

Presented to	Ordinary Meeting of Council to be held 18 March 2025
Related to Item	Proposed Notice of Motion - WAPC Request to Prioritise Completion of Outstanding Structure Plans
Submitted by	Director Planning
Attachments	Nil

This Officer Advice Note is provided in relation to Notice of Motion proposed by Cr Ross for the Ordinary Meeting of Council to be held on 18 March 2025.

OFFICER ADVICE

The City of Melville acknowledges the importance of achieving the dwelling targets set by the Central Sub-regional Planning Framework and the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC).

This advice is provided to ensure that the Council considers relevant facts and strategic planning considerations before determining this motion.

1. WAPC Advice on Prioritisation of Structure Plans

The City acknowledges that the WAPC provided written guidance on 27 May 2022, outlining three key priorities:

- a) Review of density coding allocation where justified by the Local Planning Strategy;
- b) Prioritisation of outstanding structure plans; and
- c) Investigation of development incentives to encourage more residential development.

Clarification of City's Actions:

The assertion that "no action has been taken" on outstanding structure plans is incorrect. Since 2022, the City has undertaken the following:

- a) Comprehensive local planning review to align zoning with growth strategies; and
- b) Engagement with stakeholders, including landowners, on density and development responses.

Strategic planning initiatives, including:

- i. Review and implementation of the Canning Bridge Activity Centre Plan (CBACP).
- ii. Preliminary review and implementation of the Booragoon Structure Plan.
- iii. Preliminary review and implementation of the Riseley Structure Plan.
- iv. Progression, finalisation and implementation of the Kardinya Activity Centre Plan.
- v. Implementation of the Melville District Activity Centre Plan.
- vi. Implementation of the Willagee Structure Plan.

The City remains committed to progressing planning outcomes within existing resourcing and strategic priorities.

2. Progress on Structure Plans

The City has identified key precincts where structure planning may be required. However, not all areas require new or revised structure plans. In some cases, existing planning controls already facilitate development, and additional structure planning would have minimal impact on dwelling yield.

Additionally, engagement with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) has affirmed the need to focus planning efforts on areas under immediate development pressure.

Areas Currently Under Review:

- a) Canning Bridge Activity Centre Plan (CBACP) – Review completed, awaiting WAPC decision;
- b) Booragoon Structure Plan – Review commenced; and
- c) Riseley Structure Plan – Review commenced.

Future Consideration:

- a) Petra Street – Ongoing engagement with the Town of East Fremantle and landowners;
- b) Bull Creek District Centre – Discussions with landowners indicate no major investment expected in the next decade; and
- c) Murdoch and Bull Creek Rail Station Precincts – Identified for review as part of LPS6 review.

The suggestion that all outstanding structure plans should be prioritised immediately does not align with resource availability or strategic need.

3. Projected Dwelling Targets and 2031 Compliance

The modelling referenced in the motion is based on assumptions about:

- a) Market demand;
- b) Economic conditions; and
- c) Development feasibility.

While current projections suggest a potential shortfall in the 2031 dwelling target, it is important to note:

- a) Dwelling targets are benchmarks, not mandatory quotas;
- b) Structure plans are only one tool—other planning mechanisms also contribute to dwelling supply; and
- c) Private sector investment decisions are beyond the City's direct control.

The City remains proactive in identifying planning mechanisms to facilitate residential development without overcommitting resources to areas where market demand does not yet exist.

4. WAPC Intervention Risks

Each local government has unique planning contexts, and intervention decisions are case-specific.

Additionally, the WAPC has multiple points of engagement with the City's planning framework. If the WAPC required immediate action on outstanding structure plans, it would likely:

- a) Raise the matter formally with the City; and
- b) Recommend adjustments during the Minister's review process.

Pre-empting a directive that has not been issued could lead to misallocation of resources without strategic justification.

5. Legislative and Policy Implications

A Local Planning Scheme Review and preparation of structure plans/precinct plans are distinct but related processes. Whilst these processes may be run concurrently the preparation of a structure plan/precinct plan would progress independently of a planning scheme review.

6. Financial & Resourcing Implications

Prioritisation of additional structure planning projects would require:

- a) Reallocation of existing staff resources – impacting other projects;
- b) Additional consultancy funding – requiring budget approval; and
- c) Possible rescheduling of current projects – delaying other planning initiatives.

Council should consider whether bringing forward structure planning is justified given current budget constraints.

Notwithstanding the advice provided in the Advice Note, should Council be of a view to proceed with the Notice of Motion the timeframe for providing the report having regard for existing priorities is estimated at September 2025.

7. Procedural and Considerations – Reordering for logical decision making

The current Notice of Motion requests the CEO to prioritise completion of structure plans (Point 1) before identifying them (Point 2) or assessing resource requirements (Point 3).

Suggested Reordering:

Step 1: Identify outstanding structure plans requiring completion.

Step 2: Assess resourcing, key considerations, and timeframes.

Step 3: Council makes an informed decision on prioritisation at a later date and after being informed.

Why this is important:

- a) Ensures structured decision-making;
- b) Allows Council to make evidence-based decisions rather than pre-determined actions; and
- c) Aligns with best-practice governance and transparency.

8. Governance Considerations

Sound governance requires that decisions are made based on full information rather than assumptions.

Risks of Proceeding Without Reports:

- a) Resource implications – Prioritising structure plans without assessing workload could compromise other planning priorities; and
- b) Informed decision-making – Council members must base decisions on clear, evidence-backed advice.

Ensuring that all decisions align with statutory, financial, and strategic priorities is fundamental to good governance.

9. Alternative Recommendation

Notwithstanding the information provided in this Advice Note, should the Council be of a view to proceed with the Notice of Motion, it's recommended to be phrased as follows:

That the Council:

1. Requests the CEO to identify outstanding structure plans requiring completion.
2. Requests a report outlining resource requirements, key considerations, and timeframes by September 2025.
3. Request an Elected Member Engagement Session on the findings by September 2025.

10. Conclusion

The City remains committed to effective strategic planning and achieving its housing targets.

Key Takeaways:

1. The City has taken action on structure plans, the claim of inaction is inaccurate.
2. Prioritisation should be based on strategic merit and resource availability.
3. Reordering the motion, if it's to be pursued, ensures structured and logical decision-making.
4. WAPC intervention is not imminent, pre-empting action without direction is unnecessary.
5. Financial and resourcing impacts must be considered before prioritising additional planning efforts.



The City will continue working towards a well-planned and sustainable urban future, balancing the need for growth with responsible urban governance.

The City does not recommend that the Council progress the Notice of Motion.