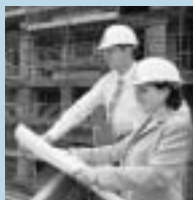


# INTRODUCTION TO PLANNING

## For Council Members



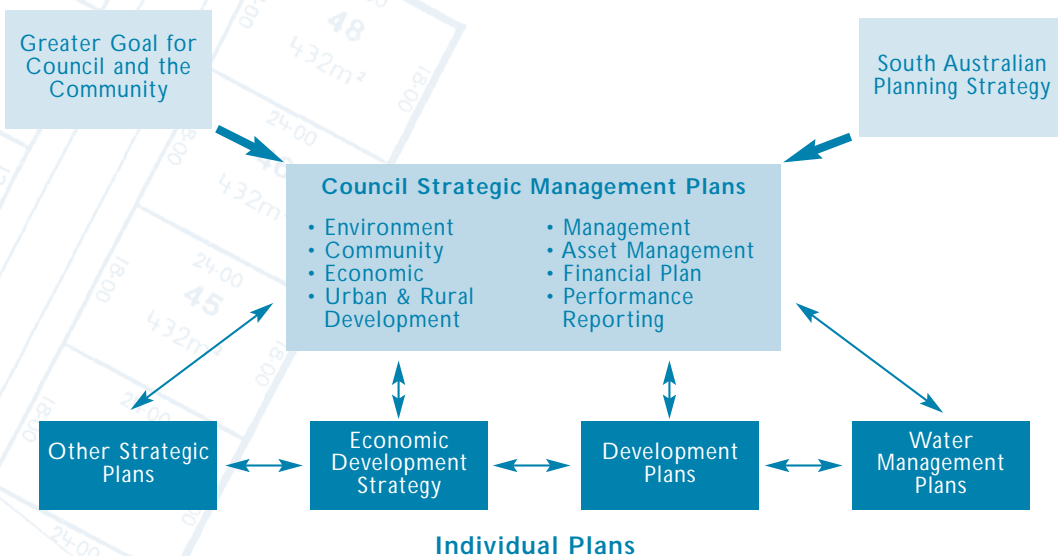
Planning is about considering options, generating a vision for the future and acting to achieve those outcomes for the community. It requires strategic planning to identify the goals and objectives for your area and preparing detailed implementation plans to achieve them.

### What is Strategic Planning?

The Local Government Act 1999 calls for Councils to apply a strategic planning approach in all actions it undertakes. Councils are required to prepare and adopt plans collectively referred to as strategic management plans. These plans should articulate the Council's goals and objectives and the vision for the community. They should also complement the State's Planning Strategy.

One of the individual plans is the Development Plan for the Council area. The Development Plan is part of SA's Planning and Development Assessment System.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING



### SA's Planning and Development Assessment System

The Development Act 1993 establishes a number of statutory documents and procedures.

#### South Australia's Planning Strategy

The Planning Strategy sets out the State Government's strategic priorities for sustainable land use and built development.

#### Development Plans

The Development Plan is a statutory document that provides policies to assess development applications.

For a Council to ensure development outcomes are in accordance with its strategic management plans, the Development Plan must reflect the Council's vision and complement the State's Planning Strategy. Updating the Development Plan to reflect the Council's expectations regarding future development is an important, sustainable way of achieving the Council's vision.

#### Strategic Policy Review

Councils regularly initiate "Section 30" reviews of the Development Plan and prepare Plan Amendments Reports (PARs) to ensure policies are relevant to the area and complement the Planning Strategy and the strategic management plans.

## Development Assessment

The Development Act also sets out the procedures for the assessment of development applications. Councils are required to act as a “relevant authority” pursuant to the Development Act when assessing applications rather than as a traditional Council. Applications are assessed against the policies in the Development Plan and applications should be approved when in accordance with these policies in order to provide certainty for both proponents and the community. Consequently, it is crucial to ensure that the Development Plan policies are up-to-date.

There are some circumstances when the Development Assessment Commission (DAC) assesses applications. The Regulations set out those instances when applications are to be assessed by the DAC.

## Appeals

The Development Act enables applicants to appeal against most development assessment decisions to the Environment, Resources and Development Court (ERD Court). Objectors to applications that have been subject to full Public Notification, as per the Regulations or the Development Plan, also have an appeal right.

The ERD Court hears the case and makes a decision based on the policies in the Development Plan in order to ensure there is a consistency of decision making. Again, it is important for Councils to ensure Development Plans are relevant and up-to-date.

## What are Council's Responsibilities?

### Policy Maker

The most important role for Council is to set strategic directions and implement them. As part of the implementation, it is important priority is given to reviewing the relevance of policies set out in the Development Plan.

### Development Assessment

The Council assesses development applications as the “relevant authority” based on policies set out in the Development Plan. The Council makes the decisions as the “relevant authority” and should establish a panel or committee to undertake this role.

The Development Amendment Bill currently before Parliament will require each council to establish a development assessment panel and to delegate appropriate powers and functions to it.

### Council Staff Responsibilities

Staff undertake the vast majority of procedures established by the Development Act and Regulations and make decisions on applications pursuant to delegated authority (approximately 90% of decisions are currently made this way). Council staff also prepare reports and provide professional advice to assist Council Members make decisions on the remaining applications.

## Your Responsibilities as a Council Member

It is the role of the Council to set a clear direction and policies and establish appropriate administration processes to implement such policies.

Ensuring the Council's strategic management plans and the policies in the Development Plan are relevant and up-to-date are crucial tasks. These documents set the foundation for Council programs, development assessment decisions and appeals.

Council Members, when in the development assessment role, have a responsibility broader than simply representing the personal interests of a member of the community. The development assessment role requires Council Members to assess a development application against the relevant Development Plan policies.

## Next Steps

**The most important step for you now is to learn more about South Australia's Planning and Development Assessment System. The Local Government Association (LGA) and Planning SA have combined to prepare a range of essential information including:**

- “Council Members' Guide to Planning – An overview of South Australia's Planning and Development Assessment System” booklet
- Workshops for Council Members, based on the “Council Members' Guide to Planning”

**Further information and support is available from:**

- Your Council Staff
- LGA.net or the LGA web site, [www.lga.sa.gov.au](http://www.lga.sa.gov.au)
- Planning SA web site, [www.planning.sa.gov.au](http://www.planning.sa.gov.au)



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