housing types
Census migration data
Diverse income, age and employment groups.

↓ % of people in housing stress
↓ % low-income earners in housing stress
↑ # inclusive homes (UD)
↑ supply of rentals
↑ first home buyers
↑ social/community housing
↓ # homeless households

↑ housing supply
↑ supply of rentals (esp. LT)
↑ alternative tenures – e.g. cooperatives/co-housing, land trusts
↑ social/community housing

↑ building completions
↑ % diverse housing types
Design quality and efficiency (as built) audits

Character Statements
Community surveys – satisfaction with/pride in built environment

↑ # house & subdivision approvals
↑ building completions
↑ investment (incl. ethical investment)
↑ investment in public infrastructure and services in growth areas
Census population data
Community wellbeing data

Strategy 2

High-quality infill housing

Vision

New housing is located mostly in and around existing town centres, with shops, services, parks and community facilities close by, encouraging walking and cycling.

Strategies

Encourage building of new homes in the existing towns of Dorrigo, Bellingen and Urunga.

Invest in infrastructure in areas of infill housing growth.

Actions

2.1 Planning controls for best-practice infill house design

Planning controls will be updated to encourage low-impact infill housing that is environmentally responsible and designed to fit within existing neighbourhoods. Well-designed infill housing is sensitive to its place and context with minimal impacts to neighbouring properties and local character. It is important that controls and processes encourage good design and prevent poorly designed infill housing as bad examples will erode community support for additional housing in our towns.

Controls proposed to be reviewed include:

- a) **Simplify or remove Locality Density Provisions**
The Locality density provisions in the DCP detail how many dwellings can be accommodated on a site based on location and site area. These requirements will be reviewed and simplified or removed to allow infill housing in more areas.
- b) **Review landscaped area controls**
Landscaping controls provide homes and neighbourhoods with green space on private land. New landscaped area objectives, controls and definitions will be introduced to limit overall density and built up area/building footprints, whilst allowing for a range of housing types and sizes. Landscaped area controls will seek to maintain and enhance the leafy character of our Shire and encourage gardens and backyard biodiversity. The 40% control proposed in the draft Strategy will be reviewed in accordance with Action 1.2.
- c) **Tree planting**
One small tree will be required to be planted on site for each new home built.
- d) **Review built form objectives and controls**
Review objectives and controls to encourage sensitive development, e.g. review setbacks and bulk and scale controls.
- e) **Site Analysis Plans**
Introduce requirement to submit a Site Analysis Plan for all new dwelling house applications. Site analysis encourages proactive design responses to potential challenges or impacts.
- f) **Car parking**
Car parking controls will be reviewed to ensure all new infill homes has a minimum one off-street car space per dwelling (except granny flats and shop top housing), and that carparking and manoeuvring areas (hardstand areas) are designed to be safe yet not visually intrusive.

All proposed planning control changes will require further rounds of community consultation.

2.2 A guide to best-practice infill examples

Provide and promote examples of best practice infill housing for our local context in an accessible guide. Promote high-quality buildings that are built to last and illustrate how good design can address common concerns, e.g. privacy or loss of tree cover and gardens.

Promote understanding and use of the Government Architect's (*Draft*) *Urban Design Guide for Regional NSW* to build awareness of good design across Council, the property & development industry and the general public.

2.3 Infrastructure planning and studies

Long-term strategic infrastructure planning is important to support orderly and efficient growth, as well as improve environmental, social and economic outcomes. Holistic infrastructure plans should identify necessary upgrades and projects with appropriate delivery triggers to support growth, as well as develop cost-effective and equitable delivery mechanisms and report on service level provisions so residents know what to expect.

Encouraging infill growth is new for Bellingen Shire, which previously grew, and planned to grow, by expanding outwards. As town areas are expected to see more infill housing growth over the life of the strategy, investment in infrastructure upgrades including utilities (e.g. water, sewer), footpaths, roads and parks and green spaces will be required in these areas.

Infill focus areas (areas of highest infill potential as described in the *Housing Strategy* and *Infill Capacity Study*) will be prioritised for detailed infrastructure studies. These studies will investigate capacity and servicing requirements and seek to encourage small-scale, incremental infill housing projects in a cost-effective manner.

The review of the *Strategic Asset Management Plan (Civil Infrastructure and Buildings) Feb 2019* will be updated to reflect the LSPS & Growth Management Strategy.

2.4 Key sites

Key sites are large sites with redevelopment potential, specifically potential to deliver greater housing diversity. For a list of key sites and map, refer to the *Housing Strategy*. Key sites may present development partnership opportunities and excellent opportunities to provide Affordable Housing. Council will prioritise proposals on key sites where alignment with the Housing Vision and any site-specific principles can be clearly demonstrated.

2.5 Focus on low-rise housing

Building more homes to meet changing community needs should focus on low-rise housing types. The height of new development must respond to its setting and be compatible with neighbourhood character. More homes can be delivered without increasing the height of buildings. Therefore, the 10m height limit that currently applies across the Shire will be retained.

2.6 Laneway Housing Investigation

Laneways in our town areas presents opportunities for infill housing. Ways to encourage housing facing laneways in preferred locations, will be investigated, focusing on infrastructure needs and best practice design.

Laneway houses are located behind existing homes and generally have minimal impacts to the streetscape. Some laneways are better suited than others due to width, slope, condition and ease of providing services like water, sewer and waste collection.

A Laneway Housing Investigation Project will take a place-based approach and involve:

- identifying lanes which can accommodate a level of additional development with little intervention;
- understanding development feasibility and planning and infrastructure barriers;
- undertaking infrastructure network strategies in priority/feasible locations identifying infrastructure capacity and required upgrades;
- additional community engagement;
- developing funding and cost-sharing mechanisms for resurfacing and service extensions where laneway housing is considered desirable;
- producing workable design guidelines and engineering standards; and
- changing planning controls and procedures where necessary.

In the interim, granny flats behind dwellings and facing lanes will be encouraged (this type of development does not require direct vehicle access from lanes).

2.7 Promote retrofitting buildings as infill

Retrofitting existing homes to provide additional dwellings is a very low impact form of infill development. For example splitting one large home into two smaller homes (creating a dual occupancy). This can also include strata subdivision. Using existing buildings means limited change to streetscape appearance and character. This method also represents efficient, and generally more sustainable use, of land and space. Planning controls may need to be changed to facilitate more retrofits and interested proponents need to be aware of building code regulations. Simplified factsheets, guidelines and examples could be produced to assist.

2.8 Employment Lands Study

As part of the ELS, investigate ways to complement infill housing growth, for example by:

- Supporting existing centres and limiting out-of-centre major developments,
- Encouraging jobs in accessible locations and small-scale, community-focused mixed use,
- Increasing employment self-sufficiency and reducing commuting times and congestion.

OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
<p>There are more homes built in well-serviced neighbourhoods, catering for a wide range of households.</p> <p>Linked to Strategy 1</p> <p>Housing growth is supported by well-planned and maintained infrastructure and infrastructure investment is efficient and cost-effective.</p> <p>Public space quality is improved.</p>	<p>↑ # of houses approved and built in infill focus areas</p> <p>↑ % diverse housing types</p> <p><i>Census population data</i></p> <p>↑ <i>Infrastructure upgrades & maintenance in infill focus areas</i></p> <p><i>Updated Development Contributions Plans</i></p> <p><i>Neighbourhood tree canopy cover maintained or enhanced</i></p> <p><i>Street design standards</i></p> <p><i>Sporting fields (amenities/surfaces/range of users)</i></p> <p><i>Public space quality audits</i></p>
<p>Growth is compact and well-connected, encouraging walking and cycling and reducing car dependence.</p> <p>Linked to Strategy 3</p>	<p>↑ # of houses within 800m of daily needs shops/services</p> <p>↑ # of footpaths/cycleways/shared paths linking key destinations</p> <p>↓ local car trips</p> <p><i>Transport surveys</i></p>
<p>Infill benefits local businesses and producers, town centres, main street shopping and the local economy.</p>	<p>↓ <i>escape expenditure</i></p> <p><i>Low retail/business vacancy rates</i></p> <p><i>No out-of-centre large/major retail developments</i></p>
<p>Infill housing is provided at a range of price points and includes housing for low-middle income earners.</p> <p>Linked to Strategy 4</p>	<p><i>Affordability data– incl. Income and house price (sale & rent) data</i></p>
<p>The bulk and scale of infill housing is compatible with neighbourhood character and buildings and hard surfaces are softened with landscaping.</p> <p>Linked to Strategy 6</p>	<p><i>Character Statements</i></p> <p><i>Design quality audit</i></p>
<p>Housing is located away from areas of high natural hazard and isolation risks.</p>	<p><i>Natural hazard studies & planning controls</i></p>
<p>Our biodiversity, water quality and natural landscapes are protected through preventing housing development in areas of high environmental value.</p> <p>Linked to Strategy 7</p>	<p><i>Area of HEV land zoned for environmental purposes only</i></p> <p><i>Low % vegetation change/loss due to housing/infrastructure</i></p> <p><i>Water quality data</i></p>
<p>Our Important Farmland is protected for future generations.</p> <p>Linked to Strategy 8</p>	<p><i>Area of Important Farmland zoned for rural and rural-related uses only</i></p> <p><i>Low # of land use conflict complaints</i></p>

Strategy 3

Walking and cycling

Vision

New housing is located mostly in and around existing town centres, with shops, services, parks and community facilities close by, encouraging walking and cycling.

Strategies

Design subdivisions, buildings and public spaces to encourage walking and cycling.

Connect key destinations by providing footpaths, cycle paths and supportive infrastructure.

Actions

3.1 Implement the Pedestrian and Bike Plan

Implement the recommendations of the *Bellinghen Shire Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan and Bike Plan* (GHD, 2016). In the next review of the Plan, include measurable targets to increase walking and cycling. Provide links across town precincts and between town and greenfield sites. Ensure footpath, cycleway and shared path improvements are delivered where they are most needed and most likely to be well-used, having regard to construction and maintenance costs.

3.2 Review Contributions Plan and seek funding opportunities

Update the *Bellinghen Shire Local Roads and Traffic Infrastructure Developer Contribution Plan 2015* to include funding for strategic footpath and cycleway projects. Pursue other funding opportunities such as grants.

3.3 Street Design Standards

Develop Street Design Standards that provide for the needs and safety of people walking and riding bicycles. Plan for people with more restricted mobility, including children, seniors, and people with a disability to ensure that everyone in the community has the chance to use active transport. Use these standards when undertaking public works designs; advising on large developments such as large subdivisions; and when delivering new projects.

3.4 Manage car parking

Deliver the *Town Centres Parking Strategy* (2018). Car transport is necessary in rural areas and there is a need to provide parking near key destinations. A balanced approach is required, providing for all modes of transport and providing accessibility and mobility choice for everyone, including people with a disability. The number of accessible car parking spaces should be increased within town centres and consideration should be given to designating parking spaces for electric vehicles and car sharing programs.

The design of car parking areas and access must complement the character of our centres (developed in a time before cars were common, and creating the special sense of place we enjoy today).

Ways to practically reduce car use (especially for short local trips) and vehicle emissions should be investigated.

3.5 Connect greenfields areas to town centres

New housing estates need to be well-connected to surrounding neighbourhoods. Good subdivision design can encourage active forms of transport. Controls will ensure walking and cycling access provide good connectivity between old and new neighbourhoods, enhancing community connections and social cohesion.

3.6 Planning controls and building design to encourage active transport

Investigate planning controls and engineering standards that promote walking and cycling and manage traffic and parking impacts. Controls need to consider the needs of people walking, riding bikes and people of all abilities.

a) Housing and Streetscape

There are a number of additional planning controls that can be used to protect and enhance the character of existing neighbourhoods and promote walking. For example:

- providing clear pedestrian entries to homes and homes that face the street
- minimising vehicle circulation (where it is safe to do so) and hard surfaces (e.g. concrete) on properties
- providing off-street car parking that is recessive in the streetscape
- planting street trees along pedestrian/cycle routes to provide shade

b) Subdivision

It is very important to design for active transport at the subdivision design stage, but this is often overlooked in order to maximise developable land or streamline car traffic. Planning controls should be reviewed to ensure that making new housing areas walkable is a top priority.

c) Other (e.g. Commercial)

Encourage active transport by providing bike parking, end-of-trip facilities (showers, lockers). Provide accessible parking spaces and electrical vehicle charging for large proposals.

3.7 Foster a walking culture

Walking and other forms of active transport provide a multitude of benefits, from increasing health and fitness; promoting social activity and safety and taking pressure off the road network.

Residents value the features of a walking culture – enjoying a ‘stop and chat’ in the street; the slower pace of life in the country and living more environmentally-friendly lifestyles. In rural areas, there is the need to come into town by car, but those living near town (set to increase with infill development) should be encouraged to walk to local destinations and for most short local trips.

Council can promote active travel through actions such as:

- providing safety messages and information for drivers, walkers and cyclists
- improving signage
- marketing the benefits of walking and pedestrian-focused design
- raising awareness of local facilities and infrastructure

- engaging with frequent walkers and find out their motivations, needs and ideas
- engaging with and sharing stories of people with mobility difficulties to increase understanding
- supporting walking initiatives and challenges
- supporting active transport for events or at busy times (e.g. market days).

3.8 Support and encourage Ride or Walk to School programs

Walking or riding a bike is great exercise for kids and the only choice of transport for those without a driver's licence and access to public transport.

Council can:

- support school programs that increase walking and cycling rates amongst students;
- engage with schools and students and parents/caregivers about barriers to walking or cycling; and,
- work to reduce/remedy these barriers.

OBJECTIVES

Growth is compact and well-connected, encouraging active transport.

Linked to Strategy 2

People have more transport and mobility choices because useful, inclusive & attractive alternatives to private car travel are provided.

Community health outcomes are improved including physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Social interaction opportunities are increased.

Linked to Strategy 5

More streets are pedestrian-focused, making walking comfortable and improving safety.

High pedestrian activity improves small business exposure and increases local spending.

Private transport costs are reduced.

Linked to Strategy 4

Traffic congestion, car parking demand and noise and air pollution from vehicles is reduced.

Linked to Strategy 7

Accessible car parking is prioritised (for people with a disability) and a balanced amount of car parking is provided near key destinations.

Greenhouse gas emissions from transport are reduced.

Linked to Strategy 7

Subdivision and building design prioritises walking and cycling, respecting historical streetscape design and neighbourhood character.

Linked to Strategy 6

New and emerging technologies are planned for and implemented in an inclusive and equitable way.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

↑ # of houses within 800m (10 min walk) of daily needs

↑ footpath/cycleway connections

*Pedestrian and Bike Plan updated
Transport surveys and audits
Census data*

↑ investment in walking/cycling infrastructure

*Public health data
Health Economic Assessment Tool (WHO) or similar*

*Community wellbeing data
Street design standards*

↑ places to stop and rest

↑ walking journeys

↓ road accidents

↑ perceptions of safety

↑ Street trees, landscaping and shade and places to stop and rest

↑ pedestrian activity in centres

Low commercial vacancies

↑ walking journeys

Household travel cost data (adjusted for inflation)

Origin-destination surveys

↓ local (short-distance) car trips

↑ # accessible car parking spaces in town centres

↑ rates of park and walk

Car parking occupancy surveys

↑ walking journeys

Health Economic Assessment Tool (WHO) or similar

Planning controls & design guidelines

Design quality audits

↑ # electric vehicle charging stations

↑ Public transport/on

demand/sharing opportunities

Strategy 4

Affordability

Vision

We strive for greater opportunity and affordability in the housing market. Our homes cater for a wide range of people and households, including for all incomes, people with a disability, and for our ageing population.

Strategies

Advocate for improved housing affordability, especially for people on low and middle incomes.

Encourage and facilitate the building of Affordable (subsidised) Housing, as well as homes that are more likely to be affordable (e.g. smaller homes, homes with high-quality lower-cost specifications/finishes, homes with shared spaces).

Actions

4.1 Provide Affordable Housing on government-owned sites

Council has commenced a review of its landholdings which could identify land suitable to be used for Affordable Housing. This review is in its early stages and land suitability studies need to follow any preliminary investigations into potentially suitable land parcels. Council has limited land classified as Operational and therefore limited land available for development. This review could include analysis of Community land parcels (which could be reclassified to Operational land for the purpose of Affordable Housing). Council will also advocate to State government regarding any available State-owned or Crown land parcels that may be suitable for AH development. Any AH development on Council-owned land must cater for the needs of the community, in particular very low and low income earners, and be developed by a Community Housing Provider(s) and/or Not-for-Profit organisation.

4.2 Define affordable housing, and promote its benefits to the community

Council will adopt definitions of affordable housing considering local context. Benchmarks will also be provided, specifying what the cost of a home (for rent and purchase) in our Shire would need to be in order to be considered affordable for different income groups. These benchmarks must be indexed, reviewed and updated regularly across the life of the strategy. Housing-related costs like energy and water also need to be considered.

Making affordable housing a priority for our Shire will benefit a wide range of people and our community as a whole.

Council will work with partners and the community to continue to promote quality housing solutions to affordability challenges and address misconceptions and concerns about affordable housing through research, education and engagement.

4.3 Affordability objectives

Council supports provision of affordable housing for all residents and this intent should be clear within Council's plans and strategies.

Affordability will be included as an important objective within Council strategies and planning controls, for example within the LEP, DCP, LSPS, Employment Strategy and tourism and economic development studies.

4.4 DA Management Policy

Council will introduce a Development Assessment (DA) Management Policy to streamline the DA process and reduce the cost and time it takes to build more homes in our Shire. This policy will be aligned with the *Development Assessment Best Practice Guide for Councils*, written by the NSW State Government.

4.5 Promote housing diversity

Council will encourage houses and lots of different shapes and sizes, especially smaller homes which are a gap in the market. Small homes are generally cheaper to construct and run (depending on design and specification). Planning controls currently require a mix of bedroom numbers in multi-dwelling developments but do not restrict dwelling size, meaning a 1 or 2 bedroom home can be as large as a 3 or 4 bedroom home and retrofitted to include more bedrooms after approval. Council will encourage and promote the delivery of housing diversity and smaller homes through engagement with industry, state government and the community; through design education and training and embedded in planning objectives.

In the medium term, if the market persists in not providing a mix of house sizes, Council will consider additional development controls that mandate a greater mix of dwelling sizes and types, including maximum floor area controls.

The Infill Focus Areas are located in accessible and desirable locations, linked to higher land values. A mix of housing types and sizes will be required in these areas to encourage provision of homes at a range of pricepoints to positively influence affordability.

4.6 Reduce ongoing housing-related costs

a) Reduce ongoing costs through design and resilience-building

There are a number of ways to reduce ongoing housing costs that Council can promote. Housing that is designed to be adaptable, energy, water and space efficient and made from durable materials will be cheaper to run. Infill housing reduces private transport costs and homes that avoid hazard-prone areas have cheaper insurance.

Sometimes up-front design costs may be higher than for standardised homes but significant savings can be achieved in the long run and more information should be provided on cost-saving design measures (including for retrofitting existing buildings) that residents can adopt.

In addition, investing in climate change adaptation, fostering community resilience and encouraging greater community self-sufficiency will help reduce ongoing costs related to service provision and infrastructure.

b) Reduce Cooling and Heating Costs

On average, 40% of energy costs in the home are spent on air conditioning and heating. A number of house design measures and resident actions can reduce energy costs whilst maintaining comfort and benefiting the environment (less home energy use and reduced emissions).¹

Council will promote resources that can assist homeowners, homebuilders and renters in reducing energy costs through good home design, retrofits and behaviours.

¹ <http://yourhome.gov.au/energy/heating-and-cooling>

Council will also produce location and climate-specific factsheets, outlining practical design measures and behaviours that can reduce ongoing cooling and heating costs for residents.

These guides should discuss upfront costs and benefits of energy-efficient house design in reducing ongoing costs. Greater awareness of potential costs and future potential savings can help residents choose what will work best for their needs and budgets. This action also assists with climate change adaptation and resilience, ensuring our buildings are comfortable year-round, more resilient to shocks like power outages, and appropriately designed and built for local climatic conditions.

c) Energy justice advocacy

Energy poverty is a significant issue in Australia, exacerbated by rising electricity costs and climate change impacts. Lower-income households and renters are disproportionately affected by energy poverty and are more likely to forgo comfort and risk health issues because they cannot afford to cool or heat their homes. Council should advocate for the equitable distribution of benefits resulting from energy efficient design and technologies. This may mean social impact assessments for significant projects or targeting of programs and incentives to low-income earners or other marginalised groups.

4.7 Advocacy and partnerships

Providing affordable housing is the responsibility of all levels of government, Federal, State and Local. Local Governments are not responsible for many policies or actions that influence housing affordability; however can advocate for change to other levels of government and responsible agencies. An Advocacy Platform will be prepared, detailing important points and suggested policy responses, for example advocating for a National Housing Strategy, greater public investment in social and affordable housing, rental reforms to enable secure longer-term leases for tenants and embedding universal design principles in building codes.

Council will look for partnerships, and continue working with existing partners such as the Bellingin Nambucca Affordable Housing Action Group. Council supports in principle BNAHAG's idea for a community-led Housing Hub which could provide advocacy, advice and education services to the community in partnership with Council. Council and partners will also continue to share stories of people experiencing housing affordability challenges, to promote understanding and spur action.

4.8 Strategies to reduce homelessness

Council will advocate for a whole-of government approach to addressing homelessness and engage with local and regional stakeholders to better understand how we can secure sustainable accommodation and appropriate support solutions for homeless households in our area.

OBJECTIVES

Bellingin Shire communities are diverse and inclusive.

Linked to Strategies 1 and 5

There are homes and housing opportunities for everyone, and fewer people struggle to find safe, secure and affordable shelter.

Bellingin Shire offers choice in housing tenure, including homes for sale at different price points and increased rental supply, affordability and security.

Bellingin Shire provides safe and secure housing for very low and low income earners, reducing social inequalities.

Homelessness in the Shire and region is reduced and prevented.

Council and the wider community understand the need for affordable housing and are supportive of affordable housing goals.

Investment in affordable housing development provides permanently affordable housing and maximises long-term social benefits.

Homes are designed or retrofitted to reduce ongoing running costs (e.g. electricity and water costs).

Linked to Strategy 7

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

*Census population data
Diverse income, age and employment groups.*

↓ % of people in housing stress
↓ % very low, low-moderate income earners in housing stress*
↑ # inclusive homes (UD)
↑ supply of rentals (esp. LT)
↑ first home buyers
↑ key worker housing
↑ social & community housing
↓ # homeless households

↑ housing supply
↑ supply of rentals
↑ alternative tenures – e.g. cooperatives/co-housing, land trusts
↑ social/community housing

↑ # affordable rental dwellings for very low and low income households
↑ # affordable dwellings for low-income purchasers
↓ % of very low and low income earners in housing stress
↑ # lower cost housing types/products

↓ # homeless households
↑ support services

Housing Strategy
↑ housing supply at various price points
Positive media about affordable housing developments

↑ alternative tenures – e.g. cooperatives/co-housing, land trusts
↑ social/community housing
↑ key worker housing

↑ energy and water efficiency
↑ low-energy design/passive design
↑ renewable energy

* Levels of housing stress on lower income households can be reduced if higher housing costs cause these people to move out of the area. Therefore, we need to also consider population and income diversity measures.

Strategy 5

Community connections

Vision

High quality design of housing and public space encourages community connections and enhances neighbourhood character whilst respecting our shared history and heritage.

Strategies

Build upon our community's sense of care, creativity and resilience and support new and existing connections.

Include social considerations in decision-making and deliver socially inclusive outcomes.

Increase community engagement in strategic planning and encourage community partnerships.

Actions

5.1 Parks, Community Facilities and Public Spaces Strategy

Infill housing provides an impetus to better our public spaces. As some people's private backyards will be smaller, public open space and trees and plants in streets and parks become more important.

Council will produce a strategy that identifies the public open space (e.g. parks, playgrounds, sporting fields) and community facility needs of the Bellingen Shire, taking into account predicted growth. The strategy will build upon the recommendations of the *Open Spaces Management Plan July 2012* and provide benchmarks (including public space requirements for new developments), design principles, recommendations and funding priorities for public space and community facility projects.

The strategy will explore ways to support greater social interactions and welcome people of all ages and abilities in public spaces. Opportunities to create interconnected networks of open space (e.g. along creek corridors) and support biodiversity and climate change adaptation will also be explored. The strategy must consider the different needs of greenfield and infill housing areas, ensuring new, established and changing neighbourhoods are well-connected and well-serviced.

5.2 Funding public space infrastructure – review Contributions Plan

The *Community Facilities & Open Space Infrastructure Contributions Plan* will be reviewed to ensure adequate and fair levies on development are applied. Council will also seek to fund public space improvements in line with a *Parks and Public Spaces Strategy* through a variety of other mechanisms including grants. Proposals which include new or embellished public spaces will need to consider the costs of maintenance and ongoing workforce implications.

5.3 Creating socially sustainable places – Social Impact Assessment

Environmental and economic considerations are often addressed in development proposals, but social considerations can be less tangible and less often considered or assessed. Social considerations are broad and can include health, equality and cultural impact assessments. Council will investigate ways to better integrate social considerations into planning and design decision-making.

5.4 Ageing in place

Towns and homes need to be designed to help people stay at home as they age, if they want to. Council will review planning controls and barriers to ageing in place and encourage age-friendly housing (Universal Design); and a variety of housing types including supporting co-housing for older age groups. Council will also prioritise age-friendly design principles for public space and facility planning and providing information and support for housing options for older residents.

5.5 Aboriginal Connections to Country and Community

Council recognises and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, culture and knowledge and deep and continuing connections to place. Council will work on engaging and developing relationships with Aboriginal people, groups and agencies to better understand and plan for the needs and aspirations of local Aboriginal people.

Council will support projects, programs and partnerships run by Aboriginal community groups that strengthen community connections, share experience and knowledge, including sharing Gumbaynggirr language, and projects which empower Aboriginal people. Other actions for investigation, suggested during engagement include establishing Aboriginal Reference Groups and including more Aboriginal representation on panels and committees.

5.6 Mixed Tenure Housing

Mixed tenure housing means development that includes a mix of social and affordable (sold or leased below-market rate) dwellings and market rate homes. Mixed tenure allows more expensive homes to cross-subsidise social and affordable housing.

Council supports best-practice mixed tenure development in residential areas, and will support best practice proposals (assessed on merit). Some aspects of best practice include:

- tenure blindness (subsidised dwellings must be largely indistinguishable from market-rate dwellings);
- all tenants must have equal access to facilities and open spaces;
- quality design and build for all dwellings that considers lifetime maintenance costs;
- mixing of different tenures so subsidised housing is not all in the one place or block.
- Community housing providers are involved early in the design stages of a proposal, and
- Development is sensitive to its surrounds and designed to maximise amenity

These features of best practice mixed tenure encourage community connections, create "bridging" social opportunities, reduce inequalities and can help address stigma.

5.7 Workforce housing

Home ownership and private rental is becoming less affordable for a range of workers across the Shire, including retail, hospitality, education, health and emergency services workers. Council will investigate ways to encourage development of affordable housing options for local workers, including working families and single people with low-moderate incomes, so local people can remain able to afford to live near their jobs and to attract new working age people to the Shire. Strategies to provide greater affordability can include rent-to-buy, subsidised key worker housing, shared equity, co-ownership, long term leasing and capped profit developments, targeting low-middle income workers.

5.8 Equitable Access to High Speed Internet

Council will continue to advocate for fair and equitable high quality access to high-speed internet for all Shire residents. Quality internet access is a socio-economic wellbeing indicator and can support social connectedness, employment, education and health outcomes. A digital divide exists in Australia where access to internet is not equally distributed and lower socio-economic groups tend to receive poorer quality digital infrastructure². Access to reliable high speed and high quality internet is also a key area for investigation in Council's forthcoming Employment Strategy.

Council must also consider residents' access and ability to use digital services when transitions to more digitally-focused services are proposed. Council will support projects that build residents' digital skills, and enhance digital access, especially for marginalised groups.

5.9 Community Engagement and Participation in Strategic Planning

Council recognises that local knowledge and community participation is key to effective strategic planning. Whilst not everyone will agree with each other, plans that are developed with community input are more likely to result in action. Council will continue to build upon the processes and learnings of the *Homes for Our Future* community engagement and seek to improve engagement in strategic planning projects and build trust in planning functions and processes.

There are many people and groups who do not feel empowered by our current planning system and processes. Council will continue to focus on engaging with a wide range of people and groups across the Shire and to listen to a wide range of people, capturing voices less commonly heard.

OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
Bellingen Shire communities are diverse and inclusive. <i>Linked to Strategies 1 and 4</i>	<i>Census population data</i> <i>Diverse income, age and employment groups.</i>
Bellingen Shire residents maintain strong social networks, fostering feelings of belonging, trust and empowerment.	↑ <i>Volunteering</i> ↑ <i>Local, community driven events</i> <i>Connections between and across our communities</i> <i>Community wellbeing data</i>
Community members have access to being able to actively participate in community life and civic activities.	<i>Community wellbeing data</i> <i>Disability and Inclusion Plan</i> <i>Internet connectivity</i> ↑ <i>community participation in planning</i>
Community health outcomes are improved including physical and mental health and wellbeing.	<i>Public health data</i>
Social interaction opportunities are increased and people feel safe. <i>Linked to Strategy 3</i>	<i>Community wellbeing data</i>
People have improved access and connections to parks, green space, water and nature, enhancing community wellbeing. <i>Linked to Strategy 7</i>	<i>Parks and Public Spaces Plan</i> <i>Community wellbeing data</i>
Connections to place are strengthened, through protecting and celebrating the special and unique aspects of our Shire. <i>Linked to Strategy 6</i>	<i>Community wellbeing data</i> ↑ <i>community participation in planning</i> <i>Heritage strategies and programs</i>
The principles of social justice underpin our activities and decision making processes	<i>Community wellbeing data</i> ↑ <i>trust</i>
More homes support ageing in place, allowing older residents to stay in their homes and within their local communities. <i>Linked to Strategies 1 and 4</i>	<i>Census population data</i> ↑ <i>% diverse housing types</i> ↑ <i>supply 1 & 2 bedroom homes</i> ↑ <i># inclusive homes (UD)</i>
We value, honour and actively acknowledge our Gumbayngirr culture and heritage.	<i>Engagement with Aboriginal community</i> ↑ <i>Aboriginal events, activities, learning opportunities and storytelling in appropriate cultural spaces</i> ↑ <i>use of Gumbayngirr language</i>
Our communities and towns are resilient and made safer through preparedness for natural hazards and disasters such as floods and extreme heat. <i>Linked to Strategy 7</i>	↑ <i>Volunteering</i> <i>Community wellbeing data</i> <i>Hazard studies</i> <i>Emergency preparedness</i>

² Schram, Baum, Fisher et al. "Three charts on: the NBN and Australia's Digital Divide" published in The Conversation June 2017

Strategy 6

Design and character

Vision

High quality design of housing and public space encourages community connections, and enhances neighbourhood character whilst respecting our shared history and heritage.

Strategies

Showcase high quality design that provides for household needs and respects local character.

Respect and appreciate local history and culture and cherish the unique characteristics of Bellingen Shire.

Promote understanding and conservation of Gumbaynggirr heritage and culture, historical buildings, heritage items, natural landscapes & notable people, groups and stories.

Actions

6.1 Character Statements

In line with state planning reforms, consideration of local character will be elevated in plan-making and development assessment. Character is how a place looks and feels, and is influenced by physical, cultural and spiritual features. New development and strategic masterplans will be guided by Character Statements.

Council will prepare a *Local Strategic Planning Statement* (LSPS) to describe character features across the Shire and identify desired future character. Council will also prepare place-specific *Character Statements* for Dorrigo, Bellingen and Urunga. These important new planning documents will be informed by community input and will be used to inform planning decisions.

Planning for local character is about allowing a place to evolve whilst maintaining and enhancing special features and values. These features must be defined by local people, using local knowledge and acknowledging diverse perspectives.

6.2 Planning controls for high quality design and character

Review planning objectives, controls and processes to strengthen character and design considerations for development. These controls should encourage high quality design particularly in relation to bulk, scale, building siting and footprints. Controls should be flexible enough to enable design responses to constraints (overly prescriptive controls can restrict design and encourage standardisation).

a) Landscaping controls

New landscaped area controls will be introduced to provide private green open spaces for a range of housing types and limit overall built-upon area. The 40% control proposed in the draft Strategy will be reviewed in accordance with Action 1.2. Landscaped area controls will seek to maintain and enhance the leafy character of our Shire and encourage gardens and backyard biodiversity. Landscape Plans will be required to be submitted with development applications and guidance on how to prepare a Landscape Plan for small proposals will be produced.

b) Tree planting

One small tree will be required to be planted on site for each new home built. A *Small Tree Landscaping Guide* will be produced to help people choose the right tree for their gardens.

c) Significant Tree Register

Significant trees will be given statutory protection through inclusion of a register of significant trees in Council's DCP.

d) Site Analysis Plans

Introduce requirement to submit a Site Analysis Plan for all new dwelling house applications. Site analysis supports buildings that are sensitive to local context, and address challenges through good design.

e) Building siting and design

Planning controls across multiple DCP Chapters will be reviewed to ensure well designed and sited dwellings to increase energy and water efficiency, reduce potential impacts to neighbours and protect local character and amenity.

6.3 Innovative demonstration projects

On suitable sites zoned residential, Council will encourage and prioritise demonstration projects that embrace best-practice design and showcase housing diversity and sustainability. A demonstration housing project displays leadership, inspires the development industry and can stimulate supply of high-quality housing for the community. Demonstration projects can also test and develop new or emerging concepts and provide a basis for academic research. Most demonstration projects include partnerships between Community Housing Providers or Not-For-Profit Organisations.

6.4 Build upon the Shire's creative and design culture

Good housing design is sensitive to its surroundings and considers local conditions and constraints. Good design can occur across a wide range of budgets and for all housing types. Good design is about creating fit-for-purpose and attractive buildings for longevity rather than spectacle. Bellingen Shire has an advantage in producing high-quality outcomes because of its natural and built assets and creatively-inclined community. By capitalising upon these artistic and creative skills, Bellingen Shire can be renowned as an area of design excellence. Council can nurture these qualities and reflect them in the built environment by:

- Celebrating and rewarding local examples of design excellence and highlighting case studies;
- Engaging with the community (e.g. when designing infrastructure) and supporting design conversations;
- Supporting local public art in key public spaces; and
- Promotion of, and training in, urban design and housing design principles and best-practice concepts

In addition, Council supports in principle BNAHAG's idea for a community-led Housing Hub which could provide advocacy, advice and education services to the community in partnership with Council.

6.5 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study

New housing must avoid development impacts on areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

To help identify and protect culturally significant land, Council proposes to undertake a Shire-wide Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study involving engagement with the local Aboriginal community as the owners of this cultural heritage. A comprehensive study requires Council and partners to resource and prioritise working relationships with Aboriginal residents, groups and community networks. Council will apply for grant funding to help fund a Shire-wide Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study.

Council supports the State Government's proposed changes to the management and conservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage via the introduction of the draft Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act and will work with local stakeholders to implement these reforms when they are enacted.

6.6 Heritage Listing Review

The *Bellingen Shire Heritage Study* was produced in 1992, and requires updating to ensure places of significance and worthy of conservation are legally recognised and preserved for future generations. Heritage in its many forms is ubiquitous in Bellingen Shire and highly valued by residents. Owners' of heritage items should be supported in conservation efforts consistent with the ICOMOS Burra Charter heritage management principles. The *DCP Chapter 15 Heritage* requires review to make it more user-friendly and to encourage conservation and adaptive reuse of heritage items and places.

6.7 Greening Programs

Bellingen Shire's spectacular natural environment is a key contributor to the Shire's character. This character can be protected and enhanced through tree planting and landscaping in residential areas, both on public (street trees, verges and in parks) and private land (in yards and gardens). Greening can be supported and measured through a *Significant Tree Register* and *Tree Canopy Study* which includes canopy targets for different areas.

Information sharing can assist greening for example through mapping of tree assets or significant plantings, production of local habitat and planting guides (to help choose appropriate species) and embellishment of parks and open spaces, including transparent maintenance plans and proactive tree management. Bushfire risk will need to be considered in plant selection and maintenance. Tree planting will be a key focus, but also the planting of flowering shrubs will be encouraged to support pollinators and biodiversity.

6.8 Incentive programs, including continuing heritage conservation grant program

Council will support small grant programs that protect and enhance neighbourhood character, such as the annual matched-funding heritage conservation grants, which are partially funded by Council and partially funded by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. When considering possible future small grant programs or financial incentives/concessions, residential projects must contribute to the achievement of the Housing Vision and strategies, and must be locally and community based.

6.9 Local character in greenfield areas

Greenfield areas need to carefully consider character and opportunities for community connections during subdivision design. During the *Homes for Our Future* engagement, residents expressed a desire for new housing areas to prioritise environmental protection, sustainable living and neighbourhood character. To help new neighbourhoods establish character and distinctiveness, greenfield areas should: provide inclusive public spaces; respond to the natural environment and work with features such as topography and vegetation; design for local microclimates; maximise views and vistas; provide generous landscaping suited to the climate and local context and integrate with, and connect to, existing established neighbourhoods.

OBJECTIVES

The features of places that people cherish, identify with and relate to are recognised and enhanced.

[Linked to Strategy 5](#)

Our towns and places remain distinct from one another and other places, and places evolve and change in ways sympathetic to their valued characteristics.

The supply of well-designed homes that respond to individual needs and unique settings is increased.

[Linked to Strategy 1](#)

Home designs are creative and personalised whilst remaining sensitive to place and local character.

The bulk and scale of infill housing is compatible with neighbourhood character and buildings and hard surfaces are softened with landscaping.

Homes in greenfield areas respect their surrounds and environment and add variety to the streetscape.

Residential streets and public places are green, featuring street trees and gardens and urban heat impacts are reduced.

Heritage buildings and sites are protected, celebrated and, where appropriate, sympathetically well-utilised.

Aboriginal objects, places and landscapes of significance are protected, managed and respected in accordance with the wishes of local Aboriginal people.

The local economy is boosted through protection and appreciation of our distinct and attractive places.

[Linked to Strategy 8](#)

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Character Statements
Qualitative measures/design audit
Resident survey – satisfaction with quality of built environment

Character Statements
Resident survey – satisfaction with quality of built environment

↑ # DA house approvals
Qualitative measures/design audit
Resident survey – satisfaction with quality of built environment

Qualitative measures/design audit

↑ Landscaping and tree planting on private land, especially forward of building line
Design audit

Qualitative measures/design audit

↑ Tree canopy cover
↑ Landscaping

Heritage Studies
Investment in heritage buildings

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study
Partnerships and engagement

↑ Tourism expenditure*

* Tourism is a significant contributor to the Shire's local economy but needs to be managed to ensure it is balanced and sustainable.

Strategy 7

Environmental protection and sustainable living

Vision

Our housing reflects the environmental ethos of the community, respecting our precious natural environment and supporting eco-conscious lifestyles and habits.

Strategies

Protect ecologically sensitive areas from development and emphasis an environmentally-sustainable approach to growth.

Continually improve environmental performance and be a leader in sustainable living.

Mitigate and adapt to climate change, and support community sustainability initiatives.

Actions

7.1 Planning for long-term water security

Council will update its strategic long-term water security and water-related infrastructure plans to provide safe, clean and cost-effective water for current and future residents, taking into account projected growth figures and climate change models. Council is currently reviewing its *Integrated Water Management Strategy*.

Planning for our water future should include consideration of community views and values along with technical reviews, investigations and scenario testing, for example similar to the holistic long-term approach taken by South-East Queensland Water and innovative measures undertaken by Orange City Council. Findings or summaries of updated water modelling, plans and monitoring data will be made publicly available in plain English to increase community knowledge around water planning and usage. Updated water capacity models must inform growth and infrastructure planning and delivery.

7.2 Looking after Water

It is the responsibility of Council and all residents and visitors to the Shire to use water as efficiently and mindfully as possible. Council will update its *Water Demand Management Plan* (2012) and implement measures to decrease water usage, including consideration of: reducing leakage/loss in the system; community education; increasing rainwater tank use (promoting use, offering rebates); efficient washing machine rebates; water audits, greywater use, dual reticulation for new subdivisions, water recycling, and/or permanent low-level restrictions. Protecting water quality is a key responsibility and Council will work to minimise stormwater pollution, and manage stormwater run-off in ways suited to local climate and conditions.

7.3 Update natural hazard risk plans

Update and implement floodplain risk, bushfire and coastal management plans and mapping to manage risks in growing areas. Update the Drought Management Plan and investigate a heat wave plan.

7.4 Planning controls and processes review – enable sustainable living

Council will ensure planning controls allow and encourage environmentally-sensitive building practices and features. These include (but are not limited to): solar power; passive building design; greywater reuse; composting toilets, waterwise gardens and green walls and roofs. In addition, Council will simplify information and processes wherever possible to make adoption of these features easier for residents and developers. Council will also investigate how to support innovations and reduce costs relating to zero/low carbon housing, community power-sharing/microgrids and solar gardens, water-sensitive design, water recycling, other renewable energy generation, electric vehicles, e-bikes and car-share.

Council will seek to recognise, reward and/or incentivise best practice environmental design features included in homes that go beyond mandated minimums and to reward energy and water efficient households. This could include offering financial incentives, prioritised according to cost-benefit analysis.

7.5 Climate-responsive house design

Siting and designing comfortable homes to suit local climates can result in more affordable running costs and better environmental outcomes, compared to standardised house designs that are not modified to local conditions, which may cost less upfront but be more expensive to run (e.g. higher heating and cooling costs) over the lifetime of the home.

Council will promote existing design resources to assist homebuilders, buyers and renovators in what to look for in a comfortable and sustainable home. Council will also produce location-specific factsheets to encourage climate-responsive design, including passive design, choosing the right solar panel/rainwater tank system for your needs, landscaping and sustainable material advice. These guides will provide guidance on a range of home improvement measures for a variety of budgets.

7.6 Support biodiversity in our backyards

Residents' value living close to nature and as more homes are built it is important to provide useable gardens and private open spaces, to enhance landscaped areas and support biodiversity in public areas and create urban habitat corridors.

a) Finalise and implement Bellingen Shire Biodiversity Strategy

The draft *Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan* presents an overarching framework to better prioritise spending on biodiversity and to measure improvements. The *draft Biodiversity Strategy* has 6 focus areas to protect and enhance local biodiversity: native vegetation; rivers; corridors + connectivity; public spaces & habitat species preservation. Housing development should contribute to these biodiversity goals and focus areas.

b) Verge/footpath gardens

Verge gardens are located on public land in the footpath area between property boundaries and roads. Council will investigate approaches taken across local governments to understand how to effectively allow and manage simple verge gardens.

c) Pet management

Investigate ways to reduce impacts to wildlife caused by cats and dogs, including increased community education and possible enforcement mechanisms.

d) Planting guidelines

e) Public spaces and greening programs

Council will plan to embellish public spaces, including planting of street trees, managing public creek corridors and bushland and support sustainable infrastructure such as cool paving and water sensitive urban design in key public spaces.

Council supports in principle BNAHAG's idea for a community-led Housing Hub which could provide advocacy, advice and education services to the community in partnership with Council, including promotion of environmentally-sound design and building practices and features.

7.7 Reduce construction and domestic waste

The construction industry has significant environmental impacts³, including use of resources in harvesting and manufacture of materials, transport, resulting waste generation and disposal and all associated greenhouse gas emissions, yet there are limited planning strategies, or building practices that address this issue that are widely applied. Council will investigate ways to encourage waste minimisation in building (especially in the design stage), working with stakeholders across the industry. Council will also continue to implement measures to reduce domestic (household) waste.

7.8 Mainstream sustainable living and reduce consumption impacts

Wide, lasting change in the housing industry will occur when sustainability is understood, accessible and cost-effective for most people, and when the majority of home-buyers demand sustainable homes. Sustainable living practices comprise of so many different things, and people should be encouraged to do what they can, within their means and budgets, and with the guidance and support of governments and communities.

Council will promote sustainable living within its plans and policies and advocate for increased investment in sustainability across the property industry and by other levels of government. Council will provide information to residents (in the form of factsheets and online resources) that encourage sustainable house design, eco-conscious living practices and actions to reduce consumption impacts.

7.9 Cooling urban areas

Urban heat is a significant and growing issue in our cities. Built-up areas are hotter than surrounding natural or rural areas. Heatwaves are getting hotter and more frequent and are a significant health hazard. While Bellingen Shire is predominantly rural and not built-up like dense city areas, local microclimates, topography and vegetation (e.g. in the Valley) can exacerbate heat and humidity effects in summer. Therefore strategies to reduce urban heat should be produced and implemented to increase comfort for residents and reduce heat stress on local flora and fauna. Council will consider and promote resources such as the Low Carbon Living CRC's *Guide to Urban Cooling Strategies 2017* to assist in cooling our town areas during our hot summers.

Council will also introduce planning controls such as mandated landscaped area and tree planting controls to reduce impacts associated with urban heat island effects.

OBJECTIVES

Our biodiversity, water quality and natural landscapes are protected through preventing housing development in areas of high environmental value. [\(Linked to Strategy 2\)](#)

Biodiversity in our residential neighbourhoods is enhanced.

Bellingen Shire offers a wide variety of comfortable, healthy and efficient homes that save residents' energy, water and money. [\(Linked to Strategies 1 and 4\)](#)

Homes are designed for local climates, to maximise comfort and save on mechanical cooling and heating. [\(Linked to Strategy 4\)](#)

Residents have energy efficient houses and lifestyles and renewable energy use grows.

We take action to mitigate climate change together and the transition to a low and zero carbon future is managed in a just and equitable way. [\(Linked to Strategies 4 and 5\)](#)

The community have water efficient homes and lifestyles and protect water quality.

Construction and domestic waste is reduced.

Growth is compact, encouraging walking and cycling and reducing car dependence and vehicle emissions. [\(Linked to Strategy 3\)](#)

People have improved access and connections to parks, green space, water and nature, enhancing community health and wellbeing. [\(Linked to Strategy 5\)](#)

Housing is located away from areas of high natural hazard and isolation risks. [\(Linked to Strategy 2\)](#)

Our communities and towns are resilient and made safer through preparedness for natural disasters and hazards such as floods and extreme heat. [\(Linked to Strategy 5\)](#)

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Area of HEV land zoned for environmental purposes only
Low % vegetation change/loss due to housing/infrastructure
Water quality data

↑ *trees, shrubs and flowers & tree canopy cover maintained or enhanced*
Citizen science counts (e.g. pollinator, bird, frog, koala counts) or City Biodiversity Index measures

↑ *sustainable homes (NatHERs 7 star or above/Green Star rated/zero carbon)*
Design quality and efficiency (as built audits/ NABERS self-assessments)

↑ *sustainable homes*
Design quality and efficiency (as built audits/ NABERS self-assessments)
↓ *urban heat island effects*

↑ *sustainable homes*
Design quality and efficiency (as built audits/ NABERS self-assessments)
↑ *solar installations and storage*
↑ *other renewables in region*

Energy justice and equity
↓ *Greenhouse gas emissions*
↓ *% of people in housing stress*

↓ *water usage per person/household*
↑ *water sensitive urban design*
Water security

↑ *recycling of building materials*
↓ *Waste to landfill per person*

↑ *walking journeys*
Health Economic Assessment Tool (WHO) or similar (↓ emissions)

Public health data
Parks and Public Spaces Strategy

Natural hazard studies & planning controls

Emergency response plans and preparedness
↑ *volunteering*

³ <http://yourhome.gov.au/materials/waste-minimisation>

Strategy 8

Country towns and farming

Vision

The farmland and rural character of the Shire is protected, and offers regenerative and innovative farming opportunities, supporting our country towns and villages.

Strategy

Support compact growth in Dorrigo and country villages, with a focus on leveraging sustainable and regenerative farming opportunities.

Actions

8.1 Compact growth in rural areas

Growth is supported in rural towns, especially the main rural centre of Dorrigo, in order to maintain population and retain the high quality services residents enjoy today – such as the Hospital, schools, community and recreational facilities, supermarkets, banks etc.

Housing growth is encouraged, clustered around existing residential and village areas, ideally within walking distance to services to strengthen our existing communities, economically and socially. A Rural Lands Study will investigate rural communities' needs, including housing and employment challenges.

8.2 Country town and village revitalisation

Revitalisation initiatives for Dorrigo and rural villages to help attract new residents, investment and development include:

- parks and public spaces investment and beautification
- promotion of local, community-driven events and markets
- support small business attraction, retention and Chamber of Commerce initiatives
- heritage conservation and façade rejuvenation for historic shopfronts
- provision of affordable housing
- attraction of new industries and jobs, especially rural-related (e.g. value-add or food-processing) and in health, education, arts, culture and green jobs (enviro-focused)
- continued investment in roads and footpaths
- promotion of tourism that benefits local people, economy and environment
- recognition of community members and groups doing great things in our rural communities, sharing of stories and experiences.

8.3 Community Title Subdivision of existing Multiple Occupancies (MOs)

Multiple occupancies are also known as rural land sharing or intentional communities. An MO consists of one block of land with multiple people or families living on the land, having collective ownership of the site.

Council will change planning controls to allow existing MOs the option to subdivide in a Community Title arrangement via an amendment to the Local Environmental Plan (LEP). CT subdivision will require infrastructure upgrades, including bushfire safety and access upgrades and these require further place-based investigation.

This action does not seek to allow new MOs. Principles and planning controls relating to MOs will be further investigated as part of a Rural Lands Strategy.

8.4 Eco Village Pilot Project

Eco-villages were broadly supported during the *Homes for Our Future* community engagement process. However, there are many challenges to siting, funding and developing eco-villages.

Nevertheless, eco-village housing could provide additional housing choices aligned with the Housing Vision if implemented well.

In the event that a proponent presents Council with a suitably detailed project that will produce exceptional environmental and social outcomes, and the learnings of that project could be transferred into mainstream housing in the future, then Council will provide support for the alterations to planning controls that would be necessary to facilitate the pilot project. Established schemes such as the Living Future Challenge and Certification Scheme may be used to demonstrate merit.

Finding a location for the eco-village should focus on minimising natural hazard risks to people and property and result in clear improved environmental outcomes on the site (e.g. locating the village on an already degraded site rather than developing and clearing land in a healthy natural area). Council will work with any proponent to assist in locating an appropriate site for the project.

Depending upon the outcomes of any Pilot Project, Council will consider the development of future amendments to planning controls that will provide guidance for future potential eco-village projects.

8.5 Review residential capacity of coastal villages after sewer services provided

Growth to 2040 is predicted to be met mostly via infill housing. In the longer term, the housing potential of villages such as Raleigh and Repton can be reviewed once sewer services have been extended to the area. These villages have good flood-free access to the Pacific Highway and excellent connections to the region. Any future growth considerations must be subject to extensive community engagement, environmental and infrastructure studies and not impinge on Important Farmland productivity.

8.6 Information about moving to rural areas

Simple and engaging quick guides/brochures explaining what to expect when moving to a rural Shire will be produced and made available to the public.

The guide should seek to highlight the attractions of living in rural areas, detail services provided and landholder obligations and also seek to reduce possible land use conflicts by detailing what to expect living on or close to working farms, and to foster greater understanding between people moving from city areas and people from country areas with long farming histories.

8.7 Support for local food production and small farmers

Bellingin Shire's rural economy is supported by mostly family-owned and small-medium operations, with few large corporations (the dairy co-operative Norco is an exception).

Bellingin Shire residents' value access to locally produced and affordable food. We can support our local farmers in many ways including: buying local; understanding barriers to small farm start-up and profitability; engaging with local producers; sharing success stories and investigating farm-door retail opportunities. Often strict planning controls make things more difficult for smaller producers rather than larger industrial-scale agribusiness, which often can easily absorb additional regulation costs. Compliance action should occur for all operators who do not comply with environmental controls (including strong advocacy to other agencies responsible for compliance).

Planning mechanisms to support local food production and small business will form part of a forthcoming Rural Lands Study, including investigating how to incentivise sustainable operators and regenerative producers.

8.8 Rural Lands Study

Along with the Housing and Employment Strategies, a Rural Land Strategy (RLS) forms an important part of the Shire's Growth Management Strategy.

The RLS should investigate supporting rural residents and the rural economy, investigating the many changes and challenges occurring and looking for ways to realise our aspirations and competitive advantages in consultation with farmers and rural residents.

Objectives

Provide housing diversity and choices for people living in country towns and villages. (Linked to Strategy 1)

Provide opportunities for people who live in rural areas to age in, or close to, their communities. (Linked to Strategy 5)

Attract younger people to rural towns, villages and rural areas to maintain vibrant rural communities with good access to essential services. (Linked to Strategy 5)

Our Important Farmland is protected for future generations. (Linked to Strategy 2)

The community has access to fresh, healthy, and affordable locally-produced food and local food producers and smallholders provide food security.

Our scenic rural landscapes are retained. (Linked to Strategy 6)

Regenerative agriculture opportunities and innovations are supported and expanded.

The natural environment in our rural areas is conserved and regenerated, through weed management; maintenance and enhancement of wildlife corridors, and protection of biodiversity and soil and water quality. (Linked to Strategy 7)

Places of Aboriginal cultural significance are protected through appropriate consultation with traditional owners.

Our rural economy is supported and ongoing viability secured by supporting diversification, value-adding and farming innovation and promoting local products and farms.

Rural areas continue to increase self-reliance. Infrastructure provision and maintenance (especially roads) becomes more efficient and cost effective.

Performance measures

↑ % diverse housing types
↑ supply 1 & 2 bedroom homes
↑ # inclusive homes (UD)
↑ rentals

↑ # inclusive homes (UD)
↑ supply 1 & 2 bedroom homes
Retention of (or some expansion of) services and facilities in Dorriggo and villages

↑ % diverse housing type
↑ rentals (including farm leases)
Census and migration data
Retention of (or some expansion of) services and facilities in Dorriggo and villages

Area of Important Farmland zoned for rural and rural-related uses only
Rural Lands Strategy

Food security plan and programs
Locally-grown food availability (e.g. farmers markets, community-supported agriculture schemes, local food in shops)

Area of Important Farmland zoned for rural and rural-related uses only

Rural Lands Study
↑ organic or chemical free farms
↑ support (e.g. grant \$, advice or assistance, promotion programs)

LLS Regional Weed Management Plan
Protection/revegetation of wildlife corridors
Biodiversity Strategy
Soil and water quality testing

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study

Rural Lands Strategy
↑ local spending
↑ # small farms and producers
↑ support (e.g. grant \$, advice or assistance, promotion programs)

No new settlements in poorly serviced/isolated areas
↑ Water efficiency measures & renewable energy
↓ Waste to landfill
↑ community groups and programs
Emergency response preparedness
↑ volunteering

Timelines

The Belling Shire Housing Strategy is a 20 year plan and actions will be completed in stages over this time period. Many actions are ongoing and are intended to support planning and decision-making processes. Some actions will run over multiple years/timeframes or be dependent upon funding and resourcing. The following is a guide to the expected staging of the Housing Strategy actions.

Immediate actions (within the next year)

Action #	Action Title
1.1	Set housing diversity targets
1.2	Enable more housing types by changing planning controls (commence)
1.3	Enable housing diversity in greenfield areas (commence)
2.1	Planning controls for best-practice infill house design (commence)
2.2	A guide to best-practice infill examples (commence)
2.3	Infrastructure planning and studies (commence)
2.6	Laneway Housing investigation (commence)
3.1	Implement the Pedestrian and Bike Plan
3.2	Review Contributions Plan
3.6	Planning controls and building design to encourage active transport (commence)
4.1	Affordable housing on government owned land
4.2	Define affordable housing
4.3	Affordability objectives (commence)
4.4	DA Management Policy (commence)
6.1	Character Statements (and Local Strategic Planning Statement)
6.2	Planning controls for high quality design and character (commence)
6.9	Local character in greenfield areas (planning controls commence)

Action #	Action Title
7.1	Planning for long-term water security (commence)
7.2	Looking after Water (Demand Management Plan commence)
7.3	Update natural hazard risk plans
7.4	Planning controls and processes review – enable sustainable living (commence)
7.6	Support biodiversity in our backyards
8.3	Allow Community Title subdivision of existing Multiple Occupancies (MOs) (commence)
8.8	Rural Lands Study (commence)

Short-term actions (1-3 years)

Action #	Action Title
1.2	Enable more housing types by changing planning controls (finalise)
1.3	Enable housing diversity in greenfield areas (finalise)
2.1	Planning controls for best-practice infill house design (finalise)
2.2	A guide to best-practice infill examples (finalise)
2.3	Infrastructure planning and studies (continue)
2.6	Laneway Housing investigation (finalise)
2.8	Employment Lands Study
3.1	Implement the Pedestrian and Bike Plan
3.3	Street Design Standards (commence)
3.6	Planning controls and building design to encourage active transport (finalise)
4.1	Affordable housing on government owned land
4.3	Affordability objectives (finalise)
4.4	DA Management Policy (finalise)
4.6	Reduce ongoing housing-related costs
4.8	Strategies to reduce homelessness
5.1	Parks, Community Facilities and Public Spaces Strategy
5.2	Funding public space infrastructure – review Contributions Plan
5.3	Creating socially sustainable places –planning control changes (commence)
6.2	Planning controls for high quality design and character (finalise)
6.6	Heritage listing review (commence)
6.7	Greening programs
6.9	Local character in greenfield areas (planning controls finalise)

Action #	Action Title
7.1	Planning for long-term water security (finalise)
7.2	Looking after Water (Demand Management Plan finalise)
7.3	Update natural hazard risk plans
7.4	Planning controls and processes review – enable sustainable living (continue)
7.5	Climate-sensitive house design
7.6	Support biodiversity in our backyards
8.3	Allow Community Title subdivision of existing Multiple Occupancies (MOs) (finalise)
8.4	Eco-village pilot project
8.6	Information about moving to rural areas
8.8	Rural Lands Study (finalise)

Medium-term actions (3-10 years)

Action #	Action Title
1.8	R5 Large Lot Residential Zone Review (commence)
2.3	Infrastructure planning and studies (finalise)
3.1	Implement the Pedestrian and Bike Plan
3.3	Street Design Standards (finalise)
4.1	Affordable housing on government owned land
4.8	Strategies to reduce homelessness
5.3	Creating socially sustainable places – planning control changes (finalise)
5.7	Workforce housing
6.3	Encourage innovative demonstration projects
6.5	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study
6.6	Heritage listing review (finalise)
6.7	Greening programs
7.3	Update natural hazard risk plans
7.4	Planning controls and processes review – enable sustainable living (finalise)
7.6	Support biodiversity in our backyards
8.4	Eco-village pilot project

Long-term actions (10-20 years)

Action #	Action Title
1.8	R5 Large Lot Residential Zone Review (finalise)
3.1	Implement the Pedestrian and Bike Plan
6.3	Encourage innovative demonstration projects
6.7	Greening programs
7.3	Update natural hazard risk plans
7.6	Support biodiversity in our backyards
8.4	Eco-village pilot project
8.5	Review residential capacity of coastal villages after sewer services provided

Ongoing actions to support decision-making

Action #	Action Title
1.1	Set housing diversity targets (monitor)
1.4	Encourage smaller homes
1.5	Promote Universal Design
1.6	Housing choices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
1.7	Encourage a variety of tenure types
2.4	Key Sites
2.5	Focus on low-rise housing
2.7	Promote retrofitting buildings as infill
3.4	Manage car parking
3.5	Connect greenfields areas to town centres
3.7	Foster a walking culture
3.8	Support and encourage Ride or Walk to School programs
4.2	Promote affordable housing benefits to the community
4.5	Promote housing diversity
4.6	Reduce ongoing housing-related costs
4.7	Advocacy & partnerships
4.8	Strategies to reduce homelessness
5.3	Create socially sustainable places
5.4	Support ageing in place
5.5	Support Aboriginal connections to Country and Community
5.6	Support mixed tenure housing
5.8	Equitable access to high-speed internet
5.9	Community engagement and participation in strategic planning

Action #	Action Title
6.3	Support innovative demonstration projects
6.4	Build upon Bellingen Shire's creative and design culture
6.7	Undertake greening programs
6.8	Support incentives, including heritage conservation grants
6.9	Shape local character in greenfield areas
7.1	Planning for long term water security
7.2	Looking after Water
7.5	Climate-sensitive house design
7.6	Support biodiversity in our backyards
7.7	Reduce construction and domestic waste
7.8	Mainstream sustainable living and reduce consumption impacts
7.9	Cooling urban areas
8.1	Encourage compact growth in rural areas
8.2	Support country town and village revitalisation
8.7	Support local food production and small farmers

Summary of Planning Control Review

Many actions within the *Bellingen Shire Local Housing Strategy* relate to reviewing and updating planning controls for development. The scope of the planning control review is summarised below.

Not all the planning controls will change at once and some require further research, refinement and stakeholder engagement. Changes to planning controls in the LEP and DCP will require additional community engagement and public exhibition processes. More information and details on planning control review and potential changes can be found in the *Draft Bellingen Shire Housing Strategy-Action Plan (2019)*.

There are two very important Plans that affect development in Bellingen Shire, the *Local Environmental Plan (LEP)* and the *Development Control Plan (DCP)*. In the NSW planning system there is a hierarchy, where State-wide controls (State Environmental Planning Policies or SEPPS) sit above (and override in the event of any inconsistency) LEP controls. LEP controls sit above DCP controls.

LEP

The **Bellingen Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2010** sets out a framework for how land can be used. LEPs break up land into Land Use Zones (for example residential, rural, industrial, environmental) and specify the objectives of each zone and what kinds of development/land uses are allowed in each zone. LEPs also set out other high-level controls for development, including but not limited to: height limits, minimum lot size for subdivision, heritage listings, biodiversity protection and flood planning.

DCP

The **Bellingen Shire Development Control Plan (DCP) 2017** provides detailed planning and design guidelines for all types of development across the Shire. A DCP complements the LEP and provides more detailed design criteria to guide development, for example setback from boundary requirements and landscaping requirements (minimum amounts) and car parking controls.

LEP Review

- **R1 General Residential Zone:** Include objectives related to housing diversity, affordability and sustainability
- Reduce **minimum lot size for subdivision** from 600m² to 500m² in R1 town areas and review objectives (part 4.1).
- Allow Community Title subdivision of existing **Multiple Occupancies** (Rural Landsharing Communities)

DCP Review

- Enable and encourage greater **housing diversity** whilst protecting neighbourhood amenity and character
- Provide design and amenity controls for **small lot** housing (<500m²)
- Improve **subdivision design**
- Review **landscaped area** controls to limit building footprints, provide adequate green open space on lots and maintain our leafy and spacious neighbourhood character
- Provide a range of lot sizes, house sizes and house types in **greenfield** areas
- Encourage **smaller homes**
- Promote **best-practice infill design**
- Encourage **retro-fits**
- Promote **Universal Design**, make DCP more user-friendly (examples, graphics, case studies)
- Improve feasibility and streamline approval processes for small, well-designed **low-impact homes** that are compatible with neighbourhood character.
- Simplify Locality Density Provisions (use landscaped area/building footprint to **control density** instead)
- **Tree planting** requirements
- **Built form** controls and design guidance – e.g. bulk and scale, footprint, siting
- Require **site analysis plans** to promote sound design
- Protect **heritage**
- **Car parking** controls (min 1/dw) and design requirements – minimise visual impacts
- Encourage **active transport**
- Promote design of homes that **reduce ongoing costs** (e.g. passive design to reduce heating and cooling costs)
- Encourage **mix of dwelling sizes**, including smaller homes that are more **affordable**
- **Significant tree register**
- **Climate-responsive** house design, e.g. **passive design**
- Encourage **environmentally-sensitive** building practices and features
- Support **biodiversity**
- Manage **stormwater run-off** and water quality
- Reduce **urban heat island effect**

Monitoring and Reporting

Planning strategies need to be adaptable to change and long-term strategies such as this Housing Strategy, which spans 20 years or more, require consistent monitoring and reporting, to ensure outcomes are consistent with what has been predicted and planned and that performance measures are being met.

It is important to be transparent and to let the community know how the strategy is being used and the progression of the proposed actions. Frequent data collection and reporting is vital.

The Strategy should also be referred to/considered and reported against wherever a large planning issue or development proposal is considered.

Significant change may occur over the life of this 20 year strategy. Therefore reviews, both minor and major will be required to ensure the Strategy best serves the community's needs of the time.

Review Periods

After undergoing considerable community engagement and being adopted by Councillors and the NSW Government, a Housing Strategy should remain relevant over the long-term and be relied upon irrespective of political cycles, offering greater certainty to landowners, residents and the wider community, business and the development industry, investors, advocacy groups, agencies and other levels of government regarding the strategic direction and future aspirations of the Shire.

Refer to the Housing Strategy for timing of scheduled reviews.

Monitoring Actions

1. A Baseline Data Report will be written, to establish baseline (or base case/current) data on performance measures. Where this data does not yet exist, efforts should be made to access it, or plans made to enable collection of this data into the future. The progress of the Strategy and efficacy of the actions will be reported against using data compared with the baseline.
2. Monitoring of housing approval and construction data will be improved, to enable analysis of changes in housing types (housing diversity) over time.
3. Local housing affordability data should be collected and reported upon.
4. Reviews and audits of how the Housing Strategy is being used internally, across various divisions of Council will also occur and be reported upon to management, to ensure the Strategy is embedded across the organisation and remains relevant.
5. Consideration will be given to establishing a reference group, including some external representation to effectively monitor the implementation of the Housing Strategy and Growth Management Strategy.

Reporting Actions

1. The first report on progress of the Housing Strategy should be prepared and reported to Council (and made public) one year from adoption of the Strategy.
2. After the first report, reporting on progress of this Strategy should be biennial (every two years) and made accessible to the public.
3. Consideration should be given to providing easy access to housing data to the public, for example via a webpage, or online mapping system.

Glossary

Active transport: Active transport includes non-motorised forms of transport involving physical activity, such as walking and cycling. It also includes public transport for longer distance trips, as public transport trips generally include walking or cycling components as part of the whole journey.

Affordable housing: Has many definitions. Affordable is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as “*not expensive*” and [about houses] “*able to be bought or rented by people who do not earn a lot of money*”.

Affordable housing can be relative, what is affordable for one household may not be for another depending on income and a variety of circumstances. Affordability also varies by place. The NSW Government Family and Community Services (FACS) defines Affordable Housing as:

Affordable housing is housing that is appropriate for the needs of a range of very low to moderate income households and priced so that these households are also able to meet other basic living costs such as food, clothing, transport, medical care and education. As a rule of thumb, housing is usually considered affordable if it costs less than 30% of gross household income.

Affordable housing [may also refer] to housing that has been developed with some assistance from the NSW and/or Commonwealth Governments, including through planning incentives. It may include a range of housing types and sizes, including single or multi-bedroom units or houses, as well as studio apartments. It is only available in some locations and eligibility criteria apply.

Affordable housing is not necessarily always subsidised by governments, although private market housing in many parts of Australia is increasingly unaffordable to many people, of all ages and incomes.

Amenity: The pleasantness or attractiveness of a place.

Attached dwelling: means a building containing 3 or more dwellings, where:

- (a) each dwelling is attached to another dwelling by a common wall, and
- (b) each of the dwellings is on its own lot of land, and
- (c) none of the dwellings is located above any part of another dwelling.

These developments are typically known as terraces.

Battle-axe Lot - A 'battle axe lot' is a subdivision of a lot behind an existing dwelling, where access is by a long handle which typically accommodates a driveway, services and landscaping. This formation appears to be in the shape of a battle axe, hence the name.

Baugruppen: Literally translating to “building group”, baugruppen in effect cuts out developers from developments. The idea is that a group of interested purchasers come together and collectively fund their own multi-unit housing project. They are often helped or led through the process by architects, and they get a say in what their resulting homes look like. Generally, these homes have a focus on quality, sustainability and shared community facilities.

<https://www.domain.com.au/news/baugruppen-model-ditches-developers-so-that-apartment-buyers-save-20170626-gwwz8w/>

Biodiversity: the variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat, a high level of which is usually considered to be important and desirable.

Capped/limited profit housing: A capped profit development is designed to provide high quality housing but reduces costs at various points throughout the build and operation, and attracts small ethical investors who accept a capped amount of profit (usually 15%, below usual developer's minimums of 20-25%) on their investment, thereby reducing incentives to increase profit by skimping on quality. Homes are usually sold by ballot direct to owner-occupiers (with few real estate or marketing costs) and have limits placed on how much they can be sold for, so they do not become speculative/flipped for quick profits.

<https://theconversation.com/affordable-sustainable-high-quality-urban-housing-its-not-an-impossible-dream-57958>

Co-housing: Semi-communal housing consisting of a cluster of private homes and a shared community space (e.g. for cooking or laundry facilities).

Community Land Trust: A Community Land Trust (CLT) is a form of shared ownership of a property, where the land component of a residential property is owned by community based, not-for-profit legal entity and the actual building is owned (or leased long-term) by an individual household.

Design: A design is a plan or specification for the construction of an object or system or for the implementation of an activity or process, or the result of that plan or specification in the form of a prototype, product or process.

The verb to design expresses the process of developing a design. A design usually has to satisfy certain goals and constraints, and may take into account aesthetic, functional, economic, or socio-political considerations, and is expected to interact with a certain environment.

Detached house: A house that is not joined to any other house, usually on its own property.

Development Control Plan (DCP): Development Control Plans (DCPs) contain specific controls to guide certain types of development, and achieve particular development outcomes within certain areas. A DCP is a

supplementary development guideline that supports Council's primary planning instruments. These are called Local Environmental Plans (LEPs).

Dual occupancy: Dual occupancy developments occur when two dwellings are built on a single lot. The homes can be attached or detached. A dual occupancy does not include a secondary dwelling (granny flat). If a dual occupancy is subdivided and the homes are attached, the development is called semi-detached dwelling. If a dual occupancy is subdivided and the homes are detached, the dwellings are considered detached houses.

Duplex: Another name for an attached dual occupancy – where two homes are attached to each other. If the homes are subdivided and have their own lot of land they are known in NSW planning terms as semi-detached dwellings.

Eco-village: There are many complex definitions of eco-village. There is no NSW planning definition for eco-village and it is not recognised as its own land use. The Global Ecovillage Network defines an ecovillage as, *"an intentional or traditional community using local participatory processes to holistically integrate ecological, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of sustainability in order to regenerate social and natural environments."*

Energy poverty: Energy poverty is lack of affordable access to modern energy services. It refers to the situation of large numbers of people in developing countries and some people in developed countries whose well-being is negatively affected by very low consumption of energy.

Exempt & Complying Development: Some minor building renovations or works don't need any planning or building approval. This is called exempt development. Exempt development is very low impact development that can be done for certain residential, commercial and industrial properties. A few examples of development that can be exempt development are: decks, garden sheds, carports, fences, repairing a window or painting a house. As long as the proposed works meet all of the development standards (identified in the State Policy for exempt and complying development), approval may not be needed.

Complying development is a combined planning and construction approval for straightforward development that can be determined through a fast-track assessment by a council or an accredited certifier. Complying development applies to homes, businesses and industry and allows for a range of things like the construction of a new dwelling house, alterations and additions to a house, new industrial buildings, demolition of a building, and changes to a business use.

The majority of exempt and complying development types and their development standards are found in the State Policy for exempt and complying development. You can view the policy on the NSW Legislation website

Greenfield housing: Greenfield land is undeveloped land in a city or rural area either used for agriculture or landscape design, or left to evolve naturally. These areas of land are usually agricultural or amenity properties being considered for urban development.

Growth Management Strategy (GMS): Growth Management is the application of planning tools in a coordinated manner to guide development towards desired patterns of growth. These policies and tools are set out and communicated in a Growth Management Strategy.

Employment Strategy: Part of a GMS, an Employment Lands Strategy considers current and emerging trends and plans for job creation and provides planning tools to meet the employment challenges of an area.

Housing Strategy: Part of a GMS, a Housing Strategy plans for the current and future housing needs of an area.

Rural Lands Strategy: Part of a GMS, a Rural Lands Strategy identifies and addresses current and emerging rural land issues, balancing complex economic, demographic, social and environmental challenges.

Housing Stress: Housing stress, when households have to pay too large a proportion of their income in housing costs (and thereby reduce spending on other essentials such as food and health), is the result when housing costs rise too far above household incomes. Usually, a person or household is considered to be in housing stress when they are spending greater than 30% of their weekly gross income on housing-related costs.

<https://www.ahuri.edu.au/policy/ahuri-briefs/3040-indicator>

Important Farmland: Important Farmland is land that contains a combination of resources that is highly suitable for agricultural (food and fibre) production. IF is considered state-significant and is protected under NSW planning policy and legislation.

Infill housing: Infill housing is the insertion of additional homes into an already-approved subdivision or neighbourhood. They can be provided as additional homes built on the same lot, by dividing existing homes into multiple units, or by creating new residential lots by further subdivision or lot line adjustments.

Infrastructure: The physical and organisational structures and facilities (e.g. buildings, roads, power supplies) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise.

Laneway housing: A laneway house are typically built into pre-existing lots, usually in the backyard and opening onto the back lane.

Local Environmental Plan (LEP): A local environmental plan (LEP) is a legal document that provides controls and guidelines for development in an area. It determines what can be built, where it can be built, and what activities can occur on land. LEPs contain both a written instrument and maps.

Locality Density Provisions: Are planning density controls within Bellingen Shire's Development Control Plan. These provisions indicate the number of homes that can be built on a particular site, depending on how large the site is and where it is located. For example where a site is mapped as being within Locality Density 4, one dwelling can theoretically be built for each 150m² of site area, provided all other planning controls can be met. These provisions also provide landscaping requirements – e.g. 40m² of landscaped area is required for each dwelling in Locality 4.

Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS): Set out the 20-year vision for land-use in the local area, the special character and values that are to be preserved and how change will be managed into the future.

The statements will implement actions in the regional and district plans, and the council's own priorities in the community strategic plan it prepares under local government legislation.

The statements will shape how the development controls in the local environmental plan (LEP) evolve over time to meet the community's needs, with the LEP the main tool to deliver the council and community's plan.

Manor house: A small walk-up flat building, no bigger than two storeys high and having no more than 4 separate units.

Mixed Tenure housing: Means mixing subsidised housing (social or affordable rental) with market housing on the same site or within the same development.

Multi-dwelling housing: means 3 or more dwellings (whether attached or detached) on one lot of land, each with access at ground level, but does not include a residential flat building. For example multi-dwelling housing could include townhouses, terraces or villas.

Multiple Occupancy: Multiple Occupancies (otherwise known as MO's, or Rural Landsharing Communities) are developments that allow for three or more dwellings on a single parcel of land and the sharing of common facilities. Subdivision of the land, to allow for the creation of a dwelling on each lot, is not permitted.

New-generation boarding house: A boarding house provides a form of low cost rental accommodation for a wide range of tenants including singles, retirees, students and young couples. A new generation boarding house has rooms that are self-contained, so rooms contain their own bathrooms and/or kitchenettes.

Passive design: Design that takes advantage of the climate to maintain a comfortable temperature range in the home. Passive design reduces or eliminates the need for auxiliary heating or cooling, which accounts for about 40% (or much more in some climates) of energy use in the average Australian home.

Passive solar design means designing homes to heat up and cool down with the natural workings of the sun. For example, planting deciduous trees or vines to shade house windows in summer and keep the home cool but let in warm winter sun to heat the home in cooler seasons. There are many building design techniques (suited to different climates) that embrace passive design.

Pilot project: A pilot study, pilot project, pilot test, or pilot experiment is a small scale preliminary study conducted in order to evaluate feasibility, duration, cost, adverse events, and improve upon the study design prior to performance of a full-scale research project. A pilot study is often used to test the design of the full-scale experiment which then can be adjusted. It is a potentially valuable insight and, should anything be missing in the pilot study, it can be added to the full-scale (and more expensive) experiment to improve the chances of a clear outcome.

Regenerative farming: Regenerative Agriculture is a system of farming principles and practices that increases biodiversity, enriches soils, improves watersheds, and enhances ecosystem services. By capturing carbon in soil and aboveground biomass, Regenerative Agriculture aims to reverse global climate change.

Residential flat building/flats/apartment building: Means a building with three (3) or more dwellings where some dwellings sit on top of others.

Resilience: Resilience is the ability to anticipate risk, limit impact, and bounce back rapidly through survival, adaptability, evolution, and growth in the face of turbulent change. Resilient communities minimise any disaster's disruption to everyday life and their local economies.

Rural residential: Rural residential development refers to land in a rural setting, used and developed for dwellings that are not primarily associated with agriculture. Some agriculture may take place on the land however it will be ancillary to the use for a dwelling. It is likely to be carried on for 'lifestyle' reasons and is unlikely to provide a significant source of household income. Rural residential land is typically also used for non-agricultural home occupations or for large gardens. These lots are larger than typical residential lots, but are usually too small for agricultural use. Because of its primarily residential function, rural residential development requires access to most of the normal services and infrastructure provided in urban settlements. Typically it also generates urban residential amenity expectations.

Secondary dwelling/granny flat: secondary dwelling means a self-contained dwelling that: (a) is established in conjunction with another dwelling (the principal dwelling), and (b) is on the same lot of land as the principal dwelling, and (c) is located

within, or is attached to, or is separate from, the principal dwelling. There are sized restrictions on secondary dwellings and they cannot be subdivided from the principal dwelling.

Semi-detached dwelling: means a dwelling that is on its own lot of land and is attached to only one other dwelling.

Social justice: Social justice is based on the concepts of human rights and equality, and can be defined as "the way in which human rights are manifested in the everyday lives of people at every level of society". Social justice is about treating all people fairly.

Subdivision: the act of dividing land into pieces that are easier to sell or otherwise develop or use. A subdivision does not need to be sold, in whole or in part, for its resulting pieces to be considered separate parcels of land.

Community Title subdivision Community title is a form of land subdivision that enables shared property to be created within conventional Torrens title subdivisions. It is essentially a horizontal form of strata title.

Torrens Title subdivision A Torrens Title property is one in which the purchaser owns both the house and the land on which it is built.

Strata subdivision Strata title is a form of ownership devised for multi-level apartment blocks and horizontal subdivisions with shared areas. The 'strata' part of the term refers to apartments being on different levels, or "strata".

Sustainability: Sustainability focuses on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The concept of sustainability is composed of three pillars: economic, environmental, and social—also known informally as profits, planet, and people. It can also be defined as the quality of causing little or no damage to the environment and therefore able to continue for a long time.

Terrace house: A terraced house or a terrace house is one of a row of similar houses joined together by their side walls. They typically face the street or a laneway, with each having direct access to the street/lane. Where terraces are subdivided and each has their own lot, they are known in NSW planning terms as attached dwellings.

Tiny house: There are many definitions of tiny house, but tiny house is not a separately defined land use in NSW planning law, meaning there is no accepted planning definition. Tiny houses are typically small (definitions measure them anywhere between 7m² to 100m²) and suited to minimalist lifestyles. Some NSW Councils define a tiny house as being under 50m² in area. In planning terms tiny houses can be fixed in one place and be considered a secondary dwelling (granny flat, a small separate home, or part of a multi-dwelling arrangement. Tiny homes can also be mobile/moveable, built upon wheels and be considered a registered vehicle/home similar to a caravan. Lake Macquarie Council, Byron Bay Council and Tweed Shire Council have useful fact sheets on tiny homes.

Townhouses: A type of multi-dwelling housing, where multiple homes are built on the same site. Townhouses are homes that usually are attached and share at least one common wall with another townhouse. Similar to terraces except often townhouses don't always face the street, and may be accessed via internal roads or a long driveway.

Universal Design: Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it. This is not a special requirement, for the benefit of only a minority of the population. It is a fundamental condition of good design. If an environment is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use, everyone benefits. By considering the diverse needs and abilities of all throughout the design process, universal design creates products, services and environments that meet peoples' needs. Simply put, universal design is good design.

Villas: Similar to townhouses, villas are a type of multi-dwelling housing. Commonly townhouses are two storeys high, whilst villas are limited to one storey and can be attached or detached.

Water Sensitive Urban Design: WSUD is an alternative to the traditional conveyance approach to stormwater management. WSUD is a philosophy which aims to mitigate environmental impacts particularly on water quantity, water quality and receiving waterways, conventionally associated with urbanisation.

Image Credits

As part of the *Homes for Our Future* community engagement project, Council held a photograph competition. Residents were asked to take photographs of *what they love about their neighbourhoods*. 60 entries and photographs were received.

Some of these photographs have been used in this document. Credits for these photographs are as follows:

Page 5:

Dawn Lewis - Gens Kookaburra

Drew Hopper – Lush Oasis Never Never

Pingala Walsh – Streetscape Church St

Dorothy Carter – City Kid meets Country

Jacqui Forest – View from Urunga Boardwalk

Ruth Holmes - Greener Pastures

Taff Cooper-Williams – Nesting Rosella

Katrina Collins – Drive Dorrigo Tourism

