CP1.6 Community Engagement Policy	CP1.6 Community Engagement Policy	
CURRENT POLICY STATEMENT	**PROPOSED**	**CHANGE NOTES**
SUSTAINABILITY THEME Community	**SUSTAINABILITY THEME** Governance	Community Engagement is located under governance in the Community Strategic Plan
OBJECTIVES a) To ensure that meaningful community engagement is integrated with the City's planning, policies and activities and inform City decision making. b) To ensure that community engagement is coordinated and integrated in a consistent manner across the City. c) To assist in strengthening the partnerships between Council and the community.	**OBJECTIVES** Council is committed to engaging with the community to: • Respond to our external environment by continually adapting our approach to community engagement to reflect how our community communicates and engages with the City and Council; • Respond to the increasing complexity of public policy issues which, increases the need to provide information to the community about the complexity and gather their response; • Provide the public with a clear understanding of Council's commitment to community and stakeholder engagement; • Continually identify opportunities to engage with the community and integrate the engagement process in project planning and service delivery; • Ensure the community's expectation to be engaged in the decision making process is met with appropriate, consistent and coordinated engagement; • Ensure our diverse communities of interest have the opportunity to engage in decision-making processes; and • Report community engagement outcomes.	Revised objectives provide clear guidance as to why engagement occurs and the outcomes engagement should achieve. They also reflect the challenges the City has faced regarding the community, their involvement and their expectations regarding engagement since the policy was adopted.
POLICY STATEMENT a) The policy defines the principles of community engagement and mechanisms for engagement. b) The policy is applicable to all of the City's activities and the focus will be on applying it to formal planning processes and major projects. c) *Why community engagement is valuable* To enable a full decision making process, the City may consider and report on a cross- section of information including: • regional guidelines and national/international best practice; • local values; • professional assessments of local needs; and • resource availability. d) Community engagement is the key mechanism for the identification of local values and local needs that form part of staff advocacy to Council for a preferred project approach. e) During the community engagement and reporting processes City staff must be mindful of the resource constraints and best practice standards affecting the project. f) Engagement Context	**POLICY STATEMENT** The City and Council will engage with the community to better understand their wants, needs and aspirations; address issues affecting their wellbeing; and to identify and deliberate solutions to commonly recognised problems. This Policy defines the principles and mechanisms for engaging with the community. **Rationale:** Community engagement strengthens relationships and builds trust between the City, Council and the community. It enables informed decision making in relation to strategic policy, planning and prioritisation of resource allocation. An engaged community is an outcome and is characteristic of good democratic government. Good governance reflects contributions to the decision making process by those impacted by the decision.	a) New Policy Statement provides clear guidance on what engagement sets out to achieve. b) Where the policy is applicable has been moved to Policy Details. c) Why community engagement is valuable has been replaced with **Rationale** which provides a succinct definition of why engagement is valuable based on experience gained in the past 6 years. d) Removed and summarised in Policy Statement. e) Removed. Reporting now has its own heading. Resourcing now included in Roles and Responsibilities f) Engagement Context has been moved to Policy Details: #1. g) The Community Engagement Spectrum has been replaced with

Engagement and participation activities occur under different circumstances and for different reasons. The type and level of community engagement will vary between activities and projects and the level of engagement may be more detailed depending on the nature of the project/proposal and the level of impact of that project/proposal.
 	
g) The Community Engagement Spectrum, see Appendix One, provides a guide to the selecting the appropriate level that should be considered by the City or Councillors when planning engagement.
 	
h) In addition to ensuring internal City control of collected information, correct analysis, and transparent reporting to Council bodies, good community engagement is able to:
 	
   1) identify stakeholders – an engagement process identifies those with an interest in a decision making area, and helps define their expectations;
   2) define the agenda – sets boundaries for the questions to be asked, encouraging debate around a structured set of opinions;
   3) allow for two-way discussion – dialogue assists in reaching choices acceptable to a wide range of interests;
   4) improve information flow – in addition to helping the community to interact and discuss issues through the careful planning of public meetings, a wide range of mechanisms are used to invite stakeholders to consultations;
   5) enable others to act – good community engagement may lead to formation of groups that can attract additional resources and take projects forward, reducing the need for local government to 'do and be everything'; and
   6) ensure a plan for evaluation – we need to learn so that our engagement methods, skills of our staff and the expectations of our community can evolve together.
 	
h) Value Statement
"We value an open and trusting relationship between the community, Local Government and other decision makers across the region are committed to an ongoing and consistent community engagement where constructive feedback results in action"*
 	
i) *Extract from the 2029 and Beyond Community Charter - Governance pillar of sustainability.*
		the Public Participation Spectrum and is listed in the Policy Details.
		
		h) Description of good community engagement has been removed and is included in the Community Engagement Framework. 1,2,3&4. have also been incorporated into Policy Principles. 6. Covered in new heading Reporting and Evaluation
		
		h) Value Statement updated to align with current Community Strategic Plan and moved to Policy Principles.
		
		i) Removed reference to 2029 Community Charter

POLICY DETAILS
 	
a) The following principles will guide processes for community engagement:
 	
1. Open and Transparent: is accessible and encourages participation with no hidden agendas;
 	
2. Genuine Commitment: there is a clear sense that there will be follow through and that the community will be kept informed on how input has been used in decision making;
 	
3. Inclusive: all voices and opinions are valued and considered. Everyone is respectful of views and values of those involved in the process;
 	
4. Consensus Seeking: in style and approach of the dialogue; and
	POLICY DETAILS
	
	1. Community engagement occurs under different circumstances and for different reasons.
	2. Community engagement may occur:
	  • Where a proposed change to Council strategic direction, functions or programs may significantly affect the community in terms of the economy, lifestyle, environment, wellbeing or amenity;
	  • When developing new or reviewing existing strategies, plans and Capital Works;
	  • When introducing a new service, discontinuing an existing service or substantially changing or reviewing a service that may significantly affect how services are provided;
	  • When proposals are made for changing the way in which public space looks, is used or enjoyed;
		a) Policy Details (1-5) are principles and have been moved to Policy Principles heading.
		
		b) Removed and included in 2. Community engagement may occur:
		
		c) Removed and included under Policy Principles.
		
		New Policy Detail 1. taken from Engagement context in Policy Statement
		New Policy #2, 3 and 4) provide much needed guidance as to when engagement will or will not occur as

5. Proactive: an open, forward-looking process, using every engagement experience as a learning opportunity to improve our community engagement practices.

b) All strategic planning and major projects will make specific reference to this policy and choose the level of engagement that is appropriate to the circumstances.

c) The choice of engagement method and outcomes will be reported to Council through Agenda Items and briefings where applicable.

- When the community raises a significant issue with Council for a deliberation and there are likely to be competing community interests and adverse media and public attention;
- During the planning, development and delivery of major projects and the capital works plan; and/or
- When we are required to do so by law.

3. Community engagement isn't always applicable, or possible, due to time constraints and generally may not occur when:
   - An immediate resolution is required;
   - Technical or other expertise is required;
   - The City is responding in an emergency where public health and safety are at risk;
   - Decisions relate to the City's day-to-day business operations; and/or
   - Legal, commercial or confidential restrictions are involved.

4. The policy does not apply to advocacy campaigns and does not negate the need to adhere to statutory and legal obligations regarding community consultation.

5. The type and level of community engagement will vary depending on the nature of the project/proposal and level of impact it may have. A highly effective tool to determine the appropriate level of engagement is the International Association for Public Participation's universally recognised participation spectrum. The following table has been adapted from the IAP2 participation spectrum. It identifies the five levels of increasing engagement, their goals and the role of the community at each level.

Low level ——————————————► Mid-Level ——————————————► High

Level	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	*Empower
Goal	One-way communication to provide balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen or has already happened.	Two-way communication process aimed at obtaining feedback on ideas, alternatives and proposals to inform decision making.	Participatory process designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.	Working together to develop an understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions.	To give the community the knowledge, means, responsibility a accountability the final decisi can be placed i their hands.
Role of the community	Listen	Contribute	Participate	Partner	Lead

Table 1: Public Participation Spectrum.

*In the Local Government context, the highest level of 'empower' is rarely achievable or appropriate as the ultimate authority to make final decisions rests with the elected Councillors.

6. 'Inform' is the core business of the Corporate Communications team and will be undertaken with the assistance of relevant staff utilising available channels including social media.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

it is either not well defined or not included in the current policy.

5. The Public Participation Spectrum replaces the Community Engagement Spectrum previously found only in the CE Guide. It reflects the five levels of engagement activities that have been undertaken in the past six years.

6. Inform has been identified as core City business and as the required minimum level of community engagement.

The current policy does not have a Policy Principles heading.

	Councillors will endeavour to support and observe community engagement activities. The choice of engagement method and outcomes will be reported to Council through Agenda items and Briefing Notes.	Council's commitment updated to align with the Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027, including the value statement.

	Council's commitment to engage with the community:
	City of Greater Geraldton Strategic Community Plan 2017-2027
	Governance:
	We value an open and trusting relationship between the community, Local Government and other decision makers.
	4.1 Community Engagement
	    4.1.1 Continuing to engage broadly and proactively with the community.
	    4.1.2 Promoting and celebrating the City's achievements.
	    4.1.3 Providing innovative and accessible customer service and information systems.
	
	1. Open and Transparent: is accessible and encourages participation with no hidden agendas;
	
	2. Genuine Commitment: there is a clear sense that there will be follow through and that the community will be kept informed on how input has been used in decision making;
	
	3. Inclusive: all voices and opinions are valued and considered. Everyone is respectful of views and values of those involved in the process;
	
	4. Consensus Seeking: in style and approach of the dialogue; and
	
	5. Proactive: an open, forward looking process, using every engagement experience as a learning opportunity to improve our community engagement practices.
	
	6. Timely: Activities should be planned during the project planning stages to optimise the level of influence the community is able to have and ensure it is given genuine attention, appropriate resourcing and realistic timeframes. Where possible engagement activities avoid events such as school holidays and religious festival.
	
	7. Access and equity: Barriers that may hinder awareness, access and participation including types of communication and engagement techniques, use of alternative formats and presentation of information, providing assistance with transport, childcare and communication aids and choice of venue should be considered.
	
	8. Value local wisdom: The collective wisdom of various groups and individuals in the community is useful and important. Additional time, different techniques, communication tools, resources and supports may be needed so individuals or groups are able to participate and share their wisdom and expertise
		1-5. Moved to Policy Principles from Policy Details
		
		6. Not included in current policy and is relevant to achieving success
		
		7: Not included in current policy aligns with Disability Access and Inclusion Plan objectives
		
		8: Not included in current policy and is critical to achieving success.

	RISKS All community engagement involves levels of risk. The financial, legal, social and reputational risks of engagement activities and their outputs must be identified and mitigated in the planning stages.	Not included in current policy.
	APPROVALS All community engagement activities must be approved by the Executive Management Team.	Not included in current policy.

	All high-level engagement activities must also secure from EMT and/or Council a determination of the extent or degree of responsibility and level of accountability the community will be given in regard to the output and/or final decision making.	
	REPORTING AND EVALUATION Results of community engagement activities on significant matters must be reported to Council, participants and the broader community. To ensure engagement activities meet their objectives and are continually improved upon, mid and high-level engagement activities must conduct post activity participant surveys and all high-level engagement activities require an evaluation report.	Not included in current policy.
KEY TERM DEFINITIONS **Community Engagement** is the broad and ongoing range of interactions between Council and the whole of the local community to build capacity and partnerships. An engaged community is an outcome and is a characteristic of a participatory, effective, democratic governance model. The term community engagement is often used interchangeably with the term community consultation however, consultation is only one level of engagement. Community engagement refers to the different ways in which a local government authority connects with members of its diverse community. For the purpose of this document community engagement occurs on a spectrum of three levels; inform, consult and participation. As you move further along the spectrum the level of participation the community has in the decision making process will increase. **Inform** means one way communication that provides balanced and objective information to assist the community in understanding the problems, alternatives, and/or solutions. This usually occurs once a decision has been made. **Consult** means a process of obtaining public feedback on analysis and/or alternatives that will help determine how a project or policy will be implemented. **Participation** is achieved by involving the community in a participatory process. designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to decision making. Participation also recognises and acknowledges the importance of working collaboratively with the community and stakeholders to develop an understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions. Participation is achieved through a range of deliberative techniques that encourages or enables participants to take responsibility for their contribution to solutions and helps shape the way in which a policy or activity is decided upon and implemented.	**KEY TERM DEFINITIONS** **Accountability** - the tasks where someone is answerable for their actions. **Authority** - the power to make and enforce decisions**.** **Community** - a group of people who share something in common. It may be location, interests, culture, language, beliefs, age, ethnicity, values or traditions. **Community Engagement** is the process of working together with the community to address issues affecting their wellbeing and to identify solutions to commonly recognised problems. The process takes into consideration the aspirations, concerns, needs and values of the community and incorporates them in the decision making process. **Participation** - involving the community in a participatory process. **Responsibility** - the tasks one is given the means to accomplish or perform.	New terms used in the policy added to provide clarification. Community Engagement definition has been simplified. Inform and Consult have been removed and defined in the Public Participation Spectrum table in **Policy Details.** Participation definition has been simplified.
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES a) The Community Engagement Policy owner is the Chief Executive Officer. The CEO shall oversee the implementation of this Policy and subsequent policies through receiving reports and giving directions through the Executive Management Team. b) All strategic planning and major projects will make specific reference to this policy, and choose the level of engagement that is appropriate to the circumstances.	**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES** The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of this policy. Community engagement is the responsibility of all Council service areas, teams and employees. As such, engagement activities must be considered and resourced via project budgets. To ensure the effective application of engagement principles and processes, a Community Engagement Framework and Toolkit have been developed to provide guidance for Council employees.	Roles and Responsibilities broadened to include all staff. Resourcing has been added to ensure engagement activities are funded accordingly. b) Moved to Policy **Details**. c) Council's Commitment to engage moved to Policy Principles which reflects the purpose of this Council Policy.

c) Councillors will endeavour to support and participate in community engagement activities. The choice of engagement method and outcomes will be reported to Council through Agenda Items and briefings. d) Council's Commitment to Engage with the Community 1. COUNCIL DECISION MAKING via agenda items. 2. Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey 3. City of Greater Geraldton Strategic Community Plan 2011-2021 e) Opportunities for Creativity 1. Recognised internationally as a leader in the integration of research, sustainability and community empowerment. 2. Investigate and develop innovative models for community engagement and empowerment. Leading the Opportunities 1. Citizen and stakeholder focused services. 2. Maintain meaningful engagement, consultation and deliberative processes with the community. 3. Actively utilise technology to support engagement and reporting processes. 4. Facilitate partnerships for collaborative governance and delivery.		d) Council's commitment has been updated and moved to Policy Principles. A new Framework and Toolkit has been developed to accompany the policy.

WORKPLACE INFORMATION
 	
Local Government Act 1995 - Section 2.7 – Role of Council
(1) The council —
    (a) governs the local government's affairs; and
    (b) is responsible for the performance of the local government's functions.
 	
(2) Without limiting subsection (1), the council is to —
    (a) oversee the allocation of the local government's finances and resources; and
    (b) determine the local government's policies.
 	
Local Government Act 1995 - Section 3.1– General Function
    (1) The general function of a local government is to provide for the good government of persons in its district;
    (2) The scope of the general function of a local government is to be construed in the context of its other functions under this Act or any other written law and any constraints imposed by this Act or any other written law on the performance of its functions; and
    (3) A liberal approach is to be taken to the construction of the scope of the general function of a local government.
 	
Statutory Compliance
The City has a number of functional areas where community engagement or public consultation processes are governed by legislative requirements. It is acknowledged that these legislative processes are the minimum requirement regarding public consultation processes and are to be utilised in conjunction with the Community Engagement Strategy.
	WORKPLACE INFORMATION
	
	Local Government Act 1995 - Section 1.3 – Content and intent
	    (2) This Act is intended to result in —
	        (a) better decision making by local governments; and
	        (b) greater community participation in the decisions and affairs of local governments;
	
	Local Government Act 1995 - Section 2.10 – The Role of Councillors
	A Councillor:
	    a) represents the interests of electors, ratepayers and residents of the district;
	    b) provides leadership and guidance to the community in the district;
	    c) facilitates communication between the community and the council;
	    d) participates in the local government's decision-making processes at council and committee meetings; and
	    e) performs such other functions as are given to a councillor by this Act or any other written law.
	
	Local Government Act 1995 - Section 2.7 – Role of Council
	(1) The council —
	    (a) governs the local government's affairs; and
	    (b) is responsible for the performance of the local government's functions.
	
	(2) Without limiting subsection (1), the council is to —
	    (a) oversee the allocation of the local government's finances and resources; and
	    (b) determine the local government's policies.
	
	Local Government Act 1995 - Section 3.1– General Function
	    (4) The general function of a local government is to provide for the good government of persons in its district;
	    (5) The scope of the general function of a local government is to be construed in the context of its other functions under this Act or any other written law and any
		Added Local Government Act References s1.3 and s.2.10

	constraints imposed by this Act or any other written law on the performance of its functions; and *(6)A liberal approach is to be taken to the construction of the scope of the general function of a local government.* **Statutory Compliance** The City has a number of functional areas where community engagement or public consultation processes are governed by legislative requirements. It is acknowledged that these legislative processes are the minimum requirement regarding public consultation processes and are to be utilised in conjunction with the Community Engagement Strategy.	

POLICY ADMINISTRATION

Directorate	Officer	Review Cycle
Office of the CEO	Community Engagement Officer	Biennial

Version	Decision Reference	
1.	CCS231-24 January 2017	CP042 EXISTING POLICY transferred to new template. amended.

POLICY ADMINISTRATION

Directorate	Officer	Review Cycle	Next Due
			2020

Version	Decision Reference	Synopsis

Updated to reflect the biennial review cycle.