Council Policy

POL-C-153 Stakeholder and Community Engagement

1. OBJECTIVE

The City of Swan (the City) is committed to engaging with the community to better understand its needs and aspirations and to encourage participation in decision making.

Through a coordinated and consistent approach to Stakeholder management and community engagement, the City aims to:

- enhance its reputation as open, accountable and adaptable;

- create opportunities to engage with difficult to reach sections of the community;

- build community capacity for self-reliance and contributions to the greater good;

- foster a sense of belonging in the community;

- ensure services to the community are effective, efficient and meet community needs;

- ensure the outcomes of community engagement are considered and duly influence policy, strategy, design and partnership development;

- assist in the resolution of conflict and tensions; and

- provide an early sign of emerging issues, allowing the City to deal with them proactively.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Stakeholder and community engagement are fundamental aspects of the City's role and is an essential element in the planning and delivery of community-focused services. Quality engagement is an essential foundation of good governance.

The City is committed to inclusive, meaningful and relevant engagement with its community, recognising its obligations under the *Local Government Act 1995* as they pertain to participation, consultation and engagement.

This policy and the associated Stakeholder Engagement Management Plan and toolkit clearly outline the City's commitment to community engagement, including the values and principles that underpin improving the quality of life for our community.

Community engagement provides opportunities for people to give back to their own communities through their involvement and empowerment, leading to a stronger sense of community ownership and a sense of belonging; both of which are essential to social cohesion and sustainability.

2.1 Definitions and Application

a) For the purposes of this policy:

    i. 'Community Engagement' is any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision making and uses public input to make decisions (*International Association of Public Participation - IAP2*);

ii. '<u>Community</u>' refers to individuals or groups residing, working or operating in the City of Swan Local Government Area (LGA).

iii. '<u>Stakeholder'</u> refers to any individual, group, agency or organisation that has a relationship with the City or is impacted by decisions of the City. 'Community' is a subset of 'Stakeholder'

b) This policy applies to City employees and to consultants engaged by the City. It also recognises the important role Councillors play in facilitating dialogue and engagement with their constituents.

2.2   Principles and Values

a) The City recognises the full spectrum of engagement activities from inform and consult, through to involve, collaborate and empower as advocated by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2).

These principles have been built into the Stakeholder Engagement Management Plan and form the basis for all stakeholder and community engagement.

b) The City will take a 'principles approach' to community engagement, following the guiding principles from IAP2:

i. "<u>Integrity</u>" when there is openness and honesty about the scope and purpose of engagement;

ii. "<u>Inclusion</u>" when there is an opportunity for a diverse range of values and perspectives to be freely and fairly expressed and heard;

iii. "<u>Deliberation</u>" when there is sufficient and credible information for dialogue, choice and decisions, and when there is space to weigh options, develop common understanding and to appreciate respective roles and responsibilities; and

iv. "<u>Influence</u>" when people have input in designing how they participate, when policies and services reflect their involvement and when their impact is apparent.

The City acknowledges the community's desire to participate in decisions that affect them and will provide a means for incorporating their feedback, values, interests, needs and desires into the decisions that affect their lives.

2.3   Community Engagement Planning

a) The City will strive to build community engagement into work practices, with community engagement being an integral part of operations. The City will apply community engagement methodologies appropriate to the circumstances and desired outcomes of any specific engagement.

b) The City will work with local communities to identify the most appropriate and effective engagement methods in order to continually improve the relationship between all parties. Different community engagement techniques and communication mechanisms will be used depending upon the issue or project, its particular circumstance and the audiences and stakeholders it needs to target.

c) Deciding on the type of engagement will require an understanding of the:

i. <u>Complexity:</u> the degree of complexity of the decision that is under consideration;

ii. <u>Impact:</u> the extent to which the decision will impact on the community; and/or

iii. <u>Sensitivity:</u> the political sensitivity of the decision, or its capacity to be highly contentious.

d) The engagement level matrix contained within the Stakeholder Engagement Management Toolkit (based on the IAP2 matrix) is a tool designed to assist in the selection of the most appropriate level of engagement on the basis of complexity, impact and/or sensitivity of the decision.

e) The need for, and type of community engagement to be undertaken will be determined at the project planning stage following an analysis of the desired project outcomes. The project plan will also identify the most appropriate communication tools to ensure that the particular target group(s) are well informed of both the issue and related engagement opportunities.

2.4 Stakeholder Engagement Management Plans

a) Stakeholder Engagement Management Plans for specific projects or activities will ensure that:

   i.   the problem to be solved or opportunity to be addressed is clearly identified;

   ii. clear and achievable goals or objectives are set;

   iii. all roles in the engagement process are explicitly addressed;

   iv. key stakeholders for the project are researched and identified;

   v.   the level of community engagement integrated into the decision making process for the project is clearly explained; and

   vi. the project is captured and evaluated by internal and external stakeholders for future engagements.

2.5 Community Engagement Deployment

a) Whichever method of community engagement is chosen, the process needs to be open, responsive, genuine, inclusive, consistent and accountable.

b) To promote the deployment of inclusive and effective engagement mechanisms the City will:

   i.   make a concerted, regular effort to engage with parties for whom there are issues which may be of interest or concern;

   ii. recognise that there may be a need to employ different methods to reach different groups or individuals, and for variations in circumstance;

   iii. be mindful of the need to guard against the possibility of being unduly influenced by vocal minorities or those with vested interests;

   iv. ensure the community is given adequate time and opportunity to respond during any consultation process; and

   v.   meet its obligations giving prompt, effective feedback and follow through with any undertakings it gives or decisions made.

c) Whilst it is not possible to consult with the community on every issue, Council would like to ensure that the community is as well informed as it can be on major issues, plans and projects, and has opportunities through consultation to enhance Council's decision-making.

d) Staff undertaking community engagement activities will refer to the compliance requirements at the end of this policy and will adhere to the intent, objectives, codes or guidelines outlined within:

    i. the Strategic Community Plan;

    ii. Stakeholder Engagement Management Plan;

    iii. Employees' Code of Conduct;

    iv. Local Government Act 1995.

Document Control

Document Approvals:	
Version #	**Council Adoption**
1.	Ordinary Meeting of Council - 19 May 2010 - adopted new policy
2.	Ordinary Meeting of Council - 10 September 2014 - adopted policy for 2 years
3.	Ordinary Meeting of Council - 7 June 2017 - adopted revised policy

Document Responsibilities			
Custodian:	Coordinator, Stakeholder Relations & Engagement	**Custodian Unit:**	Marketing & Public Relations

Document Management:			
Risk Rating:	4	**Review Frequency:**	Biennial
Next Review:	2018	**ECM Ref:**	1437589

Compliance Requirements:	
Legislation:	Department of Local Government Local Laws. Local Government Operational Guidelines. No.16. November 2011. City of Swan Local Planning Scheme No 17. Planning and Development Act 2005. Gazetted: February 2008, Amended March 2016. (The sections in this document that are relevant to the Stakeholder Engagement Management Plan are the various provisions that relate to S2.4 Procedure for Making or Amending a Local Planning Policy; S5A.1.8 Advertising of structure plan, and S.9.4 Advertising of (Planning) Applications. Western Australian Local Government (Official Conduct) Amendment Act 2007. Western Australian Local Government Act 1995 s.103 'Codes of Conduct'
Industry:	Department of Local Government Elected Members' Relationship with Developers. Local Government Operational Guidelines. No.12., April 2006.
Organisational:	City of Swan, Code of Conduct for Councillors and Committee Members City of Swan, Code of Business Ethics. City of Swan, n.d., Communications Help Book. City of Swan, n.d., Strategic Community Plan. City of Swan, n.d., Stakeholder Engagement Management Plan City of Swan, n.d., Disability Access and Inclusion Plan City of Swan, n.d., Employees Code of Conduct. City of Swan, Place Plans (various). The City of Swan's values of: respect; excellence; accountability and leadership. The City of Swan's commitment to the Corporate Principles of the Business Excellence Framework, SIA Global 2007, also informs our community engagement approach
Strategic Community Plan:	G1.1 Provide accountable and transparent leadership