

MINISTER'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM

REFERRAL IN PROGRESS

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

1 Background

State and Local Government have the responsibility to set clear strategic policy across the State and locally for land use planning and development. In particular State and Local Government are involved directly and indirectly in the formulation and implementation of the State Government Planning Strategy and Development Plans, pursuant to the *Development Act 1993*.

A number of operational issues related to development planning are currently the subject of initiatives under the auspices of Planning SA and the LGA.

There are, however, a number of significant joint State and Local Government issues relating to development planning that need to be progressed. These include:

- Strategic planning - ways in which the State's strategic policy directions related to land use, natural resource management, transport integration, housing, social policy and economic development can best inform and be incorporated at a regional and local level;
- Policies and procedures - ways in which State and Local Government resources can best be utilised to review and implement policies within reasonable timeframes;
- Policies and procedures - ways in which councils can place greater emphasis on ensuring that policies in Development Plans are pertinent and up to date;
- Resourcing - measures that might be taken by State and Local Government to secure and retain the services of an adequate number of appropriately qualified planners/development assessment officers;
- Public consultation - the appropriate level and means of effectively engaging the community in the formulation and review of policies and programs.

2 Consultation

Persons contributing to the preparation of the Referral in Progress Paper:

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LGA

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3 Current Status of Work in Progress

State and Local Government are working together on a number of detailed programs relating to the promotion of strategic planning and improving the operation of the South Australian Planning and Development System. Attachment 1 provides an outline of a number of initiatives currently in progress.

During the progress of these detailed programs it has become evident that there is a range of strategic issues that could usefully be discussed by the Forum.

Agencies and the LGA believe that the discussion of such issues by the Forum can contribute to implementation of change and co-operation without duplicating existing programs.

4 Issues

4.1 Strategic planning

The complex roles of State and Local Government in setting clear strategic policy across the State and locally for land use planning and development, housing, integrated transport, economic development, natural resource management and social needs can be seen in the formulation and implementation of policy through:

- The State Planning Strategy and Development Plans, pursuant to the *Development Act 1993*
- Strategic Management Plans for each Council, pursuant to the *Local Government Act 1999*
- A range of natural resource management plans
- A range of economic development strategies

Currently the update of the Metropolitan and Country Region volumes of the Planning Strategy are being finalised. An update of the Inner Region volume has commenced. A review of the role and content relating to the Metropolitan volume has also commenced.

The Environment and Conservation Portfolio is reviewing the best ways to integrate natural resource management plans. The new Economic Development Board is preparing an economic strategy for the State.

The challenge at present is to identify how statutory State policy directions in these related areas, especially the Planning Strategy, can be incorporated into Development Plans within a reasonable timeframe.

4.2 Policies and Procedures

Planning SA has initiated a Development Plan Improvement program in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders which addresses:

- Policy content and structure of Development Plans
- Strategic planning linkages
- Section 30 Reviews
- Plan Amendment Reports – procedures and timeframes
- Public consultation and notification
- Statements of intent – contents and format

The challenge is to identify the best approaches to Development Plan policy reviews to link with the Planning Strategy, to ensure that the policies are up to date, and to reflect natural resource management and economic development strategies.

4.3 Resourcing

There are two aspects to resourcing in the development planning context. First, there is a shortage of suitable qualified planners available. This shortage is particularly affecting regional areas. Discussions and some activities have commenced to address this concern however there may be a need for higher level strategic coordination between a range of State agencies, Local Government, the education sector and professional bodies to effect a long term integrated approach to human resources and regional resource sharing.

The second aspect of resourcing is that a lack of human resources can affect policy review requirements. Planning staff are often consumed with all aspects of development assessment and enforcement, leaving inadequate time for policy review. A strategic discussion about the role planners play in the development assessment process may be relevant. It may be that other staff and other training opportunities can be identified to take up some of the more basic functions that planners are currently undertaking.

4.4 Public Consultation

The Development Act 1993 and the Local Government Act 1999 set out the statutory minimum requirements for engaging the public in setting strategic and development policy direction for their area.

There is however a need to further examine consultation processes in addition to these minimum requirements to ensure that information and participation opportunities are both meaningful at the local level and provide appropriate attention to broader strategy that has been prepared in the interests of the whole community.

5 Recommendations:

That Forum Members:

1. confirm that the issues listed are of strategic importance;
2. note the current status of work related to these issues;
3. identify any other related strategic development planning issues not listed;
and
4. advise on approaches that might be taken in the immediate future to add value to existing work.

Work in Progress – Development Planning

1 Strategic Planning

- Planning Strategy -Country Region volume update is being finalised after considering the formal public/council /agency consultation comments
- Planning Strategy - Metropolitan volume update is being finalised after considering the formal public/council /agency consultation comments
- Planning Strategy - Inner Region volume update program has commenced
 - Outline briefings have been held with all councils
 - Planning Firm engaged to prepare action plans
 - Stakeholder workshops are being held in the region
- Planning Strategy Role and Content Review (Metropolitan volume)
 - LGA Working Groups briefed
 - Cabinet Sub committees briefed
- LGA Urban Development Metropolitan Adelaide Working Group has been formed to promote metropolitan strategic planning issues

2 Improved Policies and Procedures (IPAP)

- IPAP program drafted for discussion with key stakeholders
- Development Plan Improvement Program commenced
 - Outline paper prepared and stakeholder workshops have been held;
 - Reference Group is being formed
 - Discussion Paper is being prepared for stakeholder consultation.
- System Indicators and Best Practice Review is being initiated
 - draft brief prepared for discussion with the LGA
 - variety of existing planning and development indicators collected under different Acts have been summarised
 - 2001/02 data from Referral Agencies collected
 - the LGA Development Assessment Panel Guide to Innovation has been prepared and is about to be released.
- Compliance and associated Fees Review is progressing
 - council survey undertaken in 2002
- Electronic Development Application Lodgement and Assessment (EDALA) project is progressing:
 - Stage I relating to Land Division applications came into operation in July 2002

- a Land Division Certificate stage is being introduced
 - the options for inclusion of Land Use applications will be discussed with the LGA
- The LGA has established a System Improvement Program Working Group and a Development Assessment Process Working Group to provide input into IPAP as part of their role.

2.3 Planning and Development Resources

- Stakeholders meeting held to discuss the options
- Planning as a Career Choice material being prepared for career selection and course selection
- LGA project (about to commence) considering opportunities for establishing a “graduate” program in the planning discipline and researching appropriate qualifications/skills desirable of planners in a Local Government environment
- Career information being prepared for Year 11 and 12 students
- LGA Councils Statutory Planning Pilot program is underway and will service the human resource needs of Country Councils through selected trials.
- The Council Members Guide to Planning is being revised by the LGA and Planning SA

2.4 Public Consultation

- Section 30 Review Guide update and PAR Guide update that are being finalised include a section on public consultation above the statutory minimum.