Community Engagement Policy

 Collaboration   Communication   Integrity   Efficiency   Leadership

Version Control and Objective ID	Version No: 2	Objective ID: A8502848
Adopted at Council Ordinary Meeting on	24 November 2022	
Date of Review	25 November 2026	

1. Statement

Ipswich City Council is committed to meaningful engagement with the community on issues affecting the city, and on local issues that significantly impact on the community. Community engagement is the foundation of sustainable decision-making and is mutually beneficial to the community and council.

This policy confirms council's commitment to section 4(2)(c) of the *Local Government Act 2009* which prescribes community engagement as a legislative requirement to ensure de*mocratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement* in government decision making.

2. Purpose and Principles

The purpose of this policy is to provide council with a framework to guide a consistent, transparent, and effective approach to community engagement.

The following principles guide council's approach to community engagement:
- We know why we are engaging and we communicate this clearly
- We deliberately include as many people as we can
- We aim to be inclusive and connect with those hardest to reach
- We are sensitive to history and know the context
- Whenever possible we engage early on challenges and not just solutions
- We genuinely listen at every stage and we keep coming back
- We are relevant and purposeful.

3. Strategic Plan Links

This policy aligns with the following iFuture 2021-2026 Corporate Plan themes:
- Safe, Inclusive and Creative
- A Trusted and Leading Organisation

4. Regulatory Authority

Local Government Act 2009 (Qld).

5. **Human Rights Commitment**
   Ipswich City Council (Council) has considered the human rights protected under the Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld) (the Act) when adopting and/or amending this policy. When applying this policy, Council will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and give proper consideration to a human right relevant to the decision in accordance with the Act.

6. **Scope**
   This policy applies to all Councillors, council staff (full-time, part-time, temporary and casual), and consultants and contractors engaged by, or acting on behalf of, council.

   This policy does not apply to the responsibilities, commitments or actions of other levels of government.

7. **Roles and Responsibilities**
   Implementation of this policy is a whole-of-council responsibility. Specifically, the following roles include the responsibilities listed below.

   Councillors
   Elected representatives have an integral role in to play in Council's community engagement processes. For the benefit of the community, they should be engaged early, informed of and involved in community engagement activities, to support them to fulfil their role of representing Ipswich residents and to allow their meaningful participation in those activities.

   Elected representatives have an important role in advocating for and informing the community of Council engagement activities, to support their reach and their effectiveness. To perform their roles effectively, Councillors also need to engage with constituents on a range of matters. Councillors will be engaged early and kept informed of Council engagement activities to ensure these engagements take place in the context of those broader Council activities.

   Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
   The CEO is responsible for advocating for quality community engagement activities and understanding the different roles and responsibilities outlined in this policy. The CEO should be aware of current and upcoming community engagement activities and consider community engagement feedback when making decisions.

   General Managers
   General Managers are responsible for having a robust understanding of council's Community Engagement Framework, identifying strategic community engagement opportunities, resourcing departmental community engagement activities by allocating staff time and budgets and considering community engagement feedback when making decisions.

   Branch and Section Managers
   Branch and Section Managers are responsible for having a good level of understanding of council's Community Engagement Framework, advocating for quality community engagement activities, supporting staff involvement in community engagement processes, approving community engagement plans and budgets and reporting project-based community engagement findings to the Executive Leadership Team and Councillors.

Council officers who undertake or are involved with community engagement activities

Council officers who undertake or are involved with community engagement activities are for having a good level of understanding of council's Community Engagement Framework and adhere to community engagement principles and processes.

Stakeholder Engagement Team

The Stakeholder Engagement team is responsible for ensuring that key stakeholders who have a vested interested in Council's Capital Delivery Program are engaged in meaningful conversations as early as possible, to inform sustainable decision-making. The Stakeholder Engagement Team provides guidance to council officers and contractors about best-practice engagement for project-related planning and delivery, including proactive issue, risk and reputation management. The Stakeholder Engagement team partners with project teams to design and deliver 'fit-for-purpose' engagement strategies that are integrated with project management plans. On these initiatives, the Stakeholder Engagement Team is responsible for engaging Councillors early in the process to ensure the approach to the community is effective and to leverage their experience and networks.
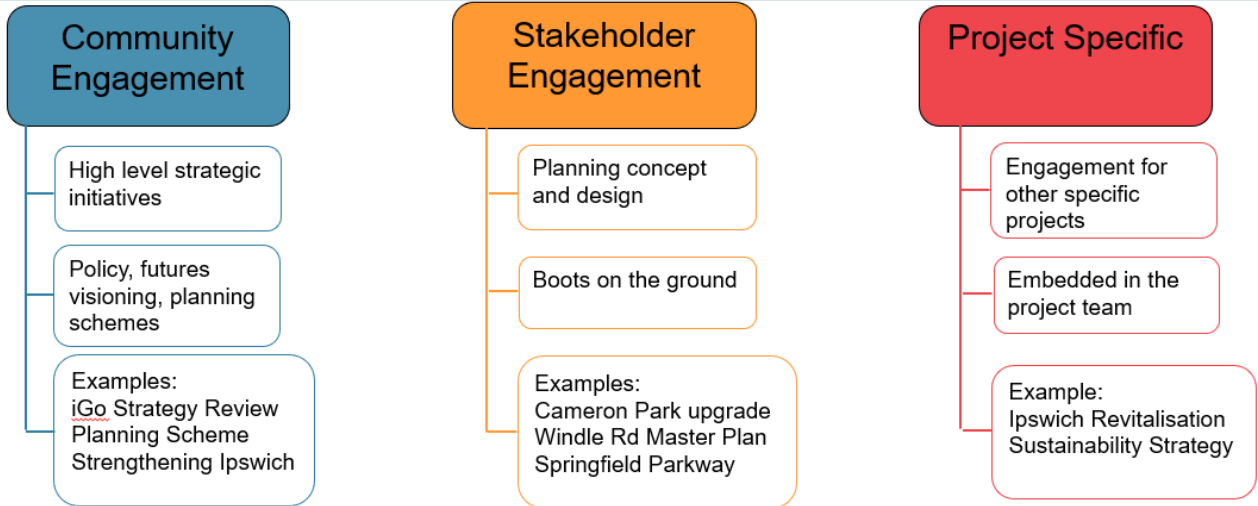
Community Engagement Team

Council's Community Engagement Team is responsible for having a robust understanding of, and implementing, maintaining and continuously improving, council's Community Engagement Framework. The Community Engagement team facilitates engagement activities for whole-of-Council initiatives and strategic plans. On these initiatives, the Community Engagement Team is responsible for engaging Councillors early in the process to ensure the approach to the community is effective and to leverage their experience and networks. The Community Engagement Team is responsible for providing guidance and support to council officers about community engagement principles, processes, resources and reporting. The Community Engagement Team is also responsible for monitoring community engagement processes across council, providing updates to the Executive Leadership Team and Councillors and building community engagement skills and capabilities across the organisation. The Community Engagement team manages and coordinates engagement activities with the Community Panel to have conversations that reflect the diversity of Ipswich. The Community Engagement team manages the online community engagement platform, Shape Your Ipswich to increase inclusion and enable feedback from community via a digital method.

Project Specific

Project specific officers for large, long-term projects are responsible for the design and delivering of engagement activities following council's Community Engagement Framework and community engagement principles and processes to meet the engagement requirements for all stages of the specific project. On these initiatives, project specific officers are responsible for engaging Councillors early in the process to ensure the approach to the community is effective and to leverage their experience and networks.

The table below illustrates the range of engagement functions within Ipswich City Council

1. Engagement functions in Ipswich City Council

Community Engagement	Stakeholder Engagement	Project Specific
High level strategic initiatives	Planning concept and design	Engagement for other specific projects
Policy, futures visioning, planning schemes	Boots on the ground	Embedded in the project team
Examples: iGo Strategy Review Planning Scheme Strengthening Ipswich	Examples: Cameron Park upgrade Windle Rd Master Plan Springfield Parkway	Example: Ipswich Revitalisation Sustainability Strategy

City of Ipswich

8.   Our Community Engagement Process
Community engagement is a process of involving the community in decision-making. This ranges from informing and consulting, to involving and collaborating with the community.

Council has a clear process for designing and delivering community engagement. This process has five key stages: Understand, Plan, Deliver, Report and Evaluate as shown in the below figure.

OUR ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

1. Understand
2. Plan
3. Deliver
4. Report
5. Evaluate

9.   Our Approach to Community Engagement

Council's community engagement approach is guided by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) framework. The IAP2 spectrum for public participation is a tool to determine what level of community involvement is appropriate for any given engagement activity.   The spectrum operates on a scale of involvement from: Inform; Consult; Involve; Collaborate; and Empower.

Table 1. Levels of engagement and role of community

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION

	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.

© IAP2 International Federation 2018. All rights reserved. 20181112_v1

Role of the public

Learning	Commentating	Providing input	Partnering	Deciding

Level of Public Impact examples

Fact sheets, websites, flyers	Public comment, focus groups, surveys, public meetings	Workshops, deliberative polling	Citizen advisory committees, Consensus-building, Participatory decision making	Citizen juries, ballots, delegated decision

10.   Key Stakeholders

The following will be consulted during the review process for this policy:
- Elected representatives
- The CEO and General Managers.
- Community Engagement Team
- Stakeholder Management Team
- Community members (consulted on potential engagement priorities)

11.   Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy can be measured by:
- Demographically broad and diverse community participation in community engagement
- activities
- Annual growth in the number of council community engagement activities
- Annual number of council decisions informed by community input
- Analytics regarding community support and satisfaction with community engagement

12.   Definitions

Community	A group of any size whose members reside in the same locality, share common characteristics (e.g. age, sex, ethnic origin, faith), interest and/or cause. People can belong to several different communities at any one time.
Community Engagement	A process by which community and council work together to facilitate community input into council decision-making.
Community Engagement Framework	The suite of council documents which outline council's vision and commitment to engaging with the community, detail the community engagement roles and responsibilities across Council and the various community engagement processes, tools, and resources.
Councillors	All elected representatives including the Mayor
IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.	The IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation provides a methodology for determining what level of influence a community has over a decision and therefore what level of engagement is appropriate. The spectrum operates on a scale of involvement from: Inform; Consult; Involve; Collaborate; and Empower.

13.   Policy Owner

The General Manager (Community, Cultural and Economic Development) is the policy owner and the Manager, Media, Communications and Engagement is responsible for authoring and reviewing this policy.