8 REPORTS DIRECT TO COUNCIL

8.1 PLANNING SCHEME REVIEW AND PREPARATION OF A NEW PLANNING SCHEME

File No:	Council meeting	S

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to:

- present to Council the findings from a review of the current planning scheme, including recommendations arising from this review and
- seek a resolution from Council to make a new planning scheme under the *Planning Act* 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme 2014 (the planning scheme) took effect on 21 May 2014 and has been in operation for over six and a half years.

Under the *Planning Act 2016*, Council is required to review its planning scheme within 10 years of it taking effect and decide, based on that review, whether to amend or replace the planning scheme. In addition, the current Corporate Plan 2020-2024 states that Council will commence development of the region's next planning scheme, which is intended to be in place by 2024.

As an initial step towards preparation of a new planning scheme, a Review of the current planning scheme has been undertaken to examine its efficiency and effectiveness as a regulatory instrument and consider whether it accords with community expectations, current legislation, State planning instruments and Council's adopted vision and strategies. Details of the Review are contained in **Attachment 1** (**Planning Scheme Review Report**).

While the Review has found that the current planning scheme compares favourably to other contemporary planning schemes in Queensland, and has been generally successful in its operation to date, a number of significant influences are emerging which require the current planning and policy framework to be revised and updated, including:

- state and regional planning horizons have shifted to 2041 and beyond (noting the current planning scheme has a planning horizon to 2031)
- there is a need to improve and strengthen alignment with recent State, regional and local planning policy changes
- mapping needs to be updated to better reflect physical and environmental constraints, infrastructure projects, the State Planning Policy (SPP) and South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017 (SEQRP) and
- there are opportunities to improve useability, accessibility and user experience through new technological delivery platforms (fully electronic planning scheme).

On balance, based on the findings of the Review, it is recommended that the current planning scheme be replaced with a new planning scheme.

To formally commence preparation of a new planning scheme, Council must first propose to make a planning scheme under the *Planning Act 2016*. According to this Act, a planning scheme must:

- identify strategic outcomes for the local government area to which the planning scheme applies (typically included in the planning scheme's strategic framework)
- include measures that facilitate the achievement of the strategic outcomes and
- coordinate and integrate the matters dealt with by the planning scheme, including State and regional aspects of the matters.

To support preparation of a new planning scheme, a Project Plan (**Attachment 2**) and Proposed Community Engagement Approach (**Attachment 3**) have been prepared.

A range of key inputs will guide and inform preparation of a new planning scheme. Some of these inputs are contained in existing plans and strategies (e.g. SEQRP and the Environment and Livability Strategy), and other inputs will emerge from processes that are currently underway (e.g. the Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Project business case process) or are yet to commence. The timing of the new planning scheme and the direction that it takes will be heavily influenced by these inputs.

Apart from some mandatory elements specified in State planning legislation, such as standardised zones and definitions, the format and structure of the new planning scheme will largely be open for Council to determine. However, a structure similar to the current planning scheme is suggested. In addition, to help guide preparation of the new planning scheme, a set of preliminary drafting and planning principles has been identified.

From start to finish, the plan-making process is anticipated to take in the order of three to four years to complete (noting that the timing of certain steps in the process, such as state interest reviews, are not within Council's control).

If Council proposes to make a new planning scheme, the next step will be to seek a notice from the State Planning Department setting out the plan-making process to be followed.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- (a) receive and note the report titled "Planning Scheme Review and Preparation of a New Planning Scheme"
- (b) based on a review of the current planning scheme, decide to replace the planning scheme
- (c) propose to make a new planning scheme under section 18 of the *Planning Act* 2016 and
- (d) delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to prepare and progress the proposed planning scheme under the *Planning Act 2016* and *Minister's Guidelines and Rules*.

FINANCE AND RESOURCING

If Council formally resolves to prepare a new planning scheme, adequate resourcing will be crucial to ensure timeliness and quality of outputs and overall project success.

The New Planning Scheme Project will be a multi-year project that is anticipated to be delivered over four (4) financial years. To this end, a budget briefing paper for the Project

was approved as part of the 2020/21 budget process, covering the period until 30 June 2024. In order to commence the New Planning Scheme Project in the second half of this financial year, funding for human and financial resources has been allocated within the 2020/21 Strategic Planning Branch budget.

It is proposed that the new planning scheme project will be managed "in-house" by a core project team within the Strategic Planning Branch, in partnership with a range of internal and external subject matter experts.

While there will be a pivot of resources within the Strategic Planning Branch to focus on the new planning scheme project, there will continue to be a need to administer the amendment program for the existing planning scheme. This work will be undertaken within existing 2020/21 budget resources allocated to the Strategic Planning Branch and is intended to progressively diminish in future financial years as the commencement of a new planning scheme draws nearer.

CORPORATE PLAN

Corporate Plan Goal: A healthy environment

Outcome: 2.1 - A resilient region shaped by clever planning and good design

Operational Activity: 2.1.6 - A performance review of the existing planning scheme will

be undertaken, background planning studies prepared and a

community reference group established.

CONSULTATION

Councillor Consultation

The future direction for the review of the current planning scheme and preparation of a new planning scheme was discussed with Councillors at a workshop held on 8 October 2020.

Internal Consultation

No internal consultation has been undertaken specifically in relation to this report. However, as part of the planning scheme review process, internal consultation has occurred with various branches including:

- Development Services Branch
- Urban Growth Projects Branch
- Economic Development Branch
- Community Planning and Development
- Environment and Sustainability Policy Branch
- Design and Placemaking Services Branch
- Transport and Infrastructure Planning Branch

The main purpose of this consultation was to seek feedback on the operational performance and effectiveness of the current planning scheme and obtain up to date information and advice about adopted and proposed strategies that would inform preparation of a new planning scheme.

In addition, on 11 December 2020, a briefing was provided to the Executive Leadership Team on the development of the new planning scheme.

External Consultation

No external consultation has been undertaken in relation to this report. However, as part of the planning scheme review process, targeted external consultation was conducted with some locally-based planning consultants to obtain feedback on the operational performance of the current planning scheme from a practitioner's perspective.

Community Engagement

No community engagement has been undertaken in relation to this report. However, a review of the results of previous consultation processes conducted for other recent strategy projects has been undertaken and has informed this report. If Council formally resolves to prepare a new planning scheme, community engagement will be a core element of the plan-making process.

In this regard, a Community Engagement Strategy will be prepared to ensure that communications and engagement activities across all stages of the project successfully support the preparation of the new planning scheme and meet the expectations of the community and project stakeholders. A Proposed Community Engagement Approach document (Attachment 3) has been prepared to outline the key elements of a Community Engagement Strategy.

If Council decides to prepare a new planning scheme, it is intended that a Community Reference Group will be established to help shape and inform the community engagement that is undertaken for this and other related planning projects.

PROPOSAL

This report presents to Council the outcomes from a review of the current planning scheme and, based on the findings of that review, recommends that the current planning scheme be replaced. The report also seeks a resolution from Council to propose a new planning scheme.

Background

The Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme 2014 (the planning scheme) took effect on 21 May 2014 and has been in operation for over six and a half years. During this time, the planning scheme has been subject to a number of amendments as part of Council's ongoing planning scheme amendment program to ensure that it has been kept up to date and has continued to operate efficiently and effectively.

Under the *Planning Act 2016*, Council is required to review its planning scheme within 10 years of it taking effect and decide, based on that review, whether to amend or replace the planning scheme. In addition, the current Corporate Plan 2020-2024 states that Council will commence development of the region's next planning scheme, which is intended to be in place by 2024.

Planning scheme review

Given this background, early last year, the Strategic Planning Branch initiated a Planning Scheme Review Project (the Review) with the following purpose:

To ensure the regulation of land use and development on the Sunshine Coast remains up to date, effective and efficient, and in accordance with Council's adopted vision and strategies.

In particular, the Review has examined the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning scheme as a regulatory instrument, and whether it accords with community expectations, current legislation and Council's adopted vision and strategies.

The scope of the Review has included:

- primarily a technical, internally focused review of the operational effectiveness of the current planning scheme, including consultation with key users
- a review of the current and emerging policy environment relevant to land use planning, particularly at the State, regional and local levels

- an audit of mapping/data, development outcomes and legal proceedings
- a review of community and industry feedback from consultation on recent Council strategies and projects and
- identification of information gaps, key findings and recommendations.

While the Review has found that the current planning scheme compares favourably to other contemporary planning schemes in Queensland, and has been generally successful in its operation to date, a number of significant influences are emerging which require the current planning and policy framework to be revised and updated, including:

- state and regional planning horizons have shifted to 2041 and beyond (noting the current planning scheme has a planning horizon to 2031)
- there is a need to improve and strengthen alignment with recent State, regional and local planning policy changes
- mapping needs to be updated to better reflect physical and environmental constraints, infrastructure projects, the State Planning Policy and South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017 and
- there are opportunities to improve useability, accessibility and user experience through new technological delivery platforms (fully electronic planning scheme).

While these matters could be addressed through one or more further amendments to the current planning scheme, on balance, based on the findings of the Review, it is recommended that the current planning scheme be replaced with a new planning scheme.

Preparation of a new planning scheme

To formally commence preparation of a new planning scheme, Council must first propose to make a planning scheme under the *Planning Act 2016*.

A planning scheme is a statutory planning instrument made by a local government to manage land use and development within the local government area. According to the *Planning Act 2016*, a planning scheme must:

- identify strategic outcomes for the local government area to which the planning scheme applies (typically included in the planning scheme's strategic framework)
- include measures that facilitate the achievement of the strategic outcomes and
- coordinate and integrate the matters dealt with by the planning scheme, including State and regional aspects of the matters.

The practical effect of dot point three above is that, in addition to addressing matters of interest to the local government, a planning scheme must also incorporate and be aligned with state and regional interests as expressed in the State Planning Policy (SPP) and the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017 (SEQRP 2017).

For the Sunshine Coast context, it is also important to note that a new planning scheme will not apply to all parts of the local government area. As is the case with the current planning scheme, the Maroochydore City Centre and Caloundra South Priority Development Areas (PDAs) will continue to be subject to their own development schemes under the *Economic Development Act 2012*. Similarly, in the event that the Beerwah East Major Development Area (MDA) is made available for urban development, it may also be declared as a PDA and therefore not be subject to the planning scheme. In addition, the undeveloped parts of Kawana Waters subject to a development agreement will continue to be subject to Development Control Plan 1 Kawana Waters.

Planning scheme content and structure

While it is largely open to a local government to determine the content of its planning scheme, there is some mandatory content specified under the *Planning Act 2016* and

subordinate legislation. In particular, the *Planning Regulation 2017* includes 'regulated requirements' for the contents of planning schemes in Queensland. These regulated requirements include standardised:

- zone names, zone purpose statements and zone colours
- land use terms and definitions and
- administrative terms and definitions.

Beyond these regulated requirements, there is no mandatory structure or format for drafting a planning scheme under the *Planning Act 2016*. However, it will be important to ensure that the structure of a new planning scheme is efficient, logical and easy to navigate.

Contemporary planning schemes for major local government areas have a structure that typically includes the following:

- **Introduction** includes preliminary content on the purpose, structure and interpretation of the planning scheme.
- **Strategic framework** identifies the strategic outcomes and policy directions for the planning scheme area, supported by mapping.
- Tables of assessment identify the levels of assessment for development (i.e. accepted development, code assessable development and impact assessable development) and the assessment benchmarks (i.e. codes) that development must be assessed against.
- **Zone maps** allocate land use zones to all premises within the planning scheme area.
- **Overlay maps** identify physical, environmental or other elements that may constrain or otherwise influence development outcomes.
- **Local plan areas** divides the planning scheme area into discrete local plan areas for the purposes of finer-grain planning.
- Assessment benchmarks criteria that development must be assessed against, typically in the form of codes (e.g. zone codes, local plan codes, overlay codes, use codes and other development codes).
- Local government infrastructure plan (LGIP) an LGIP is that part of a planning scheme that identifies the local government plans for trunk infrastructure that are necessary to service urban development at the desired standard of service (DSS) in a coordinated, efficient and financially sustainable manner.
- **Definitions** includes land use and administrative definitions that assist in the interpretation and operation of the planning scheme.
- Schedules that accommodate technical and other supporting information.
- **Planning scheme policies** separate local planning instruments that support the planning scheme by providing advice and guidance material.

It is also noted that the above structure is similar to that adopted in the current planning scheme. As part of the Review, feedback from internal and external users indicated that the structure of the current planning scheme was logical and easy to navigate.

Therefore, the structure outlined above (or a variant to this) is considered to provide a sound basis upon which to prepare a new planning scheme for the Sunshine Coast.

Key inputs

A range of key inputs will guide and inform the preparation of a new planning scheme. Some of these inputs are contained in existing plans and strategies, and other inputs will emerge from processes that are currently underway or are yet to commence. The timing of the new

planning scheme and the direction that it takes will be heavily influenced by these related processes.

Key inputs for a new planning scheme are summarised in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Key inputs

Existing plans and	Work currently underway	Further work/investigation
strategies		required
 State Planning Policy 2017 (including associated mapping) South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017 Corporate Plan 2020- 2024 (currently under review) Council's regional strategies (REDs, ELS, Community Strategy, Integrated Transport Strategy) 	 Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Options Analysis Coastal hazards / climate change impacts as part of the Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy (CHAS) project Flooding and stormwater (e.g. new flood hazard mapping based on hydraulic risk) Biodiversity, waterways and wetlands mapping Planning for the Beerwah East MDA Planning for Maroochydore City Centre surrounds Planning for Sunshine Coast Airport and surrounds Planning for strategic greenspaces, including the Blue Heart and Lower Mooloolah Floodplain 	 Design provisions, especially for multi-unit residential and mixed use development Emerging uses/issues such as microbreweries, secondary dwellings and short-term accommodation (e.g. AirBnB) Planning for Palmview structure plan area Centres and employment planning Scenic amenity, views, landscape character, local character Housing needs assessment Natural hazard risk assessments (SPP requirement) Implications of transport and mobility trends Review of local extractive resources Consideration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and interests e-Planning approach

The most significant input for the new planning scheme is the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017 (SEQRP). The SEQRP indicates that of the 87,000 dwellings needed to accommodate the forecast population growth of the Sunshine Coast to 2041, 53,700 (or 62%) are to be delivered by way of consolidation and 33,700 (or 38%) are to be delivered by way of expansion.

The business case process for Sunshine Coast Mass Transit (SCMT) and, in particular, the community engagement program for the SCMT *Options Analysis*, will consider the options for land use change in locations close to the potential mass transit service.

However, irrespective of the outcomes of the SCMT *Options Analysis* process, the new planning scheme will need to have an increased focus on urban consolidation (and in particular consolidation done well and at the right locations) as opposed to continued urban expansion. A greater emphasis on urban consolidation also aligns with the growth management principles set out in Council's Environment and Liveability Strategy.

The SEQRP notes that "Regional plans are reviewed generally every five to seven years. On this basis, a review of Shaping SEQ would see a new plan delivered sometime between

2022 and 2024." Accordingly, it is anticipated that a new SEQ Regional Plan is likely to be delivered in either draft and/or final form during the project timeframe for the preparation of a new planning scheme, which may have implications for its delivery.

Consultation and engagement

To ensure project success, consultation and engagement will be a key component to the preparation of a new planning scheme.

In terms of statutory consultation requirements, there is a minimum 40 business day public consultation period for a proposed planning scheme under the *Planning Act 2016*. In addition, Council is required to prepare and submit, to the State Planning Department, a 'Communications Strategy' for the proposed planning scheme.

In addition to these statutory requirements, it is proposed to undertake meaningful consultation and engagement to ensure that consultation activities across all stages of the project successfully support the preparation of the new planning scheme and meet expectations of the community and project stakeholders. This is intended to include the following initiatives:

- Formation of a Community Reference Group (CRG) in the early stages of the project to help shape the communications and engagement that is undertaken for the new planning scheme and other related planning projects.
- Preparation of a Community Engagement Strategy in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Framework and the State's Community Engagement Toolkit for Planning. As a starting point, a Proposed Community Engagement Approach (Attachment 3) has been prepared.
- Preliminary (non-statutory) public consultation on the proposed policy directions for the new planning scheme.
- The development and alignment of key messaging in coordination with other major Council strategies and projects (e.g. the next Corporate Plan, Mass Transit Project, and Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy).
- Preparation and implementation of technology-based engagement tools (e.g. on-line tools and interactive websites).
- Development of project branding and preparation of media and promotional material to support community engagement activities and correspondence.
- The formation of internal technical working groups and external reference groups to provide technical input and feedback on new planning scheme content.

Preliminary drafting principles

By their nature and the role they need to perform, planning schemes tend to be large and relatively complex documents. From the outset, it is therefore important to identify a set of drafting principles to help guide the drafting process for a new planning scheme.

In this regard, the State Planning Department has released a number of guidance documents for drafting and amending planning schemes, most notably '*Drafting a planning scheme – Guidance for local governments*', dated June 2020. Having regard to this guidance material and based on previous plan-making knowledge and experience, the preliminary drafting principles in **Table 2** below have been identified for a new planning scheme:

Table 2: Preliminary drafting principles

Drafting principle	Element
Strong and clear	Elevate important policy positions to provide strong heads of
policy framework	power
	Ensure clear line of sight from vision through strategic
	outcomes to code provisions
	Provide clear and concise outcomes
	Address emerging trends, uses and issues
Risk tolerant and	Avoid unnecessary regulation
risk aware	Lowest level of assessment possible for low risk development
	Improve alignment with community expectations for higher risk
	development
Balanced approach	Provide certainty where outcomes are non-negotiable or
to certainty and	where it assists efficiency
flexibility	Be fair and practical and avoid undue rigidity
	Allow for changing social and economic circumstances which
	may lead to new types of development
	Consider potential unintended consequences
Effective and	Provide clear and objective outcomes
defendable	Ensure internal consistency
	Minimise complexity, duplication, and layers
	Pre-empt likely development-related risks and challenges
	Ensure vertical and horizontal alignment

Preliminary planning principles

Having regard to the findings from the Planning Scheme Review and Council's adopted policy positions and strategies, the following preliminary planning principles have been identified for a new planning scheme:

- Retain strong and clearly defined growth management boundaries.
- Promote a compact, transit-supportive and sustainable pattern of settlement.
- Provide for vibrant, compact centres as a focus for economic and social activity and protection of the Sunshine Coast activity centre network.
- Encourage economic diversification and leverage investments in key infrastructure and region shaping projects.
- Maintain a strong position on building height as a key feature distinguishing the Sunshine Coast from other metropolitan regions in SEQ.
- Promote Sunshine Coast Design principles.
- Prioritise high quality urban landscaping, deep planting and walkable, leafy streets.
- Increase focus on the design of multi-unit residential and mixed use development.
- Recognise the distinct character and identity of individual communities.
- Maintain a focus on local planning (i.e. retention of local plans as a key concept and building block for the planning scheme).
- Protect biodiversity, landscape character and scenic amenity.
- Protect the ongoing viability of natural economic resources (e.g. agricultural land, forestry, fisheries and extractive resources).
- Encourage appropriate value adding rural enterprises.
- Avoid constrained or high hazard areas and improve resilience in existing areas.

Adapt to a changing climate.

As part of preliminary community consultation for a new planning scheme, it is intended that community feedback will be sought to confirm the planning principles/strategic directions for the new planning scheme.

Ultimately, these planning principles/strategic directions would be reflected in the Strategic Framework (or strategic plan) of the new planning scheme. The Strategic Framework sets the policy direction for the planning scheme area and forms the basis for ensuring appropriate development occurs within the area. Having regard to these principles and Council's vision for the Sunshine Coast, the following potential themes for the Strategic Framework have been identified at this early stage:

- Shaping sustainable growth
- A smart economy
- A healthy and resilient region
- A creative community of communities and
- Connected people and places.

Plan-making process and indicative timeframes

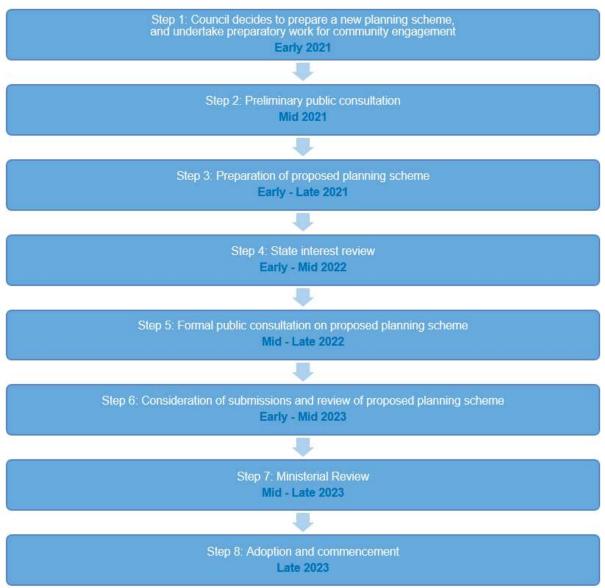
The process for preparing a new planning scheme is governed by the *Planning Act 2016* (the Act) and the *Minister's Guidelines and Rules* (MGR). At the outset, the State Planning Department will provide Council with a notice about the process for making a planning scheme in accordance with section 18 of the Act.

It is anticipated that the plan-making process for the new planning scheme will involve the main steps outlined in **Figure 1** below. Indicative timeframes for these various steps are also shown (noting these timeframes are ambitious and do not allow for any contingency or dependent project delay).

From start to finish, the plan-making process is anticipated to take in the order of three to four years to complete (noting that the timing of certain steps in the process, such as state interest reviews, are not within Council's control).

To provide a project management framework for the preparation and delivery of a new planning scheme, a Project Plan has been prepared (refer to **Attachment 2**). The Project Plan outlines the scope of the Project, the proposed work program, governance arrangements, anticipated resourcing requirements and other key project management aspects.

Figure 1 – Plan-making process and indicative timeframes



Legal

No legal advice has been sought in the preparation of this report.

The *Planning Act 2016* and the *Minister's Guidelines and Rules* sets out the statutory process that a local government must follow when making a planning scheme. Where necessary, legal advice will be sought during the plan-making process to ensure compliance with these statutory requirements and to verify that the planning scheme is legally robust.

Policy

A planning scheme is a local planning instrument that seeks to integrate state, regional and local planning interests. State and regional planning interests are expressed in the following State planning instruments:

- State Planning Policy (July 2017) and
- South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017.

As part of plan-making process (principally at the State interest review stages), the Planning Minister will need to be satisfied that the proposed planning scheme appropriately integrates relevant State and regional planning interests as expressed in the above planning instruments.

At the local level, the proposed planning scheme will seek to integrate the strategic policy directions (as relevant to land use planning and development) contained in the following higher order Council plans and strategies:

- Corporate Plan
- Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017
- Regional Economic Development Strategy 2013-2033
- Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019-2041 and
- Integrated Transport Strategy 2018.

Risk

Preparation of a new planning scheme is a significant and complex undertaking and has inherent risks, particularly for a diverse and dynamic region such as the Sunshine Coast. In this regard, section 5.4 of the Project Plan (**Attachment 2**) has considered the risk profile for preparation of a new planning scheme.

Overall, the preparation of a new planning scheme has been assessed as having a "moderate" level of risk. The risk assessment has identified a range of strategies to ensure that the identified risks are mitigated as far as practicable.

Previous Council Resolution

There is no previous Council resolution relevant to this report.

Related Documentation

Planning Act 2016

Minister's Guidelines and Rules

Critical Dates

Council's current Corporate Plan 2020-2024 states that Council will commence development of the region's next planning scheme, which is intended to be in place by 2024.

Preparation of a new planning scheme is a significant undertaking for a local government that typically takes several years to complete. Therefore, in order to meet the timeframe stated in the Corporate Plan, it is imperative that a formal Council resolution to prepare a new planning scheme is obtained as soon as practicable.

Implementation

Should the recommendation be accepted by Council, it is noted that the Chief Executive Officer will need to give notice of the proposed planning scheme to the State Planning Department under section 18 of the *Planning Act 2016*.

The State Planning Department will then give Council a notice about the process for making the planning scheme which must include, as a minimum, the following:

 the local government must publish at least one public notice about the proposal to make the planning scheme

- the local government must keep the proposed planning scheme available for inspection and purchase for a period of at least 40 business days after the day the public notice is published in a newspaper circulating in the local government area
- the public notice must state that any person may make a submission about the proposed planning scheme to the local government during the consultation period
- a communications strategy that the local government must implement about the proposed planning scheme
- the local government must consider all properly made submissions about the planning scheme
- the local government must notify persons who made properly made submissions about how the local government dealt with the submissions
- the local government must give the Minister a notice containing a summary of the matters raised in the properly made submissions and stating how the local government dealt with the matters and
- after the planning scheme is made, the local government must publish a public notice about making the planning scheme.

Council must make the planning scheme by following the process set out in the notice from the State Planning Department.