

Item 3.

City for All Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan

File No: S120601.018

Summary

This report seeks Council endorsement for the public exhibition of the City's Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan – A City for All. The plan sets out a roadmap for strengthening social justice and resilience in our city over the next decade.

The document is the outcome of extensive community and stakeholder engagement involving more than 2,400 people. This process culminated in a 'people's summit' – a deliberative democracy event through which a diverse group of 200 people were recruited as representatives of the wider community to collectively set the plan's priorities.

Following this summit, the City's inaugural Social Sustainability Policy was adopted by Council in July 2016; this sets out a vision and principles for social progress. Further work was then undertaken to develop the Action Plan, which is presented here as part of an integrated Policy and Action Plan document.

This plan presents targeted suites of actions across four strategic directions to deliver an inclusive, connected, liveable and engaged city. Its primary agenda is to strengthen social wellbeing and resilience through fostering inclusive economic growth, strengthening social capital and cohesion, sustaining quality of life, and enabling all people to access opportunities that enable them to thrive and participate in shaping Sydney's future. This agenda is today recognised as central to progressive global cities.

Focus areas for action include: leveraging the social impact agenda of city businesses to address local social issues; delivering affordable and diverse housing supply to address rising inequality and sustain socio-economic diversity; delivering innovative approaches to address entrenched poverty, food insecurity and disadvantage; providing affordable lifelong learning, recreational and cultural participation opportunities for all residents; improving social connectedness and the social integration of diverse communities; improving opportunities and strengthening cultural connections with the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; increasing citizen participation in democratic processes; and strengthening governance for public benefit.

Publication of this Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan will complete the suite of four 'pillar' strategies that deliver on Sustainable Sydney 2030, including the Economic Development Strategy, Environmental Strategy and Action Plan and Cultural Policy and Action Plan.

The plan establishes priorities for action over the next decade as determined by the community. It captures the range of current activities delivered by the City and its partners to strengthen social sustainability and articulates new approaches to emerging issues. It sets out an evaluation framework for measuring, monitoring and reporting on outcomes of these activities, aligned with the City's Community Wellbeing Indicators.

A City for All invites shared responsibility and collaborative action for delivery involving all levels of government, the not-for-profit sector and wider community.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve the City for All Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report, for public exhibition for a minimum of four weeks; and
- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to undertake minor editorial amendments prior to the exhibition of the Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan.

Attachments

Attachment A. A City for All Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan 2018-2028

Background

1. A City for All – this Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan – represents a renewed commitment to a socially just and resilient Sydney. It sets out a roadmap for the next decade based on targeted suites of actions across four strategic directions for an inclusive, connected, liveable and engaged city.
2. The plan has been developed through deep engagement with the community and sector stakeholders throughout 2016, involving more than 2,400 people. It directly reflects the community's priorities for social progress.
3. Social sustainability is an agenda for strengthening the wellbeing and resilience of individuals and communities. It is an agenda for inclusive economic growth, through which the benefits of prosperity are widely shared, providing people with equitable opportunities to realise their potential.
4. Strategies for strengthening community wellbeing involve action across a wide range of areas, including ensuring access to affordable housing and services, lifelong learning and job opportunities, opportunities for creative expression and cultural participation, strengthening social networks, protecting the environment to support human health, and ensuring governing institutions deliver social justice, promote civic participation and protect the public interest.
5. The plan describes work already underway as well as new initiatives to present a holistic picture of action by the City and its partners to achieve this vision. This includes across areas within Council's control, influence and concern.
6. Focus areas for action include: collaborating with businesses to deliver local social benefits; supporting the growth of the social enterprise sector; delivering affordable rental housing for those priced out of the market; improving access to green open spaces and high quality community facilities and services for people on all incomes; fostering mutual respect, understanding and connections across cultures, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living cultures; increasing opportunities for creative and cultural participation in the life of the city; improving the accessibility of the city for older people and people with a disability, and delivering targeted strategies to reduce homelessness, poverty and food insecurity.
7. The action plan reflects the contemporary sustainability agenda for global cities promoted by the United Nations, the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and other global institutions. These institutions promote community wellbeing as the most important aspiration and barometer for social progress in global cities, rather than economic output.
8. The City has committed to deliver on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 2016 through its community strategic plan, Sustainable Sydney 2030, and through its participation in the Rockefeller 100 Resilient Cities initiative. Community wellbeing and resilience is core to the City's broader sustainability agenda.
9. The City is also committed to deliver on and affirm the United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through this plan, together with our Reconciliation Action Plan. Through this work we recognise the historical grievances, contemporary challenges and socio-economic, political and cultural aspirations of the city's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities – and commit to progress these collaboratively.

10. The Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan completes the suite of four 'pillar' strategies that deliver the quadruple bottom line sustainability agenda set out in Sustainable Sydney 2030. It sits alongside the Economic Development Strategy, Environmental Strategy and Action Plan, and Cultural Policy and Action Plan.
11. This plan is a collective plan for action to be delivered with other levels of government, the business and not-for-profit sector and the wider community. It reflects the fact that social sustainability is inherently a shared responsibility, with benefits for all members of society along with circular benefits realised through its potential to foster economic growth and productivity.
12. The impacts and outcomes of this plan will be measured and reported on through the evaluation framework set out in the document. This 'Result-based Accountability' framework is linked with the City's Community Wellbeing Indicators, which track wellbeing and social progress at a population level.
13. The City has committed to deliver this action plan to the community for public exhibition and subsequent adoption. This process will enable the City to complete the work it has undertaken with the community to deliver a contemporary agenda for social progress in our city – strengthening and sustaining Sydney, a city for all.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

14. Sustainable Sydney 2030 is a vision for the sustainable development of the City to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the City, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This plan is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 1 – A Globally Competitive and Innovative City - A Globally Competitive and Innovative City: Social progress, rather than pure economic output, is today recognised as the best measure of a globally competitive and innovative city. This plan is fundamentally a plan for furthering social progress – and therefore Sydney's global competitiveness – through strengthening social justice and resilience and ensuring all people can contribute to, participate in and realise their potential through our economy and society.
 - (b) Direction 6 – Vibrant Local Communities and Economies – This plan recognises the inextricable links between local communities and economies and the benefits to the economy of strengthening community wellbeing and resilience. It sets out an agenda for action with real potential to benefit the economy locally through a stronger society in which more people are enabled to actively participate. Specific goals, such as supporting the growth of the local social enterprise sector, have potential to enhance the city's economic vibrancy and resilience. Increasing supply of affordable housing for essential urban service workers and others increasingly locked out of the inner city housing market is another key action area that directly benefits the city's social and economic sustainability and vibrancy.

- (c) Direction 7 – A Cultural and Creative City – This plan recognises the importance of our city’s cultural and creative vibrancy to people’s wellbeing, sense of self and sense of belonging. It promotes avenues for self-expression and active participation in the cultural life of the city, including through ensuring all people have opportunities to participate and contribute to shaping their city and community.
- (d) Direction 8 – Housing for a Diverse Population – This plan recognises the fundamental importance of housing supply diversity in underpinning social and economic diversity. It promotes increased supply of subsidised forms of housing – including social, affordable and supported housing – for those unable to access the mainstream housing market, to ensure they can choose to live in the city and the city is sustained as a city for all.
- (e) Direction 9 – Sustainable Development, Renewal and Design – Through the actions set out in the ‘liveable city’ strategic direction, this plan seeks to enhance quality of life for the community through responsible development. That is, development that is appropriate, sustainable and harnessed to deliver public benefit and sustain quality of life, including through provision of open spaces, social infrastructure and services. It promotes a public domain that is accessible, and the development of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure that supports healthy, active lifestyles. Sustaining a healthy natural environment and developing adequate community-based responses to climate change are central to the plan’s agenda of strengthening community wellbeing and resilience.
- (f) Direction 10 – Implementation through Effective Governance and Partnerships – The principle of shared responsibility underpins this plan, with actions primarily to be delivered collaboratively with other levels of government, the business and not-for-profit sectors and wider community. This will require strong leadership and advocacy by the City and a strengthening of its role as an enabler of community-driven change. Additionally, this plan is focused on enhancing responsible governance by institutions and building public trust through genuine engagement and collaboration with communities and furthering a policy agenda that represents broad public benefit.

Organisational Impact

- 15. The Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan sets out an holistic agenda for collaborative action by the City with its delivery partners over the next decade. It captures business-as-usual activities across the organisation, as well as new activities planned for the next decade.
- 16. Business-as-usual activities include the delivery of community facilities; community safety initiatives; homelessness services; public domain amenity improvements; city greening and urban ecology initiatives; community engagement and advocacy activities, and broader social, economic and environmental programs and services. Organisational activities across these areas are aligned with the four strategic directions of this plan and will be evaluated in relation to their delivery on these outcomes.
- 17. Much of the investment associated with this plan – such as subsidising new affordable housing schemes; renewing and delivering new community facilities to meet growing demand; improving the accessibility of the public domain; improving the availability of Council information on the basis of ‘open data’ principles, and delivering free WiFi hotspots in the public domain; and delivering more green open spaces – is the subject of existing Council commitments.

18. Additional targeted activities, such as the development of a food business incubator in the city in response to rising food insecurity and entrenched economic disadvantage, have been funded or will be subject to rigorous investment decisions prior to proceeding through project implementation stages.

Risks

19. Through the extensive public engagement process during 2016 associated with the Social Sustainability Policy and Discussion Paper, the City committed to work with the community to develop and deliver an agenda for strengthening social justice and resilience over the next decade.
20. The resulting document – this Social Sustainability Action Plan – reflects the priorities that emerged through the ‘people’s summit’ of community representatives held at the culmination of the public engagement process, to synthesise the outcomes.
21. Successful delivery of this plan will rely on effective collaboration and advocacy with other levels of government, the business sector, the not-for-profit sector and the wider community. The City alone cannot deliver this broad agenda – as social sustainability is by nature a shared responsibility and the majority of actions are outside the City’s direct control.

Social / Cultural / Community

22. Delivering community benefit through Sydney’s growth and development is the central agenda of this plan. It aims to harness economic growth in a way that is inclusive and socially just, enabling more people access to opportunities to realise their potential.
23. Strengthening individual and community wellbeing and resilience is the essence of social sustainability. This plan aspires to achieve this through action across four strategic directions for sustaining an inclusive, connected, liveable and engaged city.
24. These outcomes have been endorsed by the community through the public engagement process as priority focus areas, in recognition of the fact that social progress – as is measured through community wellbeing – is affected by a range of factors, ranging from access to good quality food and housing, to financial security, education and job prospects, trust in governing institutions, and the strength of local social networks.

Environmental

25. This plan recognises the inextricable connections between environmental and human health and wellbeing. It promotes initiatives to sustain the health of the natural environment, as well as initiatives to provide people with access to the nature in the heart of our city, to sustain their own health.
26. Key initiatives include investment in further greening the city, providing communities with access to opportunities to green their own neighbourhoods, and access to leafy pedestrianised networks throughout the city.
27. This plan should be read alongside the City’s Environmental Strategy and Action Plan, to provide a fuller picture of the City’s integrated, quadruple bottom line sustainability agenda.

Economic

28. This plan promotes an agenda of inclusive economic growth. This agenda is manifested in a range of actions, from encouraging greater engagement of city-based businesses in local social issues, to fostering the growth of the social enterprise sector, to delivering targeted initiatives that aim to improve employment and opportunities for people who face disadvantage.
29. It includes substantial investment in activities such as subsidising affordable housing for the city's key workers and lower income earners to sustain socio-economic diversity, targeting the issue of current housing market conditions driving rising inequality, including intergenerational inequality.
30. These initiatives, which are central to this plan, deliver circular economic benefits as well as social benefits, in that it is now widely recognised that rising inequality is a brake on economic productivity and undermines the cities' economic competitiveness.

Budget Implications

31. The costs associated with the development and public exhibition of the Social Sustainability Action Plan are included within the Research, Strategy and Corporate Planning budget for 2017/18.
32. The delivery of this plan largely represents the alignment of business-as-usual activities with the outcomes in the plan – sometimes requiring a shift in focus or realignment of resources, but not requiring extensive new resources.
33. New areas of activity or initiatives proposed through this plan have been carefully considered and aligned with the City's long term financial plan and associated resourcing strategies and priorities.
34. As the plan is delivered over the coming decade, detailed planning for resourcing particular activities will be undertaken as part of the organisational budget planning process – including priority projects planned for 2018/19 and over the subsequent three years.
35. The plan is based on an agenda of shared responsibility and delivery in collaboration with other government and non-government stakeholders. As such, many of the actions will not require City resources beyond coordination or advocacy activities.

Relevant Legislation

36. Local Government Act 1993.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

37. The public exhibition of this Plan will commence following Council endorsement. A four week public exhibition period is proposed from 23 April to 25 May 2018.

Public Consultation

38. This integrated policy and action plan document is the outcome of an extensive public consultation process. This began with public exhibition of a Social Sustainability Policy and accompanying Discussion Paper during 2016.
39. More than 2,400 people were engaged through this process, including community members and stakeholders from across the government, not-for-profit and private sectors. This included targeted outreach engagement activities with key sectors of the community, including culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, children and young people, and residents in renewal areas.
40. The public engagement process culminated in a ‘people’s summit’ – a gathering of 200 randomly-recruited community representatives who were brought together to collectively deliberate on and determine the priorities for this plan.
41. The work was strongly endorsed through the public engagement process – including the vision and principles in the policy and the four strategic directions for action set out in the discussion paper, which have become the basis for this plan.
42. A comprehensive report on the outcomes of the public consultation process was published, through Council, accompanying the final Policy for adoption.
43. The plan will now be subject to a further public exhibition period from 23 April 2018 to 25 May 2018, subject to Council endorsement.
44. During the public exhibition period, key sector partners and community members who have participated to date will have the opportunity to comment. Additionally, the wider community and sector stakeholders will be engaged through various channels, including online engagement and social media activities.
45. Feedback obtained during the public exhibition period will inform finalisation of the action plan, which will then be reported back to Council for adoption and publication.

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