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| Responsible Directorate | Community Development |
| Responsible Business Unit/s | Customer and Communications |
| Responsible Officer | Manager Customer and Communications |
| Affected Business Unit/s | All business units |

Objective

The objectives of this policy are to:

- provide a clear statement of Council’s commitment to best-practice community and stakeholder engagement as it applies to informing decision-making
- define the guiding principles that will ensure appropriate, effective and inclusive community and stakeholder engagement is achieved consistently across the City
- outline the required mechanisms to be established and continually reviewed to ensure best-practice engagement practices are integrated into strategic and operational planning.

Scope

This policy applies to all City staff and contractors that manage projects, plans and initiatives that impact stakeholders in our community, as well as consultants engaged to manage these on the City’s behalf.

It applies to the engagement strategies managed through the City’s online engagement hub as well as those using traditional methods.

This policy is not intended to replace legal and statutory obligations. It should, however be applied to guide business unit-specific practices and procedures and to exceed the minimum requirements set under legislation, where appropriate.

Policy

The City is committed to communicating and engaging with our diverse community openly and inclusively to make sure they have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making that impacts them, and help shape the future of the City.

The City supports public participation as a process to make better decisions that incorporate both the interests and concerns of affected stakeholders, and the needs of the City. While there are many technical, financial and legislative requirements the City must consider when making decisions, every effort will be made to involve affected stakeholders in the decision-making process.

This Policy reflects the aspirations identified in the City’s Strategic Community Plan 2018–2028 and articulated in the City’s Vision, Mission, Values and Sustainability Principles.

The City has adapted the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values to shape our commitment to community and stakeholder engagement through seven guiding principles. Building our approach to engagement on these will support the development and implementation of engagement processes consistent with recognised international best-practice.

The principles guiding the City’s approach to community and stakeholder engagement

1. We believe that those affected by a decision have the right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. We will be clear about how participants' feedback and contributions will influence the decision.
3. We believe that the best decisions are the ones that recognise and communicate the needs and interests of both the City and the stakeholders in our community.
4. We will actively identify those affected by or interested in a decision and make every effort to support and encourage participation in the decision-making process.
5. We are committed to providing equal access and inclusion for all members of our diverse community. We will understand the diverse range of needs that stakeholders in our community have and choose the methods of engagement within our means that will best support their participation in the decision-making process.
6. We will ensure we give the stakeholders in our community the information they need, at the right time and communicated in the best way to support their understanding, so that they can participate in a meaningful way.
7. We will keep the stakeholders in our community updated on the progress and let them know how their input affected the decision.

The City recognises the importance of ensuring best-practice engagement practices are integrated into strategic and operational planning, including business case decision-making and project management and will work towards continual improvement in this area.

When the City may engage

Community and stakeholder engagement may occur:

- On developments or changes with potential to impact residents and ratepayers
- When required by Legislative requirements
- To get input into long-term and strategic plans of the City
- On major projects and strategic issues
- When requested by the community or Council.

How the City may engage

The City will take a planned and purposeful approach when engaging with stakeholders and the community and will use tools such as the IAP2 Spectrum (Appendix 1) and internal guidelines and frameworks. Methods will be appropriate to the purpose, level of engagement, resources available and stakeholders impacted.

When feedback may not be sought

There are some situations when it may not be effective or appropriate to seek feedback from the community and stakeholders, for example when:

- Legal constraints exist (e.g. confidentiality)
- The City is required to act in a timeframe which precludes consultation
- The matter is delivering a policy-driven decision where previous engagement with the community and stakeholders has occurred
- A decision has already been made
- The City is not the decision-maker and has no ability to influence the decision
- The matter concerns public safety or is an emergency.

Where it is determined that seeking feedback will not occur, the City will provide clear communication to impacted stakeholders explaining why feedback was not sought.

Responsibility of Business Units

Embedding the principles outlined in this policy within the City will be supported by processes and practices based on the IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard For Community and Stakeholder Engagement and the AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard (SES) 2015.

To provide consistency and ensure that the City engages at a level considered as being best practice, Community and Stakeholder Engagement Procedures will be developed for City issues that require engagement. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- Strategic Plans, Frameworks etc. (e.g. Community Strategic Plan, Multicultural Framework)
- State Underground Power Project
- Scheduled roadworks, right-of-way construction
- Road closures, traffic calming proposals
- Local Laws
- Ward boundary reviews
- Changes to services (e.g. changes to how waste is collected by the City, closure of services)
- Reactive building maintenance and minor building works
- Public toilet and other building demolitions
- Building upgrades, internal or external building refurbishments
- Playground and park upgrades, replacement and renewal
- Major projects (new regional facilities, parklands etc.)

As a minimum, these Community and Stakeholder Engagement Procedures will include the following areas:

- Legislative requirements, if applicable
- When engagement is to occur
- Situations where feedback may not be sought
- Processes of engagement that will be used
- Minimum requirements for engagement
- How feedback will be used to inform the final decision, and who the decision-maker is
- Method and timing of feedback and communication
- Reporting requirements and format
- How the procedures meet the Reconciliation Action Plan
- How the engagement process will be reviewed and improved on an ongoing basis.

All Community and Stakeholder Engagement Procedures are to be developed within one (1) year of this policy's adoption and included as addendums to this policy. The procedures are to be subject to public comment, endorsed by Council and reviewed as part of the City's policy review process.

Definitions

City- the City of Stirling

Communication- the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing or via another medium, in consideration of the audience and appropriate for the channel delivered through. Communication is about connecting with people by sending information.

Community- broadly refers to any specific group of people who share a similar location, interest or affiliation within the City of Stirling area. These include, but are not limited to residents, ratepayers, business owners and operators, employees, students, visitors and community groups and organisations.

Community and stakeholder engagement- a planned process, which aims to ensure those affected by a decision are given an opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process. It includes a range of activities and strategies to encourage the participation and involvement of all stakeholders.

Community consultation- a subset of community engagement, as defined within the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, it is a level of engagement in which the purpose is to obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

IAP2- International Association for Public Participation. The leading professional organisation advancing the practice of public participation globally by promoting the right of those affected by a decision to have a say in the decision-making process, highlighting the benefits of this to organisations, governments and individuals, and providing training programs.

IAP2 Spectrum- developed by IAP2, the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum helps to define the community's role in any public participation or engagement process. The spectrum identifies five levels of engagement based on the engagement purpose or goal and the organisation's promise to the public during the process. Also includes examples of methods or tools suitable for each level.

Program- a group of related projects, subprograms and program activities managed in a coordinated way to obtain benefits not available from managing them individually.

Project- an endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service or result. Projects have a definite beginning and end, and a desired outcome. Projects could be the development of a product/service, change in business structure or process, delivering information technology, construction of infrastructure or enhancing a business practice/policy.

Public Participation- is another term used to describe the process of 'community engagement'. Other terms include 'civic engagement', 'citizen engagement', 'public engagement' and 'public involvement'.

Online engagement hub- an online platform used to coordinate an organisation's stakeholder and community engagement activities. The tools and functionality of the platform enables engagement at all levels of the IAP2 Spectrum. Your Say Stirling is the City's online engagement hub.

Our Vision- the City of Stirling will be a place where people choose to live, work, visit and invest. We will have safe and thriving neighbourhoods with a range of housing, employment and recreational opportunities. We will engage with our diverse community to help shape our future into the City of Stirling – City of Choice

Our Mission- to serve the City's diverse community through delivering efficient, responsive and sustainable services.

Our Values- integrity; community participation; accountability; respect; environment; diversity.

Stakeholder- individuals, groups or organisations interested in, impacted by or in a position to influence the City of Stirling's activities or objectives.

Statutory- a legal requirement the City must adhere to.

Sustainability Principles- long-term decision making; fairness for all generations; improving lives and human rights; environmentally and socially responsible development; acting with precaution; conserving the natural environment and biodiversity; minimising the impact of operations, goods and services; accountability, transparency and engagement.

Relevant management practices/documents

Access and Inclusion Plan

Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) September 2018–September 2020

Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

Planning Consultation Procedure

Risk Management Policy

Strategic Community Plan 2018–2028

Customer Service Charter

Legislation/local law requirements

WA Local Government Act 1995 and Regulations

Health Act 1911 and associated regulations

Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act 1959

Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015

Heritage of WA Act 1990

Environmental Protection Act 1986

Bush Fires Act 1954 and associated regulations

Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1984 and associated regulations

Privacy Act 1998

Disability Services Act 1993 and Equal Opportunity Act 1984

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| Relevant delegations | Not applicable | | | |
| Initial Council adoption | Date | 2 July 2019 | Resolution # | 0719/020 |
| Last reviewed | Date | 26 May 2020 | Resolution # | 0520/027 |
| Next review due | Date | 2021 | | |

