

Housing NSW - Community Engagement Action Plan for the Redfern and Waterloo Preliminary Masterplan June 2011 – July 2012

1. Purpose

This document describes plans for community engagement to support the development of the preliminary masterplan for the concentrated social housing areas in Redfern, Waterloo and South Eveleigh for the period June 2011 to June 2012.

The document is a framework that is subject to change as the process continues and develops. Timeframes included in this version provide an indication of our intention and may also be subject to change. Please note version number and date.

2. About the Preliminary Masterplan

The preliminary masterplanning process is primarily funded through the Commonwealth's Housing Affordability Fund (HAF) and is to be completed by June 2012. The principal output will be a preliminary masterplan for renewal and redevelopment of the concentrated social housing areas.

The preliminary masterplan aims to address issues that are relevant to the objective of creating a greater physical and social environment for residents in the subject areas. The masterplan will be the long term blueprint for renewal and redevelopment of the existing social housing areas, once the Government determines the scale, timing and funding sources for redevelopment. It will be a preliminary masterplan because further more detailed planning and feasibility testing of the plan will be necessary before it is finalised and can be submitted for approval through the planning system.

3. Planning Context

The Redfern-Waterloo Authority (RWA) developed and exhibited the Draft Built Environment Plan (Stage 2) (Draft BEP2). This plan sets out a framework and principles for planning controls to guide development on land owned by Housing NSW in the suburbs of Redfern, Waterloo and South Eveleigh – the same land that is the subject of the preliminary masterplan.

Whilst the exhibition of the draft BEP2 was not a statutory exhibition, it is proposed that the Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority, will consider the feedback received and will review BEP2's proposed planning framework as it moves to prepare a plan for formal exhibition under the Urban Renewal State Environmental Planning Policy.

4. Integrating BEP2 and preliminary masterplanning processes

The preliminary masterplan will be consistent with the Redfern Waterloo Authority's Built Environment Plan (BEP2). In particular, the preliminary masterplan will guide the achievement of the BEP2 objectives of increasing the number of dwellings and decreasing the concentration of social housing on the site.

Both BEP2 and the preliminary masterplan are critical documents, framing future redevelopment and renewal of social housing areas in Redfern, Waterloo and South Eveleigh. Given that consultation for both processes will have some level of overlap, it is proposed that the two processes become, in effect, two parts of a coordinated community

engagement process with the RWA will leading the BEP2 engagement and Housing NSW will leading the preliminary masterplanning engagement process.

The engagement process outlined in this action plan seeks to build on the community engagement and consultation about the Draft Built Environment Plan Stage 2 (BEP2) that was undertaken throughout 2010 and the early part of 2011.

Maintaining and supporting community spirit was a clear priority for local people. This plan recognises the community spirit in Redfern Waterloo by relating to existing groups and undertaking activities such as the street corner sessions, the visioning and the enquiry by design which support high levels of community involvement.

The plan has been designed to create opportunities for genuine input and transparency through the regular check-ins with existing groups. As requested, the plan also includes a set of guiding principles for engagement.

The use of both formal and informal structures will help to include the voice of residents who may not attend local groups. There will also be a series of activities specifically designed to include the input of people from specific populations, which was also a clear priority for local stakeholders.

5. Principles and frameworks for community engagement

Community engagement ensures the significant body of knowledge held by the existing community and their ideas for change contribute to, and are taken account of in, the planning process. For a project of this size and complexity this also represents critical risk management by enabling the community to have input throughout the process rather only at the end stage where new ideas are more difficult to integrate.

The approach to engagement acknowledges and strives for good practice in engagement as outlined in principles for the conduct of community engagement developed by Redwatch and Shelter NSW. These particularly emphasise an open flow of information and transparency, giving residents reasonable time to contribute their views and valuing residents comments. These represent widely supported core values of the International Association for Public Participation and principles for good practice engagement accepted by the United Nations in its Brisbane Declaration on Community Engagement.

Community engagement in the Redfern Waterloo preliminary masterplanning process will:

- *Provide opportunities for stakeholders to comment on the community engagement plan and influence processes and activities.*
- *Provide significant opportunities for all residents and stakeholders to have an input to the masterplan, at a number of points in the process.*
- *Engagement processes and activities are designed to maximise input by all population groups, including harder-to-reach groups, and suit a wide variety of preferences about how to participate.*
- *Community views will be valued and will have an influence on the plan.*
- *Build the capacity of the community to better understand the masterplan processes and design concepts, so that the value of their input is optimised.*

The engagement will follow the Living Communities engagement scheme developed and refined on previous projects which includes four interconnected domains: information, consultation, participation and capacity building. The approaches used throughout the engagement period may relate to one or more domain. Diagram 1 illustrates the Living Communities engagement schema.

Diagram 1
Living Communities Engagement
Schema



6. Key Strategies and Activities

The strategies and activities are divided into five approaches: a planning expo; street-based engagement; target group engagement; focused topic based activities; an enquiry by design. Liaison with stakeholder groups and communication and feedback will also be essential streams throughout the engagement period. Each of these approaches relates to one or more of the engagement domains illustrated above. They also occur in various timeframes throughout the period as shown on the table below.

All of the activities will relate to the key topics to be addressed in the preliminary masterplan.

- **Connections:** (September 2011)
 - Better connections within Redfern and Waterloo and with the rest of the surrounding area;
 - Better retail and community facilities and services;
- **Streets & Parks:** (October 2011)
 - Improved streetscapes and road networks for pedestrians and vehicles. Improved parks, public domain and open space;
- **Building Design:** (February 2011)
 - Better building design including integrating the existing and new buildings;
- **Sustainability:** (throughout all topics)
 - Better, more sustainable environmental outcomes.

Approach 1:**Street based engagement (July 2011 – June 2012)**

Street life in Redfern Waterloo is very rich. Many people walk to meet friends and relatives or to nearby shops and facilities. Local people also socialise in public open space. Therefore street-based engagement is very successful for both information and consultation. This informal style of engagement is likely to appeal to large numbers of residents who choose not to engage in the more formal or organised processes.

Street based engagement will include:

- Street corner sessions for information dissemination, consultation on issues and for promoting other types of events.
- The “listening post” will be used as means of consulting with local people about issues and topics related to the preliminary masterplanning process.
- Stalls at the monthly Redwater Markets will provide the chance to inform and consult with a wide range of residents and stakeholders.

Approach 2:**Target Group Engagement (July 2011 – June 2012)**

The project staff already have contact with residents and service users through a range of meetings and services. These contacts will be used and expanded to allow local people to participate in the engagement through services and groups that they currently use and trust.

Further services will also be approach to invite them to have sessions about the preliminary masterplan and to participate in the focus topic activities in familiar environments.

Target groups that have been identified include: older people, young people and families with children, non-English speakers, people with a disability, Aboriginal people and people with mental health issues.

Where appropriate and possible, engagement processes will be tailored to engage target groups such as translating key documents in to the three main community languages, using bilingual, culturally appropriate staff and meeting at different times.

Target groups engagement content will mirror the focus topic areas and feature strongly in the communication and feedback approach.

Approach 3:

Planning Expo (August 2011) The Planning expo will launch the engagement around the preliminary masterplan and provide a context for the community to move forward into this next phase of consultations.

Key issues addressed at the expo will include:

- Providing a context that links BEP2 to the preliminary masterplanning process
- Information on the roles and responsibilities of the Government Authorities involved in RW that relate to planning showing the linkages and boundaries
- Information on what is / is not included in the preliminary masterplan
- Introduction , information and promotion of workshops and topic areas
- Consultation around The Vision for RW

The format will be an open community festival day in conjunction with the Redwater Market – 20 August 2011. There will be activities and stalls inviting people to explore ideas and options for a better neighbourhood.

The Expo will initiate community conversations and increase community understanding about the preliminary masterplan process. It will also invite further engagement in the focused topic activities and workshops that will follow in the next phase. Participants will be able to register interest in particular topic areas. They may also simply comment on the day and choose not to have continued involvement. People who are part of community groups or networks will also be invited register to have a presentation made to their group at a time and place that best suits them.

The Expo will also include entertainment and fun activities to activate public space and inspire imagination for a better neighbourhood.

Approach 4:

Focused topic activities: (September 2011 - February 2012)

A series of events, workshops and activities will be conducted to stimulate community conversations and consultation input about the preliminary masterplanning topic areas.

Each of the topics listed above will be introduced at the Planning Expo. All of the issues are interconnected. To look at the topics in more detail we will group them and include issues that cut across many topics such as safety and crime prevention.

Where possible, groups of interested residents will participate in the design and development of activities for the topic areas.

It is anticipated that for each topic area or group of topic areas, there will be:

- **Information:** Printed background material with information about expert ideas on the topic and examples of good practice or outcomes relating to the topic area. Printed material will include translated material in English, Russian and Chinese.
- **Capacity building:** A workshop or similar face to face capacity building session to facilitate greater understanding about the topic area.
- **Participation:** An interactive activity will be conducted for people to gain greater experience of the topic area and to see relevant examples of good practice in the topic areas.
- **Collaboration:** Follow up conversations or focus groups will review the material and input from participants and formulate cultural statements or residents' briefs about the topic area.

This phase will undertake a range of activities to enable input in to the topic areas from a wide range of population groups, including specific activities with Aboriginal people; children and young people; older people and people with a disability; and non-English speakers.

The outcomes from this process will be presented by participants to the professionals working on the master plan at Community Design Workshops discussed in the next section.

**Approach 5:
Community Design Workshops: (November 2011 and March 2012)**

Previously Housing NSW planned to hold one design workshop in March 2012, titled “*Enquiry by Design*”; this plan has now been amended.

Housing NSW will now hold two Community Design Workshops whereby cultural statements and community briefs will be presented to the planners and the residents.

Each workshop will be a hands-on planning process, in which residents, planners, stakeholders, landowners and others will collaborate on ideas for the preliminary masterplan.

The November workshop provides an initial opportunity for all, whilst the focus topic activities are still underway. The March workshop will collate all ideas and identified issues up to that time and allow the opportunity for further inputs prior to the finalisation of the preliminary masterplan.

Ongoing Liaison with Stakeholders (May 2011 – June 2012)

Continuous liaison with key stakeholders and community members will be an essential part of the engagement process.

As advised by stakeholders in the extensive interview processes, no new reference group will be established for this project. In keeping with the wishes of local stakeholders existing structures will be used to ensure regular dialogue occurs as the engagement process is implemented.

The project team will provide regular verbal updates and where possible written reports, and seek input from groups such as the Neighbourhood Advisory Boards, the Service Coordination meetings, Senior officers groups, the Community Learning and Research Forum.

Groups such as Redwatch and the Chamber of Commerce will be approached about regular updates or dialogue at their meetings or with member representatives.

Ongoing Communication and Feedback: (May 2011 – June 2012)

All of the approaches will be supported by an integrated communication and feedback process which will include:

- Regular articles in the HNSW local newsletters (Redfern Update and Waterloo Update)
- Flyers and posters announcing events
- Posters and publications presenting consultation outcomes (What you told us..)
- A local information dissemination through the use of community facilities, such as Our place and Waterloo Neighbourhood Centre, as display spaces and meeting places

Appendix 1

WHAT THE COMMUNITY HAS TOLD US

Throughout 2010/2011, HNSW has been engaging with social housing communities in Redfern and Waterloo and generating conversations with residents and agency stakeholders about the shape of renewal and redevelopment of the ageing public housing stock. We have also sought stakeholders' advice about what they want from the consultation process about renewal and about how best to engage the communities.

This has included:

- Conducting consultation with over 40 key stakeholders to find out what people think about renewal and how the community can best be engaged.
- Providing bus trips to HNSW redevelopment projects in Minto and Bonnyrigg, so stakeholders can see Housing's approach, the quality of new development, and talk to residents involved.
- Facilitating open house inspections of the new apartments, built by HNSW at Walker St, Redfern, to understand the quality of new build and the standard of amenity in new social housing homes.
- Holding a number of Stakeholder Forums with visiting experts (Bliss Browne, Julie Cowans, Jim Diers, George Housakos) so the community can hear about good practice and the learn about renewal from around the world.
- Conducting "Places and Spaces for People tours" to learn about and experience good quality urban renewal. These tours visited private and affordable housing projects in Green Square and Pyrmont and were held in English, Chinese and Russian.
- Conducting significant consultation for the implementation of the Waterloo Green Neighbourhood Project, which will see improved security and a concierge service installed in six high rise buildings in Waterloo, as a pilot scheme.
- Talking to the communities about how research can inform the renewal process and assist learning in the community, including conducting a Baseline Survey of attitudes and experience towards the area.

The key themes and issues that have emerged from these stakeholder consultations are:

- High levels of concern about residents' safety and the impacts of anti social behaviour on residents' amenity and community life. Stakeholders want better security, and coordinated agency action to improve safety within buildings and in the public domain.
- Stakeholders say that a small number of residents, and some visitors, cause most of the problems and many want HNSW to take tougher action on breaches of tenancy agreements, be more careful about allocations, and work

more closely with other agencies to ensure better support for high need clients.

- Most residents however love their area and value their diverse and tolerant community. They do not want this community spirit lost as the area undergoes renewal.
- Many, though not all, believe a socially mixed/ mixed income community, could be safer and provide better amenity for residents. Some residents were however concerned that social housing residents would lose out if poorly conceived social mix policies were applied.
- Many accepted that the walk up flats were ageing and that their replacement over time with new apartments with modern facilities, lift access, balconies and internal laundries would be welcomed by many tenants. Stakeholders wanted sensitive relocation practice that supported people, particularly the vulnerable, to cope with change.
- There was concern that increased housing densities may result in parking and traffic problems,
- There was concern about the potential for loss of open space and pressure on community facilities.
- Many valued their existing high rise living and welcomed the idea of more choice of new business's and shops and services that denser living gave them access to.
- Stakeholders provided a wealth of advice about how to engage the communities. They sought a genuine and transparent approach, adoption of a set of guiding principles for engagement and strategies that encouraged and supported all groups in the community to participate.