



Department of **Planning,
Lands and Heritage**

Region Scheme Amendments Pre-lodgement Advice Requests

Guidance Document

November 2021

1. Overview

The Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) has committed to preparing new tools and processes to provide consistent and useful advice for proponents and users of the planning system on matters involving the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (the Department). This change is consistent with the State Government's agenda for reform of the planning system.

A key component of the change is the provision of a pre-lodgement advice process for Region Scheme amendments to assist with the early identification and resolution of issues. This advice will be facilitated through the preparation of a Region Scheme Amendment Assessment Sheet by officers of the Department, to identify any key matters that proponents should consider during the preparation of the formal Metropolitan Region Scheme, Peel Region Scheme or Greater Bunbury Region Scheme Amendment documentation for future consideration by the WAPC.

This guidance document:

- outlines the information requirements and process for proponents in obtaining pre-lodgement advice;
- provides guidance to officers on how to prepare the content of an Assessment Sheet; and
- establishes a clear expectation regarding the manner and form of the pre-lodgement advice.

2. Information Requirements and Process

2.1. Request Submitted

- The request for pre-lodgement advice should consist of a covering letter, and a summary or overview of the proposal. It is not expected that the full scheme amendment documentation will be provided at this preliminary stage.
- The request can either be posted in hard copy to one of the following addresses

For potential Metropolitan Region Scheme or Peel Region Scheme amendments:

Schemes and Amendments
Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage
Locked Bag 2506
Perth WA 6001

For potential Greater Bunbury Region Scheme amendments:

Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage
6th Floor Bunbury Tower
61 Victoria Street
Bunbury WA 6230

OR

Submitted electronically to info@dplh.wa.gov.au with the one of the following subject lines, depending on the applicable Region Scheme:

Potential Metropolitan Region Scheme Amendment – Request for Pre-lodgement Advice
Potential Peel Region Scheme Amendment – Request for Pre-lodgement Advice
Potential Greater Bunbury Region Scheme Amendment – Request for Pre-lodgement Advice

2.2. Referrals

- Referrals will be undertaken with key stakeholders (eg. state agencies, servicing authorities) by the assessing officer for a period of 28 days.
- During this time, the assessing officer will commence a preliminary assessment of the proposal.
- Copies of the referral advice will be provided by the assessing officer to the proponent as it is received.

2.3. Assessment

- The preliminary assessment will be finalised by the assessing officer and the Assessment Sheet will be completed.
- Assessment sheet to be signed off internally.

2.4. WAPC Consideration

- Item scheduled for WAPC meeting for information purposes and preliminary discussion only.
- Proponent advised of meeting date and provided with the opportunity to present to the WAPC.
- The key matters coversheet will be provided to the proponent by Commission Support ahead of the meeting so that parties who wish to make a **presentation** can make better use of their time and that of the WAPC.
- Assessment sheet distributed with, but **does not form part of**, the WAPC agenda.
- Assessing officer briefs Commission members at the WAPC meeting.
- Item considered by the WAPC with a recommendation that the information be noted.

2.5. Advice Provided

- Assessing officer considers all matters, including WAPC discussion (if any), and updates written advice to the proponent (if required).
- Written advice signed by the relevant Planning Director, Land Use Planning and sent electronically to proponent with copies of all the referral advice that was received.
- Correspondence is saved on file for future reference.

3. How to prepare the Assessment Sheet content

The Assessment Sheet content is intended to be succinct and informative and to assist interested parties to quickly understand the key issues likely to be considered by the WAPC in its future decision making.

The Assessment Sheet is to address the following:

- Overview of the proposal.
- Summary of consultation.
 - Who was consulted and for how long.
 - Key matters raised through submissions.
- Key matters - discussion based on referral advice and internal assessment.
 - Copy of the draft written advice to the proponent is to be included as an attachment.

The information provided to a proponent/applicant via this process is advice only, does not constitute a formal decision of the WAPC, and does not fetter any future decisions by the WAPC or the Minister for Planning. Anyone is free to lodge a Region Scheme amendment request with the WAPC, supported by sufficient planning justification, for a decision on whether an amendment request should be initiated.

- Conclusion
- Officer recommendation

The information contained in the Assessment Sheet will be provided to a proponent by way of written advice to assist in the preparation of formal scheme amendment documentation.

Note: A formal decision or resolution of the WAPC **will not** be obtained as part of this process. The information is presented to the WAPC for noting only.

A copy of the Assessment Sheet template is included at **Appendix A** for reference.

3.1. Guidance for preparing the Assessment Sheet content

The following tips are provided to assist in preparing the Assessment Sheet content:

- Identify all the key matters that have been raised through the officer assessment and the referral process.
- Try to keep descriptions neutral. It may help by identifying the key matter as a question. For example, “Whether the proposal is consistent with the requirements/objectives/policy measures of State Planning Policy X”. The proponent/interested parties will know that they should answer address this question in their presentation.
- If there are no key matters (i.e. the proposal is straight-forward and entirely consistent with all requirements), then state that “the proposal is consistent with strategic objectives”.
- Endeavour to present the key matters clearly, succinctly and without repetition.

The Assessment Sheet should **preferably be confined to three pages** where possible.

3.2. Types of key matters

The types of issues and matters arising will vary for different proposals and may be more extensive than the examples below. Such key matters may include:

1. Consistency (or otherwise) with the State and/or local planning framework
2. Matters raised in referrals from stakeholders
3. Relevant (and potentially contentious or unresolved) technical matters (e.g. servicing, environment, traffic, bushfire etc.).

3.3 Assessment Sheet approval

The Assessment Sheet content, specifically the key matters, will form the basis of the written pre-lodgement advice to the proponent. The review and endorsement of the Assessment Sheet is to occur as part of the normal report review process by Managers and Directors and be confirmed during agenda setting.

Commission Support will distribute the Assessment Sheet to Commission members, but it **will not** form part of the published agenda.

The information provided to a proponent/applicant via this process is advice only, does not constitute a formal decision of the WAPC, and does not fetter any future decisions by the WAPC or the Minister for Planning. Anyone is free to lodge a Region Scheme amendment request with the WAPC, supported by sufficient planning justification, for a decision on whether an amendment request should be initiated.

Appendix A – Assessment Sheet template

Key Matters Coversheet



| | | | |
|---|--|--------------------|--|
| REPORT TO | Western Australian Planning Commission | | |
| Meeting date | | File number | |
| Subject | Metropolitan / Peel / Greater Bunbury (<i>DELETE AS APPLICABLE</i>) Region Scheme Amendment Pre-lodgement Advice Request – <i>INSERT ADDRESS</i> | | |
| KEY MATTERS IDENTIFIED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, LANDS AND HERITAGE | | | |
| <i>The key matters outlined below are those identified by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage through its preliminary assessment and does not fetter any future consideration of the proposal by the Western Australian Planning Commission or the Minister for Planning.</i> | | | |
| <i>This coversheet is always to be used for Region Scheme Amendment Pre-lodgement Advice Requests as the content of the Assessment Sheet is confidential. This coversheet will be provided to the proponent ahead of a WAPC meeting, so they are informed as to the relevant matters that have been identified through the officer assessment and referral process.</i> | | | |
| <i>The key matters identified here should reflect those that are detailed within the Assessment Sheet.</i> | | | |

Assessment Sheet



| | | | |
|--|---|--------------------|--|
| REPORT TO | Western Australian Planning Commission | | |
| Meeting date | | File number | |
| Subject | Metropolitan / Peel / Greater Bunbury (<i>DELETE AS APPLICABLE</i>) Region Scheme Amendment Pre-lodgement Advice Request – <i>INSERT ADDRESS</i> | | |
| Purpose | Information for WAPC | | |
| SITE-SPECIFIC DETAILS | | | |
| Local government/s | | | |
| Landowner/Consultant | <i>To allow WAPC and Committee members to identify and manage conflicts of interest issues, all proponents must be listed here, including names of any consultants.</i> | | |
| DETAILS OF PROPOSAL | | | |
| <i>This should be a short paragraph providing an overview of the proposal and any relevant background</i> | | | |
| Consultation | <i>(Summarise here in one paragraph – matters raised through consultation can be expanded on in the Key Matters section)</i> | | |
| KEY MATTERS IDENTIFIED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, LANDS AND HERITAGE | | | |
| <i>The key matters outlined below are those identified by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage through its preliminary assessment and does not fetter any future consideration of the proposal by the Western Australian Planning Commission or the Minister for Planning.</i> | | | |
| <i>List all key matters identified in preliminary assessment of proposal. Also include any key matters raised through the consultation process.</i> | | | |
| <i>Draft letter of advice to the proponent to be prepared and referred to in this section (eg. the above matters have been included within the draft letter of advice to the proponent included at Attachment.....).</i> | | | |
| CONCLUSION AND OFFICER RECOMMENDATION | | | |
| <i>Detail whether it is likely/unlikely to be recommended to the WAPC that a potential Region Scheme amendment request be initiated.</i> | | | |
| RECOMMENDATION | | | |
| That the Western Australian Planning Commission: | | | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. notes the above information; 2. notes the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage's draft letter of advice provided at Attachment..... | | | |
| ATTACHMENTS | | | |
| <i>List all of the attachments here including draft letter of advice to the proponent</i> | | | |

Three page maximum for entire assessment sheet

Appendix B – Context for Change

Green Paper

The *Modernising Western Australia’s Planning System: Green paper concepts for a strategically led system* (the Green Paper), released for public comment in May 2018, identified efficiency as one of four fundamental principles that should underpin the Western Australian planning system.

Whilst it considered the notion of applications in a broader context, the Green Paper noted at the time that a key driver behind efficiency is the ability for a planning system to facilitate increased cooperation between parties, and not to freeze discussion until there is a final determination. To encourage this, the Green Paper highlighted ‘Pre-lodgement cooperation’ as a key method to allow for the early identification of issues that must be addressed.

Action Plan for Planning Reform

Subsequent to the Green Paper process, the Minister for Planning released the State Government’s *Action Plan for Planning Reform* (the Action Plan) for the reform of the Western Australian planning system in August 2019. The Action Plan outlines the government’s vision and agenda for planning reform.

The Action Plan comprises of three overarching goals and 19 reform initiatives. Initiative C3 involves procedural changes to facilitate better planning outcomes, as follows:

New processes for pre-lodgement advice to assist with the early identification and resolution of issues, which are consistent, fair, open and beneficial.

One of the Early Actions of the Action Plan associated with Initiative C3 states that:

The DPLH will prepare new tools and processes to provide improved access and consistent and useful information and advice for proponents and users of the planning system on matters involving the Department. These include region scheme requests and amendments, local planning scheme matters, structure plans (and precinct plans as per the Design WA project) and subdivision proposals.