Port Pirie Regional Council

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY	
Type	Governance
Category	Corporate & Community
Responsible Officer	Director Corporate & Community
First Issued / Adopted	14 December 2011
Review Period	2 years
Last Reviewed	26 February 2025, 22 April 2020, 28 March 2018, 22 April 2015
Minutes Reference	OM038/25, OM119/20, OM86/18, OM117/15, OM357/11
Next Review Date	February 2027
Applicable Legislation	Local Government Act 1999
Related Documents	Community Engagement Procedure Public Question Time at Meetings Procedure Social Media Policy
Public Consultation Required	Yes
File Reference	2024.1245 2025.0777

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Policy is to: ensure that the Port Pirie Regional Council (the Council) meets its legislative obligations in regard to community engagement (public consultation) by:

- providing an open, accountable and responsive decision-making processes which are informed by effective communication and consultation between the Council and the community;
- ensuring that appropriate and cost-effective methods are used to inform and involve the local community, key stakeholders and interested parties, relevant to the specific circumstances of each consultation topic; and
- foster and support a culture of effective community engagement to enhance the Council's decision making

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to Members of Council, employees, volunteers, contractors, agents and consultants acting on behalf of the Council.

This Policy also applies to all facets of the Council's operations including the Council's corporate, assets/ property, land use, strategic and financial planning and the day-to-day services and activities. These community engagement processes are required under:

- the Local Government Act 1999 (unless specifically legislated otherwise);
- other Acts and Regulations; and
- to any other community engagement process that the Council resolves to be submitted to a high standard of community engagement.

3. DEFINITIONS

Community engagement
Also known as public consultation, means two-way communication between the Council and the Community to seek ideas, opinions, alternatives and proposals to inform decision making.

NOTE: For the purposes of this Policy the words 'community engagement' and 'public consultation' are interchangeable.

Gazette
Means the South Australian Government Gazette which is a periodical that is published weekly and contains Notices that are categorised according to content and source, including Local Government (Councils).

Member of Council
Means the principal member or a councillor of the Council.

the Act
Shall mean the Local Government Act 1999

Written notice
Includes a notice given in a manner or form determined by the Council (as defined in the Local Government (Procedures at Meetings) Regulations 2013, the Council website and Social Media webpages approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

4. POLICY

The Community Engagement Policy and associated Procedure have been developed and adopted in accordance with Section 50 of the Local Government Act 1999 (the Act). This Policy informs on the various sections of the Act which require public consultation to take place.

4.1 Section 50 of the Act

Section 50 of the Act requires the Community Engagement Policy to identify steps the Council intends to take where the Act requires community engagement (consultation) and provides for the steps to vary according to the class of decisions to be made by the Council.

(a) The Council must provide interested persons with a reasonable opportunity to make submissions regarding relevant matters. This shall be carried out by written notice where the publication of a notice is:

(i) in a newspaper circulating within the area of the council; and

(ii) on a website determined by the Chief Executive Officer,

describing the matter under consideration and inviting interested persons to make submissions in relation to the matter within a period (which must be **at least 21 days**) stated in the notice; and

(b) The Council will consider any submissions made from the public during the prescribed consultation period in response to an invitation under the paragraph above.

NOTE: This Policy does not include the Council's consultation requirements with other Agencies or the Minister.

4.2 Other Sections of the Act Requiring Community Engagement

In addition to section 50, there are other sections of the Act which require community engagement. These are listed in Appendix 1 of the Community Engagement Procedure.

4.3 Other Legislation Requiring Community Engagement

In addition to 'the Act' and 'the Regulations' there is additional legislation which are relevant to the Council's activities and requires community engagement: These additional Acts are listed in the Community Engagement Procedure.

4.4 Public Question Time at Meetings

The Council will allocate fifteen (15) minutes in the Council agenda for each monthly Ordinary meeting for the purpose of Public Question Time.

NOTE: Also refer to Public Question Time at Meetings Procedure and Code of Practice for Meeting Procedures.

4.5 Alteration of the Policy

The Council may from time to time alter this Policy or substitute a new policy.

Before a council adopts a public consultation policy, or alters, or substitutes a public consultation policy, the Council must:

(a) prepare a document that sets out the proposal of changes to the Policy; and

(b) submit the proposal to alter the Community Engagement Policy to the community engagement (public consultation) process within a period (which must be **at least one month**) stated in the notice by publishing;

(i) in a newspaper circulating within the area of the Council a notice of the proposal inviting interested persons to make submissions on the proposal; and

(ii) on a website determined by the Chief Executive Officer, and

(iii) taking into consideration any submissions made in response to an invitation under the paragraphs above.

NOTE:

(i) For the purposes of these alterations **the Council** includes an officer or employee of the Council acting within the scope of that person's ordinary functions and duties except in circumstances where these alterations expressly require a matter to be considered at a meeting of the Council.

(ii) If the Council determines that the alteration to the Community Engagement Policy is of only minor significance that would attract little (or no) community interest, the consultation process is not required (Section 50(7) of the Act).

5. DOCUMENT REVIEW

Document Review will occur in accordance with the Policy Review Schedule and/ or when material changes to this document are required due to one or more of the following:

(i) change in legislation;

(ii) new information, requirement or commitment;

(iii) change to intent;

(iv) change to delegated authorities; or

(v) as the Chief Executive Officer or relevant Director determines.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

This policy will be available for inspection at the Council offices listed below during ordinary business hours and available to be downloaded, free of charge, from Council's website: www.pirie.sa.gov.au

- Principle Office: Port Pirie Council Administration Centre, 115 Ellen Street, Port Pirie
- Port Pirie Regional Library, Ellen Street, Port Pirie.
- Crystal Brook Office and Library, Bowman Street, Crystal Brook

Copies will be provided to interested parties upon request, and upon payment of a fee in accordance with Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.

7. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version No.	Date Approved	Minute Reference	Notes/ changes
V1.0	14/12/2011	OM357/11	New Policy (replaced the Public Consultation Policy)
V1.1	22/04/2022	OM119/20	Amendments related to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions.
V2.0	26/02/2025	OM038/25	Taking into consideration that the majority of the information within Version 1.1 of this Policy has been transferred to the Community Engagement Procedure Version 1.0, the information contained within Version 2.0 of this document (Policy) has the following changes: Added: Community Engagement Procedure to Related Documents; ensure that the Port Pirie Regional Council (the Council) meets its legislative obligations in regard to community engagement (public consultation) by (added to the Purpose section); definitions for - Community Engagement, Member of Council, the Act and written Notice; the statement – This Policy informs on the various sections of the Act which require public consultation to take place (Section 4 – Policy); Other sections of the Act requiring community engagement (Section 4.2); Other legislation requiring Community engagement (Section 4.3); NOTE: refer to Public Question Time at Meetings Procedure and Code of Practice for Meeting Procedures (Section 4.4); Alteration to Policy (Section 4.5 (a) and (b)); NOTE (ii) added (Section 4.5); Document Review (Section 5); Document History (Section 7). Updated: most of the Scope statement. Deleted: Related Documents statement – this Policy is intended to compliment and be implemented in conjunction with other Council policies, resources and operating procedures including Complaints Policy; Complaints Handling Policy.