8.2.   Precinct System Review - Recommendations

AUTHOR: Jenny Gleeson, Manager Corporate Planning & Engagement

ENDORSED BY: Shane Sullivan, Executive Manager Governance

ATTACHMENTS:
1.   Attachment 1A - Council Report May 2022 [**8.2.1** - 22 pages]
2.   Attachment 1B - Management Response [**8.2.2** - 26 pages]
3.   Attachment 2 - Revised Option 1A Map [**8.2.3** - 1 page]
4.   Attachment 3 - Revised Option 1B Map [**8.2.4** - 1 page]
5.   Attachment 4 - Stage 2 Consultant's Report [**8.2.5** - 46 pages]

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to refer the matter back to Council as resolved on 23 May 2022, with a revised implementation timetable. It is noted that an operational decision has been made to introduce remote attendance at Precinct meetings.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The North Sydney Community Precinct System is one of several engagement programs currently coordinated by Council. This program, now 50 years old, is under review to ensure it remains fit for purpose for both the Council and the community.

In December 2017, Council resolved to undertake the review. The Review was included as a project in the *Delivery Program 2018/19-2021/22*. Council adopted the Review methodology on 25 November 2019 and adopted the project-specific Engagement Strategy on 24 February 2020. Stages 1 and 2 consultations occurred in 2020/21.

A Councillor Briefing was held on 14 March 2022 where the proposed process for progressing the Review was presented. Council at its meeting of 23 May 2022 resolved:

THAT this matter be deferred to the July Council Meeting.

This report presents the preliminary recommendations arising from the Review and again seeks endorsement to undertake a further round of consultation prior to presenting the final recommendations to Council.

Attached are the previous report provided to Council and the attachments to that report.

Two key changes to the recommended actions within Attachment 1A are:

a) Timetable - the originally proposed implementation timing now requires adjustment due to the deferral and clarification of the steps outlined in the report.

b) Remote meetings - It has been determined to implement remote participation in Precinct Committee Meetings. This is in accordance with the management response to Recommendation 7 (Administrative support by Council) and in response to feedback from Precincts particularly with potential for further concerns regarding COVID.

The proposed next steps are:

- a final round of public consultation (via public exhibition) regarding the proposed boundary realignment options running simultaneous to; and
- consultation with active Precincts to finalise the Implementation Plan, and amendments to the *Precinct System Guidelines*, *Precinct System Policy* and *Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers & Members*; and

Following the next round of consultation, the following reports will be provided to Council:

- Post exhibition report on the feedback received on the revised Precinct area boundaries;
- Report providing the amendment Policy and Code seeking endorsement for public exhibition; and
- Post exhibition report presenting the submissions received, and proposed changes and seeking adoption of the Policy and Code.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

In 2022/23, each Precinct Committee is eligible for $1,500 operational funding; this amount has remained the same since 2013/14. The amount of operational funding available per Committee in 2023/24 will be reviewed, in consultation with Precinct Committees, as part of updating the Guidelines and final determination of the total number of Precinct areas. This, in part, will be informed by the number of Precinct areas to be in operation effective from 2023/24.

In 2022/23, excluding staff salaries, a total of $40,000 has been allocated to the Precinct System program - the breakdown includes: $35,000 operational funding, $3,500 printing and $1,500 postage and mail.

It is proposed that the $40,000 non-recurrent funding, that was allocated in 2021/22 to the finalisation of the Review, be carried over to 2022/23 to fund the direct notification mailout promoting the public exhibition of the revised Precinct area boundary options; and any remaining funds be used towards marketing and promotion of the Precinct System.

Further budget requirements resulting from the finalisation of the Review can be considered as part of preparation of the draft 2023/24 Operational Plan & Budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the Precinct System Review - Stage 2 Consultation Outcomes Report be received and noted.

2. THAT the management responses to the consultant's recommendations be adopted, and the Implementation Plan (including Communications Plan) be finalised in consultation with Precinct Committees prior to a further report to Council seeking adoption of the final Implementation Plan.

3. THAT a further and final round of consultation occur regarding Precinct area boundaries, as outlined in this report, by way of public exhibition for a minimum of 60 days, prior to a further report to Council seeking adoption of the Precinct area boundaries.

4. THAT the Precinct System Guidelines, Policy and Code be updated as outlined in this report and in consultation with Precinct Committees, prior to a further report to Council seeking endorsement to place the revised Policy and Code on public exhibition for 42 days prior to final adoption.

5. THAT the consultation with Precinct Committees on facilitating remote meeting participation be noted.

LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

5. Our Civic Leadership
5.3 Community is engaged in what Council does

BACKGROUND

The Review originated from a Notice of Motion in December 2017 and was included as a project within the *Delivery Program 2018/19-2021/22*. The Review approach and methodology was adopted on 25 November 2019 and the project-specific Engagement Strategy 24 February 2020. Implementation of Stages 1 and 2 of the Review were somewhat impacted by the COVID pandemic as detailed in Attachment 1.

A Councillor Briefing was held on 29 March 2021, and the consultation findings and preliminary recommendations arising from the Review were first reported to Council on 24 May 2021, whereby Council resolved to defer condition to the June 2021 meeting.

A Councillor Briefing was held on 21 June 2021 and the deferred report presented to the Council meeting of 28 June 2021, the Council resolved to defer consideration of the report to until after the Local Government Election.

A Councillor Briefing was held on 14 March 2022 at which the proposed process for progressing the Review was presented. A report recommending adoption of the preliminary recommendations arising from Stages 1 and 2 consultations for the Precinct System Review was provided to Council on 23 May 2022. Council resolved:

THAT this matter be deferred to the July Council Meeting.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Protocol. It is proposed that further consultation with Precinct Committees (and relevant stakeholders) occur regarding implementation of the final recommendations, as outlined in this report.

DETAIL

The Precinct System is under review to ensure it remains fit for purpose for both Council and the community. The Review objectives are to:

- standardise the way in which Precinct Committees operate (including a consistent level of service by Council to individual Committees);

- identify the priorities for support by the Council to the Precinct System;
- update the Precinct area boundaries via a proposed reduced total number of Precinct areas; and
- strengthen the role and function of the Combined Precincts Committee.

Two stages of the Review have occurred so far. A further and final consultation stage is proposed. It is recommended that the Review conclude as soon as practical so as not to prolong angst and uncertainty with active Precinct Committees, and to put in place the necessary program improvements, including increased marketing and promotion.

As shown in the following table, majority support for most recommendations was confirmed via the Stage 2B workshops held in 2022/21.

Recommendation No.	Level of support
1. Eligibility	Partially support
2. Participation in multiple Precinct Committees	Fully support
3. Describing Council consultation mechanisms	Fully support
4. Timing of consultation with Precinct Committees	Fully support
5. Precinct area boundary redistribution	Partially support
6. Program naming	Partially support
7. Administrative support by Council	Fully support
8. Changes to the Combined Precincts Committee (CPC)	Alternate action
9. Precinct Systems Guidelines (including CPC)	Fully support

Not unexpectedly, the matters where significant changes the status quo are proposed received mixed reactions by the Precinct Committees. Regarding Precinct area boundaries (Recommendation 5), Attachments 1A and 1B details that the purpose of further consultation to seek feedback on the proposal. The proposed exhibition will seek stakeholder preference per Precinct area against the following options:

a) Option 1A
b) Option 1B
c) Other (please specify - can include voluntary amalgamation proposal)
d) No change to existing boundaries.

Regarding the CPC (Recommendation 8), the proposed amendments to the CPC format as presented in 2020/21 were met with strong dissatisfaction by Precinct Committees. In response, a meeting between senior management and the CPC Convenors was held in April 2021, whereby it was agreed that the proposed change in CPC format proposal be discontinued. Council will continue to support four to six CPC meetings per annum with secretarial support (including minute taking, agenda items coordination and pre-Agenda meeting with the Co-convenors), and the number and timing of meetings to be agreed between the Co-Conveners and Council's Engagement staff) per annum.

It is noted that the formal introduction of remote/online Precinct Committees was proposed (under Recommendation 7) as a response to the impacts of the pandemic on in person meetings, and to increase participation in meetings. The proposal was to "permit individual

Committees to use remote meetings (Zoom or equivalent) complemented by a minimum of either 4 (quarterly) or 2 (biannual) in-person meetings (frequency TBD) with a subscription for each Precinct Committee supplied by Council". An operational decision has since been made to permit remote Precinct Committee meetings to procced, effective immediately under current arrangements until the formal format is agreed. Consultation with Precinct Committees will occur in July/August 2022 as to the preferred licence format, frequency of use and promotional requirements, with view to the new arrangements coming into effect from January 2023. Between now and then, Precinct Committees with their own licences can continue to use such and Council can temporarily assist those without individual licences, upon request.

The intent of the officer's recommendations remains unchanged, in that the proposed next steps of the Review are:

- a final round of consultation (via public exhibition) regarding the proposed boundary realignment options running simultaneous to;
- consultation with active Precincts to finalise the Implementation Plan, and amendments to the *Precinct System Guidelines*, *Precinct System Policy* and *Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers & Members;*
- post exhibition report to Council seeking:
  - o adoption of the revised Precinct area boundaries (as necessary); and
  - o endorsement of the revised Policy and Code for 28 days public exhibition followed by a post exhibition report presenting the submissions received and seeking final adoption of the Policy and Code.

It is recommended that:

- this report (including Attachment 1A) be adopted in context of the above-mentioned adjustments to Recommendations 5, 7 and 9;
- the consultant's Stage 2 Consultation Outcomes Report of February 2021 (Attachment 4) be received and noted;
- the management responses (Attachment 1B) be endorsed inclusive of:
  - o a further, and final, round of consultation (via minimum 60 day public exhibition) occur regarding proposed options to realign Precinct area boundaries (per Attachments 2 and 3):
    - the public exhibition will be directly promoted to the affected active Precinct Committees/areas and eligible stakeholders, inclusive of a flyer (produced by Council) letterbox dropped to all residences within the Precinct areas proposed for amalgamation;
    - directly or non-directly affected Precinct Committees are invited to propose voluntary mergers with their neighbouring Precinct area(s), noting that any such proposals require the agreement of all affected Precinct Committees.
    - feedback sought as to the proposed advantages/disadvantages of each option, where boundary lines should fall, and suggested names for each new Precinct area;
  - o updating/finalisation of the following documentation:

- Implementation Plan including Communications Plan (Attachment 1B), *Precinct System Guidelines*, *Precinct System Policy* and *Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers & Members* in consultation with active Precinct Committees, as outlined in the following table; and
- thereafter associated templates etc will be finalised.

The following table details the amended proposed implementation schedule:

Task	Original Timing	Revised Timing
Public exhibition of Revised Boundary Option Maps (min. 60 days)	Jun to Aug 2022	Sep-Oct 2022
Finalise Implementation Plan and update Guidelines, Policy and Code in consultation with active Precinct Committees	Jul to Sep 2022	Aug to Oct 2022
Post exhibition report prepared in house	Oct 2022	Nov 2022
Council meeting - present submissions summary and adopt final Precinct area boundaries (as necessary); and endorse amended Policy and Code for 28 days exhibition	Oct 2022	28 Nov 2022
Public exhibition of amended Policy and Code	Not specified	Late Jan to Mar 2023
Council meeting - present submissions summary and adopt final Policy, Code and Guidelines	Not specified	12 Mar 2023
Actions requiring budgetary consideration to be included in the draft 2023/24 Operational Plan & Budget preparations	Not specified	Mar 2023
Promotion/awareness campaign - relaunch Precinct System	Jan to Jun 2023	Apr to Jun 2023
New Precinct area boundaries come into effect	1 Jul 2023	1 Jul 2023
Annual General Meetings held - office bearers appointed	Aug/Sep 2023	Aug/Sep 2023
Office Bearer Induction/training	Oct 2023	Oct 2023

8.10. Precinct System Review - Recommendations

AUTHOR: Jenny Gleeson, Manager Corporate Planning & Engagement and Gemma North, Community Engagement Coordinator

ENDORSED BY: Shane Sullivan, Executive Manager Governance

ATTACHMENTS:
1.   Management Response (with Draft Implementation Plan) [**8.10.1** - 26 pages]
2.   Revised Option 1 A Map [**8.10.2** - 1 page]
3.   Revised Option 1 B Map [**8.10.3** - 1 page]
4.   Stage 2 Consultant's Report [**8.10.4** - 46 pages]

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider responses to the Precinct System review undertaken to date and to undertake a further round of consultation to inform any further actions with regard to the Precinct System.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The North Sydney Community Precinct System is one of several engagement programs currently coordinated by Council. This program is under review to ensure it remains fit for purpose for both the Council and the community.

This report presents the Stage 1 and 2 consultation outcomes and outlines the proposed next steps in the Review. Following conclusion of the Stage 2 engagement, the consultant's recommendations have been considered by senior management.

The format of this report is consistent with how the recommendations from the 2006 Review were presented to Council. Attachment 1 details the management response to the consultant's recommendations, outlining the proposed actions moving forward. Attachment 1 also includes a draft Implementation/Communications Plan detailing how the recommendations will be actioned; as detailed in the report it is proposed that the plan be finalised in consultation with Precinct Committees.

It is noted that this report was deferred in the previous term of Council on two occasions. Firstly, on 24 May 2021, at which time submissions from the Combined Precinct Committee and Registry Precinct Committee were received. The request by Registry Precinct Committee has been included in this revised report, reflected in revised Option 1A map (Attachment 2), as reported in June 2021, where it was further deferred to this term of Council.

The Review objectives are to:

- standardise the way in which Precinct Committees operate, including providing a

consistent level of service by Council to all individual Committees;
- identify the priorities for support by the Council to the Precinct System;
- update the Precinct area boundaries via a proposed reduced total number of Precinct areas; and
- strengthen the role and function of the Combined Precincts Committee.

In accordance with the adopted Engagement Strategy, Stage 1 was conducted in-house. Feedback was sought on six draft recommendations (largely consistent with the recommendations consulted on during the discontinued 2012/13 Review) within the updated *Discussion Paper*. The *Discussion Paper* provided detailed background information and sought feedback on the draft recommendations:

1. Terminology/branding
2. Reallocation of Precinct area boundaries
3. Combined Precincts Committee's role and function
4. Code of Conduct, including use of social media
5. Council's level of support (resource allocation)
6. Other initiatives

Stage 2 was led by an external consultant. The Stage 1 feedback informed the Stage 2 consultation scope, which included workshops with active Precinct Committees, interviews with key stakeholders and an opt-in online survey targeting those not involved in the Precinct System.

The consultant prepared the Stage 2 consultation outcomes summary and draft recommendations (Attachment 4). The intent of the consultant's recommendations is to advise Council of the key focus areas to be addressed by way of final recommendations formulated by staff. Attachment 1 details the proposed next steps, called "management response", outlining the proposed actions to implement the recommendations.

The level of management support for the recommendations, is indicated as follows:

- Fully support - Recommendations 2, 3, 4, 7 and 9;
- Partially support - Recommendations 1, 5 and 6; and
- Alternate action recommended - Recommendations 8.

It is noted that changes to Precinct area boundaries (Recommendation 5) and the current Combined Precincts Committee format (Recommendation 8) as discussed during Stage 2B were not favoured by the majority of active Precinct Committees. Section 2.4 of this report focuses on these two recommendations in detail, as majority support from the Precinct Committee representatives was given for all other recommendations via the Stage 2B workshops.

In response to Precinct Committee feedback concerning boundaries, it is recommended that further work proceed only on Option 1 (amalgamation of existing Precinct areas), subject to further consultation as proposed in this report. Whilst the option to integrate inactive Precinct areas with their adjacent/most relevant active Precinct area is considered less

impactful, and would appease the majority of active Precinct Committees, it is acknowledged this still requires exploration of many of the issues raised as the concerns in opposition to Option 2.

It is proposed that (Stage 3) consultation occur between May to July 2022, by way of a public exhibition period seeking feedback as to where the boundaries should fall, proposed names for the new areas etc. Active Precinct Committees proposing to merge with their neighbouring active Precinct area may also suggest such i.e. voluntary mergers invited - with a prerequisite that all affected Precinct Committees are agree with the proposal.

The proposed amendments to the Combined Precincts Committee (CPC) format were met with dissatisfaction by Precinct Committees. In response, a meeting between senior management and the CPC Co-convenors was held in April 2021, and it was agreed that the change in CPC format proposal be discontinued. In addition, it was agreed that general business items be discontinued (consistent with Local Government meeting practice) and Council staff will be ex officio members. Council will continue to support four to six CPC meetings per annum with secretarial support (including agenda coordination and a pre-Agenda review meeting with the Co-convenors, venue bookings, managing RSVPs, catering arrangements, minute taking), and that the number and timing of meetings to be agreed between the CPC and Council).

Further, as outlined in the Implementation/Communications Plan (Attachment 1), and updated Precinct System Guidelines, Policy and Code of Conduct will be prepared, in consultation with active Precinct Committees, by September 2022.

The following table summarises the recommended implementation schedule as presented at the Councillor Briefing held on 14 March 2022.

Task	Timing
Public exhibition of Revised Boundary Option Maps (min. 60 days)	Jun to Aug 2022
Finalise Implementation/Communications Plan and update Guidelines, Policy and Code in consultation with active Precinct Committees	Jul to Sep 2022
Post exhibition report prepared	Oct 2022
Council meeting - consider recommendations and resolve next steps	Oct 2022
Promotion/awareness campaign - relaunch Precinct System	Jan to June 2023
New Precinct area boundaries come into effect	1 Jul 2023
Annual General Meetings held - office bearers appointed	Aug/Sep 2023
Office Bearer Induction/training	Oct 2023

The public exhibition period has been delayed due to staff focus on the Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements. However, it is not expected that this change will delay delivery of other elements.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Each Precinct Committee is eligible for $1,500 in operational funding; this amount has remained the same since 2014. The amount of operational funding per Committee will be reviewed, in consultation with Precinct Committees, as part of updating the Guidelines. This,

in part, will be informed by the number of Precinct areas to be in operation effective from 2023/24.

In 2021/22, excluding staff salaries, a total of $40,000 was allocated to the Precinct System program - $35,000 operational funding, $3,500 printing and $1,500 postage and mail. The same amount has been included in the draft 2022/23 Operational Plan & Budget. Further budget requirements resulting from the finalisation of Precinct area boundaries CAN be considered as part of preparation of the draft 2023/24 Operational Plan & Budget.

It is proposed that the $40,000 non-recurrent funding allocated to the finalisation of the Review be carried over to 2022/23 to fund the direct notification mailout promoting the public exhibition of the revised Precinct area boundary options. And any remaining funds be used towards marketing and promotion.

It is noted that Precinct System program expenditure in 2020/21 and 2021/22 has been impacted by the COVID pandemic. There has been disruption to frequency and format of Committee meetings due to public health orders etc which has resulted in not all Precinct Committees claiming operational funding per annum.

RECOMMENDATION:
1. THAT the Precinct System Review - Stage 2 Consultation Outcomes Report be received and noted.
2. THAT the management responses to the consultant's recommendations be adopted, and an Implementation Plan (including Communications Plan) be prepared.
3. THAT a further and final round of consultation occur regarding Precinct area boundaries, as outlined in this report, by way of public exhibition for a minimum of 60 days.
4. THAT the Precinct System Guidelines, Policy and Code be updated, as outlined in this report and in consultation with Precinct Committees.

LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

5. Our Civic Leadership
5.3 Community is informed and consulted

BACKGROUND

1. Precinct System Background

The North Sydney Community Precinct System has operated in various formats since 1972. It was disbanded in 1977 and reintroduced in 1980 by the Council as its then primary mechanism for public participation, under its commitment to 'open government'. Since its inception, the total number of Precinct areas has reduced from 56 to the current 25. Currently 18 of 25 Committees are active plus the Combined Precincts Committee.

The Precinct System is now one of several Council coordinated community engagement programs. While the Precinct System was considered Council's primary engagement program, it is now one of several engagement programs. Over time, with the introduction of new technology and changing community needs, Council's community engagement approach has expanded as detailed in the below diagram, in addition to project-specific engagements hosted via the Your Say North Sydney site:
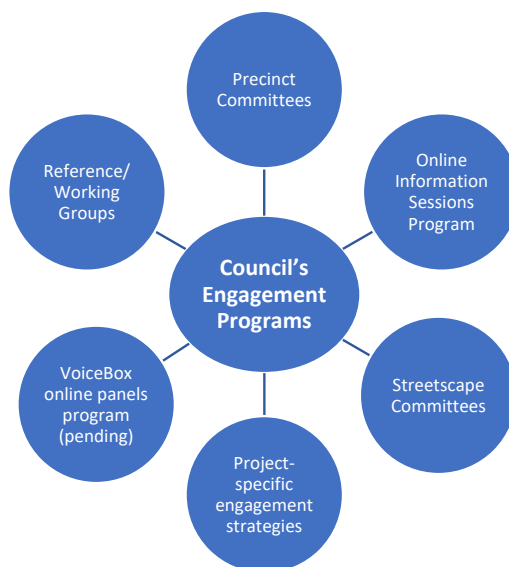
The Community Engagement Section within Council is directly responsible for oversight and administration of the Precinct System, the Online Information Sessions Program (which commenced in 2020), administering the Your Say North Sydney website, the Online Panels Program (in development) and assistance/support to project managers across the

organisation, to design, implement and evaluate a project-specific engagement strategy per project/proposal (in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Protocol).

2. Current Review Timeline

On 4 December 2017 Council considered a Notice of Motion (NoM) requesting a review and assessment of the current North Sydney Community Precinct System. Council unanimously resolved (Min. No. 490):

> *1. THAT Council revisit the North Sydney Precinct Report presented to Council in December 2012. Can the report be updated to reflect any details that need to be adapted to ensure this is a current and relevant document.*
> *2. THAT Council look at and evaluate again referring to the 2012 report.*

On 25 November 2019 adopted the minutes of the Governance & Finance Committee meeting held 4 November 2019, at which a response to the NoM No. 58/17 was considered. Council resolved (Min. No. 330):

> *2. THAT Council endorse a review of the Precinct System which includes the following:*
> > *a. an updated Discussion Paper;*
> > *b. consultation with active Precinct Committees;*
> > *c. an objective to include all of the LGA within an active Precinct Committee;*
> > *d. an external consultant to facilitate face-to-face consultation;*
> > *e. a Community Engagement Strategy; and*
> > *f. a question included in the next Customer Satisfaction Survey (2020) to enable benchmarking with the 1992, 2006 and 2009 survey findings. (GF02)*
> *3. THAT the Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers and Members be reviewed to ensure currency with Council's Code of Conduct - Councillors and Staff (adopted April 2019). (GF02)*
> *4. THAT the Precinct System Guidelines be updated prior to the commencement of the review to reflect current arrangements. (GF02)*
> *5. THAT on a trial basis, the boundaries of the inactive and "as needed" Precinct Committees be merged with active Precinct areas. (GF02)*
> *6. THAT planning commence in recognition of the upcoming 50th Anniversary of the Precinct System, for budget allocation in the next Delivery Program (2021/22-2024/25). (GF02)*

On 24 February 2020 Council resolved to commence the Review, to be undertaken in two stages.

> *1. THAT the Community Engagement Strategy be adopted.*
> *2. THAT the Discussion Paper and amended Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers and Members be endorsed for public exhibition, of minimum 120 days' duration. Submissions to be invited during the exhibition period, including via an online feedback form and written submissions.*

A Councillor Briefing was held on 29 March 2021.

This report was initially presented to Council on 24 May 2021, at which time submissions from the Combined Precinct Committee and Registry Precinct Committee were received. Council resolved:

1. THAT the matter be deferred to the next Council Meeting to enable a briefing to occur and for Council to clarify any questions arising from the report.

The Councillor Briefing was held on 21 June 2021, attended by the Stage 2 consultant, PlanCom Consulting.

The report was represented to the former term of Council on 28 June 2021 inclusive of revised Option 1A map (Attachment 2) which was amended in response to the submission by Registry Precinct Committee. The Council resolved:

1. THAT the matter be deferred until after the Local Government Election on 4 September 2021.

The following Council resolutions relate to the Review, specifically the updated Precinct System Guidelines:

On 27 September 2021, Council resolved:

1. THAT Council resolves that Precinct Committees may determine, without reference to Council:
a) the matters that are to be discussed at their meetings; and
b) to address their meetings.
2. THAT Council resolves that during the Regulated Election Period defined in s4 of the Electoral Act 2017 (NSW) for an election of Councillors to North Sydney Council a member of a Precinct Committee who nominates in an election of Councillors:
a) will stand down from the office held until the poll is declared; and
b) may during the period of stand down attend meetings of the Precinct Committee and participate in discussions that are held.

On 21 February 2022, Council resolved:

1.THAT this matter [safeguarding the independence of Precincts] be deferred for consideration in conjunction with the Precinct System Review.

A Councillor Briefing was held on 14 March 2022.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Protocol. It is proposed that further consultation with Precinct Committees (and relevant stakeholders) occur regarding implementation of the final recommendations, as outlined in section 3 of this report.

DETAIL

The Precinct System is under review to ensure it remains fit for purpose for both Council and the community. The Review objectives were to:

- standardise the way in which Precinct Committees operate (including a consistent level of service by Council to individual Committees);
- identify the priorities for support by the Council to the Precinct System;
- update the Precinct area boundaries via a proposed reduced total number of Precinct areas; and
- strengthen the role and function of the Combined Precincts Committee.

The Review was conducted in two stages.

1. Stage 1 Overview

Stage 1 sought feedback on the recommendations within the updated Discussion Paper. The Discussion Paper provided detailed background information regarding the establishment of the Precinct System and sought feedback on six recommendations (which were largely consistent with the recommendations consulted on during the discontinued 2012/13 Review):

1. Terminology/branding - ascertain the level of interest in changing Precinct area/Committee names
2. Reallocation of Precinct area boundaries - ascertain the initial level of support for Precinct area boundary reallocation, with view to reduce the total number of Precinct areas, inclusive of three proposed boundary options provided as a starting point for discussion (including the stated preference for suburb-based alignment)
3. Combined Precincts Committee's role and function - review Terms of Reference in context of any other recommendations implemented
4. Code of Conduct* - amendments to address issues not covered; proposed amendments were concurrently exhibited with Discussion Paper and the Code subsequently readopted by Council on 30 November 2020.
5. Council's level of support (resource allocation) - review current administrative/ funding support in context of Council's other engagement programs, marketing and promotion, office bearer training etc; and
6. Other initiatives* - no longer relevant to this Review, as post release of the Discussion Paper Council resolved to pilot Street Play/Streets as Shared Spaces initiatives.

Note: Recommendations 4 and 6 (marked *) were withdrawn from the Stage 2 consultation process and dealt with in other ways as noted above.

1.1 Inform Methods

The *Discussion Paper* was exhibited from 12 March to 19 August 2020. To promote the exhibition period and invite submissions the following inform methods were used:

- project webpage - 649 page views:
    - o 69 downloads of the Discussion Paper
    - o 51 downloads of proposed boundary redistribution map Option 1
    - o 39 downloads of proposed boundary redistribution map Option 2A
    - o 38 downloads of proposed boundary redistribution map Option 2B
    - o 21 downloads of the Engagement Strategy
    - o 16 downloads of the related Council report of February 2020
- Facebook post - reached 1,141 people with 35 post clicks
- memorandum distributed to all active Precinct Committees, inclusive of hard copies of the documents on exhibition, including maps
- via the weekly Precincts and monthly Council's E-newsletters

1.2 Submissions Received

A total of 29 submissions were received in response to Stage 1, comprising 15 from active Precinct Committees, with the remaining 14 from individuals who are members of Precinct Committees (the majority were from one Precinct Committee).

Additionally, 21 submissions were received in response to the Amended Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers and Members, including 11 from active Precinct Committees and the remainder from individual members of Precinct Committees. The amended Code was adopted on 30 November 2020, following consideration of a post exhibition report presented to the Governance & Finance Committee on 9 November 2020.

1.2.1 Submissions Analysis

The following provides a summary of the key feedback from the Stage 1 submissions, including feedback in response to the proposed amendments to the *Code of Conduct* that were co-exhibited as they related to the recommendations within the Discussion Paper.

a) Role and Function

- Program eligibility:
    - o majority preference to maintain status quo - residents, workers, students and property owners (includes businesses)
    - o some misconception that only residents are eligible
    - o some concern about business participation; no definition of business

- Participation in multiple Precinct Committees:
    - o some concern about permissibility of holding office in more than one Precinct area.

- Council consultation with Precinct Committee:
    - o some concern raised that a Precinct Committee's submission holds no more weight an individual submission (for both planning and non-planning submissions) for Council; requesting this be reviewed.

b) Council Support and Resources

- Operational Funding (Recommendation 5A):
  - o half favour maintaining current funding level i.e. is adequate, but support adjustment if Precinct areas expand/do not reduce if number of Committees is reduced.
  - o some favour reviewing current funding level - citing need to review what funding can be used for including flyer printing/distribution and sundries, modernise/transition correspondence online, increased venue hire fees if move to larger Precinct areas as will need larger venues. Note: Council pays venue hire for Committees using non-Council owned venues in addition to operational funding.
  - o suggestion that in electronic age/pandemic the use of video conferencing should be permitted to host meetings.

- Special Project/Event Funding - application basis (Recommendation 5B):
  - o not of direct relevance to some - non-plussed/was unsure what this relates to but encouraged further discussion on the matter.
  - o minority favour maintaining the current level of funding.

- Office Bearer Training (Recommendation 5C):
  - o majority stated existing induction training is good - should remain mandatory for new Office Bearers.
  - o half suggested the induction does not need to be delivered as in person format/could be a video (distributed on demand) or online/remote meeting format accompanied by hard copy materials.
  - o one suggested training/induction required for new staff/Councillors - to ensure the relationship between Council and the Precinct System consistent; increase Councillor attendance at meetings.
  - o one suggested chairing meeting/Code of Conduct training should be mandatory for Office Bearers, and whether training/mentoring could be provided to encourage more to want to take on Office Bearer roles.
  - o succession planning for office bearers was suggested.

- Administrative support by Council (Recommendation 5D):
  - o majority note current level of support is excellent/very good/appreciated/happy with/continue.
  - o some said the Office Bearers admin burden is currently reasonably managed/shared amongst the roles. Several suggest Council modernise admin requirements by electronic means.
  - o one suggested information dissemination by Council to Precinct Committees is a burden that falls to Committees to manage; and could benefit from review.

- Marketing of Precinct System (Recommendation 5E):
  - o majority suggested marketing of the Precinct System could be enhanced/increased/improved. With a few noting lack of awareness of any

     active marketing by Council/suggested Council could do more to inform new residents/renters and real estate agents e.g. new residents pack and greater website prominence e.g. short video on background/purpose.

- o some encouraged use of individual Committee websites e.g. Waverton.
- o one noted that awareness of the Precinct System by residents and businesses remains very low (source: 2020 Customer Satisfaction Survey).
- o one suggested flyers be standardised (branding/content structure), and it should be mandatory to distribute flyers as aware not all Committees currently distribute flyers. Email only promotion limits participation to subscribers/those in the know.
- o one suggested Facebook pages/groups by individual Committees.
- o one suggested advertising in Council's newsletters and regular reporting to Council on attendance/participation levels in Precinct meetings.
- o one suggested promoting the Precinct System via the rates notices and market stalls.

- • Other:
    - o some stated the Precinct System was a good initiative, enabling Council to keep locals knowledgeable/involved in matters of local concern, in a structured/supportive/integrated way.
    - o one suggested emergency operating mechanisms be explored.
    - o one suggested the variation in Committee meeting frequency be reviewed.
    - o one spoke to difficulties requiring two bank account signatories (which is a requirement of their respective bank, not Council).
    - o one suggested the *Guidelines* include the procedures for reactivating an inactive Precinct Committee/questioned why AGMs must be held in November annually.
    - o one noted that loss of hard copy DA plans is disappointing, and Council should offer alternate formats to Committees to view DA plans at meetings. DA plans are available online - technology/equipment could be provided to enable the display of plans at meetings.

c) Precinct area boundaries

- • Boundary criterion (Recommendation No. 2):
    - o six Precinct Committees overtly stated their support for boundary realignment, with six against, three 'other' and one did not state a preference. Some of the submissions that indicated they were opposed to boundary changes included preferences for the exhibited options.
    - o reasons against suburb-based alignment - suburb boundaries not always obvious, unfair impost on larger sized suburbs, program focus is on local issues/natural groupings/communities of interest (character), must be walkable, lack of evidence for economies of scale.
    - o logistical concerns raised - larger sized areas require larger meeting venues, if too big lose voice/too many competing priorities, difficulty obtaining volunteer office bearers, more time required for office bearers to respond to more queries.

- Naming (Recommendation No. 1):
  - majority prefer current program name i.e. do not support a name change.
  - reasons against change - well established term, not perceived as ambiguous, don't change for change's sake, and dictionary definition.
  - one alternate suggestion received - Neighbourhood Groups/Meeting.
  - some concern about individual Committees names if Precinct areas change - how will the new names be determined?

d) Combined Precincts Committee (CPC)

- Role and function review (Recommendation 3A):
  - half support for the proposed review
  - no specific reasons were given as to why support - those in favour noted that the CPC works reasonably well as is/is valuable.
  - reasons against include - perception currently functions well seems to be performing, can't see benefit in change, no need to over police as unpopular individuals find themselves outvoted/not supported etc.

- Changes to terms of reference (Recommendation 3B):
  - suggestions included: Co-Convenors should be recent ex-Chairs of individual Committees; Co-Convenors should hold their positions for two years minimum, with one standing for re-election each year for continuity; agenda items should be LGA wide or issues concerning multiple Precinct area; briefings by Council; and sub-committees working closely together on common 'hot spot' issues.

2. Stage 2 Overview

The Stage 1 feedback was used to guide the scope of the Stage 2 consultation, which was largely externally facilitated by PlanCom Consulting. The consultant was commissioned to facilitate workshops with representatives from active Precinct Committees and interviews with a sample of stakeholders, as well as to prepare a consolidated consultation outcomes report (Attachment 4), inclusive of an overview of the Stage 1 feedback and the opt-in survey and draft recommendations.

Council conducted an opt-in survey targeting those who do not currently participate/were unaware of the Precinct System to ascertain reasons for non-participation.

2.1 Workshops

The two-phase Stage 2 workshops were exclusively for active Precinct Committees; Phase A occurred in November/December 2020 and Phase B in January/February 2021. Four workshop times were offered in Phase A and three in Phase B (a fourth planned workshop was cancelled due to a clash with the Beaches Link EIS consultation). One option per phase was held in-person and all other workshops were conducted remotely online.

Each workshop was limited to a maximum of 20 participants (catering for up to 80 participants total). Each active Precinct Committee was entitled to up to a maximum of four representatives per phase. For continuity it was expected that the same people be involved through both phases.

There were 38 participants in the Phase 2A workshops, representing 16 Precinct Committees; and 33 participants in the Phase 2B workshops representing 15 Precinct Committees. 28 participants participated in both phases.

The workshops included an overview of the Stage 1 feedback, inclusive of proposed matters to be addressed via the updated Precinct System Guidelines in response to issues raised, proposed marketing and promotion methods to be included within the updated Communications Plan (which will detail how Council will promote the Precinct System and as well as individual Committee promotion) - to which there is desire for Precinct Committees to be invited to provide feedback on the draft Plan, a proposal to change the current CPC format to similar to the format as used by Randwick Council (one of only two other councils in NSW with active Precinct Systems) in which the meeting is chaired by the General Manager (refer to section 2.4.2) - which received strong opposition from the majority of Precinct Committees; and draft revised boundary options prepared in response to the Stage 1 and 2A feedback - nothing that a further round of consultation was foreshadowed via formal exhibition of the final boundary options.

The key issues raised/feedback received via the workshops is detailed in Attachment 4.

2.2 Interviews

The consultant conducted 12 interviews with key stakeholders, including:

- office bearers from a sample of four active Precinct Committees
- office bearers from a Precinct Committee that recently went into recess
- the Co-Convenors of the Combined Precincts Committee
- businesses - the opportunity to participate was promoted to all businesses currently involved in Council's Streetscape Committees.
- the two Chambers of Commerce
- Council staff - senior and middle management

The key issues raised/feedback received via the interviews is detailed in Attachment 4. In summary:

- both Council staff and Precinct representatives noted the importance of the two-way information exchange facilitated by the Precinct System;
- for Precinct Committees, the interviews provided the opportunity to also expand on feedback provided via the Stage 2A workshops; and
- a key finding from the interviews with local businesses including the Chambers of Commerce was a lack of awareness of the Precinct System.

2.3 Survey

Council conducted an opt-in online survey to ascertain reasons for non-participation by those not actively involved in the Precinct System - seeking input from non-participants to determine the level of awareness of the Precinct System, why they do not currently participate, how they prefer to receive information about Council programs and whether they think that the System should be open to all those who are currently eligible to participate.

The survey ran from 26 November 2020 to 5 February 2021 and received 136 responses.

The survey was promoted via the following methods:

- Project web page - 779 views
- Adverts in the Mosman Daily (printed edition)
- Stall at the Northside Produce Market
- Facebook posts:
    - 2 December 2020 - reached 11.7K, with 384 clicks and 50 engagements
    - 20 January 2021 - reached 886 people with 34 engagements

The key survey findings were:

- over half (56%) the respondents are aware of the Precinct System.
- of those aware, the top three reasons impacting participation are 'other', 'meeting format - don't like how the meetings are run' and 'meeting time - starts too early or too late'. Other reasons included scheduling conflict/other commitments, lack of awareness and negative/poor past experience.
- of those not aware, the top three reasons impacting participation are meeting time, meeting frequency and meeting format.
- the top five preferred sources of information are email, eNewsletter delivered by email, flyer in letterbox, Facebook, and hard copy Council Newsletter, North Sydney News, delivered to all households. These are consistent with the 2020 Customer Satisfaction Survey findings.
- the majority of respondents felt the currently program eligibility should remain - the most common reason was acknowledgement that the North Sydney LGA is made up of a number of stakeholders who use and benefit from community facilities, therefore, to ensure representativeness, the four key groups - residents, students, workers and property owners/businesses - should have the opportunity to have their say, and this collect input generates innovation.

The survey results will be used to inform the Communications Plan.

2.4 Draft Recommendations

In response to the Stage 1 and Stage 2A feedback, PlanCom Consulting prepared nine draft recommendations and provided Precinct Committees the opportunity to provide feedback on these via the Stage 2B workshops. The recommendations are summarised in section 7 of

Attachment 4.

Not surprisingly, the proposed changes to Precinct area boundaries (Recommendation 5) and to the status quo of the CPC format (Recommendation 8) were not favoured by the majority of Precinct Committees. This is further discussed under sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2.

The consultant's draft recommendations advised of the key focus areas to be addressed by way of the final recommendations formulated by staff. Attachment 1 details the management response to the recommendations, outlining the proposed actions to implement the recommendations. Management level of support for the recommendations, is indicated as follows:

- Fully support - Recommendations 2, 3, 4, 7 and 9;
- Partially support - Recommendations 1, 5 and 6; and
- Alternate action - Recommendations 8.

This report focuses on the two recommendations (5 and 8) which address the two issues of greatest concern to active Precinct Committees, while majority support was received via the Stage 2B workshops for all other recommendations.

2.4.1 Precinct Area Boundaries (Recommendation 5)

As background, the current Precinct area boundaries are the result of numerous amalgamations from the original 56 that have occurred since the program's inception. The most significant recent boundary change occurred in 1995, when Wollstonecraft and Nicholson Precinct areas merged. Minor boundaries changes occurred in 2004 in response to some Precinct Committees reporting anomalies between different versions of Precinct area maps used by Council. These anomalies were geographic or concerned Council's historical records of Precinct boundaries. In response, all Precinct Committees were asked to provide feedback on any minor boundary changes they felt were necessary and the maps were updated accordingly.

The 2006 Review did not consider boundaries. In 2008 a proposal to redistribute the CBD Precinct within the neighbouring Precinct areas was proposed, while this had the support of the Precinct Committees it was opposed by the North Sydney Chamber of Commerce and ultimately not supported by Council. Attempts to reactive the CBD Precinct were short lived. This report revisits the 2008 proposal concerning the redistribution of the CBD Precinct.

The 2012 Review foreshadowed changes to Precinct areas to occur during Stage 2, however that Review was discontinued at the end of Stage 1. The boundary options prepared for Stage 2 of this Review were used as the basis for preparing the initial options presented in the current Review.

The 2020/21 Stage 1 Discussion Paper overtly stated Council's intent to reduce the total number of Precinct areas, with preference for Precinct areas to be aligned with suburb boundaries, as occurs in both Randwick and Waverley council areas (the only two other Precinct Systems operating in NSW), and within of the North Sydney Precinct System e.g.

Wollstonecraft, Waverton and Cremorne Point Precinct areas largely align to their respective suburb boundaries.

The Discussion Paper proposed administrative and financial benefits of a lesser number of Precinct areas. As explained to Precinct Committees during Stage 2, a reduction in the number of Precinct areas may not necessarily generate cost savings to Council, similarly the amount of funds allocated to the program would not necessarily decrease nor increase, rather how funds are allocated could change e.g. the amount of operational funding per Committee could increase if there were less without an increase in the overall program budget, and residual funding be allocated to marketing and promotion to increase awareness, attract more participants to the program etc. However, in terms of administration and staff resources, a reduction in the number of Precinct areas would in part reduce the amount of administration required which can be directed to the enhancement of Council's other engagement programs.

Mixed feedback was received during Stage 1. As previously noted, some Precinct Committees supported boundary realignment, and some did not.

Reasons given against suburb-based alignment included that suburb boundaries are not always obvious, would create unfair impost on larger sized suburbs, concerns about loss of communities of interest (character) and lack of walkable sized areas. Feedback was also received that there was a lack of evidence for economies of scale. Logistical concerns were raised including larger sized areas requiring larger meeting venues, potential to lose voice their voice if too big, difficulty obtaining volunteer office bearers, and more time by office bearers would be required to respond to more queries.

An outcome of the Stage 2A workshops was development of "top 10 boundary criteria" (refer to Attachment 4), which the consultant has recommended Council use to inform revised boundary redistribution options. It is acknowledged that some criterion is subjective/open to interpretation and/or self-serving, including:

- agreement by Precinct Committees to proposed changes - this does not take into consideration other stakeholders, including Council.
- high participation rates - is this determined by participation rate against an individual Precinct area's population/residential count or by comparison to other Precinct areas (which may be smaller or larger in size)?
- commonality of issues prevailing on amenity - what constitutes a 'common issue'? It is acknowledged that activity levels fluctuate depending on what projects/issues affect each area at any given time.
- activity levels of the locality/work for the Precinct Committee - the level provided by an office bearer differs from Committee to Committee, some provide a higher level of service than others at their own discretion. This can be addressed via the revised Guidelines, regarding confirmation of the scope of responsibilities of the Convenor/office bearers.
- culture and demographic of the Precinct area - what is meant by "culture"? Note: 2021 Census data not yet available.

Further work occurred inhouse on revised boundary options following Stage 2A workshops conclusion, inclusive of review of all stakeholder feedback received (including Precinct minutes), the abovementioned "criteria", ABS data, internal advice from GIS Mapping, Strategic Planning, Traffic & Transport Operations and Council's Historian and the Waverley Precinct System case study. Revised draft boundary options were presented to the Stage 2B workshops for comment. These were met with mixed reactions. Similar issues were raised as per Stage 1, with some preferring amalgamation of existing Precinct areas and some preferring suburb-based alignment - dependent on the level of impact to be imposed on their own Precinct area. These issues were discussed between senior management and the CPC Co-convenors in April 2021, whereby it was recommended that further work proceed on Option 1 only - amalgamation of existing Precinct areas, subject to consultation with the affected active Precinct areas.

This option is considered less impactful. However, it is acknowledged that such includes several significant issues that need to be explored (noting that many are consistent with the concerns raised in opposition to Option 2). While a key objective is to increase active Precinct Committee coverage LGA-wide, it is acknowledged that the following issues need to be explored further when amalgamating existing Precinct areas:

a) size - this will significantly increase the size of some Precinct areas not only in terms of land size, but also population (no. residents/no. properties).
b) venues - larger Precinct areas may require larger venues to accommodate the desired increased level of participation. The availability of suitable venues within proximity is noted, as are the potential physical distancing limited under COVID safety requirements.
c) impact on office bearers and current participants - changing Precinct area boundaries may increase the workload for office bearers. A change in meeting venue/format may also prohibit/deter some current members from participating. The flip side is that it presents the opportunity to attract participation from a new/wider demographic via re-marketing; and
d) cost - including, but not limited to possible need to use non-Council venues which incur a hire fee and increase printing and distribution costs associated with flyers.

It is noted that two temporary mergers have occurred since the Review commenced. In February 2021, Bennett and Harrison Precinct Committees voted to temporarily merge until the Review is finalised. In April 2022, Union and Edward Precinct Committees voted to temporarily merge for a trial period of three months.

It is recommended that further consultation occur, by way of a public exhibition period; providing Precinct Committees and other interested stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback on the revised maps (Attachments 2 and 3) which will seek to integrate inactive Precinct areas with their adjacent/most relevant active Precinct area.

Currently eight (of 25) Precinct areas are inactive - Anderson, Bennett, Bradfield, Bridgeview, CBD, Hayes, Kurraba and The Plateau.

The table below outlines two options for merging inactive Precinct areas with adjoining active Precinct areas. These revised options would reduce the total number of Precinct areas from 25 to 16, inclusive of the following.

It is noted that the original revised options (as presented to Council on 24 May 2021) were prepared based on feedback received during Stages 1 and 2. Subsequently, Registry Precinct Committee made a submission (distributed under separate cover to all Councillors) requesting consideration of a merger between Registry Precinct (active) and Bridgeview Precinct (inactive), instead of a Bay/Bridgeview/The Plateau merger.

Revised Option 1A	Revised Option 1B
1. Bennett/Harrison 2. Kurraba/Hayes/Neutral/half of Anderson 3. Milson/Bradfield/half of Anderson 4. CBD distributed to adjacent Precinct areas (per the 2008 proposal) 5. Bay/The Plateau 6. Registry/Bridgeview	1. Bennett/Harrison (same as option 1A) 2. Kurraba/Hayes/Neutral/half of Anderson (same as option 1A) 3. Milson/Bradfield/half of Anderson (same as option 1A) 4. Stanton/half CBD 5. Edward/Union/half CBD 6. Bay/Bridgeview/The Plateau

Deferral of the report, on 24 May 2021, provided the opportunity to collate and present, in the following table, the preliminary sentiments of the Precinct Committees who would be affected by the proposed boundary changes.

Precinct	Feedback
Bay	Supports Registry Precinct's request (to merge with Bridgeview Precinct area) leaving Bay/The Plateau Precinct merger; i.e. the new Precinct area will not be too big.
Edward	Prepared to merge with Union Precinct if required, but not with part of the CBD Precinct; Motion, 9 June 2021: Edward Precinct recommends that it merges with Union Precinct.
Harrison	Supports merger with Bennett Precinct; has since 2019 been holding joint meetings on common topics; and since late 2020 (when Chair resigned) has extended their meetings, including notification, to Bennett residents.
Lavender Bay	Awaits revised maps to discuss formally within the Precinct. Has been monitoring the lower end of CBD for many years, e.g. DAs discussed; willing to accept a modest adjustment per the 2008 proposed map - incorporating the William St, Pacific Hwy and Mount St triangle.
Milson	Supports a merger with Bradfield Precinct. Concerned about the logistics of flyer delivery for a larger area.
Neutral	Support proposed redistribution/have been advocating for Kurraba and Hayes to formally join Neutral Precinct, these are natural areas to merge with; also in agreement to include part of Anderson Precinct. Concerned whether current level of operational funding will service larger size area in term of flyer delivery costs.
Stanton	Supports a partial merge with CBD Precinct; for many years have invited residents from the CBD/covered CBD issues etc; would require access to a larger venue if size increases; currently promote meetings via email group/word of

Precinct	Feedback
	mouth/older members unable to distribute flyers; support standardised meeting day/week to aid LGA-wide promotion/awareness.
Union	Supports merger with Edward Precinct. Acknowledge logistical issues still need to be considered.

As demonstrated by the above, overall, there is support from the affected active Precinct Committees for the proposed boundary changes, subject to finalisation of the associated logistical issues identified including (but not limited to) venues, flyer delivery and operational funding. The logistical issues will be explored by staff during the exhibition period and will be reported via the post-exhibition report.

The purpose of proposed next, and final, round, of consultation is to seek feedback, particularly from eligible stakeholders within Precinct area affected by the proposed boundary changes, as to the advantages and disadvantages of each option, i.e. where boundaries should fall, and suggested names for each new Precinct area. During the public exhibition period, other active Precinct Committees, not directly affected by the revised options can also propose voluntary mergers with their neighbouring Precinct area(s), with a prerequisite that all affected Precinct Committees must agree.

The exhibition period will seek stakeholder preference per Precinct area against the following options:

a) Option 1A
b) Option 1B
c) Other (please specify - can include voluntary amalgamation proposal)
d) No change to existing boundaries

It is recommended that Attachments 2 and 3 be publicly exhibited in May to July 2022 (for a minimum of 60 days as not all Precinct Committees meet monthly). Promotion of the public exhibition will include the following methods:

- Council website and project web page
- North Sydney News (pending timing)
- hard copies on display at the Customer Service Centre and Stanton Library
- flyer letterbox dropped to all residents within the Precinct areas proposed for amalgamation (i.e. within 17 of the current 25 areas as the proposed changes to not affect all Precinct Committees)
- direct letter to affected Precinct areas
- memorandum to all Precinct Committees
- social media posts
- adverts in local media publications (paid)
- information stall at local markets
- noticeboards/bus stops;
- hard copies printed and distributed to all Precinct Committees.

Note: In the event that a voluntary merger by any Precinct Committees is proposed a further round of consultation will be required for the affected Precinct areas.

The post-exhibition report be presented to Council in October 2022, with view that the boundary changes come into effect from the next financial year (2023/24). This provides ample lead time for promotion of the newly created Precinct Committees, and LGA-wide promotion of the Precinct System at large, to occur between January to June 2023.

Further, it is recommended that following finalisation of the Precinct area boundaries, that they be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure they best meet current and future needs - rather than to continue with the past practice of arbitrary boundaries because of amalgamation of existing Precinct areas. The level of participation and active status of revised boundaries will be monitored, and where four or more Precinct areas are inactive for more than two years, that the suburb-based boundaries proposal will be re-explored.

2.4.2 Combined Precincts Committee (Recommendation 8)

The consultant's recommendation was in response to the proposed model that staff posed via the Stage 2 workshops. It was recommended that the proposed changes be "better described" by the Council inclusive of "its objectives and the expectations for the CPC and what CPC members can expect from participating". In response, the following revised model (largely based on the equivalent model in operation by Randwick City Council) was communicated via the CPC meeting held on 23 February 2021:

a) Format - meet for the purpose of information exchange verses "committee" with sense of formality/assumed formal standing. No motions/resolutions are passed i.e. no voting.
b) Purpose - like current; bring together the Precinct executives to discuss issues with each other and two-way information with Council via staff presentations on major projects/issues of LGA concern or affecting multiple Precinct areas.
c) Chair - General Manager or delegate.
d) Eligibility - retain the maximum two representatives per Precinct Committee.
e) Meeting frequency - four to six meeting per annum, retaining secretarial support by Council's Community Engagement Coordinator.
f) Agenda - set by Council, with suggested agenda items invited form individual Precinct Committees.
g) Terms of Reference - current document to be revised.

The proposed amendments to the CPC format were met with strong dissatisfaction by Precinct Committees. In response, a meeting between senior management and the CPC Co-convenors held in April 2021, whereby it was agreed that the change in CPC format proposal be discontinued. In addition, it was agreed that general business items be discontinued (consistent with Local Government meeting practice) and Council staff will be ex officio members. Council will continue to support four to six CPC meetings per annum with secretarial support (including minute taking, agenda items coordination and pre-Agenda meeting with the Co-convenors), and the number and timing of meetings to be agreed between the Co-Conveners and Council's Engagement staff).

3. Summary and Recommended Next Steps

Significant work has gone into the Review to date, including by Precinct Committees. It is proposed to conclude the Review as soon as practical so as not to prolong angst and uncertainty with active Precinct Committees, and to put in place the necessary program improvements, including increased marketing and promotion.

The Review has explored a wide range of issues related to the Precinct System's operation. Many are administrative, which some stakeholders consider of minor concern; nevertheless, the consultation process to date has been valuable in seeking to resolve issues not covered by the current Guidelines and associated policies. Majority support for most recommendations was confirmed via the Stage 2B workshops. Not unexpectantly, the matters where significant changes were proposed have received mixed reactions by Precinct Committees, this included changes to Precinct area boundaries and the CPC - Section 2.4 of this report specifically details the management response to Recommendations 5 and 8.

Attachment 1 details the management response to the consultant's recommendations. This format is consistent with how the 2006 Review recommendation were presented to Council. It recommends that:

- the Stage 2 Consultation Outcomes Report, prepared by the consultant, be received and noted (Attachment 4);
- the management responses be endorsed (Attachment 1) and the actions requiring budgetary consideration as part of preparation of the draft 2023/24 Operational Plan & Budget;
- a further, and final, round of consultation occurs regarding Precinct area boundaries, as outlined in this report:
  - Attachments 2 and 3 will be publicly exhibited for a minimum of 60 days, seeking feedback as to the proposed advantages and disadvantages of each option (applicable to a minority of current Precinct areas), where boundary lines should fall, and suggested names for each new Precinct area.
  - the public exhibition will be directly promoted to the affected active Precinct Committees as well as eligible stakeholders inclusive of a flyer produced by Council and letterbox dropped to all residents within the Precinct areas proposed for amalgamation.
  - during the exhibition period, the non-directly affected Precinct Committees will be invited to propose voluntary mergers with their neighbouring Precinct area(s), noting that any such proposals require the agreement of all affected Precinct Committees.
  - Council staff will be available to address Precinct meetings as invited
  - it is recommended that the exhibition period occur May to July 2022 and that the post-exhibition report be presented to Council in October 2022, with view that the boundary changes come into effect from 1 July 2023 i.e. next financial year (2023/24). This provides ample lead time for promotion of the newly created Precinct Committees and LGA-wide promotion of the Precinct System at large to occur between January to June 2023.; and

- the following documentation be updated, as outlined in this report/Attachment 1:
  - as occurred regarding implementation of the 2006 Review recommendation, the Implementation/Communications Plan will be prepared and the Precinct System Guidelines, Policy and Code of Conduct updated in consultation with active Precinct Committees between July and September 2022; and
  - thereafter associated templates etc will be finalised.

The following table summarises the proposed implementation schedule:

Task	Timing
Public exhibition of Revised Boundary Option Maps (min. 60 days)	Jun to Aug 2022
Finalise Implementation/Communications Plan and update Guidelines, Policy and Code in consultation with active Precinct Committees	Jul to Sep 2022
Post exhibition report prepared	Oct 2022
Council meeting - consider recommendations and resolve next steps	Oct 2022
Promotion/awareness campaign - relaunch Precinct System	Jan to June 2023
New Precinct area boundaries come into effect	1 Jul 2023
Annual General Meetings held - office bearers appointed	Aug/Sep 2023
Office Bearer Induction/training	Oct 2023

Further, it is proposed that following finalisation of the Precinct area boundaries, that they be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure they best meet current and future needs - rather than to continue with the past practice of arbitrary boundaries because of amalgamation of existing Precinct areas. The level of participation and active status of revised boundaries will be monitored, and where four or more Precinct areas are inactive for more than two years, that the suburb-based boundaries proposal will be re-explored.

Management Response to the Consultant's Draft Recommendations

No.	Consultant's Draft Recommendations	Management Response
1	***Eligibility -** further consideration of:* • *Better define property owner;* • *Precinct Committees concern about the resources required for adequate promotion to each of the target groups;* • *Better definition of business as it relates to voting and levels of influence; and* • *Encouragement for more participation to and from business forums i.e. residents participating in Streetscape Committees and businesses in Precinct Committees - potential design of meetings/agendas to facilitate this.* Note: Current eligibility to participate in the Precinct System, as stated in the current Guidelines and Council's *Precinct System Policy* is: "residents, workers, students and property owners from within a Precinct area… Students 15 years and over are eligible to vote."	Partially support - the Guidelines will be updated to include: • definition of property owner • business eligibility defined - limiting to SME/local businesses, not big corporates including major chain supermarkets • revised student eligibility - increase to minimum 18 years. Currently, the Precinct Committees who letterbox meeting invites (flyers) do so to households only. The requirement for flyers will be reviewed as part of preparation of the revised *Communications Plan* (see Recommendation 7), with view to streamline preparation, printing and distribution. The objective of increased awareness and participation by eligible businesses will be aided by the revised *Communications Plan,* which will include targeted promotions to businesses and to/via the Chambers of Commerce. Further, it is recommended that Council's Streetscape Committee program be reviewed (to be included in the next Delivery Program). It was instigated in the 1990s to inform the design of capital works programs for the various commercial areas.
2	***Participation in Multiple Precinct Committees -** participation across multiple Precinct Committees should be allowed where participants meet the criteria for participation but consideration should be given to limiting the ability for participants to hold office in more than one Precinct Committee. (to be captured in the revised Guidelines)*	Support - such is currently not addressed by the current Guidelines, but experienced by some Precinct Committees. The Guidelines will be updated to reflect: a property owner with an interest in more than one Precinct area can attend all active Precinct Committees in which they own property and must an declare interest

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No.	Consultant's Draft Recommendations	Management Response
		where applicable; however they cannot hold office in more than one Precinct area.
3	***Describing Council consultation mechanisms*** *- Council to promote greater understanding of the context of Precinct Committees; Council should map the functions of each and every method for engagement with the community. That is, the Precinct Committees should be shown alongside other methods/programs with explanation of the following:* • *the purpose and contribution to decision making; and* • *who they target in the community - most especially where other methods of engagement are considered to cover particular stakeholder groups or segments of the community.*	Support - promotion of the role/purpose of the Precinct System as an inform/consult method can be strengthened within Council's *Community Engagement Protocol*. Council publicises its decision making cycle via the respective Engagement Strategy per project/proposal. The Protocol guides preparation of each project-specific Engagement Strategy, outlining the scope i.e. how stakeholders can expect to participate. Where Precinct Committees are listed as an inform/consult method, the 'purpose' is to "encourage Precinct Committees to promote consultation opportunity to their members and/or to make a submission". The role/purpose of the Precinct System as an inform/consult method can also be better explained via the annual office bearer Induction Session: • Precinct Committees are to promote engagements/have your say opportunities onto their members. • Precinct Committees can make a submission, however individual submissions should be encouraged. • CPC meetings provide the opportunity for Council staff to present/provide a project overview to Precinct representatives, enabling individual Precinct Committees to best explain the proposal/project within its Committee meeting. • under its Online Information Sessions program, Council proactively provides an overview of each proposal/project; these sessions are open to the public. o Where no Online Information Session is scheduled, and a request for speaker/presentation by Council staff is

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No.	Consultant's Draft Recommendations	Management Response
		received from an affected Precinct Committee - depending on the project/proposal, Council staff will consider convening an Information Session so the opportunity to participate is extended to all stakeholders and/or accept the invitation to address an individual Committee meeting. All references to the role/purpose of the Precinct System program will also be streamlined in the following documents: *Precinct System Guidelines* *Precinct System Policy* *Code of Conduct - Precinct office Bearers and Members*
4	***Timing of Consultation with Precinct Committees*** *- to the extent practicable per decision, Council should publicise its decision making process/cycle and publicise this to all, particularly Precinct Committees. Council should consider the timing of Precinct Committees when setting consultation start and end dates to ensure participation. Some Precinct Committees may benefit from an additional meeting or changing their meeting date to enable them to meet to inform a submission by a Precinct Committee. Council understands that this is not always possible.*	Support - this is proposed to be addressed via instigation of an internal 'Public Exhibition Commencement Schedule', which was endorsed by senior management for trial in March 2021. The intent of the schedule is that notice can be given to a Precinct Committee (subject to Council endorsement to exhibit) enabling them to change the meeting date (at their discretion) so they can meet and discuss the proposal during the exhibition period. This was advised to the CPC meeting held 20 April 2021. Additionally, it is proposed that stakeholder consideration be given to the practicality of all Precinct Committee meetings being held on the same day or week of the month e.g. two weeks prior to Council meetings or one week after Council meetings. The purpose is to streamline promotion and awareness of the Precinct System (e.g. enables generic promotional material and only possible with changes to meeting notices as detailed in Recommendation 7/Communications Plan), as well as a revised internal workflow that would improve Council staff responsiveness to actions arising from Precinct meetings. This proposal is subject to confirmation of

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No.	Consultant's Draft Recommendations	Management Response
		venue availability and potential to hold online meetings as per Recommendation 7.
5	**Boundary Redistribution** - *Council should use the top 10 boundary criteria identified by Precinct Committee representatives during the Stage 2A workshops to inform revised boundary redistribution options, for further consultation with Precinct Committees.* 1. *Focus on locality only/Agreement by Precinct Committee to proposed changes (equal first)* 2. *Natural centres/focus points* 3. *Commonality of issues prevailing on amenity* 4. *Retaining those with current high participation levels* 5. *Areas to reflect essential character of Precinct area* 6. *Not divided by a major carriageway* 7. *Activity levels for the locality/work for the Precinct Committee* 8. *Maximum number of residents/properties for a Precinct area* 9. *Culture and demographic of the Precinct area* 10. *Suburb boundaries (there are 13)* Note: the draft revised boundary options as presented to the Stage 2B workshops were met with mixed reactions, with some preferring Option 1 which involved amalgamation of existing Precinct areas and some preferring Option 2 suburb based alignment - dependent on the level of impact to be imposed on their current Precinct area.	Partially support - in response to Precinct Committee feedback, it is recommended that further work proceed on Option 1 only - amalgamation of existing Precinct areas, subject to consultation with the affected active Precinct areas. This option is considered less controversial. However it is acknowledged that such includes a number of significant issues that need exploration (noting that many are consistent with the concerns raised in opposition to Option 2): a) size - some Precinct areas will significantly increase not only in terms of land size, but also population (number of residents/ properties). b) venues - larger Precinct areas may require larger venues to accommodate the desired increased level of participation. The limited availability of suitable venues within close proximity is noted, as are the current physical distancing limitations under COVID safety requirements. c) impact on office bearers and current participants - changing Precinct area boundaries may increase the work load for office bearers. A change in meeting venue/format may also prohibit/deter some current members from participating. The flip side is that it presents the opportunity to attract participation from a new/wider demographic via re-marketing; and d) cost - including, but not limited to possible need to use non-Council venues which incur a hire fee, and increase printing and distribution costs associated with flyers.
6	**Naming** - *the name 'Precinct' should remain and changes to the name of individual Precincts Committees should reflect new/revised*	Partially support - inclusive of:

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No.	Consultant's Draft Recommendations	Management Response
	areas. Consideration should be made to having the term 'committee' reflect the office bearers and 'group' the participants.	• program name - should be retained given that Council instigated the Precinct System model/acknowledging its 50 year history. The strong association with the name is acknowledged and respected. • individual Precinct area names - pending determination of revised Precinct areas (links to Recommendation 5). • further consideration[1] is required regarding the suggestion that 'committee' reflect the office bearers 'group' the participants as such is not how the majority of Precinct Committees currently operate. Referred to as 'office bearers' or the 'executive' within the current Guidelines. [2]
7	***Administrative support by Council*** *- any changes to the current Precinct System require increased administrative support by Council to facilitate the changes and realise the desired outcomes. Council should work with Precinct Committees to identify a range of appropriate support mechanisms, some having been suggested through this consultation. This might include:* • *a Communications Plan outlining how Council will increase awareness of the Precinct System in conjunction with individual Precinct Committees.* • *introduction of an admin portal to streamline distribution and storage of communications* • *enabling use of remote/online meetings.* • *induction/facilitation training to be delivered online.*	Support - the key reasons to change current administrative support levels to the Precinct System are: • equity - equity - in terms of a consistent level of service to be provided by Council to each Precinct Committee. Currently some Committees receive a greater than average level of support, whilst others receive little to no support outside of response to actions arising via minutes. • increasing participation - while the use of remote Committee meetings was not formally permitted by Council under COVID, a number of Committees have employed use of Zoom (or equivalent); this has had positive benefits with many reporting an increase in the number of participants/ability to reach new people (of wider demographics). • increasing awareness - via improved brand association. Logos have been in place for more than 15 years, however they are not consistently used; flyers are not standardised or distributed by all; some promote meetings to their email lists only (essentially making participation exclusive/i.e. for those in the know); some

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[1] This suggestion does not address how each Precinct Committee/group is collectively promoted.

[2] Note: the recently readopted Code saw introduction of Convenor/Co-Convenor as standard office bearer roles.

No.	Consultant's Draft Recommendations	Management Response
		use social media; little promotion by Council occurs outside of the website etc. • operational funding - some but not all Precinct Committees claim their annual allocation; there was some feedback that the current amount ($1,500) was too low yet not all who claim spend their full allocation; not all have their own bank account; what they can spend the money on requires review e.g. phone and internet; cost savings to be explored regarding flyer printing and distribution (see below proposal), venue hire, online meeting permissibility and reduced number of Precinct area - as any savings can be re-directed to promotion/marketing and provision of remote meeting subscriptions etc. It is recommended that Council: • review/update current Service Level Agreements. • permit individual Committees to use remote meetings (Zoom or equivalent) complemented by a minimum of either 4 (quarterly) or 2 (biannual) in-person meetings (frequency TBD) with a subscription for each Precinct Committee supplied by Council. • continue to produce the weekly Precinct eNews, with the subscription to continue exclusively for office bearers as a central means of communication/notification. • explore options for a low cost/simple to use software solution for managing (storage of/easy access to) correspondence from Council to Precinct Committees (that meets corporate record keeping requirements/integrates with ECM where practical) e.g. similar to apps used by schools/child care centres to correspond with parents or resurrection of the Precincts Extranet site previously in use (built by the IT Department using open source software).

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No.	Consultant's Draft Recommendations	Management Response
		• continue to provide the annual Induction/Refresher Session for office bearers, and that this be delivered online in 2021 (as a trial) with view to creating an e-learning module (allowing any office bearers to complete where they assume office outside of the AGM). • provide mandatory meeting chairing/facilitation skills training for convenors. The previous *Communications Plan* will be updated using the Stages 1 and 2 feedback outlining the methods to be employed by Council to increase awareness of the Precinct System. The promotional requirements of individual Precinct Committees will be included in the updated Guidelines. Individual Precinct Committees will be given the opportunity to provide input into both documents, in due course. New inclusions for the *Communications Plan* are: • enhanced promotion via Council website[3] and the YourSayNorthSydney site[4]; • re-branding - new suite of Precinct Committee logos to be redesigned by Council's graphic designer in consultation with Precinct Committees (to instil brand awareness individual Committee logo variations will be discontinued); • standardised meeting flyer/agenda template, including co-branded with Council logo; • generic DL size flyer distributed biannually[5] - replacing the

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[3] Including "find my local Precinct Committee" function similar to http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/community/community-consultation/precincts; and explanation of what is a Precinct Committee/why get involved, inspired by https://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/residents/precinct_committees.

[4] Project tile via home page providing a direct link back to Council's website, same for Development Applications. Ensuring continuity between the two sites.

[5] Frequency to be determined; alternate is quarterly. Under the current Guidelines, flyer printing and distribution for general meetings is not mandatory. While the majority of Precinct Committees do distribute flyers as a means to increase awareness/attendance numbers, such is only mandatory for AGMs. Flyer printing is largely done by Council at no cost to the Precinct Committee (i.e. provided in addition to Operational Funding). Alternate distribution methods also need to be explored. Originally, Precinct Committees printed and distributed their flyers, sharing this task amongst its members at low or no cost. In more recent times, Precinct Committees have engaged the services of a distributor, incurring a cost (covered by Operational Funding).

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No.	Consultant's Draft Recommendations	Management Response
		printing and distribution of flyers for each meeting per Committee; • promotion via rate notice (pending feasibility/cost); • periodic social media posts including promotion via local community Facebook groups (paid boosts incur minimal cost); • periodic advertising in local media (pending budget); • articles/adverts in North Sydney News (now 6 issues per annum); • signage/posters for noticeboards and bus stops - A4 space to be reserved for exclusive Precinct use; • promotion via Council's new residents kit; and • 50th Anniversary celebration/program of events (timing pending COVID resctiotions).
8	***Changes to the CPC*** *- That the proposed changes to the CPC operations be better described with Council being asked to articulate its objectives and the expectations for the CPC and what CPC members can expect from participating.* Note: the following revised model was communicated via the CPC meeting held on 23 February 2021, to which there was strong dissatisfaction expressed, except for d) and e) at 6 meetings minimum per annum. a) Format - meet for the purpose of information exchange verses "committee" with sense of formality/assumed formal standing. No motions/resolutions are passed i.e. there is no voting. b) Purpose - similar to current; bring together the Precinct executives to discuss issues with each other and two-way information with Council via staff presentations on major projects/issues of LGA concern or affecting multiple Precinct areas. c) Chair - General Manager or delegate.	Alternate Action - Precinct Committee opposition is noted; they want to retain the current CPC format, having independence from Council in setting their agenda and electing their own Co-convenors (x2) from within the Precinct Committees. In response, the proposed changes to the CPC format will be discontinued. Council will continue to support 4 to 6 CPC meetings per annum providing secretarial services i.e. minute taking, agenda items coordination and pre-Agenda meeting with the Co-convenors, adhoc CPC meetings not supported, general business items are no longer permitted to be raised at CPC meetings, and Council staff are ex officio members. CPC Terms of Reference to be updated accordingly.

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No.	Consultant's Draft Recommendations	Management Response
	d) Eligibility - retain the maximum 2 representatives per Precinct Committee. e) Meeting frequency - 4 to 6 meeting per annum, retaining secretarial support by Council's Community Engagement Coordinator. f) Agenda - set by Council, with suggested agenda items invited form individual Precinct Committees. g) Terms of Reference - current document to be revised. A meeting between senior management and the Co-convenors (x2) was held 23 April 2021.	
9	***Precinct System Guidelines (including CPC)** - the current Guidelines should be revised in the context of all input as result of this consultation and should focus on:* • *outcomes Council wants from the Precinct System and individual Precinct Committees; and* • *what Precinct Committees and/or their participants can expect from Council.* *The Guidelines should outline what Council wants to see from Precinct Committees. In addition, it should identify elements including:* • *what is potentially key for Precinct Committees success;* • *expectations around communication to and from staff;* • *roles and responsibilities of Precinct Committee participants and Office Bearers, including that they should:*	Support - Guidelines to be reviewed inclusive of: • edit per Recommendations 1 to 8 changes noted above; • update Council's service levels agreements; • transfer elements of the *Code of Conduct,* including Appendix regarding use of Social Media (as outlined in the report to Council, 30 November 2020); • cross reference with Randwick Council's *Precinct Rules & Procedures* (2015) and Waverley Council's *Precinct Handbook: Precincts Policy and Operational Guidelines* (2013) as indicated above; • include guidance for use of online/remote meetings[6]; and • incorporate success factors - explanation of what is a Precinct Committee/why get involved; including via the annual Induction Session training.[7]

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[6] Inspired by http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/272487/Online-Precinct-Meetings-Guide-for-Members-2020.pdf
[7] Not intended to be KPIs/benchmarks by which the effectiveness of individual Precinct Committees is assessed by Council.

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No.	Consultant's Draft Recommendations	Management Response
	o *allow for balanced presentation of all sides of the discussion and the identification of individual values;* o *play a role in supporting people in their role in supporting people in the individual submissions to Council, but also refer residents to Council to receive information.*	
		Other recommendations - responding to issues identified by Council staff: • enhance the Councillor Induction Program - include an overview of the Precinct System; its role and function and accepting invites to address Precinct Committee meetings (per the Code). • enhance the new Staff Induction Program - include an overview of the Precinct System; its role and function and expectations of Council staff e.g. to respond to actions arising tasked via ECM within agreed service levels, accepting invites to address Precinct Committee meetings etc. • update the Staff Procedures.

10

Precinct System Review - Draft Implementation Plan

This Improvement Plan outlines how the management responses to the consultant's recommendations will be actioned by Council. These actions will improve the role and function of the North Sydney Precinct System, in terms of Council's administration and accountability to and by individual Precinct Committees, and increase community participation through greater awareness of the Precinct System.

There are five key priority areas:

1. Boundaries
2. Policy and Guidelines
3. Marking and Promotion
4. Training
5. Operational Funding

Key Priority Area 1: Precinct Area Boundaries (R5)					
Result: Reduce the total number of Precinct areas and ensure currency of boundaries					
Issue	Outcome	Current Situation	Action	Responsibility	Status
1.1 Precinct area boundaries have not been formally reviewed since the mid-1990s	Reduce total number of Precinct areas, ensuring all eligible participants have access to an active Committee (revised Option 1) - amalgamation of active with inactive Precinct areas - other Precinct Committees, not directly affected by the resided options can also propose voluntary mergers with their neighbouring Precinct area (prerequisite all affected parties are on agreement)	Current Precinct boundaries a result of amalgamation over time of the original 56 areas and no longer reflect original/current criteria - resulting in arbitrary boundaries as a result of amalgamation	1.1.1 Conduct a future and final round of consultation regarding proposed Precinct area boundary changes identified in the Final Report	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
			1.1.2 Prepare and distribute (letterbox drop) flyer promoting the public exhibition to all residents within each Precinct area proposed for amalgamation	Corporate Planning & Engagement	

Key Priority Area 1: Precinct Area Boundaries (R5)					
Result: Reduce the total number of Precinct areas and ensure currency of boundaries					
Issue	**Outcome**	**Current Situation**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
	Suitable meeting venues sourced for new/larger scale Precinct Committee meetings	Not all current meeting venues could cater for an increase in participant numbers should the Precinct area increase in size Limited Council owned meeting venues	1.1.2 Explore suitable meeting venue options for larger sized Precinct areas. Note: costs associated with use of non-Council owned venues are covered by Council, additional to operational funding	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
1.2 Process for seeking to reactivate a Precinct area not publicly documented	Eligible participants aware of process for activating a Precinct Committee in recess	Reactivation process advised to interested parties on request Policy includes reference to how to stakeholders can propose boundary changes	1.2.1 Edit Guidelines: document process proposing boundary changes for considered by Council; and (per the Final Report) following finalisation of the Precinct area boundaries, that they be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure they best meet current and future needs - monitor level of participation and active status of revised boundaries and where four or more Precinct areas are inactive for more than two years, that the suburb-based boundaries proposal (Option 2) will be re-explored	Corporate Planning & Engagement	

2

Key Priority Area 2: Policy and Guidelines					
Result: Policy Guidelines are up to date and address issues identified by the Review					
Issue	**Outcome**	**Current Situation**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
2.1 Convenor not Chair/Chairperson	Office bearer role consistent across all Precinct Committees - Chair to be replaced by Convenor[1]	Various titles in use/ inconsistency in application by Precinct Committees	2.1.1 Edit Policy and Guidelines: Chair to be replaced by Convenor	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
2.2 Property owner not defined	Limit to SMEs/local businesses as opposed to corporates including major supermarket chains	Property owner not defined Business eligibility not defined	2.2.1 Edit Policy and Guidelines: define property owner and business eligibility (R1)	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
2.3 Student eligibility currently too low	Student eligibility increased to 18 years	Students 15 years and over currently eligible to vote	2.3.1 Edit Policy and Guidelines: adjust Student minimum age (R1)	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
2.4 Scope of participation by owners of property within multiple Precinct areas not defined (R2)	Property owners with an interest in more than one Precinct area can attend all active Precinct Committees in which they own property, and must an declare interest as applicable	Not addressed in Policy and Guidelines but experienced by some Precinct Committees	2.4.1 Edit Policy and Guidelines: a property owner with an interest in more than one Precinct area can attend all active Precinct Committees in which they own property and must an declare interest where applicable	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
	Eligible to hold office in one Precinct area only	Not addressed in current Guidelines but experienced by some Precinct Committees	2.4.2 Edit Policy and Guidelines: a person cannot hold office in more than one Precinct area	Corporate Planning & Engagement	

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[1] introduction of Convenor/Co-Convenor as standard office bearer roles via *Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers & Members* readopted in November 2020.

3

Key Priority Area 2: Policy and Guidelines					
Result: Policy Guidelines are up to date and address issues identified by the Review					
Issue	**Outcome**	**Current Situation**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
2.5 Role of Precinct Committees within Council's community engagement framework not defined (R3)	Outline what Council wants to see from Precinct Committees	Guidelines do not currently detail the outcomes Council wants from the Precinct System and/or individual Precinct Committees, nor what Precinct Committees and/or their participants can expect from Council	2.5.1 Edit Community Engagement Protocol: illustrating how the Precinct System as an inform/consult method sits within Council's engagement framework[2]	Corporate Planning & Engagement `	
			2.5.2 Edit Policy, Code and Guidelines: streamline references to the role/purpose of the Precinct System within the Community Engagement Protocol	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
			2.5.3 Edit Guidelines: incorporate success factors in - explain what is a Precinct Committee/why get involved - Office Bearer roles and responsibilities (R9)	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
			2.5.4 Update the Induction Module: better explain the role/purpose of the Precinct System as an inform/consult method (R3)	Corporate Planning & Engagement	

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[2] include diagram of the context of Council's engagement methods, e.g. Precinct Committees, Streetscape Committees, Online information sessions program etc

4

Key Priority Area 2: Policy and Guidelines					
Result: Policy Guidelines are up to date and address issues identified by the Review					
Issue	**Outcome**	**Current Situation**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
2.6 Timing of Council engagements/public exhibitions does not always align with the meeting schedule for affected Precinct areas. (R4)	Instances reduced where an engagement period conflicts with the applicable (target) Precinct Committee/s (i.e. an identified key stakeholder) unable to meet to consider proposal prior to the submission deadline	Precincts meeting schedule does not necessarily align with timing of Council engagements, meeting schedules/deadlines, prohibiting Precinct Committees as key stakeholder/within affected area to participate effectively in the opportunity to have a say	2.6.1 Implement a corporate Engagement Schedule - new engagements/public exhibitions commence one week after endorsement by a Council meeting, unless otherwise specified	Corporate Planning & Engagement	*In progress*
			2.6.2 Consult with Precinct Committees regarding the practicality of all Committee meetings being held on the same day or week of the month e.g. two weeks prior to Council meetings or one week after Council meetings [links to 3.3.2]	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
2.7 Permit and resource remote Committee meetings (R7/9)	Permit Precinct Committees to hold remote meetings[3] complemented by a minimum of either four (quarterly) or two (biannual) in-person meetings with a subscription for each Precinct Committee supplied by Council	Use of remote meeting format is currently not formally permitted by Council; this has had positive benefits e.g. increase in the number of participants, ability to reach new people/wider demographics	2.7.1 Consult with Precinct Committees regarding to determine the minimum in-person meeting frequency per annum	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
			2.7.2 Check what remote meetings support Randwick/Waverley Councils supply to Precinct Committees	Corporate Planning & Engagement	Completed

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[3] Zoom or equivalent

5

Key Priority Area 2: Policy and Guidelines					
Result: Policy Guidelines are up to date and address issues identified by the Review					
Issue	**Outcome**	**Current Situation**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
			2.7.3 Edit Guidelines: include guidance/privacy requirements for use of online/remote meeting format[4] to ensure consistency in application per Committee [links to 5.1.2.]	Corporate Planning & Engagement/Privacy Officer	
			2.7.4 Review Attendance Sheet template: update accordingly [links to 2.13]	Corporate Planning & Engagement/Privacy Officer	
2.8 Admin portal required to streamline/ provide centralised folder/filing system for Precinct related correspondence including templates, memorandums and weekly eNews (R7)	Portal established for exclusive use by Office Bearers, reducing need for individual Committees to save documents on their personal PCs etc	Softcopy templates/forms issued annually and available on request; and/or available via Precinct eNews standing items Previously templates/forms were issued annually via a CD and correspondence sent periodically via email, with each Committee saving their end, as required Electronic forms not in use/not promoted via Council website to avoid misuse by the public	2.8.1 Establish a secure section within the Your Say North Sydney site to store 'Precinct use only' templates, correspondence etc	Corporate Planning & Engagement	*In progress*
			2.8.2 Edit Guidelines: include reference to the Precinct use only admin portal	Corporate Planning & Engagement	

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[4] Inspired by http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/272487/Online-Precinct-Meetings-Guide-for-Members-2020.pdf

6

Key Priority Area 2: Policy and Guidelines					
Result: Policy Guidelines are up to date and address issues identified by the Review					
Issue	Outcome	Current Situation	Action	Responsibility	Status
2.9 Use of social media by Precinct Committees and office bearers	*Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers & Members* refined	Use of social media currently defined via an Appendix to the *Code of Conduct*	2.9.1 Edit Guidelines: transfer Appendix regarding use of social media from the *Code of Conduct*[5] [links to 3.7.1] (R9)	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
2.10 Other matters[6] - as identified via emails/ memorandums to all Precinct Committees need to be included in updated Guidelines	The Guidelines document is a central repository detailing all current requirements of individual Precinct Committees	New/amended administrative procedures are announced via memorandum outside updates of the Guidelines	2.10.1 Edit Guidelines: incorporate matters identified via emails/memorandums currently not included in the Guidelines. Include option for appendices for future updates	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
2.11 Precinct related Service Level Agreements (SLAs) are outdated, they were last reviewed in 2011	The SLAs are up-to-date and consistent with the Policy and Guidelines	Precinct System SLAs concerning the, ensuring consistency with the updated Guidelines	2.11.1 Review/update Council's SLAs concerning the Precinct System, ensuring consistency with the Policy and Guidelines	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
			2.11.2 Make the updated SLAs available via the Precincts online admin portal [links to 2.8.1]	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
			2.11.3 Update Staff Procedures (internal how to guide): ensure consistency with updated SLAs/Guidelines (R0)	Corporate Planning & Engagement	

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[5] Foreshadowed in Council report 30 November 2020 - see Item 3.05 from Governance & Finance Committee meeting held 9 November 2020
[6] Intended as a 'catch all' for other' matters e.g. Local Government Elections provisions, Redacting Minutes for publication on Council website

7

Key Priority Area 2: Policy and Guidelines					
Result: Policy Guidelines are up to date and address issues identified by the Review					
Issue	**Outcome**	**Current Situation**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
2.12 Periodic review of insurance cover	Insurance cover suitable to Precinct Committee activities	Council's insurance cover currently extended to the Precinct System (treated as s355 Committees by the Insurer) - public liability and professional indemnity The current Guidelines permits alcohol provision/service at Committee meetings, but activity not covered by Council's current insurer	2.12.1 Review current scope of insurance cover - clarify whether provision/service of alcohol at Committee meetings still permitted	Corporate Planning & Engagement/Legal & Risk	
2.13 Review internal of privacy procedures in line with Council's revised Privacy Management Plan	Applicable privacy management procedures in place and consistently applied	Attendance Sheets registered in Council's electronic document management system, access not restricted	2.13.1 Update Guidelines and Templates: as needed per actions arising from Council's Records Management Review and updated Privacy Management Plan [links to 2.7.4]	Corporate Planning & Engagement/Privacy Officer	
2.14 Combined Precinct Committee (CPC) Terms of Reference updated consistent with the Review outcomes (R8)	Currency of CPC Terms of Reference	CPC Terms of Reference were last amended by the CPC 2019 absent of formal consultation with Council regarding change in service levels	2.14.1 Update CPC Terms of Reference: in accordance with the Review outcomes/Council resolution	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
			2.14.2 Edit Policy and Guidelines: include reference to the CPC	Corporate Planning & Engagement	

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Key Priority Area 3: Marketing and Promotion/Communications Plan (R7)					
Result: Branding created and consistently applied to ensure brand identification enhanced by through increased promotion					
Issue	**Outcome**	**Current Situation**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
3.1 Promotion of the Precinct System is not overt on Council's website	Improved/enhanced website presence	Precinct System section of website accessible via tab listed under Community Engagement section, located under Council & Meetings[7]	3.1.1 Explore options to enhance promotion of the Precinct System via Council website, including reinstating the address look-up function (per former Council website[8])	Corporate Planning & Engagement/Website Coordinator	
			3.1.2 Promote individual Committee meetings via Community event listings	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
			3.1.3 Add 'why get involved in the Precinct System' information to the Council website[9]	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
			3.1.4 Add standing project tile 'Precinct Committees' to the Your Say North Sydney home page[10] (improving connection with Council's Community Engagement Protocol)	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
			3.1.5 Review standing content per individual Committee page of Council's website	Corporate Planning & Engagement	

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[7] Direct URL is www.northsydney.nsw.;gov.au/precincts;

[8] Or explore "find my local Precinct Committee" function similar to http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/community/community-consultation/precincts.

[9] See https://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/residents/precinct_committees re what is a Precinct Committee/why get involved

[10] Like DAs

9

Key Priority Area 3: Marketing and Promotion/Communications Plan (R7)					
Result: Branding created and consistently applied to ensure brand identification enhanced by through increased promotion					
Issue	**Outcome**	**Current Situation**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
3.2 Precinct System branding not uniform, various logos currently in use	New program branding/new suite of individual Precinct Committee logos (designed by Council's graphic designer) in consultation with Precinct Committees (to instil brand awareness individual Committee logo variations will be discontinued)	Whilst a suite of logos is currently available (developed in the early 2000s), with consistent branding for all Committees, not all Committees use them; some use a logo they designed themselves	3.2.1 Prepare new suite of Precinct logos for use by all Precinct Committees following consultation [11]	Corporate Planning & Engagement/ Communications & Events	
3.3 Precinct meeting agendas not uniform and while not currently mandatory the majority of Committees prepare and distribute flyers	Standardise meeting format/agenda	Committee meeting format/agenda varies from Committee to Committee, as does whether such is letterboxed in addition to email distribution	3.3.1 Prepare agenda/flyer template for use by all Precinct Committees, including co-branded with Council logo and section for Council information/current engagements	Corporate Planning & Engagement/ Communications & Events	
			3.3.2 Council to design and distribute LGA-wide a generic DL size flyer biannually OR quarterly [12] (with magnet on back) [13] and included in Council's New Residents Kit	Corporate Planning & Engagement/ Communications & Events	

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[11] Preference is to instil consistent logos and allows Lavender Bay and Cremorne Point to utilise their current "logos/artwork within their agenda template i.e. with program branding and NSC logo on agendas/minutes

[12] Under the current Guidelines, flyer printing and distribution for general meetings is not mandatory. While the majority of Precinct Committees do distribute flyers as a means to increase awareness/attendance numbers, such is only mandatory for AGMs. Flyer printing is largely done by Council at no cost to the Precinct Committee (i.e. provided in addition to Operational Funding; two Committees currently print their own general meeting flyers; one Committee does not distribute general meeting flyers).

[13] replacing the printing and distribution of flyers for each meeting per Committee

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Key Priority Area 3: Marketing and Promotion/Communications Plan (R7)					
Result: Branding created and consistently applied to ensure brand identification enhanced by through increased promotion					
Issue	**Outcome**	**Current Situation**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
3.4 Council's promotion of the Precinct System is minimal	New promotional strategies trialled		3.4.1 Promote quarterly via North Sydney News (community newsletter)	Corporate Planning & Engagement/ Communications & Events	
			3.4.2 Promote quarterly via social media posts from Council's accounts plus paid promotion via local community Facebook groups	Corporate Planning & Engagement/ Communications & Events	
			3.4.3 Include standing section (Committee meetings listing) within monthly Council eNews	Corporate Planning & Engagement/ Communications & Events	
			3.4.4 Explore feasibility and format options to promote via rate notice mailout (July annually)	Corporate Planning & Engagement/ Communications & Events/Financial Services	
			3.4.5 Explore print and online media advertising options to promote meetings listing, pending available budget	Corporate Planning & Engagement/ Communications & Events	
			3.4.6 Design and print a large scale banner to be periodically displayed across the LGA	Corporate Planning & Engagement/ Communications & Events	

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Key Priority Area 3: Marketing and Promotion/Communications Plan (R7)					
Result: Branding created and consistently applied to ensure brand identification enhanced by through increased promotion					
Issue	**Outcome**	**Current Situation**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
			3.4.7 Explore feasibility of holding a stall at local markets, pending insurance cover	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
			3.4.8 Promote the Precinct System via email signature/ banner from yoursay@ and precincts@	Corporate Planning & Engagement/ Information Technology	
3.5 Use of Council's notice boards as promotional method inconsistent	Standardise Precinct System promotion via Council-owned noticeboards/advertising panels	Council has over 60 noticeboards across the LGA, with the content usually updated every 6 weeks (except Dec/Jan)

Some Committees have keys to the noticeboard/s within their Precinct area

New permanent advertising panels to be installed across the LGA | 3.5.1 Designate/reserve an A4 space for exclusive Precinct use per noticeboard and/or to display 3.5.2 | Corporate Planning & Engagement/ Community Development | |
			3.5.2 Design and print a generic A4 poster to be updated in accordance with the noticeboard change over schedule	Corporate Planning & Engagement/ Communications & Events	
			3.5.3 Designate/reserve a space for Precinct System promotion	Corporate Planning & Engagement/ Communications & Events/Engineering Infrastructure	
3.6 Not all Precinct Committees have a generic email address	All Precinct Committees have their own email address, which can be pass onto when Office Bearers change	While the majority do, not all Committees have their own dedicated email address used by Office Bearers	3.6.1 Assist Precinct Committees to establish generic email addresses; keep access details on file to assist turnover of Office Bearers	Corporate Planning & Engagement/ Information Technology	

Key Priority Area 3: Marketing and Promotion/Communications Plan (R7)					
Result: Branding created and consistently applied to ensure brand identification enhanced by through increased promotion					
Issue	**Outcome**	**Current Situation**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
3.7 Some Precinct Committees have created their own websites and/or Facebook page	Consistent guidance in place, enabling individual Committees to decide whether they will set up and maintain a website/Facebook page	Reimbursement of website costs permitted under the current Guidelines	3.7.1 Consult with Precinct Committees regarding setting minimum website/Facebook page content standards [links to 2.9.1]	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
3.8 50th Anniversary of the North Sydney Precinct System	50th Anniversary is recognised and celebrated	The Precinct System has operated in various formats since 1971/72	3.8.1 Prepare and implement a 50th Anniversary events program	Corporate Planning & Engagement/Communications & Events/ Historical Services	*In progress*

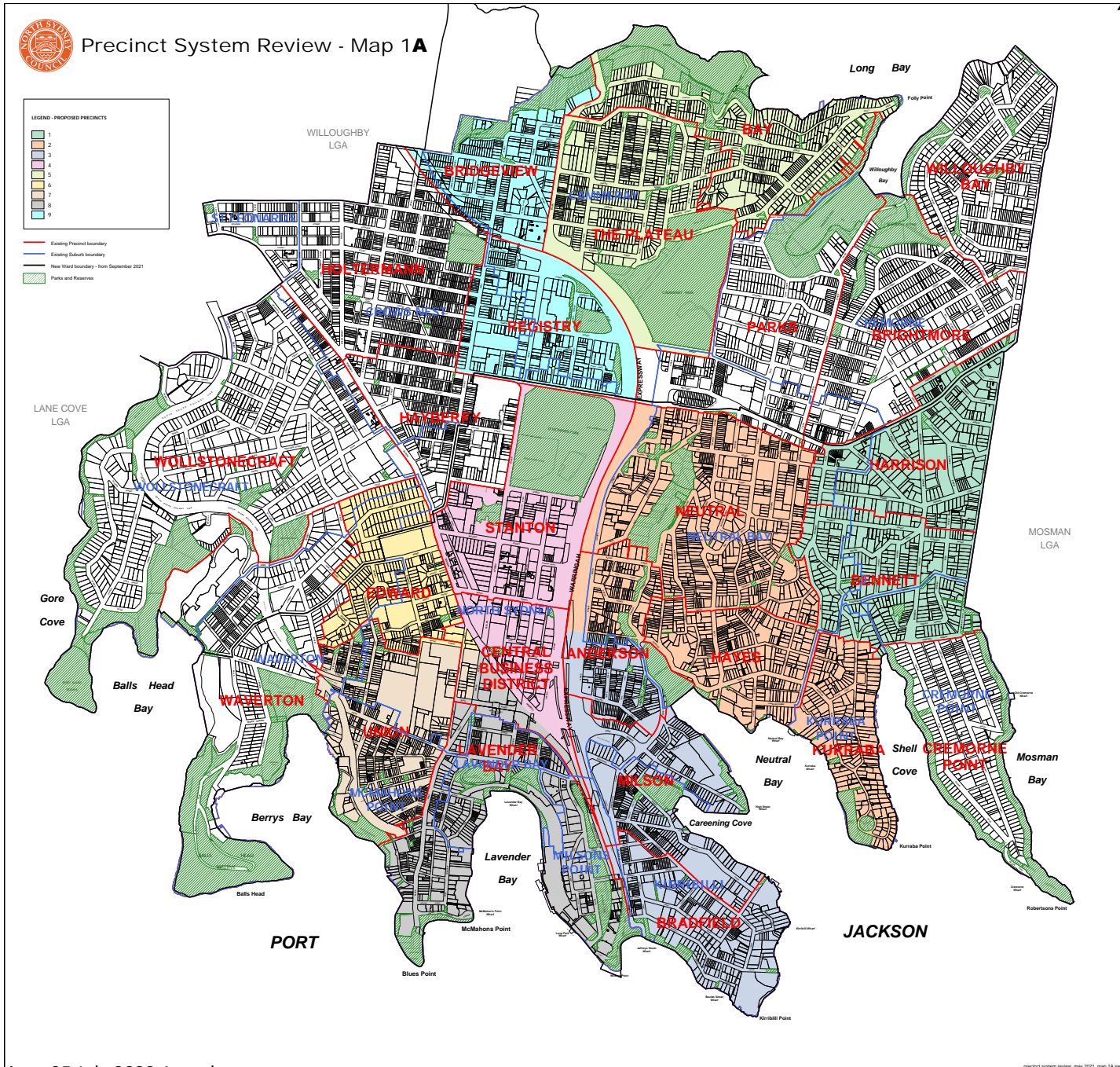| Key Priority Area 4: Training					
Result: Training provided for all stakeholders in the Precinct System					
Issue	**Outcome**	**Current Situation**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
4.1 Annual Induction unable to be delivered in person due to COVID restrictions; on hold pending investigation of online delivery methods	Annual induction provided online, allowing Office Bearers to complete at a time convenient to individuals	Induction Session has historically been held in person, one evening per annum; targeting both new and continuing office bearers (as refresher)	4.1.1 Prepare and deliver mandatory online induction module, accessible via … [links to 2.8.1]	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
			4.1.2 Prepare and deliver mandatory online Code of Conduct module, to be completed at least one during term of office	Corporate Planning & Engagement	

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Key Priority Area 4: Training					
Result: Training provided for all stakeholders in the Precinct System					
Issue	**Outcome**	**Current Situation**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
4.2 Convenors would benefit from facilitation training and skills development for both in-person and online meetings	All Convenors complete mandatory facilitators skills training, at least one during their term of office	Facilitation skills training infrequently offered; in the past has been co-delivered with other councils with Precinct Systems	4.2.1 Deliver mandatory facilitation skills training for Convenors offered annually	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
4.3 Office Bearers would benefit from networking with their peers from other Precinct Systems	Opportunities for networking with Office Bearers in other Precinct Systems periodically provided	There are only three Precinct Systems currently in operation in NSW - North Sydney, Randwick and Waverley. Networking opportunities previously provided, including the *Combined Councils Forum* in October 2009	4.3.1 Explore networking options with Randwick and Waverley Councils	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
4.4 Perception by Precinct Committees that not all Councillors support the Precinct System/relationship between the elected Council and the Precinct System could be improved	Improved awareness/ understanding of the role of the Precinct System by Councillors (R0)	Overview of Precinct System has been included as part of a Divisional overview as opposed to stand-alone module	4.4.1 Overview of the Precinct System incorporated into the 2021/22 Councillor Induction Program	Corporate Planning & Engagement/Executive Manager Governance	
4.5 Opportunity to enhance/improve staff awareness of the	Improve induction of new staff and increase periodically reminders to all staff	Precinct System is referenced in p4 of Employee Handbook (2021) within context of	4.5.1 Promote Precinct System via in person Induction Session	Executive Manager Governance	

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Key Priority Area 4: Training					
Result: Training provided for all stakeholders in the Precinct System					
Issue	**Outcome**	**Current Situation**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
Precinct System including service levels	regarding agreed service levels	community engagement at Council	4.5.2 Prepare standard text to send to new staff to explain the Precinct System and the role/responsibilities in responding to Precinct actions via ECM	Corporate Planning & Engagement	*In progress*
		SLAs last reviewed in 2011	4.5.4 Promote revised Precinct System SLAs to Council staff [links to 2.11.1]	Corporate Planning & Engagement	

Key Priority Area 5: Financial Support by Council					
Result: Operational and special projects/events funding allocation/applicability reviewed					
Issue	**Outcome**	**Current Situation**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
5.1 Current Guidelines limit Office Bearer reimbursement to certain activity types/purchases	Committees able to fully recover costs associated with running a Precinct Committee	Guidelines last reviewed in 2011/12	5.1.1 Consult with Precinct Committees regarding scope of permissible purchases by Office Bearers for reimbursement via Operational Funding	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
			5.1.2 Procure subscription for online meetings for each Precinct Committee[14] [links to 2.7.3]	Corporate Planning & Engagement	
			5.1.3 Explore feasibility of purchasing equipment to aid meeting facilitation for shared use by Committees	Corporate Planning & Engagement/Information Technology	

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[14] OR permit use of operational funding to cover subscription costs managed by individual Committees - potential cost savings through bulk purchase as opposed to individual subscriptions

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Key Priority Area 5: Financial Support by Council					
Result: Operational and special projects/events funding allocation/applicability reviewed					
Issue	**Outcome**	**Current Situation**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
5.2 Most Precinct Committees incur costs associated with the delivery of meeting flyer invites	Expenditure associated with flyer delivery is reduced as much as practical	Flyer delivery costs paid by individual Committee accounts direct to supplier; many use the same supplier who is not registered for GST. When originally set up, flyers were delivered by Committee members (no/minimal cost involved). Note: flyers printed by Council at cost to the Committee (i.e. additional to operational funding)	5.2.1 Explore schedule of rates for flyer delivery [frequency links to 3.3.2]	Corporate Planning & Engagement/Financial Services	
5.3 Special Project/Event funding available but not utilised	Need for Special Project/Event funding reviewed	Not many Committees have applied for funding in recent years, and of those who have their requests have been denied/proposed use not suitable to be funded by this source	5.3.1 Internally review special project/event funding eligibility/scope of permissible uses and allocation/available amount per annum [links to 2.12]	Corporate Planning & Engagement	

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Precinct System Review - Map 1**A**

LEGEND - PROPOSED PRECINCTS
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9

— Existing Precinct boundary
— Existing Suburb boundary
— New Ward boundary - from September 2021
Parks and Reserves

WILLOUGHBY
LGA

LANE COVE
LGA

MOSMAN
LGA

Long Bay

Folly Point

Willoughby Bay

BAY

BRIDGEVIEW

THE PLATEAU

WOLLSTONECRAFT

EDWARD

STANTON

NEUTRAL

HAYBERRY

EDWARD

WAVERTON

UNION

CENTRAL
BUSINESS
DISTRICT

ANDERSON

LAVENDER

MILSON

BRADFIELD

BAYER

BENNETT

HARRISON

BRIGHTMORE

PARKS

REGISTRY

KURRABA

CREMORNE
POINT

*Gore
Cove*

*Balls Head
Bay*

Berrys Bay

*Lavender
Bay*

Balls Head

McMahons Point

Blues Point

Kirribilli Point

Careening Cove

*Neutral
Bay*

*Shell
Cove*

*Mosman
Bay*

Kurraba Point

Robertsons Point

PORT

JACKSON

precinct system review_may 2021_map 1A.swd

Precinct System Review - Map 1B

LEGEND - PROPOSED PRECINCTS
1
2
3
4
5
6
7

—— Existing Precinct boundary
—— Existing Suburb boundary
—— New Ward boundary - from September 2021
Parks and Reserves

WILLOUGHBY
LGA

Long   Bay

Folly Point

BAY

BRIDGEVIEW

CAMMERAY

*Willoughby
Bay*

**WILLOUGHBY
BAY**

ST LEONARDS

THE PLATEAU

HOLTERMANN

CROWS NEST

REGISTRY

PARKS

**CREMORNE
BRIGHTMORE**

LANE COVE
LGA

HAYBERRY

WOLLSTONECRAFT

WOLLSTONECRAFT

HARRISON

NEUTRAL

NEUTRAL BAY

MOSMAN
LGA

STANTON

*Gore
Cove*

EDWARD

BENNETT

NORTH SYDNEY

WAVERTON

**CENTRAL
BUSINESS
DISTRICT**

ANDERSON

HAYES

**CREMORNE
POINT**

*Balls   Head
Bay*

**KURRABA
POINT**

WAVERTON

UNION

KURRABA

*Shell
Cove*

**CREMORNE
POINT**

*Mosman
Bay*

LAVENDER

LAVENDER BAY

*Neutral
Bay*

**MCMAHONS
POINT**

MILSON

Berrys   Bay

Careening Cove

Kuraba Point

*Lavender
Bay*

**MILSONS
POINT**

KIRRIBILLI

McMahons Point

BRADFIELD

JACKSON

PORT

Balls Head

Bluee Point

Kirribilli Point

Robertsons Point

Precinct System Review
Stage 2 Consultation Outcomes

North Sydney Council

Prepared by PlanCom Consulting Pty Ltd

22 February 2021

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Contents

List of Appendices

North Sydney - Precinct System Review

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of the Consultation Process

The North Sydney Precinct System is one of North Sydney Council's current consultation programs. It is almost 50 years old. This program is under review to ensure it remains fit for purpose for both Council and the community and that it can continue to thrive and grow as a means of engaging the community of North Sydney.

PlanCom Consulting was appointed to facilitate consultation for Stage 2 of the Review, providing independent specialist stakeholder and community engagement services to support the project that was managed by Council's Community Engagement Section within the Integrated Planning & Special Projects Department.

This report documents the Stage 2 consultation process and outcomes for the North Sydney Precinct System Review. It describes the outcomes of workshops with Precinct Committees representatives as part of two phases and 12 interviews with a representative sample of stakeholders. In addition, it includes results of an opt-in survey conducted by Council and targeting non-participants to seek reasons for non-participation in Precinct Committees and preferred communication methods. The content in this report builds on the information that was provided through the submissions to the Stage 1 Discussion Paper.

The purpose of Stage 2 consultation was to enable further discussion about the Stage 1 Discussion Paper (green paper), its recommendations, the response to date via public submissions and to help determine the resulting actions for Council. Stage 2 occurred in two phases - the first occured November/December 2020 and the second phase occured January/February 2021.

The objectives of this consultation was to work with Precinct Committee representatives and other stakeholders to, expand on the key issued identified via the Stage 1 submissions, to seek:
- standardise the way in which individual Precinct Committees operate to create a consistent level of service by Council to the community.
- identify priorities for increased support by Council to have the Precinct System succeed and grow.
- update the Precinct area boundaries –
  a) seek stakeholder direction to inform the new boundary criteria and
  b) recommend new boundaries.
- strengthen the role of the Combined Precincts Committee.

The two phases (A and B) for Stage 2 were as follows:
1. **Stage 2A - November/December 2020** allowed workshop and interview participants to:
   - learn about what the community has said through Stage 1 submissions and expand on that information and explore key issues.
   - ensure Council accurately interprets what they have heard in developing recommendations for the future direction of Precinct Committees.
   - learn what is non-negotiable for the Council in going forward with Precinct Committees.

2. **Stage 2B - January/February 2021** allowed workshop participants to:
   - review the initial draft recommendations that are proposed to be made to Council, that are based on what was heard through all consultation stages.

- indicate any concerns with these recommendations, so these might be reflected in changed recommendations that will be communicated to Council by PlanCom Consulting.

1.2 Overview of the Outcomes

A key finding of the consultation was that the North Sydney Precinct System is equally valued by the Council and the community with the residents we spoke with being predominantly those engaged in the system.

It is a unique system of community engagement that serves to enhance the relationship between the community and Council. There are few similar systems across the country and possibly none that have been consistently backed by any council for this duration. The North Sydney Precinct System should be celebrated and recognised.

The demand from community members in general to be engaged in government decision making has increased since the Precinct System was initially established in the 1970s. Stakeholders have more access to information and perhaps increasing distrust of government.

North Sydney Council, along with other local governments across the country, needs to meet the demand to consult widely and involve a range of stakeholders. There are resource demands to meet the expectations and requirements.

While at one point it might have been acceptable to have its engagement effort vested mostly in the Precinct Committees (i.e. all in one program), this is not so appropriate in current times. Current engagement practice calls for a variety of entry points and formats to be offered to the community.

While wanting to continue to support the Precinct Committees and to see their success, Council also needs to provide resources to a range of engagement mechanisms. A key driver for the review is to ensure the Precinct System program remains fit-for purpose for all stakeholders, including Council; and that the current staff and financial resources support the Precinct Committees in a consistent way, but that they also support a range of other mechanisms by Council to engage the community.

The current raw numbers of people participating in Precinct Committees, and who they seem to represent in terms of their demographic profile and their interest, could be argued as not representative of the interests and demographics of all those eligible to participate. In addition, there are vastly different levels of effectiveness and coverage from Precinct Committee to Precinct Committee, which make them difficult for Council to consistently rely on for each and every area. This limits them being able to be used as the blanket method of engagement. It would be ideal if the Precinct Committees had higher numbers of residents participating and local government area wide coverage.

However, those that do participate in the Precinct System are devoted and passionate and contribute much volunteer effort to keep Precinct Committees meeting and providing feedback to Council. Office bearers reported that they saw it as a privilege to be a part of the Precinct System and to serve the community.

Council values having residents directly participating and direct channels for communication, rather than focussed on advocating against Council, as is often the situation with resident action groups in other Local Government Areas.

2. **This Review**

2.1 Timeline of Activities

The following plots a history of the review of the Precinct System and in particular the events that led up to the current review and the next steps:

- 2006 - Last review, resulting in minor changes (detailed in Appendix 4 of the Stage 1 Discussion Paper). No changes were made to the Precinct areas (their number and the boundaries)
- Dec 2017 - Council resolutions to revisit the *2012 Discussion Paper.* [The 2012/13 Review involved public exhibition of the 2012 Discussion Paper from December 2012 to April 2013. Subsequent stages were discontinued by resolution of the former term of Council.]
- Nov 2019 - Council resolved to undertake a review in two stages
- Mar to Aug 2020 - Stage 1 public exhibition of *Discussion Paper 2020* (green paper) and proposed amendments to *Code of Conduct*
- Jul 2020 - Stage 2 facilitation budget approved
- Sep 2020 - Stage 1 submission collation and analysis
- Oct 2020 - Consultant appointed to facilitate Stage 2 consultation
- Nov to Dec 2020 - Stage 2A consultation undertaken
- Jan to Feb 2021 - Stage 2B consultation undertaken
- Late Feb 2021 - final consultation summary signed off by Council staff along with proposed recommendations

2.2 Stage 1 Discussion Paper Recommendations

The following is a list of the recommendations from the Stage 1 Discussion Paper. Subsequent to the Stage 1 consultation, Recommendations 4 and 6 (*) were withdrawn from this consultation process and dealt with in other ways as noted below. These recommendations were not topics of discussion in Stage 2, and hence are not covered in this report.

1. **Terminology/branding** - determine level of interest in changing Precinct area/Committee names (considered in context of Recommendation 2);
2. **Reallocation of Precinct area boundaries** - determine level of support for Precinct area boundary reallocation, with view to reduce the total number of Precinct areas inclusive of consideration of three proposed boundary options provided as a starting point for the discussion;
3. **Combined Precincts Committee's role and function -** review Terms of Reference in context of any other recommendations implemented;
4. *Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers & Members* **-** *amendments to address issues not covered. Note: was concurrently exhibited with Discussion Paper;*
5. **Council's level of support** (resource allocation) - review current administrative/ funding support in context of Council's other engagement programs, marketing and promotion, office bearer training (considered in context of Recommendation 2); and
6. *Other initiatives* **-** *no longer relevant to this Review, as Council resolved to pilot Street Play/Streets as Shared Spaces initiatives post release of the Discussion Paper.*

2.3 Stage 1 Overview

The Stage 1 consultation sought to invite wide interest from the community. The following mechanisms were used to inform the community and the level of particpation are shown in the table below.

Communication Mechanism	Level of Participation
Project web page	649 views
Facebook post	1,141 views with 35 post clicks
Document Library downloads	o Precinct System Discussion Paper x 69 o Community Engagement Strategy x 21 o Related Council report (February 2020) x 16
Proposed boundary redistribution map option downloads	o Option 1 x 51 o Option 2A x 39 o Option 2B x 38

A total of 29 submissions were received in response to the Stage 1 Discussion Paper, comprising 15 from active Precinct Committees, with the remaining 14 (12 online and 2 written) from individuals who are Precinct Committee members. Included in this was a number of submissions from individuals of one Precinct Committee. Additionally, 21 submissions were received in response to the *Amended Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers and Members*, which was concurrently exhibited, including 11 from active Precinct Committees and the remainder from individuals who are members of Precinct Committees.

An overview of what was heard in submissions in response to the Stage 1 Discussion Paper (and comments on Amended Code of Conduct as relevant to the Discussion Paper) can be found in Appendix A.

3. About the Precinct System

3.1 Origin and Evolution of the Precinct System

The Precinct System was once North Sydney Council's primary engagement program but is now one of several engagement programs. In its early days the Precinct System, as a model of community engagement, was considered innovative and was well regarded both nationally and internationally.

The Precinct System originates from an engagement program conducted in the early 1970's as part of a review of the *North Sydney Planning Scheme*[1]. The LGA was divided into 56 residential 'precincts' (consultative neighbourhood committees), each area averaging less than 400 dwellings[2], ranging in population from less than 50 residents to over 2,800 residents[3], with the sole charter of assisting Council to obtain information and advice regarding the Planning Scheme. The original boundaries were supported to reflect physical barriers, such as marked changes in slope, open space corridors, through traffic routes, changes in dwelling environment etc[4].

It became a formal engagement program of the Council in the 1980s and was at that time Council's primary public participation mechanism under its commitment to 'open government', enabling geographically based community engagement on issues of concern.

The North Sydney local government area is currently divided into 25 Precinct areas, with 18 Committees currently active (plus the Combined Precincts Committee). Over time Precinct areas have reduced from the original 56 to the current 25. The Combined Precinct Committee is made up of representatives from the active Precinct Committees with secretariat support provided by Council. Current eligibility to participate in the local Precinct Committees remains open to residents, students, workers and property owners.

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[1] For detailed background information refer to the Stage 1 Discussion Paper.
[2] Ranging between 20 to over 1,300 households per Precinct area.
[3] Pickles, I. Community Involvement in Local Urban Planning - the North Sydney Experience, 1976 p120.
[4] Ibid. p120

The Precinct System has been periodically reviewed by Council, in partnership with individual Precinct Committees, to ensure that it continues to meet the current and future needs of both Council and the local community.

The 1992 Review was in response to several issues raised by Precinct representatives, mainly the need for revision of objectives and guidelines and requests for a review of Council's role in supporting the administration of the Precinct System. A Code of Conduct was introduced in 1993.

The 2006 Review followed concerns that the demographics in many parts of North Sydney had changed and that the Precinct Committees no longer reflected this change, nor could they access the increased population in some Precinct areas. Committee attendance in many Precinct areas, had become low, and as a result some Precinct Committees were no longer a representative voice of the community, unable to fulfil their objectives; and the program may have become static and possibly irrelevant. No boundary changes resulted from the 2006 Review.

The most recent Precinct area boundary adjustment occurred in 2000 with the merger of Wollstonecraft and Nicholson, following Nicholson Precinct going into recess.

3.2 Context of the Precinct System for Council Engagement

The following diagram shows the current engagement programs of Council.
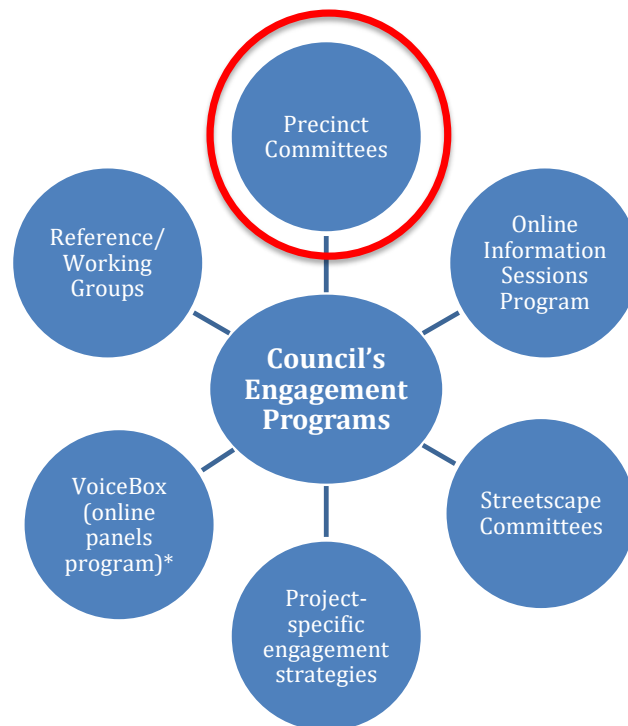
3.3 Overview of the Current Precinct Committees in North Sydney

The following table provides an overview of the activity of the current Precinct Committees.

Precinct	Status	Meeting Frequency	Suburb	Household Count[5]	Property Type[6]	2020 Average Attendees[7]	2019 Average Attendees	2018 Average Attendees
Anderson	Inactive	n/a	Neutral Bay and North Sydney	1,098	RC	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bay	Active	Quarterly	Cammeray	846	RC	23	17	11
Bennett	Inactive	n/a	Cremorne, Cremorne Point, Kurraba Point	964	RCE	TBA	15	16
Bradfield	Inactive	n/a	Kirribilli	1,573	RCE	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bridgeview	Inactive	n/a	Cammeray	886	RC	n/a	n/a	n/a
Brightmore	Active	Monthly	Cremorne and Neutral Bay	2,029	RCE	14	20	19
CBD	Inactive	n/a	North Sydney	412	RC	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cremorne Point	Active	Quarterly	Cremorne Point	1,077	R	34	21	26
Edward	Active	Bi-monthly	North Sydney and Waverton	924	RCE	8	10	12
Harrison	Active	Monthly	Cremorne and Neutral Bay	2,077	RCE	12	14	13
Hayberry	Active	Monthly	Crows Nest and North Sydney	878	RCE	8	12	15
Hayes	Inactive	n/a	Neutral Bay	1,042	RC	n/a	n/a	n/a
Holtermann	Active	Monthly	Crows Nest and St Leonards	2,509	RCE	10	12	14
Kurraba	Inactive	n/a	Kurraba Point and Neutral Bay	836	RC	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lavender Bay	Active	Monthly	Lavender Bay, McMahons Point, Milsons Point and North Sydney	3,018	RCE	23	27	27
Milson	Active	Monthly	Kirribilli and North Sydney	1,599	RCE	18	15	21
Neutral	Active	Monthly	Neutral Bay	2,655	RCE	9	13	13
Parks	Active	Monthly	Cremorne and Neutral Bay	1,588	RCE	16	23	n/a
Registry	Active	Monthly	Cammeray, Crows Nest and North Sydney	1,427	RCE	9	9	10
Stanton	Active	Monthly	North Sydney	1,383	RCE	10	16	21
The Plateau	Inactive	n/a	Cammeray	803	RCE	n/a	n/a	n/a
Union	Active	Monthly	McMahons Point, North Sydney, Waverton	762	RCE	16	23	16
Waverton	Active	Monthly	Waverton	1,584	RC	15	18	19
Willoughby Bay	Active	Monthly	Cremorne	678	R	16	17	15
Wollstonecraft	Active	Bi-monthly	Crows Nest, North Sydney, Waverton and Wollstonecraft	4,205	RC	23	32	46

[5] approximate ABS household count per Precinct area (2016)[2] property type legend: R = residential, C = commercial E = education

[6] property type legend: R = residential, C = commercial E = education

[7] meetings impacted by COVID. Average attendance derived from attendance sheets supplied to Council.

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4. Stage 2 Consultation

Stage 2 included engagement with representatives from active Precinct Committees as well as other eligible stakeholders and Council staff. It was considered equally important to also engage with those who do not participate/were unaware of system or who did previously participate and no longer participate in Precinct Committees - this occurred via interviews and an opt-in online survey.

The purpose of the survey, conducted by Council, was to get the input from non-participants to determine the level of awareness of the Precinct System, why they do not currently participate, how they prefer to receive information about Council programs and whether they think that the System should be open to all those who are currently eligible to participate. A summary of the survey results are represented in section 5.

4.1 Workshops

The Stage 2 workshops were exclusively for representatives of active Precinct Committees, and occurred in two phases - Stage 2A occurred in November/December 2020 and Stage 2B in January/February 2021. Four workshops were offered in Stage 2A and three workshops in Stage 2B (a fourth workshop was cancelled due to a clash with a NSW Government consultation meeting for the Beaches Link EIS). Each workshop was limited to 20 participants. Five workshops were held remotely via Zoom and two were held in person (one for each phase). Each active Precinct Committee was allowed a maximum of four representatives per phase (allowing for a maximum of 80 participants in total). For continuity it was expected that the same people would be involved through both phases.

The number of workshops participants are outlined in the table below. Also which Precinct Committee representatives participated in which workshop through the two phases of Stage 2 is represented in a table in Appendix B.

Workshop	Date	Number of participants	Format
Stage 2A			
1A	27 November 2020	8	Zoom
2A	2 December 2020	8	Zoom
3A	3 December 2020	11	In person - Hutley Hall
4A	9 December 2020	11	Zoom
Stage 2B			
1B	28 January 2021	11	Zoom
2B	1 February 2021	15	In person - Hutley Hall
3B	4 February 2021	7	Zoom

There were 38 participants in the Stage 2A workshops representing 16 Precinct Committees. There were 33 participants in the Stage 2B workshops representing 15 Precinct Committees.

Of the above, 28 were the same participants for both phases.

As a warm up exercise for Stage 2A workshops, participants were asked how they currently travel to Precinct Committee meetings. The options were: drive, walk, public transport, cycle, other. The results were as follows, with the majority currently walking to/from meetings:

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Travel means	1A	2A	3A	4A	Total
Drive	2	2		3	7
Walk	5	5	10	5	25
Cycle			1		1

4.2 Interviews

The following interviews took place during Stage 2A, with the groups and number of participants shown in the table below. Opportunity to participate in the interviews was promoted to all businesses currently involved in Council's Streetscape Committees. A sample of office bearers from Precinct Committees were also interviewed.

Group Interviewed	Number of Participants	Date
Council Staff - Middle management (with frequent interaction with Precinct Committees)	6	7 December 2020
Council Staff - Senior Staff	5	7 December 2020
Business - recruited via the Streetscape Committee	2	15 December 2020
Business - recruited via the Streetscape Committee	1	16 December 2020
Business - representative of the North Sydney Chamber of Commerce	1	10 December 2020
Business - representatives of the Neutral Bay Chamber of Commerce	2	11 December 2020
Active Precinct Committee - representative of Brightmore	1	11 December 2020
Active Precinct Committee - representatives of Edward/Union	2	18 December 2020
Active Precinct Committee - representatives of Neutral	3	14 December 2020
Active Precinct Committee - representative of Milson; who was involved in the North Sydney Planning Scheme review in the 1970s	1	14 December 2020
Inactive Precinct Committee - representative of The Plateau	1	23 December 2020
Combined Precinct Committee - Co-Convenors	2	18 December 2020

5. Survey Outcomes

The survey, which ran from 26 November 2020 to 5 February 2021 received 136 responses. The key findings were:

- just over half (56%) of the respondents are aware of the Precinct System.
- of those aware, the top three reasons impacting participation in the Precinct System are other, meeting format - don't like how the meetings are run and meeting time - starts too early or too late. The 'other' reasons include scheduling conflict/other commitments, lack of awareness and negative/poor past experience.
- of those not aware, the top three reasons impacting participation in the Precinct System are meeting time, meeting frequency and meeting format.
- the top five preferred sources of information are email, eNewsletter delivered by email, flyer in letterbox, Facebook, and hard copy Council Newsletter, North Sydney News, delivered to all households.
- the majority of respondents felt the Precinct System should retain its currently eligibility.

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The most common reason given for this option was acknowledgement that the North Sydney LGA is made up of a number of stakeholders who use and benefit from community facilities, therefore, to ensure representativeness, the four key groups - residents, students, workers and property owners/businesses - should have the opportunity to have their say and that this collect input generates innovation. Refer to Appendix D for the high level survey results. For the full survey results visit https://yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/Precinct-System-Review.

6. Workshops and Interviews Outcomes

The following section outlines what was heard through the Stage 2A workshops and interviews. The response to what was heard is captured in the recommendations that follow description of what was heard from stakeholders. Stage 2B workshop participants were provided the opportunity to discuss the draft recommendations and this report reflects the final agreement per recommendation.

Following each recommendation is a summary of the discussion from the Stage 2B workshops where additional issues were raised or representatives wanted to specifically see their own comments reflected.

The amended recommendations are captured in Section 7 'Summary of Recommendations' i.e. the recommendations to be presented to Council for its consideration as a way forward. It will be a decision of the Council as to whether they are adopted. Note: that this methodology is consistent with the 2006 Review. As part of this previous review the consultant made recommendations to the Council for its consideration following consultation with stakeholders. Council ultimately resolved which recommendations to adopt and subsequently prepared an implementation plan, and supporting communications plan.

6.1 What Stakeholders' Value About the System

The following is a list of what Precinct Committees representatives said through introductions during the workshop, and through other questions in the interviews, that they value about the Precinct System:

Theme	Comment
Representation/ democracy	• It is voice that is representative of the community • Grass roots democracy for every community member to have a say • Pushes the idea of transparency • Democracy as consultative body (not a deliberative body) • The eyes, ears, words and wishes of the community
Ideas/ Issue generation	• Opportunity to submit ideas to improve the area in which we live • Raising common issues • Are a nursery for matters of public interest
Advocacy to government decision making/ improving society	• Opportunity to reverse Council and state government decisions through power of the community to unite • Opportunity to air concerns, advocate against over development • It is good for the Precinct Committees to hold Council to account • To keep Council on the straight and narrow • A mechanism to improve environment and sustainable developments
Community capacity and relationship building	• Developing/forging relationships with people who share common issues • Maintains relevance for local people • Provides for Interaction with other locals

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Theme	Comment
	• Community connection • Valuable community structure • Helping to create rich and vibrant communities • A means of contributing to the creation, enabling and construction of community
Relationship with Council	• Ability to liaise quickly and easily with Council on a range of issues • Environment to harness community involvement in Council issues • Important conduit to Council's executive and Councillors
More general comment	• Value in the Precinct Committee now and knows it has been valuable in the past

The following is what Council staff said in response to the interview question about the value of the Precinct Committees.

- Provide Council with easy access to the community. Not necessarily representative of the wider community but engaged and informed. Provide response to requests/call for feedback.
- Have a good rapport with Council
- They are an early warning system to let us know when there is an issue.
- Know the history of the local area and have civic pride. Retain history of development in the area. Is an important resource. Channel is fantastic for planners and more generally for Council
- When Council have projects going out for consultation it is an avenue to get the message out.
- Can come in with their own voice, own ability to connect - a third party voice. They act as powerful amplifiers of key issues such as state government issues.
- Challenges the status quo
- Provides Council with a structured engagement framework around the community voice.

6.2 Role and Function - Governance

In response to what Council heard through the submissions in Stage 1, Council presented the following proposed changes to the workshops:

- The need for enhanced Councillors and staff induction
- The need for the Guidelines to be updated
- Demand for greater consistency/adherence to the ToR to be able to maintain status as an eligible Precinct Committee supported by Council
- The need for the same level of administrative support to be given to each Precinct Committee, including in relation to printing of flyers.

In relation to role and function or what might be termed 'governance' we heard that both Council staff and Precinct Committee representatives felt that there was too much interference both ways. Precinct Committees try to interfere with what is the remit of Council and Council want Precinct Committees to act as if they are Council. The direction and future guidance needs to better steer the ability for both Precinct Committees and Council to focus on their respective roles - the comment was "Council should do Council, and Precinct Committees should do Precincts". In particular:

- Council staff were concerned that Precinct Committees are:

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- ▪ Too political
        - ▪ Expect that they can make recommendations that will be taken on by Council.
- Precinct Committees said of Council:
        - ▪ There is too much paperwork/bureaucratic requirements as if we are an arm of Council
        - ▪ They do not like it when we have a different view to theirs.

Issues connected to this include:

Leadership
- Need for leadership from Council, and for the Council to recognise that the Precinct Committees are followers of that leadership.

Representativeness
- While in some respects Precinct Committees may not be representative, both Council staff and Precinct Committee members consider them potentially more representative than other consultation means used by Council, that is depending on the project.
- Linked to this is that Council staff feel Precinct Committees can over state their own influence and representativeness - also staff are sometimes not sure when individuals claim to be representing a group - that is whether this is based on group discussion/Committee resolution.
- A Precinct member considered it to be desirable to lock Councillors into a Precinct Committees position (that is to have Councillors be required to vote as per their instructions) - staff indicated concern with this position linked to representativeness as per the above.

Meeting Management
- Requirement to use voting in Precinct Committee meetings that mirrors Council - this is worth review, although many Precinct Committees report that they use voting to bring discussion to a close - a meeting management technique *(that may have other unintended consequences).*
- Management of meetings with levels of formality or informality – there seems to be different approaches and support for these approaches per Precinct Committee.
- Concern about the recently changed *Code of Conduct- Precinct Office Bearers and Members* and its application - feeling that Precinct Committees are going to be disciplined/punished by Council for not following the new Code; that the Code is focussed on stopping certain behaviours, perhaps rather than encouraging behaviours that the Council wants to see more of.

Accountability
- Council requires certain documentation for accountability in return for operational funding.

6.3 Who Should Participate - Eligibility

The question about eligibility is pertinent to the Precinct System's role and function. The question was whether stakeholders thought that it should remain as it is, being open to residents, students, workers and property owners, including businesses, within a Precinct area or whether there should be a narrower focus to participation.

The considerations in raising this are around improved marketing beyond residents who are more often the focus of current promotion, and residents are by far the dominant participants at present. The question was put as to whether it should (continue to) be open to the following people within the Precinct area:

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- **Residents, Students, Workers (18 years plus) and Businesses/Property Owners** - the current situation
- **Residents and Property Owners only** - model used by Randwick City Council
- **Residents only**

Responses from a poll conducted at the Stage 2A workshops were as follows:

	Workshop 1A	Workshop 2A	Workshop 3A	Workshop 4A	Total
Residents, students, workers and businesses	5	4	6	11	27
Residents/property owners only	2	2	4		8
Residents only		1			1
Other					

The question about eligibility was also raised at the interviews and there was a general consensus, even amongst those from business who do not necessarily choose to participate, that the Precinct System should be open to all community stakeholders. Responses to the survey to date also support this position.

Both representatives of the Precinct Committees and businesses considered that business participants are more likely to be small business, as their concerns might align with those of the residents (i.e. traffic, waste collection).

Other comments included:

Confusion about current eligibility criteria including:
- The misconception that the program is currently only for residents - this is demonstrated by some meeting flyer invitations targeting residents only
- Lack of understanding/concern that students (18 years plus) at a school/education facility can participate as individuals, regardless whether they reside in the Precinct area (in the same way that workers can), and workers includes employees of a school/education facility who can participate as individuals.
- Lack of awareness of the Precinct System and the fact that businesses are entitled to participate.[8]

Comments about promotions:
- Concern about individual Precinct Committee resources being required to both market to and actively include non-residential stakeholders.
- Desire that schools participate in Precinct Committees - this does occur in some areas but is not consistent across all Precinct areas; and the need to promote the Precinct System to all school/education facilities.
- A question by one Precinct Committee about whether businesses should receive flyers advertising Precinct meetings.

Comments about Business participation:
- Feeling that Council's Streetscape Committee program and other forums such as the Chambers of Commerce cater for businesses, and that business has its own means for communicating with each other and around issues.

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[8] (this is supported by the recent findings of Council's *Customer Satisfaction Survey 2020*, that found that business awareness of the Precinct System was low at 21% (verses 30% in 2016 and 24% in 2013).

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- Concern about eligible businesses - developers and/or big business trying to stack meetings with people (e.g. multiple share holders) and voting to influence decision making. Precinct Committee representatives had no issue with participation of local business with interest in the area. There was a desire for clearer definition of business and eligibility to vote.
- Businesses suggested that much of a Precinct Committee agenda might not be relevant and so suggested there be an agenda item at the beginning of the meeting for business issues. Businesses might then be encouraged to attend and raise issues relevant to their needs.

General comments were:
- Observation of the low level of participation by students, businesses and workers.
- The position of one Precinct Committee that participation should be limited to residents/property owners only with others welcome to attend meetings but not being entitled to vote.

Despite some comments to the counter, in general there was agreement through all means of the Stage 2 consultation that the Precinct System should remain open to residents, students, workers and property owners including businesses.

> Initial Draft Recommendation 1 – Eligibility (see Section 7 for changes)
>
> Maintain the current eligibility for participation (residents, students, workers and businesses) with further consideration of:
> - The resources required for adequate promotion to each of the target groups
> - Better definition of business as it relates to voting and levels of influence
> - Encouragement for more participation to and from business forums i.e., residents participating in Streetscape Committees and businesses in Precinct Committees - potential design of meetings/agendas to facilitate this.

Discussion during Stage 2B workshops was consistent with the above with the exception that participants wanted property owners to be added to the definition. Also, there was desire that it be made clear that it is Precinct Committees, not Council who are concerned about the lack of adequate resources for promotion.

These changes are reflected in an amended Recommendation 1 in Section 7.

The counter perspective was that the addition of property owners had resource implications for Precinct Committees, and there might be logistical issues reaching property owners who are not always represented in a letterbox drop.

Also, there was some question about the need to break it down by the type of property ownership.

While people agreed that the recommendation represented the view of many somewanted it reiterated that:
- They believe the Precinct System is really focussed on residents, with some believing it should be residents only and others being concerned in particular about business involvement.

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- Business is only welcome when there are issues of their interest.
- Businesses involvement is of concern because they:
  o have their own forums available to them
  o may be able to outnumber residents' views
  o may be big business with little interest in the amenity of the local area
  o are not represented in Council voting so the Precincts should reflect this.

6.4 Participation in Multiple Precinct Committees

Questions put to the workshop participants were:
a) Is this a significant issue that needs to be addressed?
b) If permitted, should people be eligible to hold office in more than one Precinct area?

This topic rendered relatively less discussion/controversy than other topics/ recommendations. There were some who felt that while people might be eligible and participate on multiple Committees (i.e. because they own property in multiple Precinct areas, work in one and reside in another etc) it might be better to minimise their participation as office bearers. That is while they might participate in more than one, they should be able to hold office in one Precinct Committee area only.

> ### Recommendation 2 - Participation in multiple Precinct Committees
>
> Participation across multiple Precinct Committees should be allowed where participants meet the criteria for participation but consideration should be given to limiting the ability for participants to hold office in more than one Precinct Committee. *(to be captured in the revised guidelines)*

There was majority support for this recommendation via the Stage 2B workshops, as this was considered to reflect the majority view. There was support for not holding office in more than one Committee due to the potential for conflicts of interest.

The concerns about this recommendation included that there is a limited number of people volunteering as office bearers to interact with Precinct Committees, so there is no point in limiting participation.

Suggestions for potential conditions for holding office across multiple committees included:
- If it is limited to a duration i.e. maximum three months.
- If it is limited to a total number of Precinct areas i.e. only three?
- where the Precinct Committees they are involved in adjoin.
- where it is an agreement or decision of the Precinct Committee that this can occur

6.5 Council Consultation with Precinct Committees

Weighting of Precinct input vs individual submissions and other means

Through the Stage 1 submissions, and further endorsed during the Stage 2A workshops, was the belief that submissions by Precinct Committees should hold greater weight by Council than the weight given to other means i.e. individual submissions and other means for people to input to Council. Other means are thought by the Precinct Committee members to be less considered. One participant said, "Precinct Committee members do not feel there is adequate value by Council for the time they put in to consider multiple sides of the discussion

over hours at Precinct meetings - more than those using Your Say or other similar quick consultation means".

This concern was for both planning and non-planning submissions, and some of the comments were that:

- More attention should be paid to context than quantity of submissions.
- Need more education about the planning process and the importance of making individual submissions.
- Desire for a formal weighting allocation to Precinct submissions (i.e. equal to number of people attending meeting or registering their views by email).

For Council there is some concern about the Precinct Committees perspectives on the weighting discussion, in particular:

- Council considers it important that stakeholders be encouraged to make individual submissions for publicly exhibited documents/proposals, as this is called for by the NSW Planning System.
- Submissions via Precinct Committees or by copying a form submission, have potentially less influence in the assessment and decision-making process than individuals registering their own views with Council.
- There is a danger that the participant/residents can be led to think that the Precinct Committee is an approval authority and that their contribution through that means is enough.

> Initial Draft Recommendation 3 - Describing Council consultation mechanisms (see Section 7 for changes)
>
> Council to promote greater understanding of the context of Precinct Committees; Council should map the functions of each and every method for engagement with the community. That is, the Precinct Committees should be shown alongside other methods/programs with explanation of the following:
>
> - **the purpose and contribution to decision making** - *The Precinct Committees are considered by Council as inform/consult method in accordance with its Community Engagement Protocol.*
> - **who they target in the community** - most especially where other methods of engagement are considered to more adequately cover a particular stakeholder group than the Precinct Committees.

There was concern about the last dot point, in particular the reference to "more adequately cover" which seemed to be an either/or reference - that is there is the potential to bypass or marginalise Precinct Committees. While this was not the intent, this has been amended to make it clearer that there may be times when another engagement forum or method may be considered to cover a particular stakeholder group.

There was one comment about defining the obligations and responsibilities of Precinct Committees but it is felt that this is covered by Recommendation 9.

Some also still considered that Precinct committees should have a higher weight than other means of consultation in Council.

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Timing of input

Through Stage 1 submissions, and to some extent reinforced through Stage 2A consultation, was concern that the Precinct Committees meeting schedule is not taken into account by Council when scheduling public exhibitions. That is a Precinct Committee within the affected area may not have the opportunity to meet and discuss, or have the time to read and respond to documentation, or the advertising period is between two meetings. The comment was made by Precinct Committee representatives that there is need for flexibility with submission deadlines being extended - that is 28 days is not long enough.

The following recommendation is in the light of understanding that there is always going to be decisions that will need to be made within timeframes that will not suit the Precinct Committees. The intention is to allow scheduling of Precinct Committee meetings to be timed with Council engagements for policies or projects or be in a position to convene special Precinct Committees meetings to give timely input to pertinent local items.

> **Initial Draft Recommendation 4 – Timing of consultation with Precinct Committees (see Section 7 for changes)**
>
> To the extent practicable per decision, Council should publicised its decision making process/cycle and publicise this to all, particularly Precinct Committees. Council should consider the timing of Precinct Committees when setting consultation start and end dates to ensure participation, acknowledging that some Precinct Committees may benefit from changing their meeting date to enable them to meet to inform a submission by a Precinct Committee, as warranted.

There was majority support for this recommendation via the Stage 2B workshops. No changes to this recommendation were proposed, but a suggestion was received to soften it, so that it does not imply that Precinct Committees must change their meeting dates. The recommendation in Section 7 has been changed accordingly.

Some current challenges in timing for the Precinct Committees that were reiterated include that:

- Some Committees meet bi-monthly, are dependent on the venue availability and there would be additional costs for more meetings - making changes to fit with Council difficult.
- The volunteer effort in having additional or changing meetings needs to be acknowledged.
- Council needs to accept late submissions. Council clarified that they do accept late submissions where practicable, and that internal time lines in finalising reports need to be appreciated.
- Submission deadlines may not be always understood.
- The need to consider the Christmas holiday period when Precinct Committees are not holding meetings to discuss submissions

Suggestions included:

- need for additional adhoc meetings
- potential for a pattern for all Precinct Committee meetings so that Council can then work within these.

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6.6 Changes to Precinct Area Boundaries

As part of the Stage 1 Discussion Paper there was a recommendation by Council to consolidate (reduce) the current number of Precinct areas. While a number of submissions were against the proposed changes to the Precinct area boundaries, a number of submissions provided criteria or a basis which Council could use in considering any changes[9].

The PlanCom Team used information from the Stage 1 submissions to identify 11 initial core criteria that Council could use to determine the future boundaries for the Precinct Committees. These 11 criteria (shown in the table below) were presented to the first Stage 2A workshop with the question "what criteria are missing that would be important for Council to consider in determining changes to the future boundaries for the Precinct Committees". This criteria was expanded at the subsequent Stage 2A workshops, as detailed below.

Criteria	Issues from the submissions informing these criteria
Focus on locality only	Focus on local issues, walkable distance across the area, ability to distribute flyers easily, desire to socialise with nearby neighbours
Retaining those with current high participant levels	Issues of historical or current high-level interest, maintain the social fabric
Suburb boundaries (x13)	Can easily be identified by anyone in Council or stakeholders, including new people coming into the area; can get data related to suburb boundaries
Alignment with LATM zones[10]	Desire that the LATM zones are solely within one precinct to assist with communication/consultation regarding traffic matters
Activity levels for the locality/work for Precinct Committee	This included the fact that some Precinct Committees are dealing with a large quantity of Development Applications (DA's) or other projects impacting their area.
Maximum number of residents/properties	That the Precinct Committees should not cover too large an area - that the number of residents and properties that they cover should be capped
Natural centres/focus points	Paying attention to how people move within a Precinct area - attention to use of restaurants/cafes, transport, shopping etc.
Venue - parking	There should be parking associated with the venue that the Precinct Committee meets in.
Venue - meeting facilities e.g., AV equipment	There should be other facilities in the venue that the Precinct Committee meets in.
Venue - accessible, flat access	There should be an available and accessible venue for the Precinct Committee meetings.
Not cut off by Warringah Freeway (**which became Not divided by a major carriageway**)	This criterion arose from a comment in the Stage 1 submissions about the Freeway as a major obstacle where this might divide the Precinct areas. Through discussions in the workshops, it was clear that any major carriageway (including Pacific Highway, Military Road and Falcon Street)

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[9] In their Stage 1 submission, six of 15 submissions by Precinct Committees overtly stated that they were in support of Precinct area boundary realignment (Discussion Paper Recommendation No. 2), while six were against, three were 'other' and one did not state a preference.
[10] LATM zones = Council's Local Area Traffic Management zones 1 to 7.

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Criteria	Issues from the submissions informing these criteria
	should not be part of the Precinct area - that is these should be the boundary and not run through a Precinct area.

In response to the request for additional criteria missing from those derived from submissions the first Stage 2A workshop added the following criteria:

- Character of dwellings in the area. e.g., high rise v heritage buildings, schools kept together etc.
- Should be option for large Precinct area
- Areas to reflect essential character of Precinct area
- Culture and demographic of the Precinct area.

The second Stage 2A workshop added the following criteria:

- Commonality of issues prevailing on amenity
- Agreement by Precinct Committee to proposed changes.

The third Stage 2A workshop added the following criteria:

- Precinct areas should cover every resident
- Boundaries determined by infrastructure
- Alignment with Council Community Centres
- Community of interest
- Needs to be a venue to meet in.

The fourth Stage 2A workshop was satisfied that the criteria for Council determining the Precinct area boundaries was covered by the presented list.

Each Stage 2A participant was asked to think about their own personal priority order of the criteria for determining new Precinct boundaries. A weighted score was applied to the criteria to determine the rank order. Each participant was allowed to allocate their top seven and each participant's scores were allocated as follows:

Priority order	Score
first	7
second	6
third	5
fourth	4
fifth	3
sixth	2
seventh	1

The result of this individual ranking for each criteria at the Stage 2A workshops is represented in Appendix C. A weighting was applied to those criteria that were added at the second and third workshops i.e. those criteria that the participants of the first two workshops did not see and were not able to rank.

'Focus on locality' and 'Agreement by the Precinct Committee to proposed changes' were the equal top criteria with weighting applied to 'Agreement by Precinct Committee to proposed changes' that was added in the second workshop.

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As a result of the prioritisation of criteria, the top 10 criteria were as follows:
1. Focus on locality only
1. Agreement by Precinct Committee to proposed changes
2. Natural centres/focus points
3. Commonality of issues prevailing on amenity
4. Retaining those with current high participation levels
5. Areas to reflect essential character of Precinct area
6. Not divided by a major carriageway
7. Activity levels for the locality/work for the Precinct Committee
8. Maximum number of residents/properties for a Precinct area
9. Culture and demographic of the Precinct area
10. Suburb boundaries (there are 13)

Discussion about the Precinct boundaries had a number of people advocating for smaller areas and minimal change from the current situation. The argument for smaller areas included:

- Easier to promote and keep participant interest because issues are directly relevant
- Feeling people will only attend the part of the meeting relevant to their interest if it is too broad
- Resistance to change, the keep it local/walkable/knowing your neighbours
- Increase in the already high workload for the existing volunteers.

Support for the proposed larger Precinct areas included that:

- People should be challenged to consider and talk about issues that might be outside of their immediate domain/sphere of understanding/social circle
- Might contribute to the development of less homogenous groups in the interest of broadening social connections/understanding of range of issues
- The opportunity to increase knowledge about the NSW Planning System - exposure to developments and proposals that might be happening through a wider area than their immediate surrounds.
- It will spread the load in potentially having a wider pool from which to attract volunteers/resources.

Further considerations in relation to this discussion about boundaries included:

- Concern about St Leonards suburb in the context of 'suburb boundary' criterion to have 'natural centres/ focus points' split into two categories
- Complexity of some areas in relation to the criteria to reflect the essential character.

> ### Recommendation 5 – Boundary redistribution
>
> Council should use the top 10 boundary criteria identified by Precinct Committee representatives during the Stage 2A workshops to inform revised boundary redistribution options, for further consultation with Precinct Committees.

Council staff prepared draft revised boundary Precinct area options (by description/text only, no maps) for preliminary discussion with Precinct Committee representatives via the Stage 2B workshops. The draft revised options incorporated the Stage 1 and Stage 2A feedback

from all stakeholders, including the top 10 boundary criteria. The household/residential data from 2016 was used as is the most current data available[11].

The draft revised options were presented to the Stage 2B workshops, to enable Council to obtain initial feedback ahead of further internal consideration/planning and preparation of draft maps. Council advised workshop participants of its intention to provide a further opportunity for feedback from active Precinct Committees (in due course) on revied boundary options.

Some Precinct Committee representatives expressed the need to see draft maps to aid the Stage 2B discussion. Many made clear in the discussion that their preference was for no change to the current Precinct area boundaries.

There was discussion about the motivation for boundary changes. Council reiterated that as part of ensuring the Precinct System remains fit-for-purpose 50 years after its inception, that the current Precinct area boundaries had not been reviewed in over 20 years. Council wants to facilitate greater coverage for the entire LGA and ultimately see increase in the level of participation for each Precinct Committee.

Council had advised, via the Stage 1 Discussion Paper, its preference for suburb based boundaries and an overall reduction in the total number of Precinct areas. Council staff indicated the motivation for these changes is as has been presented; noting that Councillors and Mayors past and present have all had their views on the Precinct System.

There was some support from Precinct Committee representatives for combining Precinct areas based on the indicative figures, the relatively low number of people attending Committee meetings and improved level of support/resources provided by Council. Also, some suggested the inactivity of some Precinct areas may just mean that residents are happy and nothing is driving the need for a Precinct Committee.

While there was considerable concern that the indicative population figures for each of the proposed new Precinct areas were wrong, Council clarified that they were indicative only (see footnote 10; 2016 Census data is the most recent available) for the purpose of discussion via the Stage 2B workshops.

The importance of certain criteria was reiterated via the Stage 2B workshops, in particular the need for (not in any priority order):
- areas of common interest (and this may or may not correlate by suburb).
- keeping Precinct areas small and in walking distance - the contrary view was that the use of remote meetings means that the constraint of people having to walk to a meeting is removed.
- need to have whole streets included in one Precinct area, not split across multiple.
- maintaining local interest - especially for those Precinct areas that focus discussion on development applications (DAs).
- suburb boundaries - some saw value in this.
- merging current active Precinct areas but not breaking them up (as occurs with the draft revised suburb based option). This was considered important as enables current office bearers of active Precinct areas to transition.

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[11] Where an existing Precinct area is proposed to be split in two, the 2016 count was equally divided in two (for indicative purposes only). Similarly, where an existing Precinct area is proposed to be split in three, the 2016 count was equally divided in three (for indicative purposes only).

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- population based grouping to be uniform - in preference to suburbs and/or alongside suburb considerations.
- voluntary Precinct area amalgamation to be encouraged.
- the need for Council to invest more resources into reactivation of current/long standing inactive areas or merge inactive with active Precinct areas.

There was concern that (not in any priority order):
- Precinct areas with 5,000 plus properties are excessive.
- the areas will become too large such that the local interest will be lost.
- current active Precinct Committees are not representing all of the LGA - therefore suburb-based solutions will not necessarily lead to full coverage and increased participation.
- Precinct Committees may lose some current participants if increased to cover bigger areas.
- suburb based Precinct Committees are very diverse in terms of land size, number of properties and population.
- current data must be used to inform Precinct area boundary options i.e. decision making must consider the number of additional properties as well as owners and residents/occupiers since 2016.
- larger size will lead to more work for volunteers. Need to acknowledge that a lot of work for office bearers goes on outside of meetings i.e. the day-to-day directing people where to find information. This workload seemed to be particularly concerning for those dealing with DAs.
- there will be difficulty finding meeting venues for larger sized Precinct areas.

6.7 Naming of the Precinct System and Committees

In general there was majority support, via both Stage 1 and Stage 2A, for no name/terminology change per the issues raised in Recommendation 1 of the Discussion Paper. Only one alternate naming/terminology suggestion was raised in Stage 1 - Neighbourhood Groups/Neighbourhood Meetings [12]. This and the alternate option of Progress Associations (currently in use in the Willoughby City Council area) were flagged at the Stage 2A workshops but not discussed in detail due to lack of interest in changing from the current terminology.

Only in the third Stage 2A workshop was there some support with one participant arguing that:
- 'Neighbourhood' is far more effective, as 'Precinct' term is "alien".
- The term 'Precinct' is associated with fire stations/districts.

The counter and dominant view was that 'Precinct' has a defined operational purpose to it; that is while neighbourhood has a good feeling, it does not describe the function.

The only other general comment about naming was that if an inactive Precinct Committee amalgamates with an active Precinct Committee it should take the name of the active Precinct area.

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[12] Similar to the 2006 Review recommendation to rename to as 'Neighbourhood Precincts' to better convey the essence of what Precinct Committees are about.

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> Initial Draft Recommendation 6 – Naming (see Section 7 for changes)
>
> The name 'Precinct' should remain and where practicable with the boundary changes the existing names of individual Precincts Committees should be retained.

In the Stage 2B workshops there was a suggestion that some of the existing Precinct Committee names should not be retained/there is need to rename new/revised areas.

There was a comment about the nuance of the term "Precinct Committee". During one workshop it was felt it should refer to the office bearers i.e. executive committee, rather than the meeting participants as a whole. It was suggested the participants in the meeting should be called the "Precinct Group" or "community body", as in some cases this is the current assumption. There was the feeling that the term 'Committee' implied there is work to do and that is it might not be inviting to come to a 'Committee'. Minor changes to the recommendation has been made to reflect this point.

Also some Precinct Committee representatives wanted to reiterate that they do not like the term "Precinct" and some questioned the assumption of the recommendation that the boundaries will in fact change.

6.8 Administrative Support and Resources

A key objective in the proposed changes to the administrative arrangement by Council is so that no Precinct Committee is disadvantaged, and that no Precinct Committee has any resource advantage over another.

In response to the Stage 1 feedback, during the Stage 2A workshops a range of possible areas of support were offered by Council, and these were in general agreed to by the Precinct Committee representatives and have been reflected in the Recommendation 7.

Details of administrative support and resources discussed were as follows:

- **Leadership** - both Council staff and Precinct Committee members indicated that a key success factor for individual Precinct Committees and the CPC was good leadership/facilitation. Improvements in operations were reported based on leadership. Adequate training in meeting management was considered a key element in improving Committee meetings. There was support for online training in preference to pre-COVID face-to-face training.

- **Council staff resources** - both Council staff and Precinct Committee members questioned the need for Council to be at all meetings (i.e. as suggested for the CPC).

- **Use of funds** - Suggestions for use of funds allocated to the Precinct System, including operational funding to individual Committees:
    - **Remote meeting format** i.e. purchase Zoom licence (or similar) or make use of Council's existing software e.g. Microsoft Teams - there was strong support for the need for this resource, due to cost saving for meetings, COVID safety, accessibility and proven effectiveness in reaching a wider demographic, including new participants.
    - **Meeting equipment** e.g. AV equipment, laptop/tablet and projector - in particular there was mention of the need for access to good equipment in the

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case of displaying DA plans and "hybrid meetings" (with some participants in the meeting room and some joining online). Lack of support for this was due to the time/effort required to pick up shared equipment from Council shared resources because of the.

▪ **Individual websites** - one Precinct Committee has a website and there was mixed views on the value/effort required for each to have a website (when Council provides a web page for each Precinct Committee on the Council website). Some saw maintaining a website as resource intensive for office bearers who have to then update, and others saw the value of it to make Committees more visible and as a form of electronic notice board in the place of printed flyers.

- **Flyers and emails**
  ▪ Precinct Committees want the current level of admin support by Council retained in relation to printing of flyers.
  ▪ Discussion that printed flyers are outdated and provide little value for money, as they might attract one or two new people per meeting and distributing them is labour intensive.
  ▪ One Precinct Committee felt that Council should provide each Precinct Committee with an email address. This would allow email addresses to be transferred in the case of change of office bearers. Council staff indicated at the Stage 2A workshops that this would have significant logistical/recording keeping implications. It is noted that many Precinct Committees have established generic email addresses (e.g. gmail) which can be transferred when there is a change of office bearers.
  ▪ Some Precinct Committees believe that emails are not effective means of promoting meetings, as there is reluctance for privacy reasons for people to provide email addresses. Council has noted that email only promotion is exclusionary i.e. those not on the list aren't notified.

- **Hard copies of DA plans** - the removal of this as a service to Precinct Committees by Council (following the transition to ePlanning) was for some an issue due to the need for many of the plans to be printed on A3 - most Precinct members do not have this capability readily available.

- **Promotion** - the need for more promotion mechanisms to increase awareness - suggestions were provided via the Stage 1 submissions. These were further reiterated as part of the Stage 2 consultation including:
  ▪ Distributed as part of rates notices
  ▪ In papers such as the Mosman Daily
  ▪ New resident kits distributed via real estate agents.
While there was support for promotion, at least one Precinct Committee raised the issue of the potential increase in the administrative load of office bearers as result of increased participation.

- **More cross-sharing** - Precinct Committees want to learn about the good things/ideas other Committees are implementing in the use of resources provided. It would be good if there was more understanding of what each of the Committees choose to spend their money on. *In response to this suggestion, Council staff are in the process of collating and analysing the Statement of Income and Expenditure returns provided annually by Precinct Committees for the last three years.*

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Initial Draft Recommendation 7 - Administrative support including promotions (see Section 7 for changes)

Any changes to the Precinct System require increased administrative support by Council to facilitate the changes and realise the desired outcomes. Council should:

- develop a *Communications Plan* (informed by the Stage 1 and 2 feedback), outlining what Council will do to increase promotion and awareness of the Precinct System and the expectations of individual Precinct Committees.
- explore the feasibility of introduction of an admin portal to streamline distribution and storage of communications with Precinct Committees e.g., similar concept to former Extranet site, using SharePoint or as a section within Your Say North Sydney site etc.
- enable use of remote/online meetings, potentially complemented by a minimum number of face-to-face meetings per annum.
- induction/facilitation training to be delivered online (and eLearning module to be explored).

In the Stage 2B workshops it was suggested that this recommendation include less detail about the specifics of the administrative resources to be provided. On the other hand some participants indicated that some elements need more definition.

The recommendation has been changed to make the references to types of support more general. The next stage of this review (to be undertaken by Council) will explore the implementation of some of these ideas and at this point that there will be more detail available.

Other comments as part of this discussion included:
- That it is important to get the level of support right and that the support requirement of the Precinct Committees varies based on a range of factors including their size and level of experience.
- Desire that there be a link between the services expected to be provided and resources identified by Council.
- Need for Council to more effectively promote the Precinct System to the wider community.
- Discussion about the support for online meetings included:
  - some felt that all meetings could be conducted online with no need for a minimum number of face-to-face meetings per annum - in particular as this encouraged increased participation including a wider demographic.
  - some felt that there needs to be some face-to-face meetings in addition to online (even if only for election of office bearers).
  - some were not in favour of online meetings at all.
  - general agreement that hybrid meetings with some online and some in the room can be difficult logistically i.e. onus on office bearers and equipment required.
  - it was noted that recording number of votes per motion in online meetings is not practical.
- Need to respond to changes in a digital age including increase use of digital communications in addition to letterboxing printed flyers.
- That there is need to support the voluntary office bearer including:
  - Support/advice/training on how to run meetings effectively.

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  o Training in online meeting management.
- That the support required reaches beyond what a communication plan can offer i.e. the support required from Council reaches beyond just being about the promotion of individual Precinct Committee meetings.

6.9 Changes to the Combined Precinct Committee (CPC)

In general, while it was considered that the CPC was not so effective at one time, it was felt by those currently attending CPC meetings, that it had become more effective in the past year or so. It was unclear as to how the changes proposed by Council, as revealed to the Stage 2A workshops, arose from the Stage 1 feedback.

Precinct Committees saw some of the Council proposed changes as a fundamental shift from the operations and the purpose that they consider that the CPC plays, and has always played in relation to the Precinct System.

The Precinct Committees see the CPC is as a way for Committees to unite around concern over issues that cross Precinct boundaries, rather than what is perceived to be Council's intent in comparing it to the Randwick City Council example i.e. that is more of a means for centralised communication from Council.

There was confusion about the perceived problem/issue regarding the CPC that Council is wanting to address by the proposed changes - that is the Co-convenors and Precinct Committees seem to be satisfied with the current operations. There was a desire via both the Stage 2A workshops and interviews with Precinct Committee representatives to know more about the purpose and the decision making role and function of the proposed change in CPC format.

Specific comments by Precinct Committee representatives in response to the proposed alternate model released by Council at the Stage 2A workshops included:
- The connection between Council and Precinct Committees including that:
  - Perception that it is a desire by Council to make the CPC an arm of Council, and remove the relative autonomy of the Precinct System.
  - Having the CPC at arm's length to Council was considered to be in both the CPC and the Council's interest, considering workload and that expectations flow both ways.
  - It was felt that the more Precinct Committees are used by Council as an avenue for communication, the more the Council seem to expect in terms of behaviours/actions.
- **Agenda setting and the Chairing of the meeting by the Mayor/General Manager** - there was concern about this - the potential for this to steer the CPC direction. Some felt the agenda should be completely controlled by the Precinct Committees and others conceding that the current situation of the agenda setting by Council with opportunity to input to the agenda was ideal.
- **Input by Council staff** - was definitely of interest to many Precinct Committees, but while it seemed that Council saw these presentations (and it is assumed discussion) as a major part of the agenda, some saw the order of business differently, suggesting that Council should only participate on invitation.
- **Number of meetings** - while some seemed to understand that Council did not want to support more than four CPC meetings a year, they did not see that there was any

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reason the CPC might not convene its own 'adhoc' meetings without secretariat support by Council as has occurred in the past[13].

- Some conceded that some control of the CPC by Council had value so that it did not become unwieldy.

> ### Recommendation 8 – Changes to the CPC
>
> That the proposed changes to the CPC operations be better described with Council being asked to articulate its objectives and the expectations for the CPC and what CPC members can expect from participating.

Further to the previous comments in Stage 2A, as part of the discussion in the Stage 2B the workshops participants reiterated their lack of support for Council's proposed changes to the CPC and that:

- A CPC chaired by the General Manager or Mayor with the agenda set and run by Council:
    - misses the mark of the purpose of this group.
    - will not make the group any more effective in its purpose.
    - will be a potential deterrent to individual Precinct Committees attending.
    - is a conflict when the Precinct Committees are trying to make submissions to Council.
- Council's role in the CPC should be to advise/consult.
- They supported maintaining good lines of communication from Council to the CPC and vise versa, but with a minority indicating they did not want Council attendance at all (aside from secretarial support).

Comments about the perceived role and purpose of the CPC included that it is to:

- cover common issues affecting more than one Precinct area - providing one voice on issues that affect all of the community.
- be the "bottom'up" community based advice to Council and not a branch of Council.
- represent the collection of Precinct Committees.

More specifics issues on the management of the CPC included:

- That it should be independent.
- Council staff should be allowed to attend meetings of interest to them.
- That it should meet at least six times per year.
- Returning to four meetings a year was considered to:
    - not contribute to making it more effective.
    - result in the members organising adhoc meetings outside of the scheduled four.
- That the Mayor and General Manager should not attend every meeting, but may present periodically.
- Some support for it being about information sharing with less formality and no motions/voting.
- Comment that motions should not be voted on at CPC meetings unless the subject matter has been voted on by individual Precinct Committees.
- Agendas need to be set by the stakeholders and Council should value community input and act on it. This will encourage continued participation.

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[13] It is noted that the current CPC Term of Reference is for six general meetings per year

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Other suggestions:
- Reintroduce the Ward Forums as a way to improve communication from Council.

6.10 Reconfirming Precinct System Function and Planning for its Success

There was much discussion about the 'unique character' of the various Precinct Committees.

Each Committee has a different style of operation and a range of traits, and that some of these have been carried through years and decades - that is, events, people, history etc. might be crucial in determining their relationship to business, the hierarchical way in which some operate or practices that they hold onto. The Precinct Committees believe some of these traits are vital to their success and many of their ways of being are likely crucial to the success in the same way that some are likely their downfalls.

While it is understood that these variations exist, they are an administration challenge for Council who are seeking consistency, not only in the level of support provided to ensure individual Precinct Committees succeed, but in the delivery of Precinct Committees as a engagement program that is accessible to the community. If Council is promoting the Precinct System, they need to be able to do this in a consistent way. What a person participating in a Precinct Committee might expect from attending a meeting needs to be relatively consistent.

The role and contribution of the Precinct System as described by Precinct Committee members included:
- volunteer effort to Council's role in developing relationships with the community.
- that it contains the conflict in the community and can act as a buffer to Council having to deal with that conflict.
- can answer community questions that are related to DAs that otherwise would need to be answered by staff.

Council staff were concerned that:
- information related to a DA or a project might be delivered by a Precinct Committee with confidence/perceived authority. If this is incorrect it can cause misinformation to be spread through the community. That is, there is a desire that sometimes community gets this information directly from Council.
- Committees can be focussed on developing and delivering 'positions' on matters to Council, when sometimes it is more valuable for Council to learn about people's values and how they feel about a draft, proposal, project or policy, hence encouraging individual submissions over 'group think'.

There was considered potential for Precinct Committees to offer the following roles and functions:
- Council would like to see them as a place where people get information related to all views so they can come to individual positions, rather than being influenced into 'group think'. Contrary to this at least one Precinct Committee reported they don't do 'group think' - they only call for a vote when there some level of agreement. If it is split, they do not take it to vote.
- Both Precinct Committees and Council staff acknowledged that Precinct Committees galvanise and get support/participation around issues. There was recent energy around State Government projects that was useful to Council so that it could

advocate on behalf of its stakeholders, to help influence State Government decision making.
- The potential to have a broader community focus and tackle issues that are beyond the remit of Council matters.

Behaviours

Council staff indicated that the Precinct Committees:
- can be confrontational to staff and this can make staff cautious about attending meetings if they are to be put on the spot etc.
- can be combative and look to point out what is not working/what Council is doing wrong.
- Council funds Precinct Committees and their role in the critique of Council can put into question the use of public funds for this purpose.

Defining the role and function

There might be value in adopting the approach of trying to determine what is desirable from the Precinct Committees in terms of outcomes and behaviours and allow them to steer a path to get there. That is the desired outcomes become standardised rather than the path to get there.

In response to Council's proposed re-naming of the Guidelines to Terms of Reference (ToR) there was a point made by Precinct Committees, that ToR's have a level of informality, while 'guidelines' or 'rules' have more gravitas - being something that Committees must follow rather than just being a reference point.

Revised Guidelines (rather than ToR) could focus on:
- What Council is trying to achieve from its support of the Precinct System, in terms of relationships and outcomes.
- What participants can expect of participation in individual Precinct Committees.
- Expectations in terms of communication by Council to and from Precinct Committees.
- Guidance on potential success factors in operation and relationships
- "All people and all views are welcome" - facilitating diverse participation in terms of ease of access for all demographics and encouraging a range of views.
- Helping Precinct Committees focus on what they can realistically achieve.
- Encouraging ways to cross-fertilise things that work well, good ideas etc in terms of operation.

The future guidelines should be a frequent reference point and help focus directions, rather than being a way for Council to pick up where Precinct Committees are non-compliant.

Defining the elements of success

The focus on outcomes or changes to the current operations, that might be embedded in Precinct Committee characteristics, should be supported by exploration of the elements of success for Precinct Committees. Many Precinct Committees have consistently successfully operated while some have not i.e. some have been in and out of recess, lacked stable participation numbers, have had high turn over of office bearers due to small pool of willing participants etc.

What makes for that success is likely different for each group, but they provide valuable lessons that can be shared across all Committees.

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Success factors in the operation of Precinct Committees should be further explored, but might include:

- Leadership
- Offerings as part of the meeting agenda
- Attendance
- The relevance of and the facilities provided by a venue
- Promotion/mailing lists (what it says and how it is promoted).

Similarly, reasons (examples) for Precinct Committees lack of success should also be documented in the Guidelines.

Initial Draft Recommendation 9 – Guidelines for the Precinct System (including CPC) – (see Section 7 for changes)

The current Guideline should be revised in the context of all input as result of this consultation and should focus on:

- Outcomes Council wants from the Precinct System program as a whole and individual Precinct Committees
- What Precinct Committees and/or their participants can expect from Council

The Guideline should draw on the previous material but be quite direct in outlining what Council wants to see from Precinct Committees. In addition, it should identify elements including:

- What is potentially key for the success of Precinct Committees
- Expectations around communication to and from staff
- Roles and responsibilities of Precinct Committee participants and Office Bearers including that they should:
  - allow for balanced presentation of all sides of the discussion and the identification of individual values
  - encourage participation and diversity of views at meetings rather than being focussed on resolutions and group positions
  - encourage interest in a range of matters across the community – not just those immediately impacting that community
  - refer residents to Council to receive information or to make individual submissions.

In the Stage 2B workshops there was some concern about the sub-dot points under roles and responsibilities with suggestion to delete the second and third points and keep the first and fourth points.

There was a suggestion to change the last dot point to say that the Precinct Committees assists individuals to make individual submissions. Many Precinct Committees play an important role in assisting residents with the formation of submissions in response to DAs. The problem raised was that people come to meetings just because of what is happening next door to them. The motivation for attendance is often when people have a problem, meaning that Precinct Committees always have an element of negativity in the nature of their role of responding/objecting to developments.

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The intent of the wording of dot point four was so that residents did not think that attending and voting at Precinct meetings is sufficient to voice their individual views. Council is looking to understand the breadth and depth of concerns that might surround a DA.

There was concern about the reference to the 'range of views' in the second sub-point, with comment that they want to know their views verses a diverse range of views.

Some felt that the recommendation should just say "refine guidelines" rather than detailing the proposed inclusions. Council staff clarified that this recommendation is viewed as a starting point and the intention is for Council to work with the Precinct Committee in revising the Guidelines including the roles and responsibilities.

Elements of success for Precinct Committees as raised in the Stage 2B workshops included:
- That they go through cycles of working well and not so well – may need more support at some times or to learn from other Precinct Committees.
- potentially linked to tension in society about whether democracy is working – may be a need to return to the grass roots and re-instil and sense of participation and trust.
- May be value in adjusting timing of Precinct Committee meetings to have consistent meeting dates/pattern- would make it easier to promote/advertise and possibly be more cost effective.
- committed members/people involved volunteers and staged turnover of office bearers – everyone working to share the load.
- Council resources achieving an increase participation so more people feel engaged with Council.
- Having a focus for a meeting e.g. topic with speaker rather than a general list of agenda items has been key to the success of some Committees.
- the history of being effective in highlighting issues through Council.
- Committees work well when they are not overly formal.
- Community/membership is able to drive the Precinct Committee agenda.

Support what it is that they need/in response to what is not working so well:
- Council needs to do more to help individual Committees including providing opportunities to cross fertilise, partner and borrow ideas. Potentiallly via a get together in particular to discuss promotion, optimum meeting times and online tools etc.
- Struggle for greater attendance and growth - desire to have more participants and explore the success factors for some over others, and the broader trends that may be impacting participation.
- Value Council's feedback to minutes (via the Summary of Actions) ahead of each Committee meeting. There was some comment about the need for more detailed feedback/responsiveness from Council in relation to actions/motions.
- Precinct eNews works well for sharing links to more information.
- The value of the printed/distributed flyers is questioned, and a number of Committees think these are expensive for the number of new people they attract.
- Want to be involved in the development of the new Communications Plan that Council has flagged.
- Overhead projection system critical – supported by Council in the Council-owned premises

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Other issues that were reiterated during the Stage 2B workshops included:

- concern about potential control by Council of who Precinct Committees can invite as speakers and objection to the requirement via the recently updated Code that indicated the need to invite all Councillors.
- Need to have resolutions as a structure for outcomes – if no resolution only taken by Council as a comment i.e. not part of the detailed response provided via the Summary of Actions.
- The Guidelines should be direct in outlining what the Council wants to see from Precinct Committees – what Council sees as success.
- The inference in sub-point one under roles and responsibilities of the draft recomendation that Committees do not allow for "balanced presentation" of other prespectives.
- Many are conduits of information and communication with older members who do not access to technology and they value this community information being shared.

7.   Summary of Recommendations

Amended Recommendation 1 – Eligibility – Add property owners to the list of those eligibility for participation – becoming residents, property owners, students, workers and businesses with further consideration of:

- Precinct Committees concern about the resources required for adequate promotion to each of the target groups
- Better definition of business as it relates to voting and levels of influence
- Encouragement for more participation to and from business forums i.e., residents participating in Streetscape Committees and businesses in Precinct Committees - potential design of meetings/agendas to facilitate this.

Recommendation 2 – Participation in multiple Precinct Committees - Participation across multiple Precinct Committees should be allowed where participants meet the criteria for participation but consideration should be given to limiting the ability for participants to hold office in more than one Precinct Committee. *(to be captured in the revised guidelines)*

Amended Recommendation 3 – Describing Council consultation mechanisms - Council to promote greater understanding of the context of Precinct Committees; Council should map the functions of each and every method for engagement with the community. That is, the Precinct Committees should be shown alongside other methods/programs with explanation of the following:

- **the purpose and contribution to decision making** - *The Precinct Committees are considered by Council as inform/consult method in accordance with its Community Engagement Protocol.*
- **who they target in the community** - most especially where other methods of engagement are considered to cover particular stakeholder groups or segments of the community.

Amended Recommendation 4 – Timing of consultation with Precinct Committees - To the extent practicable per decision, Council should publicise its decision making process/cycle and publicise this to all, particularly Precinct Committees. Council should consider the timing of Precinct Committees when setting consultation start and end dates to ensure participation. Some Precinct Committees may benefit from an additional meeting or

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changing their meeting date to enable them to meet to inform a submission by a Precinct Committee. Council understands that this is not always possible.

Recommendation 5 – Boundary redistribution - Council should use the top 10 boundary criteria identified by Precinct Committee representatives during the Stage 2A workshops to inform revised boundary redistribution options, for further consultation with Precinct Committees.

Amended Recommendation 6 – Naming - The name 'Precinct' should remain and changes the name of individual Precincts Committees should reflect new /revised areas. Consideration should be made to having the term 'committee' reflect the office bearers and 'group' the participants.

Amended Recommendation 7 – Administrative support including promotions - Any changes to the Precinct System require increased administrative support by Council to facilitate the changes and realise the desired outcomes. Council should work with Precinct Committees to identify a range of appropriate support mechanisms, some having been suggested through this consultation. This might include:

- a *Communications Plan* outlining how Council will increase awareness of the Precinct System in conjunction with individual Precinct Committees.
- introduction of an admin portal to streamline distribution and storage of communications
- enabling use of remote/online meetings.
- induction/facilitation training to be delivered online.

Recommendation 8 – Changes to the CPC - That the proposed changes to the CPC operations be better described with Council being asked to articulate its objectives and the expectations for the CPC and what CPC members can expect from participating.

Amended Recommendation 9 – Guidelines for the Precinct System (including CPC) - The current Guideline should be revised in the context of all input as result of this consultation and should focus on:

- Outcomes Council wants from the Precinct System program as a whole and individual Precinct Committees
- What Precinct Committees and/or their participants can expect from Council

The Guideline should outline what Council wants to see from Precinct Committees. In addition, it should identify elements including:

- What is potentially key for the success of Precinct Committees
- Expectations around communication to and from staff
- Roles and responsibilities of Precinct Committee participants and Office Bearers including that they should:
  - allow for balanced presentation of all sides of the discussion and the identification of individual values
  - play a role in supporting people in their individual submissions to Council but also refer residents to Council to receive information.

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APPENDIX A - Stage 1 Stakeholder Feedback Summary

The table details the key issues identified in Stage 1 submissions (in response to the initial recommendations listed in the Discussion Paper) that was used to guide the Stage 2 consultation:

Recommendation	High Level Summary
1. Terminology - determine level of support for a program name change	• 21 of 29 submissions (73%) were against a name change, 4 were in support and 2 neither/nor • Reasons against included well established terms, not perceived as ambiguous, don't change for change sake, and dictionary definition • 1 suggestion received - Neighbourhood Groups/Meeting
2. Boundary Realignment - consolidation of current number of Precinct areas	• 28 including 15 from Precinct Committees - 16 against change, 7 in support and 4 other. Of the Precinct Committee submissions, 6 support boundary realignment, 6 do not, 3 were other, and 1 did not state a preference. • Reasons against realignment - suburb boundaries not always obvious, unfair impost on larger sized suburbs, program focus is on local issues/natural groupings/communities of interest (character), must be walkable, lack of evidence for economies of scale • Logistical issues raised - larger sized areas require larger meeting venues, if too big lose voice/too many competing priorities, difficulty obtaining volunteer office bearers
3A. CPC - determine support for a review of the CPC's role and function	• 20 - including 12 from Precinct Committees 10 support, 7 neither/nor and 4 not support. Of the Precinct Committee submissions, 6 were neither/nor, 4 were in support, 1 does not, and 3 did not indicate. • No specific reasons given in support of a review, those in favour noted that the CPC works reasonably well as is/is valuable. • Reasons against include - perception currently functions well seems to be performing, can't see benefit in change, no need to over police as unpopular individuals find themselves outvoted/not supported etc.
3B. CPC - recommend changes to Terms of Reference	• Suggestions included - Co-Convenors should be recent ex-Chairs of individual Committees, Co-Convenors should hold their positions for two years minimum, with 1 standing for re-election each year for continuity; agenda items should be LGA wide or issues concerning multiple Precinct areas, briefings by Council, and potential to facilitate different subcommittees working closely together on common 'hot spot' issues.
5A. Council support and resources - operational funding	• 17 responded • 9 favour maintaining current funding level/is adequate, but support adjustment if Precinct areas expand/do not reduce if number of Committees is reduced. • 4 favour review of current funding level, citing need to review what funding can be used for including flyer printing/distribution and sundries, modernise/ transition correspondence online, increased venue hire fees if move to larger Precinct areas as will need larger venues • 2 did not overtly state whether for or against - they appreciate the support provided by Council, and request no reduction in direct fiscal or administrative support • 1 noted that in electronic age/pandemic the use of video conferencing should be permitted to host meetings.

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Recommendation	High Level Summary
5B. Council support and resources - special project/event funding (application basis)	• 12 responded; 7 referred to street parties or similar initiatives; majority stating that such should not be organised/paid for by Council including funded the Precinct System allocations. Of these 3 suggested a pilot scheme be undertaken. • 4 noted such is not of direct relevance to their Committee/non-plussed/was unsure what this relates to but encouraged further discussion on the matter. • 3 favour maintaining the current level of funding.
5C. Council support and resources - Office Bearer training	• 15 responded; majority stated existing induction training is good/should remain mandatory for new Office Bearers. • 7 suggested the induction does not need to be delivered as in person format/could be a video (distributed on demand) or online/remote meeting format accompanied by hard copy materials. • 1 suggested training/induction required for new staff/Councillors, to ensure the relationship between Council and the Precinct System remains consistent/Councillor attendance at meetings. • 1 suggested chairing meeting/Code of Conduct training should be mandatory for Office Bearers, and questioned whether training/mentoring could be provided to encourage more to want to take on Office Bearer roles.
5D. Council support and resources - Admin support by Council	• 14 responded; majority note current level is excellent/ very good/appreciated/happy with/continue. • 6 noted Office Bearers admin burden is currently reasonably managed/shared amongst the roles. Several suggest Council modernise admin requirements by electronic means. • 1 suggested info dissemination by Council to Precinct Committees is a burden that falls to Committees to manage, and could benefit from review.
5E. Council support and resources - Marketing of Precinct System	• 15 responded; majority suggested marketing of the Precinct System could be enhanced/increased/ improved. With 4 noting lack of awareness of any active marketing by Council/suggest Council do more to inform new residents/renters and real estate agents e.g. new residents pack and greater website prominence e.g. short video on background/purpose. • 1 noted that awareness of the Precinct System by residents and businesses remains very low (source: 2020 CSS). • 1 suggested flyers be standardised (branding/content structure), and mandatory to distribute flyers as is aware not all Committees currently distribute flyers. Email only promo limits participation to subscribers/those in the know. • 1 suggested Facebook pages/groups by individual Committees • 1 suggested advertising in Council's newsletters and regular reporting to Council on attendance/participation levels in Precinct meetings.
5F. Council support and resources - other	• 6 request review of current stance that a Precinct Committee submission holds no more weight than individual submission. • 4 stated was a really good initiative, enabling Council to keep locals knowledgeable/involved in matters of local concern, in a structured/supportive/integrated way. • 1 suggested emergency operating mechanisms be explored. • 1 spoke to difficulties requiring two bank account signatories.

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Recommendation	High Level Summary
	• 1 suggested the Guidelines include the procedures for reactivating an inactive Precinct Committee/questioned why AGMs must be held in November annually. • 1 noted that loss of hard copy DA plans is disappointing and Council should offer alternate formats to Committees to view DA plans at meetings. DA plans are available online - technology/equipment could be provided to enable the display of plans at meetings. • 6 request review of current stance that a Precinct Committee submission holds no more weight than individual submission. • 4 stated was a really good initiative, enabling Council to keep locals knowledgeable/involved in matters of local concern, in a structured/supportive/integrated way. • 1 suggested emergency operating mechanisms be explored. • 1 spoke to difficulties requiring two bank account signatories. • 1 suggested the Guidelines include the procedures for reactivating an inactive Precinct Committee/questioned why AGMs must be held in November annually. • 1 noted that loss of hard copy DA plans is disappointing and Council should offer alternate formats to Committees to view DA plans at meetings. DA plans are available online - technology/equipment could be provided to enable the display of plans at meetings.
General Feedback	• 16 submissions; 5 prefer no changes to the current operations/configuration, citing it works well. • 1 notes Precinct Committees foster civic participation and social inclusion. • 1 suggests expanding the min. number of Office Bearer positions to increase resilience/provide succession pool (R5C) • 1 suggests rates notice be used, as well as information stalls at local markets, to promote the Precinct System (R5E) • 1 questioned variation in Committee meeting frequency, asking if there is a min. requirement to be considered active? • 1 questioned whether the System should be open to more than residents, noting resident participation dominates, contributed by some meeting flyer invites overtly state such are open to residents/attention to residents; suggests asking whether businesses, workers and students whether want to participate * • 1 sees no benefit engaging a consultant for Stage 2.
Amended Code of Conduct	• the term Precinct Committee (R1) • whether the Precinct System should be exclusively open to residents, or should remain open also to businesses, workers and students 18 years plus Note: this highlights a lack of awareness that the Precinct System is currently not exclusive open to residents • Individual Precinct Committee websites (Waverton example)

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APPENDIX B - Stage 2 Workshop Participation by Precinct Committee

Below is a table that shows the representation by different Precinct Committee in the workshops that where conducted as part of two phases during the Stage 2 consultation.

Precinct	Stage 2A	Stage 2B
Bennett	1	0
Willoughby Bay	3	2
Union	4	4
Holtermann	4	2
Bay	2	2
Stanton	1	1
Edward	4	3
Waverton	1	2
Neutral	3	3
Registry	5	4
Parks	3	2
Harrison	1	2
Hayberry	2	2
Brightmore	1	0
Lavender Bay	1	2
Milson	3	2
Wollstonecraft	0	1
Total participants	**38**	**33**

Note: that the number of representative for the Precincts Committees in the table includes an additional person as one participant represented both Union and Edward Precincts in the workshop.

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APPENDIX C - Raw figures and calculations from the Workshops for the ranking of boundary criteria

No.	Source	Criteria - Basis for Council review and decision on Precinct Committee boundaries	27-Nov	2-Dec	3-Dec	9-Dec	Sum	Ranking	Adjusted weighting	Ranking (adjusted)
	Source	**Criteria**				**Workshop Date**				
1	Derived from Submissions	Focus on locality only	25	25	25	16	91	1		1
2		Retaining those with current high participation levels	19	27	21	8	75	5		4
3		Suburb boundaries (there are 13)	26	5	4	7	42			10
4		Alignment with the LATMS (Local Area Transport Management Scheme)	3	3	0	5	11			
5		Activity levels for the locality/work for the Precinct Committee	10	28	4	14	56			7
6		Maximum number of residents / properties for a precinct area	12	15	26	1	54			8
7		Natural centres/focus points	12	23	26	28	89	2		2
8		Venue needs to have parking	3	0	1	0	4			
9		Venue needs to have other facilities for the meeting such as AV etc.	9	0	5	3	17			
10		Venue needs to have easy flat access	4	4	4	0	12			
11		Not divided by a major carriageway (wording change in workshop 3)	10	6	27	20	63	7		6
12	Added in workshop 1	Character of dwellings in the area. e.g., high rise v heritage buildings, schools kept together etc	13	1	9	10	33			
13		Should be option for large precinct	22	5	0	5	32			
14		Areas to reflect essential character of precinct	32	8	28	3	71	6		5
15		Culture and demographic of the precinct	24	7	13	1	45			9
16	Added workshop 2	Commonality of issues prevailing on amenity	0	37	25	15	77	4	*85 (10%)	3
17		Agreement by Precinct Committee to proposed changes	0	30	16	36	82	3	*91 (10%)	1
18	Added in workshop 3	Precinct should cover every resident	0	0	0	4	4		**	
19		Boundaries determined by infrastructure	0	0	6	2	8		**	
20		Alignment with Council Community Centres	0	0	10	0	10		**	
21		Community of interest	0	0	36	2	38		**41	
22		Needs to be a venue to meet in	0	0	14	13	27		**28	
23		Electoral polling booth areas	0	0	5	0	5		**	

*Based on 22 less participants responding to that criteria - % additions based on assumption of possible similar sentiment to that criteria

**Based on 16 less participants responding to that criteria

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Appendix D - Results of the survey of stakeholders currently not participating in Precinct Committees

As part of Stage 2 of the review of the Precinct System, Council wanted to hear from those currently participating and the reasons for non-participation to inform the way forward for Council. This opt-in online survey targeted community members not currently participating in the Precinct System. Note: the questions replicated those asked in Council's *Customer Satisfaction Survey 2020*, to provide a point of comparison. The survey was open from 26 November 2020 to 5 February 2021 and was widely advertised by mean including the website, Facebook, information stalls, advertisements and through the Chambers of Commerce communication.

Results:

136 respondents completed the survey. The following provides an overview of the results, including comparison to the *Customer Satisfaction Survey 2020* findings as relevant.

Q1. The North Sydney local government area is split into 25 'Precinct Committees' and within each of these 'Precinct areas' residents, students, workers and property owners including businesses are given the opportunity to become involved with decisions that affect their local area. Prior to reading this, were you aware that your locality has a local Precinct Committee?

Question options
● Yes ● No ● Unsure

*Mandatory Question (136 response(s))*
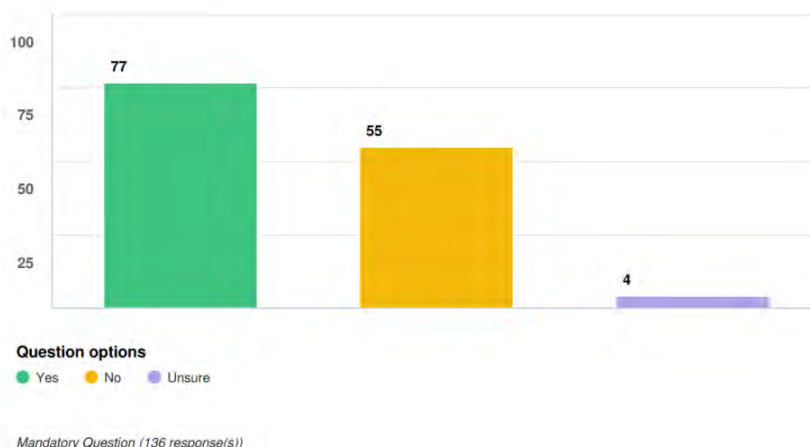
The above graph shows the response to Q1, with more respondents aware of the Precinct System than were unaware.

The majority (n=69, 51%) of those aware of the Precinct System are residents, with five (3%) both residents/business and one business. Of those unaware, the majority (n=49, 36%) are residents, four are businesses (3%) and two (1%) both residents/business.14

The following graph details the age range of those who are aware/not aware of the Precinct System.

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14 it was optional to identify whether resident or business i.e. doesn't equal 100%
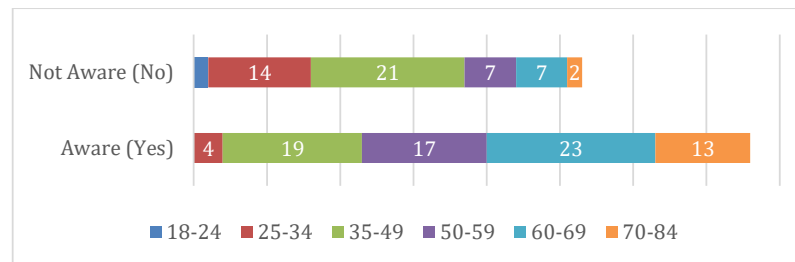
By comparison, the *Customer Satisfaction Survey 2020* found that resident awareness of the Precinct Committees remained reasonably stable on the previous two rounds of research at 47% (verses 45% in 2016 and 53% in 2013), and business awareness was 21% (verses 30% in 2016 and 24% in 2013).

The following questions sought reasoning for non-participation, analysed by level of awareness of the Precinct System.

Q1A. If you are aware of the Precinct System, why do you NOT participate? (tick all that apply)
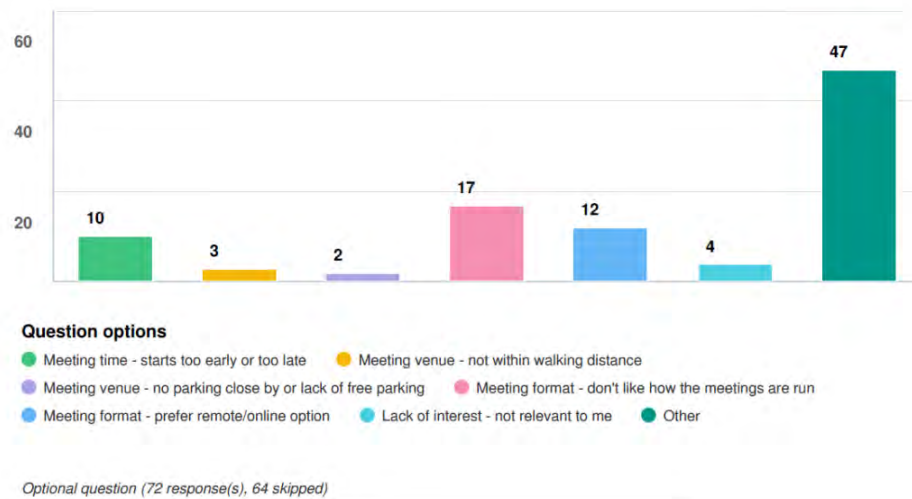
The above graph shows the response to Q1A. All except five of the respondents who are aware of the Precinct System provided reasons why they do not participate. The top three reasons impacting participation are:

1. other* (n=47)
2. meeting format - don't like how the meetings are run (n=17)
3. meeting time - starts too early or too late (n=10).

Verbatim 'other' reasons given as to why respondents do not participate in the Precinct System by those aware of the program are available via the full survey outcomes report available from Council. The responses have been categorised by high level themes and summarised below.

- scheduling conflict/other commitments (n=12)
- lack of awareness (n=6)
- past experience (n=5)
- own Precinct Committee inactive (n=3)

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- other (n=3) - includes COVID, seems political and concern about face-to-face disagreements with neighbours; would rather make comment directly to Council
- matters of interest (n=2)
- lack of interest (n=1)
- promotional material not inviting (n=1)

Q1B. If you are NOT aware of the Precinct System, do any of the following impact your decision to participate in your local Precinct Committee?
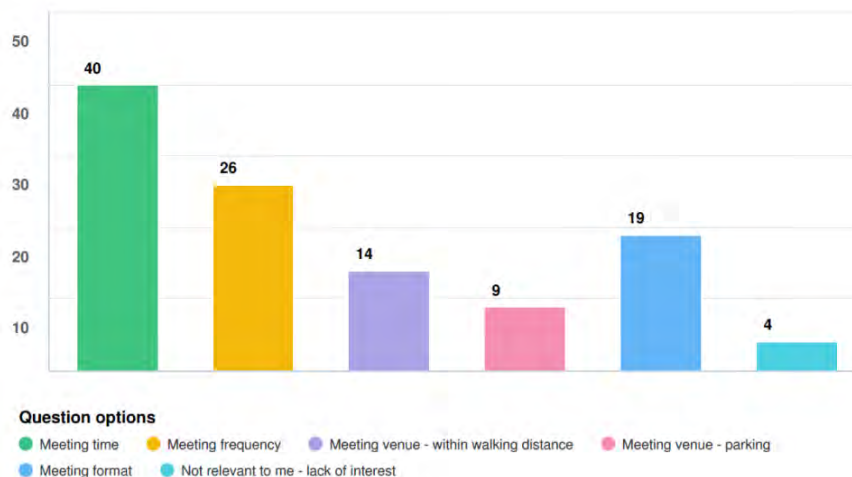

Optional question (52 response(s), 84 skipped)

The above graph shows the response to Q1B. Almost all of the respondents not aware of the Precinct System responded to this question (except three). The top three reasons impacting participation are:

1. meeting time (n=40)
2. meeting frequency (n=26)
3. meeting format (n=19).

Q2. Which sources of information are you most likely to receive and/or respond to? (tick all that apply)
The following graph shows the response to Q2, completed by all respondents. The top five preferred sources of information are:
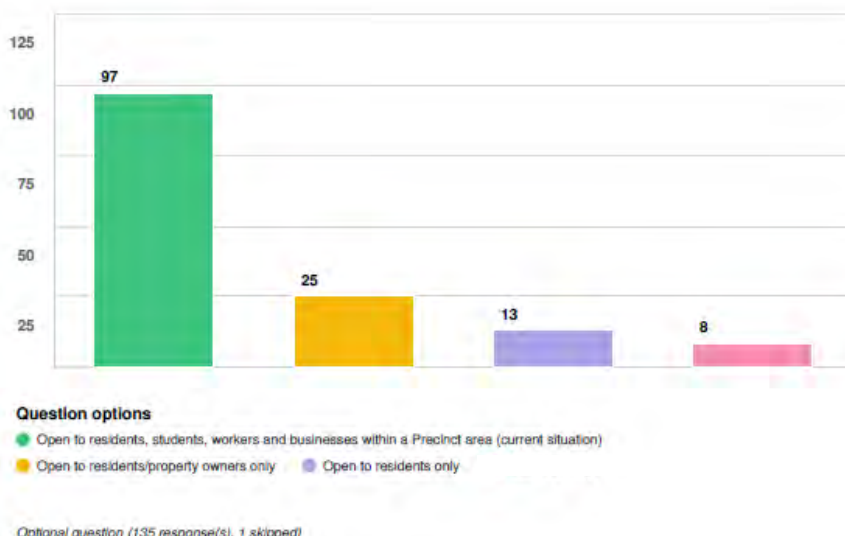
1. email (n=80)
2. eNewsletter delivered by email (n=79)
3. flyer in letterbox (n=63)
4. Facebook (n=58)
5. Council's hard copy newsletter, North Sydney News, delivered to all households (n=49).
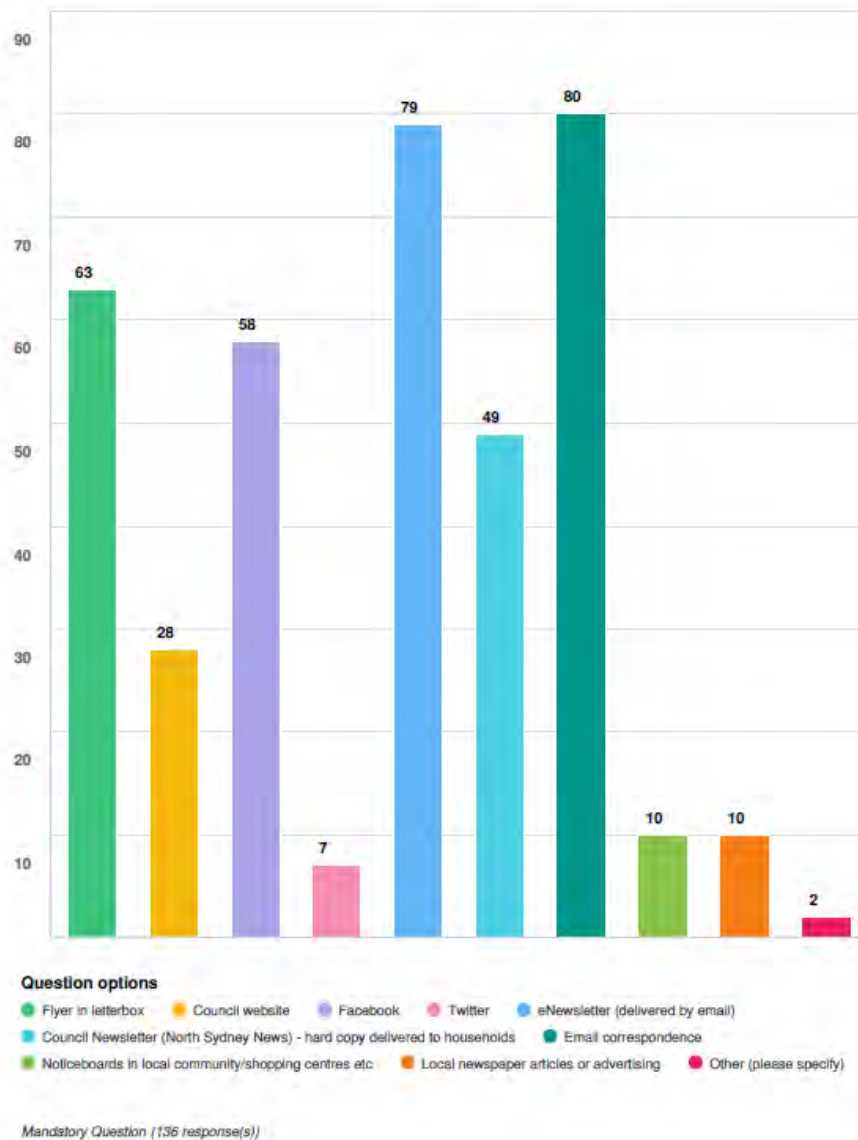
This feedback is consistent with feedback to the *Customer Satisfaction Survey 2020,* with eNewsletters the preferred source of information overall for residents, followed by brochures/leaflets (flyers) and North Sydney News. For businesses, the top three preferred sources of information were e-newsletters, email and the Council website.

Q3. Do you think that the Precinct System eligibility should be (select one and detail why)
Most of the respondents completed this question, with the majority (n=97) stating the Precinct System should be open to residents, students, workers and businesses (by way of property owners). The most common reason given for this option was acknowledgement that the North Sydney LGA is made up of a number of stakeholders who use and benefit from community facilities, therefore to ensure representativeness, the four key groups - residents, students, workers and businesses/property owners - should have the opportunity to have their say and that this collective input generates innovation.

Question options

- ● Open to residents, students, workers and businesses within a Precinct area (current situation)
- ● Open to residents/property owners only   ● Open to residents only

Optional question (135 response(s), 1 skipped)

Q3 respondents were asked to provide reasons for their program eligibility preference.
The reasons given are available in full through report available from Council. The following table provides a high level summary of the key themes.

| Option	High Level Reasons/Themes
Open to residents, students, workers and businesses within a Precinct area (n= 74)	• strong sense of community, with majority of respondents acknowledging all four stakeholder groups are key users/ beneficiaries of the North Sydney LGA, and should have a voice. • majority agree that this engagement program needs to be representative of the stakeholders that make up the local community. • some encourage greater involvement by business in the program in recognition of their contribution to the local economy/ considered important part of fabric of local community.
Open to residents/property owners only (n= 19)	• some perceive residents and property owners to have a greater/vested interest or right to input than a worker/student, who are assumed to have less interest due to transient/less frequent duration within the North Sydney LGA. • other engagement channels/methods targeting workers and students were suggested.
Open to residents only (n= 7)	• desire to keep local focus. • perception that tenant/non-occupier owners views are less relevant than owner/occupier views. • perception that businesses have different interests than residents. • perceive other opportunities for engagement of non-residents by Council exist.
Other (n=7)	• one said that membership should be LGA-wide, because participants shouldn't have to live/work/study where you want to go comment. • one was concerned about a perceived decrease focus on residents in preference of increased focus on businesses. • three provided Precinct meeting observations: • relationships with neighbours - situation one is placed in when positive about a project/issue and everyone else is against it or vice versa. • a place nasty residents go to hurt their neighbours. • caught up in small stuff doesn't interest anyone nor benefit them, it somewhat purposefully stifles debate and prohibits people seeing or talking on the bigger picture.

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The survey also sought general comments from participants. The common themes arising from the open-ended feedback were (listed alphabetically):

- Awareness - lack of awareness and suggestion to increase promotion of the program
- Agenda items - interest in meeting agenda drives participation
- Format - encouraging use of remote/online meeting format
- Function - seeking clarification of the Program's purpose and connection to Council; involvement by of Councillors
- Precinct area boundaries - includes suggestions to change boundaries
- Naming - suggestion that "Precinct System/Committee" sounds too bureaucratic
- Past experience - both positive and negative examples provided
- Workload - impact on voluntary office bearers

Respondent Profile:

The survey sought (optional) demographic information about the respondents. The majority of respondents were residents, with less than 9% businesses as shown in the following graph.
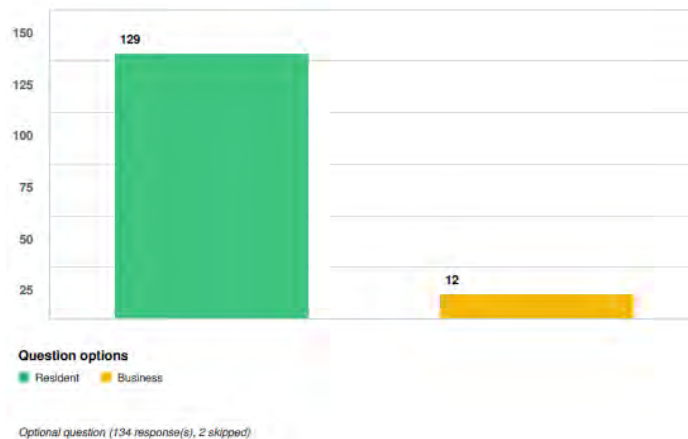

The following graph details the age range of the respondents, with the most aged 35-49 years, followed by 60-69 years and 50-59 years. It was good to see an age range in respondents, with almost half (48%) of the respondents between 18 to 49 years of age.
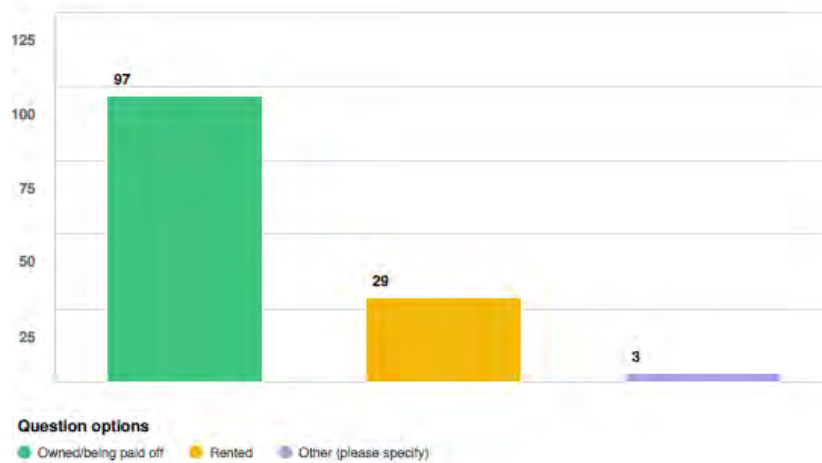
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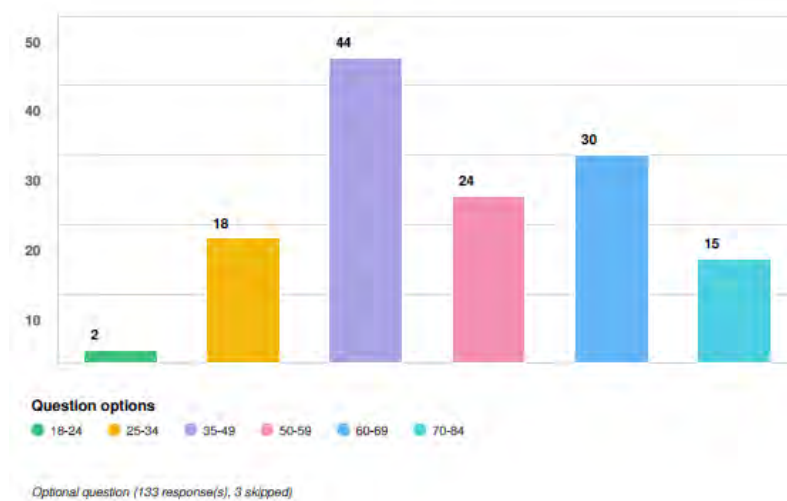
The following graph details whether respondents have children under 12 years living in their household, with the majority (76%) of respondents without children in their household. The question was answered by the majority of residential respondents.

Question options
● Yes   ● No
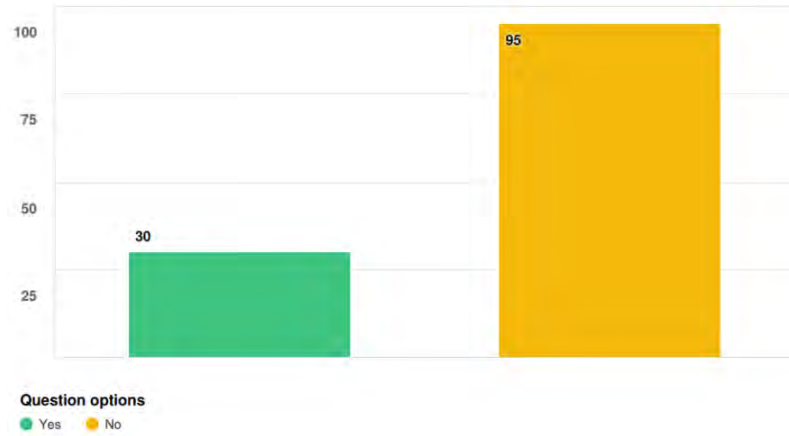
Optional question (125 response(s), 11 skipped)

The following graph details whether respondents own their own home/property. Most respondents own or are paying off their property.

Question options
● Owned/being paid off   ● Rented   ● Other (please specify)

Optional question (128 response(s), 8 skipped)

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