

Implementing and Monitoring your Strategy

This section provides guidance in developing an action plan to implement the housing strategy, describes some of the issues involved consulting among the public and various stakeholders, and recommends the continuous monitoring of the implementation process to ensure that feedback is received and the strategy is kept on course.

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Creating an Action Plan

As with all strategic approaches, a Local Housing Strategy should include an action plan that covers:

- key strategies
- prioritised actions and task lists
- targets (including timeframes) responsibilities
- resources available

To develop the action plan, you will need to clarify:

- What resources are available? What is the source of funding for aspects of the strategy? What staff resources or other support must be dedicated to implementing each action identified in the strategy?
- Who is responsible for what? Sometimes it is appropriate to identify a lead individual, section of council, or organisation, as well as those responsible for providing support.
- What is the timeframe for implementing actions under the strategy? When should key actions be commenced and completed? Do some actions take priority? Are some actions dependent on the outcomes of others?
- What mechanisms will ensure ongoing community involvement in implementing the strategy? How will you ensure ongoing collaborative relationships with other organisations, such as local housing providers or neighbouring councils?

The responsibility for delivering housing strategy goals within council can be a vexed question, usually because the issue is a shared interest of various elements of council rather than of narrow interest. As a consequence, Local Housing Strategies incorporate actions across a number of functional areas of council, particularly planning and community services.

In addition to identifying people responsible for each action, it is wise to identify a lead project officer, who will be responsible for overall coordination and monitoring of the strategy. This person may:

- maintain and update the data contained in your housing market analysis
- provide advice to planning staff on the potential impact of a particular development on the availability of, or need for, low-cost housing, and assist in the design of strategies to mitigate this impact. (It is helpful to have a formal protocol to identify development applications that may have significant housing implications.)
- establish and maintain contacts with external stakeholders, such as social housing providers, resident and tenant groups, and key developers
- gain input and support from interested councillors in developing and implementing key

aspects of the housing strategy, through periodic meetings, workshops, and regular briefing material

- provide regular advice to council about progress, including special briefings on any potentially controversial strategies or decisions.

One approach used by some councils in managing strategic issues is to establish a high level (that is, Director) interdepartmental group. An interdepartmental working party to look at mechanisms for the integration of a housing strategy with other management and planning processes could be a useful first step in developing the appropriate process for your council.

Many large-scale projects also have a “sponsor”, who has no day-to-day role in implementation, but who expresses organisational commitment to the project’s success, intervenes to smooth over sensitivities and any high-level difficulties should they occur, and who has sufficient standing to engage with other agencies, businesses or tiers of government at a senior level.

Action Plan Template

Strategy: <i>Example: Ensure sufficient supply of new housing development opportunities to 2021</i>						
	Priority	Action	Performance indicators	Lead Officer	Staff Resources	Completion date
1.	<i>High</i>	<i>Assess existing supply of serviced residential land, identify new housing opportunities and opportunities for rezoning for residential uses/higher residential density</i>	<i>New land released (hectares)</i>	<i>Manager Strategic Planning</i>		<i>December 2008</i>
2.						
3.						
4.						
Strategy: <i>(E.g.) Achieve greater housing diversity consistent with community needs</i>						
5.	<i>High</i>	<i>Change Local Environmental Plan to permit accessory dwellings in standard residential zones</i>	<i>Statutory approval</i>	<i>Manager Strategic Planning</i>		<i>December 2009 (within broader LEP review)</i>
6.						
7.						
8.						

Public Involvement

Monitoring your Housing Strategy

Monitoring the implementation of the housing strategy enables you to check that actions are being undertaken within the anticipated timeframe and to address any delays or implementation problems, such as poorly anticipated resource needs. It is also important to measure the effectiveness of these actions in addressing local housing needs.

Monitoring the strategy requires that you collect information about the way in which strategic actions are being carried out; and as far as possible, information about the impact of these actions.

The first type of information is fairly straightforward, and simply requires regular reporting on project outcomes, noting any barriers to implementation, the reasons for these barriers, and any mitigating steps that need to be taken to overcome these problems.

The second type of information can be more difficult to determine. General indicators of local housing trends (which you have identified during your housing study) should be updated regularly to help monitor the impact of the strategy, or to help prioritise certain actions or initiatives contained within it.

Each of the strategy objectives and actions you have identified should also have more specific indicators to monitor and evaluate the impact of the strategy.

Monitoring should be done on a regular basis, with a formal annual reporting process coordinated by the designated officer within Council. This coordination role will be particularly important where the housing strategy is not contained within a single document and is being implemented through various corporate processes.

Regardless of whether one individual or a group has the responsibility for implementation of the strategy, it is important to carry out regular, formal reporting on its progress. It is a good idea to incorporate reporting on your housing strategy outcomes with other regular reporting activities of council. For instance, you might indicate progress on housing initiatives within an “access and equity” section of your Annual Report, or in the relevant sections of your council management plan.

It is also important to establish a process for the formal review or evaluation of the strategy, preferably over a five-year period. Where the initial strategy is not a comprehensive one, earlier review (at say 12 months) is recommended to determine if its scope should be expanded.