

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Policy/Procedure Type	Council
Responsible Department	Community & Organisational Development
Responsible Officer	Manager Customer Experience & Communications
Related Documents	Communication and Engagement Strategy 2023-27 Community Engagement Charter
Community Plan 'Towards 2050' Link	1. Community 1.5 We foster meaningful opportunities for all people to participate in community and civic life.
Date Originally Adopted	27 April 2010
Last Review Date	24 August 2026
Next Review Date	August 2030
ECM Document No.	9244312
Attachments	1. Community Engagement Requirements Table 2. Matters (In Legislative Order)

1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1. Council is committed to open, accountable and responsive decision making, which is informed by effective communication and engagement between Council and the community.
- 1.2. Including communities in decision-making processes is important to the successful development of appropriate and informed decisions and policies by Council.
- 1.3. Council's community includes people who live, work, study, own property, conduct private or government business, visit or use the services, facilities and public spaces and places of Council. Council recognises that a community may be a geographic location (community of place), a community of similar interest (community of interest) or a community of affiliation, practice or identity (such as industry or sporting clubs).
- 1.4. Section 50A of the *Local Government Act 1999* (the Act) requires Council to prepare and adopt a policy relating to community engagement for the purposes of the Act. The policy must be consistent with and comply with any requirements set out within the Community Engagement Charter (the Charter).

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This Policy applies to decisions, activities and processes undertaken by the Council, a delegate of the Council or a person exercising power on the Council's behalf, where community engagement is required to be undertaken in accordance with the Act, the Charter, or this Policy.
- 2.2. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation and application of this Policy, and where necessary reporting the outcomes of consultations to the Council. The specific delegations made under this Policy are outlined in part 7 of this Policy.
- 2.3. This Policy does not apply where the Council is exercising powers and functions under any other Act. Where there are consultation requirements under other legislation, e.g. the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*, those specific processes take precedence over this Policy.

3. PURPOSE

- 3.1. The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that Council meets its legislative obligations regarding community engagement by:
 - 3.1.1. Meeting the requirements set out in the Act and the Charter.
 - 3.1.2. Using appropriate and cost-effective engagement methods which are relevant to the specific circumstances of each decision, activity or process.
 - 3.1.3. Providing for appropriate participation by the local community, key stakeholders and interested parties.
 - 3.1.4. Using feedback to enhance decision making.
 - 3.1.5. Providing information on the reasons for a decision or actions of Council, where reasonable and appropriate.
- 3.2. This Policy is a statement of Council's general position in relation to community engagement, as required under the Act and the Charter.

4. DEFINITIONS

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Council	The Corporation of the City of Unley
Community	Council's community includes people who live, work, study, own property, conduct private or government business, visit or use the services, facilities and public spaces and places of Council. Council recognises that a community may be a geographic location (community of place), a community of similar interest (community of interest) or a community of affiliation, practice or identity (such as industry or sporting clubs).
Community Engagement	A planned process through which Council provides opportunities for the community to be informed, involved and, where appropriate, to participate in decision-making processes, policy development, service planning and project delivery. Community engagement may occur across a range of levels and may include, but is not limited to, information sharing,

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
	consultation, collaboration and participation. Community engagement may occur before, during or following a Council decision, activity or process. For the purposes of this Policy, any reference to public consultation is taken to mean community engagement.
Community Land	Community land is local government land (other than roads) that is classified as community land under section 193 of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i> . Community land is held by Council for the benefit of the community and is subject to specific statutory requirements relating to its classification, management, use and alienation.
Elected Member	A Mayor or Councillor elected to represent the City of Unley in accordance with the Local Government Act 1999
Strategic Management Plans	The collective long-term planning documents adopted by Council that lay out the council's strategic direction for a future ten-year period, including Council's Long-Term Financial Plan and Infrastructure and Asset Management Plan.
Written submission	Written communication provided to Council by an individual or organisation as part of a community engagement process, within the specified consultation period, for the purpose of complying with consultation requirements and expressing views, feedback, information or concerns on a matter under consideration.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

<u>Role</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>
Elected Members	• Responsible for the approval and adoption of this Policy • Must comply with the requirements of this Policy • Exercising Council's decision-making authority in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i> • Endorse significant community engagement activities • Must remain independent of community engagement processes and give due consideration to community input as a key factor in informed decision-making • Will consider the outcome of any community engagement process within the context of strategic planning directions for the whole Council area, resource and budgetary constraints, and broader regional or State policies where relevant
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	• Must comply with the requirements of this Policy

<u>Role</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>
Manager Customer Experience & Communications	• Responsible for the review and application of this Policy
Employees	• Must comply with the requirements of this Policy. • Will plan, promote, and conduct inclusive community engagements that fulfil legislative and policy requirements, as well as the Diversity and Inclusion Plan.
Community	• Engage on matters that affect or interest them using the mechanisms provided.

6. STATEMENT

6.1. Principles

The preparation and adoption of this Policy fulfil the Council's obligations to prepare and adopt a policy under section 50(A) of the Act. The following principles in the Charter have been considered in the preparation of this Policy:

- 6.1.1. community members should have reasonable, timely, meaningful and ongoing opportunities to gain access to information about proposed decisions, activities, processes of councils and to participate in relevant processes;
- 6.1.2. information about issues should be in plain language, readily accessible and in a form that facilitates community participation;
- 6.1.3. participation methods should seek to foster and encourage constructive dialogue, discussion and debate in relation to proposed decisions, activities and processes of councils;
- 6.1.4. participation methods should be appropriate having regard to the significance and likely impact of proposed decisions, activities and processes; and insofar as is reasonable, communities should be provided with information about how community views have been taken into account and reasons for decisions or actions of councils.

6.2. Undertaking Community Engagement

- 6.2.1. Council will undertake community engagement in accordance with the Act, the Charter and this Policy.
- 6.2.2. Council may, in its absolute discretion, determine to undertake a step or steps in addition to those set out in this Policy in relation to a matter which it is required by the Act and/or the Charter to undertake community engagement.
- 6.2.3. However, Council is not required to give prior consideration and/or to determine whether or not to undertake any additional step or steps in relation to such a matter. A compliant well-intentioned engagement that does not generate the anticipated level of engagement is not a breach of this Policy.
- 6.2.4. Council may, from time to time, alter or substitute a new policy, following community engagement.

6.3. Community Engagement Categories

The Charter addresses minimum mandatory community engagement activities for matters where the Act requires public consultation to be undertaken.

The Charter establishes different categories of consultation for matters, as follows:

- 6.3.1. Significant – **Annual business plan and rating policy:** Decisions related to a council's adoption of its annual business plan or proposed changes to the basis of its council rates; including:
 - 6.3.1.1. Adopting an Annual Business Plan - section 123(3)(b)
 - 6.3.1.2. Changes to basis of rating, declaring differential rates, imposing a separate rate, service rate or service charge, or changing the basis on which land is valued for the purpose of rating - section 151(5)(e)
- 6.3.2. Significant: Decisions that a council makes that have a significant impact on most or all ratepayers and residents, or the wider community or area; including:
 - 6.3.2.1. Representation reviews - section 12(7)
 - 6.3.2.2. Development and review of Strategic Management Plans - section 122(6)
 - 6.3.2.3. Changes to use of differential rating - section 156(4a)(b)
 - 6.3.2.4. Revocation of classification of land as community land - sections 194(2)(b)
 - 6.3.2.5. Community Land Management Plans - adoption - section 197(1)
 - 6.3.2.6. Community Land Management Plans – significant amendments - section 198(3)
 - 6.3.2.7. Alienation of community land by lease or license - section 202(2)
- 6.3.3. Standard: Decisions that a council makes that benefit from community input across the council area; including:
 - 6.3.3.1. Opening hours and place of principal office - substantial changes - section 45(3)
 - 6.3.3.2. Community Engagement Policy - section 50A(6)(b)
 - 6.3.3.3. Council behavioural support policies - section 75F(6)
 - 6.3.3.4. Access to meetings and documents - section 92(5)
 - 6.3.3.5. Power to make orders - section 259(2)(b)
- 6.3.4. Local: Decisions that impact an identifiable smaller group of residents/ratepayers or a local area; including:
 - 6.3.4.1. Proposed permit or authorisation for alteration or use of a road for business purposes when there are works and traffic impeded for more than 48 hours (with a detour in place) or where no detour will be available section 223(1)
 - 6.3.4.2. Proposed planting of vegetation on a road – significant impact - section 232(b)
- 6.3.5. Inform: Matters where councils provide information to a community impacted by a decision; including:
 - 6.3.5.1. Opening hours and place of principal office – minor changes - section 45(3)

- 6.3.5.2. Proposed permit or authorisation for alteration or use of a road for business purposes when there are works and traffic impeded for less than 48 hours and the Council ensures that a detour is in place - section 223(1)
- 6.3.5.3. Election information - section 13A (2) of the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*
- 6.3.6. The Engagement Charter Requirements (Attachment 1) to this Policy sets out the actions that Council will undertake to meet the requirements of each matter for which community engagement must be undertaken in accordance with the Act and the Charter.
- 6.4. **Charter Engagement Requirements**
 - 6.4.1. Council will comply with the minimum mandatory public consultation requirements at the least for each category of matters set out in the Charter.
 - 6.4.2. Attachment 1 sets out the engagement activities that Council will undertake to meet the public consultation requirements in the Act and the Charter.
- 6.5. **Other decisions, activities and processes**
 - 6.5.1. Council recognises there may be decisions, activities and processes where the Act and Charter are silent in relation to community engagement, but for which community engagement may nevertheless be appropriate.
 - 6.5.2. Council may undertake community engagement activities for community participation in relation to other decisions, activities or processes of the Council not specified in the Charter at its absolute discretion. However, Council is not required to give prior consideration and/or to determine whether or not to undertake any such steps in relation to these matters.

7. DELEGATIONS

- 7.1. Specific engagement activities to be undertaken in relation to any particular decision, activity or processes shall be determined on a case-by-case basis, by:
 - 7.1.1 Council, by resolution;
 - 7.1.2 the CEO;
 - 7.1.3 a delegate with the power to undertake community engagement under the Act, the Charter or this policy; or
 - 7.1.4 a delegate with power to make a decision or undertake an activity or process that requires community engagement under the Act, the Charter or this policy.
- 7.2. Council, the CEO or a delegate is not required by this policy to undertake, or to consider or determine whether to undertake, additional engagement activities or engagement methods. Such a decision is at the absolute discretion of the decision maker.

8. LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 1999 (SA)*

9. AVAILABILITY OF POLICY

9.1. The Policy is available for public inspection during normal office hours at:

The 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.

10. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date	Version No.	Comment
27 April 2010	Version 1	Council 644/10 & 306/10
25 July 2011	Version 2	Council 191/11
28 May 2012	Version 3	Council 420/12
28 July 2014	Version 4	Council 1193/14. Was policy number COU 11
24 August 2026	Version 5	C0172/26

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS TABLE

Charter requirement	Mandatory minimum actions to achieve Charter requirement	Charter Category				
		Significant ABP and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform
Website	Publish information about the matter that can be easily found on a Council website.	X	X	X	X	X
News publication	Publish information about the matter in a local news publication (print where available, but otherwise digital) that circulates in the Council area and is not produced by the Council.	X	X			
Consult with the whole Council area	Consider appropriate forms of notifications to the Council area. Consider whether additional information or notification should be made available to the community to bring their attention to the matter and to support participation.	X	X	X		
Invite submissions	Provide information about how the community can make a submission, including timeframe.	X	X			
Explain decision making process	In material prepared explain what the Council proposes to do, why it proposes to do it, and what it seeks to achieve. Explain how community feedback will inform the Council's decision.	X	X			
Seek and consider feedback from the community—significant matters	Consider how best to invite feedback from the community. Provide a minimum community engagement period of 21 days to enable the community to provide feedback. Include a summary of community engagement feedback to the Council ahead of the decision.	X	X			
Public Meeting	Hold a public meeting where the community is invited to provide submissions (written or verbal) on the matter. The public meeting may be part of a Council meeting or a separate event.	X				

Charter requirement	Mandatory minimum actions to achieve Charter requirement	Charter Category				
		Significant ABP and Rating Policy	Significant	Standard	Local	Inform
Council meeting invitation	Invite people who have made a written submission to attend a Council meeting to speak to their submission before the decision is made.		X			
Seek and consider feedback from the community	Consider how best to invite feedback from the community Provide information about how community feedback will inform the Council's decision. Ensure an appropriate period of time is provided to enable communities to provide feedback.			X	X	
Consult with local community	Consider appropriate forms of notifications to the area within the Council affected by the Council decision or action. Consider whether additional information or notification should be made available to the local community to bring their attention to the matter and to support participation.				X	
Information to the whole Council area	Provide information to the whole of the Council's community if it may be directly affected by the Council decision or action.					X
Information to local community	Provide information to the local community that may be directly affected by the Council decision or action.					X

MATTERS (IN LEGISLATIVE ORDER)

Category	Matter	Act Reference	Description
Significant	Representation reviews	Section 12(7) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	Consultation that a council undertakes when it is doing a review of its internal representation (including possible changes to its ward structure, number of council members, change of council or ward names).
Inform	Minor changes to opening hours and place of council offices	Section 45(3) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	A council's decision about the manner, places and times at which its offices will be open to the public, where the impact of the decision would be minor.
Standard	Substantial changes to the opening hours and place of council offices	Section 45(3) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	A council's decision about the manner, places and times at which its offices will be open to the public, where the impact of the decision would be substantial.
Standard	Community engagement policy	Section 50A(6)(b) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	Councils must consult before adopting its community engagement policy, which is the document that demonstrated how the council will consult in accordance with this charter and on other matters.
Standard	Council behavioural support policies	Section 75(F)(6) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	Consultation that a council undertakes when it is proposing to adopt behavioural support policies.
Standard	Access to meetings and documents	Section 92(5) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	How councils ensure that council documents are made available and accessible to community members.
Significant	Strategic Management Plans	Section 122(6) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	The development and review of a council's strategic management plan. Strategic management plans lay out the council's strategic directions for a future ten-year period, including council's long-term financial plan and infrastructure and asset management plan.
Significant—annual business plan and rating policy	Annual Business Plan	Section 123(3)(b) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	Adopting an annual business plan. Annual business plans set out the decisions a council makes each year on the rates and income they will receive and how they will spend these funds.
Significant—annual business plan and rating policy	Basis of rating	Section 151(5)(e) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	Consultation that a council takes when it is proposing changes to the basis of its council rates, including declaring differential rates; imposing a separate rate, service rate or service charge; changing the basis on which land is valued for the purposes of rating.
Significant	Differential rating and special adjustments	Section 156 (14a)(b) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	Consultation that a council takes when it is proposing changes to its use of differential rating.
Significant	Revocation of classification of land as community land—in all other cases	Section 194(2)(b) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	Consultation that councils must undertake before revoking the community land status of any land that is community land.
Significant	Community Land Management Plans—adoption	Section 197(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	Before a council adopts a community land management plan, it must undertake consultation.
Significant	Community Land Management Plans—	Section 198(3) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	If a council amends a community land management plan, and the amendment

Category	Matter	Act Reference	Description
	significant amendments		has a significant impact on the community, it must undertake consultation.
Significant	Alienation of community land by lease or licence	Section 202(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	Consultation that a council undertakes when it is proposing to lease or licence community land.
Inform	Council is proposing a permit or authorisation for alternation of a road or use of roads for business purposes	Section 223(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	Consultation that a council takes when there are works on a road that require the council's permit and authorisation, and where traffic will be impeded for less than 48 hours and the council ensures that a detour is in place.
Local	Council is proposing a permit or authorisation for alternation of a road or use of roads for business purposes	Section 223(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	Consultation that a council takes when there are works on a road that require the council's permit and authorisation, and where traffic will be impeded for more than 48 hours (with a detour in place) or where no detour will be available.
Local	Consultation on proposed planting of vegetation on a road	Section 232(b) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	Consultation that a council takes when it proposes or authorises or permits for planting street trees or other vegetation on council roads, if the planting may have a significant impact on residents, nearby business or advertisers in the area.
Standard	Power to make orders	Section 259(2)(b) of the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i>	Councils must have policies in place on how they make orders relating to hazards on land adjoining a public place and the inappropriate use of a caravan or vehicle as a place of habitation and must consult before they adopt these policies.
Inform	Election information	Section 13A(2) of the <i>Local Government (Elections) Act 1999</i>	Councils must provide information, education and publicity for local government elections.