

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION POLICY

Objectives

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 recognises 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.

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.

Responsibility for Implementation

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of this policy and the development of an appropriate framework, staff toolbox and any communication or engagement plans. 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.

The Framework and Toolbox is included in this Policy Manual as [Appendix 8](#).

AMENDED by Res: 080515 / 5 May 2015

P040130 COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY

1. The Shire will conduct an annual Community Satisfaction Survey to understand community priorities and to provide key performance indicators that measure progress against the Shire's Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan.
2. The Survey will target community members over the age of 18.
3. The Survey will be sent to community members listed across any Shire database, including the Rates, Library and Recreation Centre databases.
4. The Survey will aim to achieve a target sample size that reduces the sampling error to a minimum of +/-10% at the 95% confidence interval.
5. In an effort to reduce waste and minimise cost, at least two thirds of the random sample will be contacted via email, with this percentage increasing as the Shire continues to build its email database.

P040236 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Objectives

To outline what is expected of Elected Members and Employees in relation to managing Shire of Denmark social media in order to protect the reputation and legitimate interests of Council.

The aim of the policy is to build an understanding of what is appropriate and productive use of social media, to minimise miscommunication and prevent misuse of social media tools that will undermine Council's brand.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

For Council Members, Committee Members and Employees

Acknowledgements

This Policy is based on the Model Social Media Policy produced by the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT).

Scope

This policy outlines what is expected of elected members and employees in relation to managing Shire of Denmark social media in order to protect the reputation and legitimate interests of Council.

The aim of the policy is to build an understanding of what is appropriate and productive use of social media, to minimise miscommunication and prevent misuse of social media tools that will undermine Council's brand.

What is social media and why do we use it?

Simply put, social media is a collection of internet based tools which facilitate conversations, for example Facebook, Twitter, Youtube.

Social media is now strongly embedded in Australian culture as a personal tool for networking and communication and is increasingly being used as core component of marketing and communications strategies by governments and businesses.

There is increasing use of social networking by Australians. Over 11 million Australians use Facebook – this is more than half the population. It is estimated that Australians spend 20 hours a month online.

The desire to connect with governments using social media is increasing along with an expectation that this form of communication will be available. The digital age is well and truly here.

Social media can support organisations in the following:

- providing information and getting feedback;
- demonstrating the business personality/brand;
- ensuring organisational transparency;
- improving internal communications; and
- market research which is low cost.

Among the advantages of social media are that it:

- is fast/can be immediate;
- allows for easy content creation/development/dissemination;
- can establish large, powerful networks;
- is always on;
- potentially can reach a large audience; and
- can build reputation through attracting attention.

Around the world, councils are using social media in a myriad of ways including event promotion, communication including local laws, getting community feedback including from hard to reach groups, establishing ongoing networks, emergency management, recruitment, branding and consulting in strategic and specific issues.

Use of social media needs to be embedded within broader governance, communications and marketing strategies, an understanding that there is a need to choose the right tool for the task and awareness of what is appropriate or inappropriate use of social media.

Key principles

1. *Social media can be used as a communication tool and to facilitate professional development and online collaboration. Social media will not be the driver for building a communications strategy, but rather, a tactic applied.*
2. *Information disseminated through social media will be accurate, authorised and aligned with Council strategies, policies and decisions.*
3. *Use of social media will always follow clear identification of objectives and the right tools to meet those objectives.*
4. *Private information will be protected and copyright, privacy and other applicable laws will be taken into account when interacting with social media.*
5. *There will continue to be appropriate record keeping of information disseminated or collected via social media.*
6. *The use of social media is a personal responsibility regardless of whether it is authorised or individual, in or out of work.*
7. *All elected members and employees are responsible for being familiar with this policy.*

Key rules & defining of postable information

1. All Shire of Denmark Facebook postings are to be authorised by either the Department Director or the CEO prior to posting.
2. Shire of Denmark recordkeeping principles are to be applied to Social Media postings.
3. Use discretion. Take care not to publish information that should not be made public. If you aren't 100% sure, seek advice.
4. Stick to your area of expertise and talk about what you know.
5. It's a conversation, so be human, use your own voice and bring your personality into the conversation. It makes it more interesting.
6. Admit our mistakes (unless there is a risk of liability whereupon the Council's legal advisor/and or insurer should be contacted in the first instance) – we all make them so when you do, be quick to admit and correct them.
7. Types of Information to be posted can include:
 - i. Link to Shire website.
 - ii. Notices of upcoming events
 - iii. Emergency Information –
 - Road/trail closures
 - General location of fires
 - power shutdowns
 - media releases
 - links to DFES/ABC Radio
 - iv. Photographs/information pertaining to Shire events – eg. Australia Day.
 - v. Information regarding works to be carried out that may impact on traffic or access.
 - vi. Road conditions.
 - vii. Photos of employees in workplace situations – introductions to new/current employees or changes in employees.
 - viii. Selected Community events hosted by other community organisations – eg Chamber of Commerce Christmas Parade.
 - ix. Upgrades to Shire facilities – eg. photovoltaic at the Shire Admin building.
 - x. Information regarding breakdowns in rubbish trucks and alternative arrangements.
 - xi. Information regarding Inlet sand bar openings.
 - xii. Reminders regarding upcoming dog re-registrations etc.

Objectives to be achieved through the use of social media

Social media tools are to be used by the Shire of Denmark within the framework of one or more of the following:

- in complement to other communication activities;
- as part of a communications plan;
- as part of a media strategy;
- as part of a community engagement / consultation plan; or
- as part of a crisis management plan.

Council can selectively use approved social media sites to:

- enhance Council's reputation;
- develop stronger relationships with community members;
- provide an informal and accessible way for the public to communicate with Council;
- support traditional media by broadening its reach and scope;
- promote selected services, events, projects, policies and activities;

- expand Council's community engagement opportunities; and
- provide essential updates to the community during a crisis or emergency.

Council also uses specific online media sites selectively to:

- protect Council's reputation by monitoring social media activity that relates to Shire of Denmark;
- place Council's statements of facts directly onto the public record; and
- respond or clarify an issue in detail.

Links to other Council Policies

Using social media is not without risks and challenges and this policy aims to address some areas of concern such as inappropriate use, record keeping and resourcing. Some other issues are best covered in other policies and those related policies are outlined here:

- Responsible use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT)
- Code of Conduct
- Privacy
- Customer Service Charter
- Records Management /Archiving
- Emergency Management Plan
- Freedom of Information
- Policy Manual
- Organisation Wide Procedure Manual

These policies will be reviewed regularly to ensure alignment with this Social Media Policy.

Corporate use of Social Media

Authorised officers

Elected members and employees intending to use social media to communicate about Shire of Denmark activity or policy should ensure appropriate authorisation as per the Responsibilities/Delegations table below.

As at 28th June 2013 the following social media accounts are approved for use:

- *Shire of Denmark Facebook*
- *Shire of Denmark Library Facebook*
- *Shire of Denmark Recreation Centre Facebook*
- *Shire of Denmark Youth Centre "Tha House" Facebook*

All elected members and employees should register their social media account/tools/site being used for corporate activity with the Shire of Denmark IT Officer and/or the Shire of Denmark Facebook Administrators.

Responsibilities/Delegations

The Roles and Responsibilities Table has been established to identify who will write and post content, who will approve/moderate incoming content, and who will respond to negative and positive posts (and how). These roles and Responsibilities are linked to the Shire of Denmark Code of Conduct, the Shire of Denmark Organisation Wide Procedures Manual and the Shire of Denmark Policy 40111 – Public Relations – Media Releases.

CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should ensure responsibilities/delegations in relation to Social Media are clearly defined and act as a source of advice to the organisation. Should approve use of Council branding. Should ensure compliance with Social Media provider conditions. Should act as the spokesperson on operational issues or issues of fact.
Elected Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should seek advice from the CEO and be sure not to speak on behalf of the Council excepting for the Shire President. A person authorised to comment on behalf of Council may be limited to a particular topic or specific types of social media or both. Comment only on topics within your area of expertise and express authority received from the Shire President or the CEO. Comply with terms of use.
All employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should have approval for postings initially from the relevant Director and/or from the CEO or A/CEO. Must maintain records as per the Shire of Denmark Recordkeeping Plan. Adhere to the Shire of Denmark Operational Procedures 040213 and 040214.
Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departmental employees training in responsible use of social media. Departmental approval for potential postings.
Social Media Administrators 1. Records Officers 2. A Customer Service Officer(backup) 3. Website Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training in responsible use of social media. Posting, reviewing and updating content. Develop record keeping procedures. Monitoring/moderating. Manage content.
IT Officer	Secure access/backup.
Moderator (DF&A) (Should be a person with knowledge of Council's policies or guidelines and with experience in managing sites/software.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve and authorise postings. Moderate and remove offensive public postings. Monitor Social Media is used in accordance with the Shire of Denmark Policies and Procedures.

Content

- The Shire of Denmark has a clearly established and disseminated plan as to who will write, approve post content, who will approve/moderate incoming content, and who will respond to negative and positive posts (and how). Corporate content will only be posted by authorised officers as outlined earlier.
- When communicating on behalf of the Shire of Denmark, elected members and employees must identify their relationship with the Shire of Denmark by stating their name and position. Generally, no-one should provide email or phone number contacts.

Uploaded content will only disclose information which is classified as suitable for the public domain.

Content Managers will ensure the information posted is accurate and not misleading in any way.

In developing, posting and responding to content, authorised officers WILL:

- uphold the values of the Shire of Denmark by acting with honesty, integrity, courtesy and professionalism;
- ensure that all relevant legislation has been complied with and that there is adherence to the Shire of Denmark codes, policies and procedures;
- avoid political bias;
- act in a timely manner; and
- take steps to avoid real or potential conflicts of interest.

When developing or posting content, authorised officers must NOT:

- use abusive, profane or sexually explicit language;
- undertake commercial solicitations or transactions;
- use copyright or ownership protected materials without appropriate approvals;
- be discriminatory, defamatory, or encourage law breaking;
- compromise Shire of Denmark, employee or system safety;
- spam; or
- air personal campaigns.

Content Removal

- The Shire of Denmark reserves the right to remove certain content such as illegal or offensive material. Material that is reasonably critical of the Shire of Denmark will not be deleted.
- The Shire of Denmark will always state why a post or content was removed regardless of who posted.

Monitoring/moderating/responding

As a general requirement, relevant administrative employees will monitor social media content and exchanges at least once daily, Monday to Friday (dependent upon circumstances – emergency situations may require more postings) and establish whether:

- comments need replies or removal.
- current content is factual, accurate and up-to-date.
- posts are relevant.
- new information needs uploading.

Council will make use of digital monitoring tools whenever available as part of their evaluation of social media activities.

Access

Employees members who are authorised to post comments on behalf of Council must do so from the administrative profiles set up for Shire of Denmark Council Facebook page.

Branding

The brand is the corporate identity of the Shire of Denmark and can take many forms (name, sign, symbol, colour combination, slogan). A clear brand is an essential tool in online communications.

The Shire of Denmark logo should always be attached to corporate content.

Authorised officers will adhere to Council's corporate style guide when developing and uploading content.

Engagement

Social Media tools may be used for community engagement as appropriate. Consideration will first be given to what the desired outcome is, the resources available and relevance of social media tools.

Use of Social Media for engagement will be supported by a Community Consultation Plan or business case which clearly articulates how the process will be managed.

Copyright

Material which is copyrighted (applications, audio, video, graphics, images, photographs, publications) will not be used unless prior written consent is obtained from the creator or copyright owner and the original author or source of the material is acknowledged.

Authorised officers will be diligent in their consideration of brand, copyright, fair use and trademarks.

Website

Information of a general nature (not responding to posts) provided through social media will, where practical, be replicated on the Council's website.

Risks

A risk analysis with related mitigation strategies will be undertaken for each new planned aspect of social media use. Such analysis will consider things like lack of followers, blurring of professional and personal communications, online activism and negative comments, expectation of instant responses, breaches of law or codes of conduct, unauthorised posts.

The liabilities section of this policy covers off on some specific risks but legal advice should be sought where appropriate.

In considering how to proceed, The Shire of Denmark will give detailed consideration as to:

- The protection of privacy and the confidentiality of Shire of Denmark and ratepayer information.
- Preventing disclosure of corporate information outside that which is authorised or publically available.

- How Shire of Denmark's intellectual property and copyright will be protected.
- The terms of service for nominated social media sites.
- How the Shire of Denmark will respond to orchestrated campaigns by skilled social media users.
- The level of response for issues raised by people outside the municipality.

Record Management

In using social media, The Shire of Denmark will comply with the requirements of the *State Records Act 2000* and Shire of Denmark Recordkeeping Plan with reference to the requirements on digital record management.

Consideration of record keeping requirements will be made before each new planned use of social media.

The five key questions to help identify whether a record is a state record are:

1. Was it made, sent or received in the course of business?
2. Does it document a decision taken?
3. Does it document advice given?
4. Does it document the process of arriving at a decision?
5. Is it required to be kept by legislation?

Resource/Training

The Shire of Denmark will ensure that social media activities are adequately resourced to allow for content development, monitoring, interpreting the volume and content of messages and responding as required.

Evaluation

The Shire of Denmark's social media activity will be evaluated through simple metrics which are sustainable and related to the desired outcomes.

The mechanisms for evaluation will be determined in relation to each new planned use of social media.

Misuse of corporate social media

Prohibited or offensive activities

- Employees and elected members must not post or respond to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist or infringes copyright.
- Employees and elected members must not establish fictitious names or identities deliberately intended to deceive, mislead or lie.
- Employees and elected members must not bring the Shire of Denmark's integrity into disrepute, or harm the operations or reputation of Council.
- Employees and elected members must separate personal opinions from professional ones.
- Employees and elected members must avoid the use of business email addresses for personal social media logins.

Breach of policy penalties.

Employees and elected members must comply fully with the policy at all times.

If you are not sure if an activity complies, speak to your Director, the CEO or, if an elected member, the Shire President.

Non-compliance is a serious matter and appropriate action will be taken.

Nothing in this policy should be interpreted as diminishing or attempting an employee's right to engage in lawful industrial activities.

An Elected Member breaching this policy may be subject to a Code of Conduct complaint (as per the *Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government (Rules of Content) Regulations 2007*).

Employees breaching this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

Legal issues/liabilities

Defamation/offensive/obscene

- Social media can appear to blur private and public spheres but activities on social media websites should be considered public activities. Despite the availability of privacy functions on social media websites, the possibility exists for content to be shared beyond intended recipients. Additionally it should be noted that the terms and conditions of use for most social media sites state that all content becomes the property of the site on which it is posted.
- Online content is essentially permanent and should NEVER be considered private.
- Use of offensive, obscene or defamatory content may breach a number of Federal and State Laws.
- Employees and elected members will not post offensive, obscene or defamatory content.

The following legislation applies:

- Defamation Act 2005 (Western Australia)
- Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995 – offences related to telecommunications for example Section 474.17 deals with using a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence.

Privacy/confidentiality

- In using social media, employees and elected members will be cognisant of requirements under the Shire of Denmark (adopted) Privacy Policy, Freedom of Information Act 1992 and the Local Government Act 1995.
- Personal and sensitive information cannot be published without permission of the person to which that information belongs.
- Employees and elected members will not disclose confidential Council information, including but not limited to matters relating to closed meetings of the Shire of Denmark.

Security Risks

Employees and elected members will be cognisant of security risks to the Shire of Denmark through the use of social media and will comply with this policy in relation to use of equipment.

Employees and elected members will also give consideration to security risks in relation to content development and uploading, recognising that while one small fact alone might not form a security

risk collectively all posted information can form part of a jigsaw puzzle that can be used against the interests of the Shire of Denmark.

Dispute resolution

Disputes will be managed in accordance with Council's Complaint Management Policy P040214, Shire of Denmark Policy Manual (for internal disputes) and within the scope of the Shire of Denmark's Customer Service Charter for issues from the public.

Adoption of the Social Media Policy

This policy was adopted by the Council at their Ordinary Meeting 22 October 2013.



Community Engagement Policy

Policy Statement

The Shire of Denmark is committed to inclusive, transparent, and responsive engagement with its community. This policy provides a framework for consistent, high-quality engagement practices that ensure community input informs Council decision-making and strengthens public trust.

This policy establishes a consistent framework for high-quality community engagement across the Shire. It aligns with the *Community Engagement Operational Standard*, *Social Media Operational Standard*, and the best practice principles of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).

Council supports community engagement that is:

- Inclusive – Actively seeks diverse perspectives, including those of underrepresented groups.
- Transparent – Communicates openly about decisions, processes, and outcomes.
- Responsive – Values community input and integrates it into decision-making.
- Accountable – Commits to regular review and public reporting of engagement outcomes.

Scope

This policy applies to all Shire employees and contractors involved in planning, delivering, or evaluating community engagement.

Policy Commitment

Council commits to implementing this policy through:

Strategic Oversight

Council requires the CEO to develop a *Community Engagement Operational Standard* as the guiding framework for all engagement activities across the Shire.

Digital and Social Media Engagement

Council supports the use of digital platforms—such as *Your Denmark*—and social media to expand access, encourage participation, and enhance transparency in engagement processes.

Community Survey

The Shire will conduct the *Community Satisfaction Survey* on a biennial basis or as otherwise determined by Council. This survey will capture community priorities, perceptions, and satisfaction with services. The results will inform strategic planning and support continuous improvement. The survey will be sent to community members listed across any Shire databases, including the Rates, Library and Recreation Centre databases.

Key Projects

The Policy requires that Council endorse the engagement plans for major projects—those with significant community impact, strategic importance, or substantial investment. These plans will outline key engagement activities, timelines, and methods to ensure meaningful community input and participation.

Community-Council Relationship

Council is committed to building trust through respectful dialogue, active listening, and transparent decision-making.

Responsibilities

Effective community engagement is a shared responsibility across the organisation and its partners.

The Council provides strategic oversight and leadership, setting budgets, endorsing key engagement plans, and utilising community input to inform decision-making.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for day-to-day management and ensures organisational alignment with this policy, and oversees the implementation of engagement strategies.

Contractors and consultants engaged by the Shire to undertake community engagement are expected to adhere to this policy and relevant operational standards when undertaking engagement activities. They must ensure that their methods reflect best practice principles and contribute to the Shire's commitment to meaningful and respectful community engagement.

Policy Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of engagement practices and this policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure continuous improvement, relevance, and alignment with best practice standards. Any updates to the policy will be informed by evaluation findings and community feedback.



OPERATIONAL STANDARD

Community Engagement

Standard Statement

The purpose of this operational standard is to ensure that all community engagement activities are conducted consistently, following established guidelines and best practices. The standard helps maintain a high standard of engagement by outlining clear expectations and benchmarks for performance, as well as a framework for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of community engagement efforts. This standard ensures that diverse community voices are heard and considered in decision-making processes.

Scope

This standard applies to all employees involved in community engagement activities, as well as contractors engaged by the Shire to undertake such activities.

Practice

Community engagement practice at the Shire of Denmark is guided by a commitment to inclusivity, transparency, and responsiveness, and aligns with the best practice principles of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). Staff are expected to follow structured processes, apply suitable engagement methods, and ensure community input is meaningfully considered in decision-making. Engagement activities should be well-planned, professionally delivered, and followed through with clear communication and accountability. Staff are encouraged to seek support from the Communications and Engagement Officer and pursue professional development where engagement is a regular part of their role. Sharing feedback and lessons learned helps strengthen future engagement and build trust with the community.

This Operational Standard takes you through the five steps to community engagement:

1. Understand the issues
2. Determine the level of community engagement required
3. Plan the engagement
4. Deliver the engagement
5. Conduct a debrief and reflect on lessons learned.

Step 1 - Understand the issue and what is required of the engagement

Before planning a community engagement activity, staff should take time to understand the nature and context of the issue. This includes assessing its complexity, potential impact on the community, and any political, safety, or media sensitivities. Staff should also consider available resources, legal obligations, and whether the community can meaningfully influence the outcome. By reflecting on these factors through targeted questions, staff can determine the appropriate level and method of engagement to ensure it is effective, inclusive, and aligned with organisational standards.

Work through the considerations and see how much you know about the issue. Where needed, seek out help from your supervisor, the Communications and Engagement Officer and your team.

Consideration	Questions to consider	Your Assessment
Degree of complexity of the issue.	Are we dealing with a single, clearly defined issue or multiple interconnected issues that require separate engagement approaches?	
Degree of potential community impact and or concern	What level of impact will this issue have on the community, and how concerned are community members likely to be? (Refer to Risk Management Policy definitions: Insignificant, Minor, Moderate, Major, Extreme)	
General community perception of the issue/s	How does the community currently perceive the issue, and are there existing opinions, concerns, or misconceptions that need to be addressed?	
The degree of political sensitivity surrounding this issue	Is there a risk that individuals or groups may use this issue to advance political agendas or influence public opinion?	
Availability of resources and budget.	Do we have sufficient budget and staff resources to support the level of engagement required for this issue?	
Media Interest.	Is this issue likely to attract media attention, and how might that influence public perception or engagement outcomes?	
External consultant	Have the benefits/risks of using an external consultant been considered? <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Expertise and experience- Objectivity and neutrality- Tailored engagement methods- Level of control over the engagement- Access to data after the engagement	
Community influence on the decision	To what extent can community input shape or change the final decision or outcome?	
Whether an emergency or safety issue exists.	Does this issue involve any immediate risks to public safety or require urgent action?	

The extent to which the community could help improve the solution or outcome.	How can community knowledge, experience, or ideas contribute to a better solution or more effective implementation? Are there opportunities for co-design or collaboration with the community to enhance the outcome?	
The historical context	Have we engaged the community on this issue before, and what were the outcomes or lessons learned from those activities?	
Legislative and regulatory requirements.	Are there any legal or regulatory requirements that necessitate community engagement on this issue?	
Whether a decision has already been made or not.	Has a decision already been made, or is there genuine scope for community input to influence the outcome?	

Now that you have a good understanding of the issues surrounding this community engagement, the next step is to use this information to determine the appropriate level of community engagement.

Step 2: - Determine the Level of Community Engagement Required

This table is a practical tool to help staff determine the most appropriate level of community engagement based on the nature of the decision being made. By considering what you aim to achieve, the timeframe available, and the potential impact on the community, you can determine whether the engagement should be at the Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, or Empower level. Use the table to match your engagement goals with the corresponding level of community involvement, ensuring that your approach is proportionate, timely, and aligned with the community's expectations and the significance of the decision.

If your proposed engagement approach, available timeframe, and the potential level of community impact are not aligned, it's important to discuss the situation with your supervisor to identify which factors may be flexible. For example, if the engagement must be completed within a month, a collaborative approach—which typically requires more time—may not be feasible. The appropriate level of engagement should always be determined by balancing these elements: the purpose of the engagement, the time available, and the significance of the decision's impact on the community.

Determine the appropriate engagement level					
	What do you think is the best approach? (CIRCLE THE PREFERRED APPROACH)	What's your timeframe? (CIRCLE THE PREFERRED TIMEFRAME)	What level of Impact will the decision have on the community? CIRCLE LOW, MEDIUM or HIGH		
INFORM	Provide balanced and objective information to the community or stakeholders to help them understand the topic, explore alternatives, identify opportunities, and consider potential solutions.	2 – 4 weeks	Lower Level of Impact: A small change or improvement to a facility or service at the local level, with little effect on the community	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 Denmark LGA. Potential for controversy. (i.e. removal of local playground, changes to services, provisions to a community-wide event).	High Level of Impact: A significant change considered of high value across all of Denmark LGA or a large part of the Shire. This includes highly controversial issues or projects, such as the provision of a district or regional facility, changes to the natural environment, or the removal of a facility or service.
CONSULT	Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	2 – 6 weeks	and low or no risk of controversy (e.g., upgrading a local playground).		
INVOLVE	Work with the public throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	1 – 3 months			
COLLABORATE	To partner with the public in every aspect of the decision-making process, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	3 – 6 months			
EMPOWER	To place final decision-making and/or devolved budgets in the hands of the public.	3 – 6 months			

Step 3: Plan the Engagement

When undertaking a community engagement exercise, Shire employees should ensure that they have considered the elements and questions outlined in the following checklist. This should be discussed with your supervisor.

What is the purpose(s) or outcome(s) of the consultation exercise? Please describe.	Checklist
Does information already exist on the issue? If yes, please document / list.	
Have you set a clear consultation timeframe(s)? If yes, please detail.	
Have you considered the best time to consult, taking into account both the stakeholders and the Council's processes and timeframes required, especially if Council approval is necessary? If yes, please detail.	
Have you identified all relevant stakeholders and who needs to be engaged with, including hard-to-reach stakeholders? If yes, please detail/list.	
What is the best consultation method(s) to use? Please detail/ list.	
Have you considered if <i>Your Denmark</i> platform is appropriate for this engagement? Speak to the Communications and Community Engagement Officer in making this determination.	
Should the consultation be undertaken in-house or externally? Why? Has a budget been provided for an external consultant? If external, please detail.	
Have you consulted with the relevant Committee of Council or Working Groups? If so, please provide details.	
Have you determined and included, as part of the total project budget, a specific budget for the community engagement, including advertising, mail-outs, publications, facilitators, catering, childcare, staging, hire fees?	
Have you considered what information is available to support community engagement? If yes, please detail.	
If there are legal requirements to consult with the community, have you made yourself familiar with the details of the legislation and the minimum standards/timeframes?	
Have you considered relevant in-house skills available in other teams who might be able to support you in delivering this engagement? If yes, please list.	
Have you consulted with other relevant teams? If yes, please briefly detail who, how and the results of that consultation.	
Do you need to consider any sensitive or culturally sensitive issues?	
Are there any opportunities for "hands-on" community involvement in the implementation of the project/plan? If yes, please detail/list.	
How will decisions be fed back to participants involved in the consultation/engagement exercise?	
Have you considered how Council or Councillors will be involved and briefed during the process?	
Have you considered and defined the type of debrief for the community engagement exercise following its conclusion? If yes, please attach.	

Your Denmark (www.yourdenmark.wa.gov.au) – is the key platform for community engagement at the Shire of Denmark. It is important because:

1. The platform offers a single, easy-to-access location for all engagement activities, allowing staff to manage projects efficiently and enabling community members to participate with ease.
2. It ensures transparency and consistency in communication and engagement processes.
3. *Your Denmark* allows for a broader reach, enabling participation from residents who may not be able to attend in-person events due to time, distance, or accessibility barriers.
4. It supports asynchronous engagement, meaning people can contribute at a time that suits them.
5. The platform can collect quantitative and qualitative data through surveys, polls, forums, and interactive tools.
6. Staff can use this data to analyse trends, identify community priorities, and make evidence-based decisions.
7. Digital engagement can be more cost-effective than traditional methods, as it reduces the need for physical venues, printed materials, and travel.
8. It also streamlines workflows, allowing staff to manage multiple engagement activities simultaneously.

Step 4 - Deliver the Engagement Activity

If you are delivering an in-person engagement activity such as a town hall meeting or workshops, the following checklist will help ensure the details are covered.

Preparation	
Confirm venue, equipment, and materials are booked and ready. Ensure all staff and facilitators are briefed and understand their roles. Prepare and test any technology (e.g., microphones, projectors, online platforms). Print or distribute engagement materials (e.g., agendas, feedback forms, maps). Confirm attendance or participation of key stakeholders and community members.	
Accessibility and Inclusion *(see resource list at end of document)	
Provide interpreters, accessible formats, or support services as required. Ensure the venue or platform is accessible to all participants.	
Communication	
Send reminders to participants with event details and expectations. Ensure signage and directions are clear for in-person events. Prepare a welcome message and clear explanation of the engagement purpose	
Engagement Delivery	
Start on time and follow the planned agenda. Create a welcoming and inclusive environment. Facilitate discussions respectfully and ensure all voices are heard. Capture feedback accurately (notes, recordings, surveys). Monitor participation and adjust facilitation if needed.	
Risk and Issues Management	
Be prepared to manage conflict or challenging questions. Have a plan for technical issues or disruptions.	
Wrap Up	
Summarise key points and next steps. Thank participants and explain how their input will be used. Provide contact details for follow-up questions or feedback.	

Step 5: - Conduct a Debrief and Share Lessons Learnt

This checklist is designed to support staff in debriefing community engagement activities by prompting reflection on each stage of the process, from planning and consultation methods to outcomes and follow-up. By systematically reviewing what worked well and what could be improved, staff can capture valuable lessons learned that inform future engagement efforts. Sharing this feedback across teams and departments helps build organisational knowledge, promotes transparency, and fosters a culture of continuous improvement in how we engage with our community.

Objectives	Were the objectives of the Community Engagement exercise clear to all involved?	Checklist
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 the 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, e.g., draft documents for comment, was the information easily accessible? 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 and relay this back to participants? Have you recognised and acknowledged participants, contributors and/or attendees?	

Useful Resources to improve access and inclusion

- Survey creation: <https://help.surveymonkey.com/en/surveymonkey/create/accessibility/>
- Consultation: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un_disability-inclusive_consultation_guidelines.pdf
- Hosting accessible and inclusive in-person meetings and events: <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/hosting-accessible-inclusive-in-person-meetings-events#BfLSM>

- Inclusive language: <https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/accessible-and-inclusive-content/inclusive-language>
- Communication with people with disability: <https://afdo.org.au/resource-communication-with-people-with-disabilities/>
- <https://theconversation.com/we-can-all-help-to-improve-communication-for-people-with-disabilities-101199>

Variation to This Standard

This standard may be cancelled or varied from time to time. All Shire of Denmark employees will be notified in writing of any variation to this standard. All employees are responsible for familiarising themselves with this Standard.

Document Control

Document Responsibilities:			
Owner:	Chief Executive Officer	Owner Business Unit:	Governance
Reviewer:	Communications & Engagement Officer		
Document Management:			
Synergy Ref:	NSTN25914		
Version #	Date	Action	
1.	August 2025	Approved by the CEO	