

Local Housing Strategies

Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated: 2 October 2018

What is a local housing strategy?

A local housing strategy is a document prepared by a council which addresses the strategic planning issues relating to the future housing needs of a local government area. Previously, these documents have been called residential development strategies, local housing strategies, or affordable housing strategies.

Do all councils need to prepare one?

Councils are to prepare a local housing strategy if required by the relevant regional or district plan. Currently, this includes all metropolitan councils and some regional councils.

A council that is not required to prepare a local housing strategy by a regional or district plan may choose to prepare one at any time.

Will councils be required to use the Department's guideline and template?

The guideline and template set out a best-practice approach to preparing a local housing strategy.

The local housing strategy template must be used by all councils within Greater Sydney. Councils outside Greater Sydney are encouraged to use the template, however, variations may be sought in consultation with the relevant Regional Team at the Department of Planning and Environment.

Previously, there has been no standard format for a local housing strategy. The use of the guideline and template will improve the level of consistency and quality across NSW. Councils can supplement their local housing strategy with additional data and information, if necessary.

Do local housing strategies require approval?

The Department of Planning and Environment will approve local housing strategies. For Greater Sydney councils, the Department will consult with the Greater Sydney Commission prior to approval. An approved local housing strategy will:

- contain the information required in the local housing strategy template to an acceptable standard;
- demonstrate how housing supply targets (if applicable) will be met;
- provide information in such a way that it is able to be independently verified; and
- provide the evidence base for a supporting planning proposal (if required) to implement any new development capacity.

Following approval, councils are to make their local housing strategy and supporting background information available to the public on their websites.

Following preparation of a local housing strategy, will a planning proposal be required?

There is no requirement for the council to pursue a planning proposal to implement a local housing strategy, other than the requirement to prepare a planning proposal to give effect to a district or regional plan. However, not preparing a planning proposal to deliver on the outcomes of a local housing strategy limits the full impact of the strategy.

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The implementation of local housing strategies can be phased, with multiple planning proposals giving effect to the local housing strategy.

Planning proposals can be exhibited concurrently with a local housing strategy or separately.

Will planning proposals stop while local housing strategies are being developed?

While developing a local housing strategy, councils are expected to work with the existing strategic plans to continue progressing planning proposals.

Will a local housing strategy be made public?

Local housing strategies are to be made publicly available on council websites.

How will local housing strategies address infrastructure requirements?

Understanding infrastructure implications is an important component of local housing strategies. Councils should liaise with infrastructure agencies during the preparation of their local housing strategy. The Department's Regional Teams can assist councils in this process. In some cases, the provision of new infrastructure projects by the State government and councils will be critical to delivering new housing supply. In other cases, a local housing strategy will be able to direct housing growth to make better use of existing infrastructure.

What is the connection with requirements for Local Strategic Planning Statements?

Each council will prepare a local strategic planning statement which will set out the 20-year vision for land-use in the local area, the special characteristics which contribute to local identity, shared community values to be maintained and enhanced, and how growth and change will be managed into the future. The statements will be succinct and will focus on the vision and priorities for land use in the local area.

It is envisaged that local strategic planning statements will cover the full range of land use considerations and will have a broader focus than local housing strategies which will be detailed long-term plans specifically for housing.

Local housing strategies will inform a local strategic planning statement or vice versa, depending upon which document a council develops first. The documents may also be prepared concurrently. The local strategic planning statement can also require a local housing strategy be prepared in the future.

The local strategic planning statement provides a clear line of sight from the regional and district plans released by the Department or Greater Sydney Commission, to the council's controls featured in the local environmental plans and the development control plans.

A local housing strategy can set the land use vision, priorities and actions for housing in a local area, through a council's local strategic planning statement and their local environmental plan and development control plan.

How is local character being addressed?

Character is a critical element of local areas and neighbourhoods and needs to be carefully considered in future planning. The Department has released the Planning Circular PS 18-001 *Stepping up planning and designing for better places: respecting and enhancing local character*, to provide advice on how the NSW planning system will deliver development that both meets the growing needs of NSW and is contextual, local and of its place, to make better places for everyone.

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In what other ways can a council use the evidence and analysis collected during the preparation of a local housing strategy?

Where a council investigates and identifies affordable housing needs as part of its local housing strategy, this evidence and data can be used to inform the development of affordable housing contribution schemes under State Environmental Planning Policy No 70 – Affordable Housing (Revised Schemes) (SEPP 70). If a council is not named in SEPP 70, evidence sourced through the development of a local housing strategy could be used to support a request to be named in SEPP 70.

What assistance to councils will be available?

Councils are encouraged to discuss their local housing strategy at an early stage with the Department's relevant Regional Team. The Regional Team can assist in relation to the preparation of the local housing strategy and supporting LEP amendments.