

ITEM 10.1	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY AND FRAMEWORK - OUTCOMES FROM PUBLIC EXHIBITION
REPORTING MANAGER	EXECUTIVE MANAGER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
TRIM FILE REF	2016/385926
ATTACHMENTS	1 Northern Beaches Community Engagement Policy (Included In Attachments Booklet) 2 Community Engagement Matrix - Northern Beaches (Included In Attachments Booklet) 3 Northern Beaches Community Engagement Policy and Matrix - Summary of Submissions (Included In Attachments Booklet)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

To report on the submissions received and seek adoption of the final Community Engagement Policy and Matrix.

SUMMARY

The Northern Beaches Council is committed to improving how it engages with the community as key input to its decision making process. Effective engagement is good business practice and critical to good governance. Further, community consultation is a key driver of overall satisfaction with Council.

The community engagement policies from the three former Councils have been reviewed in preparation of the new draft Policy and Matrix. The preparation of a single policy and framework for the new Council has been a key component of the transition process.

The new consolidated draft Policy and Matrix were placed on public exhibition from 11 October to 27 November 2016. There were 25 submissions received and are detailed, together with responses in Attachment 1. The submissions included broad feedback on engagement in general, project related feedback and specific suggested changes to the wording in the Policy and Matrix. Changes to the draft Policy and Matrix are included in the final versions (Attachments 2 and 3).

RECOMMENDATION OF DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

That Council:

- A. Adopt the revised Community Engagement Policy and Matrix.
 - B. Continue to progress recommendations and transformation actions to support and develop engagement practice within the new council.
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REPORT

BACKGROUND

The Northern Beaches Council is committed to maintaining a high level of community engagement to ensure that residents and key stakeholders have an opportunity to be involved in the decision making process.

The former councils were committed to community engagement and each had its own policies based on similar principles. Previous research has confirmed that community engagement is a key driver of overall satisfaction with Council and is an important aspect of the decision making process.

The development of a combined Community Engagement Policy and Framework for the Northern Beaches is a critical part of maintaining business as usual during the transition process. Since May 2016, community engagement has played a key role in the transition process. To date we have:

- Formed an Implementation Advisory Group and Local Representation Committees comprising of 22 former councillors.
- Transitioned the previous community committee structures across the region to a new Committee and Community Group Framework consisting of 11 new Strategic Reference Groups, existing Project Working groups, existing External Joint or Statutory Committees and a register of Community Groups.
- Discussed community engagement principles and the proposed approaches supported by the Engagement Framework with the IAG and LRC members.

This new draft Policy and Matrix is primarily based on the former Pittwater and Warringah documents and processes. These were both based on the IAP2 principles (International Association of Public Participation) and proven methodologies. They were recognised as leading practice in this field and often referenced by other Councils. The Community Engagement Policy and Framework have been developed to build on the strengths of the different approaches of the former Councils.

CONSULTATION

The development of the draft policy and framework was supported by a review of engagement practice and previous community consultation studies undertaken by former councils.

Consultation on the draft Engagement Framework commenced in June with the Implementation Advisory Group (IAG) on 8 and 29 June 2016 and Local Representation Committees (LRC) on 15 and 29 June 2016.

The draft Policy and Framework was on public exhibition from 11 October to 27 November 2106.

The consultation process included:

- Information and online submission form on the Your Say project page <http://yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/CEpolicy2016>
 - 473 page visits, 226 people downloaded documents
- Advertisements in the Manly Daily on 22 October 2016
- Community information sessions in
 - Manly Library
 - Dee Why Civic Centre

- Mona Vale Library
- Additional Stakeholder meetings with community members at Dee Why and Mona Vale Customer Service areas
- CSP engagement activity sessions including discussions with community at:
 - Avalon Shops,
 - Mona Vale Golf Club,
 - Seaforth Centre,
- Emails to our community engagement database of 9500 people
- Emails to all registered community groups and other key stakeholder groups
- Tailored email to 107 contacts who had participated in the former Engagement Review project.

SUBMISSION SUMMARY

In total 25 submissions were received during the exhibition period. A response to the key points raised in the submissions is included in the Attachment 1.

There were a range of comments made:

- General Engagement Practice: comments relating to community engagement practice in general and this feedback has been addressed in Attachment 1. The implementation of this policy and matrix is supported by an internal implementation plan that will continue during the transition period. A summary of these actions is shown below.
- Wording Changes to the Documents: specific changes have been made to the draft Policy and Matrix and these are summarised in the Attachment 1 and changes have been made to the final documents (shown in track changes in Attachments 2 and 3)
- Comments on previous projects: specific comments on previous projects have been referred to the relevant business units as part of feedback on their specific projects and learnings for the future.

Key Themes included:

- Local consultation and representation
- Consideration of input and feedback
- Timing of engagement
- Transparency and accountability

TIMING

Once adopted the revised policy and framework will be displayed publicly on our website and communicated to all relevant internal business units for future planning. Ongoing implementation actions will continue to support the policy and framework during the transition process.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Any financial impact of implementing this policy will be factored into current and future project planning and operational budgets.

SOCIAL IMPACT

The social impact of this draft Policy and Framework is a clear approach in providing consistent, meaningful and effective community engagement between Council and our community. The community input will be used to effectively plan for the future of our area and provide an understanding of how their input has been used in Council decision-making. Involvement of the community in Council decision making helps to promote a socially inclusive society. The draft Policy and Framework is established to foster social inclusion and to improve the social outcomes for all in the northern beaches community.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The draft Policy and Framework does not impact on the environment.

IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS

The table below details the key areas for improvement and the recommended outcome or actions. Some of these suggestions relate directly to changes included in the revised Policy and Matrix.

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Priority Finding	Outcome / Action
Ensure updates and feedback are provided to those involved – close the loop	Internal systems in place to ensure follow up emails are sent
Regular project updates on web	Internal measures on project updates
More consistent approach	Continue to support cross functional training, process maps and staff coaching
Allow more time and earlier involvement – before decision is made.	Minimum 2 stage approach included in Matrix for high impact projects
Better understanding of what the community said and how this was used	Internal systems in place to ensure email updates are sent Council reports include summary of community input and how it was used
Embed in organisation. Ensure staff listen and understand concerns (real and perceived)	Engagement is a cross functional role (not a central function). Ongoing training and coaching continues to further embed across Council. Skills development to include listening and rapport building
Continue to use a range of tools and methods to engage more broadly	Continue to evaluate and use new tools
More local engagement on local issues	Requirement for local engagement and local signs mandatory for high impact projects
Know what's coming up (forward schedule)	Suggestion noted and will be considered in future process and system upgrades.
Councillor visibility and involvement	Work with Councillors to facilitate involvement in high impact engagement projects
Include as internal measurement ie KPIs	Additional internal measures being implemented
Ensure sufficient project resources to meet framework requirements (staff, budget, time) Allow flexibility of timeframes to allow for good engagement	Project Planning process revisions to ensure engagement planning is done early and includes provision for resources and timeframes
Councillor and Leadership support to ensure framework is followed	Ensure Councillors and Leadership Group are aware of engagement framework requirements for projects

In addition to the suggestions and revisions to the Policy and Matrix, a number of other initiatives are underway to support the findings including:

- Implementation of a Community Engagement Register and associated website upgrades to facilitate easier access to information and register for specific project updates
- Continuing community engagement training to support staff development and consistency of approach

- Provision of internal staff briefings to support and educate on the key changes
- Provision of internal advice, guidance and support by the Community Engagement Team.