



5. Community and Customer Focus

5.1 Community Consultation Policy (Non Planning Matters)

27 August 2009

This policy was adopted by Council to set governing principles in place that align the strategic direction of the organisation with community values and aspirations.

Objectives

The objective of this policy is to provide guidance to Councillors and Officers in planning, implementing and reviewing community consultation for key projects and policy development. Such a framework provides a basis for informed decision-making, post consultation analysis and Council-wide learning.

Policy

The following principles shall apply to Shire consultation processes:

1. Commitment

Council is committed to providing leadership and a strong commitment to information, consultation and active participation in policy-making and key projects.

2. Rights

The community of Augusta-Margaret River has a right to access information, provide feedback, be consulted and actively participate in policy-making and key projects. Council's obligations to respond to the community when exercising these rights will be clearly stated in specific consultation processes.

3. Clarity

Objectives for, and limits to, information, consultation and active participation during policy-making and key projects will be defined from the outset. The respective roles and responsibilities of the community (including individuals and groups) and Council (including Councillors and officers) will be clear to all. Council will ensure there is clarity in relation to who will make final decisions, and how and when.

4. Methodology

The approach for specific consultations will be tailored to the target audiences and consider all other factors outlined in this policy.

5. Time

Consultation will be undertaken as early in the policy process as possible to allow a greater range of policy solutions to emerge and to raise the chances of successful implementation. Adequate time will be made available for consultation to be effective.

6. Objectivity

Information provided by Council during policy-making and key projects will be objective, complete and accessible. All those involved in a consultation process will have equal treatment when exercising their rights of access to information and participation.

7. Resources

Council will ensure adequate financial, human and technical resources are available to make a consultation initiative effective. The allocation of resources will be considered in relation to broader budgetary restraints and the implications to existing priorities. Council will support its officers in consultation initiatives.

8. Coordination

Consultation on specific policy-making and key projects will be coordinated across Council to enhance knowledge management, ensure policy coherence, avoid duplication and reduce the risk of “consultation fatigue” within the community.

9. Accountability

Council will be accountable for the use made of input from a consultation process. Council will ensure consultation processes are open, transparent and amenable to external scrutiny and review.

10. Evaluation

Council will actively and openly evaluate its consultation processes and practices in policy-making and key projects. The results of evaluation will directly impact upon future consultation initiatives.

Measures of success of consultation will include assessments of whether:

- a. The interests of all parties have been served;
- b. Expectations concerning the process have been met;
- c. Consensus, consent and commitment have emerged;
- d. The process has encouraged generation of the best options;
- e. Objective criteria have been used to assess the different options under consideration;
- f. Understanding has been enhanced;

- g. Relationships between Council and the community and within the community have been enhanced;
and
- h. The decision resulting from the consultation has been stable and enduring.

Application

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with the Council, CEO and staff of the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River. The Policy is to be reviewed every three years.

Adopted by Council	Date 27 August 2009 (OM0908/022)
Last reviewed	Date: