

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Policy Number:	5.1.6
Approved by:	Council
Approved Date:	June 2026
Date of Next Review:	June 2027
Applicable to:	Councillors, Council employees and temporary staff
Responsible Officer:	Manager Customer and Communications
Related Policies:	Customer Service Policy Media and Communications Policy
Related Documents:	Wellington Shire Council Community Engagement Strategy
Statutory Reference:	<i>Local Government Act 2020</i>

OVERVIEW

This policy outlines Wellington Shire Council's commitment to meaningful, transparent, and inclusive community engagement. It sets clear expectations for staff and Councillors when planning, delivering, and considering engagement to inform decision-making, in line with the *Local Government Act 2020* and recognised best practice frameworks.

THE POLICY

Wellington Shire Council recognises that effective community engagement supports better decision-making, strengthens relationships and builds trust within the community.

Council is committed to engagement that is:

- Purposeful and proportionate to the scope and impact of the decision
- Inclusive and representative of the community
- Transparent, with clear communication about scope, constraints and outcomes
- Responsive, including a commitment to report back to participants on how their input informed decisions

Community engagement will be undertaken in line with legislative requirements and guided by the principles in the Community Engagement Strategy and the IAP2 framework.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All Council Staff

All staff are responsible for planning and delivering community engagement in line with this Policy, the Community Engagement Strategy and legislative requirements.

Respectful participation

Council is committed to respectful, constructive engagement.

We recognise that community members may hold strong views. However, Council does not tolerate communication that is abusive, threatening or disrespectful towards Councillors, staff or other participants.

Where communication is considered inappropriate in nature:

- Council may limit or cease engagement with the individual in relation to the matter
- The content will not be considered as part of the community engagement process

This approach ensures a safe and respectful environment for all participants and supports fair and effective decision-making.

Managers and Supervisors

Managers and Supervisors are responsible for:

- Ensuring engagement activities are planned and documented
- Supporting staff to follow agreed processes
- Ensuring outcomes are communicated back to the community
- Maintaining records of engagement for governance and audit

Councillors

Councillors are responsible for:

- Considering insights gathered through community engagement
- Incorporating community input into their decision-making

GUIDING DOCUMENTS

This Policy must be read with the Community Engagement Strategy, which provides guidance on:

- Definitions and types of engagement, including deliberative engagement
- When and how engagement is undertaken
- Principles based on legislative requirements and the IAP2 framework
- Approaches to reporting back to the community
- Tools, templates, and processes

Council will maintain and update resources to support a consistent and effective approach to community engagement across the organisation.

REVISION HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
1.0	December 2022	Review date extended to align with endorsed Strategy
2.0	June 2025	Reviewed alongside the updated Community Engagement Strategy. More simplified language and reference to tools and processes to support community engagement practices.
2.1	June 2026	The updated policy improves structure and clarity, removes repetition, strengthens alignment to the Community Engagement Strategy and clarifies roles, principles and governance focus.