District Council of
Loxton Waikerie

PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Responsible Officer/s	Community Interaction and Promotion Officer Commercial and Community Services
Relevant Legislation / Documents	Local Government Act 1999, Section 50 South Australian Community Engagement Charter Community Engagement Framework
Adopted	20 May 2026
Reviewed	20 May 2026
Next Review	18 March 2028

A. Purpose

Council is committed to open, accountable, and responsive decision making, which is informed by effective communication and engagement between Council and the community.

Council acknowledges that the community has a right to be involved in, be informed of, and provide their feedback on decisions that affect them.

Council strives for transparency in decision making and communication about decisions made. By consultation and engaging the community on areas of interest, the community should feel greater confidence in Council and its responsive decision making.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Shape the way Council conducts consultation with the community,
- Promote the opportunity for participation within various Council projects,
- Educate the community on the types of issues that their feedback can influence and strengthen the relationship between Council and the community.

B. Objective

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Council meets both its legislative obligations in regard to public consultation, and its social responsibilities relating to community engagement by:

- Using appropriate and cost-effective methods of engagement which are relevant to the specific circumstances of each project and engagement topic,
- Informing, involving, collaborating, and empowering the local community, key stakeholders and interested parties,

- Maintaining transparency about the degree of influence the community will be able to have on the decision made for each project or engagement topic,
- Using inclusive, representative, and accessible approaches to ensure all members within the community have access to the same engagement,
- Using feedback to enhance decision making, and
- Evaluating the successfulness of each engagement activity and tailoring subsequent engagement activities to ensure continual improvement

C. Policy

1. Scope

This policy applies to Council Members sitting as the elected body, Council employees, contractors, agents, and consultants acting on behalf of Council.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of the Public Consultation and Community Engagement Policy, establishing consultation level or degree of engagement, reporting outcomes of consultation/engagement activities to the Council, reviewing the value of the policy, and determining elements within that process where Council has delegated responsibility.

For the purposes of this Policy, and to clarify how Council defines and undertakes its collaboration with the community, the following definitions apply:

- **Public Consultation** – the formal process undertaken by Council to seek feedback from the community on matters where consultation is required under legislation as part of Council's decision-making responsibilities.
- **Community Engagement** – the process undertaken by Council to connect with and seek input from the community on matters that are not subject to legislated consultation requirements, but are of interest or relevance to residents, and where community feedback has the potential to inform or influence outcomes.

2. Policy Statement

The preparation and adoption of this policy fulfils the Council's obligations under section 50(1) of the *Local Government Act 1999*. Section 50 provides that:

- The Council must set out the steps that the Council will follow in cases where the Local Government Act requires consultation on a matter, and
- The Council may set out the steps that Council will following in other cases involving Council's decision-making.

In addition, under the Local Government Act Council has the following obligations where it is required by law to follow its public consultation policy.

- Council must provide interested persons with a reasonable opportunity to make submissions regarding relevant matters
- Council must publish a notice in a newspaper circulating in the area and on the Council's website, describing the matter under consideration and invite interested persons to make submissions within a period (which must be at least 21 days) stated in the notice
- Council must consider any submission received from the public during the prescribed consultation period.

Council may, from time to time, amend this policy or adopt a new policy. Where significant changes are proposed, Council must submit the proposed amendments to a public consultation process.

Other sections of the Local Government Act also refer to consultation requirements and, in some instances, prescribe specific actions that a council must undertake (see Specified Consultation Requirements and Community Engagement Charter below).

Where consultation is required under other legislation applicable to Council, such as the Development Act 1993, those specific statutory requirements will prevail over this policy in the instance of any inconsistency.

3. Specific Consultation Requirements

Under the Local Government Act, Council is required to undertake specified types or minimum levels of consultation in relation to the following matters (among others):

Matter	Legislation
Determining the manner, place and times of its principal office	Section 45
Adopting or carrying a Public Consultation policy	Section 50
Altering a Code of Practice relating to the principles, policies and procedures that Council will apply to enable public access to Council and Committee Meetings, their minutes and release of documents	Section 92
Adopting Strategic Management Plans	Section 122
Excluding land from classification as community land	Section 193
Revoking the classification as community land	Section 194
Adopting, amending or revoking a management plan for community land	Section 197
Amending or revoking a management plan for community land	Section 198
Alienating of community land where the management plan does not allow it	Section 202
Alienating roads	Section 223
Planting vegetation where it will have a significant impact of residents, the proprietors or nearby residents	Section 232
Carrying out representation reviews	Section 12(5)
Considering a change of status of Council or name change	Section 13
Making Bylaws	Section 249
Making Orders	Section 259

Details of the specific requirements under these sections are detailed within the specified sections of the Local Government Act.

4. Community Engagement Charter

In recognition that matters requiring consultation under the Local Government Act 1999 (SA) may vary in their scale, significance and impact on the community, Council will comply with the requirements of the *South Australian Section 50 Community Engagement Charter* (the Charter).

The Charter categorises legislated consultation matters into five groups: **Significant (Annual Business Plan and Rating Policy)**, **Significant**, **Standard**, **Local**, and **Inform**. Each category prescribes mandatory minimum engagement actions that must be undertaken to satisfy statutory requirements.

Council acknowledges that, where appropriate, it may undertake additional engagement activities beyond the prescribed minimum requirements to ensure the community is provided with a meaningful opportunity to contribute to decisions that may affect them.

5. Consultation Methods

Depending on the nature, scale and significance of the matter, Council may utilise one or a combination of the following methods to consult with or engage the community:

- Online feedback tools on Council's community engagement website
- Media releases distributed to appropriate media outlets
- Active and passive use of Council's website and social media platforms
- Publication in Council's regular newsletter
- Written correspondence to residents, property owners, stakeholders or affected parties
- Advertising in relevant print, digital or broadcast media outlets
- Community forums, information sessions and stakeholder meetings
- Customer, community or stakeholder surveys
- Static and non-static displays, such as information boards or electronic signs at Council offices, libraries or other public locations
- Community group presentations or representations at Council workshops
- Pop-up engagement activities or street stalls

Outlined in Council's Community Engagement Framework document, a spectrum of public participation also informs Council's community engagement activities, and provides a structure for levels of engagement based on the community's potential for impact on a decision; Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate & Empower.

6. Procedure

To fulfil the requirements of this Policy, Council will undertake the following actions:

As a minimum, Council will publish a notice in a local newspaper circulating within the Riverland area describing the matter for which public consultation is required and inviting interested persons to make written submissions within a period of not less than twenty-one (21) days from the date of publication.

All public notices inviting submissions will advise interested persons of their right to indicate whether they wish to appear before Council, either personally or through a representative, to present their submission.

Council will consider all submissions received as part of its decision-making process and will have regard to any relevant legislative requirements. Where an interested person does not request to appear before Council, submissions will be summarised in a report to Council, including the number of submissions received and their general intent (for or against the proposal).

In addition to the minimum statutory requirements, Council may utilise other consultation and engagement methods as outlined in this Policy. Any additional measures undertaken will be at Council's discretion and will be determined having regard to the nature of the matter, the level of community interest, and the resources available.

D. Availability

This Policy will be available for inspection at the Council Offices at Loxton or Waikerie during ordinary business hours at no charge.

Copies of this Policy will also be available from Councils website: www.loxtonwaikerie.sa.gov.au or postal copies may be obtained from the Council Office free of charge.

E. Document history and version control

Date	Version	Authorisation	Amendment Details
18/03/2026	1	Council Meeting – draft endorsed for public consultation	New draft created, combining the existing separate Public Consultation and Community Engagement Policies, addition of community charter information
20/05/2026	1	Council Meeting – final policy endorsed following public consultation	Addition of 'non-static displays' under '5. Consultation Methods'.