

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy sets out the governing principles for community engagement and consultation that underpin the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework to ensure the strategic direction of the organisation is in keeping with community values and aspirations.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to provide guidance to Councillors and Officers in planning, implementing and reviewing community engagement and consultation for key projects, strategic planning and policy development. This is to ensure informed decision-making, transparency, timely and effective communication with key stakeholders and the general community.

POLICY

- a. Council is committed to providing leadership and a strong commitment to information sharing, consultation and active participation of the community in contributing to the decision making process.
- b. Council acknowledges the right of the community to access information, provide feedback, be consulted and actively participate in strategic planning or in key projects of service development. Council's obligations to respond to the community when exercising these rights are to be clearly stated in specific consultation processes.
- c. Objectives for, and limits to, information, consultation and active participation during planning, project and key service development are to be defined from the outset. The respective roles and responsibilities of the community (including individuals and groups) and Council (including Councillors and Officers) are to be made clear as well as to who makes final decisions once the information is analysed.
- d. The approach for specific consultations is to be tailored to the target audiences and consider all other factors outlined in this policy.
- e. Consultation is to be undertaken as early in the planning process as possible to allow to widen the scope of consultation and to improve the outcomes. Adequate time to be made available for consultation to be effective.
- f. Information provided by Council during planning, project and key service development is to be objective, complete and accessible. All those involved in a consultation process are to have equal treatment when exercising their rights of access to information and participation.
- g. Council is to ensure adequate financial, human and technical resources are available to make a consultation initiative effective. The allocation of resources is to be considered in relation to broader budgetary restraints and the implications to existing priorities. Council is to support its officers in consultation initiatives.
- h. Consultation on specific planning, project and key service development are to be coordinated across Council to enhance knowledge management, ensure policy coherence, avoid duplication and reduce the risk of "consultation fatigue" within the community.

- i. Council is to be accountable for the use made of input from a consultation process. Council is to ensure consultation processes are open, transparent and amenable to external scrutiny and review.
- J. Council to actively and openly evaluate its consultation processes and practices in planning, project and key service development. The results of evaluation may directly impact upon future consultation initiatives.

OUTCOMES

Measures of success of consultation will include assessments of whether: -

- a. The interests of all parties have been served;
- b. Expectations concerning the process have been met;
- c. Consensus, consent and commitment have emerged;
- d. The process has encouraged generation of the best options;
- e. Objective criteria have been used to assess the different options under consideration;
- f. Understanding has been enhanced;
- g. Relationships between Council and the community and within the community have been enhanced.
- h. The decision resulting from the consultation has been stable and enduring.
- i. Timeframes and Communication Methods have been developed.

EVALUATION

An Annual Assessment of the level engagement achieved to be reported to the June Audit & Risk Committee.

RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with the Council, Chief Executive Officer and Staff of the Shire.

GUIDELINES

Annexure A - Principles for Community Engagement - Community engagement underpins the development of the Integrated Planning Framework and ensures that community needs and aspirations are considered in developing and implementing Council's strategic directions and priorities - Annexure A (Attached).

Local Government Act 1995 - Local councils in Western Australia are legally required to conduct public consultation through a prescribed process on a range of specific matters.

Quairading Strategic Community Plan - All of Council's strategic documents are linked to an Integrated Planning Framework. This framework seeks to ensure that all of Council's activities and resources are aligned to meet the aspirations, needs and expectations of the Shire's community.

Customer Service Charter.

Communication Policy.

Complaints Policy.

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

Local Government Act (1995) – Section 5.56(2)

Record of Policy Review					
Version	Author	Council Adoption	Resolution	Reason for Review	Review Date
01	Graeme Fardon	29 March 2018	172-17/18	New Policy	
02	Graeme Fardon			Policy Review Project	10/10/2018
03	A&R Committee	20 December 2018	115-18/19	Revised 12/12/2018	
04	Graeme Fardon	17 December 2020	97-20/21	Biennial Policy Review	December 2020

ANNEXURE A: PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Report/Evaluation
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with timely, balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To capture community feedback on analysis, alternatives and or decisions impacting on strategic plans, directions, issues, priorities and projects	To work on an ongoing basis with the community to ensure that community ideas, concerns and aspirations are listened to and understood and that community knowledge is harnessed for the benefit of all.	Council to provide feedback on Shire decisions
Promise to the public	Council is to work with you on an ongoing basis to ensure your ideas, concerns and aspirations are considered. Council is to keep you informed.	Council is to listen to you, consider your ideas and keep you informed and acknowledge concerns and aspirations,	Work directly with the public on an ongoing basis to ensure that your ideas, concerns and aspirations are considered	Council to provide feedback on how public input influenced Council decisions
Example techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspapers • Newsletters • Radio • Posters • SMS/email • Website • Facebook • MailChimp • Banksia Bulletin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys biennial (March) • Consultative workshops • Individuals and or Business. • Stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Committees/Forums • Working groups • User groups • Volunteer groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct response • Newsletters • SMS/email • Website • Customer Service Survey • Facebook • MailChimp