

Shire of Denmark

Community Engagement Framework

Draft September 2014



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SHIRE OF DENMARK

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Version	Date	Author	Details
1	29/07/2014	Dr Louise Duxbury	Draft Report
2	03/09/2014	Dr Louise Duxbuty	Final Draft Report
3	16/09/2014	Dale Stewart	Final Draft Report for Advertising

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The assistance of the Community Consultation Policy Working Group in preparing this draft Policy & Framework is acknowledged.

The members of the Working Group included representatives from the following organisations;

- Denmark Environment Centre
- Denmark Community Resource Centre
- Denmark Chamber of Commerce
- Denmark Historical Society
- Denmark Arts
- Greenskills
- Shire of Denmark

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Part 2 of this document is a set of examples and is not complete.

The process for completion of Part 2 was identified in the Minutes of the SHIRE OF DENMARK COMMUNITY CONSULTATION POLICY WORKING GROUP , THURSDAY, 28 AUGUST 2014.

“That with respect to Part 2 – the Staff Toolkit – It was recommended that the second part as amended with the matrices / documents, tables be provided as examples of models that the Working Group would recommend that the CEO consider for implementation in a Staff Toolkit.

It was noted that some Working Group members were interested in commenting on the final draft toolkit product if the CEO would be so inclined. The CEO noted no concerns with that approach.”

PART 1: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT Policy

Context for Community Engagement Policy and Staff Toolbox

The community's vision

The Denmark Community Strategic Plan 2031 outlines the aspirational shared vision, mission and objectives for Denmark. The vision is that:

Denmark in the year 2031 is a leading example of a dynamic, connected, caring and cohesive community in tune with its environment.

Mission

The Shire of Denmark aims through vision and integrity to serve its whole community and value its natural environment.

Values

The guiding principles (values) on how the Shire of Denmark works internally and externally with the community, into the future have been identified as:

- Sustainability
- Effectiveness
- Teamwork
- Transparency
- Respect
- Visionary Leadership
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Commitment
- Trust

Objectives

Denmark Community Strategic Plan 2031

Social

Denmark's communities, people and places are connected and creative, vibrant and dynamic, healthy and safe.

Economy

Denmark's economy is diverse and vibrant - its primary industries of tourism and agriculture rely on and enjoy natural and other assets that are sensibly managed and promoted.

Environment

Denmark's natural environment is regionally significant, wild and beautiful, yet so inviting and fragile that its protection and enhancement is carefully balanced in meeting the needs of current and future generations' lifestyle, development and tourism needs.

Governance

The Shire of Denmark provides renowned leadership in sustainability, is effective with both its consultation with its people and its management of its assets, and provides transparent and fiscally responsible decision making.



What is community engagement?

The Shire of Denmark has defined community engagement as:

An important process of fostering relationships between Council and the community, whereby Council shares information, consults, involves, collaborates, and actively enhances community capability to influence and shape the planning and delivery of services and Council decisions.

It is not a single activity but a way of building a stronger understanding of the community in Denmark.

“Community ‘consultation’ is increasingly being redefined as ‘engagement’ – Councils going well beyond seeking views on specific decisions to having an ongoing dialogue with their constituents about service delivery and the key issues facing the area.”

The Australian Centre for Excellence for Local Government (ACELG)

Level of community involvement

Community involvement refers to the level or degree to which the community is part of planning and decision making.

The Shire of Denmark recognises the best practice principles developed by the International Association for Public Participation IAP2.



Image source: <http://cms.burlington.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=24958>

Shire of Denmark P040123 - Community Engagement Policy

Objective

Council is committed to actively engage in dialogue with its community to understand their diverse needs and expectations.

In formulating and implementing the Strategic Community Plan – Denmark 2031 and strategic aims, Council recognizes the need to engage with its community and encourage community participation so as to enhance its decision-making.

This policy provides the framework and principles for undertaking community consultation, to encourage participation and to strive to continuously improve its community consultation methods.

Council obtains feedback from the community regarding views, solutions, alternatives and proposals to inform and influence the outcome of Council decisions and actions.

Principles

Council will be guided by the following principles in relation to community consultation.

Council will:

- Keep the community informed of decisions made and actions taken in relation to its activities, listen to and acknowledge concerns, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.
- Encourage participation as appropriate.
- Be open and honest about the purpose of any consultation activity so as to be transparent with its decision making processes.
- Use a range of approaches to engage community views and enable everyone interested to contribute.
- Allow time to consult effectively.
- Undertake to make balanced decisions using the outcomes of community consultation whilst taking into account other influences such as budget constraints, statutory obligations and strategic directions.

In some cases the level of community engagement will be constrained by statutory obligations or timeframes in decision making.

Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of this policy and the development of an appropriate framework, staff toolbox and public communication plan. This will also demonstrate that all levels of employees that have discretion over consultation, are adequately trained in not just this Policy, but its implementation.

Whilst it is not always practical or appropriate to engage the community on all Council decisions, it is crucial that community members are sufficiently informed of major issues, plans, projects and all matters likely to affect them and have opportunities to participate meaningfully in community engagement.



IAP2 Best Practice

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fact sheets Web sites Open houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public comment Focus groups Surveys Public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops Deliberative polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizen advisory committees Consensus-building Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizen juries Ballots Delegated decision

The International Association for Public Participation has established best practice for community engagement (summarised in the table to the left).

Whilst every endeavour should be made to follow the principles outlined in this spectrum, employees utilising the toolbox to comply with the intent of the overarching Council Policy, are encouraged to consider the merits of the various engagement techniques described and the processes outlined in the following section Community Engagement: Staff Toolbox.

PART 2: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Staff Toolbox

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT Staff Toolbox

In implementing Council Policy Po40123 Community Engagement, Council employees will undertake community engagement for the following broad reasons:

Site Specific

Matters about a particular site, such as a change in use.

Area Improvement

Matters that affect people in a neighbourhood or suburb eg traffic management.

Service Planning

To develop, review or improve a service. The service could have an impact across the whole local government.

Policy Development

To develop or improve policies for Council's position on particular matters.

Key Strategic Issues/Major Projects

Projects of such a size that they impact on the future of the whole local government area.

Strategic Plan Review and Development

Establishing the decision-making framework for Council and future long term planning for the Council.

Legislative Requirement

Where required under the Local Government Act, Planning and Development Act and Town Planning Scheme or relates to changes to other legislation, where Council is responsible for administering the legislation (See Table 1).

This Framework recognises that Council staff need to assess the potential impact and expectations regarding a situation or project and the appropriate level of community engagement. Key suggested procedures outlined in this staff toolbox are:

Matrix 1: Identify community impact/concern/perceptions.

Matrix 2: Decide on the level of engagement required.

Matrix 3: Identify the level of risk and complexity

Matrix 4: Community engagement using the Checklist.

Matrix 5: Conduct a staff debrief.

Table 1: Council Statutory Requirements

Table 2: Engagement Techniques

Assess the Level of Risk

It is important to identify and consider risks associated with engagement, especially those that may have a negative impact. This is in line with the Council's overall risk management policy.

Risks could include:

- Community groups or stakeholders feeling excluded with the engagement process
- Community members having different expectations of the community meetings
- Consultation fatigue / low community participation / poor attendance
- Financial from budget blowout or cancellation costs
- High controversy of some proposals / degree of political sensitivity
- High interest by special interest groups
- Inadequate security
- Large than expected audience
- Late arrival or non arrival of facilitators or speakers
- Logistical or technical issues
- Negative media coverage or high media interest
- Proposals are considered to have significant impact across a large part of the Shire
- Receive high level of heated emails from community members
- There may be a high number of derailleurs and potential for community outrage and resentment.

Managing the Risk

Part of preparation for community engagement involves creating a plan to ensure the engagement techniques selected support the objectives of the Engagement Policy. This will allow for a shared and collaborative understanding and approach .

The Engagement Plan should address the:

- Purpose of the communication - why do you need to communicate?
- Target audience - who are you communicating with?
- What is your message - what's the call to action?
- How will you communicate?

It's important that sufficient time is allocated to promote the engagement process and encourage participation.



Communicate with the Community

When communicating with a community, it's important to:

- Be clear, concise and use plain language without jargon
- Be open and honest about the planned activities
- Understand your audience and ensure the message is targeted at them
- Share the key message (s) with other staff who may be engaging with the same community members or stakeholders to ensure consistent messages.
- Verify the accuracy of the key message with other staff across Council
- Do not over promise
- Address community concerns
- Use all forms of media where possible.

In implementing the Community Engagement Framework, Council Staff will need to determine if day-to-day engagement activities warrant the creation of an Engagement Plan.

Matrix 1: Determine community impact/concern

The first step in assessing the level of Community Engagement required for a project is to determine the potential level of community impact and or concern.

This can be done by assessing current information such as Council's customer needs surveys, community group workshops or surveys or conducting a face to face process.

To determine the consultation approach, initial discussions with your Director and/or key stakeholders should be considered to gauge if the issue is politically sensitive or is high on the complexity scale. Consideration should be given to the following:

- Degree of complexity – is there a single issue or multiple issues?;
- Degree of potential community impact and/or concern;
- What is the general community perception of the issue/s?;
- Degree of political sensitivity – is there potential for individuals/groups to use the situation to make political gains?;
- Availability of resources;
- Media Interest;
- Informing external agencies or organisations seeking advice from Council on their proposed consultation within the Shire of Denmark, to adopt best practice principles of community engagement, such as included in this Policy and/or in accordance with the International Association for Participation's (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation.
- Where community engagement is outsourced to any external consultant or third party, Council Officers should demonstrate that the proposed consultation strategy has been approved in accordance with this Policy;
- When the method(s) of community engagement have been determined, any completed matrices or checklists that determined the type or method(s) of engagement are to be retained and may be readily viewed by members of the public on request.
- The degree to which the community can influence the decision-making process;
- Emergency situation or safety concern;
- The extend the community could help improve the solution or outcome;
- The historical context whether there has been previous engagement activities on the same issue;
- Legislative and regulatory requirements;
- Whether a decision has already been made or not.

Examples of ways to assess impact/concern are provided below.

Community Engagement

Face to face
Information session
Stakeholder workshop
Community meeting
Focus Group
Intercept survey
Drop in session

Print

Mail survey
Letter to specific stakeholder groups
Newsletter/Council News
Advertising
Flyer, brochure, poster
Static display/s
Rate notice insert

Online

Online survey
Council's website
Facebook

Matrix 2: Level of Community Engagement Required

The level of community input is directly related to the nature, complexity and the expected level of impact on the community due to the issue, plan or project.

Not all issues require public participation.

The community will become involved according to its perception of the seriousness of the issue. Similarly, it is important to gauge the receptiveness of the organisation to community feedback and the resource level that will be available.

It may be necessary to re-evaluate the level of impact and vary the engagement activities and level of public participation due to a misalignment or change in the situation.

Engagement Level		Level of impact			
What do you want to do?	Click to select				
Provide balanced and objective information to the community or stakeholders to assist understanding of topic, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Inform <i>Complete section A</i>	↓ ↓ Increasing level of public impact ↓ ↓	Lower level of impact: Small change or improvement to a facility or service at the local level. Little effect on the community. Low or no risk of controversy. (i.e. upgrade to local playground)	Moderate level of impact: Loss of or significant change to a facility or service at the local level or less significant impact across all the Newcastle LGA. Potential for controversy. (i.e. removal of local playground, changes to services, provisions to a community-wide event)	High level of impact: Significant change that is considered of high value across all the Newcastle LGA or a large part of the city. High controversial issue or proposal. (i.e. provision of a district or regional facility, changes to natural environment, removal of a facility or service)
Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Consult <i>Complete section B</i>				
Work with the public throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Involve <i>Complete section B</i>				
Work with the public throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate <i>Complete section B</i>				
To place final decision-making and/or devolved budgets in the hands of the public.	<input type="checkbox"/> Empower <i>Complete section B</i>				

Assess the Level of Impact

The matrix below, provides guidance on interaction regarding the degree of complexity and political sensitivity to assist when deciding on the appropriate level of engagement:

LOW: indicates minimal affect on the community involved.

MEDIUM: indicates the community is likely to be affected and there is potential for negative feedback to Council.

HIGH: indicates the community will be involved and there is potential for significant consequences.

As the level of engagement increases so does the need for effective management of the engagement process eg for collaboration to be possible, effective working relationships between stakeholders need to be established and fostered.

Matrix 3: Level of Risk and Complexity

INHERENT RISK	Low	Medium	High
How do you rate the potential for conflict with the community over this decision?			
How do you rate the potential for social damage if the wrong decision is made?			
How do you rate the potential for environmental damage if the wrong decision is made?			
How do you rate the potential for political damage if the wrong decision is made?			
How do you rate the potential for financial damage if the wrong decision is made?			
	None	A few	Many
How much information needs to be communicated to the community for them to participate?			
	Simple facts	Detailed proposal	Significant technical data
How much learning is required by the participants before they can be expected to make an informed decision?			
How many abstract or technical concepts need to be digested before an informed decision can be made?			
DEGREE OF COMPLEXITY	Low	Medium	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is one clear issue and/or problem that needs to be addressed (low). There are more than one or two issues and/or problems that can be resolved (medium). There are multiple issues and/or problems and its unclear how to resolve them (high). 			
DEGREE OF POTENTIAL COMMUNITY IMPACT / CONCERN	Low	Medium	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project will have little effect on communities and they will hardly notice any changes (low). The project will fix a problem that will benefit communities and the change will cause minor inconvenience (medium). The project will create a change that will have an impact on communities and the living in the environment, and the degree of impact/concern and acceptance will vary (high). 			
DEGREE OF POLITICAL SENSITIVITY	Low	Medium	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project has acceptance throughout communities (low). There are groups in the communities who may see potential in raising the profile of a project to gain attention for their cause (medium). Community expectations about the project are different to those of the decision makers and there is high potential for individuals and groups to use the uncertainty to gain attention (high). 			

Matrix 4: Community Engagement Checklist

When undertaking a community engagement exercise, Shire staff are to ensure that they have considered the elements and questions contained in the following template / checklist, and detailed responses to the questions, expanding where necessary.

What is the purpose(s) or outcome(s) of the consultation exercise? Please describe.	Tick the appropriate answer
Does information already exist on the issue? If Yes, please document / list.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Have you set a clear consultation timeframe(s)? If Yes, please detail.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Have you considered the best time to consult that considers firstly, stakeholders and secondly, Council processes and the timeframes required, especially if Council approval is required? If Yes, please detail.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Have you identified all relevant stakeholders and who need to be targeted including hard to reach stakeholders? If Yes, please detail / list.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
What is the best consultation method(s) to use? Please detail/ list.	
Should the consultation be undertaken in-house or externally? Why? Has a Budget been provided for external? If external, please detail.	<input type="radio"/> In house <input type="radio"/> Externally
Have you consulted with appropriate Council Committees or Working Groups? If Yes, please detail / list.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A
Have you determined and included, as part of the total project budget, a specific budget for the community engagement, including consultation costs such as advertising, mail outs, publications, facilitators, catering, childcare, staging, hire fees?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A
Have you considered what information is available to support community engagement? If Yes, please detail.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Is there any legal requirement(s) to consult with the community (Table 2 to the Community Engagement Procedure may be useful to refer to)? If Yes, please detail relevant legislation and minimum requirements / timeframes.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Have you considered and relevant in-house skills available in other Council Directorates? If Yes, please list.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Have you consulted with other relevant Council Directorates? If Yes, please briefly detail who, how and the results of that consultation.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A
Do you need to consider any sensitive or cultural issues? If Yes, please detail.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Are there any opportunities for “hands on” community involvement in the implementation of the project/plan? If Yes, please detail / list.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A
How will decisions be fed back to participants involved in the consultation/engagement exercise? Please detail.	
Have you considered how Council or Councillors will be involved and briefed during the process? If Yes, please detail.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A
Has a copy of the proposed consultation process, matrix determination and completed Consultation Checklist retained on the relevant file and recorded in Council’s Records software. File ref: _____	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Have you considered and defined the type of debrief for the community engagement exercise following its conclusion? If Yes, please attach.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> N/A

Matrix 5: Council Staff Debrief Checklist

This checklist should be used as a de-briefing tool to assist in the evaluation of community engagement exercises undertaken (post event). Depending upon the consultation, the level of debrief should be determined as part of the engagement checklist.

Objectives	Were the objectives of the Community Engagement exercise clear to all involved?
Who was consulted?	Did you get responses from the intended target group(s)? Did you provide feedback to those consulted? Did the people you engaged with feel that the consultation was worthwhile? How have you quantified this?
Consultation Methods	Were the methods used the right ones for your objectives? If you used more than one method, which method worked better than others and why?
Did you get the required information?	Quantitative and/or qualitative information? Response rate? Representative sample?
Timeframe	Was the timeframe clear? Was the time frame kept to? If not, why not?
Information provided	If information was provided as part of the consultation process, eg. draft documents for comment; was the information easy to access? Was the information available in the appropriate format?
Resources	Did you budget adequately? Were there any unexpected expenses? Did you have appropriately skilled staff for the exercise? Were you able to use the knowledge and/or expertise of other Council Directorates?
Outcome of the community engagement	Has the process been of benefit to stakeholders? What has changed as a result of the consultation process? Did you use the views generated by the process?
Follow through	Who will provide the follow-up? How will you monitor the outcomes of the exercise? Have you recognised and acknowledged participants, contributors and/or attendees?

Table 1: Council Statutory Requirements

The table below indicates samples of the hundreds of Statutory Requirements that the Council must follow with respect to advertising or public notice requirements.

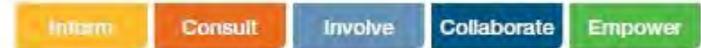
METHOD		SITE DISPLAY	MEDIA RELEASE	COUNCIL CONVERSATIONS	LOCAL PUBLIC NOTICE	STATEWIDE PUBLIC NOTICE	SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS	DISPLAYS	GOVT. GAZETTE	PUBLIC MEETING	INTRANET / EMAIL	WEBSITE	REPORT TO COUNCIL	COMMENTS
ISSUE	STATUTE	To consult / notify key stakeholders eg. adjoining/ affected owners specific community groups or members, other government bodies	On-site information board describing proposed development / activity	News story in local Paper	To advise key stakeholders and the general community	To advise key stakeholders and the local community	To advise stakeholders and the wider community	To consult specific key stakeholders	To notify the general community	To notify the wider community	To provide opportunity of discussion with key stakeholders and the general community	To inform staff	To notify the general community	To seek resolution of Council
Affected owners to be notified of certain proposals	LGA S3.51 (3)													Given notice prior to anything being done
Annual Reports	LGS S5.55													No later than 31 December
Boundary Review	LGA Schedule 2.2(7)													42 Days
Commercial Enterprises Major Trading Undertaking	LGA S3.59 (4)													42 Days
Major Land Transaction	LGA S3.59 (4)													42 Days
Compliance Audit Return	LGA 7.13 (1)													
Conditions for exercise if power of sale of land	LGA Schedule 6.3 (1) (B)													Not less than 3 months and not more than 12 months requiring payment if no sufficient address is available
Disposal of Property	LGA S3.58 (3)													14 Days
Elections Election Notice	LGA S4.64 (1)													No later than on 19th day before Election Day
Close of Enrolments	LGA 4.39 (2)													On or after 20th day, but no later than 56th day before Election Day
Call for Nominations	LGA S4.47													On or after 56th day but not later than 45th day before Election Day
Finance Fees and Charges Amendment	LGA S6.19													7 Days minimum
Rates – Differential or Minimum	LGA S6.36 (1)													21 Days
Local Laws Purpose and Effect	LGA S3.12 (3)(a)													42 Days

Table 2: Engagement Techniques at Different Levels of Engagement

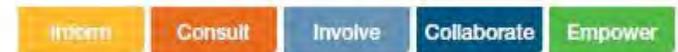
Table of Engagement Techniques

(this table isn't all-inclusive, rather it showcases examples for each level of the IAP2 spectrum)

Adapted from the IAP2 Toolbox, 2006 & Maroochy Shire Council Toolbox, 2003



Consider techniques for Inform level	Always Think It Through	What Can Go Right	What Can Go Wrong	Consider techniques for Consult level	Always Think It Through	What Can Go Right	What Can Go Wrong
Printed Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact Sheets • Newsletter • Advertising • Brochures • Issue Papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep it short & simple • Make it visually interesting and engaging but not too busy or slick • Proof-read all documents • Engage randomly selected staff members to trial material & provide feedback before distribution to the public • Use language that is inclusive and jargon free • When possible include opportunities for comment and include reply paid forms or envelopes to encourage two-way communication • Explain community's role and how comments have affected project decisions • Offer interpretation services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can reach a large target audience • Public look for information in regular format eg. Newsletter, Media column • Allows for technical & legal reviews • Written comments returned in reply paid format • Documentation of public involvement facilitated • Mailing list development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution planning inadequate • Materials do not reach the mark • Materials not read • Limited capacity to communicate complicated concepts • Information misinterpreted 	As above	Refer to table for Inform	Refer to table for Inform	Refer to table for Inform
Displays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Offices • Libraries • Community Centres, • Shopping centre • Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish regular sites if possible to build on community culture • Make sure personnel at locations know what materials are about & where they are located & who to contact for further information • Consider electronic displays, eg. touch screens, TV video loop presentations • Make sure materials are removed when past their use by date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is accessible to the public at relatively little cost • Public use the distribution locations to look for materials • Public visit Council facilities and learn more about service provision • Public ask for further information at Council distribution sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution sites are overcrowded with information and the materials get lost among the collection of materials • There is no active promotion of the materials • Upkeep of information 	Briefings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep it short & simple • Use clear, jargon free, inclusive language • Use easy to read diagrams and visuals that are consistent with the verbal and written content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of Information/ presentation • Opportunities to clarify misinformation • Reach a wider variety of people • Evaluate and readjust approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some groups may be left out • Expectations may be raised • Information may be used inappropriately
Council Website Information directly into the household	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to be visible & easy to navigate • Keep information updated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capable of reaching a large audience at low cost • Popular information resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People without access disadvantaged • Technical difficulties • Hard to navigate 	Surveys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blanket distribution • Random distribution • Selected distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys should be developed using specific guidelines and tested before distribution • Collection and method of analysis to be confidential and anonymity of respondents • Can be used to consult on sensitive issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can gather information from people other than those with special or from people who might not attend meetings • Economical and efficient means to collect data from a large number of people • Statistical results have more credibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need statistical and research expertise to design survey and analyse findings • Response rate can be poor • Communities over surveyed • Can be labour intensive • Questions may be misinterpreted • Results not trusted • Results not fed back to community effectively • Unsuitable for complex issues
Open House/ City Expo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities engage at their own pace in a comfortable environment • Drop in to individually to view plans, ask questions, give opinions have an informal chat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the demographics of the area & time sessions accordingly • Greet people at the door & explain the format, provide comments sheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates a wide variety of people • Break down perceived barriers • Fosters communication • More convenient for people • Engages people more effectively • Minimise aggressive behaviour towards Council staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special interest groups may boycott or disrupt • Staff resource intensive 	Technical Assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefings • Meetings • Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical experts must be perceived as credible by community • Ensure technical experts have access to information about the community's attitudes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build credibility and address public concerns about equity • Facts in dispute can be debated and consensus reached 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource availability may be limited • Technical experts may not be prepared for working too closely with community and may lack empathy with community concerns or use technical jargon
Information Session Community meeting held at various times and locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the demographics of the area & time sessions accordingly • May need to hold a number of sessions depending on size of project/issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public gets the same information at the same time • Time effective way of providing information for a wide group of people • Structured format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be difficult to control group if derailleurs/agitators present; Needs a competent facilitator • People may feel intimidated about speaking in front of others • If not well promoted, may get limited people attending 	Focus Groups Small group discussions with 6-12 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure tasks are clear • Non-threatening environment where participants can share views • Skilled facilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides opportunity to test material • Verify prior assumptions • Raise unexpected additional benefits • Ability to find out current issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator not impartial or not skilled enough to deal with some behaviours • Participants may feel restricted by the approach • May be perceived as exclusive • May be costly • People may attend with their own agenda, manipulate the meeting and intimidate others
				Submissions Allows interested community members to respond formally to Council proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the community with detailed information on issue/ project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written information is less likely to be misinterpreted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible poor response rate



Consider techniques for <i>Involve</i> level	Always Think it Through	What Can Go Right	What Can Go Wrong
As above	Refer to table for <i>Inform & Consult</i>	Refer to table for <i>Inform & Consult</i>	Refer to table for <i>Inform & Consult</i>
Interviews Used when specific information from a small group of people is adequate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face to face Telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be clear and open about the intent Consider questions carefully to gather relevant information Ensure effective information recording methods Be Inclusive Be equitable Vary timeframe for interviews to reach more people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather clear understanding of public concerns and issues Individuals feel inclined to provide input based on personalised format Can help to engage hard-to-reach groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be very time consuming Participants can take their issues out on the interviewer Participants are tired of being interviewed on a range of issues and will not engage willingly Need skilled interviewers Face-to-face interviews may pose personal safety risks for the interviewer
Workshops Community members work together on a number of identified tasks that clarify issues or provide solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know how you plan to use public input before the workshop How you are going to manage the group – rules for engagement Use trained facilitators to ensure the aims of the workshop are achieved Outcomes of workshop need to feedback prior to making decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants can use the opportunity to raise their concerns, needs, issues Foster equity and credibility Opportunity to hear the “silent” voices Special Interest groups get to listen to other voices Unexpected additional benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small numbers of participants which may not be representative of community Resistance to breaking up into small groups by some participants Special interest groups monopolise the workshop Participants alter the agenda Facilitator not impartial or not skilled enough to deal with some behaviours Information session format used rather than workshop format Feedback not recorded effectively Participants may raise unrelated issues or personal/topical issues
Tours/ Field Trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make accessible to diverse groups Provide itinerary/tour guide. Plan question/answer session. Plan refreshment break and provide water during the trip Consider safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to develop rapport with stakeholders Increase knowledge of issues and process for all involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of participants can be limited by resource availability Intention can be misinterpreted Project site or Council facility may reveal unintended conditions Aggrieved participant may take the opportunity to monopolise captured audience

Consider techniques for <i>Collaborate</i> level	Always Think it Through	What Can Go Right	What Can Go Wrong
Advisory committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commit to full process Aim for a cross-section of participants from the community Can tap into existing groups and organisations Requires a clear line of communication between the committee and Council Need an exit strategy to ensure committee disbands when role no longer required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants can be exposed to views and arguments from different backgrounds Works well when the composition of the group remains stable Able to deal with specific issue(s) in a detailed manner Partnership approach allows for consensus in problem solving Special interest lobbying can be diffused Can develop capacity in community Help build trust and cooperation between key stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No clear formal mechanism to input into decision-making process People do not have the time required to commit to the process Timeframes are unrealistic Agenda too ambitious or not specific enough

Consider techniques for <i>Empower</i> level	Always Think it Through	What Can Go Right	What Can Go Wrong
Citizen Juries Group of 12-25 citizens selected to learn about an issue, often controversial, and then examine the data by questioning decision-makers, technical experts, and interested parties – all of who are witnesses to the process. The Jury makes recommendations based on their evaluation of the discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the sessions are managed by a skilled facilitator Be clear about how the results will be used Ensure a cross-section from the community Consider current levels of expertise of participants Participants are randomly selected Provide information prior to the group gets together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring new thinking to the issue at hand Great opportunity to develop deep understanding of an issue Helps build participant capacity through involvement and increased knowledge Limitations and possibilities can be identified Can dispel misinformation Can build credibility Can provide unexpected benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group selection can be mistrusted Participants may not show up on the day Sessions can lose focus Cost can be extensive Time consuming for all involved Sample of community is small Extensive to conduct in terms of staff, payment of jury and experienced facilitator

Evaluation matrix template

Evaluation												
Subject/ Project												
Dimension										Notes		
Effective: achieved objectives of consultation brief; value for money; timely	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely 10	Estimated hard savings:
Flexible: tailored to requirements; adaptable to changing needs; inclusive	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely 10	
Open, fair, subject to evaluation: ethical and compliant; invite feedback from respondents and clients	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely 10	
Professionalism: deliver sound advice to the client - offer solutions; easy to reach and easy to communicate	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely 10	
Quality: all tools were well-used, well-conducted; well-facilitated community sessions; consultation reports or transcripts are of a high calibre	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely 10	