

Responsible Department:	Office of the CEO
Responsible Business Unit:	Chief Executive Officer
Date of Review:	15 April 2026
Council Resolution:	120426

1. OBJECTIVE

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Articulate the Shire of Chittering's commitment to transparent, inclusive and best-practice community and stakeholder engagement in decision-making.
- Establish principles and standards to guide engagement activities across the organisation.
- Ensure engagement practices are consistent, purposeful and proportionate to the scale and impact of decisions.
- Promote meaningful participation by residents, businesses, community groups and stakeholders in matters that affect them.
- Integrate community and stakeholder engagement into strategic planning, project development and operational decision-making.

2. SCOPE

The Shire of Chittering recognises that effective engagement strengthens decision-making, builds trust and supports stronger community outcomes.

The Shire is committed to open communication, inclusive and accessible engagement to ensure community members and stakeholders have opportunities to contribute to decisions that may affect them.

While Council must consider legislative, financial, technical and strategic factors when making decisions, the Shire will make reasonable efforts to identify and engage stakeholders who may be impacted by or interested in a matter under consideration.

This policy is guided by the Core Values for Public Participation developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) and supports the application of recognised engagement best practice.

This policy applies to:

- All Shire of Chittering employees
- Contractors and consultants undertaking work on behalf of the Shire
- All projects, programs, plans, policies and initiatives that may impact the community or stakeholders.

This policy does not replace statutory consultation requirements. Rather, it provides a framework to guide engagement practices beyond minimum legislative obligations.

3. DEFINITIONS

Communication means the provision or exchange of information through appropriate, and accessible channels to inform stakeholders about decisions, services, projects or initiatives.

Community means Individuals or groups connected to the Shire of Chittering through location, interest or affiliation. This includes residents, ratepayers, businesses, landowners, community organisations, visitors and other stakeholders.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement means a planned process that provides people who may be affected by a decision with the opportunity to be informed, provide input or participate in the decision-making process.

Consultation means a level of engagement within the IAP2 Spectrum where the purpose is to obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives or proposed decisions.

Stakeholder means Any individual, group or organisation that may influence, be impacted by, or have an interest in the Shire's decisions, services or activities.

Public Participation means a broad term describing processes that enable community members and stakeholders to contribute to decision-making.

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation means a framework developed by the International Association for Public Participation that identifies five levels of engagement: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower.

Project means a temporary initiative undertaken to deliver a defined outcome such as infrastructure, services, programs, policies or operational improvements.

Program means a coordinated group of related projects or initiatives managed to achieve broader strategic outcomes.

Statutory Requirement means a consultation or engagement obligation required by legislation or regulation.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

4.1. Guiding Principles

The Shire of Chittering adopts the following principles to guide community and stakeholder engagement:

1. Right to Participate – People who are affected by a decision have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process.
2. Transparency – The Shire will clearly communicate the purpose of engagement and how community input will influence decisions.
3. Better Decision-Making – Engagement contributes to more informed and balanced decisions by incorporating local knowledge and perspectives.
4. Inclusive Participation – The Shire will actively seek to identify and engage those affected by or interested in a decision and support their ability to participate.
5. Accessibility and Equity – Engagement activities will be designed to support participation from a diverse community, recognising different needs, abilities and access requirements.

6. Timely and Clear Information – Stakeholders will be provided with relevant information at the appropriate time to enable meaningful participation.
7. Closing the Loop – The Shire will communicate outcomes and explain how community input has informed the final decision wherever possible.

4.2. When the Shire Will Engage

Community and stakeholder engagement may occur in situations including, but not limited to:

- Development or planning proposals that may impact residents, businesses or landowners
- Strategic and long-term planning processes
- Major infrastructure projects or service changes
- Development or review of policies, local laws or strategies
- Matters where community input will improve decision-making
- Where consultation is required under legislation
- When requested by Council or where significant community interest exists.

4.3. How the Shire Will Engage

The Shire will undertake engagement in a planned, proportionate and purposeful manner.

Engagement methods will be selected based on:

- The level of impact or community interest
- The stage of decision-making
- Legislative requirements
- The resources available
- The diversity and accessibility needs of stakeholders.

The IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation will be used to determine the appropriate level of engagement.

Engagement tools may include:

- Public notices and information sharing
- Surveys and feedback opportunities
- Community workshops or forums
- Stakeholder meetings
- Advisory groups
- Online engagement platforms.

4.4. When Engagement May Not Occur

There are circumstances where community engagement may not be appropriate or feasible, including where:

- Legal, commercial or confidentiality constraints apply
- A decision must be made urgently due to public safety or emergency circumstances
- Legislative requirements dictate a specific decision-making process

- The matter is operational and minor in nature
- A decision has already been made
- The Shire is not the decision-maker and has limited ability to influence the outcome.

In these circumstances, the Shire will provide clear communication explaining the reasons engagement has not been undertaken, where appropriate.

4.5. Engagement with Government Agencies

The Shire recognises that many essential services within the community are the responsibility of State and Federal Government agencies.

While these services are outside the direct responsibility of local government, the Shire will work collaboratively with relevant government departments where their interests intersect with local community outcomes.

Government agencies will be considered key stakeholders in relevant projects, plans and initiatives and engaged accordingly.

4.6. Implementation

The Shire will support implementation of this policy through:

- Internal engagement frameworks and templates
- Training and capacity building for staff
- Application of recognised engagement standards including:
 - IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard
 - AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard (SES)

Engagement planning templates will be used for minor and major initiatives to support consistent engagement practices.

Examples of initiatives that may require engagement include:

- Strategic plans and policy development
- Infrastructure projects
- Roadworks and traffic management changes
- Service level changes
- Facility upgrades or demolitions
- Park and playground improvements
- Major capital works projects.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective community engagement is a shared organisational responsibility.

Council is responsible for:

- Setting the strategic direction for engagement through policy and governance
- Considering community input when making decisions.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring implementation of this policy
- Embedding engagement practices across the organisation
- Allocating appropriate resources and governance frameworks.

Directors and Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring engagement is incorporated into relevant projects and initiatives
- Applying the principles of this policy within their business units.

Shire officers responsible for projects, programs or initiatives must:

- Identify when engagement is required
- Apply appropriate engagement methods
- Use approved engagement templates and frameworks
- Document outcomes and feedback received.

6. COMPLIANCE

Legislation	<i>Local Government Act 1995 (WA)</i> <i>Planning and Development Act 2005</i> <i>Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015</i> <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984</i> <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> <i>Bush Fires Act 1954</i> <i>Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990</i> <i>Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984</i>
Industry	
Organisational Documents	Council Plan Corporate Business Plan Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Customer Service Charter
Strategic Alignment	

7. ADMINISTRATION

Review Cycle	Every 3 years	Next Review Due	March 2029
Policy Owner	Chief Executive officer		
Version	Decision Ref	Date	Change
1.0	120426	15/04/2026	Initial adoption