



PRECINCT SYSTEM POLICY

Policy Owner: Director City Strategy

Category: 5. Our Civic Leadership

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 1.1 The North Sydney Precinct System, whilst under the auspices of North Sydney Council, is independent from the Council in its activities and decision-making.
- 1.2 Precinct Committees encourage resident involvement in Council decisions; enhance community awareness and social interaction; generate consultative information, ideas and opinions; support Council's inter-governmental and related dealings; imbue planning programs and policies with a physical, social and historic insight; and facilitate resident-initiated expenditure on care of public land.

2. ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all Councillors and staff and all members of the public organising and participating in Precinct Committee meetings.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Precinct - describes a physical area within the Council boundaries, with borders defined by factors including physical geography, demographics, built form and land use.
- 3.2 Committee - describes the gathering of community representatives from within a Precinct area (including residents, workers, students and property owners) who meet formally to discuss local issues and raise them with Council. Students 15 years and over are eligible to vote. Precinct Committees are recognised by North Sydney Council as representative bodies for the purpose of consultation with the community.

4. PROVISIONS

- 4.1 Notice and Conduct - Committee meetings will be held at a designated time and place, to be advised broadly in the area, and conducted according to the *Code of Conduct - Standards for Precinct Office Bearers and Members*.

Any meeting of the Committee outside the predetermined annual meeting schedule must be broadly advertised throughout the precinct area at least two weeks prior to the meeting. Council must also be notified of the meeting prior to its being held.

- 4.2 Qualification and Voting - voting eligibility requires a person to be a resident or property owner living in the precinct; an owner or employee of an organisation in the precinct; or a student who regularly attends an institution in the Precinct. Hence, all residents, workers, property owners and students will be afforded the opportunity to attend, participate and vote at Committee meetings.

Office Bearers must live, work, study or own property within the precinct where they hold office. Tenure of office will not exceed four consecutive years.

Office Bearers should not be members of the same immediate family, including in de-facto relationships, residing in the same place of residence/household. In the event that executive positions of Chair and/or Secretary cannot be filled at an Annual General Meeting (AGM), a member of the same family as that of a filled Office Bearer position may temporarily assume an executive position for up to 12 months. After such time the position must be declared vacant and readvertised.

- 4.3 Size and Boundaries - each Precinct area should be small enough to retain a local character, with all parts being within reasonable walking distance.

Local stakeholders (including residents, workers, property owners and students), Council staff and/or Councillors may propose boundary alterations. Council's Community Engagement Coordinator will consider recommendations and will consult with the community before making final recommendations to Council to adopt the changes. Precinct boundaries may be viewed on Council's website.

- 4.4 Terms of Reference - Committees may consider without limitation, all:

- a) Council's annual budget
- b) Council policies
- c) Development applications
- d) Parks use proposals
- e) Plans of Management
- f) Road closures and traffic management proposals
- g) Zoning proposals; and
- h) Any other matters deemed to be of interest or relevance by participants.

Committees may also discuss and pursue as appropriate, issues of interest or relevance beyond the sphere of local government.

- 4.5 Financial Support from Council - Council will allocate an agreed sum to each Committee to cover the administrative costs of the Committee's business. Refer to the *Precinct System Guidelines* regarding administration of financial support.

4.6 Sponsorship - Council supports corporate sponsorship with organisations whose public image, products and services are consistent with its values, goals and specific policies. As per Council's *Corporate Sponsorship Policy*, acceptance of sponsorship should not influence but support the activities of the Precinct Committee. Refer to the *Code of Conduct - Standards for Precinct Office Bearers and Members* regarding acceptance of gifts and benefits. Local businesses from time to time may wish to provide sponsorship and this should not be discouraged by Precinct Office Bearers, however the Committee should be aware of the conflict of interest that could arise should the supplier have a formal matter coming before the Committee for consideration. Consideration of such matters should be minuted and recorded.

4.7 Annual General Meeting - each Committee will hold an AGM and advise by written notice, each household in the precinct of the date, time and location of this meeting, no later than two weeks before the meeting.

Committees are advised to use discretion when distributing flyers to letterboxes marked "no junk mail", and to respect anyone that advises they would not like to continue receiving Precinct related mail.

4.8 Recommendations (also known as motions or actions arising) - made by a Committee, that are referred to Council, must result from a formal committee resolution and be accompanied by a statement of voting numbers, including abstentions.

Recommendations or feedback on matters referred by Council for comment or action by Committees should be made within the specified time. They must also be discussed at a formally advertised meeting and result from a committee resolution accompanied by a statement of voting numbers, including abstentions.

4.9 Development Applications - Committees may discuss the current development applications and submit feedback during the advertised period. Committee submissions hold no more weight than an individual submission made by resident/s. Committee submissions will be assessed along with other submissions from the general public.

Council requires development applicants to submit an additional set of plans for the Precinct Committee where the development is proposed (and neighbouring Precinct Committees if the location is close to or on a boundary).

The plans are made available to the committee executive for 72 hours only and must be signed for with an undertaking that no copies will be made.

Applicants will be notified of and may attend the meeting(s) at which their proposal will be discussed. Council notices to owners affected by applications will include information on the referral to the Precinct Committee.

- 4.10 Compulsory Submission of Actions Arising and Attendance Records - each Committee will submit to Council, as soon as practicable after each meeting, minutes and/or a summary of actions arising (all resolutions), including the number voting for and against, that require a response from Council. Refer to the *Precinct System Guidelines* for more information.

Council will reply in writing to all requests arising from formal Committee meetings.

Each Committee must also submit to Council, as soon as practicable after each meeting, a record of meeting attendees present. Office Bearers will ensure attendance records are maintained in accordance with the *Code of Conduct - Standards for Precinct Office Bearers and Members* and *Privacy Management Plan*.

- 4.11 Councillor Attendance - Councillors, except those who live in the precinct area, may attend meetings only by invitation. There will be no standing invitations for councillor attendance.

5. RESPONSIBILITY/ACCOUNTABILITY

- 5.1 Council's Community Engagement Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all Committees are provided with sufficient information, resources and support to enable them to operate in accordance with this Policy.
- 5.2 Council staff, as required, are responsible for providing appropriate information about Council activities to Committees consistent with the role of the Precinct System and their relationship with Council. Staff are also responsible for providing appropriate and timely responses to Committees based on precinct enquiries and requests.
- 5.3 Office Bearers are responsible for ensuring that the conduct of Precinct Committee meetings and other activities are undertaken according with this Policy, the *Code of Conduct - Standards for Precinct Office Bearers and Members* and *Precinct System Guidelines*.

6. RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS/LEGISLATION

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

- Code of Conduct - Councillors and Staff
- Code of Conduct - Standards for Precinct Office Bearers and Members
- Corporate Sponsorship Policy
- Open Government Policy
- Precinct System Guidelines

- Privacy Management Plan

Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Resolution No.	Review Date
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2	21 November 2005	Council	1001	2007/08
3	30 June 2008	Council	422	2009/10
4	16 February 2009	Council	61	2012/13
5	18 February 2013	Council	61	2016/17
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