

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Policy Type	Council Policy
Responsible Department	Community Development
Responsible Officer	General Manager Community
Related Policies and Procedures	Community Engagement Staff Toolkit (Engaging Outside the Square)
Date adopted	C306, 27 April 2010
Last Council review	C1193, 28 July 2014
Next review date	July 2017
ECM Doc Set I.D.	2289322

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Unley is committed to effective, ongoing and timely community engagement and upholds the view that the involvement of the community in planning and decision making is fundamental to effective local governance.

Council will be proactive in informing and seeking the views of its community in order to understand concerns and aspirations, support mutually beneficial relationships with the community and encourage active citizenship.

2. COMMUNITY GOAL

Goal 2 – Living: Our path to a vibrant city;
 Strategic Objective 2.5 – Collaborative and engaged community.

3. PRINCIPLES

The following Principles underpin the City of Unley’s approach to community engagement and public consultation:

Community participation – Council is committed to informing and involving the community in key decisions affecting a local area. Council will seek and encourage contributions from people who may be impacted by a decision.

Transparent and adequate information – Transparency is demonstrated through the distribution of information that is accessible, relevant, timely and balanced in order for people to express informed opinions. Community members are provided with adequate information about the community engagement process, including the context, timelines and outcomes.

Integrity – Engagement processes are authentic and conducted with objectivity and an honest intention to gather feedback and views to inform outcomes.

Mutual respect – The City of Unley provides respectful and safe engagement spaces, where people can contribute and listen to others. Council encourages mutual respect for the aspirations and opinions of all community members (noting that opinions will vary).

Accessibility – Community members can participate through inclusive community engagement processes that are visible, well-promoted and provide a variety of appropriate and accessible ways for people to have their say.

Diverse and representative – A range of perspectives are invited into the engagement process to assist Council achieve balanced and considered decision-making.

Two-way communication – Council ensures that those who have participated in community engagement activities are informed about how valued community input has been considered in the decision-making process.

Quality planning and processes – Planning is undertaken to ensure engagement processes are well designed to appropriately match the issue and audience, and that engagement activities are scheduled to enable community consideration and input.

Continuous learning – Established evaluation practices ensure Council learns from the community engagement process and is able to monitor and evaluate success to facilitate ongoing improvement.

4. POLICY OBJECTIVE

The objectives of this policy are:

- (a) To fulfil the statutory requirements of the *Local Government Act 1999* Section 50.
- (b) To enable the community to contribute to decision making that affects them in a meaningful and appropriate way through an open and accountable process.
- (c) To promote equity through optimal access to engagement opportunities.

5. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

- (a) **Community** means “the public” and includes ratepayers, residents and all people who live, work, study, conduct business or use the services, facilities and public places in the City of Unley. These people are often referred to as “stakeholders” in the affairs of Council.
- (b) **Communication** in this Policy, means conveying information to another party.
- (c) **The Act** means the *Local Government Act 1999*, as amended.
- (d) **Community Engagement:** The Local Government endorsed definition of community engagement is “*involving the community in decision making processes, which is critical in the successful development of acceptable policies and decisions in government, the private sector and the community*”.

- (e) **Community Consultation** is part of community engagement and is a planned process by which the Council formally invites its constituents and stakeholders to comment about matters upon which Elected Members are to deliberate. This means providing information to the community and eliciting opinions and comments from members of the public, for the Council to consider. The final decision regarding such matters rests with Council.

The Administration may also consult with the community regarding specific aspects of programs to be implemented, within the framework of Council's decisions and the provisions of the *Local Government Act* or other legislation. The final decision regarding these operational matters rests with the Chief Executive Officer

- (f) **Council** means the elected member body representing the City of Unley community or staff operating under delegated authority to act on behalf of Council.

6. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

- (a) Where there are statutory requirements for consultation, these will take precedence over this policy where there is an inconsistency.
- (b) Where the Local Government Act 1999 requires that the Council follows this policy, and legislation does not specify steps to the contrary, the Council will:
- Publish in the newspaper, a notice describing the matter under consideration and inviting interested people to make a written submission within a period of no less than 21 (twenty one) calendar days, which will be stated in the notice (Section 50(4)(a)); and
 - Consider any submissions made in response to the newspaper notice
- (c) Attachment A outlines other matters where the *Local Government Act 1999* requires that community consultation be undertaken.

7. ADDITIONAL MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

This policy does not apply to Development Applications under the *Development Act 1993*.

In addition to the matters set up in the *Local Government Act 1999*, the Council may choose to follow this policy in regards to other matters. Without limiting the extent of the operation of this policy, issues warranting community consultation may include:

- Major public infrastructure developments
- The provision of services and facilities
- Traffic management
- Proposals for change

8. IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY

- (a) This policy applies to Elected Members, Council staff, contractors, agents and consultants acting on behalf of the Council.
- (b) The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for implementing community engagement and consultation programs in accordance with this policy. Guidelines and resources are to

be provided to enable staff to fulfil the consultation requirements of legislation and this policy.

9. REVIEW

It must be noted that the *Local Government Act 1999* Section 50 (6) specifies procedures for changing this policy.

10. LEGISLATION

This is a mandatory policy under Section 50 of the *Local Government Act 1999*.

11. DELEGATION

Relevant delegations under the *Local Government Act 1999* are contained in the Delegations Register.

12. AVAILABILITY

The policy is available for public inspection during normal office hours from;

Civic Centre
181 Unley Road
Unley SA 5061

A copy may be purchased for a fee as determined annually by Council.

It is also available for viewing, download and printing free of charge from the Council's website, www.unley.sa.gov.au

13. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date:	Council/Committee/Internal	Comment:
19 April 2010	City Strategy & Policy Committee 306/10	
27 April 2010	Council 644/10 & 306/10	
18 July 2011	CSP 51/11	
25 July 2011	Council 191/11	
14 May 2012	CSP 108/12	
28 May 2012	Council 420/12	
28 July 2012	Council 1193/14	Was policy number COU 11

ATTACHMENT A

The *Local Government Act 1999* requires that community consultation be undertaken in relation to the following matters and Legislative requirements must be followed in regards to:

- Composition and wards of the Council Section 12
- Status of Council or change of name Section 13 (2)
- Principal office of the Council Section 45 (3)
- Prudential requirements for certain activities Section 48(2)(d) and (5)
- Public consultation policy Section 50 (6)
- Access to meetings and documents code of practice Section 92 (5)
- Strategic management plans Section 122 (6)
- Annual Business Plans and Budgets Section 123 (3)(b)
- Basis of rating Section 151 (5)
- Basis of differential rates Section 156 (14a-14f)
- Community land: classification Section 193 (2)
- Community land: revocation of classification Section 194 (2)
- Community land: proposed management plans Section 197 (1)
- Community land: amendment or revocation of Management plans Section 198
- Community land: alienation by lease or licence Section 202(2)(3)
- Permits for business purposed (on roads) Section 223 (1)
- Planting of vegetation on roads Section 232
- Passing by-laws Section 249
- Order making policies Section 259