

CHAPTER 5

FIT FOR THE FUTURE **Other options**



CHAPTER 1 - Scale and capacity

CHAPTER 2 - Financial criteria and measures

CHAPTER 3 - Social and community context

CHAPTER 4 - Community consultation

CHAPTER 5 - Other options

SUMMARY

This chapter addresses options for Fairfield City Council not otherwise covered in the previous chapters. This includes:

1. The alternate option put forward by the Independent Local Government Review Panel (ILGRP) of a Joint Organisation with Fairfield, Liverpool, Bankstown, Camden, Campbelltown and Wollondilly.

Whilst the State Government has made it clear that joint organisations of councils in the metropolitan area will not apply within the Fit for the Future (FFF) proposals, Council considers that advantages could be gained from a strategic alliance with its south western neighbouring councils as named by the ILGRP.

2. Potential boundary changes which could be beneficial to Fairfield.

Fairfield City Council in its submission to the ILGRP, commented on boundary adjustments, on its borders with Penrith City and Holroyd City Councils.

On 23 June 2015, Council resolved to propose a further boundary change on its southern boundary with Liverpool City.

3. Commentary regarding Liverpool City Council's position on Fit for the Future options.

Liverpool City Council's preference, if there is to be an amalgamation of its LGA, is to amalgamate with a council in the south west corridor. This is due to greater strategic alignment and population synergies.

Fairfield City Council supports Liverpool City's position in this regard, as it is desirable that common urban release areas are contained within a single LGA.

STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

Benefits of collaboration through strategic alliances include reducing duplication of services, cost savings, increased innovation, enhanced skills development and it opens the way to share ideas. Participating councils have the opportunity to achieve complex and important regional outcomes.

Forming strategic alliances based on common interests would be more beneficial than regional collaborations based solely on geographical area. Fairfield City Council supports strategic alliances on common priorities to provide beneficial outcomes and already participates in a number of such alliances. This includes WSROC, WestPool, United Independent Pools and a number of specific council to council arrangements as required.

These alliances need not have fixed membership and could be based around specific needs of participating councils, providing the ability for councils to opt in and out, according to relevance of the issue. The alliance could be strengthened even further by the inclusion of State and Federal Government agencies where relevant. For example:

- Fairfield, Liverpool, Bankstown, Camden, Campbelltown and Wollondilly could form a strategic alliance to consider significant transport planning and major infrastructure development (such as the Western Sydney Airport).
- Fairfield, Auburn, Holroyd and Bankstown could form a strategic alliance on multicultural issues.
- Liverpool, Camden and Campbelltown could form a strategic alliance on urban release issues.

Various State and Federal agencies could participate in these forums, such as Transport, Planning and Community Services.

The role and benefits of strategic alliances could include:

- Providing a strong voice for the community on complex and important regional outcomes, whilst ensuring the LGAs maintain a strong sense of local identity.
- Shared services and other sharing of resources to create efficiencies and save costs.
- A common approach to sub-regional land use and infrastructure planning.
- A single endorsed set of State and major local infrastructure priorities.
- A single point of contact for State and Federal agencies on sub-regional issues.
- Providing sub-regional procurement.

The establishment of a strategic alliance is the ILGRP's alternate option for Fairfield. If established in the way presented in this Chapter, it will achieve the desired benefits whilst maintaining local representation, continuing high levels of service at a local level and will save the significant costs and disruption associated with amalgamation.

During the FFF consultations with Liverpool City Council, both Mayors and General Managers have discussed the merits of a Strategic Alliance of councils in south west Sydney, which would include Fairfield, Liverpool, Bankstown, Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly. These other councils have been contacted by Council's City Manager, with a view to arrange a meeting, with all of the councils to discuss the possibility and merits of such an alliance, however to date no commitment has been given by them.

BOUNDARY CHANGES

Fairfield City Council considers there could be benefit in examining some of its existing boundaries, particularly on its western and northern boundaries with Penrith City and Holroyd City Councils and on its southern boundary with Liverpool City Council.

In its submission to the ILGRP in 2013, Council commented on boundary adjustments on its borders with Penrith and Holroyd City Councils.

The western boundary of Fairfield, could be moved further west to Mamre Road to incorporate the residential areas of Mt Vernon and further north to incorporate the industrial areas of Erskine Park, currently within the Penrith LGA. It is anecdotally reported that residents in this area relate more to Fairfield City to the east, than Penrith City to the west and it is an area that is reportedly difficult for Penrith City Council to service. The Erskine Park industrial area is adjacent to the Smithfield-Wetherill Park industrial area to the east, and these areas could benefit from both being within the same LGA.

The northern boundary of Fairfield City with Holroyd City Council, could also be moved further north to incorporate the portion of the Smithfield-Wetherill Park industrial area that currently resides in Holroyd.

These boundary changes would result in one of the largest industrial areas in the southern hemisphere being contained within a single LGA.

To be in a position to fully explore Fit for the Future options, Fairfield City Council wrote to Penrith City and Holroyd City Councils in December 2014 to seek their interest and/or agreement regarding boundary changes of this nature. Responses from these councils have not been positive and there is no such agreement from them. Notwithstanding the positions of Penrith and Holroyd City Councils, Fairfield City Council still considers such boundary changes to be desirable.

On 23 June 2015, in resolving to submit its FFF Improvement Proposal, Council resolved to include an additional proposed boundary change on its southern boundary with Liverpool City.

Council resolved 'inter alia' to:

That Council also include in its Fit for the Future Improvement Proposal a further boundary adjustment to adjust the boundary between Fairfield and Liverpool, so that it is at the southern end of the M7 Motorway with its intersection with Cowpasture Road to include that area within the Fairfield local government area, incorporating Cecil Hills and Elizabeth Hills.

Residents in these areas of Cecil Hills and Elizabeth Hills anecdotally relate to Fairfield City moreso than Liverpool City and use more of Fairfield's services. Travelling out of these suburbs invariably necessitates entering directly into the Fairfield LGA rather than the Liverpool LGA. Fairfield City Council considers such a change to be logical and beneficial to the residents involved.

Further consideration of these boundary changes could be given as part of future stages of Local Government reform.

LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL

From discussions between Fairfield City and Liverpool City Councils during the Fit for the Future process and from Liverpool Council's resolved position, it is known that its preference is not to amalgamate and to stand alone.

Liverpool City Council has stated that 'an amalgamation with Fairfield City Council would be unlikely to generate sufficient financial savings and community benefits due to the competing priorities of the two organisations.

This position is consistent with the position of Fairfield City Council in that there are definite competing priorities between Liverpool as a regional centre with significant urban release areas and Fairfield with an established urban area and significant and unique community and social needs.

Further, it is known that Liverpool City's preference, if there is to be an amalgamation of its LGA, is to amalgamate with a council in the south west corridor. This is due to greater strategic alignment and population synergies.

Fairfield City Council supports the contention that it is desirable that common urban release areas are contained within a single LGA.

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FAIRFIELD CITY COUNCIL IS FIT FOR THE FUTURE



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