



**Chewton Urban Design Framework**  
**Draft Addendum Report**

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for the Sustainable Development Unit**



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## 1. Introduction

This addendum report has been prepared to support the implementation of the Chewton Urban Design Framework 2008 (UDF). The UDF was prepared to assist the Shire to manage and plan for the growth of Chewton in response to the recent installation of reticulated sewerage infrastructure and the expected changes to traffic movement arising from the completion of the Calder Freeway. While the UDF included a number of statutory planning recommendations, a review of them has indicated that a simplified planning approach could be used to achieve the intended outcomes. This report outlines the issues associated with using the Chewton UDF's actions and provides an alternative course of action for implementation.

## 2. Policy context

The following paragraphs provide a brief summary of a number of the key plans and documents that set the scene for planning the growth and development of the Mount Alexander Shire that are relevant to this addendum report.

### **MAP2020 COMMUNITY PLAN**

The MAP2020 Community Plan is the first comprehensive community plan for the Mount Alexander Shire and is the culmination of an extensive community engagement process that took place throughout 2007. The MAP2020 provides an overarching community vision for the Shire and includes elements that are relevant to Council's role in planning for the future. The most relevant component of the vision states that in 2020:

*“the Shire has built a strong reputation for its environmental commitments. It has achieved zero nett carbon emissions and created sustainable innovative solutions to climate change which have a high level of community ownership and support. The Shire is a leader in sustainable development nationally and internationally.”*

### **MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE COUNCIL PLAN 2009 – 2013**

The Council Plan 2009-2013 includes an objective relating to planning to meet current and future farming, business and environmental needs. One of the strategies to do this is to plan residential land use in order to enable a mix of housing types.

### **MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE URBAN LIVING STUDY 2004**

The Urban Living Study was initiated in 2002 in response to changes to population and housing trends, the expected completion and potential impact of the Calder Freeway, the installation of reticulated sewerage infrastructure in a number of townships, and the proposed Regional Fast Rail project.

Major aims of the Urban Living Study were to determine where new urban growth and development should be directed and to manage this growth having regard to the potential impact on heritage, landscape and townscape character, and protection of lifestyle attributes of the Shire's urban centres.

The most significant outcome of the Study is the adoption of the growth management model “Cluster Connect and Calder Corridor” (CCCC). The main components of the model are:

- Balanced development building on the Shire's existing settlement pattern with a regional focus on Castlemaine;
- Urban consolidation and expansion at Castlemaine;

- Urban containment and limited expansion at Maldon;
- Planned urban infill and expansion at Newstead as an alternative to Castlemaine and the Calder Corridor towns;
- Planned growth of Calder Corridor towns (Harcourt, Taradale and Elphinstone);
- Limited growth of smaller settlements; and
- Improving transport and access connections between Castlemaine and outlying towns.

The implementation of the CCCC growth model has been advanced through a number of strategic studies, such as the *Castlemaine Residential Strategy 2005*, the *Chewton UDF 2008*, and the *Harcourt: after the bypass study 2009*. All three studies are now at the implementation stage, where planning scheme amendments have been undertaken or are required to update the planning framework to facilitate the type of development envisaged by each of the studies.

### **MOUNT ALEXANDER PLANNING SCHEME**

The Mount Alexander Planning Scheme is the primary mechanism by which the strategic directions of the State Government and Council are delivered through the use and development of land within Victoria. The following clauses of the scheme relate to planning for growth and development, and while some of the Chewton specific clauses are intended to be amended to reflect the outcomes of the Chewton UDF, the key thrust of the clauses remain unchanged.

**Clause 14 – Settlement:** The objectives of this clause seek to ensure a sufficient supply of land is available for residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, institutional and other public uses, and to facilitate the orderly development of urban areas. The clause requires planning authorities to plan for and accommodate projected population growth over at least a 10-year period, taking account of opportunities for redevelopment and intensification of existing urban areas as well as the limits of land capability and natural hazards, environmental quality and the costs of providing infrastructure.

**Clause 16 – Housing:** The objectives of this clause relate to encouraging subdivisions in areas with access to physical and community infrastructure, increasing residential densities and housing choice, making better use of existing infrastructure and improving the energy efficiency of housing.

**Clause 21.02 – Key issues influencing the shire’s future land use planning and development:** This clause identifies population growth resulting from improved connectivity to Melbourne and Bendigo, an ageing population and the availability of suitable housing, the protection of the Shire’s cultural and natural heritage, and the provision of infrastructure as key issues of importance to the Shire’s future land use planning and development.

**Clause 21.03 – Municipal Vision and Framework Plan:** This clause sets out the land use planning and development vision for the Shire. It includes strategies such as consolidating urban growth to maximise infrastructure and reduce environmental impacts, increasing housing choice in sympathy with the environment for a demographically diverse community, and the development of safe and sustainable urban communities.

**Clause 21.04-1 – Management of Urban Growth** identifies a growth management model called “Cluster Connect and Calder Corridor” for the Shire. This model encourages consolidation of existing centres, particularly where services are

provided. The model also identifies that the management of urban growth requires the protection of built and cultural heritage, townscapes, the natural environment and lifestyle qualities.

**Clause 21.04-1** also identifies the need to undertake urban design frameworks to guide future growth within a number of identified towns including Chewton, and to protect Chewton’s historic urban form and maintain the existing streetscape character. This has now been completed with the adoption of the Chewton UDF.

**Clause 22.06 Chewton** is the local planning policy relating to Chewton. The policy includes a number of considerations that planning permit applicants must meet, and it is proposed to update this policy to reflect the outcomes of the UDF.

### **POLICY CONTEXT SUMMARY**

The policy context for Chewton remains largely unchanged from the time that the Chewton UDF was prepared and finalised. There remains a strong focus on the need to protect and promote Chewton’s historic urban form, however there has been a shift towards a greater recognition of the broader environmental and social impacts of development to ensure that we move towards creating more compact, accessible and resilient communities. This shift only has minor implications for achieving the vision and objectives of the Chewton UDF. It does however influence the way in which we approach the statutory implementation of the UDF’s actions.

## **3. Population and Household forecasts for Chewton**

The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) have recently released population forecasts for all municipalities within Victoria. This data suggests that the Mount Alexander Shire will grow by around 1.3% per annum through to the year 2026. This will bring the total population from around 18,293 in 2009 (ABS estimated resident population) to approximately 23,000 people in 2026.

While population forecasts have not been prepared for the Shire’s smaller areas, previous forecasts included in the *Urban Living Strategy 2004*, predicted that Chewton’s population would increase from around 370 people in 2001 (living in 155 dwellings) to approximately 450 people in 2021 (living in 205 dwellings). While this growth is relatively small in absolute numbers, it does represent growth of the town’s population by approximately 20%, and housing stock by around 25%.

A review of recent subdivision and dwelling construction activity for the Chewton area indicates that during the 2004 – 2009 period approximately five new lots have been created each year, and five new dwellings have been built each year. At this rate, the estimates included in the *Urban Living Strategy 2004* will be achieved significantly earlier than 2021. This is not a major issue in itself, as it is believed that the *Urban Living Strategy 2004* estimates were conservative and did not investigate in detail the amount of land available for potential development.

## 4. Chewton UDF Planning and Land Use

The Chewton UDF includes the following section on planning and land use:

### Context

- The recent introduction of reticulated sewerage allows for development to occur on fully serviced, smaller than traditional sized allotments.
- Chewton has a special heritage and landscape setting.
- Recent commercial development to the west end of Chewton has compromised the bushland separation of Chewton to Wesley Hill and Castlemaine.
- There are a significant number of home-based businesses in Chewton.
- Significant areas of Crown Land and private land are infested with gorse and blackberries.
- There are an increasing number of retirees moving to the area, as well as those seeking weekend retreats.

### Vision and themes

- The historic character, the landscape setting and village atmosphere is important to the community and must be preserved.
- Recognise the proximity to Castlemaine yet maintain the physical separation between the two.
- Consolidate residential development within the existing township.

### The broad objectives of the recommended actions are

- New development must be in scale and character of existing development in Chewton.
- Retain the green belt of bushland and reinstate lost bushland at the western edge of town.
- Investigate the potential release of some Crown land in Chewton for residential development in the longer term.
- Continue to provide areas of low-density residential development.
- Retain the rural character and meandering route of the highway.
- Encourage the establishment of a café, coffee shop and bakery on the main street.
- Seek funding and private initiatives to continue the control of gorse and blackberries and reinstate with indigenous vegetation.
- Promote home-based businesses in Chewton.

Using the above as a basis, a number of actions were developed and included in the Chewton UDF. A summary of the actions is provided below:

- Discourage large envelope / footprint buildings through Design and Development Overlay provisions and include the following guidelines as minimum parameters that require a planning permit:
  - Building height in excess of 5.5m
  - Building area greater than 50sqm
  - Volume of earthworks exceeding 100sqm cut / fill.
- Establish controls and provisions over new development along the Pyrenees Highway and immediate edges.
- Undertake a planning scheme amendment to introduce the new Chewton Town Structure Plan (Figure 15 of the document).
- Introduce design and siting guidelines to the planning scheme (refer to Figures 9, 10, and 11 of the UDF).

- Amend the planning scheme to reflect the provision of sewerage to Chewton.
- Give priority to residential and small business development within the Township Zone through development guidelines.
- Establish planning controls for the siting and design of commercial buildings which cover:
  - Minimum side, front and rear setbacks
  - Materials and colour palette
  - Facades and articulation of built form
  - Height and scale of buildings
  - Signage
  - Proportion of glazed surfaces to solid walls.
- In Clause 22.06 (Chewton Local Policy) update Structure Plan to reflect the UDF.
- Tighten planning and heritage controls along the highway so that new development meets design and siting guideline provisions.
- Amend Schedule 6 to the Environmental Significance Overlay to include design and siting considerations.
- Amend Clause 22.06 to include primary elements of design and siting guidelines.
- Retain relevant local policy provisions of Clause 22.06 until a full investigation of potential for residential development in the Faraday Road / Golden Point Road area has been completed. Consider rezoning to reflect current development.
- Sustainable building design principles and practices need to be reinforced in guidelines.

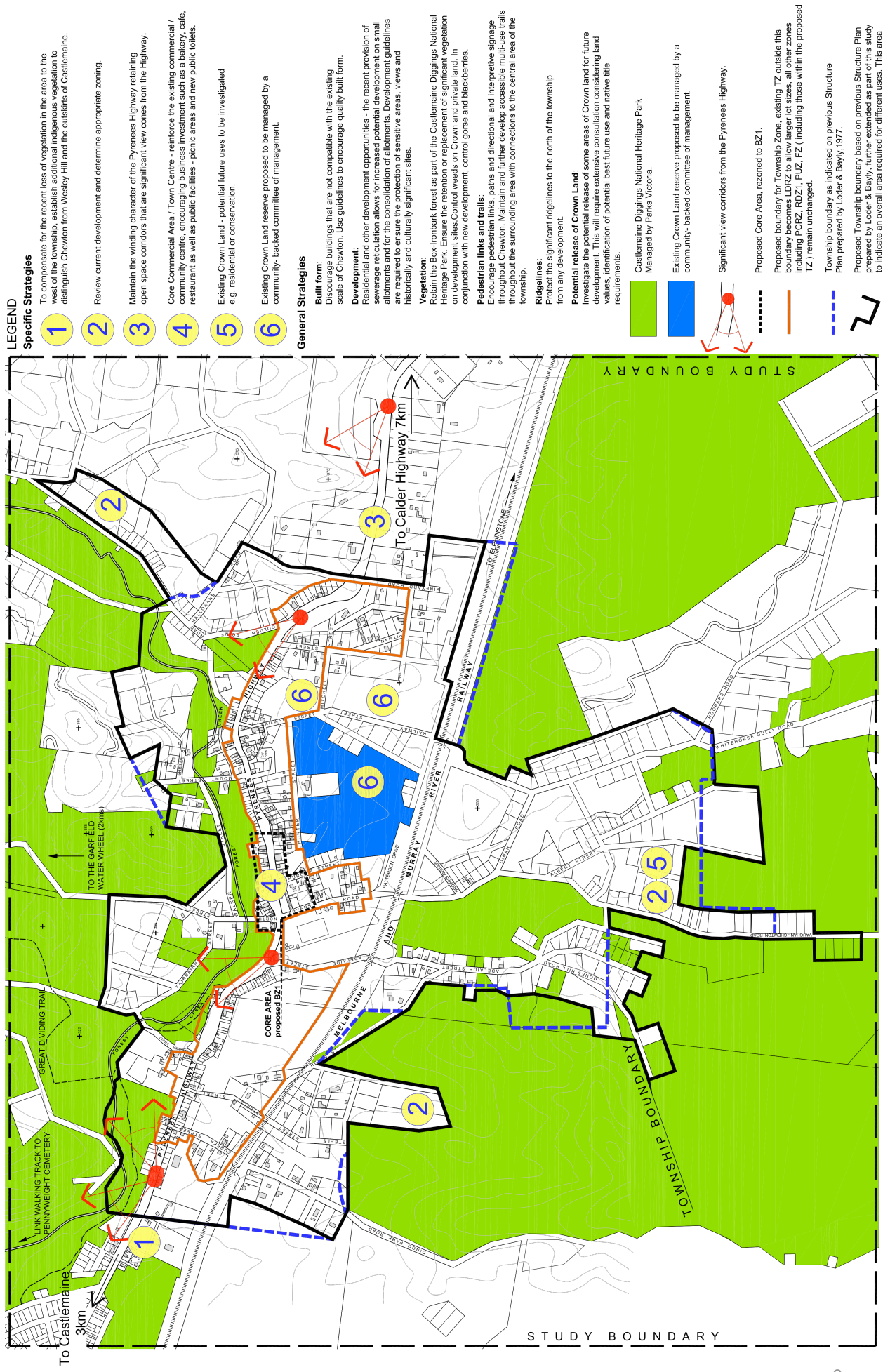
The *Chewton UDF* also includes a number of actions for rezoning land and applying overlays as identified on the Chewton Town Structure Plan (Figure 15 of the UDF). In summary, these include:

- Changing the zoning regime to Business 1 Zone in the core to consolidate commercial activity, surrounded by Township Zone along Pyrenees Highway, then Low Density Residential Zone in outer lying parts of the township.
- Applying a Design and Development Overlay to the entire township.

A copy of Figure 15 from the Chewton UDF is included on the following page.

The section following the figure investigates the proposed actions and identifies a number of issues with them. It then recommends a more simplified implementation schedule.





**LEGEND**

**Specific Strategies**

- 1** To compensate for the recent loss of vegetation in the area to the west of the township, establish additional indigenous vegetation to distinguish Chewton from Wesley Hill and the outskirts of Castlemaine.
- 2** Review current development and determine appropriate zoning.
- 3** Maintain the winding character of the Pyrenees Highway retaining open space corridors that are significant view cones from the Highway.
- 4** Core Commercial Area / Town Centre - reinforce the existing commercial / community centre, encouraging business investment such as a bakery, cafe, restaurant as well as public facilities - picnic areas and new public toilets.
- 5** Existing Crown Land - potential future uses to be investigated e.g. residential or conservation.
- 6** Existing Crown Land reserve proposed to be managed by a community-backed committee of management.

**General Strategies**

- Built form:**  
Discourage buildings that are not compatible with the existing scale of Chewton. Use guidelines to encourage quality built form.
- Development:**  
Residential and other development opportunities - the recent provision of sewerage reticulation allows increased potential development on small sites. Development guidelines are required to ensure the protection of sensitive areas, views and historically and culturally significant sites.
- Vegetation:**  
Retain the box-ironbark forest as part of the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park. Ensure the retention or replacement of significant vegetation on development sites. Control weeds on Crown and private land. In conjunction with new development, control gorse and blackberries.
- Pedestrian links and trails:**  
Encourage pedestrian links, paths and directional and interpretive signage throughout Chewton. Maintain and further develop accessible multi-use trails throughout the surrounding area with connections to the central area of the township.
- Ridgelines:**  
Protect the significant ridgelines to the north of the township from any development.
- Potential release of Crown Land:**  
Investigate the potential release of some areas of Crown land for future development. This will require extensive consultation considering land values, identification of potential best future use and native title requirements.

- Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park Managed by Parks Victoria.
- Existing Crown Land reserve proposed to be managed by a community-backed committee of management.
- Significant view corridors from the Pyrenees Highway.
- Proposed Core Area, rezoned to BZ1.
- Proposed boundary for Township Zone, existing TZ outside this boundary including U, PCZ, W, and other zones including PCRZ, RDZ1, PUZ, FZ (including those within the proposed TZ) remain unchanged.
- Township boundary as indicated on previous Structure Plan prepared by Loder & Bayly, 1977.

Figure 15.

**CHEWTON TOWN STRUCTURE PLAN**  
**CHEWTON URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK**  
**MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE COUNCIL**

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## 5. Implementation of the Chewton UDF's actions

The Chewton UDF planning related recommended actions could be summarised and combined into the following three action areas:

- Update the policy section of the Mount Alexander planning Scheme to reflect the completion of the Chewton UDF;
- Change the zoning regime to Business 1 Zone in the core commercial area, surrounded by Township Zone along Pyrenees Highway, then Low Density Residential Zone in outer lying parts of the township; and
- Prepare Design Guidelines and apply a Design and Development Overlay to the entire township to control the design and siting of all new development.

While the first action area relating to updating the policy section of the planning scheme is relatively straightforward and simple to implement, the second and third action areas raise a number of issues. The most significant is that the Chewton UDF does not provide adequate strategic justification to support an amendment to the planning scheme for the proposed zoning and overlay changes. This is a result of the focus of the study being on urban design matters, and not on land use planning. The result is that while the proposed zonings may appear to be logical, a detailed assessment has not been undertaken to clearly articulate what they would achieve above and beyond what the current controls allow. The following paragraphs explore this issue in a little more detail.

### Issues with the Business 1 Zone and Township Zone

The Chewton UDF recommends rezoning the town centre of Chewton to the Business 1 Zone to reinforce the existing commercial and community centre and to encourage business investment such as a bakery, café, restaurant and public facilities (picnic areas and toilets). While it is clear what the intent is, it is not clear how rezoning the area from a Township Zone to a Business 1 Zone will achieve this.

The Business 1 Zone is usually applied to city centre or CBD environments where its purpose is to encourage the intensive development of business centres for retailing and other complementary commercial, entertainment and community uses. While using the Business 1 Zone in the town centre of Chewton would certainly highlight the objective of encouraging commercial activity in this area, it is an area that contains a significant number of heritage buildings and is unlikely to see any significant change in built form in the future. If the purpose of the recommendation is primarily to encourage commercial uses in existing buildings, then it needs to be considered in light of the zoning recommendation to retain the Township Zone surrounding the town centre. The purpose of the Township Zone is to provide for residential development and a range of commercial, industrial and other uses in small towns. Given that the Township Zone allows for a permit to be issued for the same commercial uses that the Business 1 Zone does (although it is often a 'permit not required' use), it is difficult to envisage consolidation of the commercial core based on zoning. It is more likely that site availability will be the key driver of new commercial use and/or development.

A further consideration relating to the preferred zoning along the Pyrenees Highway is that of the existing pattern of development. Chewton has developed in an interesting way, with much of its development flanking the winding Pyrenees Highway. Often it is only a block or so deep. Dwellings make up the majority of development, however the occasional commercial premises can also be found scattered along the highway. Many buildings have been used for both residential and commercial purposes throughout their life, which may have contributed to the

high proportion of small-scale or home-based businesses that are prevalent in Chewton. While conventional planning approaches seek to avoid this type of strip development and often segregates land uses, in Chewton's case it contributes greatly to the character of the township. It is likely that it has also assisted in preserving the built form of Chewton as it has made the restoration of heritage buildings more viable than it may otherwise have been.

In relation to the proposed change from the Township Zone to the Business 1 Zone and Township Zone, it is considered that retaining the current zoning with a policy statement to consolidate commercial and public facilities in the core is more inline with the historic development of the town, and would still achieve the outcome that is promoted within the *Chewton UDF*.

### **Issues with the Low Density Residential Zone**

The *Chewton UDF* also recommends rezoning outer lying parts of the township from the Township Zone to the Low Density Residential Zone. This recommendation appears to have been drafted to reflect the perceived density of development that currently exists (pre-sewerage infrastructure) and to preserve the semi rural feeling of some of these areas. There is very little in the UDF relating to this recommendation, and on closer examination it appears that many of these areas are not consistent with the purpose of the Low Density Residential Zone, which is to provide for low-density residential development on lots, which in the absence of reticulated sewerage, can treat and retain all wastewater on site.

For areas particularly to the south of the railway line, we find that there are often clusters of houses on relatively small lots surrounded by large areas of Crown or development constrained land. If we looked at these clusters in isolation, they are of similar densities to standard urban development rather than low-density. The thing that makes them feel low-density are the large tracts of vacant land that provide them with a semi-rural outlook.

Given that much of the area is now connected to reticulated sewerage, it would be difficult to argue that this rezoning would make appropriate use of relatively expensive community infrastructure. It also raises the issue of applying a more restrictive control (in terms of both land use and lot size) to what currently exists to achieve a character outcome that has not been fully investigated or clearly articulated. There are a range of policies and directions that suggest that we should be making the most of infrastructure wherever possible and move towards increasing the density of residential areas to make them more sustainable and healthy environments. The current controls allow this to happen over time, and there is a low risk that an unacceptable development would occur as planning permits are still required in the Township Zone for any uses that may have amenity impacts. Furthermore, as the Crown land is unlikely to ever be developed, the cluster-housing model can accommodate housing growth while still retaining the spaciousness feeling that is of value to the residents.

Once again, it is considered that no change to the zoning is required to achieve the same outcomes that the UDF envisaged.

### **Issues with the Design and Development Overlay**

The final action area relates to the recommendations for preparing design guidelines and applying the Design and Development Overlay to the township. While it is understood that these actions have been identified as a way to ensure new development is sympathetic to existing development, the extent of the controls needs to be limited to those that are of critical importance to achieving the core objectives.

In summary, the actions recommended including the following elements in the design guidelines:

- Building height, scale and bulk;
- Building siting, including front, side and rear set backs;
- Building materials and colour palette;
- Façade articulation and the proportion of glazed surfaces to solid walls; and
- Signage.

While it is relatively easy to justify design guidelines that cover building height, scale and bulk, it becomes less easy when looking at including all three set back requirements, materials and colours, and articulation and signage.

The *Chewton UDF* includes a number of contradictory statements in relation to building siting and setbacks. On the one hand it states that part of Chewton's character is derived from the randomness of the building set backs, forms and textures, and on the other it seeks to avoid the randomness by recommending strict set back and building material controls. Having reviewed the *Chewton UDF* and the Chewton area, it is clear that there is a need to provide design guidance for new infill development in areas of significance, which is believed to be limited to areas flanking the Pyrenees Highway. It would be extremely difficult to argue that it should cover the entire township, and it is also unlikely that it would be supported by DPCD without significant justification, as it is also inconsistent with the State governments direction on streamlining the planning system.

In respect to the extent of the design guidance, it is recommended that it be limited to the area flanking the Pyrenees Highway, and that it be limited to those issues that are of critical importance such as building height, scale, bulk and some set backs. It is recommended that this occur through the application of a Design and Development Overlay (as suggested in the UDF) and that a simple Design Guidelines brochure be prepared to illustrate the key objectives for use by landowners and building designers.

## **6. Focus of implementation**

Having reviewed the *Chewton UDF* and its planning recommendations, it is proposed that a simplified approach be taken to the implementation of the documents key planning related objective by focussing on protecting and promoting Chewton's character by ensuring good quality infill development along the Pyrenees Highway. This can be achieved by including policy statements in the relevant sections of the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme and through the use of design guidelines and the application of the Design and Development Overlay adjacent to the Pyrenees Highway. Over time this is likely to contribute to the development of heritage-based tourism and facilitate the development of diverse small-scale commercial activities within the township. This approach will also facilitate incremental residential growth in areas connected to sewerage infrastructure, which is needed to not only support the viability of commercial and community facilities in the township, but to also contribute to meeting the demand for houses within the broader Castlemaine area.

## 7. Recommendations

It is recommended that a simplified approach be taken to the implementation of the *Chewton UDF's* actions as discussed above, the details being:

1. That a planning scheme amendment be undertaken to update the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme by:
  - Updating clause 21.02, under Cultural and Natural Heritage, to include the following sentence “The design of new development located in areas of heritage or environmental significance should respect the particular characteristics of the sensitive setting”;
  - Updating clause 21.04-1, under Further Strategic Work, to delete reference to the need to prepare an urban design framework for Chewton;
  - Updating clause 21.05 to include the Chewton Urban Design Framework 2008 as a Reference Document;
  - Updating clause 22.06, under Policy Basis, to include the latest population estimates and to recognise that sewerage infrastructure is now available;
  - Updating clause 22.06, under Policy, to:
    - Recognise that sewerage infrastructure is now available;
    - To make it clear that the Faraday Road / Golden Point area requires further detailed investigation before it should be considered for residential development, and that consolidation of residential development within the existing, serviced areas of the township is the primary focus;
    - To include reference to supporting the establishment of commercial activities in the core area of Chewton between Fryers Road and Angus Street on the Pyrenees Highway; and
    - To include reference to specific design considerations for new development in Chewton included in a Schedule to the Design and Development Overlay.  
*(note: the update to clause 22.06 needs to be considered in light of the recommendations of the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme Review project)*
  - Including a new Schedule to the Design and Development Overlay to land within the Chewton Township that fronts the Pyrenees Highway, that provides design guidance for new infill development in respect to building height, scale, bulk and siting (including set backs).
2. That a Design Guidelines brochure be prepared to illustrate the design requirements included in the Design and Development Overlay.