Community Engagement

Council Policy Number	**059**
Date adopted	17 February 2021
Scheduled for review	February 2025

1.   Preamble

To give effect to sections 55 (Community Engagement Policy) and 56 (Community Engagement Principles) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

2.   Purpose

To set the framework for community engagement activities conducted by Campaspe Shire Council ('Council').

3.   Definitions

Community	Includes all the people who live, work, study, own property, conduct private or government business, visit or use the services, facilities and public spaces and places in the municipality. The community can be referred to as stakeholders or comprise of stakeholders.
Engagement	A broader term which includes all levels of participation for including the community in decision making. Consultation is one level of engagement.
Deliberative engagement	Deliberative engagement is a methodology that enables Council to obtain key information and insight from stakeholders for issues and projects requiring a deeper level of consultation. Deliberative engagement process is defined in three parts:
	Deliberative Research: Market research and data analysis to ensure Council has relevant information to inform stakeholders and make an informed decision.
	Deliberative Dialogue: Dialogue and consensus building techniques to support staff develop an agreed view between key stakeholders or recommendations to support Council decision making processes.
	Deliberative Decision Making: Builds on collaborative methodologies to enable participants and decision makers to decide jointly on priorities and programs.
Consultation	Is a process of community engagement that seeks to inform the community or draw out the views and preferences of the community. These views are used to inform decision makers and should provide a guide to decision making.
Communication	Generally refers to the exchange of information from Council to the community and can also include the exchange of information or views from the community to Council.
IAP2	International Association of Public Participation
	Web site - www.iap2.org.au
Submission	A submission is a formal response to a public document made during the public exhibition or notice period.

4.   Policy Principles

The following principles, as outlined in the Local Government Act 2020, underpin Council's approach to community engagement.

a.   A community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope.

b.   Participants in community engagement must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation.

c.   Participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement.

d.   Participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement.

e.   Participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making.

5.   Policy Objectives

a.   To ensure the community is well informed about issues, strategies or plans that may directly or indirectly affect them.

b.   To ensure the community has the opportunity for genuine involvement in Council's decision making and policy development.

c.   To seek the views of a wide cross-section of the community, selecting engagement methods that are flexible, inclusive and appropriate to those being engaged.

d.   To provide members of the community with the opportunity to hear each other's opinions and to recommend appropriate solutions to community issues.

e.   To ensure Council is meeting its legislative requirements regarding community consultation in all areas of its service delivery.

f.   Recognise that there is diversity in the activities and projects across Council and the type of engagement undertaken should vary accordingly.

6.   Policy Statement

Council recognises that community engagement and participation processes are a vital part of local democracy. Effective engagement is good practice and critical to transparent government. For this reason, Council is committed to engaging with the community.

Refer to Attachment 1, outlining the Community engagement process.

What Council will do

Community engagement is about involving the community in decisions which affect them. It is critical in the successful development and implementation of acceptable policies and decisions and for improving services by being responsive to the needs of the community. Community engagement does not necessarily mean achieving consensus. However, it does involve seeking broad informed agreement and the best possible solution for Council and the community. Refer to Table 1:

Table 1: How Council will involve the community

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
What Council will do	Communicate a "change", focusing on why, when and how it will happen	Communicate and seek feedback on a "change" from those affected and the broader public. Focus on why, when and how it will happen, and how community can provide feedback	To seek input to identify issues, concerns and aspirations to inform decision making and show how that input has informed the decision	We work with our community to develop a detailed understanding of all the issues and opportunities and identify agreed solutions at every step of the process	To build the capacity of our community to identify solutions and/or lead change
Level of Community Influence	Nil	Feedback may or may not impact final decision	Significant level of participation in developing concepts. Council will provide final endorsement	Equal partner in developing concepts. Council will provide final endorsement	Direct impact in finalising arrangements. Council will provide final endorsement

When do we engage?

Engagement processes are planned and implemented when it is identified that there are changes to or the introduction of new services, facilities, policies or local laws that impact our community.

Council recognises the mandated requirement to deliver suitable engagement activity that is in line with the principles of the *Local Government Act 2020*, these situations include: development of governance rules, preparation or revision of Council's budget, the sale, exchange, acquisition, compensation and or lease of land.

Council also commits to ensuring deliberative engagement practises are implemented for the development of the Community Vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan and an Asset Plan.

Table 2: When Council will engage

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
When/ where we will engage	Changes to Council services eg opening times for service centres	- New local laws - Changes to rating systems	- Flood plans - Community Based Strategies - Active transport - Access and Inclusion	- Community Vision - Place Based Plan for townships - Recreation Reserve Masterplans	Projects or activities requiring community and or expert advice to ensure Council is supported to make good decisions
Level of Community Influence	Nil	Feedback may or may not impact final decision	Significant level of participation in developing concepts. Council will provide final endorsement	Equal partner in developing concepts. Council will provide final endorsement	Direct impact in finalising arrangements. Council will provide final endorsement

How do we engage?

Council's approach to community engagement is based on the spectrum of engagement activities as advocated by the International Association for Public Participation ('IAP2'). It matches the role of the community with the level of influence they should expect. Many projects will involve more than one level of engagement. This is because the community can have different levels of influence at different stages of a project; different groups within the community may be more directly impacted than others. The table below describes the five levels of engagement and the roles of Council and community.

Council Policy Council Policy Council Policy Council Policy

Who we engage with?

Council's engagement process identifies the stakeholders likely to be affected or can provide key information to support Council make informed decisions. Council proactively contacts these identified groups to seek participation within the engagement.

Council recognises that some groups face barriers to engagement, Council commits to using methods that enable and encourage equitable participation.

Table 3: Examples of engagement

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Examples of how we will engage	- Letters - Statutory advertising - Social media posts	- Submissions - Surveys - Drop in sessions - Interview	- Focus groups - Field trips - Workshops	- Project specific reference groups - Stakeholder briefings	- Direct negotiations - Polling - Expert panels - Stakeholder briefing
Level of Community Influence	Nil	Feedback may or may not impact final decision	Significant level of participation in developing concepts. Council will provide final endorsement	Equal partner in developing concepts. Council will provide final endorsement	Direct impact in finalising arrangements. Council will provide final endorsement

Tools and methods for engagement

The tools and methods Council selects will differ at various stages of the engagement process. This is to ensure stakeholder participation and meaningful feedback is obtained. This is pre-planned and linked to the capacity and needs of the stakeholders identified.

For example, Council may consult to gather ideas at early stages and then involve, collaborate to finalise priorities, design or decision details. Examples of the types of methods and tools Council employ are shown in Table 4 according to the type of engagement.

Table 4: Examples of tools used

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Fact Sheets Newsletters Media Advertising Brochures Issues paper Letters Media releases Social media posts	Briefings Surveys Workshops Open houses Pop up sessions in the community On line data collection tools	Focus groups Interviews Field trips Advisory groups	Council advisory committees Community reps on Council committees Co design workshops Online forums	Citizen juries Community committees Deliberative polling

Council Policy

Engagement

Council will comply with legislative requirements for implementing deliberative engagement activities for key process as described within the *Local Government Act 2020*. This will include a full analysis of stakeholder needs, development of a comprehensive engagement plan and implementation of a process that is line with the principles of the Act.

The benefits of effective community engagement include:

a. Increased community awareness about Council's services, planning and program delivery.

b. Increased awareness across Council of community views and the issues that should be considered as part of the decision making process.

c. Increased awareness of the needs, priorities and diversity of the local community, which in turn ensures that Council's service provision and planning functions are aligned appropriately.

d. Increased level of community ownership and acceptance of decisions affecting Council.

e. Council and the community working together to address local issues.

f. Potential for time, resource and cost savings for Council.

7. Exclusions

Nil

8. Human Rights

This policy has considered and complies with the Human Rights and Responsibilities contained in the Victorian Charter of *Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

9. Related Legislation

Nil

10. Attachments

Council Engagement Process

11. Review Period	**Responsible Officer**
Four years	Manager Community Development

12. Administrative Updates

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter the policy, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council.

Council Policy

13. Approval History

Adopted	22 July 1999	Minute Book Reference No	3769 (Item 12.1)
Revised	12 September 2000	Minute Book Reference No	4658 (Item 12.1)
Revised	11 September 2001	Minute Book Reference No	5565 (Item 12.2)
Revised	13 August 2002	Minute Book Reference No	6305 (Item 12.1)
Revised	18 August 2009	Minute Book Reference No	14208 (Item 9.1)
Revised	19 November 2013	Minute Book Reference No	1539 (Item 6.14)
Revised	19 August 2014	Minute Book Reference No	878 (Item 6.1)
Revised	18 August 2015	Minute Book Reference No	905 (Item 6.2)
Revised	15 May 2018	Minute Book Reference No	1062 (Item 7.4)
Revised	25 June 2019	Minute Book Reference No	1988 (Item 7.1)
Revised	17 February 2021	Minute Book Reference No	180 (Item 9.7)
Revised	18 February 2021	Administrative update to apply consistent references to Campaspe Shire Council ('Council') and legislation	
Revised	26 March 2021	Administrative update to Approval History Reference No	

Chief Executive Officer: ....

Date: ....26/3/2021..

Attachment 1: Council Engagement Process

	Inform	**Consult**	**Involve**	**Collaborate**	**Empower**
What Council will do	Communicate a "change", focusing on why, when and how it will happen	Communicate and seek feedback on a "change" from those affected and the broader public. Focus on why, when and how it will happen, and how community can provide feedback	Seek input from community to help Council make an informed decision	Working with community to identify and develop agreed solutions	Council to seek direction from community on preferred option(s)
When/ where we will engage	Changes to Council services eg opening times for service centres	- New local laws - Changes to rating systems	- Flood plans - Community Based Strategies - Active transport - Access and Inclusion	- Community Vision - Place Based Plan for townships - Recreation Reserve Masterplans	Projects or activities requiring community and or expert advice to ensure Council is supported to make good decisions
Who we will engage with	General Community and those directly impacted by change	General Community and those directly impacted of have interest in the proposed change	Stakeholders directly impacted or have interest in the activity Those identified as having skills and expertise to help Council make an informed decision	Stakeholders directly impacted or have interest in the activity Those identified as having skills and expertise to help Council make an informed decision	Stakeholders directly impacted or have interest in the activity Those identified as having skills and expertise to help Council make an informed decision
Examples of how we will engage	- Letters - Statutory advertising - Social media posts	- Submissions - Surveys - Drop in sessions - Interview	- Focus groups - Field trips - Workshops	- Project specific reference groups - Stakeholder briefings	- Direct negotiations - Polling - Expert panels - Stakeholder briefing
Level of Community Influence	Nil	Feedback may or may not impact final decision	Significant level of participation in developing concepts. Council will provide final endorsement	Equal partner in developing concepts. Council will provide final endorsement	Direct impact in finalising arrangements. Council will provide final endorsement

Council Policy · Council Policy · Council Policy · Council Policy