

**THIRLMERE COMMUNITY HALL  
AND  
FACILITIES CONSOLIDATION STRATEGY  
October 2018**

## **1. Executive Summary**

This Strategy proposes to undertake a number of steps that will eventually result in the sale of the following sites for the purpose of providing multi-purpose community facilities that service the same catchments and better meet the needs of the community. The sites proposed for consolidation are:

- Thirlmere Community Hall with the proceeds to go towards the development of a new multi-purpose facility at the Thirlmere Sportsground.
- The Oaks Community Hall & Senior's Annex with the proceeds to go towards a new multi-purpose facility at Dudley Chesham Sportsground.
- Oakdale Community Hall with the proceeds to go towards the embellishment of recreation facilities at Willis Park, Oakdale.

## **2. Background**

This strategy is based on consolidating ageing community facilities to provide better planned, fit for purpose community infrastructure that meets existing and future community need.

As part of its commitment to financial sustainability, Council has an ongoing program of reviewing services to the community through an Asset Management Strategy. This has identified that Council does not currently have enough funding to provide all services at the desired service levels or provide new services. Works and services that cannot be provided under present funding levels are:

- Have every building refurbished to a modern standard.
- Fully comply with Disability Access Standards AS1428.
- Design and build new assets for every community group.

Some of the Shire's existing community facilities are deteriorating with age and failing to provide the intended service provision or meet changing community needs. The resulting gaps in service provision means that the community is missing out on suitable recreation/community facilities and the services they can offer.

Most of the Council's building network was constructed by developers and from government grants, often provided and accepted without consideration of ongoing operations, maintenance and replacement needs. Many of these assets are approaching the later years of their life and require replacement, services from the assets are decreasing and maintenance costs are increasing. Our present funding levels are insufficient to continue to provide existing services at current levels in the medium term.

Council's adopted Open Space, Recreation and Community Facilities Strategy (2014) identified the Shire as lacking in contemporary community facilities that have been built for purpose, with one or two exceptions, and that the quality of facilities and nature of the amenity they provide are equally important to floor space considerations.

When assessed against best practice criteria, some of the Shire's community facilities are considered to be potential liabilities and not suitable for general community use. This is coupled with very low utilisation rates experienced at some locations, reflective of the facilities not being suitable for a range of community activities.

The Open Space, Recreation and Community Facilities Strategy recommends that Council works with the community to consolidate, integrate and modernise such facilities in order to manifest benefits, functionally, economically and socially. In the theme of Maximising Value for Money, it is recommended

that Council *'Dispose of surplus assets and use resources to develop new facilities that meet contemporary needs and standards'*.

Although the Open Space, Recreation and Community Facilities Strategy also identifies an over-supply in public open space in some areas of the Shire, this report is the first phase of a larger review and is focused on three community facilities based on urgency and community need, noting that the process of selling public assets can be complex and lengthy. The learnings from this first phase will be used to inform any future proposals.

The following information provides a brief summary of the 3 properties and the proposed approach towards their asset consolidation.

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## THIRLMERE COMMUNITY HALL

### Location

- Thirlmere Community Hall, Lot 14, Sec C, DP 1569 Westbourne Avenue, Thirlmere.



### Background

This land was purchased by Council in 1963 with no encumbrances on its transfer. It is currently zoned B2 Local Centre and measures 1,821 square metres. The land has both commercial and residential development value being located as the last land parcel that is zoned B2 Local Centre before R3 Medium Density Residential zoning for the surrounding residential lots.

### Existing Use

The Thirlmere Community Hall has been closed from public access since 2012 following the outcome of a building condition assessment which recommended that the facility be closed and demolished due to the amount of work and funding that would be required to bring the facility back to a good condition.

### Open Space, Recreation &

- There is a notable lack of facilities in Thirlmere. Since the closure of the Thirlmere Community Hall, the Thirlmere/Lakesland area's

**Community Facilities Strategy References**

population of 4,044 people no longer has access to a local community facility.

- The Thirlmere area appears to be under provided for (in terms of community facility floor space).
- The only facility in Thirlmere does not currently provide any service to the community. The building is in extremely poor condition and currently closed. Renovation of this facility may not be worthwhile as the facility has a limited site area and is located on a residential street. The facility should be considered for replacement or rationalisation.
- Utilisation score is 0 out of 5.
- Thirlmere Community Hall is one of the lowest ranking facilities against best practice criteria.

**Financial Considerations**

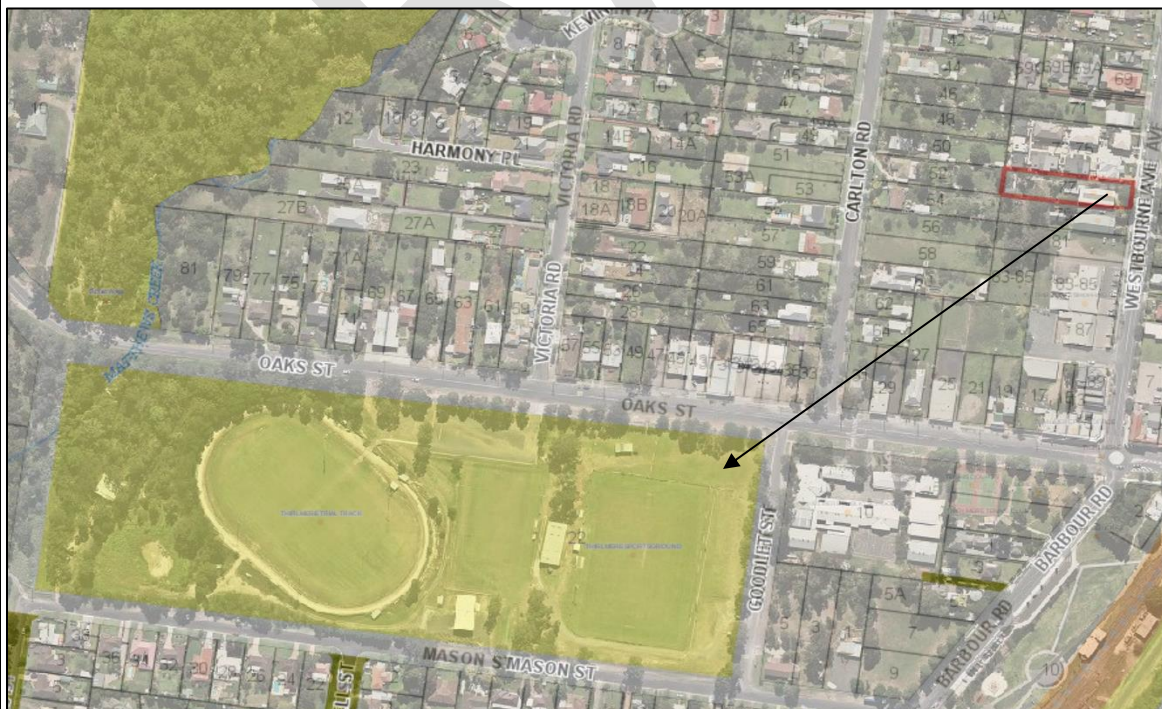
A private land valuation of the property was last undertaken in February 2018 indicating a land value of \$700,000 subject to site remediation and being rezoned to R3 Medium Density Residential. Consideration will need to be given to the cost associated with the demolition of the existing dilapidated community hall and the removal of asbestos from the site.

**Proposed Offset**

It is proposed that Council pursue a reclassification of the site from Community Land to Operational Land. If a reclassification is successful, Council may pursue the sale of the site.

Any funds derived from the sale of the site are to be directed towards the redevelopment of a new multi-purpose Thirlmere Community Facility located at Thirlmere Sportsground. Such facility is estimated to be in the vicinity of \$1,000,000 and could be constructed utilising the funds from the land sale and any additional project budget being considered from Wollondilly's Special Rate Variation and Development Contributions (noting that this is not identified within the current Development Contributions Plan 2011).

Proposed site for a new multi-purpose Thirlmere Community Facility.





## THE OAKS COMMUNITY HALL & SENIOR CITIZENS ANNEX

### Location

- The Oaks Community Hall and Senior Citizens Annex, Lot 191, DP 1090197, Lot 192, DP 1090197, Lot A, DP 157475, Russell Street, The Oaks.



### Background

This site comprises of three adjacent lots that are located within a residential street of The Oaks. The current vacant lot of the three, was purchased from private ownership by Council in 1983 and transferred without restrictions. The other two lots for which The Oaks Community Hall and the Senior Citizens Centre are located on, were conveyed to Council from the Literary Institute & School of Arts Trustees in July 1965. The entire three lots are currently zoned R2 Low Density Residential and measure 2,232 square metres in total.

### Existing Use

The Senior Citizens Annex located at the rear of the existing facility is currently hired by a personal trainer for a total of 1 hour per week. The hall is hired by a dance school for a total of 10 hours per week spread over 3 evenings, a Zumba operator for a total of 4 hours per week spread over 2 days and now a church group hires the facility every Sunday for 14 hours. A CWA has also started hiring the facility recently.

<b>Open Space, Recreation &amp; Community Facilities Strategy References</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilisation score is 1 out of 5.</li> <li>• The Oaks Community Hall is one of the lowest ranking facilities against best practice criteria.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Considerations</b>	<p>A Valuer General's Valuation undertaken in July 2016 indicated the total of the three lots to be worth \$555,000 on the property market.</p> <p>The sale of the lots would include Council being responsible for the demolition of the existing dilapidated buildings including the removal of asbestos material from the site.</p>

### Proposed Offset

The current location of The Oaks Community Hall and Seniors Annex within a residential street is not ideal given the nature of activity associated with community hired facilities. As such the subject three lots are better placed being offered for residential development.

It is recommended that Council pursue the sale of the three lots to help fund the development of a new multipurpose community facility located at Dudley Chesham Sportsground to create more of an active community hub within the precinct.

Consultants that have been engaged by Council are currently in the early stages of developing a master plan for Dudley Chesham Sportsground and funding the implementation of a future Council adopted master plan could be realised relatively quickly through utilising both the existing funds that are available through the Vanderville Estate Voluntary Planning Agreement and the potential forward funding associated with the sale of these three lots.

Initial investigations will need to conclude that are no covenants associated with the Trusteeship of Lots 191 and 192 that will limit Council's ability to offer the site for sale.

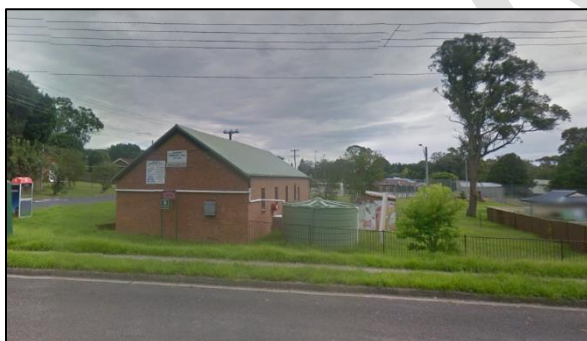
It is proposed that a new multipurpose community facility be integrated within Dudley Chesham Sportsground.



## OAKDALE COMMUNITY HALL

### Location

- Oakdale Community Hall, Lot 1 DP 708508, Egans Road, Oakdale



### Background

This land was acquired by Council from private ownership in October 1973 with a stormwater drainage easement noted on the Title. It is currently zoned RE1 Public Recreation and measures 5,214 square metres.

The surrounding residential area is zoned R2 Low Density Residential and it would be suitable to rezone this site as R2.

A Sydney Water sewer main traverses the south-eastern corner of the Lot which will need to be a consideration in future land disposal or any proposed subdivision of the site.

### Existing Use

The existing Oakdale Community Hall is deteriorating from termite and mould damage and is currently not open for use by the public.

A substantial size parcel of land zoned RE1 Public Recreation is located within 300 metres of the Oakdale Community Hall site, providing continued access to recreational land for Oakdale residents.



<b>Open Space, Recreation &amp; Community Facilities Strategy References</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Oakdale Community Hall provides limited service to the Oakdale/Nattai area population, as it is an older facility in poor condition.</li> <li>• Utilisation score of 1 out of 5.</li> <li>• The Oakdale Community Hall is one of the lowest ranking facilities against best practice criteria.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Considerations</b>	<p>A Valuer General's Valuation undertaken in July 2016 indicates the land value as being at \$105,000.</p> <p>The sale of the site would include Council being responsible for the demolition of the existing dilapidated community hall, public amenities and tennis courts, as well as the removal of asbestos material from the site.</p>

### Proposed Offset

It is recommended that Council pursue the sale of the Oakdale Community Hall site and that funds realised from the sale of the land be directed towards recouping any demolition costs, and the remaining funds allocated towards the embellishment of the existing playground at Willis Park, along with the installation of outdoor exercise equipment, multi-purpose courts, skate-able elements, a large picnic shelter and pathways.

This proposal will require the reclassification of the site from Community Land to Operational Land and rezoning from RE1 Public Recreation to a suitable zoning for residential development.

The proposal to pursue the disposal of this site should include a cost benefit analysis to compare the potential return on investment associated with a whole of Lot sale versus a subdivision of the Lot.

Funds from the sale of the Oakdale Community Hall could be directed towards the embellishment of recreation facilities at Willis Park.





### 3. Proposed Process

The Thirlmere Community Hall and Facilities Consolidation Strategy is proposed to be undertaken as follows:

- Council adoption of Strategy.
- Updated property valuation reports undertaken.
- Building demolition reports prepared.
- Community consultation process (advice to surrounding residents, user groups, public notices).
- Demolition of closed facilities (Thirlmere and Oakdale) undertaken.
- Council Report to endorse submission of Planning Proposal for reclassification and rezoning.
- Facilitate the sale of the 3 properties (as per Council Policy - Dealings with Council Owned Land GOV0057).

### 4. Financial Implications

This Strategy proposes a number of actions that require a commitment of financial expenditure as follows.

Expenditure Item	Quantity	Approximated Cost	Indicative Timeframe
Property Valuation Reports (including cost benefit analysis for rezoning options for Thirlmere and subdividing for Oakdale).	3	\$12,000	Oct 2018 – Jan 2019
Building Demolition Reports	3	\$6,000	Oct 2018 – Feb 2019
Legal advice in relation to any covenants associated with Trusteeship for Lots 191-192 Russell Street, The Oaks.	1	TBC	Oct 2018 – Jan 2019
Legal advice in relation to any impact of Sydney Water sewer easement and drainage easement noted on the title of the Oakdale Community Hall site.	1	TBC	Oct 2018 – Jan 2019
Preparation and lodgement of Planning Proposal for reclassification and rezoning.	1	TBC	Oct 2018 – Apr 2019
Demolition of facilities including asbestos.	3	TBC	Jul 2019 – Sep 2019
Legal representation for property disposal/sale process.	3	TBC	Subject to Planning Proposal process.
Planning/design for new community facilities.	3	\$30,000	Oct 2018 – Dec 2019
Construction of new community facilities.	3	>\$2,500,000	Within 3 years.

Income Item	Quantity	Estimated Income
Sale of properties	3	TBC following property valuation reports.

In addition to the income derived from the of the 3 subject properties, cost savings will be realised from the removal of problematic building maintenance burdens currently incurred on the organisation.

## **5. Risk Assessment**

### **➤ Buildings**

The risks that are associated with not addressing the deterioration of Council owned community facilities include:

- The rate of deterioration of buildings accelerates with age and is exacerbated by inadequate maintenance funding.
- Deterioration of internal furnishings past their useful life.
- Increased end of life costs to upgrade building.
- Closure of underutilised buildings.

Council's current approach towards building maintenance is focused on prioritising works based on condition, those with high utilisation and building user's needs. This means that the three facilities that are subject to this Strategy, will continue to decline and the liability to Council will continue to increase.

Once this Strategy is implemented, these risks are removed completely.

### **➤ Community**

Although the facilities proposed for consolidation are in poor condition, it is likely that there will be some community sentiment in relation to their disposal, as well as fear that once removed, Council will not replace with the community facilities that are proposed.

This will be low risk where existing facilities are closed and have not been accessed by the public for some time, contain asbestos material and are subjected to ongoing vandalism.

It is critical that Council communicates to the community that the funds received from the sale of the sites will be wholly directed towards the construction of a new multipurpose community facilities. Restricted Accounts should be established as part of this assurance.

To address this risk, it is recommended that:

- related Council resolutions include the commitment to providing new facilities to replace those removed, as per the proposed offsets identified in this Strategy; and
- the implementation of this Strategy be staged in a manner whereby new facilities are constructed prior to the removal of existing facilities that are still in use.

## **6. Conclusion**

The undertaking of this Strategy will assist Council in providing better planned, fit for purpose facilities for the benefit of the community which are currently faced with issues accessing these facilities and the possible services they can offer.

The process for consolidating public land requires Council and community support and this Strategy offers a transparent process for achieving a good community outcome.