

1 Policy Statement

Council is committed to open, accountable and responsive decision-making, informed by effective communication and engagement with the community.

Community engagement will be undertaken in accordance with legislative requirements, ensuring participation is meaningful, proportionate and accessible. Appropriate and cost-effective engagement methods relevant to the specific circumstances of each decision, activity or process will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Council will provide opportunities for community members, key stakeholders and interested parties to be informed, contribute to decisions, and understand how their feedback has influenced the decision-making process. Where reasonable and appropriate, information will be provided to explain the reasons for decision or actions of Council.

2 Scope

This Policy applies to decisions, activities and processes undertaken by Council, its delegates or any person acting on behalf of Council where community engagement is required under the Local Government Act 1999 (the Act), the Community Engagement Charter or this Policy.

This Policy does not apply where Council is exercising powers under other legislation with specific consultation requirements, where those requirements take precedence such as the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016.

3 Legislation and References

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with:

- *Local Government Act 1999 (sections 50 and 50A)*
- *Community Engagement Charter*

4 Definitions

For the purposes of this Procedure the following definitions apply:

Community Engagement Charter	<i>The Charter established under section 50A of the Local Government Act 1999, which sets out the principles and minimum standards for community engagement that Council must follow.</i>
Community Engagement	<i>A planned process of providing information and opportunities for the community to contribute to Council decision-making, activities and processes.</i>
Inform	<i>Providing balanced and objective information to assist the community in understanding Council decisions, services or projects.</i>
Stakeholder	<i>Any individual, group or organisation with an interest in or who may be affected by a Council decision, activity or process.</i>
Delegate	<i>A person or body authorised by Council or the Chief Executive Officer to act on behalf of Council in accordance with delegated authority.</i>

5 Policy

5.1 Principles of Community Engagement

In carrying out its engagement process, the Council applies the following principles:

- 5.1.1 Community interest will vary depending on the issue and the number of people affected, and Council's level of engagement will reflect this.
- 5.1.2 Council decision making will be open, transparent and accountable.
- 5.1.3 Council will, where reasonable and appropriate, communicate the outcomes of community engagement, including how community feedback was considered and, where appropriate, how it influenced the decision.

5.2 Community Engagement Approach

- 5.2.1 Community interest will vary depending on the issue and the number of people affected, and Council's level of engagement will reflect this.
- 5.2.2 Council will apply the engagement categories defined in the Charter (Significant, Standard, Local and Inform) when determining the level of engagement required and use the following approaches:

Category	Definition	Engagement Approach
Significant – Annual business plan & rating policy	Decisions related to a council's adoption of its annual business plan or proposed changes to the basis of its council rates.	Broad community notification, a minimum 21-day engagement period, opportunities for submissions and a public meeting held prior to decision-making.
Significant	Decisions that a council makes that have a significant impact on most or all ratepayers and residents, or the wider community or area.	Broad community notification, a minimum 21-day engagement period, opportunities for submissions, and where appropriate, a opportunity to present to Council prior to decision-making.
Standard	Decisions that a council makes that benefit from community input across the council area.	Public notification and provision of opportunities for community feedback within an appropriate timeframe.
Local	Decisions that impact an identifiable smaller group of residents/ratepayers or a local area.	Targeted engagement with individuals, groups or communities directly affected.
Inform	Matters where councils provide information to a community impacted by a decision.	Provision of timely and accessible information to the community or affected parties.

- 5.2.3 Council may undertake engagement activities beyond the approaches outlined where it is considered appropriate to support meaningful community participation.
- 5.2.4 Council will determine engagement timeframes based on the nature, scale and impact of the matter, the level of community interest and the needs of affected stakeholders, allowing sufficient time for the community to consider the matter and provide feedback.
- 5.2.5 Depending on the nature, scale and significance of the matter, Council may use one or a combination of the following methods to inform or engage the community:

- Online engagement via Council's website or dedicated engagement platform
- Media releases and communications through local media outlets
- Council website, social media and digital channels
- Council newsletters or publications
- Direct correspondence with residents, property owners, stakeholders or affected parties
- Advertising in print, digital or broadcast media
- Community forums, information sessions or stakeholder meetings
- Surveys, questionnaires or other feedback tools
- Displays at Council offices, libraries or other public locations
- Presentations to community groups or participation in Council workshops
- Pop-up engagement activities or outreach initiatives

6 Administrative Information

Document Type	Policy
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Applicable Legislation	Local Government Act 1999
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Adopting Authority	Council

7 Version History

Revision	Date	Change
2	To be adopted 25 August 2026	<i>Policy updated to align with the Community Engagement Charter, including proportionate engagement principles, improved accessibility and inclusion, commitment to transparent decision-making and explaining how community feedback informs outcomes.</i>