

Engagement Outcome Report for Draft Land and Property Strategy and Policy (LAPS)

Summary

- **The draft LAPS** document was placed on extended public exhibition 6th February until 20th March 2019, including an extended 2 week period.
- **Views:** There were 622 views of the Your Say Inner West webpage. Additionally, letters were sent to all tenants informing them about the LAPS and the cost neutral benchmark.
- **Response:** There were 33 submissions received, 19 in support of the strategy and 14 not in support.
- **Themes of concern** that emerged: Unsatisfactory maintenance, Accommodation Grants, Cost neutrality benchmark and the impact of increasing rents, considerations of capital investment by tenant in lieu of rent, insecurity of tenant tenure by going through a competitive procurement process, benchmarking, controlling costs of hiring facilities from tenants, tenant governance and request for a transparent complaint process.

Background

The engagement invited public feedback on the draft Land and Property Strategy and Policy. The feedback received will be incorporated into the final strategy and policy which will be considered by Council for adoption.

Engagement Methods

Engagement was both online, through yoursay.innerwest.nsw.gov.au, and through direct mail contact with tenants.

Promotion

- Social media
- Direct email

Engagement outcomes

The key feedback themes and responses are identified below.

Stakeholder	Feedback	Response
Tenant	The property is not being maintained satisfactory.	The Strategy clarifies the responsibilities of council and tenants. The Asset Management Policy identifies that renewal works are priority to new/upgrade and council will fund 100% depreciation. There is a current backlog of 7.1% for buildings.
Tenant	Charging commercial rent and outgoings will make the business unviable.	The Accommodation Grants will provide Council support to NGO and Not for Profit businesses. This is reviewed on a case by case basis. See the Policy for the assessment criteria.
Tenant	The review of tenure through the competitive Expression of Interest and Request for Tender process will make the business insecure.	The regular review of tenants is to ensure that all community organisations have access to Council owned property, the Accommodation Grant Program and that the property continues to provide the highest and best community benefit into the future.
Tenant	The allocated benchmark is correct or incorrect.	Benchmarking has been updated where suitable. The benchmarking is a live tool that will be adjusted according to demonstration of utilisation, condition, capacity, cost neutrality.
Tenant	Capital investment to be considered in lieu of rent.	Lease agreements will consider past and planned capital investments.
User	Climate change to be considered.	Sustainable criteria are incorporated into the EOI/RFT process and lease agreement. Sustainable asset management will be incorporated into the Asset Management Plan e.g. provision of solar.
User	The community benefit will be reduced by charging commercial rents.	All competitive leasing processes consider criteria including community benefits, rent, sustainability, business plan, financial. The benchmark is across the portfolio not per building. A tenant can receive a 100% Accommodation Grant if it is suitable.

Tenant	There is a lack of strategic connection between the Community Strategic Plan and the LAPS.	The Strategy supports the Community Strategic Plan to deliver the outcomes as identified by the Community.
Tenant	The organisation has occupied the property for more than 20 years.	The heritage of the organisation service and location is considered in all reviews.
User	How will the LAPS improve tenant governance, ensure qualifications of tenants and process complaints transparently?	The new LAPS procedures and lease templates will require tenants to report on key performance indicators and have a transparent governance process.
User	What is the process for divestment of council assets?	Sale of land and assets is by council resolution only. The reason for sale and purpose for funds will be identified in the report with the proposed resolution. Properties may be reviewed for change of use (re-use) as opportunities arise in accordance with the scores on Capacity, Function and Utilisation and if there is a higher better use viable.
User	How do we control the cost to hire facilities that are tenants of council buildings?	The new LAPS procedures and lease templates will require tenants to report on key performance indicators and have a transparent governance process.
Various	Comments were all received that are considered outside scope including clarification of the LEP process, dog of leash park improvements, Callan Park masterplan.	