

Item 1: Southern & Central Wānaka Structure Plan

SESSION TYPE: Briefing

PURPOSE/DESIRED OUTCOME:

The purpose of this briefing is for information and Q&A purposes only for the Wānaka-Upper Clutha Community Board, on the engagement approach for the Southern and Central Wānaka Structure Plan.

DATE/START TIME:

Thursday, 2 July 2026 at 10.30am

TIME BREAKDOWN:

Presentation: 30 mins

Questions: 15 mins

PRESENTERS:

Liz Simpson - Senior Strategic Planner

Campbell Guy - Policy Advisor

Prepared by:



Name: Liz Simpson

Title: Senior Strategic Planner

23 June 2026

Reviewed and Authorised by:



Name: Pennie Pearce

Title: General Manager, Strategy & Policy

24 June 2026

ATTACHMENTS:

A	Southern & Central Wānaka Structure Plan Presentation
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Southern and Central Wānaka

Structure Plan Process

Engagement Approach for Wānaka

Liz Simpson

Campbell Guy

What would we like from today?

Today we are seeking your input on:

- ✓ Feedback on the overall planning direction and engagement approach
- ✓ Any concerns before work progresses further

The Planning Process: Structure Plans



Role of Smart Growth Vs Full Council

Smart Growth Committee (delegated role)

Strategic oversight and guidance on growth, spatial planning and structure plans

Endorses approaches, frameworks and options before public engagement

Provides direction on trade-offs and matters to test through engagement

Receives updates and interim findings during plan development

Recommends draft and final Structure Plans to Full Council

Full Council (Non-delegated / reserved powers)

Adopts Structure Plans and associated strategic documents

Approves statutory consultation (e.g. plan changes, LGA consultation where required)

Makes final decisions on growth direction and outcomes

Confirms funding and implementation commitments (LTP / Annual Plan)

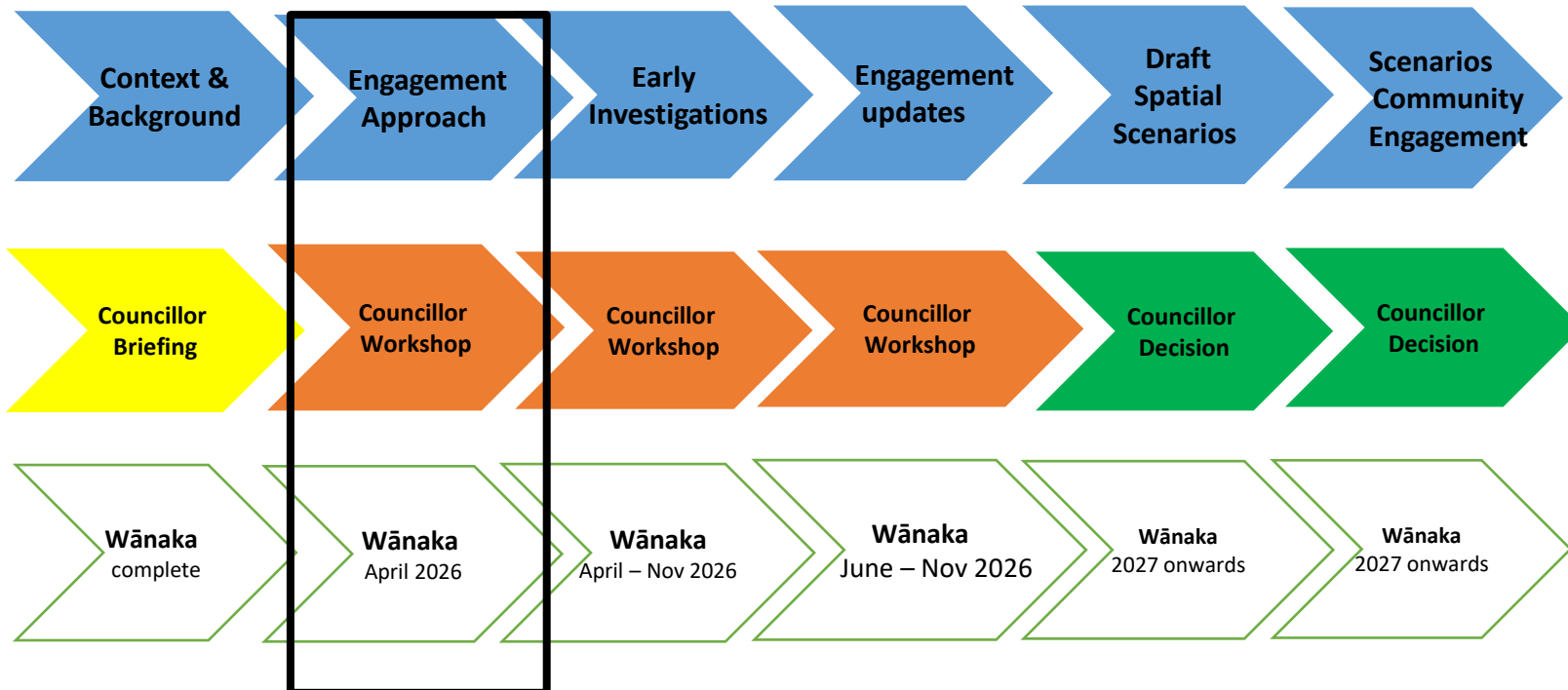
Accountable for decisions of district-wide significance

Southern and Central Structure Plans approach

Focus	Wānaka (Southern)	Wānaka (Central)	Areas of Influence
Area type & status	New greenfield , future urban area — predominantly rural	Priority Development Area — mostly established, recent Urban Intensification Variation	Surrounding urban and non-urban land
Role in the urban system	Long-term urban expansion for future housing and employment	Urban spine and major employment hub — Wānaka Town Centre and Three Parks	Wider system effects on land use, transport, open space and infrastructure
Land use & built form	Densities, land-use mix and built form still to be tested	Mix of high/medium-density housing , commercial, industrial and community uses	Key transport corridors, gateways and ecological connections
Growth capacity	Growth capacity, form and densities not yet fully settled	~ 2,000 dwellings by 2050 (2025); UIV lifts capacity — model being updated	Open space, waterways and constraints shaping capacity
Infrastructure & servicing	Higher uncertainty on infrastructure, transport and servicing	Established networks , with further intensification driven by the UIV	Infrastructure networks and constraints across the system
Structure Plan focus	Sets the future growth direction ; early, values-based engagement	Coordinates intensification with infrastructure and investment timing	System-wide view — avoids treating areas in isolation

Councillor Involvement: Wānaka

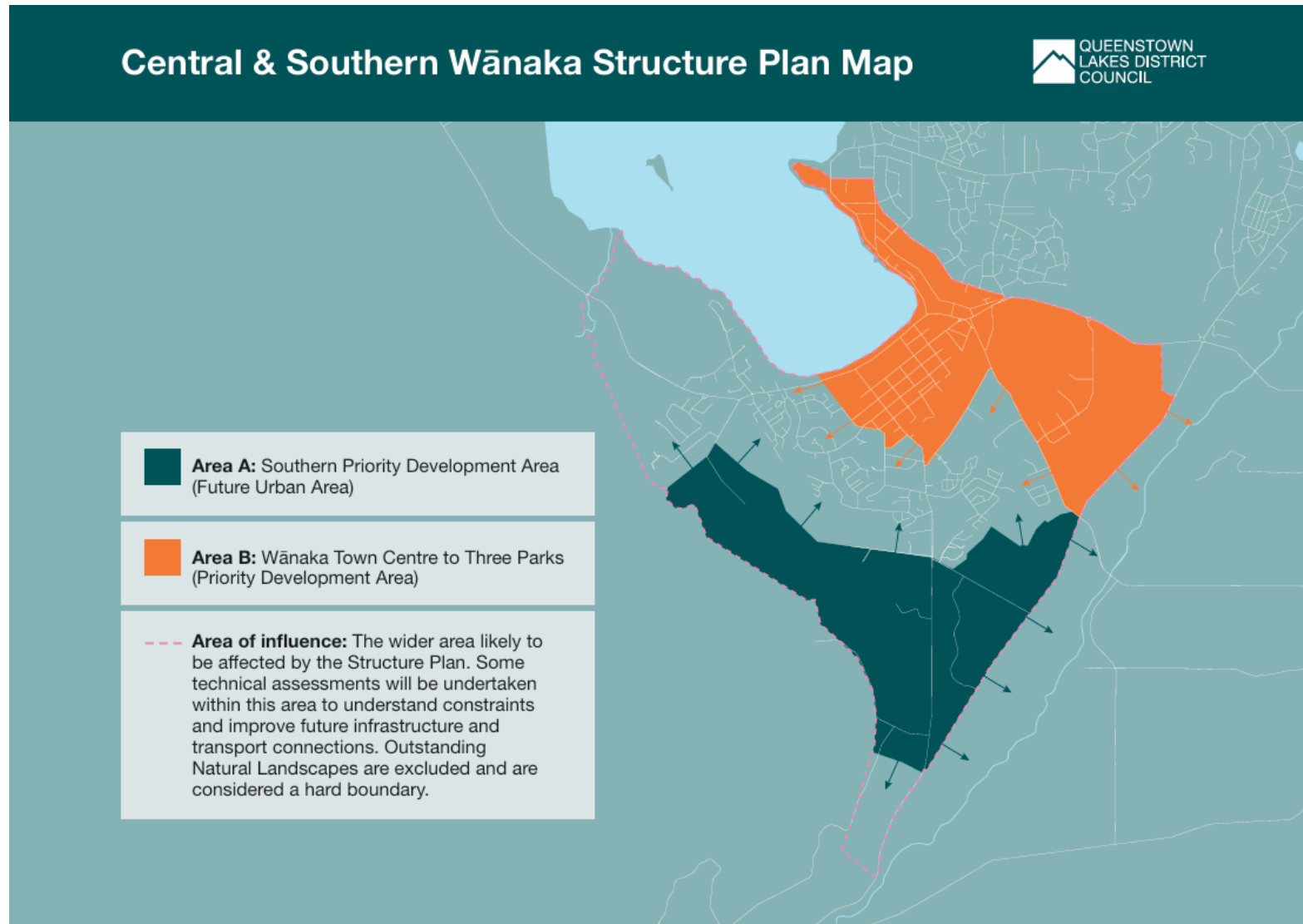
Smart Growth Committee (non-statutory governance and oversight)



Full Council (statutory)



Southern and Central Wānaka Structure Plan extent – An Integrated response



Structure plans & engagement



To help influence future statutory planning & investment by shaping land-use, infrastructure and growth sequencing



Early and robust engagement helps ensure that a Structure Plan reflects community values, mana whenua aspirations, and stakeholder priorities, and provides a transparent and credible basis for future decision-making.



Engagement also supports better outcomes by identifying issues, opportunities, and constraints early, reducing the risk of conflict or delay as the Structure Plan is translated into statutory and investment programmes over time.

Legislative & Policy Framework – now and thinking towards future statutory processes

Framework	What it requires	What this means for Council
<p>Local Government Act 2002 (LGA)</p> <p><i>Must be considered now</i></p>	<p>Decisions must be transparent, informed, and proportionate to their significance.</p>	<p>Council must actively decide how much and what type of engagement is appropriate for strategic matters like structure planning and show that community views have been considered in decision-making.</p>
<p>QLDC Significance & Engagement Policy</p> <p><i>Must be considered now</i></p>	<p>Engagement should match the scale, impact, and level of public interest of a decision.</p>	<p>Council is expected to select fit-for-purpose engagement tools and recognise that different approaches offer different levels of influence and responsibility.</p>
<p>Resource Management Act 1991 (and reforms)</p> <p><i>Requires consideration – as technical evidence and engagement informs future statutory processes</i></p>	<p>Once Structure Plan is complete and the area is ready to be zoned.</p> <p>A plan variation process will require public participation and iwi engagement in a statutory planning process.</p>	<p>Council must ensure that early engagement informs future statutory processes and supports meaningful mana whenua involvement.</p> <p>Early engagement helps to identify issues before formal plan changes begin.</p>

Engagement sits on a spectrum

QLDC's Significance and Engagement Policy:

Our Policy provides for a range of approaches to engagement and consultation depending on the nature of the decision being taken by Council.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION*					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Innovating engagement practices:

Internationally (not unique to NZ or QLDC) there are:

- declining levels of trust in institutions,
- low perceived ability to influence local decision-making, and
- a growing desire for greater public involvement.

There has been increasing use of deliberative engagement methods to counter these trends.

Staff have considered deliberative approaches to public participation for the Wānaka Structure Plan that move toward the 'collaborate' end of the spectrum, building on the collaborative approach used for the Spatial Plan 2021.

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For complex problems that require difficult trade-offs, council can consider utilizing engagement tools, such as citizens' juries and other deliberative processes.

Deliberative processes are both resource and time intensive and therefore only 'worth it' in specific circumstances. (link to guidance – considerations etc.)

Council has a range of tools available to engage and communicate with the public. Assessing when to use certain tools will be done on a case-by-case basis (link – guidance document).

What is deliberative engagement?

Deliberative engagement emphasises inclusive deliberation* on issues, not the aggregation of preferences, to make decisions and address public policy issues.

Key features of deliberative processes include:



REPRESENTATIVENESS
(FOR MOST NOT ALL)



DIVERSITY OF
INFORMATION &
EXPERTISE



TIME TO UNDERSTAND
ISSUE



OPEN QUESTION & FREE
RESPONSE
(GOAL IS CONSENSUS)



INCREASED WEIGHT IN
DECISION MAKING – PRE-
AGREED

Deliberative processes often supplement and strengthen existing representative democratic processes, not replace them

***Deliberation** = a discussion and consideration of the reasons for and against a measure.

What topics suit deliberative engagement?

Deliberative engagement is suited to:

- Values-driven dilemmas
- Complex problems that require trade offs
- Long term issues that go beyond election cycles
- Topics that are hard for public to understand
- Topics which are controversial/divisive by nature

Deliberative engagement is uniquely suited to local government.

Over 50% of all deliberative processes in OECD have occurred at the local government level.



The Central & Southern Wānaka Structure Plan is strongly aligned with these characteristics.

The point of a deliberative process is to weigh complex and politically contentious parts of a process. Pick the hardest part and use the process for that – not the easy part.

Types of deliberative engagement tools

Type	Description	Purpose	No. of sessions	Selection method	No. of participants	Cost	IAP2	
Random selection	Citizens Assembly / Jury	Where a representative group deliberates on a policy question and provides recommendations.	Collective decision making	Four or five upwards	Stratified random selection	Jury: smaller group <25 Assembly: 50 to 100	Moderate to high	Consult to empower (mostly advisory, obligation to respond publicly)
	Citizens Initiative Review	Representative panel deliberates on a referendum ballot. Produces a one-page summary of information for voters.	Evaluation of policy	Three upwards	Stratified random selection	~18 to 25 (can be more)	Moderate	As above
	Planning Cell	Small representative group collaborates on a developing solutions to a specific issue.	Option mapping	Four or more	Stratified random selection	~10 - 25	Moderate	As above
	Deliberative Poll	Representative groups completes a survey before and after expert-led deliberative workshops to identify any change in opinion.	Determine informed public opinion	Two to Three	Stratified random sampling	~100 (give or take)	High	Inform to collaborate
Participatory budgeting	Participants discuss and deliberate how to allocate public budget.	Collective decision making	Four or more	Depends on design choice (can be random or not)	20+ (can be more)	Moderate to High	Consult to empower (mostly advisory, obligation to respond publicly)	
Online deliberative platform	Deliberative online platform designed for large-scale public engagement (e.g. Pol.is).	Opinion & discourse mapping	Online platform	Open call generally	Essentially unlimited	Low to moderate	Inform to consult	

Why a Citizens Assembly for Wānaka?

A citizen's assembly of 20 to max 40 people, selected from the Wānaka area, has been identified as the preferred approach.

A citizens assembly is the best deliberative method due to:

- The time it gives participants to understand technical information,
- Its ability to reflect a diversity of views (e.g. younger people),
- The sense of legitimacy the CA process gives to recommendations/input,
- Costs associated with having a larger group (50+), meaning having 20 to 40 is more suitable*.

More practically, staff have the necessary:

- Time &
- Funding

To undertake a robust process

This could also be categorised as a Citizens Jury, however, the term Citizens Assembly is consistent with previous New Zealand examples (such as Watercare and Wellington City Council's process), each had around ~40 people.*

Citizens Assemblies - What's involved?



Cost e.g. Wellington LTP Assembly ~\$88,000 (*Note: there is allocated budget available*)



Independent facilitation is essential



Time to understand and discuss topic (~40hrs deliberation across around four sessions)



Robust random selection process

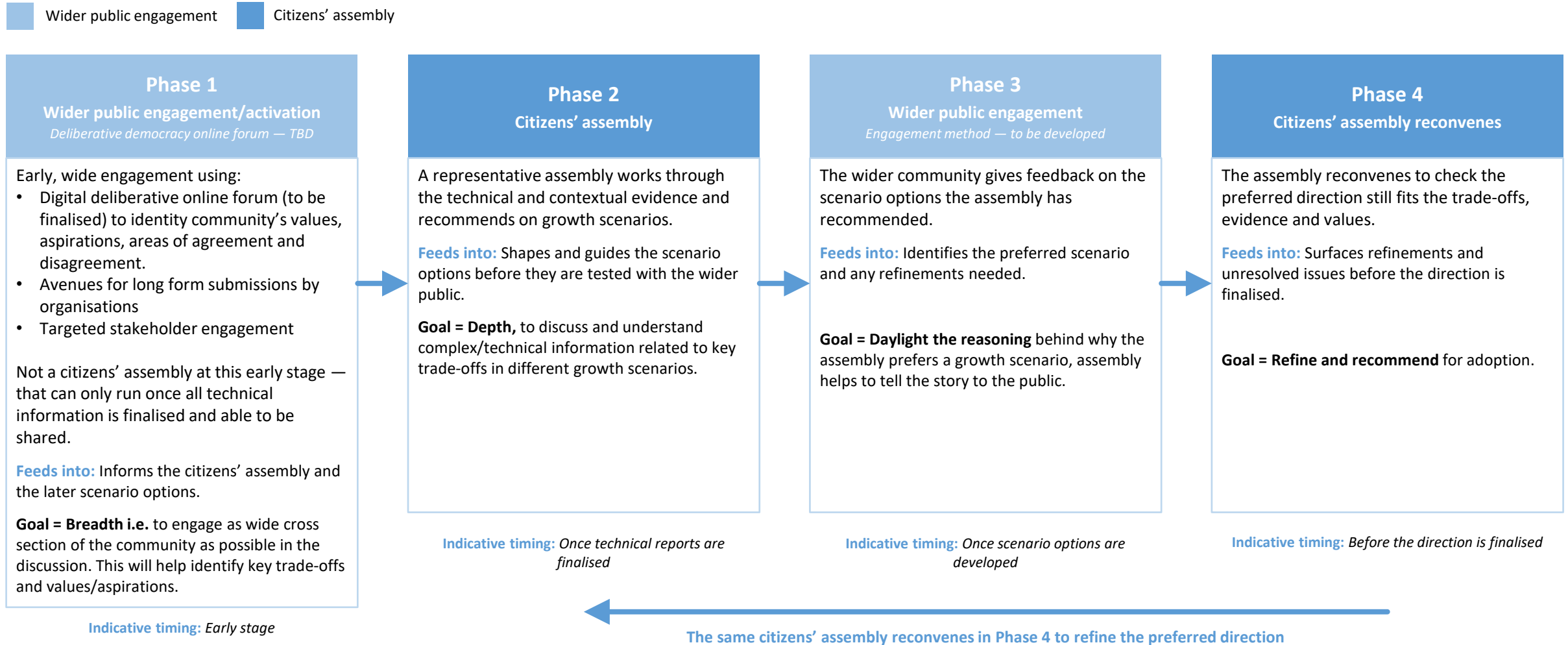


Resource/council staffing (to develop materials, source experts, support participants etc.)



Used only when there is some weight to their recommendations

How the citizens' assembly and wider engagement fits together



Across the four phases, wider public engagement and the citizens' assembly alternate — the assembly shapes the scenarios in Phase 2, then reconvenes in Phase 4 to refine the preferred direction before it is finalised.

Relationship to existing planning processes?



The CA is planned to compliment technical input provided into structure plan scenarios.



This places the process on the 'involve' end of the engagement spectrum



Council retains decision-making authority



Technical analysis continues through normal planning workstreams



Citizens' Assembly provides deliberative input, not consultation feedback



Outputs feed into: Scenario development, Engagement material, Council discussions on direction

Final Thoughts?

- ✓ Feedback on the overall planning direction and engagement approach
- ✓ Any concerns before work progresses further