

14.1 DRAFT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY - CONSULTATION**Record Number: D26/26290****Author: Acting Manager Governance****Authoriser: Acting Director Corporate Services****Attachments:**
1. Draft Community Engagement Policy
2. Community Engagement Charter
3. Summary of consultation and engagement changes**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a draft Community Engagement Policy (provided at **Attachment 1**) for community consultation and feedback,
- The Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter (the Charter) and related amendments to the Local Government Act 1999 (the Act), were released in the South Australian Government Gazette on Thursday 11 December 2025. The Charter is provided at **Attachment 2**.
- Councils have a period of 9 months from the release of the Act amendments to review and endorse their community engagement policies by 11 September 2026.
- The Community Engagement Policy (the Policy), once endorsed, will supersede our existing Public Consultation Policy adopted on 24 June 2024.
- A summary of changes from Council's current Public Consultation Policy to the new requirements and categories in the Charter is provided at **Attachment 3**.
- If approved by Council, community engagement for the draft Community Engagement Policy will be undertaken for a period of 21 days in June/July .
- The Policy will be finalised following community consultation and the final draft Policy and feedback presented to Council for endorsement in August 2026.

RECOMMENDATION

"that Council, having considered Item 14.1 – *Draft Community Engagement Policy - Consultation* , dated 17 June 2026, notes the report and in doing so approve the Draft Community Engagement Policy (Attachment 1) to undertake community engagement."

BUDGET IMPACT

Estimated Cost: \$700

Future ongoing operating costs: Nil

Is this Budgeted? Yes

RISK ASSESSMENT

Under the Local Government Act 1999 Council is required to maintain a Community Engagement Policy. The policy must comply with the Community Engagement Charter. Before Council adopts, alters, or substitutes a community engagement policy, they are required to undertake public consultation on the community engagement policy (section 50A (6)).

Under Part 5 of the Local Government (Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2021 Council has 9 months from 11 December 2025 to ensure that Council's policy is consistent with the Charter and relevant amendments to the Act.

DETAILED REPORT

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to commence community engagement in relation to our draft Community Engagement Policy (provided at **Attachment 1**).

Background

The Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter (the Charter) and related amendments to the Local Government Act 1999 (the Act), were released in the South Australian Government Gazette on Thursday 11 December 2025. The Charter is provided at **Attachment 2**.

Councils have a period of 9 months from the release of the Act amendments to review and endorse their community engagement policies by 11 September 2026. An information report was provided to Council at the 15 April 2026 meeting noting this upcoming review.

Council's current Public Consultation Policy was adopted 24 June 2024.

Discussion

The key change introduced by the new legislative framework and Community Engagement Charter is the replacement of the former prescriptive "public consultation" requirements with a more flexible, engagement-based approach that is tailored to the significance of the decision.

Previously, councils were generally required to follow a standard consultation process involving newspaper notices, publication on a council website, a minimum submission period (typically 21 days or one month), and consideration of submissions. Under the new framework, engagement activities are categorised as **Inform, Local, Standard, or Significant**, with requirements scaled according to the potential impact on the community.

The Charter sets out mandatory minimum requirements for these categories. Key changes, with a comparison to Council's current Public Consultation Policy, can be found summarised in Attachment 3.

Overall, the changes shift the focus from compliance with a prescribed consultation procedure to meaningful community engagement that better reflects the significance and impact of council decisions.

Before adopting the policy, councils must consult with their council area and consider community feedback.

It is recommended that the Draft Community Engagement Policy be released for community consultation. Advice from the Local Government Association SA recommends that councils undergo consultation on their new community engagement policy following the minimum requirements of the new Community Engagement Charter. A summary of consultation actions is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of consultation actions

Mandatory minimum requirements for Standard matters	Actions
Publish information on website	Information published on Council's website, including: explanation of the draft policy, summary of draft policy, a copy of the draft policy and instructions on how to provide feedback.
Consult with the whole council area	Consultation period open for at least 21 days from date of notice. Publication of notice: in local newspapers, Council's website, APC Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, available for inspection at Council's Principal Office, posters displayed at Council offices.
Seek and consider feedback from the community	Written feedback to the draft policy can be provided through an online form or in writing (email or letter). Feedback and report provided at the 19 August 2026 Ordinary Council Meeting.

Conclusion

Before adopting this policy, councils must consult with their council area and consider community feedback.

References

Legislation

Local Government Act 1999

Council Policies/Plans

Public Consultation Policy

Strategic Plan 2025-2028 – Proactive Leadership