

Meeting: Aland Leppington – Camden Council Meeting

Location: Camden Council and MS Teams

Date/Time: Tuesday, 16 January 2024 2.00-3.00pm

Attendees

- Josh Pownell – (Camden Council – Manager Strategic Planning)
- Michael Midson – (Camden Council – Team Leader Strategic Centres and Policy)
- Shayla Nguyen – (Camden Council – Strategic Planner)
- Andrew Stacey (Aland)
- Anas Rahhal – (Aland)
- David Hamilton – (Aland)
- Simon Wilkes – (Urbis)
- Anthony Kong – (Urbis)

Meeting Purpose/Background

The two planning proposals were submitted to Council in September 2023. Council on 22 December 2023 wrote to Aland suggesting that the two planning proposals be withdrawn, on the basis of the following:

1. The priority focus of Council on their town centre review, with some significant issues to work through.
2. The need to ensure that all processes are fair, equitable and transparent.
3. The lack of available staff resources.
4. Probity considerations.

Camden Council invited Aland to meet to discuss the options available for the planning proposals.

Key discussion points

- **Status update on the 2 x planning proposals**
Since lodgement, there has been no assessment of the proposals. Similarly, there has been no initial public notification, nor referral to government agencies. The only action to date on the planning proposals has been the preparation of the two acknowledgement letters.
- **Update on Council's planning proposal**
The public exhibition period is currently open, closing on 5 February 2024. Aland will be preparing comprehensive submissions as part of this process, outlining a number of key areas of concern. Moving forward, there would remain significant work for Camden Council to do, recognising that the number of landowners involved and that the proposal involved two local governments. Local Government elections are also scheduled for September 2024.
- **Key areas of concerns with Council's planning proposal**
There are six (6) key areas of concern from an Aland perspective, as follows:
 1. The lack of an effective road network
 2. An inappropriate/excessive level of open space provision – well beyond benchmarks, compromising place-making outcomes and in turn leading to feasibility concerns.
 3. That both the planning proposal and contribution plan have not been informed by any updated feasibility analysis.
 4. The lack of detailed design resolution for key sites, in order to see a town centre delivered.
 5. The lack of a clear timeline for the finalisation of the planning for this area.

These were discussed and generally agreed as significant matters that would need to be worked through in order to finalise the planning for this area. The land is already zoned, in fragmented ownership and with development applications being advanced to construction – including for example, the recent completed shopping centre.

- **The level of investigation/detailed resolution**

The two planning proposals have been informed by both detailed site investigations and robust urban design testing/analysis to ensure effectiveness and enable delivery of the first stages of the town centre.

- **Council's priority/focus**

Council's priority at this point in time is managing the exhibition period of the Council Leppington Town Centre (LTC) Planning Proposal and does not have enough internal resources to review the Aland Leppington Planning Proposals.

Council anticipates an extensive submissions process to the LTC Planning Proposal. A large proportion of the submissions received to date on the LTC Proposal relate to the quantum open space throughout the town centre. Council are open to amendments of the LTC Planning Proposal and the indicative layout plan as part of the submissions process. It was also acknowledged there are still a range of issues to work through, i.e. the extent of open space and road configurations and other precinct wide issues such as flooding.

- **Probity considerations**

Council have an active planning proposal for the broader LTC, it was noted Council will have probity issues and a potential conflict of interest in assessing Aland's planning proposals, and hence is not in a position to be leading the assessment. Even if independent consultants were appointed, the concerns would not fall away – for example, business papers to Council meetings would remain needing to be reviewed and presented by Council staff.

- **Potential complexities**

Council have general concerns with a proponent lodging a planning proposal within a precinct where Council currently have their own planning proposal on exhibition, as it may cause confusion within the community. Council in their view, do not consider this to be a fair and equitable process for other landowners.

Council would like to understand the mechanics of how a planning proposal within a precinct where there is a separate planning proposal on exhibition, can be assessed – particularly as this is something Camden Council has never seen or experienced before. It was discussed that there have been and will be other examples of where planning is progressed at both a broad/precinct level, in parallel with site-specific proposals.

- **Need for fair, efficient and coordinated planning**

Council would like to see activation around Leppington Station but want a fair, efficient and coordinated planning pathway, which they feel a separate planning proposal being lodged within the LTC would not achieve.

- **Potential to enter into a funding agreement**

It was outlined by Council that should Aland wish to continue with their planning proposals, it will need to be assessed at full cost recovery. Council is happy to issue a draft fee arrangement which will cost approximately \$130,000 every 6 months for Council planners to assess the proposal. There will be significant additional fees for specialist consultants, an independent planning consultant, and an independent probity adviser to assist with the assessment.

At this time, no arrangements had been made to advance a potential funding agreement – and this would take time/resources to advance, should it be agreed. It was also acknowledged that notwithstanding potential funding arrangements, probity considerations (as outlined above) would remain and Council would still not be in a position to advance their assessments of the planning proposals.

Agreed action/next steps

1. Meeting notes to be prepared and circulated.
2. Aland to formally advise Council of intentions within planning proposals.