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Contact: Sigrid Banzer

Reference: S12728 / 2020/216732
31 July 2020

The Hon Gladys Berejiklian, MP
Premier of NSW
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Premier

Urgent clarification of Government Policy for Ku-ring-gai Council Housing Strategy

I seek your urgent clarification regarding future housing targets for the Ku-ring-gai LGA.

On Tuesday 28th July 2020, Ku-ring-gai Council was to finalise adoption of its Housing Strategy. Following receipt of correspondence (attached) sent to all councillors by both local State MPs, Alister Henskens and Jonathan O’Dea, which urged councillors to reject the draft Housing Strategy, Council resolved to defer the decision for two months to consider the issues raised and to write to the Premier seeking your urgent clarification regarding Council’s obligations to meet dwelling targets (Resolution in full below).

Council has worked with the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) in the preparation of a Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) for a number of years. It was therefore particularly pleasing when earlier this year Council received a “letter of support” from the GSC confirming Council’s LSPS was consistent with the Greater Sydney Region Plan and North District Plan.

Building on the work foreshadowed in its LSPS, and consistent with the advisory notes attached to the GSC letter of support, Council has been working to finalise its local housing strategy, notwithstanding the limitations of working with Covid-19 restrictions. Throughout this process Council has been working within the context of implied dwelling projections 2016 – 2036 prepared by the Department of Planning Industry and Environment and housing targets provided by the GSC. These housing targets are clearly enunciated by the GSC in its letter of support and are largely consistent with Council’s own work in a housing needs analysis prepared late last year. They have been long understood by Council as being the basis for its work.

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During exhibition of the draft Housing Strategy and again in the few days prior to considering the matter for final adoption on 28 July 2020, Council received submissions from both its State Members of Parliament on the draft housing strategy. These submissions appear to conflict fundamentally with Council's long held understanding of its obligations to deliver new housing through its LSPS and Housing Strategy, an understanding confirmed by the DPIE as recently as 22 June 2020, when it advised, in part:

"To confirm, there hasn't been a change by the Government, Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) or Department to housing policy that is required to be considered before Council finalises its Local Housing Strategy."

Against this backdrop, the local members hold that Council's Housing Strategy, is:

"an overstep that appears to be inconsistent with reasonable community expectations and to overstate State Government requirements";

"the 'targets' suggested by the Greater Sydney Commission are not actual NSW Government policy and there is strictly no current requirement to rezone for more dwellings"

and

"that no new housing may be required in the next 5 years in Ku-ring-gai as there is likely to be an excess of housing supply over demand in Sydney in the medium term as a consequence of the.....pandemic" .

As a result of this mixed messaging, Council at its meeting of 28 July 2020 resolved:

(Moved: Councillors Szatow/Kelly.)

- A. That the issue be deferred until the September 2020 Ordinary Meeting of Council to afford the Council the opportunity to digest the issues raised, particularly in Lindfield.
- B. That the correspondence received from our two Local State Members of Parliament be forwarded to the NSW Premier seeking clarification on the content and the obligations of Council in relation to it.

*For the Resolution: The Mayor, Councillor Anderson, and
Councillors Clarke, Greenfield, Kelly
Pettett, Smith and Szatow.*

Against the Resolution: Councillors Kay, Ngai and Spencer.

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This is an important but sensitive process with longstanding implications for the future of Ku-ring-gai. It is perplexing that Council's local Members of Parliament can hold a view about what the Government's expectations are of this process that is so different from that which Council has understood as Government policy for several years. Therefore I seek your urgent clarification regarding future housing targets for the Ku-ring-gai LGA.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Jennifer Anderson
Mayor

Enclosed:

- Attachment 1 Submission to the Housing Strategy by The Hon. Jonathan O'Dea, Member for Davidson
- Attachment 2 Submission to the Housing Strategy by The Hon. Alister Henskens, Member for Ku-ring-gai
- Attachment 3 GSC Letter of Support for Council's LSPS
- Attachment 4 GSC Letter in response to letter from The Hon. Alister Henskens at Attachment 2
- Attachment 5 DPIE Letter in response to letter from The Hon. Alister Henskens at Attachment 2
- Attachment 6 Late email submission to the Housing Strategy by The Hon. Jonathan O'Dea, Member for Davidson
- Attachment 7 Late email submission to the Housing Strategy by The Hon. Alister Henskens, Member for Ku-ring-gai
- Attachment 8 Late email submission to the Housing Strategy by The Hon. Jonathan O'Dea, Member for Davidson

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