

1. Rationale

The City of Marion recognises that effective community engagement is essential for fostering a liveable, sustainable community. Community engagement allows Council to make better-informed decisions by considering the diverse knowledge, experience and opinions of those affected by the decision.

This Policy aligns with legislative requirements of section 50 of the Local Government Act 1999 (the Act), the Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter (the Charter), and reflects best practice engagement principles. It sets out how Council will meet its legislative obligations while also offering opportunities for additional engagement where appropriate.

2. Policy statement

The City of Marion is committed to delivering community engagement that is meaningful, inclusive, timely and proportionate to the significance and impact of decisions. Council will ensure that community members have reasonable and ongoing opportunities to:

- Access clear, accurate and plain language information about proposed decisions
- Participate in engagement processes appropriate to the scale and impact of the matter
- Provide feedback that is genuinely considered in decision-making

Council will clearly communicate:

- What is being proposed and why
- How community feedback will be used to inform decisions
- How community views have influenced the final outcome.

Engagement activities will be designed to foster constructive dialogue and will be accessible to diverse members of the community.

3. Objectives

Community Engagement Policy Objectives

Objective 1	Ensure compliance with the Local Government Act 1999 and the Community Engagement Charter.
Objective 2	Provide clear, consistent and transparent processes for community engagement.

Community Engagement Policy Objectives

Objective 3	Ensure information is provided in plain language and is readily accessible.
Objective 4	Enable meaningful and inclusive participation across the community.
Objective 5	Align engagement methods with the significance and impact of decisions.
Objective 6	Clearly demonstrate how community input has informed Council decisions.
Objective 7	Support continuous improvement in engagement practices.

4. Policy scope and implementation

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all community engagement undertaken by Council as required by the Act and the Charter. It applies to Council Members, Council employees, contractors and consultants acting on behalf of Council.

This Policy does not apply to processes governed by the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 (PDI Act)*, which are instead subject to the Community Engagement Charter and the legislative requirements of the PDI Act.

IMPLEMENTATION

4.1. Engagement Categories

Council will apply the following engagement categories in accordance with the Community Engagement Charter. Engagement requirements are set out for each category and must be applied proportionately, having regard to the scale, impact and level of community interest.

Significant – Annual Business Plan and Rating Policy

Minimum requirements:

- Publish information on Council website and in a local news publication
- Provide clear, plain language explanation of the proposal, purpose and impacts
- Explain how community feedback will inform the decision
- Invite submissions and provide clear instructions for participation
- Provide a minimum consultation period of 21 days

- Hold a public meeting or provide equivalent opportunity for verbal submissions (The public meeting may be part of a council meeting or a separate event).
- Provide a summary of community feedback to Council prior to decision-making

Significant

Minimum requirements:

- Publish information on Council website and in a local news publication
- Provide clear, plain language explanation of the proposal and its impacts
- Invite submissions and provide a minimum 21-day consultation period
- Invite people who have made a written submission to attend a council meeting to speak to their submission before the decision is made.
- Seek and consider community feedback
- Provide a summary of feedback to Council

Standard

Minimum requirements:

- Publish information on Council website
- Provide clear and accessible information about the proposal
- Invite submissions and provide an appropriate consultation period
- Seek and consider community feedback

Local

Minimum requirements:

- Target engagement to affected stakeholders or local community
- Use appropriate notification methods to reach impacted parties
- Provide accessible information and opportunity for feedback

Inform

Minimum requirements:

- Provide timely and accessible information to the affected community

All engagement must:

- Be conducted using plain language
- Be accessible and inclusive
- Clearly communicate how feedback will be considered

4.2 Legislative Consultation Requirements

Where the Local Government Act 1999 prescribes specific consultation requirements, Council will comply with those legislative obligations as a minimum. These include, but are not limited to:

Matter	Act Section Reference
Representative Reviews	Section 12
Status of a council/change of names	Section 13
Adoption or amendment of the Community Engagement Policy	Section 50
Strategic Management Plans	Section 122(6)
By-laws	Section 249
Policies relating to Orders	Section 259
Stormwater Management Plans	Schedule 1A, Clause 16(2)(c)^

For these matters, Council will:

- Undertake all consultation steps required by the Act
- Apply additional engagement in accordance with this Policy and the Community Engagement Charter where appropriate
- Ensure engagement is proportionate to the significance and impact of the decision
- ^Council will undertake the engagement process specified by any Stormwater Management Authority Guidelines when acting under Division 3 of Schedule 1A of the Act.

4.3 Council Decisions Requiring Consultation Under this Policy

Where the Local Government Act 1999 requires Council to follow its Community Engagement Policy, Council will undertake consultation in accordance with the requirements set out in this Policy and the Community Engagement Charter.

Matter	Act Section Reference
Principal Office – opening hours	Section 45
Code of Practice – access to meetings and documents	Section 92
Annual Business Plan	Section 123
Changes to the basis of rating	Section 151
Differential rates	Section 156

Policy Ref/Security Classification:

Category:

Owner: Manager Customer Experience

Authorisation Date: xx/xx/xx

Review Date: xx/xx/xx

Matter	Act Section Reference
Community land – revocation of classification	Section 194
Community land – management plans	Sections 197–198
Community land – lease or licence	Section 202
Roads – permits affecting traffic	Section 223
Vegetation planting with significant impact	Section 232

For these matters, Council will:

- Apply the engagement category in accordance with Section 4.1
- Undertake engagement proportionate to the significance and impact of the matter
- Meet all mandatory requirements of the Charter relevant to the category
- Follow the Community Engagement Process outlined in this Policy

The table below outlines the typical Community Engagement Charter category and minimum engagement requirements for common legislative matters. It is a guide only, and each matter must be assessed individually to ensure appropriate categorisation and compliance with the Charter.

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Table 1: Legislative Matters, Charter Category and Minimum Engagement Requirements

Matter	Act section	Typical Charter Category	Minimum Engagement Requirements
Principal Office – opening hours	s45	Inform / Standard	Website publication; accessible information; appropriate notification if impact is substantial
Code of Practice – access to meetings and documents	s92	Standard	Website + notice; explanation of proposal; invite submissions; appropriate timeframe
Annual Business Plan	s123	Significant – ABP & Rating	Website + news publication; explain proposal and impacts; invite submissions; minimum 21 days; public meeting; summary of feedback to Council
Changes to basis of rating	s151	Significant – ABP & Rating	Website + news publication; explain proposal; invite submissions; minimum 21 days; public meeting; summary of feedback
Differential rates	s156	Significant	Website + news publication; explain proposal; invite submissions; Council Meeting opportunity; minimum 21 days; seek and consider feedback
Community land – revocation	s194	Significant	Website + news publication; explain proposal; invite submissions; Council meeting opportunity; minimum 21 days; seek and consider feedback
Community land – management plans (adoption/amendment)	ss197–198	Significant	Website + news publication; explain proposal; invite submissions; Council meeting opportunity;

			minimum 21 days; seek and consider feedback
Community land – lease or licence	s202	Significant	Website + news publication; explain proposal; invite submissions; Council meeting opportunity; minimum 21 days; seek and consider feedback
Roads – permits affecting traffic	s223	Local / Inform	Targeted notification to affected community; appropriate timeframe; accessible information
Vegetation planting with significant impact	s232	Local	Targeted consultation with affected residents; clear information; appropriate timeframe

4.4 Community Engagement Process

1	<p>Develop a Community Engagement Plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies the engagement category Defines objectives and methods Ensures accessibility and inclusivity
2	<p>Obtain approval</p> <p>From Council or CEO for the engagement approach.</p>
3	<p>Information Provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide clear, plain language information that explains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal The reasons for the proposal The intended outcomes How feedback will be used
4	<p>Engagement Delivery</p> <p>Conduct engagement using methods appropriate to the category</p>
5	<p>Feedback Collection and Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect, collate and analyse all submissions and feedback.

6	<p>Prepare a report that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarises engagement activities • Summarises key themes and feedback • Demonstrates how community input has influenced recommendations
7	<p>Decision-Making</p> <p>Council considers the report and makes a decision.</p>
8	<p>Communicate the decision and clearly outline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcome • The reasons for the decision • How community feedback was considered and influenced the outcome

4.5 Additional Community Engagement

Council or the CEO may determine that engagement beyond the minimum legislative or policy requirements should be undertaken. Discretionary consultation may be appropriate for projects involving:

- Significant capital expenditure
- Economic, social, environmental, or cultural importance
- High community interest
- Enhanced decision-making through public engagement.

Guidance materials such as the City of Marion Community Engagement Framework, Local Government Association of South Australia Community Engagement Framework and IAP2 resources may be referenced.

For the avoidance of doubt, there is no obligation on the Council or CEO to undertake, or to consider whether to undertake, any additional or discretionary consultation steps.

5. Definitions

Term	Definition
<i>Community</i>	A general term for the people who live, work, study, own property, conduct private or government business, visit or use the services, facilities and public spaces and places of the City of Marion. The community are often referred to as “stakeholders” in the affairs of Council. A community may be a geographic location (community of place), a community of similar interest (community of interest), or a

Term	Definition
	community of affiliation or identity (such as industry or sporting club).
<i>Community Engagement Plan</i>	A document that defines the community engagement approach and process for a specific matter.
<i>Council</i>	Means the elected member body representing the City of Marion community.
<i>CEO</i>	Chief Executive Officer of the City of Marion.
<i>Engagement</i>	A broad term encompassing various interactions between Council and the community. Engagement may include approaches such as communication and consultation.
<i>Policy</i>	Refers to this Community Engagement Policy.
<i>Public</i>	Refer to the definition for “Community”
<i>Community Engagement / Public Consultation</i>	Public consultation involves providing information and opportunities for community input to inform the decision maker. Public consultation is important in the successful development of acceptable policies and decisions in government, the private sector and the community. In the context of this Policy, the term “community engagement” is synonymous with the term “public consultation”.
<i>Stakeholder</i>	An individual, group, or organisation with an interest in a decision or proposal, or who may be directly or indirectly affected by a decision that has been made or is being considered.
<i>The Act</i>	Local Government Act 1999 (SA)
<i>The Charter</i>	The Minister for Local Governments Community Engagement Charter published in the South Australia Government Gazette on 11 December 2025.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
<i>CEO</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead and oversee the implementation of the Community Engagement Policy across the organisation. Ensure Council and all staff adhere to the Policy's principles and legislative requirements.
<i>Council</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make decisions under the Act on behalf of the community. Promote and attend community engagement opportunities. Listen to and observe community views.
<i>Executive Leaders and Senior Leaders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure staff follow the Policy and align community engagement activities with its principles.
<i>Managers and staff with community engagement responsibilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan, execute, and report on engagement activities in compliance with the Policy. Advise on best practices for community engagement and ensure activities are inclusive, accessible, and meaningful. Keep the community informed throughout the engagement process. Ensure engagement outcomes are accurately recorded, analysed, and reported. Maintain visibility of the Policy and make it easily accessible for staff and the community.

7. References

City of Marion

- The City of Marion's Strategic Plan 2024-2034
- Community Engagement Framework

Other

- Local Government Act 1999 (SA)
- Community Engagement Charter (11 December 2025)
- IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

8. Review and evaluation

This Policy will be reviewed once during every four-year term of Council or earlier if required by legislative or organisational change. Review will be initiated by the Governance Unit in consultation with the Manager Customer Experience and Engagement.

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