

Strategic Land Use Planning — Part 2: Council's Strategic Work

Narration Script

Huon Valley Council | Candidate and Councillor Knowledge Series

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Slide 1 — Title — Strategic Land Use Planning — Part 2: Council's Strategic Work

Welcome back to Strategic Land Use Planning, part of the Hew-on Valley Council Candidate and Councillor Knowledge Series.

Part 1 covered the framework Council plans within, and who decides what. This is Part 2, and it covers the strategic work Council has adopted inside that framework.

A Land Use and Development Strategy, structure plans for Huonville and Cygnet, and a study of rural living densification. All adopted, and all Council's agreed position.

Slide 2 — Before You Begin

Part 1 set out the framework and the section 34 criteria. This part covers the four adopted documents Council has built to satisfy them.

The Land Use and Development Strategy, adopted in 2024 and running to 2039, is Council's principal strategic land use document. It sets the direction across the whole municipal area.

Structure plans add the detail. Twenty-year frameworks, one for Huonville's residential and commercial precinct and one for the Cygnet township.

And a study answers a requirement imposed from outside. The Rural Living Densification Study responds to a condition the Tasmanian Planning Commission imposed during the transition to the Tasmanian Planning Scheme.

All of them are adopted, and none of them is enacted. Every one is Council's adopted position and its evidence base, and none changes what is permitted on any piece of land. That distinction runs through the whole of Part 2.

Slide 3 — The Land Use and Development Strategy

The Land Use and Development Strategy is Council's principal strategic land use document, adopted in 2024 after a two-year process.

It replaced a strategy adopted in 2007 — seventeen years in which the Valley's demography, its housing needs and the entire State planning system all changed substantially.

It was built on evidence first and community second, in that order. A State of the Valley report in July 2022 gathered research on population, housing, infrastructure and employment. With that available, the community was consulted on its vision, and the Community Vision was received in May 2023. Consultation ran with surveys, five in-person workshops at Cygnet, Huonville, Franklin, Geeveston and Dover, a drop-in session at Mountain River, and direct submissions.

The Strategy has ten chapters: heritage, transport and access, service infrastructure, community infrastructure, environmental values and natural hazards, resource industries, tourism, commercial and industrial employment, communities, and housing and growth.

It is strategic rather than statutory. It deliberately uses language like consider and investigate, with actions confirmed and budgeted by Council annually. It guides amendments to the planning scheme; it is not one.

And it should not sit for seventeen years again. The Strategy recommends review and update every three to five years.

Slide 4 — The Settlement Hierarchy

Not every town in the Valley grows the same way, and the settlement hierarchy is what decides which grows how.

At the top sit Huonville and Ranelagh, the regional major district centre. The regional strategy identifies Huonville as a major regional centre providing goods, services and employment to the wider community, with a high-growth strategy through infill and expansion, positioned to accommodate the majority of anticipated growth.

Then the towns: Cygnet, Dover, Franklin, and Geeveston with Port Huon. The regional strategy gives Cygnet a moderate growth strategy. Franklin, Geeveston and Dover carry low-growth strategies delivered through consolidation.

Then the villages and small communities — Grove, Crabtree, Mountain River, Glen Huon, Judbury, Pelterata, Cradoc, Lymington, Verona Sands, Southport, Ida Bay and many more, each with its own character and constraints.

The hierarchy matters because it determines where infrastructure investment goes, where subdivision is supported, and where growth is resisted. And it is not Council's alone — it follows the regional strategy, which section 34 requires the scheme to be consistent with. A councillor who wants a village to grow like a town is arguing against the regional framework, not just against officers.

Slide 5 — Structure Plans

Where the Strategy says what should happen across the Valley, a structure plan says where and how within a particular place. They are detailed twenty-year frameworks for a defined area, translating strategic direction into land use, movement, infrastructure and design outcomes.

They are needed because the Strategy itself identifies more detailed local structure planning for key towns as a next step. A strategy alone is rarely enough evidence to satisfy the section 34 criteria; a structure plan supplies the detail.

They typically contain a vision and objectives, an implementation roadmap with timing and responsibilities, development controls, design standards, and coordinated infrastructure planning across water, sewer, stormwater, electricity and transport.

And here is the point councillors most need to hold. A structure plan is adopted as a strategic document. It changes nothing about what is permitted on any piece of land until the planning scheme itself is amended. A landowner reading one is reading Council's intention, not a new set of rules.

Slide 6 — Huonville

The Huonville Residential and Commercial Precinct Structure Plan is a twenty-year framework adopted in 2026.

It focuses on this precinct for two reasons. It responds to Huonville's role as the primary service and administrative centre for the Valley. And it was the most advanced planning area, ready for immediate implementation.

The masterplan vision features central park spaces, integrated stormwater management through green-blue corridors, and mixed-use development opportunities, with development controls and design standards to guide what actually gets built.

The short-term priorities are preparation and statutory adoption of two Specific Area Plans, one for the residential area and one for the commercial area, and rezoning of key sites including Future Urban zone to General Residential in the residential area and from Village Zone to Urban Mixed Use and Inner Residential in the commercial area. These SAPs are to allow for appropriately designed residential development in both areas.

And it is one large precinct, but not the whole town. A councillor asked about a site outside this residential and commercial precinct should say so rather than assume it is covered.

Slide 7 — Huonville Relimagined

Sitting over the top of that structure plan is a larger project. Huonville Relimagined is a major strategic planning project setting the long-term direction for the town's future across five key precincts.

It will produce a Huonville-wide master plan, multiple precinct plans, and supporting technical studies and business cases — identifying and prioritising the projects and pathways that will guide Huonville's future development. Council works with consultants to deliver it.

It is funded by the Commonwealth: four point six nine million dollars through the Australian Government's regional Precincts and Partnerships Program.

Five precincts are in the spotlight. The Activated Foreshore and Town Centre Precinct, exploring opportunities for Huonville's riverfront and town centre including flood resilience, transport connections, public spaces and future housing and civic uses. The Recreation and Education Precinct and Surrounds, understanding current and future recreation needs, identifying gaps in facilities, and improving connections and shared use between schools, sporting clubs and recreation facilities.

The Residential Development Precinct, building on the recently completed Structure Plan with a focus on its implementation, future housing options and better connections. The Hansen Orchards Area, exploring the future role and opportunities for this privately owned land as part of Huonville's long-term planning. And the Glen Road Precinct, investigating future business and employment opportunities and the access, services and infrastructure needed to support the area.

And note what stage this is. The first stage focuses on establishing the plan and identifying priority projects, rather than detailed design or construction. It lays the groundwork for future stages of delivery as further funding and approvals are secured.

That distinction is worth carrying into conversations with the community. Funding a master plan is not the same as funding what the master plan recommends, and a resident who hears four point six nine million dollars may assume otherwise.

Slide 8 — Cygnet

The Cygnet Township Structure Plan is a twenty-year framework, and the tension it addresses is one councillors will recognise.

Cygnet is experiencing ongoing growth pressure and strong housing demand, with increasing interest in well located residential land close to services. At the same time, growth must be managed to protect Cygnet's rural village character, heritage values, First Nations cultural heritage, natural values and community identity.

The Plan works through seven elements: Homes for People, Movement, Natural Values, Community Facilities and Streetscapes, Local Economy, Heritage and Character, and Servicing and Utilities.

It is grounded in the Strategy, which calls for detailed local structure planning for key towns, and in the regional strategy's moderate growth setting for Cygnet. It was prepared following extensive community and stakeholder engagement, with a consultation report among its appendices.

And note how Council adopted it. As a strategic planning document, with officers authorised to progress priority implementation actions — but subject to future statutory processes, budget considerations and Council decision making. Adoption is a direction of travel, not a commitment to fund every action in it.

Slide 9 — Rural Living

The Rural Living Densification Study answers a question the Tasmanian Planning Commission told Council to answer, and its history explains a great deal.

The transition from the interim scheme to the Tasmanian Planning Scheme changed the zoning of over eleven hundred properties, with around eight hundred and fifty landowners involved in Commission hearings. Some properties moved into the Rural Living Zone from zones that no longer existed.

Because lot sizes in that zone depend on whether land is classified A, B, C or D, some landowners sought a classification permitting further subdivision. In almost all cases the Commission approved a classification limiting subdivision, and required a comprehensive strategic study first, to assess the impact of reclassification on the broader municipal area.

This study is that work. It responds to Strategic Direction 10.6 of the Strategy and to a Council motion, establishing an evidence-based assessment matrix across five criteria themes: location, community and land use; topography and natural values; natural hazards and risks; landscape and cultural values; and infrastructure.

And note who does the work. The framework enables landowner groups within identified clusters to pursue reclassification through independently funded consultant processes, while strategic planning principles and community values are maintained. Council has provided the framework, not the funding — and any resulting amendment still has to satisfy section 34.

Slide 10 — What Comes Next

The strategic work is done. Giving it effect is the next term's task, and it is worth knowing what is coming.

Specific Area Plans will be developed to give the structure plans effect through the Local Provisions Schedule, following the statutory amendment process Part 1 described. That is the point at which the plans stop being intention and start being rules.

Rezoning will follow, including the sites identified in the Huonville plan Village Zone to Urban Mixed Use and Inner Residential zones.

Community-initiated amendments are contemplated too. The Rural Living framework enables landowner groups within identified clusters to pursue reclassification through independently funded consultant processes.

And there is more structure planning to come. Other precincts within the broader Huonville area, and the other towns identified in the Strategy, still require their own detailed structure planning.

Which is where councillors come in. Every one of those comes to Council before it goes to the Commission, and the community will ask about all of them. Being able to say accurately where a piece of work sits, adopted strategy, draft amendment, or with the Commission is most of what a councillor needs here.

Slide 11 — Five Things to Remember

Five things to take away from Part 2.

One. Evidence first, then community, then strategy. A State of the Valley report, then a Community Vision, then detailed forecasting, and only then the Strategy seventeen years after the last one.

Two. The settlement hierarchy decides who grows and how. Huonville and Ranelagh with high growth, Cygnet moderate, Franklin, Geeveston and Dover through consolidation following the regional strategy rather than Council's preference alone.

Three. Structure plans supply the evidence. A strategy alone is rarely enough to satisfy the section 34 criteria; the structure plan provides the detail an amendment needs.

Four. The Rural Living study was required, not volunteered. The Commission imposed it during the scheme transition, and the framework it produced hands the next step to landowner groups rather than to Council.

Five. Adoption is not rezoning. Every one of these documents states Council's intention and provides its evidence base. Nothing changes on the ground until the planning scheme itself is amended.