N O R T H   S Y D N E Y   C O U N C I L   R E P O R T S

Report to General Manager

Attachments:
1. Draft Engagement Strategy
2. Draft Discussion Paper
3. Amended Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers and Members

SUBJECT: Precinct System Review

AUTHOR: Jenny Gleeson, Manager Integrated Planning and Special Projects

ENDORSED BY: Joseph Hill, Director City Strategy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On 25 November 2019, Council adopted the minutes of the Governance & Finance Committee meeting held 4 November 2019, at which a response (progress update) to 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)

This report seeks endorsement to commence with Stage 1 of the review. In accordance with resolution 2e, a Community Engagement Strategy (Attachment 1) has been prepared detailing the engagement methods to be employed, and how the review will be promoted to stakeholders, to ensure wide-spread awareness of the opportunity to participate.

The review will be conducted in two stages. Stage 1 will obtain preliminary feedback by way of public exhibition (120 days) of the updated Discussion Paper and proposed amendments to the *Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers and Members*, which will commence from mid-March 2020.

In accordance with resolution 2a, the previous Discussion Paper (2012) has been updated. The Discussion Paper (Attachment 2) acts as 'green paper', inclusive of six recommendations seeking feedback on components of the current Precinct System to inform the face-to-face

consultation, which is to be externally facilitated at Stage 2 (per resolution 2f) and subsequent decision making by the elected body. The proposed timing of Stage 2 is yet to be determined, as it is budget dependent.

The *Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers and Members* was last extensively reviewed in 2010. The Code (Attachment 3) has been reviewed in line with Council's recently updated *Code of Conduct - Councillors and Staff*, and to address issues/areas not covered currently covered, which include but are not limited to:

- operational funding cannot be used for - political purposes/lobbying election campaigns and memberships;
- proxy voting at Annual General Meetings is not permitted;
- guidance regarding representation at Public Forums prior to Council Meetings (can represent on matters determined/endorsed by a Precinct Committee only);
- use of social media by a Precinct Committee and by office bearers in personal capacity;
- provision of alcohol at Precinct Committee meetings (requires review in context of insurance); and
- dispute resolution and sanctions for breaches of the Code.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Excluding staff costs, the adopted *Delivery Program 2018/19-2020/21* has allocated $30,000 per annum for "Precinct Support", which includes operational and event/project funding, venue hire and event insurance (purchased when required) and $5,000 per annum for printing.

As previously reported, funding for the review has not been allocated in the adopted *Delivery Program 2018/19-202/21*. Review costs, including engagement an external facilitator (Stage 2) needs to be budgeted for in the *2020/21 Operational Plan & Budget*. Costs associated with Stage 1 are limited to advertising, printing and postage and can be absorbed with the 2019/20 'Precincts Support' budget.

RECOMMENDATION:
1. THAT the Community Engagement Strategy (Attachment 1) be adopted.
2. THAT the Discussion Paper (Attachment 2) and amended *Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers and Members* (Attachment 3) 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.

LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

Direction: 5. Our Civic Leadership

Outcome: 5.4 Community is informed and aware

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'.

The Precinct System is now one of several Council coordinated community engagement programs. Over time, with the introduction of new technology and changing community needs, Council's community engagement approach has expanded. Anecdotal feedback suggests that overall, Precinct Committees do not see themselves as competing against the other more targeted programs (e.g. Ward Forums) or project-specific consultations targeting stakeholders not engaged with Precinct Committees.

There are 25 Precinct areas in the North Sydney local government area, with 19 Committees currently active. Originally, Precinct areas were based on approximately 1,000 residences per area. Precinct areas have since grown and reduced in total quantity, from 40 odd areas to 25 currently. The current 25 Precinct areas have been in place since 1995. An average number of residences per Precinct area is no longer feasible and is not considered a major criterion in the alternate options proposed as at 2013. Precinct area demographics, frequency of meetings, number of attendees, meeting format and content currently vary considerably.

2. Current Review

On 4 December 2017 Council considered a Notice of Motion (NoM) by Councillors Keen, Barbour and Mutton, 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 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:
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d. an external consultant to facilitate face-to-face consultation;
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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)

3. Previous Review (2012/13)

The 2012/13 Precinct System Review was proposed to be undertaken in three phases (extract from report to Governance Committee of 9 September 2013, G11 Precinct System Review - Next Phase):

Phase	Objective	Timeframe
1 - Discussion Paper	*Provide comprehensive background information as to the role and function of the Precinct System, its historical and current structure and operations, analytical data and recent stakeholder feedback. Propose recommendations addressing key issues, mostly arising from the 2006 Review, as 'food for thought' to obtain stakeholder feedback.*	*October 2012 - April 2013*
2 - Precinct Area Reallocation Consultation	*Expand the recommendation (No. 2) proposing exploration of the reallocation of Precinct area boundaries. Based on Phase 1 feedback, as well as considered research, several options will be prepared for consultation.*	*May - November 2013*
3 - Decision Making	*Report back on preferred Precinct area boundary option. Publicly exhibit preferred option. Determine final recommendations agreeable to both Council and the Precinct System at large, based on Phase 1 and 2 feedback.*	*November - December 2013*

Stage 1 involved the in-house preparation of a Discussion Paper, recommending areas for improvement to the Precinct System - aimed at increasing awareness of and participation in Precinct Committees, and a greater level of support to office bearers by better utilisation of Council resources. Many of the recommendations were not new. Some had been suggested through previous reviews (including the 1992 and 2006 reviews) and were explored at the time but found not to be suitable and/or not pursued. Such recommendations were suggested again for consideration within (then) current factors including complementary engagement programs, including resources and satisfaction levels.

On 10 December 2012 (Min. No.794) Council endorsed the public exhibition of the Draft Community Engagement Protocol together with a Precinct System Discussion Paper, which were exhibited for 120 days from 13 December 2012 to 11 April 2013. During this time feedback was sought from active Precinct Committees and the general public through written submissions. Meetings were held with Precinct Committees who requested to meet with Council staff during the exhibition period and/or staff attended Precinct Committees as requested. 19 submissions were received. In summary:

- 13 (68%) were from active Precinct Committees;
- 1 (5%) was from the Combined Precincts Committee;
- 2 (11%) were from office bearers of active Precinct Committees which had also made submissions;
- 1 (5%) was from a former office bearer of an inactive Precinct Committee; and
- 2 (11%) were from community groups/education institution.

The *Stage 1 Submissions Summary* was reported to Governance Committee on 9 September 2013 (G11) in context of the proposed next steps for Phase 2 of the review. However, Council at its meeting of 16 November 2013 (Min. No. 600) resolved to discontinue the review. Council resolved in part:

1. THAT the Precinct System Discussion Paper feedback be received and no further action taken on the Review; and that the resolution be communicated to Precinct Committees.

3.1 Precinct Area Boundaries

Further to recommendation No. 2 of the original Discussion Paper, three proposed options for the reallocation of Precinct area boundaries were originally reported to Governance Committee on 9 September 2013 (G11). The following is an extract of the previous report:

"As anticipated, the largest amount of feedback and concern received in response to the Discussion Paper [as at April 2013] was regarding recommendation No. 2 (also referred as recommendation b) which proposed a reallocation of Precinct area boundaries. 15 of the 19 submissions responded to recommendation No. 2; of these 12 (80%) submissions were from active Precinct Committees. In summary, 47% (7 submissions) were against a suburb-by-suburb reallocation approach, while 33% (5 submissions) were in support and 20% (3 submissions) gave neither/nor and/or other comments.

The above analysis should be considered in the context of the content of the submissions. Of the submissions against reallocation the main reasons given for not supporting a suburb-by-suburb approach were:

- *difference in size of Precinct areas i.e. some suburbs are smaller than others.*
- *flyer letter box dropping requirements.*
- *Precinct areas need to reflect the neighbourhood and "commonality of interest".*
- *bigger areas may present problems for the older residents who do not drive to attend meetings.*
- *may increase the workload of office bearers.*
- *difficulties in obtaining office bearers.*
- *amalgamation into 15 groups may increase the workload of some precincts above reasonable limits, especially those with high regular DA counts.*
- *a more sensitive and realistic method for redefining the boundaries was supported without being able to define that method.*
- *concerned meetings would become longer for a large group/area and this could deter people from attending.*

A desk top review, complemented by one-on-one meetings with other councils with active Precinct Systems was held between April and June 2013, to discuss their current operations as well as their most recent review of the Precinct area boundaries, to identify what review practices (methodology), if any may be applied in North Sydney.

Based on Phase 1 feedback as well as considered research, several options have been prepared for Phase 2 consultation. The following approach is consistent with Council's Community Engagement Protocol and feedback from active Precinct Committees:

- *Holtermann Precinct - "would like the emphasis placed on group discussion for the development of Precincts' future structure and function" ... "we request that maps showing the proposed boundaries be provided so that we can give an informed and considered response".*
- *Union Precinct - "would definitely like the opportunity of further specific input into any final paper to be put to the Council for consideration".*
- *Wollstonecraft Precinct - "until the proposal is fleshed out by identification of the boundaries of the Precincts within each Ward, and the present Precincts have had the opportunity to make further submissions in regard to them, (perhaps after a trial in one of the proposed areas), it should not be implemented…"*

The objectives of Precinct area boundary realignment are to:

- *allow community members residing in areas without active Precinct Committees to have access to an active Precinct Committee;*
- *improve Council support to Precinct Committees (i.e. voluntary officer bearers); and*
- *ensure more efficient use of existing Council resources amongst all its community engagement programs."*

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Protocol.

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

The sustainability implications will be considered and reported when the Engagement Outcomes Summary is reported to Council for endorsement (i.e. post exhibition).

DETAIL

This report responds to the resolutions 2a, 2e, 3 and 5 of 25 November 2019, and seeks endorsement to commence with Stage 1 of the review as outlined below.

1. Community Engagement Strategy (Attachment 1)

In accordance with resolution 2e, a Community Engagement Strategy (Attachment 1) has been prepared in accordance with Council's *Community Engagement Protocol*. The project-specific Engagement Strategy details the methods to be employed, and how opportunity to participate in the review will be promoted to stakeholders, to ensure wide-spread awareness.

2. Updated Discussion Paper (Attachment 2)

The Discussion Paper has been updated for currency (per December 2017 resolution) and in acknowledgement of the 2012/13 feedback received. The following table compares the original recommendations (2012) to the current recommendations as outlined in Attachment 2:

2012/13	2019/20
1. Terminology/Branding; 2. Reallocation of Precinct area boundaries - consolidation of the current number of Precinct Committees; 3. Increased marketing and promotion; 4. Review the Combined Precinct Committee's role and function; 5. Review of Council's level of support (resource allocation); 6. Offer alternative Engagement Programs1; and 7. Review of application processes for community street parties.	1. Terminology/Branding; 2. Reallocation of Precinct area boundaries - consolidation of the current number of Precinct Committees; 3. Review the Combined Precincts Committee's role and function; 4. Review the Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers and Members; 5. Review of Council's level of support (resource allocation); and 6. Review of application processes for community street parties.

The key changes compared to the original Discussion Paper are:

- Recommendation No. 2 has been expanded in response to the feedback received in 2012/13 - as detailed below;
- Former recommendation No. 3 has been integrated with No. 5 concerning Council's resource allocation;
- Former recommendation No. 6 has been removed, as it is a separate program; and
- Code of Conduct has been added as its own recommendation.

2.1 Reallocation of Precinct Area Boundaries

Recommendation 2 is potentially the most contentious and likely to generate the most feedback in Stage 1. The current number of Precinct areas/configuration has been in place since 1995.

The 2013 redistribution options were reviewed and, based on the current inactive Precinct Committees, an alternate option has been prepared (replacing the original Options 2 and 3 which were instigated at a point in time when there were less total active Precinct areas then there are now). Option 1 expands/merges current Precinct areas. Option 2 aligns (largely) to the suburb boundaries. Either option presents the opportunity for a program re-launch, to aid the objectives of increased awareness and participation.

Option (incl. Rationale)	Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Expanding/Amalgamating Existing Precinct Areas - active Precinct Committees represent a larger geographical area, incorporating the inactive Precinct areas.	- Reduction in number of Precinct areas. - Current boundaries largely adhered to i.e. status quo largely maintained. - As detailed in Attachment 1, this option supports informal suggestion to	- Status quo largely maintained. - Possible difficulty finding volunteer office bearers under new arrangements. - Community cannot easily associate their Precinct Committee with

Option (incl. Rationale)	Strengths	Weaknesses
	combine Bridgeview, The Plateau and Bay Precinct areas; and redistribution of the CBD Precinct area is as per the 2008 recommendation.	the suburb in which they reside, work or study etc.
2. Suburb Based Boundaries - the rationale is to enable residents, workers, students and property owners to easily identify with their Precinct Committee with the suburb in which they reside, work, attend school/tertiary studies etc. *Note: includes 2A and 2B*	• Reduction in number of Precinct areas. • Suburb boundaries largely aligned. Ease of association between suburbs and Precinct Committee boundaries • Larger sized suburbs could be split into two e.g. east and west (Option 2B). • Good for consultations on geographical basis.	• Threat to existing networks in the current Precinct System community. Possible difficulty finding volunteer office bearers under new arrangements. • Part of North Sydney suburb (near Careening Cove) may better associate with the neighbouring suburbs of Kirribilli and/or Neutral Bay.

3. Amended Code of Conduct (Attachment 3)

The *Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers and Members* was last formally reviewed in 2010, in consultation with Precinct Committees. The Code was based on Council's former Code of Conduct for Councillors and Staff, and there is value in ensuring a level of consistency given the relationship between the Council and the Council auspiced Precinct System. Council's *Code of Conduct - Councillors and Staff* was updated in 2019 and it is appropriate to also update the *Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers and Members.*

The Code (Attachment 3) has been reviewed in line with Council's new *Code of Conduct - Councillors and Staff* and to address issues/areas not currently covered, which include but are not limited to:

• operational funding cannot be used for - political purposes/lobbying election campaigns and memberships;
• proxy voting at Annual General Meetings is not permitted;
• guidance regarding representation at Public Forums prior to Council Meetings (can represent on matters determined/endorsed by a Precinct Committee only);
• use of social media by a Precinct Committee and by office bearers in personal capacity;
• provision of alcohol at Precinct Committee meetings (requires review in context of insurance); and
• dispute resolution and sanctions for breaches of the Code.

4. Response to Notice of Motion

In responding to the Council resolutions of 4 December 2017 and 25 November 2019, the following work has been undertaken (in-house):

a) The 2012 Discussion Paper has been reviewed and is presented as Attachment 1. The total number of recommendations has been reduced from seven to six. The background to each recommendation has been updated as required. Recommendation No. 2, regarding proposed reallocation of Precinct areas, as detailed in section 2.1 of this report, has been expanded to include options for Precinct area boundary redistribution.

    To proceed with the Discussion Paper without detailed discussion of alternate boundary options does not address the 2013 feedback received; which was that more detail was needed in relation to this recommendation.

b) The *Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers and Members* (Attachment 2) has been reviewed in line with Council's new *Code of Conduct - Councillors and Staff*. As detailed in Attachment 1, issues/areas not covered by the current Code as outlined above.

5. Next Steps

A Community Engagement Strategy (Attachment 1) has been prepared detailing how the review will be promoted to stakeholders, to ensure wide-spread awareness of the opportunity to participate.

To inform the Review's scope, it is recommended that the *Precinct System Review Discussion Paper 2019* (Attachment 2) and the amended *Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers and Members* (Attachment 3) be endorsed for public exhibition, for 120 days' duration, to commence in March 2020.

The review will be conducted in two stages. Stage 1 will obtain preliminary feedback by way of public exhibition (120 days) of the updated Discussion Paper and proposed amendments to the *Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers and Members*, which will commence from mid-March 2020.

The Discussion Pape acts as 'green paper', inclusive of six recommendations seeking feedback on components of the current Precinct System, to inform the face-to-face consultation, which is to be externally facilitated at Stage 2 (per resolution 2f) and subsequent decision making by the elected Council. The scope and proposed timing of Stage 2 is yet to be determined, as it is budget dependent.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Precinct System Review

Prepared January 2020

Councils are required under the *Local Government Act 1993* to inform the community of particular issues that potentially affect their way of life. North Sydney Council is committed both in principle and in practice, to engaging on matters affecting the North Sydney community.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this project-specific Community Engagement Strategy is to outline the ways stakeholders can be involved in the decision-making process regarding the review of the North Sydney Community Precinct System. Community engagement opportunities will be provided across a range of 'engagement' levels.

The North Sydney Community Precinct System is almost 50 years old. The Precinct System, at the time of its inception, was Council's primary public participation mechanism, under its commitment to 'open government', enabling geographically based engagement on issues of concern to local residents, businesses, workers and students (18 years plus). Over time with the introduction of new technology and changing community needs, Council's community engagement approach expanded. The Precinct System is now one of several community engagement programs coordinated by Council.

The North Sydney local government area is currently divided into 25 Precinct areas in the, with 19 Committees currently active. Originally, Precinct areas were based on approximately 1,000 residences per area. Precinct areas have since grown and reduced in total quantity from 40 odd areas to the current 25 areas. An average number of residences per Precinct area is no longer feasible.

1.1 Council's Community Engagement Protocol

This Strategy has been prepared in accordance with Council's *Community Engagement Protocol.* The Protocol is used to determine the level of 'level(s) of impact' applicable to this project/decision (proposal). This proposal has been determined as:

LEVEL OF IMPACT	LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT
High/LGA Wide	Inform/Consult/Engage

Council used the framework shown below in Table 1.1 to select the most appropriate 'level(s) of engagement' for this proposal to ensure an appropriate range of engagement 'levels' and methods were offered:

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Inform	Providing balanced and objective information to help the community understand problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions
Consult	Obtain public feedback on alternatives and/or decisions
Involve	Work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that public

1

Community Engagement Strategy - Precinct System Review

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
	concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered
Collaborate	Partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution

Table 1.1 Derived from the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

2. Background

On 4 December 2017 Council considered a Notice of Motion (NoM) by Councillors Keen, Barbour and Mutton, 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 NoM No. 58/17 was considered. Council resolved (Min. No. 330):

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d. an external consultant to facilitate face-to-face consultation;
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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)

3. Community Engagement Strategy

3.1 Who are our community stakeholders?

This Strategy identifies the following groups to engage with in the local community:

- Precinct Committees and their members
- Residents
- Businesses
- Workers
- Students

Community Engagement Strategy - Precinct System Review

- Councillors
- Council staff

3.2 Key Communication Messages

- The North Sydney Community Precinct System has been in operation for almost 50 years old. At the time of its inception, the Precinct System was considered Council's primary mechanism for public participation, under its commitment to 'open government', enabling geographically based discussions on issues of concern to local residents, businesses, workers and students (18 years plus). Over time, with the introduction of new technology and changing community needs, Council's community engagement approach expanded - the Precinct System is now one of several Council coordinated community engagement programs.
- The North Sydney local government area is currently divided into Precinct areas. Originally, there 40 plus areas which over time became to the current 25 areas, of which 19 Committees are currently active.
- Precinct area demographics, frequency of meetings, participant numbers, meeting format/structure and content/matters considered currently varies considerably from Precinct Committee to Precinct Committee.
- Council has resolved to conduct a review of the Precinct System. The review will be conducted in two stages, which will involve community engagement utilising a rage of methods. The purpose of Stage 1 is to collect stakeholder feedback/input to inform Stage 2, which will be externally facilitated. Decisions concerning Council's future support and resourcing of the Precinct System will be made by the elected Council.

3.3 Timetable

Community and stakeholder engagement will occur at various times during this six-month period[1]. The key project stages are outlined in the following table:

Stage	*Timing*
Stage 1	January to June 2020
Stage 2	July to December 2020

3.3.1 Stage 1

Stage 1 will be conducted in-house. The opportunity to provide feedback during Stage 1 will occur between February and June 2020, and will involve:

- liaison with active Precinct Committees to inform the review's scope, inclusive of the objective to consolidate the total number of current Precinct areas;
- concurrent public exhibition of the updated *Discussion Paper* and proposed amendments to the *Code of Conduct - Councillors and Staff*, in which the feedback will inform the Stage 2 face-to-face consultation.

Not listed in priority order:

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[1] Note: Stage 2 timing is subject to Council's approval of funding in the 2020/21 Operational Plan & Budget.

Community Engagement Strategy - Precinct System Review

Method	Target Stakeholders	Engagement Level	Purpose
Direct Letter	Precinct Committees/ Past submitters	Inform	Communicate proposed project
Council Website (and Engagement HQ)	All	Inform	
Media Release	Local Media	Inform	
Social media	All	Inform	
Advertisement in local papers	Residents/ratepayers/ businesses	Inform	
e-newsletters	All subscriptions	Inform	
North Sydney News[2]	Residents/ratepayers/ businesses	Inform	
Community Noticeboards	Residents/Workers/Students	Inform	
Submissions	All	Consult	Opportunity to provide preliminary feedback

Note: In accordance with Council's Community Engagement Framework described on page 1, the 'level of engagement' per engagement method is indicated.

At the end of Phase 1 a summary of consultations outcomes (raw data/unanalysed) will be produced and reported to Council (as progress update) and distributed to submitters and key stakeholders, as well as posted on Council's website.

3.3.2   Stage 2

An external consultant will be engaged to coordinate and facilitate Stage 2, which will involve:

- analysis of Stage 1 feedback;
- workshops open to current Precinct office bearers/members, as well as the general community;
- interviews with a selection of Precinct office bearers and members;
- interviews with relevant Council staff; and
- feedback collation, analysis and presentation of Stage 2 findings report, which will be presented to Council in context of staff recommendations.

At the end of Phase 2 a summary of consultations outcomes will be produced and distributed to participants and key stakeholders as well as posted on Council's website.

Stage 2 will use the same Inform methods as listed for Stage 1. Additionally, Stage 2 will utilise the following Consult and Involve methods, not listed in priority order:

Method	Target Stakeholders	Engagement Level	Purpose
Workshops	Precinct Committees	Consult/Involve	• Communicate proposed project
Interviews	Precinct Committees	Consult	
Submissions	All	Consult	• Provide opportunity

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[2] Pending publication timing

4

Community Engagement Strategy - Precinct System Review

Method	Target Stakeholders	Engagement Level	Purpose
			to respond/Invite submissions

Note: This Strategy may be reviewed at the end of Stage 1

4. Opportunity Cost/Rationale

Engaging the community in this proposal may entail financial costs to Council to achieve a high-quality engagement process. If the process is robust, community ownership of the decisions made will ensure efficient outcomes. Insufficient or poor-quality engagement can result in poor long-term decisions requiring further resources to rectify. The aim of a high-quality community engagement process is to make sustainable decisions. The engagement process will help Council staff and/or Councillors to understand the related recommendations rationale.

5. Further Information

For further information please contact Council's Community Engagement Coordinator, Gemma North, City Strategy Division:

Phone: 9936 8100
Email: yoursay@northsydney.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au

North Sydney Community Precinct System

Discussion Paper

January 2020

Prepared by North Sydney Council
Integrated Planning & Special Projects Department

Contents

1. Introduction

The North Sydney Community Precinct System, whilst under the auspice of North Sydney Council, is independent from Council in its activities and decision-making. Council has however, for almost 50 years, considered the Precinct System one of its primary mechanisms for public participation in decision-making under its commitment to 'open government'. Today there are a total 25 Precinct areas, with 19 Precinct Committees currently active, plus the Combined Precincts Committee (CPC).

On 4 December 2017, the 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, Council resolved (Min. No. 330):

2. *THAT Council endorse a review of the Precinct System which includes the following:*
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   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.*
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).*
4. *THAT the Precinct System Guidelines be updated prior to the commencement of the review to reflect current arrangements.*
5. *THAT on a trial basis, the boundaries of the inactive and 'as needed' Precinct Committees be merged with active Precinct areas.*
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).*

This paper reviews Council's support of the Precinct System, both past and present, and recommends improvements, that in turn aim to increase awareness and participation, and to provide a greater level of support to the office bearers of Precinct Committees, through improved utilisation of Council's resources. It is intended to provide enable preliminary discussion to inform the Precinct System Review, which will involve broader consultation with stakeholders - Precinct Committees, Councillors and Council staff as well as the general public - as part of the review's next stage.

As background, at its meeting of 24 September 2012 (Min. No. 543), Council resolved to review its community engagement programs, with the aim to present options for a more inclusive framework, consistent with industry best practice including online engagement. In response, on 10 December 2012 (Min. No. 794), the Council endorsed the public exhibition of the then draft *Community Engagement Protocol*, together with Precinct System Discussion Paper (Discussion Paper 2012).

Discussion Paper 2012 provided an overview of the Precinct System and recommended improvements aimed at increasing awareness and participation, and enhanced support to the voluntary Precinct Committees office bearers through improved utilisation of existing resources.

The previous review was intended to be conducted in three phases:

- Phase 1 - public exhibition of Discussion Paper 2012, inviting feedback on recommended improvements to the Precinct System, aimed at increasing awareness of and participation in Precinct Committees, and a greater level of support to office bearers through better utilisation of Council resources;
- Phase 2 - report the Phase 1 feedback and expand Recommendation 2 (possible Precinct area boundaries reallocation) by providing proposed options for consultation. Three options were proposed; and
- Phase 3 - report the Phase 2 feedback (preferred boundary option) and draft implementation plan to address the Phase 1 priority improvement areas.

The feedback received in response to Phase 1 was reported to Council in September 2013 together with three proposed Precinct area boundaries reallocation options (for consultation), Council resolved (Min. No. 600) to discontinue the review.

In accordance with the 2017 resolution, the Discussion Paper has been updated and the recommendations remain largely the same. The following table compares the previous and current recommendations:

2012	2019
1. Terminology/Branding;	1. Terminology/Branding;
2. Reallocation of Precinct area boundaries - consolidation of the current number of Precinct Committees;	2. Reallocation of Precinct area boundaries - consolidation of the current number of Precinct Committees;
3. Increased marketing and promotion;	3. Review the Combined Precincts Committee's role and function;
4. Review the Combined Precinct Committee's role and function;	4. Review the Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers and Members;
5. Review of Council's level of support (resource allocation);	5. Review of Council's level of support (resource allocation); and
6. Offer alternative Engagement Programs[1]; and	6. Review of application processes for community street parties.
7. Review of application processes for community street parties.	

1.1. What is a Precinct Committee?

In accordance with the current *Precinct System Policy (D5-41)*:

> *'Precinct' describes a physical area, within the Council boundaries, with borders defined by factors including physical geography, demographics, built form and land use.*

> *'Committee' describes the gathering of community representatives (including residents, workers, students and property owners) from within Precinct areas, who meet formally to discuss local issues and raise them with Council.*

Council's *Community Engagement Policy* (D5-15) states that it will engage the community when issues involving decision making or policy formulation are deemed, by Council officers or the elected Council, to be of specific interest to the community, and/or arise and may arise which have a significant immediate or long-term impact on the local community. One method by which engagement occurs is via the Precinct System. This is further discussed in Section 1.3.

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[1] Note: this has been removed and will be considered separately by Council.

The Precinct System provides a vehicle for the formal expression of comment, concern and suggestion between the Council and the community. The Precinct System acts as a broad conduit for information, for a range of Council related activities including traffic and parking matters, environmental health issues, development applications, land use planning, strategic and corporate planning (including the Community Strategic Plan, annual Operational Plan and Budget), various plans of management and policy matters.

Precinct Committees encourage resident, worker, student and property owner involvement in Council's decisions, by enhancing community awareness and social interaction, generating consultative information, ideas and opinions, supporting Council's inter-governmental dealings, planning programs and policies with physical, social and historic insight.

Each Precinct area has a unique character/locality - refer to Section 3 for the historical significance of each Precinct area. Each Precinct Committee varies in the level of interest/participation, executive committee configuration, the range of topics discussed and the level of formality of its meeting structure. There is also a changing dynamic within each Precinct Committee as different individuals become involved, the level of participation varies from Committee to Committee because of the nature of the issues under consideration at any point in time and the overall direction a Precinct Committee takes.

Precinct Committees function within a broad set of guidelines, which lets each Precinct Committee determine an appropriate structure, suitable to their local membership. In 1976, Council resolved that suggested terms of reference be prepared, and that these be treated as guidelines only, and not be binding on Precinct committees.

Participation is voluntary. Community members participate for a range of reasons, including but not limited to the desire to obtain general information on Council activities, an opportunity to meet neighbours or 'civic participation' to contribute to their local community.

1.2. Participatory Democracy

Through a series of adopted policies Council has consciously enable residents, workers, students and property owners to actively participate in its decision-making. In addition to the *Precinct System Policy* (D5-41), Council's community engagement programs are informed by two inter-related policies - the *Community Engagement Policy* (D5-15) and the *Open Government Policy* (D5-38).

In May 1984, Council adopted (Min. No. 123) the following policy direction:

THAT Council is a service organisation for the residents of the North Sydney Municipality. That it exists to assist each individual residing within its area consistent with the common good and legal responsibilities. That it is not the function of Council and its staff to enforce any policy or view on the community or any individuals unless that view has legal and community support, irrespective of the merits of that policy or view.

The principle of 'open government' is that the business of government should be open at all levels to effective public scrutiny and oversight by broadening participation through inclusive policy engagement processes.

Council, through the Precinct System and in conjunction with other community engagement programs, is creating socially acceptable reasons for assembly, as well as

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

providing its residents and key stakeholders with forums for the expression of their views.

Complementary to the Precinct System, Council offers several community engagement mechanisms that foster and encourage public participation in its activities; these include:

- Reference Groups and Working Groups - offer key stakeholders the opportunity to provide advice and feedback to Council on matters relevant to the scope of each group.
- Streetscape Committees - Council partners with local retailers and businesses to improve the ambience of its local shopping areas through its Streetscape Program. The program includes the development of masterplans for the various areas. There are currently six active Shopping Area Streetscape Committees in North Sydney. Note: The 2010 Customer Satisfaction Survey found that only 17% of businesses were aware of Streetscape Committees. This decreased slightly in 2013 (15%) awareness but increased in 2016 (to 23%).
- Community Ward Forums - provide an overview of key projects underway within each Ward. They also inform residents and businesses of changes in their local area and provide an opportunity for residents and businesses to meet and ask questions of the Mayor, General Manager, Councillors and senior staff.[2]
- Online Engagement/Panels Program - on 13 August 2012 (Min. No. 470), Council resolved to pilot an online panels program following the public exhibition of an options paper, which explored the introduction of 'a structured, deliberative, web-based engagement program' to complement existing communication methods and face-to-face engagement programs. Known as VoiceBox, a play on 'soapbox', the program involves five panels aligning to the five Directions of the North Sydney Community Strategic Plan[3]
- Volunteer Programs - Council recognises the importance of volunteering and offers several volunteer programs including the Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability and Don Bank Museum. Volunteer programs also include but are not limited to:
  - Bushcare Program - provides an opportunity for community members to become involved in managing and maintaining urban bushland areas. Participants meet on a regular basis and are provided with direction, technical advice and training, tools, native plants, mulch, signage and removal of rubbish; and
  - Streets Alive Program - gives community members the opportunity to create and care for gardens on public land in North Sydney. Streets Alive sites range from small planted areas around the base of street trees through to extensively landscaped areas hundreds of square metres in size.

To date these programs have been very successful and continue to be highly valued, although experience varying level of participation. It is acknowledged that involvement in all programs depends on an individual's ability to attend face-to-face meetings/gatherings.

Concurrent to the above-mentioned programs, Council also conducts project-specific engagements. Council's *Community Engagement Protocol* utilises a framework (outlined in Table 1.1), adapted from the International Association for Public

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[2] On 26 August 2019, Council resolved to reinstate the Community Ward Forum Program (Min. No. 225).
[3] Program currently in recess due to resources/workload priorities. Intent to reactive late 2020/21.

Participation (IAP2) *Public Participation Spectrum*, to select the most appropriate level(s) of engagement per project/decision. This framework ensures that the 'level' and 'type' (methods) of engagement are appropriate to the project/proposal.

Level	Description
Inform	Providing balanced and objective information to help the community understand problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions
Consult	Obtain public feedback on alternatives and/or decisions
Involve	Work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered
Collaborate	Partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution

Fig 1.1 Council's Community Engagement Framework, derived from IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

Comparison of the levels of engagement outlined in Fig.1.1 against Council's engagement programs, including the Precinct System, reveals that the level of engagement primarily generated by these programs is predominantly limited to 'inform' and 'consult'. The Precinct System provides a two-way communication mechanism between the community and Council; however, the System's structure does not necessarily allow effectively engagement at the 'involve' and 'collaborate' levels. Note: Upon invitation, Council staff attend Precinct Committee meetings to discuss proposals on exhibition and any feedback gathered conforms to the 'consult' level of engagement. Precinct Committees make recommendations to Council, which are considered by Council during its decision making. Precinct Committees cannot direct Council.

Council informs Precinct Committees of proposals, projects and events within the LGA and when required invites feedback e.g. submissions responding to documents on public exhibition. Individual maintenance issues submitted to Council via the minutes of Precinct meetings are treated as requests for service (service requests). Council does, when need arises, 'consult' with Precinct Committees e.g. invites them to briefings on the Local Environment Plan/Development Control Plan, annual Operational Plan and Budget and annual Traffic Facilities Review (allocation of capital funding to identified priorities per locality) etc. For most project types, Precinct Committee feedback is treated the same as individual submissions, which are open to the wider community.

Recommendation No.1: Terminology/Branding

The term 'Precinct' has many definitions and connotations, and its mixed usage within the North Sydney LGA causes some ambiguity:

- At North Sydney Council the term is interchangeably used in reference to the North Sydney Community Precinct System and in land use planning e.g. St Leonards/Crows Nest Planning Study for Precinct 1, 2 and 3[4].
- In Australia, the term is commonly used in a land use planning sense, to describe a neighbourhood or specific geographical area e.g. the NSW Government uses the term 'Planned (formerly Priority) Precincts'.[5]
- In the United States it the term commonly refers to police stations/local area commands, situated in and having jurisdiction over a particular geographic district.

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[4] For more information, visit
https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/Building_Development/Strategic_Planning/St_Leonards_Crows_Nest_Planning_Study
[5] For more information, visit https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/News/2017/New-priority-precincts

- The 2006 Precinct System Review recommended that the system be formally known as 'Neighbourhood Precincts'; however, there was little support by the Precinct Committees for a name change at that time.

- Similar community engagement programs currently operating within the local government context include progress associations and resident action groups (discussed in detail in Section 2).

The following is a summary of the stakeholder feedback provided as at April 2013:

- 50% (of 14 submissions) did not support a name change; 21% gave neither/nor and/or other comments.

- There was agreement that the term 'Precinct' has multiple meanings in the local government context.

- No alternative to 'Neighbourhood Committees' was suggested.

The proposed next steps as at September 2013 were:

- Keep program name as North Sydney Community Precinct System.

- Consider alternative names for each Precinct area/Committee. Names which once meant something geographically should be reviewed (e.g. Registry is reference to the former Motor Registry located within the Precinct area). It was recommended, where possible and/or appropriate, that association with suburbs is encouraged.

- Update Council's 'Corporate Terms' to reflect the two definitions/usages.

Proposed next steps as at January 2020:

- Seek stakeholder feedback on Recommendation No. 1 in current context, and particularly in context of Recommendation No.2 (reallocation of Precinct area boundaries), as to whether there is a desire for Precinct area/Committee name changes.

2. Background

2.1. Precinct System Inception

North Sydney Council established the North Sydney Community Precinct System in response to the needs of its local community and the organisation, to deal with the issues and the changing nature of both the growing central business district (CBD) and the community demands for access to the decision-making process.

The Precinct System developed out of a period in North Sydney's history when the traditional way of decision making in local government was no longer working. Its origins lay in the local progress associations that existed from the early 1900s (such as the Bay Road, later Waverton, Progress Association, established 1911), and the Resident Action Groups that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s.

> *Lasting well into the mid to late twentieth century, progress associations' records generally have long lists of achievements. They provide an important link to later movements despite ideological changes and population shifts which occurred within these communities. In many ways they demonstrate that people living within a locality regardless of their individual political beliefs or other affiliations will gravitate towards one another when the neighbourhood is affected by larger issues of development and change. […]*
>
> *Seeing the need to be part of a larger group, individual associations formed federations or coalitions and the North Sydney Federation of Progress Associations came into being from the late 1940s. At that point many other local progress associations had been established and were in operation in the local area throughout the twentieth century until the rise of the resident action groups and the precinct system.*
>
> *Source: Park, Margaret, Designs on a Landscape: A History of Planning in North Sydney, North Sydney Council & Halstead Press, 2001, pp. 30-31*

The 'Precincts' model was first introduced in 1972, as part of the *North Sydney Planning Scheme[i]*. The LGA was broken into 56 residential 'precincts' (consultative neighbourhood committees), each area averaging less than 400 dwellings[6], ranging in population from less than 50 residents to over 2,800 residents[7], with the sole charter of assisting Council to obtain planning information and advice regarding the Planning Scheme. The comparatively small average size of the Precinct areas reflected the fact that the consultant planners in the surveys had established that the average person's concept of their neighbourhood was generally no more than an area of two or three streets around their homes[8].

> *Don Geddes, Town Clerk from 1966 to 1978, observed when talking about the North Sydney Planning Consultants (NSPC) planning exercise, people had been 'enlightened' about the impacts of planning and how their communities could be affected in ways that were previously beyond their control. Through participation they were now able to wield some influence in the process.*
>
> *Source: Park, Margaret, Designs on a Landscape: A History of Planning in North Sydney, North Sydney Council & Halstead Press, 2001, p. 128*

In 1974, Council received the A. R. Bluett Memorial Award for initiative and achievement in Local Government in NSW, from the Local Government Association of NSW based on, among other things, the creation of the Precinct System.

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[6] Ranging between 20 households to over 1,300 per Precinct area.
[7] Pickles, I. Community Involvement in Local Urban Planning - the North Sydney Experience, 1976 p120.
[8] Ibid. p #

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

Appendix 1 to 3 (maps) show the change in configuration of Precinct areas over time.

In the late 1970s, there was extensive interest in the Precinct System model from the United States, New Zealand as well as NSW and interstate, as discussed in section 2.1.1.

By January 1977, 56 Precinct areas had reduced to only 19 Committees in operation. By the end of 1977 the Precinct System had largely disbanded due to a lack of community interest and general confusion over its aims and objectives. Some Councillors were dissatisfied with its role and function and moved for its abolition; they saw the Precinct System as being in competition with their own role and objected to the way in which some Precinct Committees were demanding more than merely an advisory role in town/land use planning.

> *Prior to running for North Sydney Council, Ted Mack, local resident and an architect with a particular interest in planning controls connected to his work at the Housing Commission, came to the conclusion that public participation was the reality from which good planning remedies could evolve. He was to bring his convictions to bare at North Sydney when he re-established the Council's Precincts in his first year as mayor in 1980.*
>
> *Source: Park, Margaret, Designs on a Landscape: A History of Planning in North Sydney, North Sydney Council & Halstead Press, 2001, p. 129*

The newly elected Council of 1980 adopted participatory policies including the *Open Government Policy* (D5-38) and formally reactivated the Precinct System, with a broader charter, revised Precinct area boundaries and greater Council support, by January 1981. The result was the re-establishment of a network of 26 Precinct areas with clear objectives and guidelines. At this time, the population of a Precinct area varied according to the type of dwellings and level of business activity, with 1,997 residents on average per Precinct area. In 1995, two precinct areas amalgamated into one - these being Wollstonecraft and Nicholson, thus reducing the total number of Precinct Committees from 26 to 25. No further changes to the structure of the Precinct System have occurred since.

> *A report in January 1981 returned the precinct system to the people of North Sydney, this time there was a concerted effort on the part of the Council to provide the funds and human resources the system needed to thrive and be a major participatory player in decision-making affairs. Mack relates his views on the several attempts to initiate a precinct system.*
>
> *'The Precinct system started off in the early seventies as simply a mechanism for the Council to gather information. They saw it as groups of residents who would deliver questionnaires and pick them up and then send them back to the Council … Once they were formed, a lot of people started to think about it and saw a wider role for the precincts and I was in a Precinct Committee here in Neutral Street before I ever thought about getting involved in the Council. Once I became Mayor, I wanted to reinstate the precincts but on a totally different basis, to be part of the actual decision-making process of Council, not just consultative bodies … The idea was that the people who attended those meetings could be involved in the decision-making of Council to whatever extent they wanted to be, in the broad issues, the small issues … So, while we wanted them to be part of the Council structure, they also could maintain an independence from the Council and they could also criticise the Council if they wanted to.'*
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> *Source: Ted Mack quoted in Park, Margaret, Designs on a Landscape: A History of Planning in North Sydney, North Sydney Council & Halstead Press, 2001, p. 141*

2.2. Adoption by Other Councils

Since the 1980s, the Precinct System has had an important impact on local issues and politics and has generated significant interest from individual Councils in most States and

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

overseas. In the 1980s and 1990s numerous local government areas took up the Precinct System model as a participatory democracy model for ongoing neighbourhood consultation and participation. Following is a list of the Councils within NSW, who at one point had or currently have a Precinct System in operation:

- Waverley Council - established 1986; still operating
- Gosford City Council - established 1988, disbanded by the mid-1990s
- Manly Council - established 1989; renamed Precinct Community Forums; Disbanded in 2016 on amalgamation into Northern Beaches Council, which created a single 'Manly Community Forum'.
- Liverpool City Council - established 1989; disbanded 1998 (program evolved into Neighbourhood Forums)
- Shoalhaven City Council - established 1991; still operating under alternative program called Community Consultative Bodies
- Sutherland Shire Council - established 1992; still operating however financial support from Council withdrawn in 2004
- Kiama Council - established 1992; disbanded 2001 (program evolved into Ratepayer Associations)
- Leichhardt Council - established 1992; disbanded 2015 (replaced by formal 'precinct' committees as committees of Council. These formal committees ceased operating from May 2016 on amalgamation into Inner West Council.
- Port Stephens Council - established 1992; Council support withdrawn 2007, and none currently operating.
- City of Wollongong - established 1992; disbanded 2006 (program evolved into Neighbourhood Forums)
- Lake Macquarie City Council - established 1992; disbanded in 2008
- Wyong Shire Council - established 1997; disbanded 2014
- Randwick City Council - established 1996; still operating

As at July 2019, only three other Precinct Systems remain active in NSW and one in the City of Fremantle in Western Australia (WA). It is noted that the City of Bunbury (WA), unsuccessfully conducted public consultation to gauge interest in creating a Precinct System in 2015. Glenorchy City Council (TAS) dissolved its Precinct System in August 2016, which was established in 1999.

The list above shows that the Precinct System model as a primary engagement method has, amongst most other Councils, been replaced by other community engagement programs, for example Liverpool City Council replaced its Precinct System originally made up of 20 Precinct Committees, with five Neighbourhood Forums/Committees. Between 2008 and 2015, Council held Ward Forums, one per Ward per annum; at that time there was a total of four Wards.

2.3. Previous Reviews

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

In 1992, a review of the Precinct System was undertaken in consultation with Precinct representatives. This 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 for the Precinct System was introduced in 1993. The Code is periodically reviewed, in line with Council's *Code of Conduct - Councillors and Staff* (D5-08) and the *Code of Conduct - Volunteers and Community Representatives* (D5-12). Note: a new Model Code of Conduct was prescribed in December 2018. Council adopted its revised *Code of Conduct - Councillors and Staff* on 29 April 2019.

2.3.1 Precinct System Review 2006

In November 2005, Council requested a review of the Precinct System. 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 had, in many Precinct areas, become low and as a result, some Precinct Committees were no longer a representative voice of the community, unable to fulfil their objectives; and
- a system established over three decades ago may have become static and possibly irrelevant.

The review, undertaken by Dugdale: Social and Environmental Planning Partnerships, involved extensive stakeholder consultation. The objectives of the 2006 review were:

- Ways to increase the levels of attendance;
- Whether the Precinct System's role should be widened;
- Whether additional Council resources should be dedicated to the Precinct System;
- Where were the most effective Precinct area boundary lines;
- Analysis of public participation initiatives and innovative processes of decision making in a local government context; and
- Analysis of the North Sydney demographic profile and future trends, and in this context, recommendations on appropriate structures in relation to Precinct Committees and enhancement of the Precinct System.

The 2006 Review recommendations were reported to Council on 12 March 2007, whereby Council resolved (Min. No. 124):

1. THAT a fulltime position be created to develop and support Precincts and facilitate major events undertaken by Precincts.
2. THAT attendance rates at precinct meetings benchmarked twelve to eighteen months after the position has been filled.
3. THAT Option 1 regarding administrative payments to Precincts be supported.
4. THAT twice a year, Precinct Chairs, or their representatives, be invited to join Councillors for a buffet meal following a Council (Property) or Management Services Committee meeting.

The full-time Community Engagement Coordinator commenced in September 2007, with the priority of implementing the 2006 Review recommendations.

2.3.1.1 Precinct System Implementation Plan 2008-2010

Implementation of the 2006 Review's recommendations occurred between 2009/10 and 2011/12, bringing about improvements to the operation of the Precinct System and increasing awareness within the local community.

The *Precinct System Implementation Plan* (Appendix 4), was prepared in June 2008, in response to the recommendations arising from the 2006 Review and further consultations that were held with Precinct Committees in early 2008.

The plan covered four key priority areas including organisational culture, administrative support, resources and Precinct System objectives - Refer to Appendix 4. As at 2012 seven strategies remained outstanding. These are summarised in the following table in with the 'status' has been updated as at August 2019, to reflect the three outstanding strategies. Note: 1.4.3, 1.4.4 and 2.3.3 were to be addressed by recommendations as detailed the Discussion Paper 2012.

Key Priority Area	Strategy	Status
1. Organisational Culture	1.2.1 The value of public participation to be included in Council's Statement of Values	Background: In 2009, 'Community Engagement' was included as a 'corporate behaviour' in all staff position descriptions.
	1.2.5 Review Precinct references in 'Participate' brochure	The 'Have Your Say and Get Involved' (formerly Participate) brochure was last reviewed in 2014.
	1.4.3 Explore amalgamation of CBD Precinct into neighbouring Precincts	Consultations to canvas interest and support for the reactivation of the CBD Precinct were held in 2008/09 as a result of community feedback against the proposal to amalgamate the CBD boundaries within neighbouring Precincts. The CBD Precinct was re-activated in September 2009, however, went into recess in June 2010 following a lack of interest. Amalgamation will be re-explored as detailed in the Precinct System Discussion Paper 2012.
	1.4.4 Explore opportunities for key issues such as traffic matters and relevant DAs to be considered by Streetscape Committees, where a Precinct is inactive	Existing practice remains to refer to neighbouring active Precinct area/s.[9]
	1.5.2 Initiate Recognition Awards Night celebrating contributions of members past and present	Deferred in 2009/10 due to cost saving measures organisation wide i.e. unsuccessful Special Rate Variation application. This project was discussed at the Combined Precinct Committee (CPC) held May 2012, where there was no support for this project; participating Precinct Committees at the meeting felt that the annual Neighbour Day BBQ and Precinct/Councillors Supper are sufficient opportunities. Precinct Thank You BBQs were held in, 2012, 2014 and 2015, in association with Neighbour Day. In 2017, an alternative format was trialled which

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[9] Project 3.1.1.4.1 (Investigate streamlining of Streetscape Committees and Precinct Committee boundaries) of the Delivery Program 2010/11-2012/13 did not proceed.

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

Key Priority Area	Strategy	Status
		was not exclusively open to Precinct Committees. In late 2017, the CPC resolved to support reinstatement of the Precinct Thank You BBQ, however due to low RSVPs the event was postponed in 2018. In February 2019, the CPC resolved not to proceed with the 2019 event, instead preferring the Precinct/Councillors Supper be re-instigated and that the contribution by Precinct Committees be recognised at the annual International Volunteers Function held in December. In late 2018, certificates of services were prepared and distributed to long-standing office bearers who retired from their positions.
2. Administrative Support	2.3.3 Explore shared secretarial support for Precincts	Refer to Section 4.
4. Precinct System Objectives	4.3.1 Continue to review Precincts Code of Conduct four yearly in line with the Council elections	The Precinct System Policy and Code of Conduct were reviewed and subsequently re-adopted in February 2013 and June 2018, as part of the quadrennial Policy Manual review. Amendments to the Code of Conduct are proposed and are recommended for consultation/public exhibition accompanying the Discussion Paper, so the Code can be considered in context. Following adoption of the revised Code, it is recommended that training for office bearers be held. Such training was last held in 2010.

Fig 2.1: Summary of outstanding strategies as at August 2019

2.3.2 Precinct System Review 2012/13

The 2012/13 Precinct System Review was proposed to be undertaken in three phases (extract from *G11 Precinct System Review - Next Phase*, 9 September 2013):

Phase	Objective	Timeframe
1 Discussion Paper	Provide comprehensive background information as to the role and function of the Precinct System, its historical and current structure and operations, analytical data and recently obtained survey feedback. Propose seven (7) recommendations addressing key issues, mostly arising from the 2006 Review, as 'food for thought' to obtain stakeholder feedback.	October 2012 - April 2013
2 Precinct Area Reallocation Consultation	Expand recommendation No. 2 which proposes exploration of the reallocation of Precinct area boundaries. Based on Phase 1 feedback, as well as considered research, several options will be prepared for consultation.	May - November 2013
3 - Decision	Report back on preferred Precinct area boundary options.	November -

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

Phase	Objective	Timeframe
Making	Publicly exhibit preferred option. Determine final recommendations agreeable to both Council and the Precinct System at large, based on Phase 1 and 2 feedback.	December 2013

Phase 1 involved the in-house preparation of Discussion Paper 2012, recommending areas for improvement to the Precinct System. Many of the recommendations were not new. Some had been suggested through previous reviews (including the 1992 and 2006 reviews) and were explored at the time but found not to be suitable and/or not pursued. Such recommendations were suggested again for consideration within (then) current factors, including resources and satisfaction levels.

The Discussion Paper was publicly exhibited for 120 days from 13 December 2012 to 11 April 2013. During this time feedback was sought from active Precinct Committees and the general public through written submissions. During the exhibition period Council staff presented to some Precinct Committees upon invitation.

A total of 19 submissions were received. Of these:

- 14 (73%) submissions were from Precinct Committees including the CPC;
- 2 (11%) submissions were from office bearers of active Precinct Committees which had made submissions; and
- 3 from a former office bearer of an inactive Precinct area, a community groups and a local tertiary educational institution.

Most of the feedback was in response to recommendation No.2, regarding options for alternate Precinct area boundaries.

The Phase 1 feedback summary was reported to the Governance Committee meeting of 9 September 2013. The report involved three options (proposed for consultation) for the reallocation of Precinct area boundaries (refer to Section 3). The Governance Committee recommended to discontinue the review. Council at its meeting of 16 September 2013 resolved to discontinue the review (Min. No.600).

3. Precinct Areas

The boundaries of the initial 56 Precinct areas were set mainly on the advice of Council's planning consultants (1971-72). The boundaries were supported to reflect physical barriers, such as marked changes in slope, open space corridors, through traffic routes, changes in dwelling environment etc[10].

3.1. Past Boundary Changes

Several boundary maps are included in the appendices, demonstrating how the Precinct areas have changed over time. Appendix 1 is from 1975 showing the initial 56 Precinct areas. Appendix 2 shows the Precinct areas circa 1993, noting that the current Wollstonecraft Precinct area previously consisted of four areas - Milner, Berry, Brennan and Nicholson and later became two areas - Wollstonecraft and Nicholson and the current Holtermann Precinct area previously consisted of two areas - St Leonards and Holtermann. and Appendix 3 shows the current Precinct areas in context of the current Ward boundaries[11].

When compared to criteria of 1980 (i.e. 1,997 residents on average per Precinct area) Appendix 3 illustrates that the structure/criteria regarding the allocation of Precinct areas has changed over time; due to amalgamations and other one-off requirements the current Precinct area boundaries are no longer based on a minimum number of dwellings/population. Nor do Precinct areas necessarily align with current suburb boundaries, and several Precinct areas fit within more than one Ward. As illustrated by Appendix 1 and 3, the Ward boundaries have always cut across Precinct areas i.e. several Precinct areas fall into more than one Ward, thus Ward boundaries are not considered a deciding factor in determining Ward boundaries.

In 2008, in response to an observation that Precinct Committees neighbouring the inactive CBD Precinct area[12] were (on occasion) commenting on development applications, and that the number of residents in the immediate CBD area had increased, changes were recommended to the CBD and surrounding Precinct areas. The proposal sought to reassign the boundaries of five Precinct areas, by eliminating the CBD Precinct and distributing it amongst Edward, Lavender Bay, Stanton and Union Precinct areas. In accordance with the 28 July 2008 (Min. No. 481) resolution, consultation occurred with the four active Precinct Committees prior to reporting to Council that there was in principle support. The proposal was exhibited in August/September 2008 and one submission opposing the recommendation was received. Reasons included lack of prior awareness there was a CBD Precinct hence its inactive status; and that some issues faced by CBD residents and property owners were distinct from the neighbouring Precinct areas. Despite the submission in the negative, it was recommended to Council to eliminate the CBD Precinct by assign the area into the neighbouring Precinct areas. On 8 September 2008, Council resolved (Min. No. 580) that the North Sydney Chamber of Commerce be given the opportunity of six months to 'regenerate' the CBD Precinct with active involvement from both the residential and business community. The CBD Precinct Committee was reactivated in September 2009; however, it went into recess in July 2010 due to a lack of interest/office bearers. Since this time, despite an increase in residential dwellings in the North Sydney CBD and increased business activity, Council has not received any formal requests to reactivate the CBD Precinct.

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[10] Ibid. p120
[11] The number of Wards reduced from four to three effective from September 2017. Effective from September 2020 the number of Wards will reduce from three to two.
[12] Inactive since the 1980s.

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

3.2. Current Precinct Areas

As at 1 July 2019, 19 Precinct Committees (out of a total 25 Precinct areas) are in operation, plus a Combined Precincts Committee (CPC), which meets bi-monthly and is independent of Council. The following table indicates the active Precinct Committees and how frequently they meet.

Precinct	Meeting Frequency
Bay	Quarterly
Bennett	Monthly
Brightmore	Monthly
Cremorne Point	Quarterly
Edward	Bi-monthly
Harrison	Monthly
Hayberry	Monthly
Holtermann	Monthly
Lavender Bay	Monthly
Milson	Monthly
Neutral	Monthly
Parks	Monthly
Registry	Monthly
Stanton	Monthly
The Plateau	As required
Union	Monthly
Waverton	Monthly
Willoughby Bay	Monthly
Wollstonecraft	Bi-monthly

Fig 3.1: Precinct Committee Meeting Frequency

The following table lists the number of residences per suburb - by ABS household count (comparing 2011 and 2016):

Suburbs	2011	2016
Cammeray	3,120	3,109
Cremorne	5,358	5,358
Cremorne Point	970	968
Crows Nest - St Leonards	2,747	3,326
Kirribilli	2,089	2,085
Kurraba Point	805	745
McMahons Point	1,305	1,226
Milsons Point - Lavender Bay	1,550	1,658
Neutral Bay	4,826	5,051
North Sydney	3,247	3,725
Waverton	1,462	1,481
Wollstonecraft	3,869	3,930
Total	31,635	32,662

Fig 3.2: Household Count per Suburb

The following table indicates the approximate[13] ABS household count per Precinct area (2016):

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[13] As ABS SA1 areas don't exactly follow Precinct boundaries this figure is approximate only; hence why total differs to Fig 3.2. 1991 ABS data is available per Precinct area, including housing type.

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

Precinct	Suburb	Ward	Household Count
Anderson	Neutral Bay and North Sydney	Victoria	1,098
Bay	Cammeray	Tunks	846
Bennett	Cremorne, Cremorne Point and Kurraba Point	Victoria	964
Bradfield	Kirribilli	Victoria and Wollstonecraft	1,573
Bridgeview	Cammeray	Tunks	886
Brightmore	Cremorne and Neutral Bay	Victoria and Tunks	2,029
CBD	North Sydney	Wollstonecraft	412
Cremorne Point	Cremorne Point	Victoria	1,077
Edward	North Sydney and Waverton	Wollstonecraft	924
Harrison	Cremorne and Neutral Bay	Victoria and Tunks	2,077
Hayberry	Crows Nest and North Sydney	Wollstonecraft and Victoria	878
Hayes	Neutral Bay	Victoria	1,042
Holtermann	Crows Nest and St Leonards	Wollstonecraft	2,509
Kurraba	Kurraba Point and Neutral Bay	Victoria	836
Lavender Bay	Lavender Bay, McMahons Point Milsons Point and North Sydney	Wollstonecraft	3,018
Milson	Kirribilli and North Sydney	Wollstonecraft	1,599
Neutral	Neutral Bay	Victoria and Tunks	2,655
Parks	Cremorne and Neutral Bay	Tunks	1,588
Registry	Cammeray, Crows Nest and North Sydney	Tunks	1,427
Stanton	North Sydney	Wollstonecraft	1,383
The Plateau	Cammeray	Tunks	803
Union	McMahons Point, North Sydney, Waverton	Wollstonecraft	762
Waverton	Waverton	Wollstonecraft	1,584
Willoughby Bay	Cremorne	Tunks	678
Wollstonecraft	Crows Nest, North Sydney, Waverton and Wollstonecraft	Wollstonecraft	4,205
TOTAL			36,853

Fig 3.3: Approximate Household Count per Precinct Area

3.2.1 Current Precinct Area Names

The following table provides background to the current 25 Precinct area names. All names are based on historical or geographical features within a Precinct area.

Precinct Committee	Background
Anderson	The Precinct area is named after William Anderson (1847-1930), who was an Alderman of North Sydney Council from 1891 to 1928, including as Mayor from 1914 to 1918, and for whom Anderson Park was dedicated in 1926.
Bay	The Precinct area includes the Long Bay and Willoughby Bay foreshores, giving the name. Depression-era works reclaimed approximately 20 acres of Long Bay to create Tunks Park, which first opened in 1956 and was named after William Tunks, the first Mayor of the Borough of St Leonards from 1867 to 1883.
Bennett	The Precinct area and Street are named after Irish engineer, William Bennett (1824-1889), who was NSW Commissioner for Roads and Bridges and lived nearby in a house named 'Honda' from 1864 until his death in 1889.

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

Precinct Committee	Background
Bradfield	The Precinct area is named after Dr John Jacob Crew Bradfield (1867-1943), the chief engineer of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and designer of the railway scheme which created North Sydney and Milsons Point stations. The Bradfield Highway crossing the bridge was named after him on its opening in 1932 and Bradfield Park underneath soon after.
Bridgeview	Refers to the Cammeray Bridge (now called Suspension Bridge or the Long Gully Bridge), which can be seen from parts of this area. The original suspension bridge was opened in 1892 and was rebuilt as a concrete arch bridge in 1939.
Brightmore	The Precinct area and Reserve are named after Brightmore Street. The origin of the name 'Brightmore' is uncertain, but it first appeared in Council's records from 1911 when land was being subdivided on John Cooper's Estate. The land for Brightmore Reserve was acquired by Council in 1935.
CBD	The MLC Building first opened in 1957 as the largest commercial office building in Australia. Other commercial buildings quickly followed and North Sydney became established as an important commercial centre. The most significant development occurred in the 1960s and 1970s when the North Sydney CBD experienced significant commercial and office development. Many flats and medium/high density housing were built from the 1960s.
Cremorne Point	The name Cremorne was first used by J. R. Clarke and his partner William Woolcott who leased 22 acres of land on the peninsula and opened it as a park in 1856, naming it after 'Cremorne Gardens', a picnic and amusement park in London. As a striking feature of Sydney Harbour, Cremorne Point was named in the 1880s by landowner and developer James Milson.
Edward	Named after Edward Street that runs through this Precinct area. The street is named after Edward Wollstonecraft a pioneer merchant and pastoralist of the area. Like his business partner, Alexander Berry, Wollstonecraft is buried in St Thomas' Rest Park.
Harrison	Named after Harrison Street - previously known as Cooper Street. In 1870 John Cooper purchased the Thrupps grant, and in 1879 James Start Harrison (1837-1902) leased four acres of Cooper's leasehold for a period of 99 years. Harrison was a prominent accountant and philanthropist, who 'devoted much of his time to the improvement of the conditions of the poor and the helpless'. On his death the property was subdivided into building allotments, including the street now named after him.
Hayberry	The Precinct area is named after Hayberry Street. 'Hayberry' is a combination of the names of the Berry family and their cousin, Sir John Hay (1816-1892), inheritor of the Berry Estate. Alexander Berry (1781-1873) and his family were early settlers of this area. Berry was the business partner of Edward Wollstonecraft and built the substantial 'Crows Nest House' in 1850, now the site of North Sydney Demonstration School.
Hayes	The Precinct area and Street were named after businessman Patrick Hayes (1817-1887), owner of the Oaks Steam Brick Company in Neutral Bay and founder of the Neutral Bay Ferry company.
Holtermann	The Precinct area and Holtermann Street, Crows Nest, are named after Bernhardt Otto Holtermann (1835-1885) a wealthy gold prospector and Member of Parliament for St Leonards. Famous for the Holtermann nugget (1872) and the Holtermann Collection of photos, he produced medicines for miners and was a forceful spokesman in all matters concerning the 'working masses'.
Kurraba	The Precinct area covers the area near the peninsula of land called Kurraba Point near Neutral Bay. Although the exact meaning of this name is unknown, it is of Aboriginal origin and is thought to refer to the Kurraba peninsula. Kurraba Point was proclaimed a suburb on 31

Precinct Committee	Background
	March 2010.
Lavender Bay	The Precinct area, suburb and bay were all named after George Lavender (1785-1851), the boatswain of the convict hulk Phoenix, which was moored in the bay. He married Billy Blue's daughter, Susannah, and eventually made his home in the area.
Milson	The Precinct area and the suburb of Milsons Point are named after James Milson (1778-1866), and his descendants, who were early pioneers of this area. His grandson, Alfred George Milson (1856-1928), was Mayor of North Sydney from 1909 to 1912 and 1913 to 1914, and for whom Milson Park was named in 1912.
Neutral	Neutral Bay was named by Governor Arthur Phillip, when he decreed in 1789 that all non-British 'neutral' ships visiting Port Jackson were to anchor there. In 1884, architect Walter Liberty Vernon (1846-1914) leased a large parcel of land in Neutral Bay, for his home ('Penshurst'), and started the Neutral Bay Land Company to develop houses. Vernon was an Alderman and Mayor of the Borough of East St Leonards and was the NSW Government Architect from 1890 to 1911.
Parks	The Precinct area includes Primrose Park, which was dedicated in 1930 after Hubert Primrose, Mayor of North Sydney from 1926 to 1932. In the 1890s the Park was the site of North Sydney's first sewerage treatment works. The engine and compressor houses, tunnels and canals can still be seen. The Precinct is also bordered by Grasmere Reserve, Brightmore Reserve, Cammeray Park and Green Park.
The Plateau	The Cammeray Plateau is a central geographical feature of this Precinct area and locality. Cammeray itself is named after the Cammeraygal, the local Aboriginal tribe.
Registry	This Precinct area is named after the Cammeray Motor Registry, which operated at 303 Miller Street from 1976 to 2002 and was a central feature of the area.
Stanton	The Precinct area and Stanton Library, which first opened in 1964, are named after James Street Stanton who served as an Alderman on North Sydney Council from 1925 to his death in 1943. He was Mayor of North Sydney from 1937 to 1939 and a keen supporter of the free library movement.
Union	A street with this name bisects this precinct area. The name appears in directories as early as 1875. There is no indication as to what 'union' commemorates, but it was the boundary of the Blue and Walker Estates.
Waverton	The suburb and Precinct area take their name from 'Waverton House', built by Joseph Purser in 1845 and named after a Waverton village in England. The Old family owned it from 1865 to 1974, when it was demolished.
Willoughby Bay	The name Willoughby was first used on the North Shore by Surveyor-General Sir Thomas Mitchell possibly in honour of his close friend, Sir James Willoughby Gordon. The Precinct area is bounded on one side by this bay.
Wollstonecraft	The suburb and Precinct area were named after the pioneer merchant and pastoralist, Edward Wollstonecraft (1783-1832), who took possession of a 524-acre grant here shortly after his arrival in Sydney in 1819. Wollstonecraft is buried in St Thomas' Rest Park.[14]

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[14] Nicholson (merged with Wollstonecraft) - Named after Nicholson Street, which was created in an early 1900s subdivision of the Wollstonecraft/Berry Estate. It is likely that the street was named after the close friend of Alexander Berry, Sir Charles Nicholson, first Speaker of the NSW Legislative Council and Chancellor of the University of Sydney. Berry owned the estate, which is now the suburb of Wollstonecraft, in partnership with Edward Wollstonecraft. Nicholson and Wollstonecraft Precincts amalgamated in 1995.

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

3.2.2 Recent Precinct Area Reactivation

The following is a summary of Precinct area reactivation over the last 15 years (listed alphabetically):

- Anderson Precinct Committee was activated from August 2009 to January 2012 then in recess again aside from an eight-month period from November 2015 to June 2016;
- Bay Precinct Committee was in recess from October 2007 to November 2015;
- Bradfield Precinct Committee went into recess in March 2015;
- Bridgeview Precinct Committee went into recess in July 2010;
- Brightmore Precinct Committee was in recess from December 2006 to May 2016;
- CBD Precinct Committee was reactivated from September 2009 to July 2010;
- Edward Precinct Committee went into recess from September 2016 to March 2018;
- Harrison Precinct Committee was in recess from 2001 to August 2017;
- Hayberry Precinct Committee was in recess from 2014 to October 2016;
- Hayes Precinct Committee has been in recess since late 2010;
- Kurraba Precinct Committee has been in recess since 2010[15];
- Milson Precinct Committee was in recess from December 2010 to November 2012;
- Neutral Precinct Committee was in recess from 2006 to August 2009
- Parks Precinct Committee was in recess from March 2008 to June 2019; and
- The Plateau Precinct Committee has not formally met since 2010, aside from several joint meetings with neighbouring Precinct Committees, largely concerning the State Government's Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link project and hosting an annual community Easter Egg Hunt event.

From time to time, Council fields enquiries from community members interested in reactivating dormant Precinct areas. Staff work with those interested to convene a 'community meeting' to determine the level of interest within the Precinct area. Council prepares, prints and distributes a flyer invite that is letterboxed within the Precinct area as well as promoted via its website, social media, noticeboards (as applicable) and advertisement in the local paper. If the Precinct Committee was active within the last 10-15 years, attempts are also made to invite past members (where records are available). Whilst there is no set target regarding the level of interest for reactivation, where there is majority support and volunteers for office bearers, the Precinct Committee is declared reactivated. This process has been working well as evidenced by the number of reactivated Precinct Committees.

3.3. Proposed Boundary Reallocation

Boundaries were originally selected based on areas of common interest, physical boundaries and within reasonable walking distance to a meeting place. The 'sense of neighbourhood' is also very important and related to size. The 1992 review noted that any modification of boundaries would need to consider these aspects.

As noted in Section 2 originally, in the early 1970s, Precinct areas were approximately 1,000 residences per area. Since that time Precinct areas have grown and reduced from 56 to the current 25 total areas - the same total since prior to the 1992 review

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[15] The Kurraba Point Resident Group formed in late 2018. This is not a formal Precinct Committee, i.e. receives no support from Council, however this group's purpose is like that of a Precinct Committee.

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

(inclusive of the merger of Nicholson and Wollstonecraft in 2000). An average number of residences per Precinct area is no longer feasible and is not a key criterion in the proposed options.

Precinct area boundary consolidation was considered in the 1992, 2006 and 2012 reviews, and again now for, as stated in the executive summary of the 1992 review, administratively and financially it could be advantageous if there are fewer Precincts, noting economies of scale.

As noted in Section 1, it was previously proposed that the second phase of the 2012/13 review expand on Recommendation No. 2 via a second round of engagement on three alternate Precinct area boundaries options. The following is an extract from the report to Governance Committee of 9 September 2013, G11 Precinct System Review - Next Phase (Min. No. 45), of which the minutes of this meeting were reported to the Council meeting of 16 September 2019 (Min. No. 600):

'As anticipated, the largest amount of feedback/concern received in response to the original discussion paper was regarding recommendation No. 2 (also referred to as recommendation b), which proposed a reallocation of Precinct area boundaries. 15 of the 19 submissions responded to recommendation No. 2; of these 12 submissions (80%) were from active Precinct Committees. In summary, 47% (seven submissions) were against a suburb-by-suburb reallocation approach, while 33% (five submissions) were in support and 20% (three submissions) gave neither/nor and/or other comments.

The above analysis should be considered in the context of the submissions content. Of the submissions against reallocation, the main reasons given for not supporting a suburb-by-suburb approach were:

- *difference in size of Precinct areas i.e. some suburbs are smaller than others*
- *flyer letter box dropping requirements*
- *Precinct areas need to reflect the neighbourhood and 'commonality of interest'*
- *bigger areas may present problems for the older residents who do not drive to attend meetings*
- *may increase the workload of office bearers*
- *difficulties in obtaining office bearers*
- *amalgamation into 15 groups may increase the workload of some Precinct Committees above reasonable limits, especially those with high regular DA counts*
- *a more sensitive and realistic method for redefining the boundaries was supported without being able to define that method*
- *concerned meetings would become longer for a large group/area and this could deter people from attending*

A desktop review was conducted between April and June 2013, complemented by one-on-one meetings with other Councils with active Precinct Systems to discuss their current operations as well as their most recent review of the Precinct area boundaries, to identify what review practices (methodology), if any may be applied in North Sydney.

Based on Phase 1 feedback as well as considered research, several options have been prepared for Phase 2 consultation. The following approach is consistent with Council's Community Engagement Protocol and feedback from active Precinct Committees:

- *'would like the emphasis placed on group discussion for the development of Precincts' future structure and function' ... 'we request that maps showing the proposed boundaries be provided so that we can give an informed and considered response'.*
- *'would definitely like the opportunity of further specific input into any final paper to be put to the Council for consideration'.*
- *'until the proposal is fleshed out by identification of the boundaries of the Precincts within each Ward, and the present Precincts have had the opportunity to make further*

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

submissions in regard to them, (perhaps after a trial in one of the proposed areas), it should not be implemented'.

In 2013 staff prepared three options for consultation, these options are presented again now, without change. The objectives of proposed Precinct area boundary realignment are to:

- Allow community members residing in areas without active Precinct Committees to have access to an active Precinct Committee;
- Improve Council support to Precinct Committees (i.e. voluntary officer bearers); and
- Ensure more efficient use of existing Council resources across all community engagement programs.

The first option was based on aligning Precinct area boundaries with suburb boundaries (as per recommendation in original discussion paper). The second and third options were a 'tweaking' of the existing boundaries by expanding/amalgamating existing Precinct areas whereby active Precinct areas essentially represent a larger proportion of the community than currently. A position fourth option was also considered, which involved keeping the existing Precinct area boundaries as is (i.e. maintain status quo), however this is not preferred as the residents, businesses, workers and students in the inactive areas would continue not to have access to an active Precinct Committee, unless there is community interest in reactivating these areas.

Consideration of any Precinct area boundary changes should take into consideration other boundary allocations utilised by Council which concern the public, for ease of identifying boundaries by customers. It is noted that the LGA is currently allocated into 33 parking areas and three resident parking permit zones. In 2014 Council established seven Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) zones, which at conception were said to be influenced by the current Precinct area boundaries, to 'provide a level of consistency'[16].

3.3.1 Option 1 - Expanding/Amalgamating Existing Precinct Areas

The rationale for this model is to expand/amalgamate use the current Precinct area boundaries enabling active Precinct Committees to represent a larger geographical area i.e. incorporate inactive areas. Refer to Appendix 5 for map detailing Option 1.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Reduced number of Precinct areas. • Current boundaries largely adhered to i.e. status quo largely maintained. • Supports past (informal) suggestions from active Precinct Committees to incorporate neighboring inactive areas e.g. combine Bridgeview, The Plateau and Bay Precinct areas; as well as redistribution of the CBD Precinct area (per the 2008 recommendation). • Opportunity for major program re-launch to aid objectives of	• Status quo largely maintained. • Possible difficulty finding volunteer office bearers under new arrangements. • Community cannot easily associate their Precinct Committee with the suburb in which Committee with the suburb in which they reside, work, study etc i.e. no obvious linkage with other boundaries/borders.

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[16] LATM Action Plans per zone were adopted in December 2017.

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

Strengths	Weaknesses
increased participation and awareness.	

3.3.2 Option 2 - Suburb Based Boundaries

This is the preferred option. The rationale for this model is to largely ahead of suburb boundaries, enabling participants (residents, workers, students and property owners to easily identify their Precinct Committee by the suburb in which they reside/work, study/attend school or own property. Randwick and Waverley Precinct areas, the only other remaining Precinct Systems in NSW operate this way. For consultation purpose two options have been prepared. Refer to Appendix 6 and 7 for to suburb based detailing Option 2 (A and B).

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Reduced number of Precinct areas. - Ease of association between suburbs and Precinct area boundaries by largely adhering to suburb boundaries - with Option 2B providing example of how larger sized suburbs could be split into two e.g. east and west. - Good for consultations on geographical basis - Opportunity for major program re-launch to aid objectives of increased participation and awareness.	- Threat to strong existing networks in the current Precinct System community - possible difficulty finding volunteer office bearers under new arrangements - Part of North Sydney suburb (near Careening Cove) may better associate with the neighbouring suburbs of Kirribilli and/or Neutral Bay (i.e. difference between Option 2A and 2B)

Recommendation No.2: Precinct Area Boundaries

When considering the relevancy of the current configuration of Precinct areas and the level of participation and community interest (see Section 5), it is prudent to consider consolidation of the number of Precinct Committees/areas. Such discussion should take into consideration other boundary alignments for other purposes as used by Council e.g. LATM and parking areas.

Precinct areas and names don't necessarily correspond with suburbs. Instead Precinct areas have been determined based on the uniqueness of localities. Since the inception of the North Sydney Community Precinct System, several Precinct areas have been abolished or consolidated. The most recent occurrence was in 1995, when Nicholson Precinct area was consolidated into Wollstonecraft Precinct area. The current Wollstonecraft Precinct area boundaries essentially align with the suburb boundaries of Wollstonecraft.

Council has in recent years received (informal) suggestions[17] to combine Precinct areas i.e. combined inactive areas with active areas, including The Plateau, Bridgeview with Bay; Bradfield with Milson; Edward and Union and Union with Lavender Bay. These suggestions have not been formally pursued as preference is for a holistic review of all Precinct area boundaries, rather than ad-hoc changes.

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[17] Including notes in Precinct Minutes, not including motion requiring Council action.

As demonstrated by Fig 3.3, one option for alternative distribution of Precinct area boundaries is to align Precinct areas with suburb boundaries. Such a change would also help residents easily identify with their local Precinct Committee, i.e. Precinct name corresponds with the suburb they live in. Randwick and Waverley Councils have Precinct areas largely aligned with suburb boundaries.

Note: Consideration be given of appropriate boundaries needed for large suburbs separated by a physical divider e.g. with Neutral Bay and Cremorne as it may be more feasible to have two Committees per suburb divided by the boundary of Military Road.

The following is a summary of the feedback provided in 2012/13:

- 47% (of 15 submissions) did not support boundary changes to a suburb-by-suburb approach, while 33% were in support and 20% gave neither/nor and/or other comments.
- Misconception exists amongst Precinct Committees that they are open only to residents, not businesses/other groups.
- Active Precinct Committees request consultation occur regarding boundary reallocation proposals.
- Reallocation proposals must be based on considerable research.
- Benefit of creating larger areas, thereby reducing the volume of support required and the cost of the Precinct System needs further justification.

The proposed next steps as at August 2013 were:

- Three proposed boundary options were reported to the Council meeting of 16 September 2013, recommending that consultation occur, between September and November 2013, regarding the options.

Proposed next steps as at January 2020:

- It is recommended that consultation be undertaken to determine the level of support for Precinct area boundary reallocation, with the objective to reduce the total number of Precinct areas. Preference is to align Precinct areas with suburb boundaries, to more readily enable residents, workers, students and property owners to identify their Precinct Committee with the suburb in which they reside, work, study etc. A two-stage consultation process is recommended. Stage 1 will seek feedback on proposed options, drawing from the boundary options originally proposed in 2013. Stage will involve in-depth consultation with both active Precinct Committees and a randomly selected representative sample.
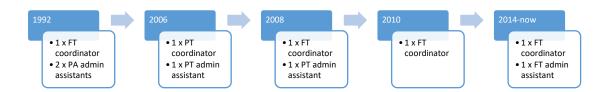
4.   Council's Support of the Precinct System

Since its inception the Precinct System has received both financial and in-kind support from North Sydney Council. Currently, Council provides support to the Precinct System in the form of:

- Administration - processing of motions/actions arising from individual meeting Minutes, meeting flyer printing and distribution coordination, and other ad hoc requests, serviced by designated contact officers: Community Engagement Coordinator and Administrative Support Assistant (primary contact person);
- Annual operational funding - $1,500.00 per active Committee in 2018/19; and
- Annual event/project funding - up to $1,000.00 per Committee in 2018/19 (granted on application basis - limited funding available).

4.1. Administrative Support

The following history outlines the level of administrative support provided by Council to active Precinct Committees. Regardless of staffing arrangements, support to the Precinct System has been provided continuously by either designated full-time and/or part-time positions[18]. Any and all changes, including increases and reductions, to the level of support and funding offered by Council have been communicated with active Precinct Committees prior to implementation.

The following timeline provides a potted history of the Council staff resources supporting the Precinct System since the time of the 1992 review. This change in resourcing levels does not necessarily reflect decisions of Council to reduce resource allocation, some are due to voluntary staff movements e.g. resignation.

1992	2006	2008	2010	2014-now
• 1 x FT coordinator • 2 x PA admin assistants	• 1 x PT coordinator • 1 x PT admin assistant	• 1 x FT coordinator • 1 x PT admin assistant	• 1 x FT coordinator	• 1 x FT coordinator • 1 x FT admin assistant

In response to the recommendations arising from the 2006 Review, Council at its meeting of 12 March 2007 resolved to reappoint a full-time Community Engagement Coordinator (commenced October 2007), responsible for the management of the Precinct System and coordination of other internal and external consultation opportunities. In 2014, following an organisational restructure and reallocation of departmental responsibilities, an administrative support role was introduced full-time to provide additional support within the Integrated Planning and Special Projects Department primarily to support the Precinct System. This position is responsible for handling general Precinct related enquiries, in-house printing of meeting flyers and liaison with the respective distributors, processing of actions arising from Precinct minutes, collation of the Summary of Actions (SOA) per Precinct Committee and maintenance of the individual Precinct Committee web pages.

The Community Engagement Coordinator is responsible for facilitating the development and maintenance of Precinct Committees. The Coordinator works with interested

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[18] Within the Integrated Planning and Special Projects Department, CIS Division (formerly known as Corporate Planning and Governance Department and before that Precincts Department). Prior to 1997 this function sat within the Community Development Department, CLS Division.

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

community members in the establishment/re-activation of Precinct Committees as well as other functions as outlined in Section 10 of the Precinct System Guidelines. Refer to Section 3.1.2 for a summary of the recently reactivated Committees.

The Community Engagement Coordinator also provides advice and internal support regarding community engagement in line with Council's *Community Engagement Protocol* (corporate methodology), although each Division of Council takes responsibility for community engagement as part of project management. Over time, the responsibilities of this position have increased to include coordination of the Community Ward Forum Program (introduced in 2008/09) and the Online Engagement Panels Program (trialled in 2013-2014) as well as administration of Council's *YourSay North Sydney* site (portal by which Council's engagements are hosted online).

Refer to Section 4.7 for the most recent feedback from Precinct Committees regarding their level of satisfaction with the administrative support provided by Council.

4.1.1 Actions Arising from Precinct Committees

Records indicate that in the 1990s a report summarising the actions arising from Precinct Committees was periodically presented to Council, providing them with an overview of actions requested of Council and issues arising from each Committee. However, over time this practice was abolished. Until recently, statistics regarding the workflow generated by Precinct Committees were not measured, therefore Council was unable to quantify the actions arising from Precinct meetings. Such data is important in evaluating the contribution the Precinct System makes to Council's planning and decision making.

An audit of the Summary of Actions between 2013 and 2018 (excluding the CPC) was conducted measuring the number and type of actions requested of Council. Compared to the graph on the following page the action type has been further categorised:

- Compliance - includes requests assigned to Council's Environmental Health and Building Compliance Department and Ranger and Parking Services Department;
- Compliments - about the Council, Councillors and/or staff;
- Development related - submissions as well as enquiries related to advertised/ determined DAs, modifications, exempt and complying development;
- Feedback - documents/proposals on exhibition (including proposed amalgamation), including strategies, policies and planning proposals and liquor licence applications etc;
- Service Request - includes general enquiries, maintenance requests e.g. trees, trip hazards, graffiti removal, and complaints/feedback on Council services;
- Traffic related - includes traffic, parking and road safety issues, area specific surveys, LATMs and cycling/active transport; and

It is noted that the same action may be counted multiple times due to the following reasons:

- Precinct Committee was not satisfied with the original response and/or requested more information (they considered the matter still open);
- Minutes not submitted to Council directly after their meeting and therefore a response was not provided prior to their next meeting;
- Delay by staff in responding to actions i.e. service level[19] not met; or
- Matter determined 'open/ongoing' by Council.

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[19] Council's current service level of responding to actions arising from Precinct Committees are:
i) Actions forwarded to responsible action for response within 5 working days of receipt of Minutes; and
ii) Response per action provided by responsible officer within 14 working days of receipt of task.

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

Precinct Committee Actions Arising 2013-2018
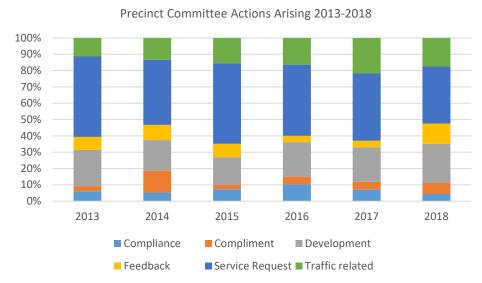
Fig 4.2 Summary of Actions by Category 2008 to 2018

In 2009 the individual Committee pages of Council's website were updated and summaries of actions arising (SOA) per Precinct Committee introduced as well as Committee minutes, which have been published for some time now. The SOAs are a summary of all the actions/motions of a Precinct Committee (requested per meeting, via their minutes) which require Council's action/response. The SOAs can be viewed at www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/precincts.

4.2. Operational Funding

In addition to administrative support, Council has also for many years provided financial assistance to the Precinct System. As outlined in Section 10.3 of Appendix 8 the purpose Council's operational funding contributions:

> …to be used for Precinct operating expenses. This may include but is not limited to venue hire, printing and flyer distribution costs, stationery, phone call and internet reimbursement, refreshments and catering, PO Box rental, website administration, promotion, committee activities etc. Council reviews the amount of operational funding annually. Precinct Committees are not registered for GST, as such Council will not pay GST on top of the operational or event funding allocations.

In 2006/07 operational funding contributions were capped at $1,000 per Precinct Committee. Following recommendations from the 2006 Review Council, at its meeting of 12 March 2007, resolved to increase operational funding to $1,500 per Committee and to introduce up to $1,500 in additional funding per Committee for events/projects e.g. street parties.

An audit conducted in early 2008, in consultation with Precinct Committees, found that several Committees were not utilising their full annual funding allocation and that funds were accumulating year after year and/or unspent funds were not being returned to Council by Precinct Committees that had gone into recess. The audit also found that some Precinct Committees were not able to access their bank accounts due to loss of signatories at the changeover of office bearers. The audit identified that some Precinct Committees demonstrated a need for additional funding.

It is noted that not all active Precinct Committees have a bank account. In lieu of having their own account, some Precinct Committees have opted for Council to hold their

annual operational funding allocation and that these funds be used to pay their expenses, mostly limited to flyer delivery costs. Unspent funds per financial year are foregone i.e. retained by Council and cannot be accumulated. Reasons for not having their own bank account include lack of volunteers willing to take on the responsibilities of account signatories and/or treasurer.

Effective from 2008/09, following further consultation with Precinct Committees, the funding distribution procedures were changed. Instead of Council automatically distributing $1,500 to each Precinct Committee, it was agreed that funding be issued in three x $500 instalments[20]. The purpose of the change was to ensure that Precinct Committees only claimed the amount of funding needed to cover operational expenses per annum. In 2008/09 only one (5.2%) Precinct Committee claimed the full $1,500 operational funding, whilst 13 Precinct Committees claimed $1,000 (68.4%) and four (21%) of 19 active Precinct Committees claimed $500 in operational funding.

In 2009/10 Council reduced its discretionary expenditure[21], including its operational funding contributions to the Precinct System, which was reduced to (up to) $1,000 per Precinct Committee, issued in two x $500 instalments. Council also instigated additional funding to cover venue hire fees for Precinct Committees that do not meet in Council-owned facilities and provided in-house printing of meeting flyers - both offers were taken up by several Precinct Committees. In 2009/10 seven (33.3%) of 21 active Precinct Committees claimed the full $1,000 allocation, not including the CPC.

Between 2010/11 and 2012/13 Council continued to provide up to $1,000 operational funding (plus additional funding for flyer distribution) and event funding respectively per Precinct Committee, plus venue hire and provision of in-house printing. The following is a summary of funding allocated per financial year, including the CPC:

Year	No. Active	Operational Funding		Event Funding		Venue Funding	
		No. Claimed	Total Value	No. Claimed	Total Value	No. Claimed	Total Value
2010/11	20	13	$8,146	6	$5,671	2	$1,310
2011/12	19	11	$7,077	5	$5,235	4	$2,576
2012/13	16	13	$8,906	1	$1,850	4	$2,150

Fig 4.3 Funding Distribution 2010/11 to 2012/13

In 2013/14, in response to the Council resolution 16 September 2013 (Min. No. 600), annual operational funding returned to one instalment of $1,500 per Precinct Committee, plus additional funding for flyer distribution, venue hire and the provision of flyer printing. Individual Precinct Committees with less than $3,500 in their account are eligible to receive the operational funding, this measure has been put in place to ensure that the previous build-up of unspent funds does not re-occur. The following table summarises the allocation of funding by Council to active Precinct Committees for the last five financial years, including the CPC:

Year	No. Active	Operational Funding		Event Funding		Venue Funding	
		No. Claimed	Total Value	No. Claimed	Total Value	No. Claimed	Total Value
2013/14	16	12	$13,378	1	$1,000	6	$2,955
2014/15	17	14	$18,994	2	$3,073	7	$3,598
2015/16	18	15	$20,816	2	$2,309	8	$4,469
2016/17	18	14	$22,522	1	$1,329	6	$4,085
2017/18	19	15	$22,691	2	$1,627	8	$4,589
2018/19	20	15	$20,798	1	$1,378	8	$5,924

Fig 4.4 Funding Distribution 2013/14 to 2018/19

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[20] For more information, refer Appendix 7 page 16 of 21.
[21] Council's 2009/10 one-off SRV application was not successful.

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

It is noted that two active Precinct Committees have recently voiced concern regarding the amount of operational funding currently provided by Council to individual Precinct Committees per annum, noting that is does increase by CPI annually. It is recommended that any consideration of an increase in operational funding takes into consideration the value of the in-kind support provided to Precinct Committees e.g. flyer printing, review what office bearers can be reimbursed to ensure consistency in application from Committee to Committee; and that any such consideration be deferred until after determination of the number of Precinct areas (i.e. Recommendation No. 2).

4.2.1 Precinct Suggestions for Additional Resources from Council

In 2017/18, in response to a Notice of Motion, originating from an individual Precinct Committee, the concept of a 'hot desk' within the Council Chambers for Precinct Office Bearers use was explored. A report detailing individual Precinct Committee feedback regarding interest in such a resource[22], and the cost/resource implications of such an initiative, the Council on 4 December 2017 resolved (Min. No. 453) to support this initiative; however, the concept was ultimately abandoned due to budget constructions i.e. project not funded in adopted Delivery Program 2018/19-2020/21.

Another request originating from an individual Precinct Committee is for Council issued email addresses e.g. EdwardPrecinct@northsydney.nsw.gov.au. Whilst this idea has merit, such provision would incur an ongoing cost (however minor) and require ongoing support from Council staff. Such a recommendation could be further explored to determine level of interest by majority Precinct Committees. Reasons not to pursue this initiative include:

- The majority of Precinct Committees already have generic email accounts;
- Security risks with externals accessing Council's corporate email account;
- Concern over Precinct Committees' independence of Council, as emails to and from Council issued email accounts are the property of Council;
- Council's *Web Access and Email Policy* (staff policy) governs the use of Council issued email accounts;
- Impact on existing resources/service levels if catering to numerous external bodies requiring support; and
- Approximate cost is $10.00 per month, per address.

4.3. Combined Precincts Committee

The Combined Precincts Committee (CPC) was initiated by the Precinct Committees themselves back in the 1990s. The CPC originally met on a quarterly basis and submitted its meeting minutes to Council for action/response. Council processed the actions/requests and recommendations (resolutions) and replied via a Summary of Actions (SOA). A copy of which is distributed to all Precinct Committees.

Like the Precinct Committees themselves, the CPC is not a formal committee of Council. Both are under the auspice the North Sydney Council, but are independent from the Council in their activities and decision-making.

The current objectives of the CPC are to:

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[22] Whilst some concerns were raised regarding the need for such a facility, including that it duplicates services already provided to the Precinct System, the annual operational funding contribution and whether the location and accessibility was most suited, there was majority support to trial the 'hot desk' as proposed in this report for a 6-month period.

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

- Continue to improve the link between Council and the community and foster improved community engagement by coordinating and liaising with Council on behalf of all Precincts;
- Establish an inclusive and democratic forum where community-wide issues, relating to policies, major plans/projects and key issues with respect to the primary functions of the Precinct Committees, can be discussed;
- Function as an executive to all Precinct Committees, though it does not replace individual Precinct Committees; and
- Be a knowledge bank and support resource for individual Precinct Committees.

Participation in CPC meetings is detailed in Section 5.

The outcomes of the 2006 Review recommended that the CPC 'has the potential to be a key source of information, inspiration and mutual support for the Precinct System. Feedback from Precinct Committees received during the review process suggested that it be run by Council or cooperatively between Precinct Committees and senior management' and that 'its meetings would also be the appropriate place for Precinct Committees to receive initial briefings on major Council initiatives on which Precinct Committees were asked to comment'.

The exploration of alternate models of operation for the CPC, including a review of its terms of reference to improve administration and enhance its role and function, was endorsed in principle at the Precincts Implementation Strategy workshops held in February 2008. Improving the role and function of the CPC was considered essential to achieving two of the four key priority areas arising from of the 2006 Review, which were to improve administrative support and resourcing of the Precinct System.

A discussion paper published in May 2008, Council staff explored alternative models for the CPC; it noted that at that time the CPC had no formal terms of reference or guidelines, and although its membership was open to representatives from individual Precinct Committees, it was not wholly representational in that not all operational Precinct Committees actively participated. The 2008 consultation with active Precinct Committees (conducted in response to the 2006 Review) found that whilst the CPC was (then) seen as a 'knowledge bank and support for individual projects' and 'a forum for joint Precinct projects', its lack of structure prohibited it from providing the level of support it was set up to provide.

The other 2006 Review recommendations as related to the CPC were:

- That it had 'the potential to be a key source of information, inspiration and mutual support for the Precinct System. Suggestions have been made that it be run by Council or cooperatively between Precinct Committees and senior management'; and
- 'Would also be the appropriate place for Precinct Committees to receive initial briefings on major Council initiatives on which Precincts are asked to comment'.

The CPC currently meets bi-monthly (as resolved August 2018) and operates, with secretariat support provided by Council staff, under Terms of Reference, which was initially endorsed in November 2008 and amended in June 2017 and April 2019. In summary, the most recent amendments to the Terms of Reference have concerned:

- Voting (clause 9g - Each Precinct Committee is entitled to up to two votes (one vote per attendee) at CPC meetings)

31

- Meeting frequency (clause 9a)
- Special meetings (clause 11a)

Recommendation No. 3: Combined Precincts Committee

The following is a summary of the feedback provided in 2012/13:

- Nine submissions were received in response to this recommendation.
- Three submissions recommended a review of the CPC's role and function.
- Three submissions (including two from active Precinct Committees) raised concerns/questioned whether the CPC was required, however such feedback was not specifically sought.

The proposed next steps as at August 2013 were:

- Feedback to be discussed with the (then) CPC Co-Convenors.
- Recommend that the role and function (including structure) of the CPC be reviewed in consultation with Precinct Committees, post finalisation of any Precinct area boundary changes.

Proposed next steps as at January 2020:

It is recommended that the CPC Terms of Reference be reviewed with active Precinct Committees in context of any other recommendations implemented.

4.4. Code of Conduct - Precinct Office Bearers and Members

A Code of Conduct was first introduced in 1993. The Code is periodically reviewed, in line with Council's Code of Conduct - Councillors and Staff (D5-08) and the Code of Conduct - Volunteers and Community Representatives (D5-12)[23].

The last review of the Code occurred in 2007/08. Council engaged an independent consultant to review the Code and make recommended amendments. The consultant also facilitated a 'refresher' training session for office bearers in July 2010, including case study examples. The Code is also explained during the annual induction/training session for office bearers.

Further, the 'operations' of Precinct Committees are not clearly defined within the Precinct Guidelines. The defined objectives of the Precinct System focus on encouraging and facilitating public participation and interaction with Council, the Guidelines establish that:

> *The Precinct System, whilst under the auspices of North Sydney Council, is independent from the Council in its activities and decision-making.*

The Code currently requires suspected breaches to be reported to the General Manager (or Public Officer) who, where appropriate, makes enquiries or causes enquiries to be made, into breaches of the Code of Conduct and will determine the

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[23] Note: In December 2018, the new 2018 Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW (Model Code of Conduct) and Procedures for the Administration of the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW (Procedures) were prescribed under the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005. All NSW Councils were required to adopt the Mode Code by 30 June 2019. Council readopted its Code of Conduct on 29 April 2019.

matter in accordance with Council's complaint handling procedures. These provisions are considered inadequate in context of recent matters brought to the attention of senior Council staff.

Over the past two years several issues have been brought the Council's attention by individual members of Precinct Committees, and are not covered by the current Code:

- Operational funding cannot be used for political purposes/lobbying election campaigns and memberships;
- Proxy voting at Annual General Meetings is not permitted;
- Representation at Council meetings;
- Use of social media by a Precinct Committee and by individual Office Bearers in personal capacity; and
- Lack of sanctions for breaches of the Code.

Recommendation No. 4: Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct was not referenced in the 2012 recommendations.

Proposed next steps as at January 2020:

In response to the above listed matters not currently covered by the Code, proposed amendments have been prepared by Council staff. It is recommended that the proposed amendments be endorsed by Council for consultation (including public exhibition and independent facilitation) with active Precinct Committees and the wider public.

4.5. Office Bearer Training

In response to a short survey to determine level of interest, Council staff led a Planning Day for Precinct Committees in February 2006. The purpose of this half day session was to help Precinct Committees wishing to attract more people to their meetings, by developing an action plan. The plans were intended as short term 'road maps' for the next two years. The session discussed the kinds of activities Precinct Committees may choose to become involved in e.g. host a special event, become active in streetscape improvements or develop a website.

Training for Precinct Office Bearers was identified as a priority in the Precinct System Implementation Plan 2008-2010. Office Bearers expressed interest in training to assist with the effective chairing of meetings and marketing and promotion, to increase awareness and interest in their Committees.

Between 2008 and 2012, Council actively sought training opportunities for Precinct Office Bearers in addition to the annual Induction Session and periodic Code of Conduct refresher. Council staff initiated a reciprocal arrangement with other Councils with active Precinct Systems - Leichhardt, Manly, Randwick and Waverley - to share training opportunities to maximise participant numbers and reduce costs. Under this arrangement a few Precinct members from North Sydney participated in training provided by the other Councils, and likewise members of other Precinct Systems participated in training hosted by North Sydney. For example, in July 2012, Council hosted 'Maximising Your Community Marketing Effort', which was attended by seven people from six Precinct Committees as well as participants from other areas.

Another initiative to arise from joint networking with other Precinct Systems, was the forum held in October 2009 in the Fred Hutley Hall, North Sydney, entitled 'Broadening the appeal of Precinct Committees'. This free half day event was open to all Office Bearers and interested Committee members from Leichhardt, Manly, Randwick, Waverley as well as North Sydney. The program included a guest lecture by renowned social researcher Hugh MacKay (who at the time was a North Sydney resident) called *Reviving Local Communities*, followed by the opportunity to participate in a choice of two workshop and a plenary session. The workshop topics included publicity and promotion (including events, special projects and innovation in meeting coordination), IT as an engagement tool (including used of technology, websites and social media) and effective advocacy (the role of Precinct Committees in responding to community interests and their role as advocate). 116 Precinct members and Councillors from across the five LGAs participated in the event. 89% of participants who completed the evaluation said they would like a similar event to be held again.

In late 2012, a survey of Precinct Committees' training needs was conducted in order to determine best resource allocation, 16 Office Bearers from 10 active Precinct Committees responded. In summary, the survey found:

- 94% agreed Council should provide training for Office Bearers and members;
- 57% preferred large groups of 10-12 people, while 36% preferred small groups of 2-5 people and 7% preferred online training;
- The following graph indicates preferences for a range of suggested training topics; and when asked whether there were other particular topics of interest the common response was Council's planning system/processes;
- 69% preferred training to be held on a weekday evening (6-8pm), while 31% preferred weekdays (Mon-Thu) between 9am and 5pm; and
- 86% supported the continued provision of joint training opportunities with other Precinct Systems including a willingness to travel outside the North Sydney LGA and of this 45% would need travel assistance if outside the North Sydney LGA.

Please indicate if you would be interested in attending training about any of the following topics.

Legend: Maybe, No, Yes

Topic	Maybe	No	Yes
Setting up a website	1	5	7
Social media – how to set up a presence (Facebook, Twitter etc)	3	5	5
Advocacy skills	3	5	6
Marketing and promotion	5	2	5
Communications skills - eg public speaking, interpersonal, negotiation	1	6	4
Community event management	6	3	4
Running/facilitating effective community meetings	3	2	9
Dealing with the media	3	2	8

Fig 4.5 2012 Training Needs Survey - Focus Areas

Externally facilitated training incurs a cost, including the financial expense of engaging a facilitator and acknowledgement of the time commitment of attendees. It is recommended that the training needs survey be conducted again to determine the current level of interest in office bearer training provision.

4.5.1 Annual Precincts Information Night

For many years up until 2010, Council hosted an annual Information Night for Precinct Committees (and later also Chambers of Commerce) towards the end of each financial year. The meeting provided Office Bearers (or their representatives, two per Committee) an opportunity to meet with Councillors and senior staff to discuss Council's projects and activities for the year ahead.

The session focused on Council's Management Plan/Operation and Budget for the year ahead. It included presentations by senior staff followed by a question and answer (Q&A) session. From 2010, Council opened this session to the general public as well as Precinct Committees. This initiative ceased in 2012 due to relatively low attendance each year, and introduction of the Community Ward Forum program.

4.6. Marketing and Promotion

The Precinct System Marketing Plan 2008-2010 (Appendix 8) focused on 10 promotional methods plus re-branding. The methods were - Council website, weekly eNewsletter, bimonthly printed newsletter, North Sydney News (community newsletter delivered to all households), corporate envelopes, advertisements, media releases promotional materials, generic email address and market stalls. Three of the total 21 actions remain outstanding - these are printed promotional material e.g. brochure, market stalls and rebranding. It is recommended that the Marketing Plan be updated and use of social media considered.

4.7. Precinct Committee Satisfaction

Council periodically conducted a satisfaction survey with active Precinct Committees in 2006, 2009, 2011, 2014 and 2019 to gauge the quality and appropriateness of administrative support provided by Council. The results of the 2019 survey have, where possible, been compared to the previous surveys. Refer to Appendix 11 for a detailed comparison of survey findings.

The 2019 survey was completed by 13 of 18 active Precinct Committees 72% response rate). In summary the key findings of the 2019 survey were:

- Overall 93% were very satisfied/satisfied (40%/53%) with the timeliness of Council's response to actions arising from their minutes - by comparison, 80% were very satisfied/satisfied (40%/40%) in 2014; 60% were very satisfied/satisfied (33%/27%) in 2011; 88% very satisfied/satisfied (50%/38%) in 2009 and 60% were satisfied in 2006.
- Only 7% were dissatisfied with the timeliness of Council's response to actions arising from their minutes, which is a 13% decrease compared to 2014 and 20% compared to 2006. Dissatisfaction was in relation to the action items being categorised as determined closed by Council before the Precinct Committee was satisfied with the response[24].
- 73% were very satisfied/satisfied (13%/60%) with the quality of Council's response to actions arising from minutes - by comparison, 70% were very satisfied/satisfied (20%/50%) in 2014; 66% were very satisfied/satisfied (33%/33%) in 2011; 80% were very satisfied/satisfied (33%/47%) in 2009 and 50% very satisfied/satisfied (7%/43%) in 2006. Dissatisfaction with the quality of Council's response to actions arising from minutes has decreased compared to previous years and is equal with 2014.
- 87% were very satisfied/satisfied (47%/40%) with the relevance and timeliness of Council's response to actions arising from minutes - by comparison, 70% of were very satisfied/satisfied (30%/40%) in 2014; 67% were very satisfied/satisfied (7%/60%) in 2011; 94% were very satisfied/satisfied (31%/63%) in 2009 and 60% very satisfied/satisfied (20%/40%) in 2006.
- Four (80%) Precinct Committees were very satisfied, and one was neutral regarding satisfaction with the assistance provided by Council in the reactivation of their Precinct Committee [25].
- 87% were very satisfied/satisfied (47%/40%) with the weekly e-bulletin correspondence from Council - by comparison, 90% were very satisfied/satisfied (50%/40%) in 2014; 87% were very satisfied/satisfied (67%/20%) in 2011, and 11% very satisfied increase compared to 2009.
- 33% of Precinct Committees were very satisfied (3% increase) and 13% were satisfied (37% decrease) with the annual Office Bearer Induction Session, while 53% were neutral, and none were dissatisfied. In 2014, 2011 and 2009 only one Precinct Committee was dissatisfied.

The general feedback responses from the surveys were compared, in summary the key issues arising were:

- There is generally a high level of satisfaction with Council's support of the Precinct System;
- When invited, staff attend Precinct Committee meetings, which are often held

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[24] If a Precinct Committee feels Council can take further steps, they can request Council reopen action.
[25] Since June 2014, Bay, Brightmore, Edward, Hayberry and Harrison Precinct Committees re-activated.

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

outside of office hours. Precinct Committees are appreciative of staff who give up their time to address Precinct meetings;

- The primary contact person(s) (full-time Community Engagement Coordinator since 2007/08 and full-time Administration Officer since 2014/15 and part-time Consultation Officer and part-time Precinct Administrator prior to 2007/08) are highly valued and considered very helpful;
- Electronic correspondence is preferred by the majority of Precinct Committees;
- Precinct Committees want greater level of interaction with their Ward Councillors; and
- Precinct Committees appreciate the increase in initiatives offered by Council, including the annual Precincts and Councillor Supper and Thank You BBQ held in conjunction with National Neighbour Day.

Recommendation No.4: Council's Level of Support

As identified through the periodic Satisfaction Survey (see Section 4.3), generally Precinct Committees are satisfied with the level of support and resourcing offered to them by Council, however opportunities exist to review the current level of support and resourcing in view of possible efficiency gains and productivity improvements.

The level of support currently provided by Council to active Precinct Committees varies; it is not equitable. There are a variety of factors influencing this, including (but not limited to):

- *Committees who monthly require a total higher flyer printing quantity than those who meet bi-monthly or quarterly;*
- *Committees with a larger geographical area/population size require a greater quantity of flyers printed;*
- *Committees with sub-committees, in addition to the general meeting, incur additional venue hire costs;*
- *Committees without their own bank account require Council to hold their operational funding allocation per annum and process their expenditure;*
- *Some Committees have more requests/motions per meeting than others, often in response to a major proposal in or around a Precinct area e.g. State Government proposals such as the Sydney Metro (two stations under construction within LGA), B-line and the WHTBL;*
- *The number of requests for Councillors and Council staff as guest speakers (i.e. draw card for meetings) is increasing;*
- *Not all Committees have a generic email address for incoming correspondence, and therefore incoming emails are passed on by Council via the precincts@ address (i.e. double handling);*
- *Not all Committees provide their Minutes in soft copy; and*
- *Provision of hard copy correspondence in absence of Internet connection at home/use of email by Office Bearer.*

The following is a summary of the feedback provided in 2012/13:

- *eight of 19 submissions responded to this recommendation, the feedback is summarised as: expansion or consolidation of Precinct areas will impact on meeting flyer distribution;*
  - *expansion of active Precinct areas will increase the work loads of Precinct Committee members (volunteers).*

- *expansion of Precinct areas will necessitate additional assistance from Council regarding flyer delivery and other administrative support/functions;*
- *Officer Bearers require access to technology e.g. computer and internet to perform their voluntary duties; and*
- *one Precinct Committee commented that Council's related policies are an impediment to Precinct System functioning; however, the majority of active Precinct Committees readily comply with paperwork related to funding allocation.*

The proposed next steps as at August 2013 were:

- *Once the total number of Precinct areas has been determined, the operational funding contribution per active Precinct Committee be reviewed; there is opportunity to workshop this with active Precinct Committees to streamline the processes.*
- *Consistency is required to ensure each geographical area is 'informed' about upcoming Precinct Committee meetings; Council to coordinate printing and delivery (optional) of all Precinct meeting flyers.*
- *Review and update the Precinct System Guidelines, post finalisation of any boundary and procedural changes.*
- *Council's support of individual Precinct Committees must remain tied to agreed processes and procedures if Council is to continue to sponsor a system which is independent of it.*

Proposed next steps as at January 2020:

- *The current level of (financial or in-kind and administrative) support provided by Council to the Precinct System should be reviewed in context of the recommencement of the Community Ward Forums Program and expansion of online engagement, as all programs are coordinated by the current staff resources supporting the Precinct System; and that such a review occur in context of any other recommendations to be implemented, especially any changes to Precinct boundaries resulting in a change in the total number of Precinct areas;*
- *Update the Precinct System Marketing Plan with intent to increase promotion and awareness of the Precinct System; Consistency is required to ensure each geographical area is 'informed' about upcoming Precinct Committee meetings; Council could coordinate printing and delivery (optional) of all Precinct meeting flyers using an agreed template (with consistent branding), as occurs for the Waverley Precinct System.*
- *Discuss training needs with Precinct Committees, including the proposal for Office Bearer skills development training on a biannual basis (as distinct from the annual Induction Session).*
- *Review and update the Precinct System Guidelines, post finalisation of any all other recommendations.*

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

5. Precinct System Awareness

Surveys conducted by Council, outside of Precinct System reviews, have been used to measure community awareness of the Precinct System. The *Customer Satisfaction Survey*[26], conducted periodically, benchmarks community awareness from 2010 to 2016. This statistically valid survey consults 400 selected residents and 200 businesses, all randomly selected.

The following graph shows that the level of community awareness has 2010 and 2016, with an average of 53% of North Sydney residents aware of the Precinct System. The results of a survey conducted in 1992 indicated a higher level of awareness by residents; with 69.2% (457) of respondents aware of the Precinct System.[27]
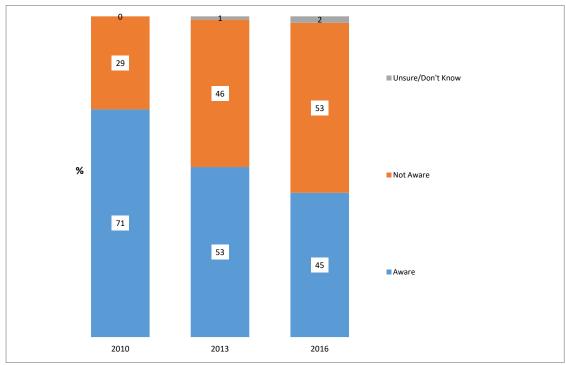
Fig 5.1 Extract from Customer Satisfaction Survey Findings Report 2016

Council's 2006 and 2009 *Customer Satisfaction Survey* also sought reasons for non-involvement and/or attendance in Precinct Committee meetings. The Customer Satisfaction Survey results presented in the following table have been compared, where possible, to the 1992 survey results[28]. The two main reasons for not participating in the Precinct Committee meetings were a 'lack of interest' and 'lack of time'; while in 1992 the two main reasons given for non-participation were 'age/access' and 'timing'.

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[26] All Customer Satisfaction Survey results are available at
http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/www/html/2308-customer-satisfaction-survey.asp
[27] The results of the survey conducted in 1992 were reported to Council at its meeting of 9 June 1992, by the Precincts Manager. In 1992 a review of the North Sydney Precinct System was conducted. The review sought community feedback on the effectiveness of the Precinct System and how it might be improved. The review was conducted by a series of surveys. Following collation of all survey data a working party was formed, which formulated a series of recommendations were reported to Council at its meeting of 9 June 1993.
[28] The Residents Survey conducted in 1992 (as part of the Precinct System Review) heard from 660 respondents, a response rate of 24% from sample size of 2,800.

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

Reason	1992	2006	2009
Age/Access - too old/Infirm/Can't get out	34.3	11	10
Awareness - often don't know the meetings are on/not informed	23.9	7	11
Content/Function - the meetings are useless nothing is achieved/waste of time/effort	3.8	9	10
Lack of Interest - there haven't been any issues I felt strongly enough about/no interest/nothing lately	12.6	27	38
Lack of Time - too busy/have no time	0	35	34
Membership - too much of a clique/people there aren't friendly/don't like people there	0	16	12
Timing - when it's on/the time/can't get there	42.2	14	12
Other	0	8	8

Fig 5.2: Comparison of Survey Findings 1992, 2006 and 2009

5.1. Level of Interest

A survey undertaken in November/December 2010, in conjunction with the 2011/12 Special Rate Variation (SRV), sought the community's level of support for Council's continued resourcing of the North Sydney Precinct System. The quantitative survey, along with an explanatory brochure, was distributed to +/-32,813 residential and business ratepayers. Residents were encouraged to review the full proposed program of works and further information available on Council's website. A total of 3,613 (11%)[29] surveys were completed[30].

The objective of the following question was to gain an understanding of the community priorities regarding the services and programs proposed to be funded by an increase in rates. Respondents were provided with a summary of the proposed program of works and were directed to Council's website for more information if required. They were asked about each component of the program, how important they thought it was:

Q1. A rate increase will be used to fund and maintain the following services and programs. To help us prioritise, please circle whether you think they are essential, somewhat important, neutral, not very important or not needed:

> 1.1 *Improve our parks, reserves, playgrounds and sporting fields including sports field resurfacing and toilet and change room facilities upgrades in Anderson Park, Blues Point Reserve, Kurraba Reserve, Tunks Park and Waverton Park*
>
> 1.2 *Install new lighting in Cammeray Park, Waverton Park and along the commuter route from Milsons Point to Lavender Bay.*
>
> 1.3 *Upgrade the change rooms and treat the concrete cancer in the 50m North Sydney Olympic Pool.*
>
> 1.4 *Improve our shopping villages and CBD streetscapes by improving footpaths and paving, street furniture, public art and landscaping (not currently funded by existing levies).*
>
> 1.5 *Refurbish the Crows Nest Centre and Forsyth Park Community Centre.*
>
> 1.6 *Refurbish the McMahons Point Child Care Centre, Cammeray Occasional Childcare Centre and Family Day Care Centre.*
>
> 1.7 *Provide community events including Youth Week, Children's Festival, Spring into Jazz concerts, North Sydney Art Prize, Garden Competition.*
>
> 1.8 *Continue free graffiti removal service for residents and businesses.*
>
> 1.9 *Continued support of the North Sydney Community Precinct System.*

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[29] A sample of 3,613 has a margin of error of 1.54% at the industry standard 95% confidence level. This means that the results are an accurate reflection of key stakeholder views within +/- 1.54%.
[30] The survey results were reported to Council on 14 March 2011.
http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/resources/documents/G0373.pdf

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

The following table details the respondents' priority rankings per proposed program or service. The majority of respondents (40%) were 'neutral' to Council's support of the Precinct System. Almost one quarter (24%) of respondents thought Council's support of the Precinct System was either 'not very important' (11%) or 'not needed' (13%). However, 36% of respondents thought Council's support of the Precinct System was 'essential' (13%) and 'somewhat important' (23%).

	Services and Programs	essential	somewhat important	neutral	not very important	not needed
1.1	Improve our parks, reserves, playgrounds and sporting fields including sports field resurfacing and toilet and change room facilities upgrades in Anderson Park, Blues Point Reserve, Kurraba Reserve, Tunks Park and Waverton Park	809 (22%)	1,175 (34%)	954 (26%)	340 (9%)	335 (9%)
1.2	Install new lighting in Cammeray Park, Waverton Park and along the commuter route from Milsons Point to Lavender Bay	649 (18%)	974 (27%)	1,128 (32%)	449 (72%)	413 (11%)
1.3	Upgrade the change rooms and treat the concrete cancer in the 50m North Sydney Olympic Pool	983 (27%)	948 (36%)	987 (27%)	346 (10%)	349 (10%)
1.4	Improve our shopping villages and CBD streetscapes by improving footpaths and paving, street furniture, public art and landscaping (not currently funded by existing levies)	798 (22%)	927 (26%)	999 (27%)	424 (12%)	465 (13%)
1.5	Refurbish the Crows Nest Centre and Forsyth Park Community Centre	272 (8%)	727 (20%)	1,435 (39%)	612 (17%)	567 (16%)
1.6	Refurbish the McMahons Point Child Care Centre, Cammeray Occasional Childcare Centre and Family Day Care Centre	329 (9%)	735 (20%)	1,426 (40%)	550 (15%)	573 (16%)
1.7	Provide community events including Youth Week, Children's Festival, Spring into Jazz concerts, North Sydney Art Prize, Garden Competition	250 (7%)	711 (20%)	1,142 (31%)	695 (19%)	815 (23%)
1.8	Continue free graffiti removal service for residents and businesses	1,329 (38%)	977 (27%)	812 (22%)	231 (6%)	264 (7%)
1.9	Continued support of the North Sydney Community Precinct System	465 (13%)	833 (23%)	1,460 (40%)	383 (11%)	472 (13%)

Fig 5.3 Respondents' priority rankings per proposed program/service 2010

5.2. Precinct Committee Attendance Comparison

The following table graph compares the average number of attendees at Precinct Committee meetings between 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2019[31], including a comparison to the same quarter in the previous year[32]. The average attendance quarterly during this period was 15 (an average increase of two persons per meeting, per quarter compared to the 36-month period, 1 July 2007 to 31 March 2012.

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[31] Based on best available data. It is noted that whilst the submission of Attendance Sheets per meeting is a compulsory requirement, there may be occasions during this period where a Precinct Committee has not provided such information to Council.

[32] In accordance with the Council resolution on 12 March 2007 (Min. No. 124) that required that attendance rates at Precinct meetings be benchmarked after the full-time Community Engagement Coordinator commenced.

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System
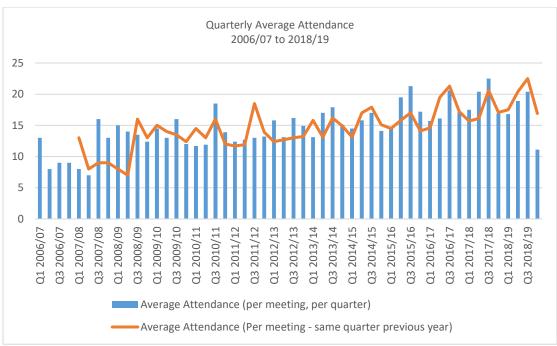
Fig 5.4 Attendance Comparison Data 2006/07 to 2018/19

There was an increase in average attendance from late 2007/08 to early 2008/09 following implementation of the *Precinct System Marketing Plan* (Appendix 8) followed by a steady, but relatively consistent, increase to current day. As identified by a review of topics discussed at individual Precinct meetings (i.e. via the minutes), reasons for the increase in attendance is attributed less to the post-GFC increase in residential and commercial development applications and more due to the high concentration of State Government initiatives, including amalgamation proposals (2014-2017), land use planning in particular the St Leonards Crows Planned Precinct (2017-current) and major transport projects such as the B-line along Military Road and the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link (WHTBL). Between 2017 and 2018, Council helped several groups of Precinct Committees to convene nine 'special' joint meetings, additional to scheduled individual Committee meetings (Between July 2017 and May 2019).

As noted in the 2012 Discussion Paper, monthly attendance figures between 1988 and 2012 (YTD) were compared. The highest level of participation was in 1992 when 3,835 people participated in committee meetings, equating an average of 320 people per month; the same year that an extensive review of the Precinct System was undertaken.

It is noted that participation in Precinct meetings is optional that there is no longer a quorum required (this requirement was removed in 2008)[33], therefore the statistical validity of the program is hard to quantify compared to other engagement programs for which quotas/quorums have be set or participation recruited. Similarly, as noted in Section 3, due to past amalgamation of Precinct areas and other one-off requirements, the current Precinct area boundaries are no longer configured based on a minimum number of dwellings or population per area.

Over the years, the legitimacy of the Precinct System as Council's 'primary' engagement mechanism was been reviewed. The 2012 Discussion Paper noted that consultation via the Precinct System needs to be complemented with other initiatives that offer diversity in level of participation and level of consultation. Research supports

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[33] Not including the CPC.

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

a multi-channel approach to community engagement, meaning the integration of multiple methods (including via Precinct Committees), tailored to the type of proposal/decision required, which are identified through an engagement strategy developed at the commencement of each project, prepared in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Protocol (corporate methodology).

In 2013, in summary in response to former recommendation (No. 5) regarding statistical validity/other engagement programs (as reported to Council on 16 September 2013 (Min. No. 600), the majority of submissions were in favour of Council offering a balance of face-to-face and online engagement methods/programs, including the Precinct System.

6. Other Initiatives:

6.1. 'Meet Your Street' Program

Many Councils facilitate the conduct of street parties. Northern Beaches Council has continued an innovative program; Manly Council offers 'Meet Your Street Program' which started in 2005[34]. This program aims to improve the quality of life of people living in Manly through developing closer relationships amongst neighbours. It ran in addition to their Precinct System.

Any individual or group of neighbours can initiate the process via an application form. Northern Beaches Council provides advice on safe road closures, infrastructure, such as amenities and barricades and general advice on planning of an event. The resident organiser of the event is required to attend an informal induction (to be covered by Northern Beaches Council's Public Liability Insurance).

The 'Meet Your Street Program' application process is like North Sydney Council's Precinct Event application form for Category B events. North Sydney Council has previously only accepted applications for street parties from Precinct Committees, not individual residents[35]. These events are coordinated by the Precinct Committees with support from Council's Community Engagement Coordinator. Since 2013 only one street party coordinated by a Precinct Committee has been held with the assistance of Council, however numerous other enquiries have been received over the years.

Residents, including Precinct Committees, wanting to hold an event - including a social gathering e.g. wedding ceremony, birthday party - for more than 60 people, or for any number that includes a jumping castle, animal farm or amusement device, on a public park or reserve for groups of 60 persons or more require a permit/approval from North Sydney Council[36].

Other NSW Councils also currently operating street party initiatives include:

- Randwick City Council funds and facilitates traffic control and temporary road closures for one-off neighbourhood events as part of its community-building, 'street party' initiative. Of the approximately ten applications for street parties submitted each year, most requests are for the month of December.[37]
- Mosman Council supports street parties, requiring organisers to contact Council a minimum of six weeks prior to the event and complete a traffic management plan (TMP), and provide written consent/support from all residents affected by the event (usually a signed petition), written permission from North Shore Local Area Command (Police) and written confirmation that NSW Ambulance Services and the local Fire Station have been notified. Approval (subject to any relevant conditions) is granted by the General Manager upon review of the application/TMP and/or RMS advice and subject to meeting the guidelines. Following approval, applicants are required to advise affected residents by letter box drop, and to hire barriers and accredited traffic controllers to install the barriers and tend to the road closure points at all times

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[34] https://www.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/community/community-group-support/meet-your-street
[35] Prior to 2018, Council was able to extend its insurance cover for such events if they were associated with an active Precinct Committee. However, from 20018/19, Council's insurer has advised that one-off events coordinated by Precinct Committees require the purchase of one-off community event cover.
[36] For more information, visit http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/www/html/5077-public-events.asp
[37] http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/about-Council/news/news-items/2018/november/christmas-events-in-randwick

as per the TMP. There is no cost to organisers other than the hire (delivery and installation) fee for the barriers and the accredited traffic controllers for the duration of the event i.e. there is no fee associated with the TMP[38].

- Lane Cove Council has a street parties Policy and Procedures Manual and requires applications to be lodged at least three weeks prior to the event or for roads with wider impact at least two months prior to event. Council will assist in preparing a Traffic Control Plan (TCP) and if necessary, a TMP. Conditions vary based on whether the street party is on a low traffic volume street and if it is a 'local road' not connected with main roads. Council provides all necessary barricades and advance warning signs (at a cost to the applicant), the applicant must collect and return barricades/signage. Approval from RMS is required. Emergency services must be advised of the event date, contact person and advised that a four-metre-wide emergency vehicle lane will be maintained. Lane Cove Council may agree to provide public liability insurance for the event.[39]

- Inner West Council encourages properly conducted neighbourhood street parties as a means of building community spirit and improving neighbourhood security. People organising a neighbourhood party need to obtain approval from Council prior to the closure of the road. Organisers are required to obtain approval for a street party involving a road closure with the following conditions: the party is to be held outdoors for fewer than 100 people; no temporary structures or jumping castles are to be erected, participants are to bring their own food and drinks, and food and drink are not for sale; and there will be no performers or amplified music involved. Applications for Road Occupancy Permits to hold community street parties should be lodged six weeks in advance for approval by the Local Traffic Committee and Council. Normal fees for Road Occupancy Permits are waived for community events and non-profit organisations.[40]

Recommendation No.6: Streets Parties Event Approval

A 'sense of community' and 'social vitality' have long been important priorities to the North Sydney community. One way to create a 'sense of community' is through the provision of community events. Street parties were a high priority of the North Sydney Community Strategic Plan 2004-2008 and subsequently have remained a priority raised during the more recent reviews of the plan.

North Sydney Council could encourage more community events via a centralised application process. Currently permission to hold street parties is limited to Precinct Committees. Northern Beaches Council's 'Meet Your Street' Program could be explored as a possible program for the North Sydney local government area. Such a program would contribute to Direction 4: Our Social Vitality of the Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028.

Research undertaken by Council's Events Officer in 2015 confirmed that Council's Public Liability Insurance could be extended to a community street party if approved by Council. However, unavoidable costs to close a local road for a street party include:

- Design of Traffic Control Plan (Council does not have resources to assist in-house)

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[38] https://mosman.nsw.gov.au/residents/resident-services/get-togethers
[39] http://www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au/CouncilServices/RoadsandFootpaths/Pages/StreetParties.aspx
[40] https://www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/1034/street-party-application.pdf.aspx

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

- Traffic Control/Calming devices (hire, if demand could consider purchasing)
- Traffic Controllers

The cost for the above is approximately $1,200 per event.

Council could consider putting a framework in place addressing areas such as:

- Timing i.e. duration, daylight only, not at times when emergency services are in high demand
- Street type i.e. local road, not on a bus route, not on thoroughfare to other streets
- Consensus within street e.g. 100% of residents must agree

The following is a summary of the feedback provided in 2012/13:

- 71% (of seven submissions) supported a model like Northern Beaches Council, with only two submissions against it.
- Mosman Daily ran an article promoting the 2012/13 review, including a misleading statement that 'North Sydneysiders will be able to bypass precincts and apply to hold their own street parties if a new Council policy is adopted' (18 January 2013).

The proposed next steps as at August 2013 were:

- Existing application processes for Precinct Committee events and paperwork (forms) remain in place until further notice - risk assessments are a necessary part of event planning.
- Council staff are reviewing insurance requirements to enable street parties and non-Council initiated events not to be associated with Precinct Committees, unless initiated by a Precinct Committee.
- The Meet Your Street program was to be considered in the development of Council's Events Strategy 2014-2017 (adopted November 2014). The Events Strategy aligned street parties with the following strategies of the previous North Sydney Community Strategic Plan (2013): 4.1.3 Promote active and diverse street life including markets, street parties and fairs using streets, laneways and public spaces and 4.2.1 Facilitate and support local cultural groups and community organisation.

Proposed next steps as at January 2020:

It is recommended that, should there be significant interest in such a program, it be considered for funding as part of the preparation of the next Delivery Program.

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

7. Recommendations

This Discussion Paper revisits the original objectives of the 2006 Review and the effectiveness of the strategies implemented in response to the identified priority areas, as well as the original recommendations as at 2012/13 (which were discontinued). In response to this Review, several recommendations are proposed to ensure the long-term viability of the North Sydney Community Precinct System, as an effective and valued public participation model, that continues to best serve the needs of North Sydney Council and the local community.

Many of the recommendations outlined below are not new. Some were suggested before through previous reviews. Some were explored at the time and found not to be suitable and/or were not pursued; such have been suggested again for consideration within current factors such as resources and satisfaction levels.

The purpose of these recommendations is to improve the structure of the North Sydney Community Precinct System, its role and function, while at the same time, enable Council to consider the introduction of alternative, complementary community engagement programs and opportunities within existing staffing and budgetary levels, to address wider community expectations of good governance, accountability and transparency in its decision making.

The following recommendations are made:

a) Terminology/Branding - the program needs a name/branding that is relevant and offers easy association to the local community, its target audience and key stakeholders. The increasing ambiguity of the term 'Precinct' suggests a change in name is timely and presents an opportunity to rebrand the program.

   It is recommended that stakeholder feedback be sought regarding whether there is a desire for Precinct area/Committee name changes - to be considered in context of Recommendation No.2.

b) Reallocate Precinct Area Boundaries - whilst participation in currently active Precinct Committees remains steady, there remain inactive Precinct areas. The configuration of each Precinct area is no longer consistent with the criteria initially established i.e. some Precinct areas have over time amalgamated whilst others have remained inactive; and due to increased density in some parts of the LGA, the average number of residents/residences per Precinct area greatly varies.

   It is recommended that consultation be undertaken to determine the level of support for Precinct area boundary reallocation, with the objective to reduce the total number of Precinct areas. Preference is to align Precinct areas with suburb boundaries, to more readily enable residents, workers, students and property owners to identify their Precinct Committee with the suburb in which they reside, work, study etc. A two-stage consultation process is recommended. Stage 1 will seek feedback on proposed options, drawing from the boundary options originally proposed in 2013. Stage will involve in-depth consultation with both active Precinct Committees and a randomly selected representative sample.

c) Combined Precincts Committee's role and function - as the office bearer membership of Precinct Committees changes over time, the original

47

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

recommendations of the 2008 *CPC Discussion Paper* could be revisited in terms of function and structure, as should opportunities for Precinct Committees to meet periodically with Council's senior management. The CPC is an appropriate place for Precinct Committees to receive briefings on major Council initiatives, which Precinct Committees are offered the opportunity to provide comment.

It is recommended that the Terms of Reference of the Combined Precincts Committee be reviewed with active Precinct Committees in context of any other recommendations implemented.

d) Code of Conduct Review - over the past few years several issues have arisen that are not covered by the current Code, including use of operational funding not permitted for political purposes/lobbying election campaigns and memberships; proxy voting at Annual General Meetings not permitted; representation at Council meetings on behalf of a Precinct Committee; use of social media by a Precinct Committee, and/or Office Bearer or member in a personal capacity; and the lack of sanctions for breaches of the Code. Proposed amendments have been prepared (for consultation purposes) in response to the issues not currently covered by the Code.

It is recommended that the proposed amendments to the Code of Council Precinct Officer Bearers and Members be endorsed by Council for public exhibition.

e) Review Council's Support and Resource Allocation - Council has an important role in supporting Office Bearers and promoting Precinct System at large. Over time the needs of some Committees have expanded resulting in inequity in the level of service provided by Council to Committees, and this in turn can impact on other services and workload priorities. The resources provided by Council must be balanced with other corporate and community priorities, including Council's complementary engagement programs (Ward Forums and Online Engagement Panels) and project-specific engagements prepared in accordance with the *Community Engagement Protocol*. If the number of Precinct Committees was to reduce, allocation of existing funding levels and support to the Precinct System could be standardised, so that the same level of support and promotional assistance is provided to each Committee.

Regardless of whether consolidation in the total number of Precinct areas occurs, review of the level of support to the Precinct System by Council is required, including but not limited to - service levels of responding to actions arising, operational and events funding, office bearer training and marketing and promotion, including flyer printing.

f) Encourage more community events - a program such a Northern Beaches Council's 'Meet Your Street' Program could be explored as a possible program for North Sydney Council (linked to Council's *Events Strategy 2019-2021*) which could be offered to all residents to enable localised community events. Such a program would contribute to Direction 4: Our Social Vitality of the *North Sydney Community Strategic Plan*.

END NOTE

[i]Extract from *Community Involvement in Local Urban Planning - the North Sydney Experience* (1976), pages 114 to 119, 121 to 123, 127 to 131:

13.1 Towards More Public Involvement - The Evolution

What started North Sydney Council's commitment to public involvement in town planning beyond its statutory obligations?

The political background to the early commitment is found in the resident action movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s. this activity was paralleled by interest in initiating particularly planning by two or three of the Alderman on the Council at that time. About six resident action groups development in the suburbs of Wollstonecraft, Waverton, McMahons Point and Cammeray, as a response to the period of intense development of North Sydney's central areas with high rise officer buildings, and the book in high density 'home unit' construction. These building developments intruded and threatened the continuance of the remaining cottage areas of the Municipality, forced land values and therefore rates up, and brought unwanted commuter and resident traffic parking congestion. Existing planning controls were obviously inadequate and unpopular, and as a result of these pressures, Council in 1970 decided to seek the assistance of consultants to under a thorough review of the Municipality's environmental problems and planning controls. A 'freeze' on further major building developments was implemented by Council in 1970, pending the outcome of the consultant's planning process.

In the 1971 Municipal elections, the resident action movement achieved a majority on the Council, with the election of four new alderman on the resident action-reformist-environment-conservation-welfare-anti development electoral platform, and the resident of three of the four former alderman, who had the support of the resident action team (Dempsey, 1971). The new alderman in 1971 pressed for a more significant citizen involvement component in the planning process that was being undertaken by the Council's planning consultants.

13.2 The Consultant's Efforts 1971-1972

The North Sydney planning consultants, in terms of their brief from Council, were required:

'to encourage full participation in the preparation of the development control plan, aimed at obtaining the maximum support of public opinion in the planning process… at all times to create an awakening of the public awareness of the contributions which citizens can make to the planning process.' (Council decisions of May 1970 and February 1971)

The consultants, under project director Terry Byrnes, attempted to meet this requirement by the usual array of information and opinion gathering, and limited consultation techniques in their planning process, spurred on by the concern of the new resident action alderman.

- group discussions involving 240 people who registered their interest following press notices, to assess the issue in each area, and define 'objectives'.
- public meetings in five main areas, to broaden the area of contact with the community, to educate people to the view that plans are now drawn overnight, and that planning involved more than a zoning drawing to test issues and solutions. (Consultant's report on Involvement, 1970). Usually over 100 people attended.
- specialist surveys (considered by the consultant's as 'participation') on such matters as transportation, retailing, parks, education, industry, and 'community attitudes'. In this way, the consultants claimed they contacted some 14,000 people including 8,000 residing in the Municipality.
- exhibitions started at the Municipal Library; these probably confused most members of the public with a myriad of maps in an attempt to show that there are other considerations besides zoning. (North Sydney Planning Consultant's Reports, 1971).

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

From the consultant's efforts came inter alia, an Outline Plan, a Traffic Management Scheme, a draft Flat Code, and suggested division of the Municipality into 56 residential precincts, and 7 commercial precincts (to cover the Municipality's commercial areas, including Crows Nest, Victoria Cross, Neutral Bay).

The consultant's recommended plan (the Outline Plan) was finally adopted by Council in September 1972 after another exhibition at the Municipal Library had led to some minor modifications to the original recommended plan. A set of detailed neighbourhood control plans (Precinct Plans) for residential areas based on the Outline Plan was then adopted in March 1973.

However, as some Alderman has noted (Hamilton, 1974), little more than lip service was paid to the public's wishes (except the powerful elites), in part due to the limitations of money, time and skills, and to the fact that personalities and attitudes of the planners pre-determined many of the issues and results.

13.3 Inauguration of the Precinct Planning Review 1973-1975

By mid-1973, it was becoming clear to some alderman and Council's Town Planner that a greater many of the 'planned for' were not all that happy with the provisions of the Outline Plan, and in particular with the types of residential buildings that were being approved and built under the new Flat Code which was supposed to reflect the community's aspirations. Residents were formally objecting in hundreds to the new proposed residential flat buildings, and some alderman pressed for continuing participatory opportunities in Council's town planning.

A Notice of Motion move by town alderman, calling for a detailed program of priorities, staff budget etc. for town planning in the following year, was adopted by Council in April 1973.

The Town Planner, Mr Ross, responded in July 1973 be preparing a far-sighted and innovative program (adopted by Council) for a detailed review of the planning controls contained in the 1972 Outline Plan, Flat Code etc, through a network of neighbourhood action committees of interested residents and ratepayers in the 56 residential precincts of the Municipality. The Town Planner outlined a similar approach in a review of the 7 commercial precincts (note: by 1976 such committees of ratepayers and interest groups had not yet been initiated by Council).

A 'Forward Planning Team' comprising two junior planners, a tracer and a typist, was set up towards the end of 1973, within the Town Planning Department, to coordinate and service the program of 'participation'. Council's formal acceptance of this program was ensured by the fact that the program was to be funded by surplus monies (some $50,000) received in excess of anticipated revenue from Development Applications during the building boom of 1973. Thus, the dilemma of 'spending ratepayer's money' on more planning and participation, so soon after the competition of the expensive consultant's exercise, was avoided in Council's decision-making on the new participation program.

The aim of the review program was to give every resident and ratepayer in the Municipality's precincts an opportunity to have a say in the planning review, and to development a process whereby recommendations to Council emerged from some consensus of informed resident opinion in each precinct or sub-area.

Initially, the program was envisaged to review the acceptability of the type of residential development allowable under the Residential Flat Building Code within the various precincts, however the program has evolved with much broader concerns…

14.1 Initiating Precinct Committees

Letters were sent to each ratepayer in a precinct (comprising of 20 households to over 1,3000, with an average of about 400 households) inviting their attendance at an inaugural public meeting in a nearby community hall. Sometimes ratepayers in two or three neighbouring precincts were invited to the same meeting. Between December 1973 and March 1975, 33 such public meetings covering all 56 residential precincts were held. Halfway through this stage, it

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

was found that tenants (i.e. the non-ratepaying residents), could be notified relatively easily by letter-drop to priorities with non-residential owners, and by posters pinned up in neighbourhood shops, public telephones booths, bus shelters etc.

At the meeting, usually chaired by one of the ward Alderman, one of Council's Town Planers spent up to an hour explaining, with the aid of slides, the present planning controls, the operation of the Flat Code, the population characteristics and physical planning problems of the precincts (as seem by the Planners and also outlined the way in which was envisaged the Precincts Committee would operate. Usually there were questions and discussion on the issue raised.

Having this set the context, those interested on being on the Precinct Committee were asked to nominate themselves (usually 6 to 12 people). In a precinct where insufficient people were forthcoming to form a Committee, a combined Precinct Committee of adjoining precincts was formed. At the meeting the usual development controls plans, land use maps, aerial photos and charts were displayed.

Thus, the purpose of the inaugural public meeting program was mainly to inform the public of the contest of local environmental decision making to discuss local environmental issues, and to establishing the network of neighbourhood citizen planning committees.

14.2 Precinct Committee's Role

The first meeting of the newly formed Precinct Committee was usually held in the home of a member of the Committee, for informality and convenience. A junior Planner attended to distribute information to members and answer any questions confirming the role of the Committee… The Chairman or contact is generally chosen at this first meeting, and sometimes a Secretary, and other logistics worked out.

Basically, a Precinct Committee's job is expected to be:

- to examine available information on what Council. Other agencies, and developers, purpose for their precinct.
- to undertake a household questionnaire survey of their precincts; and
- to determine what planning controls are desired for the precincts in the light of analysis of the questionnaire, and assessment of other information.

After the initial Committee meeting assistance is given by the Forward Planning Team at the request of the Committee. Typing, postal and duplicating services are carried out for the Precinct Committees at their request, through the Town Planning Department. Notices of Development Applications in a precinct are forwarded to a Precinct Committee Chairman to enable the Precinct Committee members to view the plans at the Council Chambers and make comments as to how the proposed development fits into the merging recommendations of the Precinct Committee.

Thus, the Precinct Committees are expected to development specific recommendations by this process of household survey, review and group discussion process, then get together with adjoining Precinct Committees to review each other's proposals. This step was supposed to attempt to eliminate obvious conflicts in approaches to planning issues affecting neighbouring precincts (e.g. road traffic control proposals) before consideration by Council. For this purpose, the fifty sox precincts were divided by the Planers into 20 Environmental Areas, each made up of groups of adjoining Precincts having an affinity or identify in the Planner's view. (However due to differences in various Committee' progress, it has not been generally expedient for adjoining Committees to discuss proposals with each other).

The resulting planning recommendation and proposal thus evolved by Precinct Committees are then submitted to Council, with appropriate comments from the planning staff, and a summary of questionnaire results. After consideration by Council, these recommendations and proposals (with Council's comments), are relayed back to Precinct residents and ratepayers through a letter-box circular, and/or a local exhibition (public meeting), for their further comments.

Eventually the Precinct Committee's proposals, as finally adopted or amended by Council, will be incorporated into statutory and policy plans/statements etc. for that part of the Municipality (e.g. referred to the Minister for gazettal as a new 'Planning Order' for that area)…

14.4 Modifying the Process

The precinct planning process was modified and adopted over the last two years [1974-1975] in attempts to better meet objectives of ensuring:

   i.   more representativeness;
  ii.   accessibility and openness; and
  iii.   more efficient processing of the public's suggestions and better communication.

The new procedures that modified the planning review process, and extended participatory opportunities, emerged mainly through the initiatives and suggestion of:

   i.   the precinct committee members, themselves;
  ii.   two or three of the 'progressive' aldermen; and
  iii.   Council's town planners administering the program.

Early changes (in 1974) were Council resolutions, on 'notices of motions' by Alderman Hamilton, to send notices of Development Applications to precinct committee chairman (as well as to adjoining owners), and to undertake typing, postage and copying services for precinct committees at Council. Somewhat later (September 1975), Council resolved that, on petition from twenty (2) or more residents and/or ratepayers in a precinct, Council must call a general meeting of all interested precinct residents/ratepayers to discuss the subject of the petition (including re-convening of a precinct committee) . This latter resolution was designed to ensure that local residents outside the precinct committees had some method of intervening in the precinct committee' affairs.

The most significant modifications arose out of a general meeting of over 60 residents representing 28 precinct committees, called by the Council in 1975, for the purposes of getting feedback and ideas on the role of the precinct committees, Residents discussed with interested Aldermen and Council officers the various problems and needs of the participatory system through the network of precinct committees, the difficulties of communication between residents, precinct committees and Council, and the need to widen the scope of precinct committees (beyond development control issues), emerged as major issues. It also emerged that it was difficult to achieve a compromise between:

   i.   The need to preserve informality and avoid creating another bureaucracy of rules and procedures; and
  ii.   The need to have some guidelines and procedures in order toe satisfy the objectives and representativeness, accessibility to the public and effective communication.

One Precinct Committee (Neutral Street) presented to the meeting a set of guidelines which the members themselves had evolved. A series of recommendations was then worked out at this this general meeting of precinct committee members, and were eventually adopted by Council in February 1976, together with some further procedures suggested by the worn planners and alderman. These new procedures and guidelines were as follows:

Aims of Representativeness

1.   Precinct Committee members should ideally represent a cross-section of the precinct, in terms of sub-areas, streets, types of dwelling environment, age groups and interests.
2.   Precinct Committees should comprise at least 10 members representing 10 different family groups of residents and/or property owners within the precinct area.
3.   Any decisions of the Precinct Committee referred to Council must result from a resolution of the committee at which a quorum of at least 6 members were present.

Discussion Paper 2020: North Sydney Community Precinct System

Aim of Accessibility to the Public

4.　　　Every Precinct Committee shall be required to call an annual general meeting (with invitations to all residents/ratepayers undertaken by Council).

5.　　　No resident and/or ratepayer of a Precinct area shall be excluded from a meeting of the local Precinct Committee.

6.　　　The office bearers, that is, chairman/secretary be required to live within the Precinct area.

Aim of Effective Communication with Council and widened Scope

7.　　　Wherever practical, Council should refer items affecting a precinct, and of mainly local significance only, before any decision is made, to enable Precinct Committees to make comment.

8.　　　Comments by Precinct Committees on matters referred by Council must be returned within 2 weeks.

9.　　　Precinct Committees should be notified of all decisions by Council concerning matters on which they have made comments.

10.　　Copies of minutes of Precinct Committee meetings should be referred to Council, so that items requiring a response can be investigated and acted upon.

11.　　Precinct Committees may expand their role beyond that of the redevelopment control plan into all matters relating to Council activities in their areas.

12.　　Council is to provide Precinct Committees with a chart of responsibility for Council departments in dealing with requests from Precinct Committees.

13.　　Council is to prepare a list of suggested terms of reference for Precinct Committees, and these are to be treated as guidelines only, and not to be binding on Precinct Committees.

14.　　A general meeting of Precinct Committee representatives is to be called at 6-monthly intervals.

15.　　Alderman may attend Precinct Committee meetings at the invitation of the Precinct Committee.

Another recommendation from the precinct's general meeting, that 'all developers be required to submit an extra copy of their development application plans for referral to the local precinct committee' has been held over by Council, because of copyright problems, and doubts about Council's legal ability to enforce such a requirement.

Whilst this cumbersome list of procedures was obviously considered valid by the precinct committee members, it would not really be conducive to encouraging mass participation (i.e. similar to the experience of the Regional Councils for Social Development, see Chapter 11.4).

The modifications to the precinct committee program must also be seen in relation to other innovations which were an attempt to devolve some responsibility and decision-making, and 'open-up' Council affairs, and which complement the participatory planning initiatives.
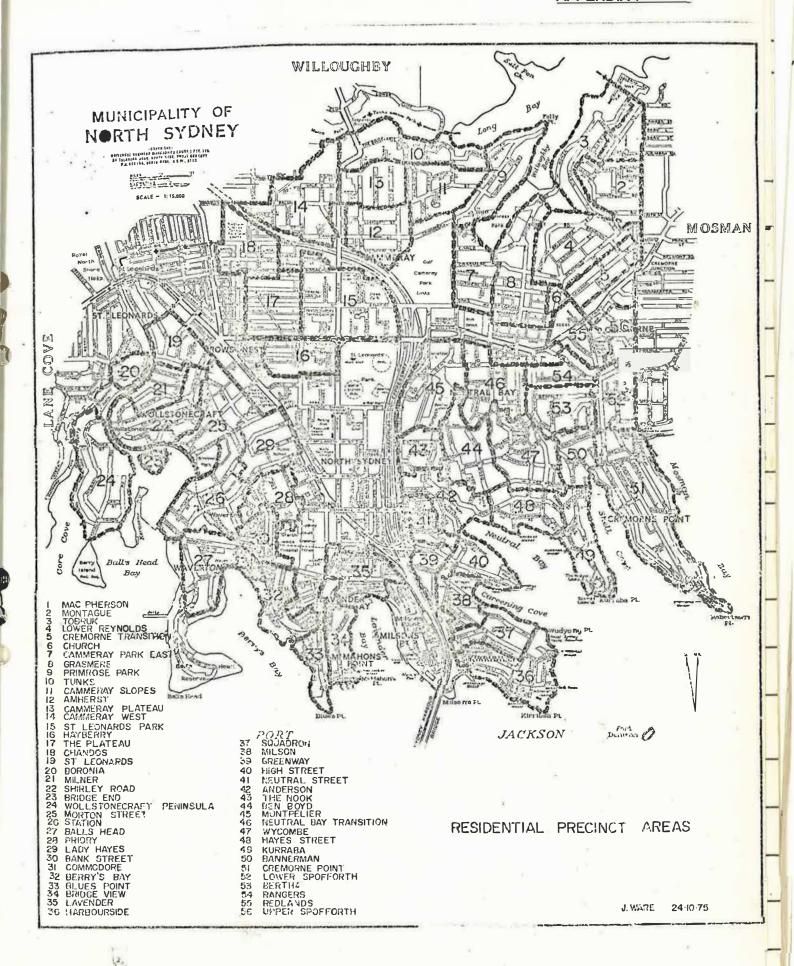
• The appointment of Council's first Community Development Officer early in 1975; her job, although not involving direct liaison with precinct committees, has been concerned with improving and promoting communication between Council and community groups, and in developing activities through the Council's 5 community centres.

• Wider citizen representation created in 1975 on some local management and advisory committees; namely:

i.　　representatives of up to 6 local Precinct Committees on each of 4 Community Centre Management Committees (Neutral Bay, Cammeray, McMahons Point, Kirribilli) and

ii.　　representatives of all Precinct Committees within the relevant Wards on the 3 Ward Tree-Planting Sub-Committees (these are responsible for advising Council on street

tree-planting priorities and open space improvement programs in three of Council's 5 Wards).
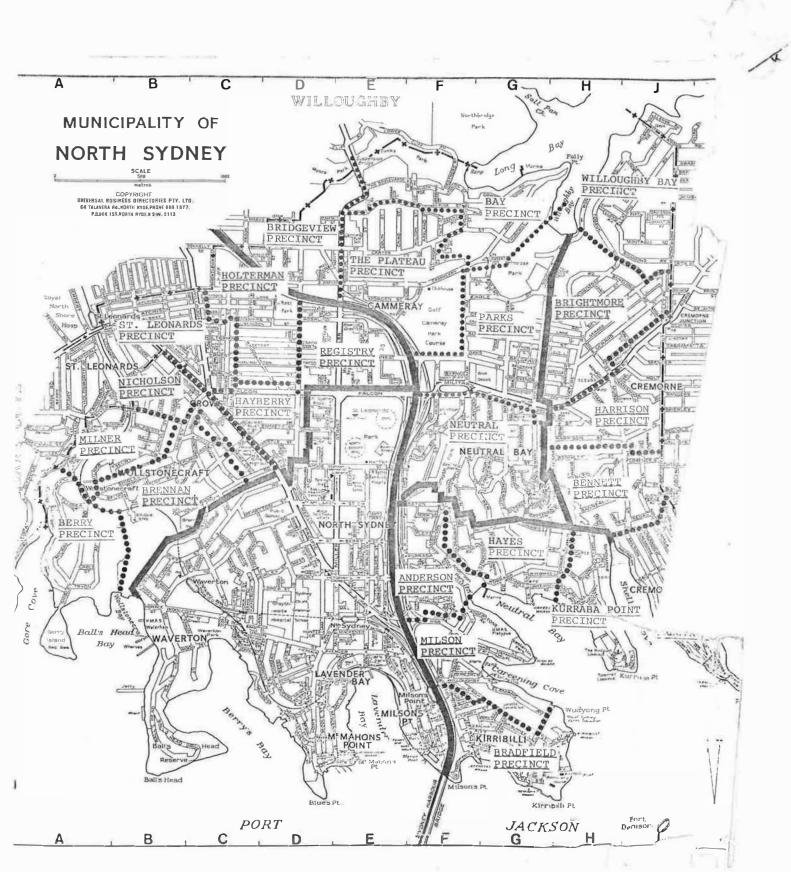
Thus, the original Precinct Committee system has been able to adapt to changed needs and an expanding role for precinct committees as local citizen advisory groups, and the main feature of citizen involvement opportunities.

It is significant that the process evolved to a great extent on the initiatives of the participants themselves; however, the modifications tended to produce bureaucratic procedures which were part of the problem that the participatory initiatives were trying to overcome in the first place.

MUNICIPALITY OF
NORTH SYDNEY

SCALE — 1:15,000

RESIDENTIAL PRECINCT AREAS

No.	Name	No.	Name
1	MAC PHERSON	37	SQUADRON
2	MONTAGUE	38	MILSON
3	TOBRUK	39	GREENWAY
4	LOWER REYNOLDS	40	HIGH STREET
5	CREMORNE TRANSITION	41	NEUTRAL STREET
6	CHURCH	42	ANDERSON
7	CAMMERAY PARK EAST	43	THE NOOK
8	GRASMERE	44	BEN BOYD
9	PRIMROSE PARK	45	MONTPELIER
10	TUNKS	46	NEUTRAL BAY TRANSITION
11	CAMMERAY SLOPES	47	WYCOMBE
12	AMHERST	48	HAYES STREET
13	CAMMERAY PLATEAU	49	KURRABA
14	CAMMERAY WEST	50	BANNERMAN
15	ST LEONARDS PARK	51	CREMORNE POINT
16	HAYBERRY	52	LOWER SPOFFORTH
17	THE PLATEAU	53	BERTHA
18	CHANDOS	54	RANGERS
19	ST LEONARDS	55	REDLANDS
20	BORONIA	56	UPPER SPOFFORTH
21	MILNER		
22	SHIRLEY ROAD		
23	BRIDGE END		
24	WOLLSTONECRAFT PENINSULA		
25	MORTON STREET		
26	STATION		
27	BALLS HEAD		
28	PRIORY		
29	LADY HAYES		
30	BANK STREET		
31	COMMODORE		
32	BERRY'S BAY		
33	BLUES POINT		
34	BRIDGE VIEW		
35	LAVENDER		
36	HARBOURSIDE		

J. WARE   24·10·75

MUNICIPALITY OF
NORTH SYDNEY

Population of Precincts

Approximate population based on Census 2016
(As ABS SA1 areas don't exactly follow Precinct boundaries,
this figure is approximate only)

Total residences approx - 36853

WILLOUGHBY
LGA

LANE COVE
LGA

MOSMAN
LGA

BAY
846

WILLOUGHBY
BAY
673

BRIDGEVIEW
886

THE
PLATEAU
803

HOLTERMANN
2509

REGISTRY
1427

PARKS
1588

BRIGHTMORE
2029

HAYBERRY
878

STANTON
1383

NEUTRAL
2655

HARRISON
2077

WOLLSTONECRAFT
1205

EDWARD
924

CENTRAL
BUSINESS
DISTRICT
412

ANDERSON
1098

HAYES
1042

BENNETT
964

WAVERTON
1584

UNION
762

MILSON
1599

KURRABA
836

CREMORNE
POINT
1077

LAVENDER
BAY
3013

BRADFIELD
1573

PORT

JACKSON

Long   Bay

Folly Point

Willoughby
Bay

Gore

Cove

Balls   Head

Bay

Berrys   Bay

Lavender

Bay

McMahons Point

Blues Point

Neutral

Bay

Careening Cove

Shell

Cove

Mosman

Bay

Robertsons Point

Kirribilli Point

N
W   E
S

Scale 1:5500

Precinct System Implementation Plan 2008-2010: Status Report

APPENIDX 4

Background

Council at its meeting of 13 March 2007 adopted a report following the completion of the 2006 Precinct System Review. The report included recommendations by the consultant who conducted the review, on which Precinct Committee feedback had been obtained.

Council at its meeting of 30 June 2008 adopted the *Precinct System Implementation Plan 2008-2010* prepared in consultation with the then active Committees and Council staff. The Plan covers the four key priority areas - these include organisational culture, administration, resources and objectives.

The Plan outlined the actions to be undertaken to improve and enhance the role and function of the North Sydney Precinct System, in terms of Council's administration and accountability to the Precinct Committees; and increased community participation through greater awareness of the Precinct System. The majority of strategies were implemented between by 2010 and progress was reported quarterly to Council via the Management Plan/Operational Plan and via the Combined Precincts Committee. Council at its meeting of 31 August 2009 adopted a mid term progress report.

Evaluation

Council at its meeting of 2 August 2010 adopted a report evaluating the Plan. As at 30 June 2010, 50 of the 58 strategies had been implemented and eight strategies (14%) remained uncompleted. In summary, the key highlights and achievements included:

- Initiation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Council and Precinct Committees outlining the role and responsibilities of each party;
- Annual review of the Precinct System Guidelines in conjunction with distribution of operational funding;
- The Precincts/Councillor Supper event was held annually providing an opportunity for Precinct members to meet their local councillors;
- The Community Ward Forum pilot series was conducted in 2009/10;
- Three Committees were re-activated - Anderson, CBD and Neutral Precincts;
- Nine events/projects were undertaken by Precinct Committees since 2007/08;
- The individual Committee pages on Council's website were updated and now include both minutes of previous meetings and a summary of actions (SOA) showing Council's response to Precinct recommendations and actions;
- An e-bulletin is distributed weekly to all office bearers;
- Induction Session was held annually for new office bearers;

- A review of the role/ function of the Combined Precincts Committee (CPC) was undertaken. As a result the Community Engagement Coordinator (or delegate) now provides secretarial support to the CPC at their quarterly meetings and a Terms of Reference was developed;
- The Combined Precincts Forum was held on 19 October 2009 and was attended by 116 Precinct members and councillors from across the five local government areas in NSW with active Precinct Systems; the Forum has resulted in strengthened working relationships with the councils that support the four other Precincts Systems and joint training and development opportunities will be delivered in 2010/11.

During the implementation period Council experienced staff/resourcing issues, including the Community Engagement Coordinator position being temporarily unfunded in 2009/10; and as a result the majority of outstanding strategies were been deferred until the reappointment of the Community Engagement Coordinator in mid August 2010.

As at 31 March 2012, 51 of the 58 strategies had been implemented; seven strategies (12%) remain uncompleted. As at 30 June 2019, 55 of the 58 strategies had been implemented; three strategies (5%) remain outstanding.

Key Priority Area 1: Organisational Culture					
Result: The Precincts System profile will be enhanced within Council.					
Priority Experiences (Issue)	Priority Measures (Outcome)	Current Situation	Strategies to turn the Curves (Action)		Responsibility	Status
1.1 Precincts System to be re-endorsed by the elected Council.	The value of the public participation, including the Precinct System, is acknowledged Council-wide.	• The Precincts policy was last readopted 2 August 2004, and amended 21 November 2005. • Review of Precincts Code of Conduct commenced mid 2007.	1.1.1	Review Precinct policy; thereafter to be reviewed four (4) yearly in line with the Council elections	Community Engagement Coordinator	Completed
			1.1.2	Review Council's promotion of the Precinct System	Community Engagement Coordinator	Ongoing - in conjunction with the Marketing Plan (3.4.4).
1.2 The role and value of the Precincts System varies amongst Departments of Council.	• All divisions within Council to recognise the precincts as a valuable part of Council's work for and with the community. • Staff recognise increased opportunities for Precincts to be consulted.	• Currently discussed at Staff Induction (E-learning) but not at length. • 'Participate' brochure distributed - indirectly promoting Precinct System. • Council is not consistently consulting Precincts.	1.2.1	The value of public participation to be included in Council's Statement of Values	General Manager/ MANEX	Completed
			1.2.2	Integrate Precincts into Council's public consultation practices	All Staff	Ongoing
			1.2.3	Review Corporate Responsibilities section of relevant job descriptions to include Community Consultation and responsiveness, including to the North Sydney Precinct System	Director Corporate Services/Human Resources Manager	Completed
			1.2.4	Distribute a key staff contact list to all Precincts	Team Support Officer	Ongoing

Key Priority Area 1: Organisational Culture					
Result: The Precincts System profile will be enhanced within Council.					
Priority Experiences (Issue)	**Priority Measures (Outcome)**	**Current Situation**	**Strategies to turn the Curves (Action)**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
			1.2.5 Review Precinct references in 'Participate' brochure	Community Information Officer/ Community Engagement Coordinator	Completed
			1.2.6 Review Precinct references in staff Induction	Community Engagement Coordinator	Completed
			1.2.7 Regularly brief relevant staff whose work deals directly with Precincts re: administration processes and procedures	Community Engagement Coordinator	*Ongoing*
1.3 Greater guidance is required from Council regarding expectations, outcomes and deliverables when commenting on draft documents.	Council refers relevant issues, draft plans/strategies and policies to Precincts for comment.	• Some correspondence is being sent to Precincts without appropriate guidelines/direction for review or provision of feedback. • A need for precincts to be given adequate notice of opportunities to provide feedback.	1.3.1 Identify key issues to be taken to Precincts for consultation	MANEX	Ongoing
			1.3.2 Develop protocols (standards) for staff preparing correspondence to Precincts	Community Engagement Coordinator	Completed
1.4 Not all Precincts of the 24 precincts currently active.	Community participation rate in all Precincts increases.	• Currently 18 Precincts operational, 6 inoperative • No widespread support from Precincts for amalgamations or boundary changes at this point in time. • There is a lack of representation to traffic	1.4.1 Develops strategies to re-establish inoperative precincts and/or explore amalgamation	Community Engagement Coordinator	Ongoing
			1.4.2 Consider requests for boundary changes on individual merit.	Council	Ongoing

Key Priority Area 1: Organisational Culture					
Result: The Precincts System profile will be enhanced within Council.					
Priority Experiences (Issue)	**Priority Measures (Outcome)**	**Current Situation**	**Strategies to turn the Curves (Action)**		**Responsibility**	**Status**
		and other local matters in areas where there are inoperative Precincts.	1.4.3	Explore amalgamation of CBD Precinct into neighbouring Precincts	Council	Completed
			1.4.4	Explore opportunities for key issues such as traffic matters and relevant DAs to be considered by Streetscape Committees, where a Precinct is inactive	Community Engagement Coordinator/ Project Coordinator (EPS)	*Pending*
1.5 Precinct Committees want acknowledgement and recognition for their voluntary contributions.	The contributions of Precinct members both past and present are recognised and acknowledged.	• Precincts are invited annually to Council's Volunteer Cocktail Night. • Suppers with Councillors held 16/03/09; 17/05/10 and 7/11/11	1.5.1	Further dinners with Councillors to be scheduled for 08/09 Budget	Community Engagement Coordinator	Ongoing - annual event
			1.5.2	Initiate Recognition Awards Night celebrating contributions of members past and present	Community Engagement Coordinator	Alternate arrangements in place
			1.5.3	Council to host a social activity open to Precinct members and their families e.g. movie screening	Community Engagement Coordinator	Completed
			1.5.4	Continue to invite Precincts to Council's Annual Volunteer Cocktail Night	Community Development Department	Ongoing

Key Priority Area 1: Organisational Culture					
Result: The Precincts System profile will be enhanced within Council.					
Priority Experiences (Issue)	**Priority Measures (Outcome)**	**Current Situation**	**Strategies to turn the Curves (Action)**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
			1.5.5 Regularly promote Precinct achievements in North Sydney News.	Community Engagement Coordinator/ Communications Officer	Ongoing - in conjunction with Precincts Marketing Plan (3.4.3)
1.6 The Combined Precincts Committee (CPC) is not representative of the entire Precinct System.	• The function of the CPC provides better support to the Precinct System but providing an avenue for addressing key strategic issues, reviewing related policies and addressing Precinct operational issues. • This Committee could monitor the implementation of the recommendation arising from the 2006 Precinct Review i.e. this Plan.	• The function and terms of reference of the existing CPC is unclear. • Participation at quarterly CPC meetings does not adequately reflect the number of operational Precincts. • The CPC is not an official committee of Council under the Local Government Act.	1.6.1 Review role and function of the CPC in consultation with Council	Community Engagement Coordinator	Completed
			1.6.2 Benchmark against function and structure of other councils with Precinct Systems	Community Engagement Coordinator	Completed
			1.6.3 Explore Council's capacity to provide secretarial support to the CPC	Community Engagement Coordinator	Completed
			1.6.4 Develop CPC guidelines	Community Engagement Coordinator	Completed

Key Priority Area 2: Administrative Support					
Result: Administrative support from Council to the Precincts System will be increased					
Priority Experiences (Issue)	**Priority Measures (Outcome)**	**Current Situation**	**Strategies to turn the Curves (Action)**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
2.1 The Precinct System requires additional support from Council.	Communication and support between Council and Precinct Committees is more efficient and effective.	• Community Engagement section formed (1.5 staff) • Precincts Administrator position revised to Team Support Officer.	2.1.1 Initiate weekly e-bulletin, compilation of outgoing correspondence	Community Engagement Coordinator	Completed
			2.1.2 Develop Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Council and Individual Precincts to clarify roles and responsibilities of each; to be reviewed annually in conjunction with operational funding	Community Engagement Coordinator	Completed
			2.1.3 All emails sent by Council to Precincts must send as undisclosed recipients or blind copy (BC)	All Staff	Ongoing
2.2 Precinct minutes are the primary form of communication. There are inconsistencies in the format/presentation and the tone and intent of resolutions can be misread.	Standardise presentation of Precinct actions arising, so resolutions put forth by Precincts are easier to understand, in turn ensuring Council provides appropriate, timely responses.	• Precincts use different formats to present minutes and/or action arising to Council. Items requiring action can be vague and difficult to interpret resulting in delays with	2.2.1 Submission of formal minutes no longer required. Streamline Council's process of replying to actions arising from precinct meetings	Community Engagement Coordinator	Ongoing - optional

Key Priority Area 2: Administrative Support					
Result: Administrative support from Council to the Precincts System will be increased					
Priority Experiences (Issue)	**Priority Measures (Outcome)**	**Current Situation**	**Strategies to turn the Curves (Action)**		**Responsibility**	**Status**
		providing a response. • There are often delays between Precinct meetings and Council receiving minutes, then Council actioning them, particularly maintenance issues.	2.2.2	Develop 'public document guidelines' for Precincts minutes/actions arising appearing on Council website	Community Engagement Coordinator	Completed
			2.2.3	Encourage Precincts to report maintenance issues via Council's Online Services (CRM)	Community Engagement Coordinator	Ongoing
			2.2.4	Develop duplicate forms for precincts to use e.g. attendance records	Community Engagement Coordinator	Completed
2.3 Precincts office bearers will have access to training and mentoring opportunities.	Precinct office bearers will feel skilled and supported by Council.	Council holds annual training session for new office bearers following AGMs.	2.3.1	Provide a training program for Precincts, incorporating individual needs	Community Engagement Coordinator	Ongoing
			2.3.2	Investigate formal and informal mentoring opportunities	Community Engagement Coordinator	Ongoing
			2.3.3	Explore shared secretarial support for Precincts	Community Engagement Coordinator	***Pending***
2.4 Precincts feel less inclined to hold events. They feel unsupported due to:	• Council encourages Precincts to coordinate community events and projects	• Council has a Public Event Checklist. Precincts must use this to apply to hold an event.	2.4.1	Develop a specific Precinct public event application form	Community Engagement Coordinator/ Technical Officer	Completed

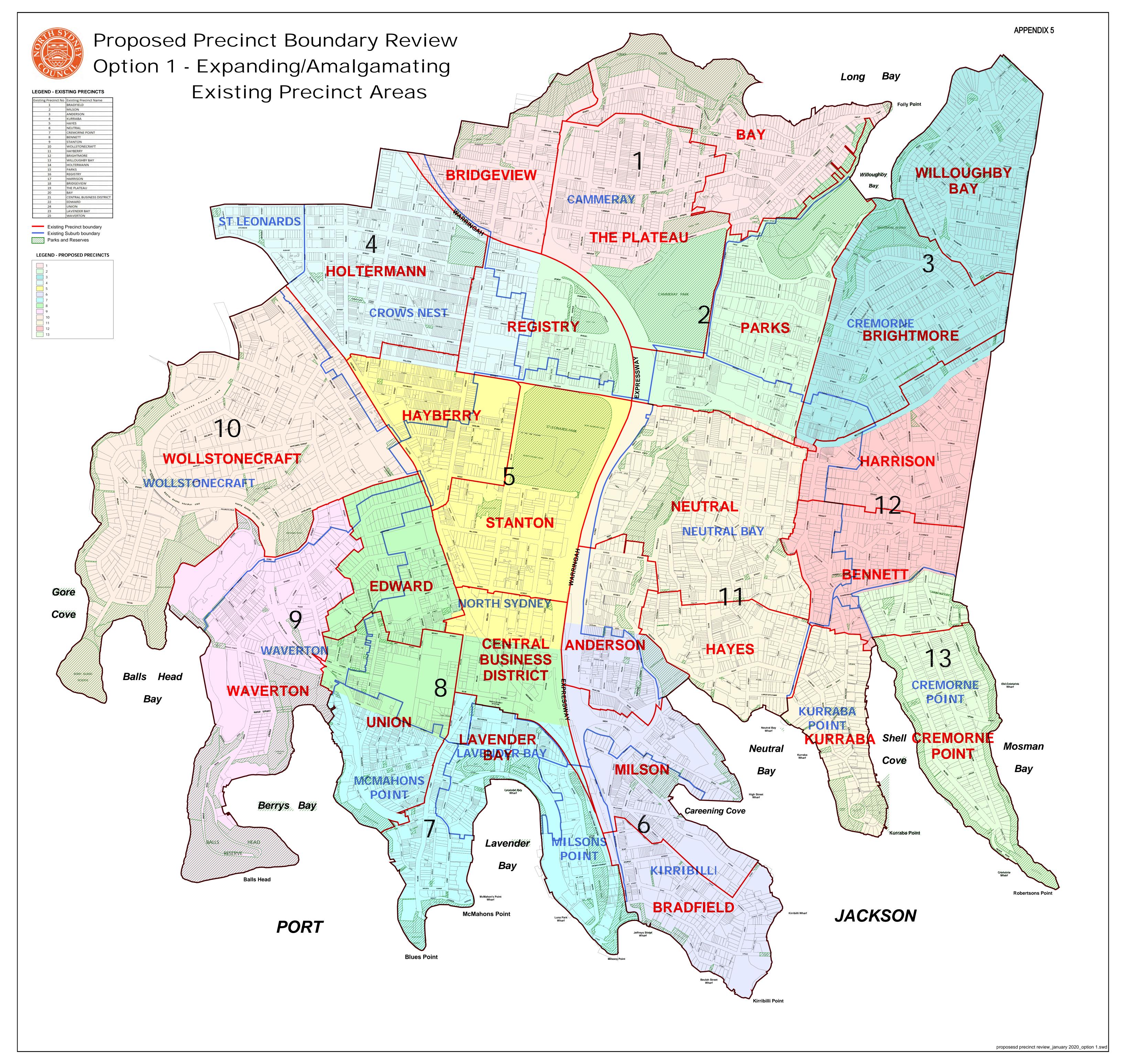| **Key Priority Area 2: Administrative Support**					
Result: Administrative support from Council to the Precincts System will be increased					
Priority Experiences (Issue)	**Priority Measures (Outcome)**	**Current Situation**	**Strategies to turn the Curves (Action)**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
• Inconsistencies with Council's application process • The level of Council support available • Own lack of time and event management skills.	• Application process streamlined • Precincts will be supported in the planning and coordination of their events and projects	• Departmental inconsistencies in Council's application procedures.	2.4.2 Increase support and advice to Precincts planning to hold events	Community Engagement Coordinator/ Technical Officer	Ongoing

Key Priority Area 3: Resourcing the Precinct System					
Result: Precincts will receive additional financial and in-kind resource support from Council					
Priority Experiences (Issue)	**Priority Measures (Outcome)**	**Current Situation**	**Strategies to turn the Curves (Action)**		**Responsibility**	**Status**
3.1 Precincts require increased IT support from Council, in particular developing and managing websites, email accounts and computer applications.	Ongoing IT support and training resources will be offered to Precinct Committees.	• There are already Precinct related pages on Council's website, however they could be better utilised as a Precinct System networking and promotional tool. • A small number of Precincts have developed their own websites which are moderated independent of Council.	3.1.1	Incorporate IT training needs in Precincts training program	Community Engagement Coordinator	Ongoing - Links to training program (2.3.1)
			3.1.2	Develop resources to assist the administration of Precinct websites. And protocols to standardise individual websites	Community Engagement Coordinator/Website Administrator	Ongoing
			3.1.3	Assist Precincts to establish and maintain email accounts, using free software	Manager Information Technology/ Community Engagement Coordinator	Ongoing
			3.1.4	All official correspondence directed to Council needs to be sent to central email address: **council@northsydney.nsw.gov.au**	All Precinct Committees	Ongoing
3.2 Precinct Committees need access to computers to assist in the preparation of minutes.	• Precinct office bearers feel confident in using applications/programs. • Precinct correspondence including minutes will be streamlined and compatible with Council systems.	• Precinct Committees are using old computer applications resulting in correspondence, including minutes, being sent in incompatible formats • Some Precinct office bearers do not have access to computers resulting in delays with Council receiving and actioning minutes.	3.2.1	Investigate computer access for Precincts	Manager Information Technology/	Completed
			3.2.2	Provide Precincts with access to free software	Manager Information Technology	Ongoing
			3.2.3	Provide Precincts with electronic versions of all forms and templates	Community Engagement Coordinator	Ongoing
			3.2.4	Send all electronic correspondence to Council as text searchable PDF or WORD	All Precinct Committees	Ongoing

| **Key Priority Area 3: Resourcing the Precinct System**					
Result: Precincts will receive additional financial and in-kind resource support from Council					
Priority Experiences (Issue)	**Priority Measures (Outcome)**	**Current Situation**	**Strategies to turn the Curves (Action)**		**Responsibility**	**Status**
3.3 Precinct Committees require additional annual funding from Council.	Improve cost saving measures that allow the Precinct System to be more financially viable.	• Precincts have expressed concern with managing operational funding. • In 07/08 Council provided annual operating funding of $1,500 per Precinct. • In 07/08 Council offered additional funding up to $1,500 for Precincts events.	3.3.1	Review Council's administration of annual Precinct operating funding	Community Engagement Coordinator	Completed
			3.3.2	Retain operational funding at $1,500 for 2008/09.	Council	Reviewed annually
			3.3.3	Retain additional funding for Precinct events at $1,500, available on application	Council	Reviewed annually
3.4 The Precinct System in not effectively promoted, resulting in lack of recognition in the broader North Sydney community.	The Precinct System and its activities will be widely recognised by the North Sydney community, which will inturn lead to increased participation.	• According to Council's 2006 Customer Satisfaction Survey, of those surveyed 35% were not aware of local Precinct Committees; 68% had never attended a meeting; and only 8% attend meetings regularly. • Council's main promotion of the Precinct system is via its website. There is a need for a range of community wide Precinct promotional initiatives to be undertaken.	3.4.1	Redesign the Precinct related pages of Council's website; to include promotion of Precinct achievements, key projects and events etc	Community Engagement Coordinator/Website Administrator	Completed
			3.4.2	Pilot a quarterly community forum, rotating per ward, to promote the activities and achievements of the local precincts and raise awareness-investigate budget requirements	Community Engagement Coordinator	Completed
			3.4.3	Implement strategies from the Precinct System Marketing Plan, including bimonthly newsletter, community noticeboards, forum/blog, notices in corporate advertisement, re-branding etc	Community Engagement Coordinator/ Manager Communications	Ongoing
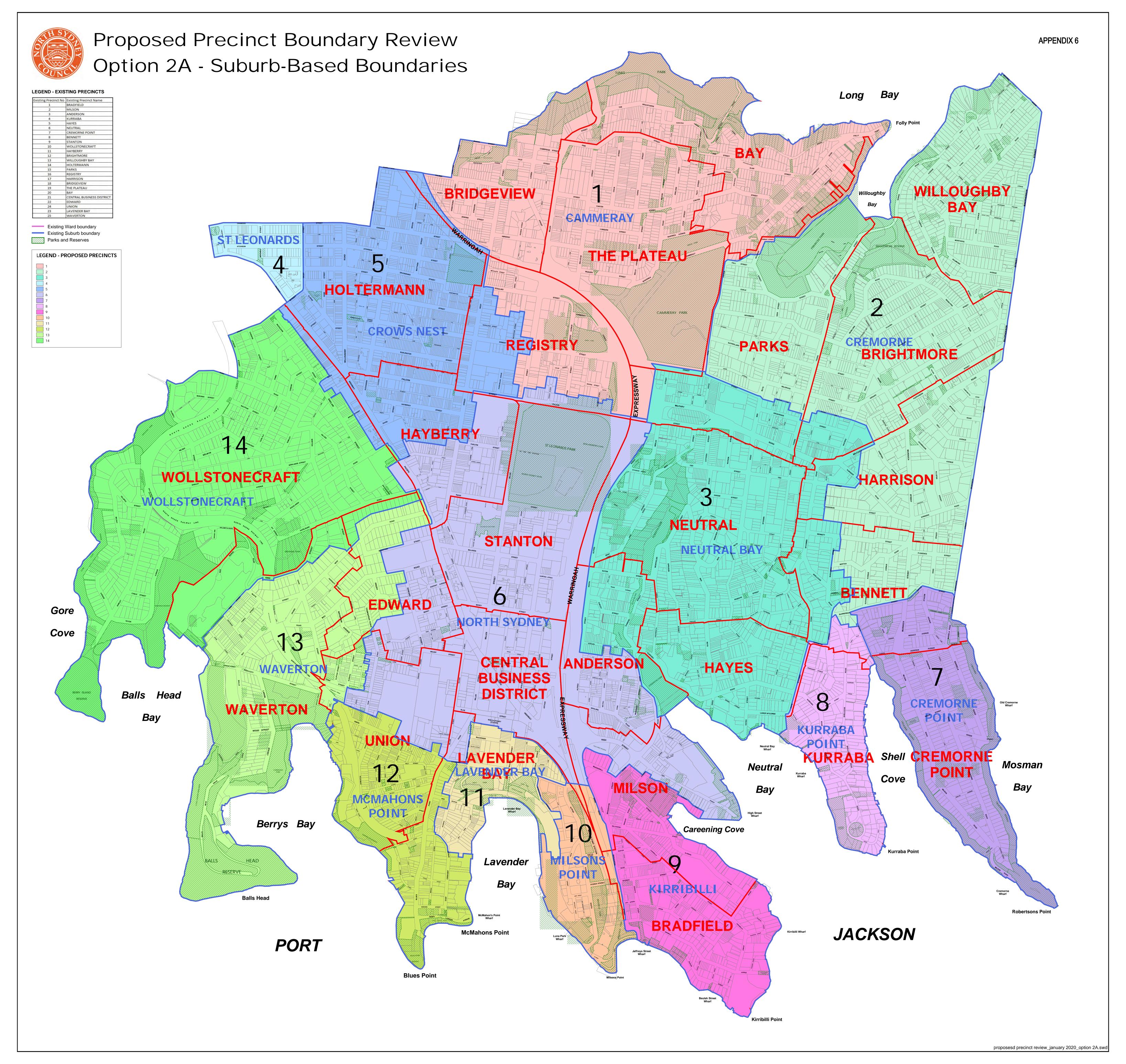
Key Priority Area 4: Precinct Objectives					
Result: Council will review the guidelines and objectives of the Precinct System					
Priority Experiences (Issue)	Priority Measures (Outcome)	Current Situation	Strategies to turn the Curves (Action)	Responsibility	Status
4.1 Precinct objectives are not in line with current Council direction, nor do they provide adequate guidance to Precinct Committees outlining their role and function.	The objectives and role of Precinct System is reinforced. In particular the Guidelines will be revised to better assist Precincts to provide effective commentary on DAs.	• The current secondary objectives - to provide input to the Council and assess on town planning matters including all major development applications - is misleading to Precincts in understanding their role in commenting on DAs and the decision making process. • Precincts feel they are expected to understand all aspects on lodging and assessing DAs. • Some Precincts let discussion of current DAs dominate meetings; some see DAs as their lifeblood.	4.1.1 Revise Precinct objectives re DAs, as part of Precincts System Guidelines review	Community Engagement Coordinator	Completed
			4.1.2 Develop Precincts specific DA submission and general enquiry forms	Planning & Development Services	Completed
			4.1.3 Include information in the Precinct System Guidelines to assist Committees to address DAs within their meetings	Administration Manager, PDS	Completed
			4.1.4 Provide information and support to Committees as required	Planning and Development Advisor	Ongoing
4.2 The two (2) year term of Precinct officer bearers is not adhered to, as Council's policy is not specific enough.	To ensure equity in the workload of the Precincts and to ensure that fresh approaches and ideas come through the Precincts.	• Many Precinct Committees struggle each year to reappoint office bearers; often office bearers remain in the role as there is no else willing to take on this role and/or because they	4.2.1 Amend tenure of office as part of Policy review - maximum of four (4) consecutive years. Articulate in Precinct System Guidelines	Community Engagement Coordinator	Completed

Key Priority Area 4: Precinct Objectives					
Result: Council will review the guidelines and objectives of the Precinct System					
Priority Experiences (Issue)	Priority Measures (Outcome)	Current Situation	Strategies to turn the Curves (Action)	Responsibility	Status
		fear the precinct will fold. • Some Precinct members have been involved in executive roles for up to ten (10) years. • Some Precinct members dominate office bearer roles.	4.2.2 Adhere to holding Office Bearers position for a maximum tenure, even at the risk of a precincts becoming inactive for a time	All Precincts	Ongoing - Links with 1.1.1
4.3 The Precincts Code of Conduct is due for review.	The Code of Conduct will be consistent with Local Government Act requirements.	• External consultant employed to redraft Code of Conduct policy.	4.3.1 Precinct Committees consulted as part of policy review	Community Engagement Coordinator	Ongoing
			4.3.2 Continue to review four (4) yearly in line with the Council elections	Manager Integrated Planning & Special Projects	*Pending*

Proposed Precinct Boundary Review
Option 1 - Expanding/Amalgamating Existing Precinct Areas

APPENDIX 5

LEGEND - EXISTING PRECINCTS

Existing Precinct No	Existing Precinct Name
1	BRADFIELD
2	MILSON
3	ANDERSON
4	KURRABA
5	HAYES
6	NEUTRAL
7	CREMORNE POINT
8	BENNETT
9	STANTON
10	WOLLSTONECRAFT
11	HAYBERRY
12	BRIGHTMORE
13	WILLOUGHBY BAY
14	HOLTERMANN
15	PARKS
16	REGISTRY
17	HARRISON
18	BRIDGEVIEW
19	THE PLATEAU
20	BAY
21	CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
22	EDWARD
23	UNION
24	LAVENDER BAY
25	WAVERTON

Existing Precinct boundary
Existing Suburb boundary
Parks and Reserves

LEGEND - PROPOSED PRECINCTS

1
2
3
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proposed precinct review_january 2020_option 1.swd

Proposed Precinct Boundary Review
Option 2A - Suburb-Based Boundaries

APPENDIX 6

Proposed Precinct Boundary Review
Option 2B - Suburb-Based Boundaries

APPENDIX 7

LEGEND - EXISTING PRECINCTS

Existing Precinct No	Existing Precinct Name
1	BRADFIELD
2	MILSON
3	ANDERSON
4	KURRABA
5	HAYES
6	NEUTRAL
7	CREMORNE POINT
8	BENNETT
9	STANTON
10	WOLLSTONECRAFT
11	HAYBERRY
12	BRIGHTMORE
13	WILLOUGHBY BAY
14	HOLTERMANN
15	PARKS
16	REGISTRY
17	HARRISON
18	BRIDGEVIEW
19	THE PLATEAU
20	BAY
21	CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
22	EDWARD
23	UNION
24	LAVENDER BAY
25	WAVERTON

—— Existing Precinct boundary
—— Existing Suburb boundary
▨ Parks and Reserves

LEGEND - PROPOSED PRECINCTS

- Cammeray East
- Cammeray West
- Cremore North
- Cremore Point/Kurraba Point
- Cremore South
- Crows Nest/St Leonards
- McMahons Nest
- Milsons Point/Lavender Bay
- Neutral Bay East
- Neutral Bay West
- North Sydney
- Wollstonecraft
- Waverton
- Kirribilli

Scale 1:5500

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Precincts Marketing Plan 2008-2010: Status Report

Promotional Tool	Strategy	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Status/Comments (Budget)
1. Council Website	1.1 Add Background Information PDF about the history of the Precinct System to the front Precincts page	Website Coordinator	May 2008	Completed
	1.2 Replace Minutes per Precinct page with Actions Arising template; also add news/highlights section to each page. Develop procedures for how Precincts contribute information for this section and add to guidelines	Team Support Officer/ Website Coordinator	October 2008 - February 2009	Completed
	1.3 Establish E-group, self-subscribe feature - creates mailing list that regular email updates can be sent to.	Website Coordinator	February 2010	Ongoing
	1.4 Investigate newsletter function, to maximise use of group; can reformat bi-monthly newsletter, media releases etc.	Website Coordinator	February 2010	Completed
	1.5 Investigate extranet site - Precinct members have password access to all forms (both online, PDF and Word - alternative options), direct emails to lodge minutes/actions summaries, policy and guidelines and related information etc or external alternatives.	Team Support Officer/ IT Support Officer	September 2008 - February 2009	Discontinued
2. E-bulletin	2.1 Continue distribution of e-bulletin, summarising hard copy correspondence, summary of DA notices etc.	Community Engagement Coordinator	Weekly	Ongoing
	2.2 Register each issue on Council's electronic document management system.	Community Engagement Coordinator	Weekly	Ongoing
3. Newsletter	3.1 Continue production of newsletter, up to 4 pages. Distribute PDF copy with e-bulletin.	Community Engagement Coordinator	Bi-monthly	Ongoing
	3.2 Register in Council's electronic document management system - task to Customer Services and DMS staff for FYI.	Community Engagement Coordinator	Bi-monthly	Ongoing
4. North Sydney News	4.1 Continue providing information to Precincts page within Council's community newsletter - NS News.	Community Engagement Coordinator/ Communications Officer	Quarterly	Ongoing

Precincts Marketing Plan 2008 - 2010

Promotional Tool	Strategy	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Status/Comments (Budget)
5. Corporate Envelopes	5.1 Continue including information about Precincts in the back of corporate envelopes. Include Call Centre number.	Manger Communications/ Purchasing Officer	From July 2008	Ongoing
6. Corporate Advertisements	6.1 Promote Precinct meetings within the Corporate Advertisement. Same format as Council meetings.	Team Support Officer/ Communications Officer	From July 2008	Ongoing
7. Media Releases	7.1 Produce media releases as required to assist promotion of the Precinct System and individual Precinct activities e.g. events	Communications Officer	As required	Ongoing
8. Promotional Material	8.1 Design generic A5 flyer to promote the Precinct System. Includes option for individual Precincts to promote own meeting and contact details.	Community Engagement Coordinator	May 2008	Completed
	8.2 Design, print and distribute DL flyer promoting Precincts System including map.	Graphic Designer(s)	February 2010	*Pending*
	8.3 Review content in 'Participate' flyer - in conjunction with Year 2 initiative from the draft Social Plan: Council produces and distributes a community involvement brochure and provides information on the Council website.	Community Engagement Coordinator/Community Information Officer	March/April 2009	Completed
9. Email addresses	9.1 Create generic email address - precincts@northsydney.nsw.gov.au.	IT Support Officer	April 2008	Completed
	9.2 Assist Precinct Committees to establish generic email addresses; keep access details on file to assist turnover of office bearers.	Community Engagement Coordinator/ IT Support Officer	As required	Ongoing
10. Re-branding	10.1 Explore re-branding of Precinct System name (affects logo and related promotional material) - in line with recommendations from the 2006 Precinct Review.	Community Engagement Coordinator/Graphic designer/s	January/February 2009	*Pending*
	10.2 Research history of Precinct names.	Community Engagement Coordinator/Council Historian	January/February 2009	Completed

Precincts Marketing Plan 2008 - 2010

Promotional Tool	Strategy	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Status/Comments (Budget)
11. Market Stalls	11.1 Investigate feasibility of holding a stall at local markets - *in line with recommendations from the 2006 Precinct Review.*	Community Engagement Coordinator/Team Support Officer	TBA	***Pending***

D5-05

AMENDED CODE OF CONDUCT - PRECINCT OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS

Page 1 of 14

Policy Owner: **Director City Strategy**

Category: **5. Our Civic Leadership**

1.   INTRODUCTION

The North Sydney Precinct System, whilst under the auspice of North Sydney Council, is independent from the Council in its activities and decision making *operates with a degree of independence from Council, and with independence of mind*. However, as the Precinct System is publicly regarded as an open-government initiative of the Council, we ask you to commit to our ethical standards and perform your activities and/or responsibilities with your Precinct Committee with integrity, honesty and fairness.

The intent of this Code of Conduct is to strengthen the role and functions of Precinct System and public perception surrounding your activities. The Code outlines Precinct Officer Bearer and Member[1] responsibilities in areas such as relationships with other committee members (including casual attendees), Councillors and Council staff, conflicts of interest, gifts and management of personal information.

2.   KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

When attending a committee meeting or carrying out other activities on behalf of the Precinct Committee, the Officer Bearers and Members are responsible for your own good conduct. As part of good conduct, you are asked to:

a)   Be inclusive and courteous to the public, Council staff and Councillors, other volunteers and Precinct Committee members;

b)   Help create an environment that is free of harassment and discrimination;

c)   Show respect to all members on the Precinct Committee including new members *(includes first time attendees, casual attendees and DA applicants)*; and

d)   Approach your involvement in Precinct Committee activities with honesty and integrity.

Each Precinct Committees has at least *a minimum of* two *(2)* Office Bearers, *a Convenor* the Chairperson and the Secretary. Office Bearers must comply with the *North Sydney Precinct System Guidelines*.

The *Convenor* Chairperson has additional roles as covered in the *North Sydney Precinct System Guidelines*.

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1 *Any person in attendance at a Precinct Committee including casual attendees.*

CODE OF CONDUCT - PRECINCT OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS

3.   CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

A conflict of interest arises when your own interests, or those of people close to you, conflict with your obligations to the Council.

The *Local Government Act 1993* (Chapter 14) states that Councillors and staff cannot get involved in any decision where there is a reasonable likelihood of appreciable financial gain or loss to them or their spouse, de facto partner, relative or employer.

It is recognised that people attending committee meetings will have interests in the matters under consideration, as Precinct Committees are made up of residents, property owners*/businesses*, workers and students who live or work in the Precinct area. This interest is understood and would not need to be disclosed. *However, were an attendee has a pecuniary interest in a specific matter being discussed, this inference should be disclosed to the meeting.*

A pecuniary interest is an interest that you have in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to you or:

a)   *your spouse, de facto partner[2], your relative[3], your partner or your employer, or a person as defined in Clause 4.6 of Council's Code of Conduct - Councillors and Staff; or*

b)   *a company or other body of which you, or your nominee, partner or employer, is a shareholder or member.*

You will not have a pecuniary interest in a matter if the interest is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be regarded as likely to influence any decision you might make in relation to the matter, or if the interest is of a kind specified in clause 4.6 of Council's Code of Conduct - Councillors and Staff.

As an Office Bearer, ~~in particular as the Chairperson and Secretary~~, you need to ensure that any interest you may have in a matter does not influence, and could not be perceived as influencing, the way in which a matter is discussed, or any decision made by the Precinct Committee.

Example:

- If an Office Bearer or Member ~~(including casual attendee)~~ is opposed to a high-rise development proposed in the Precinct area this would not be considered a conflict.

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2 "de facto partner" has the same meaning as defined in section 21C of the Interpretation Act 1987.
3 Your "relative" is any of the following:

i) your parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, lineal descendant or adopted child;

ii) your spouse's or de facto partner's parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, lineal descendant or adopted child; or

iii) the spouse or de facto partner of a person referred to in paragraphs (i) and (ii).

CODE OF CONDUCT - PRECINCT OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS

- If the high rise development proposed is next door or close by, so as to affect the value of the property of the Office Bearer or Member ~~(including casual attendee)~~, it would be appropriate that they declare a personal interest and that the Office Bearer temporarily step down from their position during discussion of the item**.**

The declaration of interests by Office Bearers protects the reputation of the Precinct Committee and the Office Bearers. Declarations ensure that people can be confident that the personal interests of the Office Bearer do not unduly influence the decisions of the Precinct Committee.

Example:

- A *Convenor* ~~Chairperson~~ would be considered to have a conflict of interest if they misuse their position, because of an interest, to inappropriately direct discussion or not allow free discussion of a matter.

- A Secretary would be considered to have a conflict of interest if they, because of an interest, inaccurately record the minutes dealing with a matter.

When an Office Bearer or Member makes a disclosure of a conflict of interest (declaration):

a)   The Secretary should record, in the minutes, whoever declared the interest and the nature of the interest declared.
b)   ~~In the case of the~~ *If they are an* Office Bearer, they should temporarily step down from their position, while the matter is being discussed, and pass their role to another member.
c)   The point at which the Officer Bearer steps down and then resumes their position should be recorded in the minutes/summary of actions arising as per the *North Sydney Precinct System Guidelines.*

If you are unsure whether ~~or not~~ you have a conflict of interest, please contact Council's Public Officer, who will be happy to talk the matter over with you.

4.   GIFTS AND BENEFITS

As a Precinct Member, you should not offer to a Councillor or Council staff member, a gift or benefit that:

a)   is designed to gain advantage for yourself or a group you represent; or
b)   may be perceived by the public to give advantage to you or a group you represent.

Similarly, as a Precinct Member you should not accept gifts or benefits from a third party e.g. external agency or developer that could appear to gain someone an advantage or influence him or her in their Committee's role/activities.

CODE OF CONDUCT - PRECINCT OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS

Page 4 of 14

Token gifts may be given or accepted; token gifts include small items such as a bunch of flowers, a bottle of wine or box of chocolates. Cash incentives should not be offered to, or accepted by, a Councillor, staff member, Precinct Member or volunteer in connection with their work with the Council, under any circumstances.

The standards for gifts and benefits in this Code are the same as the standards in Council's *Code of Conduct - Councillors and Staff.*

Example:

It would not be considered acceptable for a Precinct Committee to accept from a developer, who has a proposal in their Precinct, an offer to take Precinct members to a restaurant or to provide refreshments to the members.

If you are offered a gift or benefit that you consider being more than token, report it to Council's Public Officer. If you are unsure if a gift or benefit is token, you may seek advice from the Council's Public Officer.

Openness about such matters prevents unfair criticism at a later date. If you have any doubts whether *or not* you should accept a gift received in relation to your role as Precinct Member, it is best not to accept it.

5.   CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

As a Precinct Member or Office Bearer, you may have contact with confidential or personal information retained by Council and the Precinct Committees. If so, we ask that you maintain the security of any confidential or personal information and not access, use or remove any information, unless you are authorised to do so.

Privacy legislation governs the collection, holding, use, correction, disclosure and transfer of personal information. *Office Bearers must only use contact details collect by the Precinct Committee for the purpose it was collected - communicating on Precinct Committee matters.*

Office bearers *must* ensure attendance records and recording of minutes are maintained in accordance with the *North Sydney Precinct System Guidelines. Unauthorised disclosures of personal contact information may cause people harm or give an individual or agency an improper advantage. The Precinct Committee's integrity and credibility may be damaged if Office Bearers do not keep contact information secure.*

Example:

It would be considered inappropriate for an Office Bearer to provide Precinct Member contact details to another person, group or agency without permission from the individual Precinct Member or using Precinct Member contact details for a purpose other than which they were collected i.e. promoting election campaign material.

CODE OF CONDUCT - PRECINCT OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS

Page 5 of 14

If you would like more information about NSW privacy legislation or if you become aware of any breach of the security, or misuse, of Council's or the Precinct Committee's confidential/personal information, contact Council's Public Officer.

6.   PRECINCT COMMITTEE FUNDING

The Council provides annual funding for Precinct Committees to meet their operating expenses - such as printing, *flyer distribution,* stationery, refreshments, and telephone*/internet* expenses of Office Bearers.

Funding is only to be expended for Precinct operations and not for personal benefit. *You must use operational funding, ethically, effectively, efficiently and carefully in the course of your role as an Office Bearer and or Member and must not use it for private purposes.*

Council funding cannot be used for political purposes including lobbying and election campaigns, regarding any level of government, including local government elections; and cannot be used for membership of any other associations or organisations.

Expenditure of funds must be accounted for properly and *financial* reports provided to Council as per the *North Sydney Precinct System Guidelines*.

7.   COUNCIL RESOURCES

Council resources *(including operational funding)* should only be used for Council purposes, unless Council has given specific approval. Council resources include materials, equipment, *venues* ~~vehicles,~~ documents, records, data and information.

You must use Council resources~~, including operational funding,~~ ethically, effectively, efficiently and carefully in the course of your role as an Office Bearer and or Member, and must not use them for private purposes.

8.   PUBLIC COMMENT

Precinct Committees are not established as separate legal entities. Any comments made are therefore to be made in the personal capacity with reference to the individual making the comments, Office Bearers and members should be cognisant that they are personally responsible for comments they make.

From time to time, the media may contact Precinct members for information or comment. If the Precinct Committee has determined a matter, ~~you can as a~~ Precinct ~~member~~ *office bearers can*~~,~~ speak on behalf of the Precinct Committee, if ~~you are~~ authorised to do so. If the matter has only been discussed, but no determination made, you can express your *personal* views but not the views of the Precinct Committee.

While you may speak as a member of the public, or as a representative of the Precinct Committee, we ask that you do not make any public statement to the media or at public events that would lead someone to believe that you are speaking on behalf of Council or

CODE OF CONDUCT - PRECINCT OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS

expressing its views or policies. Instead refer such inquiries to Council's Communication and Events Manager on Ph 9936 8100.

9. *SOCIAL MEDIA*

All Office Bearers and Members must comply with social media use guidelines included as Appendix A. A failure to comply with these guidelines may constitute a breach of this Code of Conduct.

Precinct Committees may use social media, as defined in Appendix A, either in their capacity as an Office Bearers or in a personal capacity. If the Precinct Committee has determined a matter, you can comment/post on behalf of the Precinct Committee, if authorised to do so. If the matter has only been discussed, but no determination made, you can express your personal views but not the views of the Precinct Committee.

Example:

Failure to adhere to the Code of Conduct via use of social media includes making in inappropriate, derogatory or obscene posts about someone or something (e.g. Council project or decision, Councillor or another member of the public) on a social networking site where the account is in the name of a Precinct Committee; or an Officer Bearer or Member posting from their personal account.

10. *REPRESENTATION AT COUNCIL MEETINGS (PUBLIC FORUMS)*

Office Bearers and members may register to speak at a Public Forum preceding a Council Meeting in accordance with Council's guidelines. Per Clause 8, Office Bearers and members should be cognisant that they are personally responsible for comments they make.

Office Bearers, including the Co-Conveners of the Combined Precincts Committee, can only speak to a Council Meeting agenda item of which the topic has been discussed and resolved on (i.e. determination made) by their individual Precinct Committee.

If addressing the Council on a personal matter (i.e. not as representative of a Precinct Committee), the Office Bearer cannot refer to their Office Bearer capacity as an attempt to influence the decision of the Council.

11. ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Council asks that you do not participate in Precinct Committee meetings while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs that could impair your ability to make informed decisions or cause danger to the safety of yourself and/or others.

This does not mean that Precinct Committee members cannot have a glass of wine during their meeting. This standard allows Precinct Committee members and Office Bearers to

CODE OF CONDUCT - PRECINCT OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS

exclude intoxicated people who attend a Precinct meeting and thereby protect the safety of members and the reputation of the Precinct Committee.

If your Precinct Committee serves or provides alcohol as a refreshment option at your Committee meeting, please ensure that it is served responsibly. Providers of alcohol must prevent drunkenness and minors accessing liquor and must understand that irresponsible liquor practices may lead to problems both on and off the premises.

12.   *DISORDER*

In accordance with Council's *Code of Meeting Principles and Practices* the following step should be taken if an incident arises:

a)   If disorder arises in any meeting the *Convenor* ~~Chair~~ may adjourn the meeting for a period of 15 minutes ~~and leave the Chair~~.

b)   *If after the meeting has resumed, disorder by the Precinct member continues they may be expelled by resolution of the Committee (i.e. majority decision).*

c)   *If order is not re-established the Convenor should bring the meeting to a close*

d)   Once expelled, a Precinct member~~/casual attendee~~ cannot go back into that meeting, whether he or she withdraws and apologises. They may attend the next and subsequent meetings if no further resolutions are carried.

Call the Police and request assistance if you believe there is any threat or fear of violence, or if you believe that someone could be injured because you have refused entry or requested they leave~~, then call the Police and request assistance~~. Also inform Council's Community Engagement Coordinator on 9936 8285 or Council's After Hours Service Ph 9936 8100 of all incidents within 24 hours. Debriefing services can also be arranged on request.

13.   *VOTING ON RESOLUTIONS*

Voting by 'proxy' at Annual General Meetings is not permitted, including at the Combined Precincts Committee4. Attendance at individual Precinct Committee meetings is open to all residents, businesses, workers and students within a Precinct area, as such there is no "membership". An individual who is unable to attend an Annual General Meeting cannot delegate voting rights to another individual or representative to vote in their absence.

14.   RECORDING OF RESOLUTIONS AND DISCUSSION

No names should be recorded in minutes or summaries of actions arising; rather initials can be used in accordance with the *North Sydney Precinct System Guidelines*.

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4 Office Bearer nominations are permitted by proxy i.e. a person does not have to be present at an AGM to be elected to an office bearer position, provided they have given written consent prior to that meeting.

CODE OF CONDUCT - PRECINCT OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS

The Secretary is responsible for accurately recording any resolution (motion) of the Precinct Committee. Allegations made against an individual Council staff member or Councillor must not be recorded in the minutes but must be made directly to the General Manager.

Similarly, allegations made against Precinct Committee members, the general public including developers and local businesses, must not be recorded, but must be made directly to the General Manager. Any allegations of improper behaviour need to be investigated and should never be published without substantiation. Such matters may lead to defamation proceedings.

15. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNCILLORS/STAFF AND THE PRECINCT COMMITTEE

Councillors and staff cannot ~~direct or~~ propose motions at a Precinct meeting, in their capacity as a Councillor or staff member.

The Councillors are the governing body of North Sydney Council and have the responsibility of directing and controlling the affairs of the Council in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*. Council and its staff have an obligation to give effect to the lawful policies, decisions and practices of the Council.

The Mayor and General Manager are the official spokespersons for the Council. As such, they (or their delegate) should be approached first for presentations to Precinct Committees on Council issues. Such requests are to be coordinated through Council's Community Engagement Coordinator.

Precinct Committees and their Office Bearers must treat Councillors equally. If one (1) Councillor is invited to a present to a Precinct Committee, other Councillors are also to be given equal opportunity.

Officer Bearers must not take advantage of their position to improperly address or attempt to influence Councillors and staff in the performance of their public or professional duties to secure a private benefit for themselves or for somebody else.

Precinct Office Bearers and/or members may not directly contact Council staff regarding any issues arising from Precinct Committee meetings; they may request to speak directly with a Department Manager and/or a Project Coordinator (e.g. Streets Alive, Streetscape etc.), ~~or~~ *alternatively* the Community Engagement Coordinator can facilitate contact with the appropriate Department/staff. This process has been established to ensure a consistent level of service to all Precincts-related enquiries.

Precinct Office Bearers and/or committee members must not use threatening or intimidating language when talking with staff.

~~Council will supply, on an annual basis, a contact list of key staff to all Precinct Committees.~~

CODE OF CONDUCT - PRECINCT OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS

16. DEALING WITH THIRD PARTIES OUTSIDE OF PRECINCT MEETINGS

Council acknowledges that inherent to the role and function of Precinct Committees is the capacity to lobby and advocate on issues of local importance. However Council discourages Precinct Committees from directly approaching third parties to resolve an issue (except for Councillors and/or Members of Parliament and Ministers).

If seeking cooperation of a third party e.g. local business, community organisation and/or private citizen, an Officer Bearer and/or members must not take advantage (or seek to take advantage) of their status or position with, or functions performed for the Precinct Committee in order to obtain unauthorised or unfair benefit for themselves or for any other person or body.

Office bearers and/or members must not directly or indirectly engage in any activity that could, by association, cause public embarrassment or other damage to Council or the Precinct Committee.

Precinct Committee members may approach the third party as a group of residents to raise concerns regarding an issue that has been previously raised at a formal Precinct Committee meeting. Similarly Office Bearers may use their role to gather further information on an issue that has been previously raised at a formal Precinct Committee meeting. The information/issue can then be passed on, through a formal resolution, requesting Council to resolve or address.

Furthermore, Office Bearers and/or members must not use threatening or intimidating language when talking to a third party.

17. REPORTING BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

One of the ways in which you can help to maintain high ethical standards is to report any suspected breaches of the *Code of Conduct* by a Councillor, Council staff member or Precinct member.

You can report any suspected breaches to *Council's Manager Integrated Planning & Special Projects* the General Manager or the Public Officer preferably in writing in the first instance and must refrain from making allegations at Precinct Committee meetings. Such allegations should not be recorded in Precinct Committee minutes.

Where appropriate, the General Manager *(or their delegate)* will make enquiries, or cause enquiries to be made, into breaches of the *Code of Conduct* and will determine the matter in accordance with Council's complaints handling procedures.

Office Bearers and Members who are found to have breached these standards may, depending on the extent of the breach, be asked to cease their involvement with the Precinct System.

CODE OF CONDUCT - PRECINCT OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS

Alternatively, you can report any suspected instances of corruption to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) on Ph ~~8281 5999~~ *1800 464 909* and any suspected instances of misadministration to the NSW Ombudsman on Ph 9286 1000.

18. NORTH SYDNEY COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT

North Sydney Council is committed to the standards in this *Code of Conduct*. They reflect the high standards expected by our community and you are expected to maintain these standards and principles when participating in Precinct activities.

If you have any questions or are unsure about any matter relating to this *Code of Conduct*, you can contact the Council's Public Officer or the Integrated Planning and Special Projects Department on Ph 9936 8100.

19. RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS/LEGISLATION

The Policy should be read in conjunction with the following Council policies and documents:

- Access to Council Information Policy
- Code of Conduct - Councillors and Staff
- Code of Conduct - Volunteer and Community Representatives
- Code of Meeting Principles and Practices
- Community Engagement Policy
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Gifts and Benefits Policy
- Open Government Policy
- *Managing Unreasonable Complainant Conduct Policy*
- *Precinct System Guidelines*
- *Precinct System Policy*
- Privacy Management Plan
- Volunteer Policy

The Policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents/legislation:

- Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988
- Local Government Act 1993
- Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW (December 2018)

20. FOR ASSISTANCE/INFORMATION ABOUT THIS CODE:

For more information or assistance with this Code of Conduct contact Council's Public Officer or the Integrated Planning and Special Projects Department on Ph 9936 8100.

CODE OF CONDUCT - PRECINCT OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS

Page 11 of 14

Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Resolution No.	Review Date
1	30 June 2008	Council	422	2009/10
2	16 February 2009	Council	61	2012/13
3	18 February 2013	Council	61	2016/17
4	*##*	*##*	*##*	*2020/21*

CODE OF CONDUCT - PRECINCT OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS

APPENDIX A: SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

The Guidelines govern the use of social media by Precinct Committees, so that Office Bearers and Members feel enabled to participate, while being mindful of their responsibilities and obligations.

The Guidelines assist to establish a culture of openness, trust and integrity in all social media activities relating to individual Precinct Committees, including the Combined Precincts Committee and the North Sydney Community Precinct System at large.

The Guideline is applicable when using social media:

a) *as an officially designated individual representing a Precinct Committee i.e. Office Bearer; or*

b) *if you are posting content in a personal capacity that relates to your Office Bearer role within a Precinct Committee.*

What you publish on the internet can remain public for a long time. Content can also be replicated and shared beyond the original intended audience and sent recipients who were never expected to see it, who may view it out of context. Be aware that according to the terms and conditions of some third-party sites, the content you create is the property of the site where it is posted and so may be re-used in ways which you had not intended.

Before posting to social media you should understand the tool/platform you are using. Read the terms of service/user guides and look through existing content to get an idea of the posting etiquette and any associated cultural and behavioral norms before you engage.

Social Media Definition

The term social media applies to all tools/platforms for publishing, sharing and discussion information, including, but not limited to:

- *Social networking sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Yammer etc.*
- *Instant messaging e.g. SMS, Skype, Snapchat, WhatsApp etc.*
- *Video/photo sharing websites or apps e.g. Instagram, Vimeo, Flikr, YouTube etc.*
- *Blogs and micro-blogging platforms e.g. Tumblr, Wordpress, Blogger etc.*
- *Review sites e.g. Urban Spoon, Yelp etc.*
- *Live broadcasting apps*
- *Podcasting e.g. iTunes, Stitcher, Sound cloud etc.*
- *Geo-spatial tagging e.g. Foursquare etc.*
- *Online encyclopedias e.g. Wikipedia etc.*
- *Online multiplayer gaming platforms e.g. Secondlife etc.*
- *Online voting or polls*
- *Public and private online forums and discussion boards*
- *Any other technologies that allow individual users to upload and share content.*

CODE OF CONDUCT - PRECINCT OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS

Official use of social media (on behalf of a Precinct Committee)

Office Bearers and/or designated members of a Precinct Committee assigned the responsibility for administering an individual Precinct Committee's social media account(s) must apply the following principles:

a) *Approved activity - before commencing a social media initiative (e.g. setting up a Facebook account), the activity must be endorsed by your Precinct Committee.*

b) *Identity and authenticity - always use an authorised identity and not a personal identity when posting to, or responding from your Precinct Committee's social media accounts, on behalf of your Precinct Committee.*

c) *Maintain confidentiality - only post publicly available information. Don't disclose or discuss confidential information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of your Precinct Committee, unless you are authorised to do so.*

d) *Protect and respect privacy - check the account privacy settings are appropriate for the scope of engagement you wish to undertake. Protect your own privacy and personal information. Don't share the private details of others. Don't disclose details of private conversations unless you have obtained explicit consent from the relevant parties (this includes using "snippets" of someone else's post/comment etc.). If an online discussion involves specific individual circumstances or personal details, the moderator must 'switch channel' by directing members of the public to an alternative medium e.g. telephone, email, face-to-face as appropriate*

e) *Be impartial - avoid statements that advocate or criticise of Council or political parties. Avoid conflicts of interest through endorsement or criticism of third-party providers, partners, products or services. Avoid expressions of personal opinion.*

f) *Be respectful - be courteous and polite. Be sensitive to diversity. Avoid arguments and don't make personal attacks. Do not post obscene, offensive, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory, embarrassing, intimidating, sexually explicit, bullying, racist, sexists or hateful content, or otherwise inappropriate.*

g) *Be accurate - make sure the information you publish of behalf of the Precinct Committee is correct and cite sources or provide web links where appropriate; people may make decisions based on information you post.*

h) *Consider intellectual property - respect copyright. Always get permission to use words, images or materials online that you do not own.*

i) *Think first - review your content before you post it. Remember that you are responsible for your actions. You should consider the impact your activities could have on yourself, your Precinct Committee or the Precinct System at large and/or Council. Use your common sense and best judgement.*

Personal use of social media (as an Office Bearer and/or Member)

Office Bearers and Members should be aware that content published on social media is, or may become publicly available, even from personal social media accounts. Office Bearers and Members must ensure they:

CODE OF CONDUCT - PRECINCT OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS

a)   *are mindful that their behaviour, when posting/commenting in a Precinct related context, must reflect Council's values and the Code of Conduct, even when material is posted anonymously or using an alias or pseudonym;*

b)   *make clear that any views expressed are their own, and not those of their Precinct Committee, the Combined Precincts Committee or Council;*

c)   *don't make comments/post content that are obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful;*

d)   *don't post comments or images that are, or could be perceived to be; and*

e)   *point out any vested interest or if are making an endorsement or recommendation about something you are affiliated with, or have a close relationship with, you must disclosure that affiliation. use disclaimers, wherever practical, including a prominent disclaimer stating which Precinct Committee you are affiliated with and that anything you publish is your personal opinion and that you are jot speaking officially. Whilst this is good practice and is encouraged, it may not have legal effect.*