

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

Community Reference Group

For the HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER STRATEGY: CASTLEMAINE, CAMPBELLS CREEK AND CHEWTON

1. Introduction to project

The Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy ('the strategy') seeks to encourage residential development in Castlemaine, Campbells Creek and Chewton that responds to the housing needs of the community. The strategy will be informed by supporting strategic background work, including a bushfire risk assessment, heritage gap study, neighbourhood character study, and a housing needs assessment. It will help to identify and unlock strategic opportunity sites within existing urban areas, designate areas that are most appropriate for housing change, and prepare design guidelines to provide clearer guidance and certainty around future development.

The strategy seeks to provide a balanced approach to planning for future housing growth, protecting valued characteristics of residential neighbourhoods, whilst facilitating responsive urban development in appropriate locations.

Specifically, the objectives of the strategy are:

- To provide more certainty to the public around preferred built form outcomes, and facilitate housing that fits in with the preferred neighbourhood character.
- To direct housing growth to appropriate areas, based on a set of criteria which considers the strategic context, heritage, neighbourhood character, environment and amenity.
- To facilitate a diverse range of housing outcomes which responds to the current and future housing needs.
- To ensure that future residential development has regard to neighbourhood character, heritage and environmental factors such as bushfire risk.
- To apply appropriate planning tools which enable and facilitate the preferred and planned outcome.

See project details at Appendix A.

2. Purpose and function of Community Reference Group

The Community Reference Group is to support and encourage constructive collaboration between Council (including the Project Control Group and Project Manager) and the community to harness local knowledge and experience relating to housing and neighbourhood character.

Specifically, the community representatives appointed to the Community Reference Group will assist in the development of the project by:

- Having demonstrated knowledge of the study area's public and private realm features and built form, as well as an understanding of the role of the planning system in identifying and respecting neighbourhood character and planning for housing.
- Providing feedback on the Issues and Opportunities Paper (to be completed by Council officers) during the public consultation period.

- Providing strategic input and advice into the development and implementation of the project, particularly throughout the preparation of the draft and final Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy/s.
- Participating in workshops, meetings and other activities as required (such as field work activities).
- Assisting in consultation between Council, the consultant and the wider community (if/when required).
- Reviewing and advising on feedback received during public consultation (if/when required).
- Facilitating community input into the project and communicating project outcomes back to the community and other key stakeholders.
- Providing advocacy for the project locally, to relevant community groups.
- Reviewing and making recommendations to the Project Director/Manager at key project milestones.

3. Term of the Community Reference Group

This Terms of Reference is effective from appointment of the Community Reference Group and continues until completion of the Castlemaine, Campbells Creek and Chewton Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy (approximately 2 years).

4. Membership and responsibilities

The Community Reference Group will comprise membership from:

- 5 Community representatives (elected via an Expression of Interest (EOI) process). The key selection criteria for the community representatives (as outlined within the EOI form) include:
 1. Strong local knowledge of Castlemaine, Campbells Creek and Chewton (including the area's public and private realm features and built form) and/or be a resident of one of these areas
 2. Understanding of the role of the planning system in identifying and respecting neighbourhood character and planning for housing.
 3. Ability to represent a broad range of views that represent the diversity of the community;
 4. A willingness to contribute meaningfully to meetings in a fair and unbiased manner, looking beyond personal interests for the benefit of the community
 5. Ability to commit to the Community Reference Group term of appointment (approximately 2 years)
- Mount Alexander Shire Council – Councillor from a ward within the study area to represent the study area (includes the Castlemaine Ward, and a small area of the Coliban and Loddon Wards). The Councillor will chair the Community Reference Group.
- Project Director (Co-ordinator Strategic Planning) and Project Manager (Strategic Planner), for the purpose of facilitating activities and setting up meetings.

The responsibilities of the members are:

- Declare any personal interest, connection or association with any matter brought before the group.

- Not make improper use of information acquired as a consequence of membership of the group.
- Retain the confidentiality of any sensitive or personal material or information deemed to be 'commercial in-confidence'.

The responsibilities of Mount Alexander Shire Council are:

- Providing meeting support including coordinating meetings, distributing agendas and taking minutes.
- Project management.
- Consultation and communication with collective members of the Community Reference Group.
- Reporting of information through to Executive Management and Councillors.

5. Meetings

The group will determine the location and timing of meetings and the forward agenda.

- Meetings will occur at least at key milestones as per the project plan (to be developed), unless otherwise agreed by members.
- Meetings will be chaired by the Councilor representative.
- Decisions are to be made by a quorum (at least three members).
- Agenda items must be provided to the Project Manager no later than six working days prior to each meeting. These items should include:
 - Agenda
 - Minutes from the last meeting including and Action List
 - Progress or update report
 - Other documents that will be considered/reviewed at the meeting (such as a risk register, design documents etc).
 - Papers will be distributed by the Project Manager no later than five working days prior to each meeting.
 - Minutes will be produced within five working days of each meeting by the Project Manager for review by the Project Director prior to distribution.

6. Confidentiality

From time to time during the course of this process information may be shared with Community Reference Group members (verbally and/or in writing) and highlighted as confidential. Confidential information must not be shared or discussed with anyone outside of the Community Reference Group.

7. Amendment, Modification or Variation

This Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified in writing after consultation and agreement by the Project Control Group and Mount Alexander Shire Council.

Appendix A | Project scope - summary

1. GENERAL

1.1. Introduction

The Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy seeks to encourage residential development in Castlemaine, Campbells Creek and Chewton that responds to the housing needs of the community and protects valued neighbourhood character. The process of preparing the Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy is guided by the Planning Practice Note (PPN) 90 prepared by the state government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

PPN90 states that a housing strategy:

- ensures a range of housing opportunities are available across the municipality to meet the needs of the projected population
- outlines the strategies and implementation mechanisms to accommodate the projected population and household needs
- identifies where and how the housing needs of the future population will be met across the municipality
- identifies suitable locations for housing growth including those areas close to services, jobs, public transport and activity centres, and strategic development areas.

A neighbourhood character strategy assists in identifying valued characteristics of areas that need to be considered when identifying the preferred future character for residential areas. Specifically, as stated within PPN90, it:

- considers both the public and private realms
- provides strategic direction for neighbourhood character to guide future development through preferred neighbourhood character statements or neighbourhood character objectives
- identifies the comparative significance of each neighbourhood character area. In assessing the significance of areas, comparisons need to be made, not only with other parts of the municipality but also with the wider region
- forms the basis for neighbourhood character statements, policies, objectives and local variations to clause 54 and clause 55 being included in residential zone schedules, a Neighbourhood Character Overlay or other overlay.

Together, the Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy, along with other strategic work relating to heritage, bushfire, and other environmental factors, help to establish a Residential Development Framework. The framework will help balance all of the relevant factors, to ultimately enable Council to plan for housing change over the next 15 years, to meet the state planning policy obligations.

1.2. Location and study area

The study area comprises of residentially zoned land within Castlemaine, Campbells Creek and Chewton, as demonstrated in Figure 1 below.

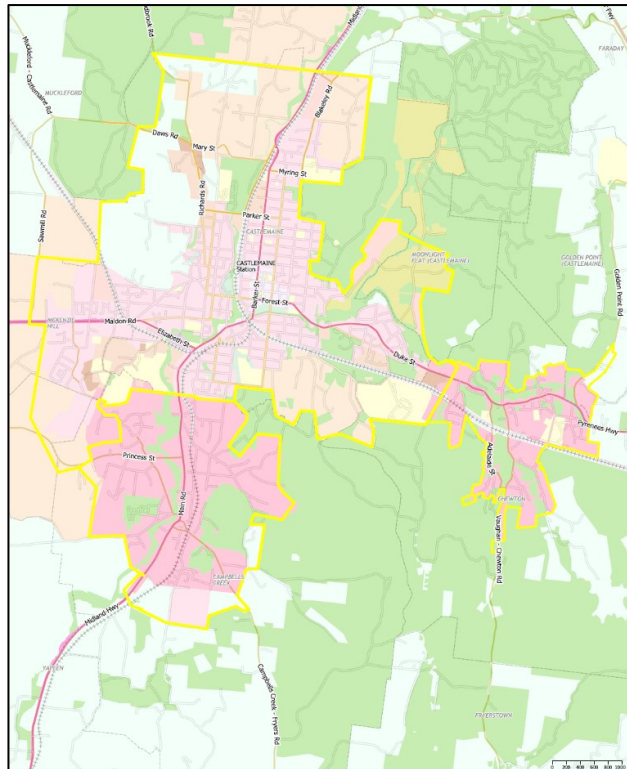


Figure 1 – Indicative study area

1.3. Background

In addition to responding to requirements at the state level (as set out in PPN90 above), the Castlemaine, Campbells Creek and Chewton Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy responds to local and regional planning directions relating to housing and planning for population growth as well as community needs and aspirations.

Regional:

The Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan (2014) identifies Castlemaine’s role as a ‘regional centre/town’ to *manage and support growth*, stating that growth should comprise *infill and some targeted expansion*, and be *focused within the existing urban area, including Campbells Creek*.

Local:

The Mount Alexander Planning Scheme Review, undertaken in 2019, includes the following recommendations:

- Undertake a neighbourhood character study with Castlemaine as a priority
- Rewrite the content of Clause 21.07 ‘Built Environment and Heritage’ to provide greater guidance in regards to preferred character and design
- Prepare Design and Development Overlays for Castlemaine Town Centre to manage built form and design issues

The Council Plan 2021-2026 includes the following strategy: ‘encourage diverse housing options and infill residential development in appropriate locations’.

The Urban Living Strategy (2004) identifies the ‘Cluster, Connect and Consolidation’ model, a key objective of which is “to encourage the consolidation of the Shire’s existing urban areas”. In particular, the ‘Cluster, Connect and Consolidation’ model identifies the importance of “urban

consolidation and expansion at Castlemaine". To allow for consolidation of Castlemaine, guidance needs to be provided to the community, Council and developers regarding the preferred development of infill areas.

The Castlemaine Residential Strategy was prepared in 2005, and includes a study of neighbourhood character and establishes character precincts. This is to be reviewed as part of the neighbourhood character study, and expanded on where applicable.

1.4. Project aim

The project seeks to provide a balanced approach to planning for future housing growth, protecting valued characteristics of residential neighbourhoods, whilst facilitating responsive urban development in appropriate locations.

Specifically, the objectives of the strategy are:

- To provide more certainty to the public around preferred built form outcomes, and facilitating housing that fits in with the preferred neighbourhood character.
- To direct housing growth to appropriate areas, based on a set of criteria which considers the strategic context, heritage, neighbourhood character, environment and amenity.
- To facilitate a diverse range of housing outcomes which responds to the current and future housing needs.
- To ensure that future residential development has regard to neighbourhood character, heritage and other factors such as bushfire risk.
- To apply appropriate planning tools which e the preferred and planned outcome.

2. SCOPE

2.1. Project tasks

The project is proposed to be broken down into the following tasks/stages:

- Preparation of Issues and Opportunities Paper (to be completed by Council officers)
- Consideration of the findings of the concurrent preparation of a Heritage Review of Castlemaine (to be completed by consultant)
- Preparation of Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy (to be completed by consultant):
 - Stage 1 Inception and background review
 - Stage 2 Draft Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy
 - Stage 3 Final Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy
- Implementation of the recommended changes to be incorporated into the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme (to be completed by Council officers)

Community consultation will occur at key milestones throughout the project.