

Policy Number:	ADM 19
Policy Type:	Administration Policy
Policy Name:	Community Consultation
Policy Owner:	Chief Executive Officer
Authority:	Shire of Nannup

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Provide a framework to guide Council in undertaking community consultation and engagement activities;
2. Facilitate Council decision-making that is open, transparent, responsive and accountable to the community; and
3. Provide a framework for staff to facilitate a coordinated and consistent approach to community consultation and engagement across Council.

POLICY

1. Council's decision-making processes

Council has various strategies to guide its decision-making. Consultation is an integral part of this strategy development. Community engagement is a process that allows people to participate in decisions that affect them, and at a level that meets their expectations. It helps strengthen the relationship between communities and government, enabling all the concerned groups to become part of the process.

Consultation is also integral to measuring our success and identifying new opportunities and areas for improvement. It is a continuous process.

In making specific decisions, council is guided by relevant legislation and strategies, and consults with stakeholders. Stakeholders include those who may be affected by the decision and those who may have an interest in the decision.

Shire of Nannup Community Plan

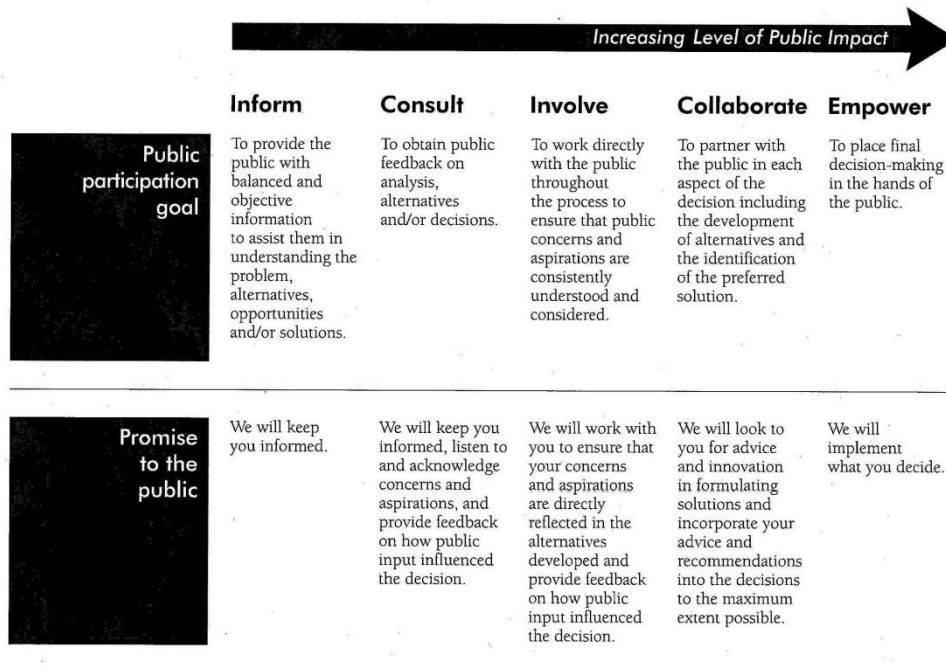
Vision

We are a unique town that role models sustainability, friendliness, taking the time to celebrate our heritage and festivals.

We are surrounded by amazing nature, with charming historic and built fabric. Our leaders provide for and listen to all of us.

This policy is based on the widely recognised International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Engagement.

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



Public Participation Spectrum, developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).

2. What is Consultation

Consultation is the process of informed communication between the council and the community on an issue prior to the council making a decision or determining a direction on that issue.

Key elements

- It is a process, not an outcome.
- It recognises the council has the mandate to be the decision-maker. Consultation is the process by which the council gathers information in order to make a decision. Consultation impacts on a decision through influence, rather than power.
- Consultation is about input into decision-making, not joint decision-making or decision-making by referendum.

3. What is Engagement

Community engagement is a characteristic of democratic governance.

Engagement is achieved when the community is and feels part of the overall governance of that community. It is informed, connected and feels it has a role to play.

Engagement, by this definition, is an outcome.

It occurs when there is good ongoing information flow, consultation and participation between a council and its community.

4. Principles underpinning council's consultations

Inclusiveness

- The consultation must encourage the involvement of people who are affected by or interested in a decision.
- Affected and interested parties will be given equal opportunity to participate, including groups who have traditionally not participated previously.
- The type of consultation or contact that is made is sensitive to a group's particular needs.

Purpose

- Consultation is purpose-driven.
- There is a clear statement about what the consultation is about.
- There is a clear statement about the role of council and the role of the participants in the consultation.
- There is a clear statement about how participants' input will be used.
- The type of consultation that is chosen is appropriate for the task.
- There is a commitment from the council to the principles and processes that this document defines in relation to consultation.
- There is a commitment from the council that it will respect the diverse range of interests and views which may exist around a particular issue and make genuine attempts to resolve conflicts, while recognizing that it has the ultimate decision-making role.

Provision of information

- Information relating to the consultation can be accessed easily by everyone involved before key decisions are made.
- Information must be presented in an easily understood format.
- All information on issues that the council is consulting upon will be available unless it is of a commercially sensitive or personnel nature.
- In some circumstances, council may determine to recover part of the cost of providing the information. These circumstances may include situations where documentation is costly to reproduce ie maps/plans/lengthy reports, etc. In such instances the council will endeavour to facilitate access via individual viewing, loaning of the material and or other appropriate methods.

Informed consultation

- Consultation is most effective when people have the facts before them. This means that council may have the officers do some development work on an issue or proposal, prior to the commencement of the consultation.
- This work will generally be described as the scoping work or study. This scoping work will be the factual information that council puts into the public arena for consultation.
- On occasions, council may develop a preliminary preference for a particular position. When this occurs, council will indicate what that preliminary position is. This will assist the community to understand where the council stands at the start of the consultation.

Timing

- The consultation will take place early enough in the decision-making process to ensure that its outcomes are able to be considered prior to the decisions being made.
- The timeframe for the consultation process will be clearly communicated, including when decision-making is to take place.

Informing people of the final outcomes

- After a decision has been made upon which feedback has been sought and received, those who provided feedback and or had input into the process will be informed of the final decision and the reasons for it.

5. Who will speak for Council

The Shire President represents Council's views on strategic and political matters, whilst the Chief Executive Officer is the delegated authority to speak on behalf of Council for operational matters.

6. Choosing to Consult

When Council must consult - Statutory consultation

Council has responsibilities and makes decisions under a wide variety of State and Federal legislation. In many instances the legislation sets minimum standards and this relates to the following matters:

- Setting Councillor allowances
- Adopting a council plan
- Making a local law
- Changing the council's system of land valuations for council rates
- Adopting a budget
- Declaring a special rate or a special charge
- Selling, exchanging or leasing land
- Deviating or discontinuing a road

The consultation required by law for these matters must include the following:

- The council must publish a public notice (in a local or daily newspaper, and on the council's website) that identifies the proposal and tells people that they have the right to make a written submission to the council.
- People who wish to make submissions must lodge them by the date specified in the public notice, which is a date not less than 28 days of the public notice.
- Anyone who has made a written submission and asked to be heard in support of this submission is entitled to speak to the council or a committee appointed for the purpose. The submitter may appear in person or be represented by someone else.
- The council must fix a time, date and place for this meeting and give reasonable notice of the meeting to each person requesting to be heard.
- The council must consider any submissions received before making a decision.
- After it has made a decision, the council must write to a person who has lodged a submission advising of the council decision and the reasons for it.

Planning applications carry their own statutory legislative requirements for consultation.

Council has a policy relating to consultation for planning applications, which is filed in the Corporate Library, Policy number: LPP 005

When Council may not need to consult

This framework will apply predominantly to matters requiring a decision by council. It will not necessarily apply to routine, day-to-day activities such as:

- maintenance activities, including tree maintenance
- works such as new footpaths or roadworks
- implementing an existing plan
- where the work is integral to the work of an advisory committee.

However as a courtesy, when undertaking day-to-day activities such as tree works/footpath works/road works and the like, council will communicate with people living at affected properties where appropriate and in the most appropriate way.

There may be occasions when council does not consult on a matter due to circumstances/requirements beyond its control, such as statutory requirements, funding requirements or policy requirements of other levels of government/agencies.

When council will consult

Council believes that there are basically six different categories of issues on which it will wish to consult:

Category One	Matters that are significant ‘one-off’ issues * For example: Digging a small trench outside a home
Category Two	Matters that change the current arrangements/uses on a single site For example: The temporary closure of a sporting facility for maintenance works
Category Three	Matters impacting on an area or neighbourhood For example: Traffic management proposals/solutions, streetscape proposals
Category Four	Service planning matters which have impacts across the shire For example : Changes to the waste disposal service
Category Five	Major plans which have impacts across the shire For example: Development of strategies relating to residential/industrial land use, open space planning or economic development.
Category Six	Major projects or issues with shire-wide impacts For example: Bushfire Prone Areas Amendment

7. Determining the level of participation

The nature of the decision will influence the level of consultation, or public participation.

8. Methods of communication and consultation

The methods used in relation to any consultation will be selected to suit the category of the issue and the identified stakeholders. It is recommended that several communication methods be used to maximize awareness and participation in the consultation.

It is important to ensure that communications (e.g. printed material) and consultations (e.g. public meetings/forums) are accessible to all people who may be interested in or affected by the decision. This includes those who may have an impairment/disability, those who may not have access to transport, and those who may not have internet access.

It is also important to consider the availability of identified stakeholders and provide a choice of meeting/discussion times. For example, many residents may not be available during the day due to work commitments whilst others may not be available or willing to attend a consultation forum at night due to family commitments, lack of transport, etc.

Methods that may be used include, but are not limited to, the following:

Printed material

- Letter/flier to every affected household or group
- Fact sheet/s
- Brochures
- Technical reports
- Scoping/draft document
- Council newsletter

Media

- Media advertising
- Media release/briefing/photo opportunity
- Community-based newsletters

Display

- Sign/notification on-site
- Static display
- Community noticeboards

Technological

- Council's website
- eNewsletter
- Email mail list

Surveys

- Comment form
- Surveys (online, written or verbal)
- Interviews
- Listening post (in person, in public places)
- Random phone surveys

Small groups (The characteristics of the participants should represent the target group).

- Advisory committees
- Reference group or working group

Public forums

- Tours
- Events
- Public meeting
- Workshops

Social Media

- Council does not currently have a social media policy that provides a framework for the issues/processes this organisation needs to consider in using tools such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. Council engages in social media through a Facebook page for the Youth Advisory Council and the Well Being Warren Blackwood project.
- This is an area where further policy development is likely to occur over the next 12 months.

In all consultations, life cycle costs must be incorporated into the project development.

9. Things to consider

When planning a consultation, consider the following points:

A	Write to every affected household/group	Writing to a select group of people based on a geographic area needs careful consideration. Consider the diversity of your audience and ensure your message is in clear, simple language and meets the requirements of people with a vision impairment, including older people.
B	Survey/other forms of formal market research	The validity of a survey is critical if you or council intend to rely on it to support a particular view. If external organisations are being engaged, it should be presented to council in the context of the broader consultation plan being pursued.
C	Council's shire-wide newsletter	Council produces a newsletter twice a year that is distributed with the rates and via post box delivery for the second newsletter. Additional copies are available at the Shire offices.
D	Community-based newsletters	Council distributes an email newsletter bi-monthly or monthly, depending on the events, activities and projects to be communicated. The newsletter is promoted on the Shire website, so that individuals can add their details to the database.
E	Council's website	<p>Council's website provides the opportunity to publish information relating to a consultation quickly and can be updated as frequently as required. It also enables a lot of content to be published without any cost.</p> <p>It can be an effective way to communicate with those who may have a vision impairment, as it provides the ability to increase the type size and may be read by a screen reader device/software.</p> <p>Council promotes an Events calendar on their website and encourages community members to promote their event using this service.</p>

F	Letter/flier to specific area	Sending an internal email to everyone may identify someone else in the organisation who is conducting a mail-out or poster run, enabling you to share the mail preparation and postage costs. Consider the community noticeboards/shops/facilities where you may be able to put up a flier.
G	Council-organised meeting	Council hosts community meetings four times per year in conjunction with the Volunteer Fire Brigades and community groups. It is important to consider the timing, length of meeting and catering/seating requirements.
H	Media release/advertisement (including print media, local radio and regional promotion)	The Nannup Community Resource produces the Nannup Telegraph with a deadline for material by the 20 th of each month. They are also the agent for media articles for the Donnybrook Bridgetown Mail. All media advertisements must be authorized by the CEO prior to release. If submitting photographs with people, their permission must be sought for release, and their names provided to the media. Children must have authority from parents/guardians for printing.
I	Input via advisory committee or working party	Council has a Risk Management Advisory Committee and working parties are established on an 'as needs basis'. All groups will have Terms of Reference and a Councillor and Officer will attend meetings. Minutes must be presented to Council.
J	Personal contact or meetings on site	The offer of personal contact can be an excellent way to personally interact with residents, however consider issues such as timing and safety.
K	Feedback at council offices/service centres	Customer feedback and complaint forms are held at the Shire offices and are forwarded to the appropriate officer for comment or to be dealt with.
L	Public comment with submissions invited	A folder is on the front desk with current public comment submissions and plans.
M	Notification on-site (if appropriate)	In the case of works or a project that is funded by council, ensure that council's logo is included at an appropriate size on the sign.

Also to note:

- Avoid sending letters/holding meetings, etc. during holiday periods
- Include a reply paid envelope if seeking a response on important matters

10. Consultation category/methods matrix

The following are recommended methods for each type of issue. However, it is acknowledged that:

- the timeframes for the consultation may not coincide with the deadlines of some newsletters or the Nannup Telegraph,
- some issues may not warrant a meeting or there may be insufficient interest expressed in participating in a meeting/discussion,
- there may be occasions when council does not consult on a matter due to circumstances/ requirements beyond its control, such as statutory requirements, funding requirements or policy requirements of other levels of government/agencies,

	SUGGESTED CONSULTATION METHODS FOR CATEGORY OF PROJECT	Category 1 One-off issues	Category 2 Changes to current arrangements on a single site	Category 3 Area or neighbourhood impacts	Category 4 Service planning with shire-wide impacts	Category 5 Major plans with shire-wide impacts	Category 6 Major projects with shire-wide impacts
A	Write to affected household/group			✓			
B	Survey/other forms of formal market research					✓	✓
C	Council's shire-wide 'Update' newsletter				✓	✓	✓
D	Community-based newsletters			✓	✓	✓	✓
E	Council's website		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F	Letter/flier to specific area including community noticeboards		✓				
G	Council-organised meeting					✓	✓
H	Media release/advertisement					✓	✓
J	Input via working party (if a relevant committee exists)				✓	✓	✓
K	Personal contact or meetings on site			✓	✓	✓	✓

L	Attendance at community-organised meetings (if organised)			✓	✓	✓	✓
M	Feedback at council offices/ service centres	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
P	Notification on-site (if appropriate)	✓	✓	✓			✓

- specific consultation requirements apply in relation to statutory consultation and land use planning matters.

11. How council will plan a consultation for a Category 6 Project

Step 1. Identify the category of the issue, project or policy – according to the list in the ‘When Council will Consult’ section.

Step 2 Identify the scope of the decision, taking into account what data exists, what research is required and what is to be consulted on.

Step 3 Consult with internal stakeholders, who may:

- need to have input in relation to the proposal/may have actions assigned to them
- be affected by the decision
- have conducted consultation on a similar issue or with the same sector of the community
- have expertise in conducting consultations or elements thereof (e.g. council’s sustainable communities planner/social planner)
- be willing to participate in an internal working group.

Advise the following stakeholders of the proposal and proposed consultation:

- Councillors
- staff within the organization:
- advisory committees of council or working parties

Step 4 Identify the external stakeholders who may be affected or have an interest in the decision.

External stakeholders may include:

- Residents in the immediate area
- Ratepayers (including those who do not live in the shire)
- Service users
- Business operators, Business and Tourism Associations and relevant industry associations.
- Investors/developers (re: infrastructure requirements)
- Local community groups and organizations
- Healthcare providers

- Partner agencies (e.g. catchment management authorities)
- Advocacy groups (e.g. welfare organizations/environment groups)
- Special interest groups (e.g. commuters)
- Utilities (water, electricity, gas)
- Emergency services (Police, SES, Ambulance)
- Australian and State Government departments

Step 5 Identify the goal of the consultation, including the level of participation. Refer to the Level of Participation section of this document.

Consider establishing a working group, including members of the community.

Step 6 Select the consultation method/s appropriate for the category of issue and suited to the identified stakeholders. Refer to the 'Methods of communication and consultation' section of this document and the consultation category/methods matrix.

Step 7 Consider privacy implications of submissions: e.g. Whether submitters' names and addresses will be included in public documents such as council reports.

Step 8 Identify the timeframe for the consultation and decision-making.

Step 9 Ensure that adequate resources will be committed to the consultation process. This includes:

- identify who will manage/auspice the consultation process and who will do the work.

Step 10 The details identified via the steps above form the basis of an implementation plan. Present this to the relevant manager for approval.

Step 11 When communicating about a forthcoming consultation, develop a one-page summary (for use in advertisements, letters, fliers, etc.) stating:

- Purpose of the consultation – refer to step 5
- Background (summarized)– what is proposed
- Contact person/s
- Closing date for public comments.

Step 12 After the consultation has been finalized and the decision made, those who provided feedback or had input into the process must be informed of the final decision and the reasons for it.

Step 13 Review consultation process: what worked/what didn't work.

12. How council uses feedback and input from consultations

In preparing a proposal, council may have already consulted with a sector of the community and developed a background paper or draft document, which council will adopt for public comment.

Following the designated closing date for feedback or input, council will:

- Analyse the feedback received;
- Consider the feedback in the context of the other data, advice, strategies and/or legislation that is relevant to this matter;
- Review the proposal in the context of concerns or suggestions expressed. There is a commitment from the council that it will respect the diverse range of interests and views which may exist around a particular issue and make genuine attempts to resolve conflicts, while recognizing that it has the ultimate decision-making role.
- A report will be presented to council for a decision.
- The decision will be reviewed once implemented, at a time to be determined.
- Agenda items will incorporate the level of consultation required.

Related Policies	
Related Procedures/Documents	LPP 014
Delegated Level	
Adopted	OM 26 June 2014
Reviewed	OM 25 January 2018