

PENRITH



## WEST DISTRICT PLAN

SUBMISSION - MARCH 2017

**PENRITH**  
CITY COUNCIL



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## Council's priorities

### New and diverse jobs

With two in three workers leaving our City each day, this loss of talent and impact on productivity as well the financial, health and social implications of long commutes, creating more local jobs is a high priority for Council and our community. Council has a bold plan to increase local jobs by 55,000 by 2031 which will require an all of government response and commitment from the private sector.

### Transformative infrastructure that addresses Penrith's needs now and into the future, including critical north-south connections

Significant growth has already occurred and reserving the corridor for North-South rail now, makes sense, in terms of cost and as a driver of development and employment. Cross regional road congestion is also a major source of frustration and lost productivity for Penrith and the West District. Resolving current barriers to growth, such as flooding and evacuation, could be eliminated with infrastructure investment to unlock growth opportunities within the West District.

### A range of housing options that are innovative and sustainable

We need diverse housing choices, well serviced by infrastructure and amenities to maximise liveability and enhance our sense of community.

### Supporting Greater Penrith as the centre of the North-South and East-West economic corridor

Penrith is the axis where the established east-west economic corridor intersects with the fast-growing Western Sydney economy between Macarthur and the North West growth centre. Penrith has an important role to play in servicing and supporting the new Western City and will continue to underpin the success of this emerging place.

### Create the Western City that boosts the Western Sydney economy

Over the next 20 years Western Sydney will be home to two out of every three Sydneysiders. To maximise liveability and productivity, we need to create a City of opportunity - where residents are connected to local jobs, goods and services all within 30 minutes with new and diverse jobs and industries centred around the airport and our existing economic sectors of health, education, tourism and manufacturing.

### Balance Penrith's growth whilst protecting and enhancing our natural environment

We value our natural, rural and urban environments. From the Nepean River to the historical rural landscapes and the rising backdrop of the Blue Mountains, our growth must respect and celebrate our unique setting.

## Overview

### Consultation

The GSC should be commended for the extensive consultation processes undertaken to date, to inform the preparation of the draft West District Plan. The establishment of Technical Working Groups, involving both Council and State Agency representatives, was a positive exercise that resulted in genuine collaboration between State and Local Governments.

Council looks forward to continuing a positive working relationship with the GSC during the preparation of the final West District Plan. We consider this submission one of a number of opportunities to provide feedback on the draft West District Plan, and welcome the opportunity to participate further.

### Implementation

The success of the draft West District Plan relies on its ability to be implemented through the actions and priorities. The GSC's approach to identify outcomes, lead agencies and partners for each action clearly outlines the responsibilities for Local and State Government. It is noted that the GSC is the lead agency for the majority of the actions, with Council listed as either a lead agency or partner in 22 of the actions. This places a significant responsibility on the GSC to deliver and implement the West District Plan. For the GSC to be successful, they must have the authority to facilitate the relevant partners, including State Agencies, to implement the actions. With 50 actions identified within the draft West District Plan, it is important that the West District Plan is supported by a stronger implementation plan, which includes timeframes and clear, measurable actions to ensure their implementation.

### Priorities and Actions

It is understood two of the ways the West District Plan will be implemented is through the application of 'priorities' to Planning Proposals and Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) and the actions, and Council supports this approach. The priorities outline the matters to be addressed in local planning strategies and LEPs, providing a clear link between the District Plan and local planning frameworks.

To ensure the priorities and actions are measurable, the terminology used within the actions and priorities should be stronger. For example, some priorities request Councils 'consider' a number of matters, and some actions seek to 'encourage' particular activities. It is recommended stronger terms such as 'provide', 'resolve', 'deliver' and 'implement' are used, as these terms provide greater certainty and indicate a more specific and measurable outcome.

There are 32 priorities within the draft West District Plan which will need to be addressed as part of a Planning Proposal in demonstrating consistency with the relevant District Plan. In some instances, this will require proponents to undertake a large volume of work that is likely to add to the cost and time of preparing a Planning Proposal. To ensure the West District

Plan captures the most significant matters for assessment of Planning Proposals, the following recommendations are proposed:

- The number of priorities be reduced to only those that can be delivered through the Planning Proposal process;
- Duplication with existing assessment planning frameworks, such as State Environmental Planning Policies and Section 117 directions, be removed;
- Some priorities be deleted and considered as part of the review of *A Plan for Growing Sydney*; and
- Priorities should only apply where major changes are proposed through a Planning Proposal

More detailed feedback on each action and priority is provided in Attachment 2.

## Key issues

### NEW AND DIVERSE JOBS

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*With two in three workers leaving our City each day, this loss of talent and impact on productivity as well the financial, health and social implications of long commutes, creating more local jobs is a high priority for Council and our community. Council has a bold plan to increase local jobs by 55,000 by 2031 which will require an all of government response and commitment from the private sector.*

#### Job targets

The vision for the Western City as outlined within *Towards a Greater Sydney 2056*, with the proposed Western Sydney Airport as a catalyst for economic growth, will be a game changer for Western Sydney and in particular, Penrith Local Government Area (LGA). Penrith's location, land, infrastructure, increasing diversity and strong leadership make the City unique and are opportunities to trigger economic development. With nearly 65% of Penrith's workers forced to travel outside the area for work everyday, it's vitally important that the West District Plan includes a strategy, supported by bold jobs targets and actions, to deliver new and diverse jobs for the West District.

The proposed jobs target of up to an additional 11,600 jobs for Greater Penrith and additional 3,200 jobs for St Marys falls short of Council's expectations. The Penrith Economic Development Strategy (EDS) was adopted by Council in November 2016 with a goal to achieve an additional 55,000 new jobs by 2031 within the Penrith LGA. For the Penrith Health and Education Precinct (PHEP) alone, the EDS identifies potential for up to a further 22,000 jobs within this precinct. The overall jobs target within the EDS is bold but can be realised through focused action and partnering with industry, business, governments and the community.

**Council would welcome the opportunity to further discuss the proposed jobs targets with the GSC, and to aim for a jobs target that more accurately reflects the opportunities within the West District and Penrith's role within the Western City.**

#### Western Sydney Priority Growth Area

The Western Sydney Priority Growth Area (WSPGA) covers an area of approximately 16,000 hectares, of which 4,200 hectares is located within the Penrith LGA. It is not just Sydney's largest future employment land area, but a unique opportunity to become a new global economic gateway for Western Sydney, attracting economic activity, new industries, commercial development and jobs around the Western Sydney Airport. The WSPGA can be accelerated and significantly more attractive to business, if serviced by a north-south rail link, connecting the Western Sydney Airport, the Sydney Science Park and the Western line in Penrith City.

Despite the significance of these lands to not only the District, but the Western City and Greater Sydney, the draft West District Plan is limited on detail of the vision for the WSPGA. Council acknowledges that the Department of Planning and Environment (DP&E) are currently preparing a Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy, to guide future land use within this area. It is important the West District Plan identifies the key elements and aspirations for the WSPGA, not only to guide the future use of the area, but also to prevent any incompatible development in the interim while planning is finalised.

**It is proposed that the final West District Plan include the overarching vision for the WSPGA, supported by a bold jobs target that reflects the opportunities of the area and reservation of a transport corridor. There is an emerging North-South economic corridor but it requires strong intervention to ensure it has high density jobs of the future.**

### Job typologies

The strong focus on tourism within the draft West District Plan recognises the contribution and growth opportunities for the West District to continue to grow more jobs in this sector. Council also supports the acknowledgement of Penrith as a major tourism, cultural, recreational and entertainment hub and the potential to explore this precinct as part of the Collaboration Area. There is a complementary relationship between the tourism sectors of each LGA within the West District, and this should be reflected and supported more strongly (through actions) within the final West District Plan to enhance the District's reputation both locally and internationally.

However, this focus on tourism as an industry underplays the growth in jobs for the West District possible through focusing efforts into the expansion of the PHEP and the Penrith City Centre, although Council also acknowledges the diversification of jobs required to deliver more opportunities for all residents closer to home. Penrith has a growing arts and culture community (this is prevalent in the West District more broadly), land availability for advanced logistics and manufacturing, and emerging health and bio-science opportunities since the establishment of the Sydney Science Park within the WSPGA. Building on these opportunities by targeted strategies and the support of relevant State Agencies including the Department of Industry, should be a major focus of the final West District Plan to deliver new and diverse jobs for Western Sydney.

**Critical to the delivery of new and diverse jobs is the efficient use of land, including higher jobs densities, skills programs and strategies supported by State Agencies that provide opportunities for local residents, and actions to enhance emerging industry sectors.**

## TRANSFORMATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT ADDRESSES PENRITH'S NEEDS NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE INCLUDING CRITICAL NORTH-SOUTH CONNECTIONS

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*Significant growth has already occurred and reserving the corridor for North-South rail now, makes sense, in terms of cost and as a driver of development and employment. Cross regional road congestion is also a major source of frustration and lost productivity for Penrith and the West District. Resolving current barriers to growth, such as flooding and evacuation, could be eliminated with infrastructure investment to unlock growth opportunities within the West District.*

Council firmly believes new infrastructure connections are critical to underpinning the long-term strategic planning for our region. The draft West District Plan does not include new infrastructure, which is essential to support the current population and appropriately cater for growth. The draft West District Plan refers only to existing infrastructure commitments and current projects. For Western Sydney, the proposed 30-minute city concept is not anywhere near a reality, largely due to poor and infrequent public transport connections.

**Transformative infrastructure is fundamental in shaping the West District, and will deliver benefits beyond LGA and District boundaries.**

### North-South Rail (and Outer Sydney Orbital)

There is one single piece of infrastructure that offers opportunity for a fundamentally better region, north to south across outer Western Sydney than any other. A passenger rail line from Marsden Park to Campbelltown. Rail changes everything for the region. It is the structuring element around which a whole new north to south economic corridor thick with jobs of the future, could be created. At a time when the corridor could, under current planning templates be filled with low employment warehouses or low density housing, it offers a much needed alternative - a series of mid-rise new town centres (with jobs and services) around new rail stations. Overlaying STEAM (science, technology, education, arts and mathematics) as a theme of employment and development along the rail corridor would future proof the new and existing population with skills and jobs for the future. Rail would give workers and residents access to the jobs and services that are currently contained in the strategic centres across the two districts.

The West and the South West District Plans should acknowledge the unique value of a north to south passenger rail line (and the Outer Sydney Orbital) as a structuring piece of infrastructure for the principles and themes that the draft West District Plan promotes. It should make reservation of the rail corridor and the commencement of planning for the very different employment, social and environmental ecosystems that such rail can catalyse the highest priority.

It is noted that the draft West District Plan identifies that Transport for NSW are working to preserve corridors including the South West Rail Link extension and that the Western Sydney Rail Needs Scoping Study will inform the final West District Plan. Along with the



development of the Future Transport Strategy and the review of *A Plan for Growing Sydney*. Council seeks a commitment that these crucial connections are embedded within these planning and transport strategies to provide certainty on their location and delivery.

**Preserving the north-south rail and Outer Sydney Orbital corridors must be identified as an action and a priority within the final West District Plan.**

## Flooding and evacuation

Greater Penrith must be unencumbered in its ability to facilitate growth, particularly due to its role as the growth centre of the West District and as a Strategic Centre within the Western City. We are committed to working with the State Government to ensure that we can continue to facilitate development within our City Centre to create a thriving region of Western Sydney. Addressing flood risk issues in the Hawkesbury Nepean Valley is a crucial step towards maximising Penrith's potential.

The West District Plan needs to ensure that existing housing capacity within the Penrith LEP 2010 is "ringfenced" to allow Development Applications to be advanced readily without further flood studies or concurrency processes.

Council supports the attention to the Hawkesbury Nepean Flood Taskforce and the need to address flood risk issues for the West District, however Council's needs to be centrally involved in the Taskforce so that the Taskforce understands the challenges Council faces in regard to this issue.

**Implementation of the outcomes of the Hawkesbury Nepean Flood Risk Management Strategy must be accelerated to ensure that overall flood risk is reduced and the growth expectations of Penrith, as outlined within the Draft Plan, can be achieved.**

## HOUSING OPTIONS THAT ARE INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE

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*We need diverse housing choices, well serviced by infrastructure and amenities to maximise liveability and enhance our sense of community.*

### Housing Delivery

The West District has a diverse range of housing in line with the role and character each LGA plays within the West District. Blue Mountains LGA generally provides village and executive housing, Hawkesbury LGA generally provides a range of rural living and lifestyle choices, with Penrith LGA generally providing a broader range of housing options but more significantly, housing at higher densities. The constraints and opportunities in regard to housing delivery within each LGA are also complementary. While Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains are constrained, Penrith has the capacity to provide for growth.

**It is recommended the role of each LGA in the delivery of housing typologies is more strongly reflected in the draft West District Plan. This will provide greater clarity and**

**ensure a diverse supply of housing remains a key attribute of the West District. The responsibility of Council's to prepare local housing strategies is considered appropriate and is strongly supported. This can be achieved through a District Housing Strategy that provides a framework for the preparation of local housing strategies.**

## Housing targets

The Penrith Local Environmental Plan 2010 provides enough existing capacity for Penrith to achieve the 5-year housing targets outlined within the draft West District Plan. The identification of long term housing targets presents a challenge, particularly due to the uncertainty regarding future transport connections, as detailed in this submission, and the impact of flood risk from the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley. Based on the DP&E's population projections, it is estimated Penrith will need to provide for over 70% of the long-term housing target identified for the West District. This equates to approximately 30,000 new dwellings over the next 20 years.

**Council reiterates that north-south rail can transform the area and create new and higher density centres. It is recommended the GSC consider long term housing targets in the context of prioritised flood and transport infrastructure.**

## Innovation

The draft West District Plan has a focus on the need for design-led planning, including the facilitation of more walking and cycling connections and for safe and healthy built environments. Council already applies these principles within our planning policies, however implementation is often difficult due to two main challenges – the ability for Councils to enforce them within the NSW planning framework, and limitations to the funding of local infrastructure.

The NSW Government's focus on expanding code-based development and the weakening of Development Control Plans to 'guidelines', means that Councils are generally unable to enforce and prioritise high quality urban design. Opportunities to enforce such principles are even more difficult through the Planning Proposal process.

The limitations of Developer Contributions, from a Council perspective, are well known. Whilst the initiative to encourage more walking and cycling routes and open space is welcomed, current infrastructure backlogs - especially for LGA's with expansive areas and limited populations, such as those in the West District - only exacerbates the barriers to delivering adequate infrastructure for growing communities.

**Whilst the delivery of better local infrastructure and design-led planning is supported, the GSC will need to pursue alternative and innovative mechanisms to ensure they can be delivered and implemented through the NSW planning framework.**

The focus on housing diversity is also welcomed. Housing in centres is strongly supported, because of the multiple economic, social and environmental outcomes this offers over suburban greenfield housing. There needs to be a bold vision for the future of cities and the

design of centres and housing. It is noted that the draft West District Plan aims to “Plan for a 21<sup>st</sup> century aerotropolis with 21<sup>st</sup> century amenity”. The GSC should reconsider the way that housing has traditionally been supplied in the past and provide further direction on what a 21<sup>st</sup> century city looks like. It is important that visual amenity is considered as fundamental to amenity, particularly as the West District is located amongst the strongly valued rural and environmental landscape. The efficient use of land should also be at the forefront as part of the development of any guidelines or principles, to further encourage the protection of land with high-quality amenity and connectivity.

**With an expectation that Western Sydney will continue to provide greenfield housing to meet housing demand, the GSC should seek to embed innovation, connectivity and sustainability into the development of design guidelines for future centres and housing.**

## Affordable Housing Targets

Council acknowledges that affordable housing is one of the most important issues for current and future generations and that strong leadership, particularly by Federal and State Government, is required to make an impact. The GSC are to be applauded for proposing a statutory mechanism that will lead to the delivery of affordable housing more broadly across Greater Sydney and recognising the role that State and Local Governments can play in achieving this outcome.

The proposed affordable housing targets will only apply to the West District, and most likely to Penrith, through the rezoning of greenfield land. Support should also be provided for Council's that do not have any urban renewal areas or greenfield land, to ensure that affordable housing is provided more broadly across Greater Sydney, and that these opportunities are available within each District and LGA.

Council recently adopted the Penrith Public Benefit Policy which seeks to provide development incentives, in return for a Public Benefit (which includes affordable housing). The GSC should support existing schemes that seek to provide more affordable housing such as the Penrith Public Benefit Policy, as well as a range of policy levers - including affordable housing for purchase - to broaden the availability of affordable housing.

The Penrith Public Benefit Policy was developed on the principle that the contribution is equitable and feasible, therefore Council understands there is a need to ensure the viability of development is not significantly impacted from any additional contributions. It is important that the GSC provide clear guidelines regarding the feasibility testing process to ensure transparency. The target of 5-10% of new floorspace above the existing permitted floorspace seems minimal, however Council welcomes the opportunity to work with the GSC as further detail is provided on the practical application of this initiative.

**The GSC are encouraged to move forward with this initiative and achieve an outcome that balances affordable housing need with development feasibility.**

## SUPPORTING GREATER PENRITH AS THE CENTRE OF THE NORTH-SOUTH AND EAST-WEST ECONOMIC GROWTH CORRIDOR

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*Penrith is the axis where the established east-west economic corridor intersects with the fast-growing Western Sydney economy between Macarthur and the North West growth centre. Penrith has an important role to play in servicing and supporting the new Western City and will continue to underpin the success of this emerging place.*

### Greater Penrith

Penrith is at the centre of the emerging north-south corridor (from Marsden Park to Campbelltown), and the existing east-west corridor (along the Main Western Line and Great Western Highway from Parramatta to the Central Tablelands), therefore it is appropriate that Penrith is recognised as Sydney's Western Gateway within the draft West District Plan. The proposal to combine Penrith's two largest jobs precincts – the Penrith City Centre and the Penrith Health and Education Precinct (PHEP) – into 'Greater Penrith' is a welcome acknowledgement of Penrith's role within the proposed Western City.

The draft West District Plan identifies a tourism gateway corridor including Penrith Lakes, Penrith Stadium, the Nepean River and the Panthers entertainment precinct. It is recommended that these precincts are identified as priority precincts in the Greater Penrith Collaboration Area. This will ensure the planning of Penrith and the recognition of its opportunities is considered in a more integrated manner.

### Collaboration Area

Council strongly supports the recognition of Penrith's economic growth opportunities through its nomination as a Collaboration Area, and looks forward to working with the GSC and other State Agencies to deliver more local jobs, investigate the opportunities for Government-owned sites and strengthen our role as the centre of the emerging north-south and existing east-west economic growth corridor.

The draft West District Plan identifies that the collaboration will focus on an integrated land use and transport vision, a landscape vision to improve public spaces and gateway roads, an infrastructure plan, urban design principles and ecologically sustainable development outcomes, for Penrith City Centre and the PHEP. These initiatives are supported.

Council has identified a number of 'Priority Precincts' that would be well supported by the Collaboration Area framework. These precincts include:

- The Penrith Health and Education Precinct;
- The City Government precinct (large Government-owned land holdings within the Penrith City Centre); and
- The River/Tourism precinct.



**Council welcomes the opportunity to develop the preferred outcomes of the Greater Penrith Collaboration Area with the GSC and relevant State Agencies, particularly in regard to the Priority Precincts.**

## CREATE THE WESTERN CITY THAT BOOSTS THE WESTERN SYDNEY ECONOMY

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*Over the next 20 years Western Sydney will be home to two out of every three Sydneysiders. To maximise liveability and productivity, we need to create a City of opportunity - where residents are connected to local jobs, goods and services all within 30 minutes with new and diverse jobs and industries centred around the airport and our existing economic sectors of health, education, tourism and manufacturing.*

### Towards our Greater Sydney 2056

The proposed metropolis of three cities is a welcome initiative that seeks to rectify the current imbalances in regard to economic growth opportunities and infrastructure investment to the benefit of Western Sydney. Council also recognises the transformative change that the Western Sydney Airport can bring. The success of the GSC's plans for a metropolis of three cities largely depends on the delivery of key infrastructure to reverse past patterns of low density housing, poor transportation and low effective jobs density.

**An essential first step in boosting the Western Sydney economy is to ensure a rail line is in operation from day one of the Western Sydney Airport's opening.**

### The Western City

Penrith's vision is to become the 'New West' and Sydney's next growth city. Penrith's location, where Sydney's north-south growth arc, Australia's most significant future economic corridor, intersects the established east-west corridor. Penrith Progression established a community-endorsed vision for our City. This blueprint is being led by Council and seeks to create a vibrant city that provides modern living and new jobs, so our residents can work close to home. Council has been advocating for the recognition of Penrith as Sydney's next growth city – although *Towards our Greater Sydney 2056* doesn't explicitly align with this vision, the proposed three metropolis concept enhances our vision and Council will continue to pursue opportunities to deliver a smart city.

The draft West District Plan (and draft South West District Plan) should also recognise its potential as a vital tool that could inform and influence the City Deal. It should essentially 'pitch' the priorities and projects needed to create the Western City, by identifying the necessary infrastructure, governance arrangements and policy required to create the Western City.

Council has received feedback that the proposed Western City concept, and Penrith's role in the Western City, is unclear. It is recommended that further clarification regarding the roles of the four Strategic Centres within the Western City be included within the final West District

Plan. This could include a more detailed diagrammatic representation of the Western City's Strategic Centres and their relationship to each other and the proposed Western Sydney Airport aerotropolis.

## Integration with the South West District Plan

The West and South West District's share the same opportunities and challenges, particularly in regard to the WSPGA and the future Western Sydney Airport aerotropolis. As Penrith LGA and Liverpool LGA are located in different Districts, the GSC needs to ensure there is an integrated approach to delivering these key centres. This could involve alternative planning frameworks. This is particularly important for the development of the Western Sydney Airport aerotropolis and the preservation of north-south transport corridors.

**The West and South West District Plans should seamlessly integrate, and a new planning and governance approach (with Local Government centrally involved) to guide the development of the future Western City. Council would welcome the opportunity to explore alternative governance frameworks, including potential boundary adjustments, for the WSPGA with the GSC.**

## BALANCE PENRITH'S GROWTH WHILST PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

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*We value our natural, rural and urban environments. From the Nepean River to the historical rural landscapes and the rising backdrop of the Blue Mountains, our growth must respect and celebrate our unique setting.*

### Blue and Green Grid

A key feature of the West District is the amenity and quality of our landscape therefore the Blue and Green Grid is particularly relevant to the West District. The draft West District Plan provides clear guidance to Councils on the mechanisms to support the preservation of these corridors. The GSC should be commended for acknowledging and supporting the values of the Blue and Green Grid within the draft West District Plan.

A challenge lies with the implementation of the Blue and Green Grid, particularly with Councils identified as being generally responsible for its delivery.

**The GSC and DP&E need to continue to support Council's through the Planning Proposal and Development Assessment process to ensure environmental and conservation lands are retained or enhanced.**

There also needs to be a fine balance between increasing access to these spaces, whilst ensuring the protection of valued biodiversity habitats. Increased housing densities on new transport corridors will allow for housing targets to be reached without impacting as heavily on greenfield sites.

## The Metropolitan Rural Area

Council considers the Metropolitan Rural Area is important in terms of defining not only the West District, but all of Greater Sydney. The draft West District Plan outlines the range of environmental, social and economic values of the Metropolitan Rural Area and the role it plays in supporting various land uses and activities.

However, it does not fully recognise the benefits in terms of helping to secure Sydney's food supply into the future, and mitigating and adopting to climate change impacts. It is recommended that to protect the values of the Metropolitan Rural Area, stronger terms should be used, such as 'prevent' and 'protect', otherwise the Metropolitan Rural Area will continue to be seen as urban land-in-waiting. A review of the Metropolitan Area should also be included as an action.

**While Council supports the inclusion of the priorities for managing the Metropolitan Rural Area, it is recommended further guidance is provided on the long term role of the Metropolitan Rural Area, particularly in terms of its agricultural productivity.**

## **Attachment 2 – Feedback on Priorities and Actions**