

Big Strategic Planning changes for Local Government in NSW

With the publication of the Greater Sydney Region Plan, *A Metropolis of Three Cities* and the five District Plans in March 2018, the clock has started for councils to complete work on the many Priorities and Actions outlined in both strategic planning documents.

With a deadline of 3 years from March 2018 (or 2 years for 18 councils who are the recipients of \$2.5 million in funding from the NSW Government) councils are expected to have completed an update of their Local Environmental Plan which will incorporate and reflect the strategic directions of the Region and their District.

However, to get to an updated LEP, there are three significant steps comprised of statutory requirements, strategic studies and stakeholder engagements that councils will need to undertake and complete. Each of these steps must progressed in a reasonable time in order to meet the delivery requirements set out by the Greater Sydney Commission and the Department of Planning and Environment.

Below are the broad steps involved and the time in which they are to be completed.



These three stages are outlined below.

1. District Plan Planning Priority - Preparing local strategic planning statements informed by local strategic planning

This Priority, within each district plan, contains an Action that requires council to perform a review of their LEP including a gap analysis against the Priorities and Actions of the region and their district plan, as well as identifying any barriers to giving effect to these plans.

This step also requires councils to undertake an analysis of local context by considering the social, economic and environmental dimensions of their communities, reflect upon the priorities of community strategic plans and identify areas of State, Regional or District significance.

Upon the conclusion of this review councils are to report on their findings and recommendations for local strategic planning priorities that will inform Local Strategic Planning Statements (LSPS) and LEP updates. Completing this action will provide a scope and background information for the LSPS work program.

2. Local Strategic Planning Statements – to be completed by 1 December 2019

Local Strategic Planning Statements were introduced through an amendment to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* in March 2018. As statutory requirement, councils are to prepare, implement and, in time, review their LSPS.

The LSPS is considered to be part of the hierarchy of strategic planning instruments that will continually inform and be informed by the suite of strategic plans in NSW. The figure below demonstrates the feedback loop of these strategies, with the intention that the LSPS will inform the review of regional and district planning as well as the bottom-up influence of Community Strategic Plans on the LSPS.



Image Source: Local Strategic Planning Statements – Guideline for Councils, Department of Planning and Environment 2018.

The LSPS will communicate to residents a 20-year vision for an LGA, outlining the values and characteristics that contribute to local identity. It is through the LSPS that councils will outline how these values will be maintained and enhanced and how growth will be managed. The LSPS will also outline how it will give effect to the Priorities and Actions of the regional and district plan and detail council's planning priorities that will inform the updating of their LEPs. In terms of their scope a LSPS could be considered a localised district plan that details how Actions will be implemented.

The LSPS is developed over four-stages, with several component parts. These steps and parts are detailed below.

Scoping Stage – Councils should ideally commence as soon as possible. This stage will benefit from the outcomes of the strategic planning review required by the Action within District Plan Planning Priority - Preparing local strategic planning statements informed by local strategic **planning**.

This stage includes:

- Collation of all applicable strategic planning information for the area including demographic data;
- Issue identification, including stakeholder engagement and consultation to understand community preferences;
- Vision setting including identifying areas for change and areas for further investigation; and,
- Developing a preliminary list of planning priorities.

Testing Stage – This stage requires the development, testing and refinement of outcomes of scoping stage including the vision and priorities. A number of different development options or growth scenarios may be included.

This stage includes:

- Targeted analysis and essential strategic work identified in the gap analysis;
- Strategy development and assessment including developing growth scenarios as well as establishing how housing targets can be achieved and the preparation of local housing strategies or growth change management plans etc;

- Local infrastructure assessment to identify infrastructure required to respond to population projections;
- Consultation and testing with community and board range of stakeholders;
- Preparation of a draft LSPS for exhibition.

Finalisation Stage – At this stage councils may develop supporting material to explain priorities, options considered and reasons for final choices.

This stage includes:

- Approval of a draft LSPS for exhibition (council endorsement);
- Finalisation of draft incorporating stakeholder feedback;
- Making the LSPS (made and approved by council);

Implementation Stage – Implementation will involve an ongoing program of works, and a review every seven years once made.

This stage includes:

- Implementing Priorities and Actions including changes to statutory controls, DCPs, council infrastructure and delivery programs;
- Alignment with related work such as amendments to LEPs and outlining when future strategic work identified in LSPS will be undertaken;
- Monitoring and review of the LSPS to respond to changes such as infrastructure investment or demographic shifts.

As part of the LSPS there are a number of discrete tasks that must be investigated, considered and potentially completed for the LSPS to satisfy the requirement that the LSPS gives effect to regional and district planning and to inform the updating of LEPs. This includes:

- Establishing Housing Targets (6-10 and 10-20-years);
- Identifying current and future planning capacity to meet the housing targets;
- Drafting a Local Housing Strategy;
- Assessment of local infrastructure capacity and future needs;
- Developing contribution plans;
- Developing place-based strategies;
- Drafting an Affordable Rental Housing Scheme;
- Analysis of and planning for growth in strategic centres;
- A strategic review of Industrial lands;

- Mapping of Strategic Priorities;
- Detailing how the LSPS will translate into the Standard Instrument LEP template for updating;
- Engagement with State agencies, stakeholders and the community; and
- Development of a monitoring system and dashboard.

Environmental Planning and Assessment (Savings, Transitional and Other Provisions)

Regulation 2017 require councils to exhibit their draft LSPS by 1 July 2019 with the final version adopted by 1 December. Regional councils are given an allowance of an additional year with final submission at 1 July 2020.

3. Updating Local Environmental Plans – completed by March 2020 or 2021

Once an LSPS is finalised and adopted by Council, work to update LEP will begin. This will involve translating the vision and planning priorities of the LSPS into the LEP through changes to LEP mapping, controls and the written instrument.

As noted above, the Greater Sydney Commission have set a deadline of 3 years from March 2018 (2 years for councils who were the recipients of the \$2.5 million funding from the NSW Government) for councils to have their LEPs updated. It should be noted that there is no certainty if the timeframes for a March 2020/21 completion of the updated LEP include an allowance for an exhibition period or time taken for review through the Gateway process

NSW Government funding

The NSW Government is supporting several councils to update their LEPs through \$2.5 million in funding for strategic planning. In accepting this support, councils are obliged to complete their LEP updates by March 2020.

Councils who have received funding so far are Camden, Campbelltown, Canada Bay, Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland, Fairfield, Hornsby, Inner West, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith Ryde and Wollondilly.

The GSC have invited the remaining 20 councils to apply for five additional grants of \$2.5 million by 25 June 2018. The successful applicants are yet to be determined.

What does this mean for councils?

The requirements for the strategic review of LEPs, the development of the LSPS and updating of an LEP means there is a significant volume of strategic planning work for councils to complete from in a relatively short time.

With these delivery timeframes, councils will need to ensure strategic planning is co-ordinated and managed appropriately and that investigations and studies are both thorough and efficient to meet statutory requirements.

However this is approached, councils will need the support of State agencies and the input of planning consultants to meet these timeframes and delivery a satisfactory comprehensive strategic planning outcome for their communities.

Further information

Greater Sydney Commission

Greater Sydney Region Plan and District Plans

<https://www.greater.sydney/strategic-planning>

Department of Planning and Environment

Strategic Planning

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/policy-and-legislation/environmental-planning-and-assessment-act-updated/guide-to-the-updated-environmental-planning-and-assessment-act-1979/part-3-strategic-planning>

Local Strategic Planning Statement Guidelines

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/policy-and-legislation/environmental-planning-and-assessment-act-updated/guide-to-the-updated-environmental-planning-and-assessment-act-1979/~media/E56C7C8D06C04D658615983B78F4D42F.ashx>

Council funding for LEP acceleration

<https://www.anthonyrobertsmp.com.au/media/media-releases/ryde-council-gains-25-million-support-strategic-planning>

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