Frequently Asked Questions

Local Planning Scheme No. 8 & Local Planning Strategy Amendment 1

30 April 2025

# General

## What is a Local Planning Scheme?

A Local Planning Scheme (LPS) is the rulebook that guides what can be built where or how land can be used in your town. It includes the zoning laws that dictate where housing (residential), shops (commercial), industrial development or parks can go.

A LPS is used to assess development applications and ensure that growth aligns with broader planning goals, like sustainable development, and community needs.

## What is a Local Planning Strategy?

A local planning strategy is a big-picture plan to guide how your town will grow over time. It figures out where new housing or shops might go, follows rules from the state or region, and explains why certain areas are zoned for specific uses—like why one area is zoned for commercial development, and another is for residential development.

Unlike a LPS (which sets the actual rules), the strategy is more about vision and direction. It helps shape future updates to the LPS.

## Why is the Shire preparing a new Scheme?

The Shire aims to review its planning rules every 5 years to make sure they still work well for our community and meet state standards. The current LPS started back in 2004, and a lot has changed since then. In 2022, the Council decided it was time for a fresh update to match the latest state guidelines and support the needs of our growing towns.

## Why is the Shire amending its Local Planning Strategy?

The Shire is updating its Local Planning Strategy (Strategy), which is the big-picture plan for how our area will grow and change over time. Here’s why these changes are happening:

### To match the Council’s latest plans and decisions.

The Council has made decisions that affect the future of our area and new developments have occurred. The Strategy needs to reflect those updates, so everything works together.

### To use the latest information, like from the 2021 Census.

New data, such as how many people live here now or how the population has changed, helps make the Strategy more accurate and relevant.

### To meet changing community needs.

As populations grow, shrink, or change (e.g. more families, more retirees), the Strategy needs to reflect updated housing, business, industry, and service needs.

### To keep up with new state government rules.

The state government has updated its planning guidelines, and the Strategy needs to reflect those changes to stay on track.

### To work well with the new planning rules being proposed (LPS 8).

The Shire is drafting a new set of planning rules, and the Strategy needs to support them, so our plans are consistent.

These updates are important because they help the Shire make informed decisions about things like where to build new homes, businesses, or parks. By keeping the Strategy current, we can plan a future that meets the Ashburton community’s needs.

## How can I find out if the zoning and R-Code of my property is going to change?

To find out if the zoning and R-Code of your property will change under the new LPS, here’s what you can do:

### 1. Understand the Basics

Zoning and land use table: This determines what types of buildings or activities are allowed on your land, such as residential (homes), commercial (shops), or industrial (storage yards or depots).

R-Code: Short for Residential Design Code, this sets rules about how densely your area can be developed per hectare – for example an R-code of R20 means you could have up to 20 dwellings per hectare of land. The R-Codes also determine the type of dwelling suited to your land, such as single, grouped, and/or multiple dwellings.

The Residential Design Codes State Planning Policy document is a set of planning rules used in Western Australia to guide how residential buildings are designed and built. There are specific rules for different “R-codes” (e.g. R20 or R30).

### 2. Compare Current and Proposed Zoning Maps

The current Scheme text and zoning maps can be found by following the links on the following webpage:

<https://www.ashburton.wa.gov.au/services/development-your-property/planning/local-planning-scheme.aspx>

The proposed Scheme text and zoning maps can be found by following the links on the following webpage:

<https://www.ashburton.wa.gov.au/publicnotices/local-planning-scheme-no-8-available-for-inspection/355>

Within these maps, you can:

* See the current zoning and R-Code for your property (under the old scheme).
* Check the proposed zoning and R-Code (under the new scheme).

Simply find your property on the map and compare the current and proposed zoning to see if there are any changes.

Alternatively, you can view a physical copy of the map at the Shire office during business hours. You can even book an appointment to go over the changes with a Shire Town Planner during normal business hours.

### 3. Get Help if Needed

If you’re not sure how to read the map or have any questions, the Shire is happy to assist. You can:

* Call: 9188 4444
* Email: [townplanning@ashburton.wa.gov.au](mailto:townplanning@ashburton.wa.gov.au)
* Come along to the drop-in sessions:
  + Wednesday 28th May (Paraburdoo Lesser Hall),
  + Thursday 29th May (Tom Price Sports Pavillion)
  + Friday 30th May (Onslow RM Forest Hall)
  + From 4pm – 6pm for each town.

## What are the key differences between LPS 7 and LPS 8

The key differences between LPS 7 and LPS 8 include:

* An updated structure and format that aligns with the State Governments’ Model format;
* A consolidation of the number and type of zones and reserves
* Updates to the zoning table to better reflect current and emerging land use trends;
* Increases in the residential density coding of properties in Onslow, Tom Price and Paraburdoo; and
* Changes to some areas zoning to better reflect current and/ or future development.
* Updates to special control areas.
* Additional Urban and Industrial Development zones in Paraburdoo, Tom Price and Onslow.

## When will the new Local Planning Scheme take effect?

Local Planning Scheme No. 8 will take effect when it is published in the government gazette. This is expected to occur in the first quarter of 2026.

## What is an Urban Development zone?

An Urban Development Zone is land that’s been set aside for future growth - like places where homes, shops, schools, and parks will be built.

The zone is usually for empty or partly developed land. The area needs a structure plan (a detailed plan outlining the layout of infrastructure, land uses, and other key elements within the development zone) first to show where everything will go. After that, building and development can begin. It helps make sure new areas are well-planned and organised.

Think of it like planning out a new neighbourhood before anything is built.

The community will be consulted on any structure plans related to land zoned urban development.

## What is an Industrial Development zone?

The Industrial Development Zone, is much like the urban development zone, however, is aimed towards future industrial development. These areas also require a structure plan outlining the layout of infrastructure, land uses, and other key elements within the development zone.

## How much influence does a Local Planning Scheme have over mining proposals?

Nowadays, the process for approval of new mines and other resource-related developments typically requires some level of engagement or consultation with the affected local government. When that occurs, the LPS and Strategy provide a valuable framework for the Shire to assess and provide feedback on a proposal’s impact on Council’s preferred land use scenarios, strategic priorities, and key planning and development aspirations.

The table below summarises the role of the LPS and Strategy in relation to the four main Acts affecting use and development of land in the Shire of Ashburton.

| **Applicable Legislation** | **Role of the Local Planning Scheme & Strategy** |
| --- | --- |
| Mining Act 1978 | Guide the Shire’s response to Mining Tenement applications. |
| Land Administration Act 1997 (LAA) | Guide the Shire’s response to referrals for powers to be exercised under the LAA (Leases etc.) |
| Environmental Protection Act 1986 | Guide the Shire’s response to clearing permits, works/operation licence applications, public environmental reviews etc. |
| Government Agreements Act 1979 | Limited. State agreements typically take precedence over every other statutory instrument. |

## What is a Special Control Area?

A Special Control Area is used in a LPS to identify areas which are significant for a particular reason and where special provisions in the Scheme may need to apply. For example, there is a Special Control Area in Onslow to identify flood prone areas and areas subject to height restrictions and other controls around the Onslow airport.

## Are there any new Special Control Areas?

Yes, there is a new Special Control Area around the Pilbara Waste Recycling Facility that is earmarked for future expansion.

## The zoning of my property has changed, do I have to redevelop?

No, if LPS 8 proposes to change the zoning of your property, development or subdivision can only occur with the landowners’ permission.

## How is housing supply being addressed in the new Scheme?

The new LPS helps plan for future housing by allowing more homes to be built in a variety of ways across Onslow, Tom Price and Paraburdoo. It includes:

* Increasing housing density in many residential areas, so smaller lots and more compact homes (like villas and townhouses) can be built.
* Allowing higher-density housing near town centres and tourism areas, including up to three-storey developments with little or no street setbacks, to make the best use of central locations.
* Setting aside land for future residential growth, including areas where further planning is needed before homes can be developed.
* Adding R-Codes to some areas that didn’t have them before, to make the development rules clearer and more consistent.

These changes aim to support more housing choices, make better use of land, create housing for essential workers and help the towns grow in a planned and sustainable way.

## How is tourism and commercial development being addressed in the new Scheme?

In all towns, the new LPS sets aside enough land for tourism-related activities and land uses. This supports the Shire’s efforts to grow tourism and keeps the planning rules flexible to make it easier for tourism and commercial development to happen.

## How is industrial development being addressed in the new Scheme?

The new LPS introduces a ‘Service Commercial Zone’ in Onslow, Paraburdoo and Tom Price. This zone allows for a mix of lighter commercial, manufacturing, business and industrial uses.

An ‘Industrial Development Zone’ is also proposed in these towns. This zone will need more detailed planning before any subdivision or development can happen.

## How are environmental features being protected?

In Onslow, the new Scheme introduces a “Foreshore” reserve to help protect the coastline. Only a small number of land uses suited to this sensitive environment will be allowed.

In Tom Price, the current “Conservation, Recreation and Nature Landscape” reserve will be renamed “Environmental Conservation.”

In Paraburdoo, a new Special Control Area will also be created around the Paraburdoo Water Reserve (the town’s public drinking water source). Development in this area will need input from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.

# Process

## Who approves the Local Planning Scheme and Local Planning Strategy?

The Planning Minister is the final decision maker. The Shire of Ashburton Council will provide their recommendation to the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) for their consideration. The WAPC will review and provide their recommendation to the Planning Minister for their decision.

## Where can I get more information?

Further information is available on the Shire’s website and at administration buildings during office hours. If you have any questions at all, Shire staff are available to assist.

There will be drop-in information sessions held on:

* Wednesday 28th May (Paraburdoo Lesser Hall),
* Thursday 29th May (Tom Price Sports Pavillion)
* Friday 30th May (Onslow RM Forest Hall)
* From 4pm – 6pm for each town.

## How do I get answers to questions that aren’t on these FAQ’s?

Give us a call on 9188 4444 or send the Shire of Ashburton Town Planning team an email at [town.planning@ashburton.wa.gov.au](mailto:town.planning@ashburton.wa.gov.au) and we will happily provide more information or answer any questions. We will also continue to update the FAQ’s as required.

## How can I make a submission?

Submissions may be lodged via email to [townplanning@ashburton.wa.gov.au](mailto:townplanning@ashburton.wa.gov.au) or mail or hand deliver your submission to the Shire at Lot 246, Poinciana Street, Tom Price, Western Australia, 6751 or PO Box 567, Tom Price WA 6751. Submissions should include reference to the LPS (Local Planning Scheme 8) or the Strategy (Local Planning Strategy Amendment 1), the address of the person making the submission, the property affected and details of the submission and lodged on or before **Tuesday, 29 July 2025**.

## What should I say in my submission?

We are keen to hear your thoughts about the planning requirements for the Shire. Submissions should be clearly written and should specifically address issues relevant to the Local Planning Scheme, Local Planning Strategy, and/or planning matters within the Shire.

## What will happen with my feedback?

All submissions are acknowledged by the Shire on receipt. When the submission period closes, all submissions received are reviewed by the Shire and State Planners. The Shire will provide a summary of all submissions received, together with Officer comments, in report to Council following the end of the advertising period. All submissions must be considered by the Shire and modifications to the Scheme and or Strategy may be proposed to address the issues raised in the submissions.