



CUMBERLAND
CITY COUNCIL

Council Meeting

Wednesday, 21 July 2021 at 6:30pm

Cumberland City Council Chambers

Merrylands Service Centre, 16 Memorial Avenue, Merrylands

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Item No: MM07/21-67

MAYORAL MINUTE - IMPROVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT TIMES AT CUMBERLAND CITY COUNCIL

Author: Mayor Steve Christou
File Number: SC486

SUMMARY

I am pleased to advise that Cumberland City Council has again made further improvements in assessment times for development applications.

During the 2020/21 financial year, the median processing time for development applications in Cumberland was 79 days, ahead of a target of 86 days. This is a significant improvement since the 2018/19 financial year, when there was a median processing time of 96 days. Over 50% of development applications were determined within 90 days, providing greater certainty for residents, businesses and investors that are lodging applications with Council.

When this Council was established in May 2016 through the amalgamation process, we inherited a significant backlog of development applications. Through the hard work of our experienced and dedicated Planning team, the improvements to our processes, systems and controls is translating into excellent results, as the median processing time for Development Applications continues to go down.

Importantly, the efforts of Council in improving development assessment times is being recognised and rewarded by the NSW Government. Cumberland City Council has been granted \$5.5 million in funding under the NSW Public Spaces Legacy Program, which incentivises councils to accelerate their assessments of development applications and rezonings to create new development capacity and meet demand for housing and employment over the next decade. This is funding that this Council will put directly back into the community.

Merrylands Civic Square has been chosen as the project for funding under the Program, which will provide a new public space in the heart of Merrylands town centre. Planning and design work is progressing currently for this important project. The Civic Square is also part of broader substantial infrastructure upgrades in the Merrylands CBD, including upgraded drainage and stormwater systems to reduce flooding and upgraded high voltage electricity to cater for future development.

I look forward to Council continuing to strive to exceed targets for development assessment processing times and working with the State Government to progress the Merrylands Civic Square project.

Therefore Councillors, tonight I am recommending the following:

RECOMMENDATION

That Council congratulate the Director Environment and Planning and all staff involved in achieving a significant reduction in Development Application median processing times.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

Item No: MM07/21-68

MAYORAL MINUTE - UPDATE ON 1 THE HOLROYD CRESCENT, HOLROYD DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Author: Mayor Steve Christou
File Number: SC486

SUMMARY

As Council is aware, during this term we have expressed our objections and significant opposition on a number of occasions for the planning proposal for a mixed use development at 1 Crescent Street, Holroyd on behalf of the Cumberland City community.

I personally have been critical of the \$525 million Crescent Parklands planning proposal. This massive development proposal will transform the site into more than 1,200 units, up to 28 storeys high – just off the already-congested Woodville Road and M4, and near Parramatta Road. The site is zoned for industrial use only, however, the developer bypassed Council and sought a review of the planning proposal under state planning laws.

Following consideration of the proposal at the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 16 September 2020, a submission was provided to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, which outlined Council's significant concerns on the proposal. The submission also clearly outlined the outcomes of the community survey undertaken in August and September 2020, which noted significant community opposition to the proposal.

At the Ordinary Council meeting of 9 December 2020, an update on the proposal was provided, with Council resolving to write to the Chairperson of the Sydney Central Sydney Planning Panel, requesting that a public meeting be held for the community with respect to the proposal for 1 Crescent Street, Holroyd.

Since this time, I have been advised by the Acting General Manager that further discussions with the proponent and State Government agencies have been undertaken, and that the Gateway Determination has been amended for the proposal to be reported to the Sydney Central City Planning Panel for final consideration by 30 September 2021.

I have repeatedly said in this Chamber that this Council is all about going back to basics, and part of that back to basics approach includes fighting for our community's best interests, and ensuring that regular and appropriate consultation with our community is undertaken when something significant will potentially impact them.

Our community have largely told us that they do not want this proposal to proceed. Therefore, it is in our community's interest that this Council hold the relevant parties accountable to undertake a proper and thorough consultation process on this proposal,

which includes the holding of a public meeting before a final decision is made by the Panel. The views of our community should be heard, and not be brushed aside.

Therefore Councillors, tonight I am recommending the following:

RECOMMENDATION

That Council write to the Chairperson of the Sydney Central Sydney Planning Panel, requesting that a public meeting be held for the community with respect to the proposal for 1 Crescent Street, Holroyd, prior to a final decision being made by the Panel at the end of September 2021.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

Item No: MM07/21-69

MAYORAL MINUTE - UPDATE ON ADVOCACY FOR IMPROVED EXPRESS TRAIN SERVICES

Author: Mayor Steve Christou
File Number: SC486

SUMMARY

For the past four years, I have maintained a strong voice advocating on behalf of commuters to the NSW State Government to reinstate Granville's express trains. Most recently, I moved a Mayoral Minute at the 19 May 2021 Council meeting, seeking support on this issue from our local Members of Parliament and the NSW Minister for Transport and Roads, and the Premier of NSW. This week, I finally received a neglectful response from the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and Roads, which was quite frankly, a train wreck in itself. They've ruled out taking any action to make changes to the timetable.

Several years ago, the NSW State Government ceased running express trains from Granville. This is completely unacceptable for residents and has resulted in significantly increased travel times to the city with an average 35 minute commute now taking close to an hour. Despite Council's efforts, there has been no improvement for our residents who continue to struggle with their public transport needs.

As a Council, we have invested heavily in major projects along the rail corridor and take pride in ensuring that locals and visitors have access to high quality infrastructure and services. That includes the newly built Granville Centre and Council's ongoing contribution to the local area by constructing record amounts of footpaths, roads and basic infrastructure.

The response that the current timetable already offers a high frequency at Granville and shorter journeys for customers travelling to the city from further west is baseless. Our residents deserve better. I am tired of Cumberland City being ignored and missing out on basic service improvements that can be provided by the State Government. At a minimum, our residents deserve that level of service. This isn't good enough.

I am now calling upon our local Members of Parliament to step up this campaign.

Therefore Councillors, tonight I am recommending the following:

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Write to the NSW Premier, and Minister of Transport and Roads, strongly urging them to reconsider their determination with regard to the**

reinstatement of express train services in the Cumberland City Council area.

- 2. Write to local State Members of Parliament, urging them to strongly advocate to the State Government to reconsider their determination with regard to the reinstatement of express train services in the Cumberland City Council area.**

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

Item No: MM07/21-70

MAYORAL MINUTE - NEW INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRIBUTIONS BILL

Author: Mayor Steve Christou
File Number: SC486

SUMMARY

The NSW State Government's proposed changes to the collection of development contributions and setting of infrastructure contributions policy is vague, lacks detail and has left many councils in NSW confused about its full impact.

Just like the State Governments Covid messaging, where sweeping changes are announced with detail not available up front, the Bill intentionally lacks detail and keeps Councils and the community in the dark.

The Bill is too vague and delegates authority solely to the Minister and defers all future policy decisions to the Minister. This is a very dangerous precedent. It will detrimentally change the way local infrastructure is funded and delivered and will ultimately cost the community more.

To take away such an important funding source from local councils, and then proclaim councils can make up that revenue from raising rates on their residents is extremely short-sighted and a slap in the face for our hard working ratepayers. It is in effect, yet another cost shifting exercise being dumped onto Councils to manage by the State Government. If this proposal goes through, Cumberland City Council residents will be hit the hardest as our community is one of the most vulnerable in NSW.

The Parliamentary Inquiry into the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Infrastructure Contributions) Bill 2021* heard from several councils last week. It's difficult for councils to even have a position on this Bill because it has very little detail, so it's impossible to determine how that will impact councils and the community.

One thing we can be certain of this bill will not have a positive impact on the Cumberland City community. In response to this, I am seeking that Council write to the NSW Government, expressing our concerns with the proposed bill and to ensure that the Cumberland Community is not left worse off as a result of the changes.

Therefore Councillors, tonight I am recommending the following:

RECOMMENDATION

That Council write to the NSW Minister of Planning and Public Spaces, , seeking that the NSW Government consult further with Councils on this Bill,

and not proceed with the reform until a considered consultation process has been undertaken.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

Item No: MM07/21-71

**MAYORAL MINUTE - ADVOCACY FOR REINSTATEMENT OF FINANCIAL RELIEF
- COUNCIL OPERATED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION & CARE FACILITIES**

Author: Mayor Steve Christou
File Number: SC486

SUMMARY

Late last week, the Australian Government amended its legislation to allow increased flexibility for families during the current Stay at Home Orders. This announcement by the Federal Government means that providers of Education and Care services can opt-in to waive the gap fee for parents who choose to keep their children at home during this period.

This arrangement commenced on 19 July 2021, and will conclude when the Greater Sydney Stay at Home Order ends or as advised otherwise by the relevant government authorities. Providers were able to decide whether they would opt-in to this arrangement or continue charging families the gap fees payable for education and care services.

Council has made the decision to opt-in to this arrangement, in view of the very difficult circumstances imposed on our community by the current situation with stay at home orders in place. I just want to be very clear – this Council will always put our community first. However, this decision to support local families comes at a cost to this Council of up to \$50,000 a week. If stay at home orders are extended by the NSW Government, this could have a very serious impact on Council's budget, on top of the other losses Council is absorbing at the moment due to Covid-19. Whilst the negative financial impact to Council will be significant, we have put the needs of the families first, who rely on our services.

I have already commenced and will continue to strongly lobby both State and Federal Governments to address the funding shortfall, consistent with the events of last year when we were faced with the reality of having to suspend these services due to budget constraints.

It is absolutely critical now that the NSW Government announce that they will provide urgent financial assistance to council run early childhood education and care services. We don't want to be in a position like we were last year where we had no option but to suspend our child care services due to Council's difficult budget position. The NSW Government need to step up, and get this done for families across Cumberland, and New South Wales. We also need our local State and Federal Members to step up and lobby the State Government on behalf of Council on this key local issue, which has the potential to severely impact our local families and this Council's long term financial sustainability.

Therefore Councillors, tonight I am recommending the following:

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **Write to the Premier of NSW, seeking immediate reinstatement of a financial relief package for local Council's operating Early Childhood Education and Care Facilities; and**
2. **Write to local State and Federal Members of Parliament seeking urgent advocacy support on this key issue.**

ATTACHMENTS

Nil