

Rates up by 5%

LOW and steady growth in Mundaring is said to be the primary reason for the shires' 5 per cent rate rise this year.

Chief executive Jonathan Throssell said the rate increase was slightly higher than the level of CPI for the year, because council had to take in to account its ageing assets.

"The area is not growing quickly — in fact it's actually growing rather slowly," he said.

Mr Throssell said in the past five years the area had experienced less than one per cent growth, which was slowly strangling the shire's financial capacity.

"The slow growth has a lot to do with our current Town Planning Scheme, which has restricted the flexibility of development," he said.

"This means that people who

wished to subdivide their land in past were prevented from doing so because the scheme wouldn't allow it."

Having been gazetted in 1994, Mr Throssell said the existing TPS needed to be updated, and council were now in the process of developing a new one.

"By the end of this year we hope to have a discussion paper written up, after which it will then be presented to the appropriate minister for consideration," Mr Throssell said.

If adopted, Mr Throssell said the TPS would create far greater flexibility in how owners managed their properties.

"Residents will be able to maximise their land assets, and I think this will create an attractive option for a lot of people to the area," he said.

"Personally I think Perth is

exhausted by building north and south, and the only way to go now is east.

While Mr Throssell welcomed the idea of growth in the area, he said the shire would be mindful that the character and charm of the Hills would not be lost in transition.

The 2006-2007 budget makes provisions for the development and sale of surplus land in Midvale to fund the redevelopment of the Shire Depot and extensions to the Administration and Civic Centre.

A further \$260,000 has been included in the budget for the relocation of the Morrison Park Bowling Club, and \$50,000 has been set aside for the demolition of the vacated building.

In addition, \$3.24 million has been budgeted for redevelopment of the Works Depot.