

July 2024

# Issues and options consultation document

## Character areas

### **Character Area Definitions: Preserving the Essence of Our Community**

As custodians of our locality's identity and heritage, the council is committed to recognizing and preserving the distinct character of each area within our jurisdiction. Through the establishment of Character Area Definitions, we seek to provide a comprehensive understanding of the diverse physical, historical, cultural, and social attributes that shape the unique identity of our community.

#### **Defining Character Areas:**

Character Area Definitions serve as a framework for categorizing and understanding the diverse landscapes, neighborhoods, and districts that make up our local authority's jurisdiction. Each Character Area is defined by its distinct set of characteristics, including architectural styles, land uses, natural features, and socio-economic profiles. By delineating these areas, we aim to facilitate informed decision-making and holistic planning approaches that respect and enhance the unique qualities of each locality.

#### **Describing Unique Attributes:**

Within each Character Area, a multitude of physical, historical, cultural, and social attributes contribute to its distinctive identity. Through careful analysis and consultation with local stakeholders, we identify and describe these key attributes to provide a comprehensive portrait of each area's character.

#### **Physical Attributes:**

This encompasses the built environment, including architectural styles, building materials, urban form, and street patterns. From the Victorian terraces of our historic town centers to the modern developments of our suburban neighborhoods, each area boasts its own architectural heritage and spatial configuration.

**Historical Significance:** Many of our Character Areas are steeped in history, with landmarks, heritage sites, and archaeological remnants that tell the story of our community's past. From medieval market squares to industrial heritage sites, these historical elements contribute to the rich tapestry of our cultural heritage and inform our sense of place.

**Cultural Diversity:** Our community is characterized by its diverse cultural fabric, reflected in the variety of ethnicities, languages, traditions, and festivals that enrich our neighborhoods. Each Character Area has its own cultural identity, shaped by the traditions, customs, and experiences of its residents, past and present.

**Natural Features:** Our locality is blessed with diverse natural landscapes, from river valleys and woodlands to coastal areas and green spaces. These natural features not only provide recreational opportunities and ecological benefits but also contribute to the character and identity of each area, shaping its sense of place and connecting residents to their surroundings.

**Social Fabric:** At the heart of every Character Area is its social fabric, comprised of community networks, local institutions, and shared experiences. From vibrant community hubs to close-knit residential streets, these social connections foster a sense of belonging and solidarity among residents, defining the character and vitality of each area.

## **Preserving Heritage and Cultural Significance: A Commitment to Our Community's Identity**

At the heart of our local council's planning strategy lies a profound respect for the heritage and cultural significance that shapes our community's identity. We understand the intrinsic value of preserving historic landmarks, cultural sites, and traditions that have woven the fabric of our locality over generations. With this understanding, our approach to planning is grounded in acknowledging, protecting, and enhancing these invaluable assets for the benefit of current and future residents.

### **Highlighting Areas of Heritage and Cultural Significance:**

Our first step in safeguarding heritage and cultural significance involves identifying and highlighting areas of particular importance within our community. Through comprehensive research, consultation with local historians, and engagement with residents, we pinpoint sites, buildings, landscapes, and cultural practices that hold special meaning and significance. These areas may include historic town centers, archaeological sites, industrial heritage, traditional crafts, cultural festivals, and intangible heritage such as oral traditions and folklore.

### **Establishing Policies for Protection and Enhancement:**

Once areas of significance are identified, we establish robust policies aimed at protecting and enhancing our heritage assets within each character area. These policies are designed to strike a

delicate balance between preservation and progress, ensuring that our community's rich heritage remains vibrant and accessible while allowing for sustainable development and evolution.

- **Protection:** We implement stringent measures to safeguard heritage assets from inappropriate development, neglect, or deterioration. This includes designating conservation areas, listing buildings of architectural or historic interest, and establishing guidelines for the sensitive treatment of heritage sites. Through planning regulations and conservation policies, we aim to maintain the integrity and authenticity of our heritage assets for future generations to cherish and enjoy.
- **Enhancement:** In addition to protection, we actively seek opportunities to enhance the value and appreciation of our heritage assets. This may involve investing in conservation projects, restoration efforts, interpretive signage, educational programs, and cultural events that celebrate our community's diverse heritage. By promoting public engagement and fostering a sense of pride and ownership, we ensure that our heritage remains a living, dynamic force that enriches the lives of all who call our community home.

## Community Engagement and Collaboration:

Central to our approach is the engagement and collaboration of residents, stakeholders, and heritage experts in the preservation and promotion of our heritage and cultural significance. We recognize that preserving our heritage is a collective responsibility that requires the active participation and support of the entire community. Through consultation, outreach initiatives, and partnership opportunities, we empower residents to contribute their knowledge, skills, and passion towards safeguarding our shared heritage for future generations.

## Incorporating Landscape and Topography: Enhancing Our Distinctive Character Areas

Landscape and topography are integral elements that define the unique character of our locality. From rolling hills to lush valleys, and from rugged coastlines to tranquil woodlands, our landscape features are not only aesthetically pleasing but also crucial components of our identity and heritage. In our commitment to sustainable development and preserving the essence of each character area, our local council is dedicated to considering the local topography, natural features, and landscape characteristics in all planning endeavors. Here's how we intend to achieve this:

**Understanding Character Areas:** We recognize that our locality comprises diverse character areas, each with its own set of topographic and landscape attributes. Through comprehensive assessment and consultation with experts and community members, we aim to gain a deep understanding of the distinctiveness of each area. This includes identifying key landscape features, such as ridgelines, water bodies, woodlands, and historic landmarks, that contribute to its unique identity.

**Developing Protective Policies:** Building upon our understanding of local landscapes, we are committed to developing robust policies aimed at safeguarding and enhancing these distinctive

features. These policies will address a range of issues, including land use, development density, conservation, and landscape management. By integrating landscape considerations into our planning framework, we seek to ensure that future development respects the natural character of each area and minimizes adverse impacts on sensitive landscapes.

**Promoting Sustainable Practices:** In addition to protecting existing landscape features, we recognize the importance of promoting sustainable practices that contribute to the enhancement of our natural environment. This includes measures such as promoting biodiversity through green infrastructure, incorporating sustainable drainage systems to manage water runoff, and encouraging the use of native vegetation in landscaping projects. By embracing sustainable practices, we aim to create resilient landscapes that are capable of adapting to environmental challenges while retaining their aesthetic and ecological value.

**Community Engagement and Collaboration:** Our approach to landscape and topography is grounded in community engagement and collaboration. We understand that local residents, businesses, and stakeholders possess valuable insights and perspectives that can inform our decision-making processes. Through meaningful engagement initiatives, such as workshops, public forums, and online surveys, we seek to involve the community in shaping the future of our landscapes. By fostering a sense of ownership and stewardship among residents, we aim to create a shared vision for our locality's landscapes that reflects the aspirations and values of our community.

**(this is an example document)**