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## 1. Statement

Ipswich City Council is committed to meaningful engagement with the community on issues affecting the city, and on local issues that significantly impact on the community. Community engagement is the foundation of sustainable decision-making, and is mutually beneficial to the community and council.

This policy confirms council's commitment to section 4(2)(c) of the *Local Government Act 2009* ~~(the Act)~~ which prescribes community engagement as a legislative requirement to ensure *democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement* in government decision making.

## 2. Purpose and Principles

The purpose of this policy is to provide council with a framework to guide a consistent, transparent and effective approach to community engagement.

The following principles guide council's approach to community engagement:

- We know why we are engaging and we communicate this clearly
- We deliberately include as many people as we can
- We aim to be inclusive and connect with those hardest to reach
- We are sensitive to history and know the context
- Whenever possible we engage early on challenges and not just solutions
- We genuinely listen at every stage and we keep coming back
- We are relevant and purposeful.

## 3. Strategic Plan Links

This policy relates to Ipswich City Council's strategic plan, *Advance Ipswich 2015*, specifically the following themes:

- Caring for the Community
- Listening, Leading and Financial Management

## 4. Regulatory Authority

*Local Government Act 2009* (Qld).

## 5. Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors, council staff (full-time, part-time, temporary and casual), and consultants and contractors engaged by, or acting on behalf of, council.

This policy does not apply to the responsibilities, commitments or actions of other levels of government.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

Implementation of this policy is a whole-of-council responsibility. Specifically, the following roles include the responsibilities listed below.

### Councillors

Councillors are responsible for advocating for quality community engagement activities and considering community feedback when making decisions. Councillors will be regularly briefed on current and upcoming community engagement activities. Councillors ~~and will be~~ invited to community engagement events and activities will be able to observe and listen to community feedback.

Community members can contact Councillors directly and their contact details are available on council's website. Councillors can help constituents who raise questions or concerns about community engagement activities by referring them to the appropriate community engagement channels relevant to particular projects.

Councillors may also seek input from their constituents through engagement practices of their own volition however this cannot parallel or seek to affiliate with council projects and community engagement activities.

### Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO is responsible for advocating for quality community engagement activities and understanding the different roles and responsibilities outlined in this policy. The CEO should be aware of current and upcoming community engagement activities and consider community engagement feedback when making decisions.

### General Managers

General Managers are responsible for having a robust understanding of council's Community Engagement Framework, identifying strategic community engagement opportunities, resourcing departmental community engagement activities by allocating staff time and budgets and considering community engagement feedback when making decisions.

### Branch and Section Managers

Branch and Section Managers are responsible for having a good level of understanding of council's Community Engagement Framework, advocating for quality community engagement activities, supporting staff involvement in community engagement processes, approving community engagement plans and budgets and reporting project-based community engagement findings to the Executive Leadership Team and Councillors.

### Council officers who undertake or are involved with community engagement activities

Council officers who undertake or are involved with community engagement activities are responsible for having a good level of understanding of council's Community Engagement Framework and adhere to community engagement principles and processes.

### **Community Engagement Team**

Council's Community Engagement Team is responsible for having a robust understanding of, and implementing, maintaining and continuously improving, council's Community Engagement Framework. The Community Engagement Team is responsible for providing guidance to council officers about community engagement principles, processes, resources and reporting. The Community Engagement Team is also responsible for monitoring community engagement processes across council, providing updates to the Executive Leadership Team and Councillors and building community engagement skills and capabilities across the organisation.

### **7. Our Community Engagement Process**




Community engagement is a ~~two-way~~ process of involving the community in decision-making. This ~~which~~ ranges from sharing and consulting, to deliberating and collaborating with the community.

Council has a clear process for designing and delivering community engagement. This process has five key stages: Understand, Plan, Deliver, Report and Evaluate as shown in the below figure.



## 8. Forms of Engagement

Recognising that no two issues are the same and that different issues will seek the input of community and stakeholders to varying degrees, council applies the Ontario Public Engagement Framework. The Ontario Public Engagement Framework guides the level of influence that community and stakeholders will have in a decision making process.

SHARE	<p><b>Council informs the community about its initiatives</b></p> 	<p><b>Commitment:</b> Ipswich community members receive information about council services, projects, plans or decisions in a way that is accessible to them</p> <p><b>Process:</b> This is one-way communication</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Fact sheets, Websites, Corporate documents, Speeches, Public presentations, Media releases</p>
CONSULT	<p><b>Council gathers views from the community on an issue, policy, development or decision</b></p> 	<p><b>Commitment:</b> Ipswich community members have opportunities to weigh-in on a matter of interest</p> <p><b>Process:</b> Participants advocate for their views on a subject</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Surveys, Focus groups, Public meetings, Interviews</p>
DELIBERATE	<p><b>Council works with the community in varying degrees of depth to identify an issue and/or develop solutions</b></p> 	<p><b>Commitment:</b> Ipswich community members are involved to varying degrees <i>From</i> Identifying and understanding issues; <i>To</i> Developing a strategy that council commits to deliver</p> <p><b>Process:</b> Participants find common ground and collectively arrive at an agreement</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Advisory panels, Reference groups, Consultative committees and workshops, Deliberative forums</p>
COLLABORATE	<p><b>Council works with the community to define an issue and develop and deliver solutions</b></p> 	<p><b>Commitment:</b> Ipswich community members work with council to define an issue, develop solutions and share in the delivery of solutions</p> <p><b>Process:</b> Participants and stakeholders share decision-making and the implementation of solutions</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Working groups, Joint projects, Multi-stakeholder initiatives, Partnerships</p>

In addition to the example forms of engagement outlined in the above table, council will use its online community engagement website *Shape Your Ipswich* and other relevant and appropriate digital solutions to engage with the community.

**9. Key Stakeholders**

The following will be consulted during the review process for this policy:

- The CEO and General Managers.

**10. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The effectiveness of this policy can be measured by:

- Demographically broad and diverse community participation in community engagement activities
- Annual growth in the number of council community engagement activities
- Annual number of council decisions informed by community input
- Analytics regarding community support and satisfaction with community engagement processes and activities

**11. Definitions**

Community	A group of any size whose members reside in the same locality, share common characteristics (e.g. age, sex, ethnic origin, faith), interest and/or cause. People can belong to several different communities at any one time.
Community Engagement	A process by which community and council work together to facilitate community input into council decision-making.
Community Engagement Framework	The suite of council documents which outline council’s vision and commitment to engaging with the community, detail the community engagement roles and responsibilities across Council and the various community engagement processes, tools and resources.
Councillors	All elected representatives including the Mayor.
Ontario Public Engagement Framework	The public engagement approach utilised by the Government of Ontario, Canada. The Ontario Public Engagement Framework is similar to the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum, developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2).

**12. Policy Owner**

The General Manager (Community, Cultural and Economic Development Department) is the policy owner and the ~~Manager~~ (Community Engagement and Development Manager) is responsible for authoring and reviewing this policy.