

Community Engagement Policy

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| Policy Number | C2 |
| Responsible Officers | Deputy Chief Executive Officer |
| Policy Adopted | April 2000 |
| Last revised date | June 2022 |
| Minutes reference | 2022/06-06 |
| Next review date | June 2026 |
| Applicable Legislation | <i>Local Government Act 1999.</i> |
| Reference | International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) public participation framework |

1. POLICY PRINCIPLE

Wakefield Regional Council is committed to open, accountable and responsive decision making, driven by effective community engagement.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVE

To outline the process for establishing partnerships between Council and the community, and encouraging community involvement in planning, decision making and delivery of services. The *Local Government Act 1999* requires this Policy to identify steps Council intends to take where the Act requires consultation. The specific consultation requirements of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* are not included in this Policy.

3. POLICY DETAIL

3.1 Definitions

IAP2: International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) - an international member association which promotes good public participation or community engagement practice across the world. This includes a set of core values for developing and implementing public participation processes.

Communication: involves providing meaningful information in a timely, relevant and accessible manner and Council will use multiple ways to communicate with the community. This may include: newsletters, advertisements, media releases, fact sheets, brochures, letters and/or displays in public places.

Engagement: is a two-way process, providing opportunities to clarify information, raise issues and discuss ideas, options and views. This may include via community panels, focus groups, workshops, community meetings, surveys and/or calling for public comment or representation to Council.

Stakeholders: those who have interest in, may influence, or be impacted by, Council decisions/actions.

3.2 Aims

Council aims to ensure that appropriate and cost-effective methods are used to inform and involve the local community, key stakeholders and interested parties, and will do this through an appropriate mix of communication and community engagement. To help make better decisions which reflect the interests of the community, Council supports the core values and models developed by the IAP2.

To deliver effective community engagement, Council will:

- Identify potential stakeholders in each specific circumstance.
- Ensure information is easily understood and accessible to identified stakeholders, and include contact details for obtaining further information in all communications.
- Provide a range of opportunities for people to access information and to be involved, taking account of barriers such as language, geographical distance, disability or cultural issues.
- Outline the consultation process for each specific topic, and identify what aspects of the decision can be influenced by community engagement and those that are 'givens' – i.e. matters over which the community has no influence.
- Listen and respond to community views in a balanced way, taking account of all submissions made by various stakeholders.
- Keep records and provide feedback about the reasons for decisions where relevant.
- Review and evaluate community engagement activities to promote ongoing improvement in the way council involves the community in its decision-making processes.

3.3 Decision Making

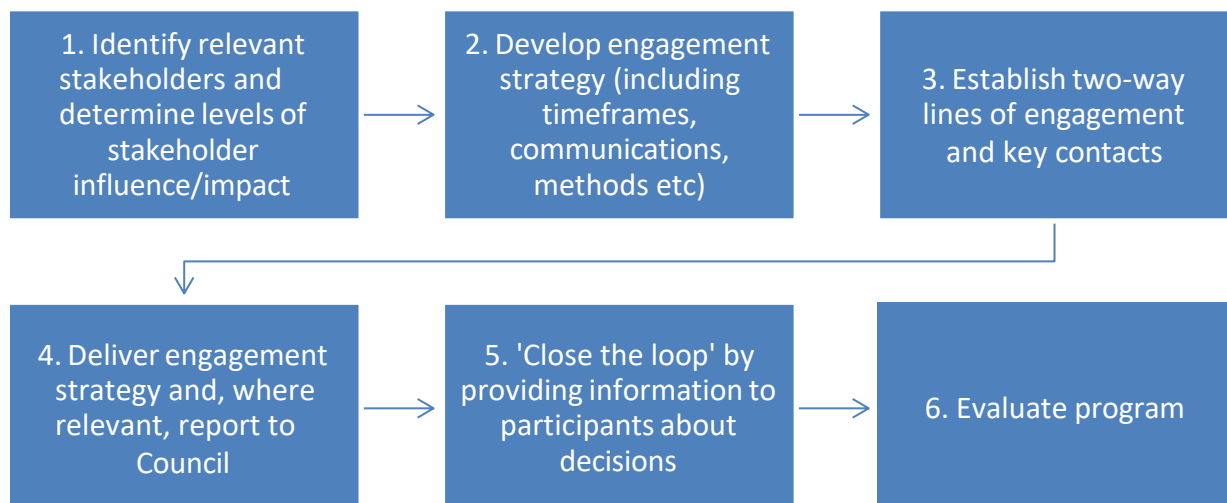
Community engagement is an important aspect of Council's decision-making process. Council seeks to take account of the views and aspirations of the community and other stakeholders, and balance those with other influences such as budgetary or legislative constraints.

In both shaping and delivering its strategic objectives, Council considers the feedback of the community and other key stakeholders, including:

- External: Wakefield community and local groups; residents; ratepayers; visitors; Federal and State agencies, Local Government authorities, regional organisations;
- Internal: Elected Members, Council/Committees, employees, advisory and consultative groups.

3.4 Engagement Procedure

The following approach will be taken to community engagement:



3.5 Engagement Strategies

For a number of Council activities there are minimum standard approaches:

1. **Operational Services:** information on operational matters already approved by Council that may require advice to residents will, as a minimum, be provided through local newsletters in a timely way.
2. **Project work affecting several residents:** as a minimum, letter addressed to individual residents with information and providing contact person(s) to obtain further information or to make a submission.
3. **Project work affecting several streets:** as a minimum, letterbox drop, with information and providing contact person(s) to obtain further information or to make a submission. If appropriate, individual contact with stakeholders.
4. **Matters affecting broader community or likely to attract considerable community interest:** (for example, strategic, planning or, regional issues) as a minimum, local paper advertisement or media release, with information and providing contact person(s) to obtain further information or to make a submission; invitations to make submissions; displays at Council office or other appropriate public places; Individual consultation and comment sheets to enable stakeholder feedback to be recorded.

3.6 Availability of the Policy

This Policy will be available for inspection at Council's offices during ordinary business hours. Copies will be provided to interested parties upon request at the Council offices. The Policy will be available on Council's website.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

This Policy will apply to Council members, staff, contractors, and agents or consultants acting on behalf of Council. The Chief Executive Officer is accountable for:

- Implementing communication and consultation initiatives in accordance with this Policy;
- Reporting on outcomes of these initiatives to Council, to inform the decision-making process; and
- Reporting on the review and evaluation of the policy.

5. REVIEW:

This Policy shall be reviewed every 48 months, or more frequently if required by legislation or Council.

Document history:

| Version | Date | Description of change |
|---------|---------------------|--|
| 1.0 | April 2000 - Min349 | New document |
| 2.0 | Mar 2010 - Min 211 | Wording change as recommended by LGA |
| 3.0 | Dec 2012 - Min149 | Insert note re Development Act on page 1 and minor rewording |
| 4.0 | Sep 2014 - Min 69 | Minor wording deletion |
| 5.0 | Nov 2014 | Policy numbering system changed and inclusion of this document history table |
| 6.0 | Sept 2017 | Wording changes – to simplify and reflect greater commitment to engagement of the community. Simplification, change of review timeframe, addition of principle. Change of policy name. Reference to the IAP2 core values. New template |
| 7.0 | April 2021 | Incorporating changes as part of the public health emergency declared on 15 March 2020 (COVID-19) |
| 8.0 | June 2022 | Removing the public health emergency declaration, update reformed legislation and removing the public consultation requirement of notice in Council's newsletter to reflect modern practices. |