

# Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy

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

## 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 City projects which require any element of community consultation must adhere to the community and stakeholder operational procedures which may include the use of the City of Stirling Engagement Planner e-Tool, at the earliest opportunity.

Where projects are subject to minimum consultation requirements under Local, State or Federal Law, Regulation or Policies, the relevant Director may exercise discretion and also include the use of these operational procedures, in addition to the minimum requirements of consultation under Local, State or Federal Law, Regulation or Policies to ensure the best engagement outcome is reached.

Where an engagement approach deviates from the procedures, or is not required, this must be justified in the relevant Council report and take into consideration the impact that will have on the affected community, the nature of the engagement and City resourcing. Where there is no Council report, the Chief Executive Officer or relevant Director may authorise the deviation or omission.

Should the outcomes of advertising be formally presented to Council and further changes are made to proposal, the changes may be advertised for a further 21 days.

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## 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.

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## 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

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## 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*

Office use only			
Relevant delegations	Not applicable		
Initial Council adoption	Date	2 July 2019	Resolution # 0719/020
Last reviewed	Date	30 March 2021	Resolution # 0321/0327
Next review due	Date	2023	

## IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

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.

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