



Continuing the Conversation

Integrated Planning and Reporting
Community Engagement
Strategy **2012 - 2013**

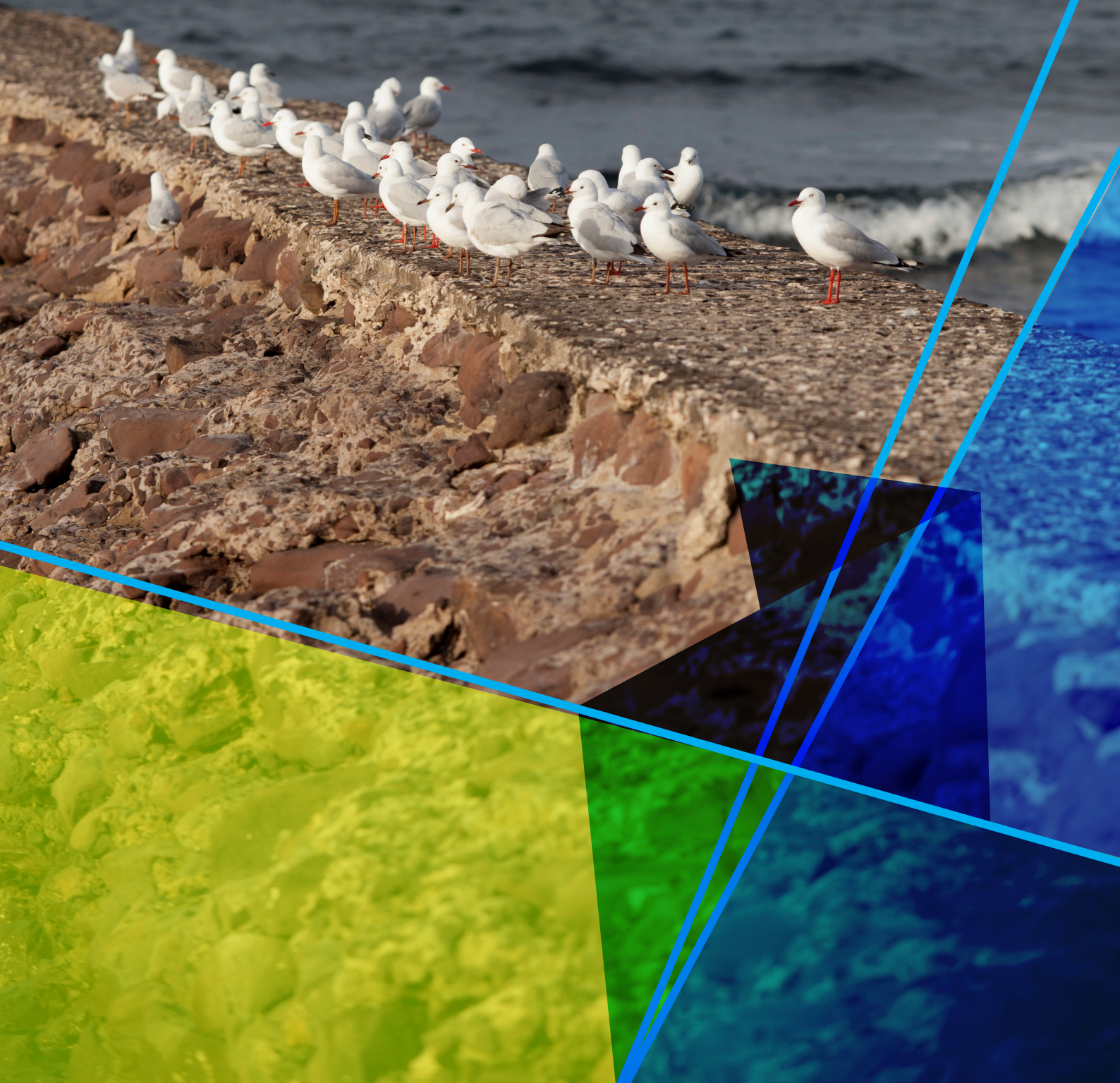


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1. Introduction

This Strategy provides a framework for the community engagement that will be undertaken in the review and preparation of Shellharbour City Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting documents.

It aims to:

- Engage the Shellharbour community in the review of the Community Strategic Plan and the preparation of all associated Integrated Planning & Reporting documents
- Deliver the community engagement strategy under the principles of social justice and according to the requirements of Council's Community Engagement Policy
- Undertake a range of engagement activities that build upon previous engagement and that recognise the diversity of the Shellharbour Community
- Increase our understanding of the community's service level needs and to explore a range of funding options to increase the asset renewal ratio
- Meet the requirements of the Local Government Act, 1993

Community engagement is an important part of Council's role in the planning and delivery of services and facilities as we work towards achieving the Community's long-term Vision for Shellharbour City.

Council is committed to ensuring the community is actively involved in Council decision-making and activities, and implements engagement strategies that are appropriate and responsive to the needs of its diverse community.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework provides Councils in NSW the opportunity to work with their communities to develop a long term plan for their areas. The Framework is a legislative requirement which forms part of the Local Government Act 1993.

The preparation and implementation of a community engagement strategy is a requirement of the Local Government Act in developing and reviewing a Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

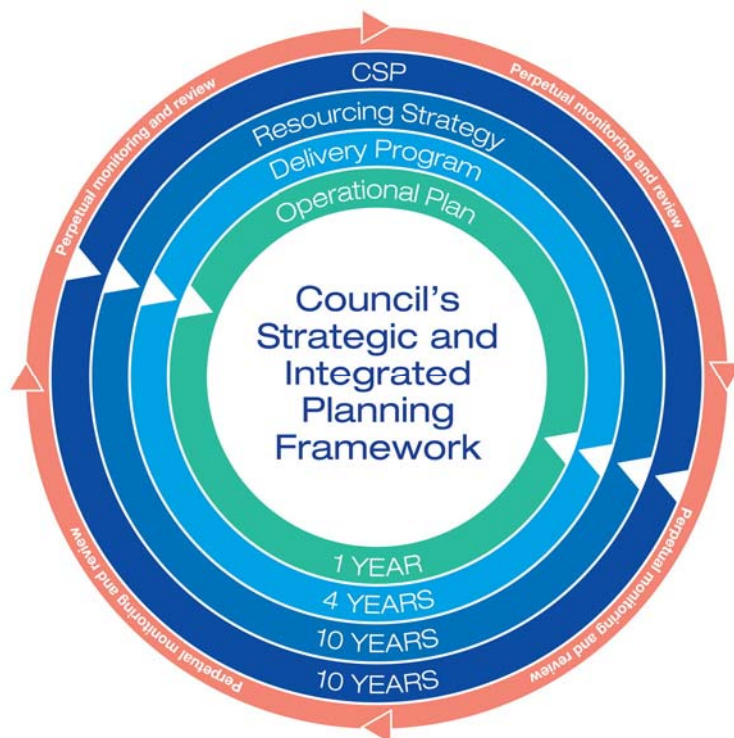
2. Integrated Planning and Reporting

Integrated Planning considers the longer term future of an area and is based around a Community Strategic Plan which has to reflect the community's aspirations and needs for the future.

This Framework encourages councils to draw their various plans together, to understand how they interact and to ensure the greatest benefits are achieved from comprehensively planning for the future.

Ultimately, the Framework provides greater accountability and transparency. Councils are required to outline a clear strategic direction for their community through their Community Strategic Plan and then report their performance back to their community in line with pre-defined community indicators.

The Integrated Planning Framework is outlined below and consists of four layers of plans – the Community Strategic Plan, a Resourcing Strategy, a Delivery Program and an Operational Plan.



The Community Strategic Plan is the guiding document which identifies the community's vision and priorities for the future and it also outlines the strategies that will achieve these objectives.

The Resourcing Strategy informs the development of the Community Strategic Plan and describes the resources we are going to utilise to achieve the objectives and strategies. It ensures there is an appropriate mix and delivery of infrastructure services combined with sufficient financial and human resources available. It is made up of three key components - the Long Term Financial Plan, a Workforce Management Plan and an Asset Management Plan.

The four-year Delivery Program is the point at which Council outlines what it intends to do towards achieving the community objectives and what its priorities are.

Supporting the Delivery Program is the annual Operational Plan. The Operational Plan contains the detail of actions to be undertaken in that year.

3. Preparing for Community Engagement

In 2011 the first Community Strategic Plan (CSP) for Shellharbour was implemented. The 2011-2021 CSP was prepared in consultation with the community and state government agencies. Participants had the opportunity to attend a number of engagement opportunities including community strategy forums, youth engagement, and a consultation workshop. Over 600 people were engaged through these activities. These were delivered in accordance with the Community Engagement Strategy (2011) a copy is available at Appendix A.

Since the 2011- 2021 CSP was implemented the Shellharbour local government election was held and a review of the plan was required.

It is important that the current review process be respectful to, and build upon, the community input to date. So to do this, Council will need to continue the conversation with the community to ensure that the plan remains current and representative.

3.1 Special Rate Variation

Since the implementation of the last CSP it has been recognised that Council needs to review its financial position and consider a range of funding options for the renewal and maintenance of Council assets. Currently Council's asset renewal ratio is 0.15 far below the state average of 0.80. An important part of the engagement strategy will be therefore increasing our understanding of the community's service level needs and to explore a range of funding options to increase the renewal ratio, including the consideration of a special rate variation.

3.2 Guiding Principles

The preparation of this Strategy has been guided by the principles of social justice, the Public Participation Spectrum developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) and Councils Community Engagement Policy 2011 (Appendix B).

3.2.1 Social Justice Principles

When preparing a Community Engagement Strategy for the CSP Councils are required to base it and the Community Strategic Plan on the social justice principles of access, equity, participation and rights. Each of these principles has been considered in the preparation of this strategy. A summary of each of these principles are listed below:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Equity: | There should be fairness in decision making, prioritising and allocation of resources, particularly for those in need. Everyone should have a fair opportunity to participate in the future of the community. The planning process should take particular care to involve and protect the interest of people in vulnerable circumstances. |
| Access: | All people should have fair access to services, resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life. |
| Participation: | Everyone should have the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions which affect their lives. |
| Rights: | Equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people from diverse linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds to participate in community life. |

3.2.2 Public Participation Spectrum

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has established a Public Participation Spectrum to demonstrate the possible types of engagement that can be undertaken with stakeholders and communities. The spectrum shows the increasing level of public impact as you progress from 'inform' through to 'empower'. In developing the range of engagement activities included in this strategy consideration has been given to the spectrum and the level of engagement that the community can participate in is summarised below.

Increasing Level of Public Impact

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal:	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, 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 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 direct 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
Example Techniques:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheets • Web sites • Open houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Deliberate polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen Advisory Committees • Consensus building • Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decisions

Source: International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

Level of Engagement Proposed

- Collaborate** We will collaborate (partner) with our community to review the Objectives of the Community Strategic Plan (Workshop), we will collaborate with Councillors and Senior management to develop the CSP Strategies. We will collaborate with staff to write actions and key performance indicators for the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.
- Involve** We will involve our community in determining the levels of service they desire for Council programs, services and infrastructure (Community Survey, Workshops and Budget Allocator Tool).

- **Consult** We will consult with the community in the consideration of funding models to achieve the levels of service (Workshops and Budget Allocator Tool) and to determine what they value most about our City (Community Survey, Photograph Competition, Children and Youth Workshops). Through the formal exhibition of the CSP the community we will further consult the community.

3.2.3 SCC Community Engagement Policy

Council's Community Engagement Policy (2011) recognises the need for a comprehensive and transparent approach to community engagement to ensure that the community of Shellharbour has the opportunity to be actively involved in decisions on plans, projects, policies and services that impact on residents, ratepayers and other stakeholders.

Council also recognises that views gathered through engagement should be representative of a broad cross section of the community, and that to be effectively engaged, community members need appropriate information and time to respond.

Council's approach to Community Engagement is delivered in three levels.

- Level 1 involves information only, with no specific call for engagement.
- Level 2 sets out specific activities to engage the community for projects or activities with a "medium" level of impact.
- Level 3 is the highest level of engagement, and relates to major plans, projects and policies with a broad impact.

It is recognised that Integrated Planning and the preparation of the associated documents requires a Level 3 "high" community engagement approach.

The requirements of a level 3 engagement include (but are not limited to) the following activities:

- Information published on Council's website ("What's On" section).
- Information published on Council's social media sites (eg Facebook and Twitter).
- Information published in Council news page and/or Community Update page in the Lake Times/Illawarra Mercury.
- Issuing of media release and/or inclusion of information in General Manager's newspaper column.
- Staff update (Through the General Managers weekly blog).
- Information in library branch/es.
- Production of communication tools such as a fact sheet, posters, library displays, Lamerton House foyer display.
- Liaison with existing networks and committees.
- At least two community forums, enabling residents in impacted areas to choose the most convenient date and venue (for high-impact city-wide issues, forums would be held in the city east, city centre and city west).

- At least one mechanism for gauging broader community views, examples may include but are not limited to an on-line survey, letterbox survey, formal phone survey, focus groups (either formal or informal), an opportunity for formal comment.
- Report back on consultation outcomes, through website, media release, newspaper pages and columns.

Council will ensure that the information that we provide to the community throughout our engagement phase will be accessible, prepared in plain language and will be available in a range of formats.

4. Implementation

It is proposed that community engagement be delivered in the following 4 stages;

Stage 1	Review of Previous Engagement
Stage 2	Continuing the Conversation (Undertake Community Engagement Activities)
Stage 3	Resourcing the Vision (Seek feedback on a proposed Special Rate Variation)
Stage 4	Checking in (Public Exhibition)

A table outlining the proposed activities, the stakeholders targeted, time frames and target IP&R documents for each activity is available at Appendix C.

Stage 1 Review of Previous Engagement

Prior to commencing active engagement with the community a review of engagement undertaken since the adoption of the last CSP will be undertaken. This process will ensure that we don't duplicate work already undertaken by staff and that we don't over consult the community on issues that they have already had a say on.

This process will involve consultation with internal stakeholders with an audit of existing engagement and a collation of the results. A review of Council's intranet, webpage and media files will be undertaken.

During this initial stage the preparation, planning and promotion for stages 2 and 3 will also commence.

Stage 2 Continuing the Conversation (Undertake Community Engagement Activities)

During stage 2 Council staff will actively undertake a number of engagement activities. Extensive promotion of these opportunities will take place via the local media, Councils webpage, e-groups, mail lists and through existing networks and committees. The following community engagement opportunities will be made available for community participation.

- Objective refinement workshop

A revision of the current 2011-2021 CSP is necessary to update the objectives and strategies outlined in the plan. To ensure the plan will be updated in line with what the current community goals are, community members involved in the previous CSP Workshops will be invited to participate in a workshop to review and rewrite of the objectives. These objectives will then formed the basis for all further engagement activities.

This method will provide a collaborative approach between Council and the community. A workshop format provides a relaxed and interactive environment to encourage open and honest communication.

- Community Strategic Plan Review and Service Level Workshops

Following the establishment of the revised Objectives a number of Community Strategic Plan (CSP) Review and Service Level Workshops will be held across the city. It is proposed that a minimum of 4 workshops be held in venues in the city east, city centre and city west. Workshops will be scheduled both after hours and during the day to meet the needs of residents.

Participants will be asked to identify the services and assets that they value the most and to nominate whether they would reduce, maintain or increase levels of services whilst considering the financial implications for the budget.

A structured workshop format will allow for the community to be involved in the review of the existing CSP and to provide important information essential to the preparation of the IP&R documents.

- Consultations with children and young people

Council has a commitment to engaging with all members of our community and it is important that children and young people have a say in the future of the City. In partnership with Council's Community Connections Team, engagement activities will be developed to engage with children and young people.

Specific engagement for children and young people will allow these target groups to have access to the planning process. This approach demonstrates that Council recognises them as valued members of our community and that their ideas are important and valid.

- Photographic Competition and Exhibition

Council will hold a Photographic Competition asking residents to submit photographs and a caption demonstrating "what's special to them" about Shellharbour. It is proposed that entries be submitted via Council's Facebook page to encourage further discussion on our social media site. At the conclusion of the competition an award ceremony and exhibition will be held. Photographs submitted will be included in the IP&R documents to enhance community ownership of the documents and celebrate what is unique and special about our city.

This engagement method provides a creative consultation opportunity that will reach various members of our community who may not otherwise participate in a formal engagement process.

- Community Survey

Council engages a research company to undertake a bi-annual telephone community survey on it's behalf to canvass resident attitudes and opinions about the services and facilities provided by Council. A survey is due to be undertaken in early 2012, this will provide an opportunity to gather feedback about how Council and its partners are progressing in meeting the objectives set out in the Community Strategic Plan 2011-2021.

A statistically valid survey allows Council to consult residents on specific issues that are pertinent to the review and preparation of the IP&R documents. Using an independent research company ensures the integrity of the results and provides comparison with previous Community Surveys and other local government authorities.

- Strategy Development Workshop (Councillors and Senior Management)

At the conclusion of stage 2 a workshop will be held with the elected representatives and Council Executives and Senior Managers to determine what the strategies should be for the CSP 2013-2023. They will be provided with the results of the community engagement undertaken to assist them in determining what the key strategies should be for the City over their term in Council and for the longer-term future of the City. This will be an important element of the revised plan as the Council was under Administration at the time the previous plan was developed and adopted.

This workshop provides an opportunity for the Councillors and Council staff to work collaboratively and to ensure that our elected representatives are aware and committed to the CSP and associated IP&R documents.

- Action Development Workshop (Council Staff)

Following the Strategy Development Workshop a series of workshops will be held with council staff to write the actions and key performance indicators for the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Council has adopted this approach for the development of the Delivery Program previously and it provides staff with a sense of ownership and increased understanding of how their work relates to the CSP and IP&R framework.

Stage 3 Resourcing the Vision (Seek feedback on a proposed Special Rate Variation)

As previously mentioned, since the implementation of the last CSP it has been recognised that Council needs to review its financial position and consider a range of funding options for the renewal and maintenance of Council assets. Stage 3 will specifically focus on the exploration of funding models to improve Council's asset renewal position, including reference to a proposed special rate variation. The following activities are planned to raise community awareness and to increase Council's understanding about the community's willingness and capacity to pay increased rates.

- Online Budget Allocator Tool

Council will provide the community with a conceptual online Budget Allocator Tool to find out what residents value the most to assist Council in finding the right mix of assets, services and programs while maintaining financial sustainability.

The Budget Allocator will allow residents to:

- Review areas of discretionary spending from Council's general fund.
- Choose priority areas in where they want services maintained or improved.
- Identify areas in which they are willing to see a decrease, and
- Understand the relationship between the services and assets the community values, how much they cost, and a potential rate increase.

By providing an online engagement method it will allow Council to reach residents that may not be able to engage in a face to face workshop environment, such as families with young children and people that work outside the LGA. It is proposed that specific supported workshops will be held at libraries across the City to assist anyone who has difficulty using a computer or that don't have access to the internet at home.

- Telephone Survey

Council will engage a research company to undertake a telephone survey of a statistically valid sample of Shellharbour residents (taking into account demographics and locality of residents) to gather feedback on a proposed Special Rate Variation. It is proposed that information on Council services, assets and the asset renewal ratio be prepared and distributed to residents prior to the survey being undertaken.

A statistically valid survey allows Council to consult residents specifically on the proposed Special Rate Variation. Using an independent research company ensures the integrity of the results. The distribution of information to participants prior to the survey ensures that respondents are well informed of the issues and the reasons why a Special Rate Variation is being proposed.

- Special Rate Variation Brochure/Fact Sheet

Council will prepare a brochure/fact sheet outlining its financial position, asset renewal ratio and proposed Special Rate Variation. This will be distributed to all rate payers, survey participants and will be on Council's webpage.

This will provide ratepayers with information directly on the proposed Special Rate Variation rather than expecting them to be aware of it through other indirect communication methods such as through the media and Council's webpage. This information will clearly explain to the community the need for and extent of, the proposed rate increase.

Stage 4 Checking in (Public Exhibition)

As required by legislation, once prepared, the suite of Integrated Planning and Reporting documents will be placed upon public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days prior to formal adoption.

Members of the community will be invited to make written submissions in regard to these draft documents and may also address Council on all Documents at both the meeting that places them on formal public exhibition and at final adoption.

During the period of public exhibition, copies of all documents will be made available on Council's website, at Council's Administration Centre and at all Libraries.

Council will also hold information kiosks across the City during the exhibition period to encourage community feedback and understanding of the proposed planning documents. Specific consultations will also be held with Council's Advisory Committee's, the Shellharbour-Kiama Interagency Network and with State Government agencies during the exhibition phase.

5. Conclusion

The outcomes of the Community Engagement Strategy will be used to inform the review of the Community Strategic Plan and the preparation of all the associated Integrated Planning and Reporting documents scheduled for implementation in July 2013.

The results of the engagement activities will be collated into a results report which will be made available to the community via Council's webpage.

Community Engagement Strategy

Shellharbour Community Strategic Plan
2011-2021

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Introduction

The NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting framework integrates and streamlines all statutory planning and reporting, strengthens council's strategic focus, aligns with National Sustainability Frameworks, and most importantly ensures accountability and responsiveness to local communities.

This new framework opens the way for councils and their communities to have important discussions about funding priorities, service levels and preserving local identity and to plan in partnership for a more sustainable future that local communities can truly 'own'.

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is the highest level plan that a council will prepare. The purpose of the plan is to identify the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future and to plan strategies for achieving these goals. In doing this the planning process will consider the issues and pressures that may affect the community and the level of resources that will realistically be available to achieve its aims and aspirations.

Whilst Shellharbour City Council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing and maintaining the Community Strategic Plan, it is not wholly responsible for its implementation. Other partners such as State agencies and community groups may also be engaged in delivering the long-term objectives of the plan.

The plan must have priority outcomes; identify strategies to achieve the outcomes, and indicators to be used to measure effectiveness in achieving the outcomes.

Vision setting is critical as clear intention precedes effective action. In other words, unless we are very clear about what we intend, we may finish up doing something else.

Previous Engagement

In 2010 Council commissioned a community survey which was conducted by IRIS Research. The purpose of this survey was to gain an understanding of the level of satisfaction from the community about the levels of service that Council provides, as well as to gain information about planning directions for the future. The 2010 IRIS Community Survey was released to the public on 10 November 2010 and from that date was available on Council's web site.

Wide ranging consultation has occurred over time in relation to the development of many strategies which, in turn, are key ingredients of the Community Strategic Plan. Among these were:-

- Council's Waste Strategy
- Open Space, Recreation and Community Facilities Needs Study
- Library Service Review
- Cultural Mapping Project, and;
- Youth Forum.

Council also developed and adopted its Community Engagement Policy in 2009, which is attached, and all subsequent engagement with the community has followed this policy.

How Did We Plan Our Engagement Strategy?

One of the first steps carried out in developing our engagement strategy was to conduct research about past engagement activities and expectations about community engagement and the Integrated Planning and Reporting Project.

Both internal and external stakeholders were interviewed about their knowledge of the project, past engagement activities, opportunities for improvement, the necessary ingredients for success, potential challenges and what will be the evidence that Council has been successful in its engagement activities.

An internal working group with representatives from all Departments of Council was formed to specifically identify the principles upon which the Integrated Planning and Reporting is to be based.

The main guiding principles this process is to be based upon are:

- The NSW Social Justice Principles:-
 - **Equity:** There should be fairness in decision making, prioritising and allocation of resources, particularly for those in need. Everyone should have a fair opportunity to participate in the future of the community. The planning process should take particular care to involve and protect the interest of people in vulnerable circumstances.
 - **Access:** All people should have fair access to services, resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life.
 - **Participation:** Everyone should have the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions which affect their lives.
 - **Rights:** Equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people from diverse linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds to participate in community life.
- Section 8 of the Local Government Act - A Council's charter:
 - to provide directly or on behalf of other levels of government, after due consultation, adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities for the community and to ensure that those services and facilities are managed efficiently and effectively
 - to exercise community leadership
 - to exercise its functions in a manner that is consistent with and actively promotes the principles of multiculturalism
 - to promote and to provide and plan for the needs of children
 - to properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment of the area for which it is responsible, in a manner that is consistent with and promotes the principles of ecologically sustainable development
 - to have regard to the long term and cumulative effects of its decisions
 - to bear in mind that it is the custodian and trustee of public assets and to effectively plan for, account for and manage the assets for which it is responsible
 - to engage in long-term strategic planning on behalf of the local community
 - to exercise its functions in a manner that is consistent with and promotes social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights
 - to facilitate the involvement of councillors, members of the public, users of facilities and services and council staff in the development, improvement and co-ordination of local government
 - to raise funds for local purposes by the fair imposition of rates, charges and fees, by income earned from investments and, when appropriate, by borrowings and grants

- to keep the local community and the State government (and through it, the wider community) informed about its activities
- to ensure that, in the exercise of its regulatory functions, it acts consistently and without bias, particularly where an activity of the council is affected
- to be a responsible employer.
- Individual Responsibility and Accountability in all things we do as citizens, encompassing caring for our community, environment and respect for each other.

The stakeholders that Council seeks to engage with include (but are not limited to):-

- The Wider Community
- Families
- Young People
- The Aboriginal Community
- Frail, Aged and People with a Disability
- Active Community and Sporting Groups
- The Business Community
- State and Federal Government Agencies
- Council's Administrator and Staff

We will also ensure that the stakeholders we engage with are a demographically and geographically representative sample of the Shellharbour Community.

What Is Our Community Engagement Goal?

Our overall engagement goal is to partner with the community to develop a 20 year vision for Shellharbour City and to identify objectives and strategies for the next 10 years to work towards achieving that vision.

How Are We Going To Achieve This Goal?

We want our community to develop the community vision statement for Shellharbour City. In order to achieve this we need to collaborate with a representative cross section of our community to create a draft vision statement and then partner with a small group of those stakeholders to finalise the vision statement.

This will be achieved by recruiting a broad cross section of the community, conducting a facilitated visioning workshop to identify the main themes important to Shellharbour City and then allowing the community members to nominate to be a part of a smaller group to finalise the vision statement.

Our aim is to assist our community to identify the key objectives and strategies necessary to achieve the community vision. In order to achieve this outcome we need to work directly with a representative sample of the community to generate ideas and dialogue about objectives and the strategies to achieve.

This will be achieved by working with the same group of community participants, presenting the vision and working in a facilitated workshop across the themes of Community, Environment, Economy and Leadership to identify objectives and strategies.

Level of Engagement

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Public participation goal:	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, 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 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 direct 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
Example techniques:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheets • Web sites • Open houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Deliberate polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen Advisory Committees • Consensus building • Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decisions

Source: International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

- **Collaborate** - We will collaborate (partner) with our community to develop a Community Vision for Shellharbour City
- **Involve** - We will involve our community in the setting of Objectives to ensure their concerns and aspirations are understood and considered and reflected in the long-term Objectives
- **Consult** - We will consult with the community in the development of strategies to achieve long-term objectives by obtaining their feedback/comments on the proposed strategies

Community Forums

It is planned to hold two Community Strategic Planning Forums with a demographically representative cross section of the community. These workshops will be professionally facilitated and attended by Council staff that have received the IAP2 training in community engagement practices.

The first workshop (4 hours) will be designed to explore a series of themes to help guide the drafting of a 20 year community vision statement. At this workshop we will seek a small group of volunteers to come back to council, a few days later, to finalise the vision statement.

At the second workshop (full day), the community vision statement will be presented to all participants and then a series of facilitated exercises to determine objectives and strategies around the key themes of environment, people, places, economy and civic leadership. Workshop participants will be guided in each theme in the following manner:-

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be in 10 years time?
- How will we get there?
- How will we know we've arrived?
- Levels of service

It is our aim to recruit a minimum 40 community members to assist us with this challenge.

Youth Engagement Forum

Quite often the opinions and ideas of young people are not heard. Council will utilise the findings of a youth engagement forum held in September 2010, to ensure that young people have input into the Community Strategic plan.

The Youth Engagement Forum targeted 45 Year 9 and Year 10 students, working with them in a day long workshop that examined issues surrounding the key themes of places, safety, services and transport.

Information to Inform the Workshop Participants

Results from the IRIS survey will be used to inform the workshops. A briefing paper has been prepared and will be distributed to all participants prior to the workshops. This paper will provide a brief snapshot of Shellharbour City, its demographics, Council principal activities, as well as current and future issues identified by 2010 IRIS Community Survey.

Recruitment of Participants for Community Forums

In order to obtain a representative sample of participants, three methods of recruitment are proposed.

Advertisements will be placed in local newspapers and Council's website and libraries, asking for interested community members to self nominate. Council will also invite selected members of the community who are active in sporting, cultural or environmental groups.

Finally, Council will commission a market research company to 'cold call' Shellharbour residents to gain a representative demographic and geographic sample of participants.

Community members who attend both workshops will receive a payment of \$100 to cover any expenses incurred.

To ensure all interested community members are able to participate in these workshops, Council will provide transport to and from the venues and child minding facilities for participants to utilise if required.

Communication with Participants

Feedback from previous engagement activities has revealed that Council needs to ensure that participants are informed of progress at each step of the process. Council will undertake to make sure that all participants are informed as to the progress of the project and are given the opportunity to further have input.

Public Exhibition

As required by legislation, the suite of Integrated Planning and Reporting documents will be placed upon public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days prior to formal adoption.

Members of the community will be invited to make written submissions in regard to these draft documents and may also address Council on all Integrated Planning and Reporting Documents at both the meeting that places them upon formal public exhibition and at final adoption.

During the period of public exhibition, copies of all documents will be available on Council's website, at Council's Administration Centre and at all Shellharbour City Council Libraries.

We will hold information kiosks at the Shellharbour Business Network Meetings, local shopping centres and the Shellharbour Village markets during the exhibition period to encourage community feedback and understanding of the proposed planning documents.

Attachments

- Shellharbour City Council Community Engagement Policy (2009)

References

- Shellharbour City Council Community Engagement Policy (2009)
- International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)
- NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting Manual

Corporate Policy:

Community Engagement Policy

Policy Name: Community Engagement	Policy Number: POL-0050 V01
Date Adopted: 19 May 2009	Review Date: May 2011
Policy Owner: Media & Communications Manager	

Contents:

1. Policy Statement/Objective(s)

Community engagement is an important part of Council's role in the planning and delivery of services and facilities to the Shellharbour community. Shellharbour City Council is committed to ensuring the community is actively involved in Council decision-making and activities, and implements engagement strategies that are appropriate and responsive to the needs of its diverse community.

It is important that Council engages the community to:

- Better understand the needs of the community
- Recognise local knowledge and expertise
- Enable community participation in decision making
- Have a better informed community; and
- Meet the requirements of legislation, policies and procedures

This policy outlines Council's formal approach to community engagement, covering three stages:

- Level 1 (low) – dissemination of information only
- Level 2 (medium) – requires feedback from parts of the community
- Level 3 (high) – requires comprehensive feedback from a wide range of stakeholders.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Council staff involved in formulating draft plans and policies, managing major Council projects and undertaking the delivery of services to the community in the Shellharbour Local Government Area.

3. References

Report of Commissioner Richard Colley into Shellharbour City Council, July 2008
 NSW Ombudsman Annual Report 2007-2008
 Local Government Act
 Notifications Development Control Plan (DCP 10/98)
 Submissions, Petitions and Form Letters Policy
 Complaints Management Policy
 Code of Meeting Practice
 Cultural Diversity Policy

4. Definitions

Community – refers to the people who live, work, visit and/or own property or businesses in the Shellharbour LGA.

Community Engagement - Community engagement refers to the processes and practices that Council uses to:

- inform the community
- gather feedback from the community; and
- works with the community to implement a range of projects/programs/services

Stakeholder – is a person or group that has an interest or stake in an issue or project

5. Variation and Review

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this policy

Review History

Date Policy first adopted – Version 1	19 May 2009
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6. Policy

Shellharbour City Council recognises the need for a comprehensive and transparent approach to community engagement. This will ensure that the community of the Shellharbour local government area has the opportunity to be actively involved in decisions on plans, projects, policies and services that impact on residents, ratepayers and other stakeholders.

It must be recognised that Council performs many routine activities on a daily basis, and this policy is not intended to cover every task. Rather, it applies to broader decision-making about strategies, plans, policies, projects and service delivery.

Council acknowledges that engagement is a process to gather opinions and ideas. It does not guarantee agreement between all parties. However, by engaging the community early and effectively in a project, there is a far greater chance of fostering community “ownership”, and of achieving a positive outcome for the majority of stakeholders.

Council also recognises that views gathered through engagement should be representative of a broad cross section of the community, and that to be effectively engaged, community members need appropriate information and time to respond.

Council’s approach to Community Engagement is in three stages. Level 1 involves information only, with no specific call for engagement. Level 2 sets out specific activities to engage the community for projects or activities with a “medium” level of impact. Level 3 is the highest level of engagement, and relates to major plans, projects and policies with a broad impact.

Large, high-impact projects with an extended timeframe may require different levels of engagement at various project stages. Other may, depending on their nature, require a mix of activities from different levels. Decisions about which level of engagement is appropriate will rest with the relevant Council Group Manager, based on a recommendation from the officer responsible for the project and with advice from the Communications Unit as required.

Level 1 (low)

Level 1 is communication disseminated from Council to the community in a variety of forms. It is essentially one-way in nature, in that its focus is primarily to *inform* rather than *seek a response*, although the community has access to ongoing methods of responding to Council at any time, through letters, emails, personal representations etc.

Applies to:

- Issues and projects where formal, Council-initiated engagement has already taken place as part of broader planning;
- Issues where there has been formal, Council-initiated consultation on a similar and directly relevant issue, and this can assist in reaching a well-informed decision (note: this is not a means to avoid formal engagement, but is aimed at avoiding unnecessary duplication and 'over-consultation' on general issues. It would not apply to site-specific matters where statutory notification is required);
- Issues where Council has no control over the decision, eg required by law;
- Projects with no/limited impact on the community;
- Urgent projects or activities where time does not permit another level of engagement (subject to approval by relevant Group Manager)

Required activities:

- Information published on Council's website ("What's On" section)
- Information published in Council news page in *Shellharbour Advertiser* and/or Community Update page in the *Lake Times*
- Issuing of media release and/or inclusion of information in General Manager's newspaper column
- Letter box drop (for local issues relating to a specific geographical area)
- Staff update
- Information in library branch/es (where appropriate)

Level 2 (medium)

Applies to:

- Issues which apply to one specific locality within the city;
- Issues that apply across the local government area but are low impact or impact a relatively small, well-defined audience;
- Long-term issues where formal, Council-initiated consultation has already taken place;
- Issues where options have already been identified based on factors such as risk management, previous consultation, financial, environmental, social and governance aspects.

Required activities:

- All basic communication requirements listed at Level 1 (For website, information will be published in "Have your say" section)
- Production of additional communication tools such as a fact sheet, posters, library displays, Lamerton House foyer display
- Liaison with existing networks and committees where appropriate, for example formal Council committees, specific groups such as bicycle users or young people
- At least one community forum in the impacted locality or impacted target audience

Level 3 (high)

Applies to:

- High impact city-wide issues;
- Significant issues impacting on more than one suburb;
- Long-term planning issues;
- Issues where initial direction is still being sought.

Required activities:

- All requirements listed at Levels 1 and 2
- At least two community forums, enabling residents in impacted areas to choose the most convenient date and venue (for high-impact city-wide issues, forums would be held in the city east, city centre and city west)
- At least one mechanism for gauging broader community views, for example an on-line survey, letterbox survey, formal phone survey, focus groups (either formal or informal)
- Report back on consultation outcomes, through website, media release, newspaper pages and columns as appropriate

In determining the appropriate level of engagement for a specific project, plan or activity, staff will complete eight steps as part of a Community Engagement Toolkit:

1. Situation analysis
2. What information am I seeking?
3. Are there any legislative requirements that will impact on this project?
4. What is the impact of the project on the community?
5. What level of engagement is required?
6. Identify and prepare engagement tasks
7. Conduct engagement
8. What was the outcome and how will I report it back to stakeholders?

In addition to the three levels of community engagement for specific activities or projects, Council also undertakes *ongoing* community engagement activities. These include, but are not limited to:

- Addresses to Council at Council meetings
- Community forums attended by the Administrator and General Manager four times per year
- Advisory Committees with community representation
- Community surveys conducted by an external organisation
- Notification procedures for development applications and other planning instruments (eg development control plans and local environmental plans)

7. Related Forms

Nil

8. Attachments:

Nil

Policy Authorised by:

Name: Council Resolution Min No. 69

Date: 19 May 2009

Corporate Policy:

Community Engagement Policy Council Policy

Policy Name: Community Engagement	Policy Number: POL-0050-V02
Date Adopted: 30 August 2011	Review Date: May 2012
Policy Owner: Media & Communications Manager	

Contents:

1. Policy Statement/Objective(s)

Community engagement is an important part of Council's role in the planning and delivery of services and facilities as we work towards achieving the Community's long-term Vision for Shellharbour City. Shellharbour City Council is committed to ensuring the community is actively involved in Council decision-making and activities, and implements engagement strategies that are appropriate and responsive to the needs of its diverse community. The Community Engagement Policy helps ensure Council meets the Community Strategic Plan 2011-2021 Objective 4.2 *A City that partners with our Community and other levels of government to actively engage with them in shaping our future.*

It is important that Council engages the community to:

- Better understand the needs of the community
- Recognise local knowledge and expertise
- Enable community participation in decision making
- Have a better informed community; and
- Meet the requirements of the Local Government Act, legislation, policies and procedures

This policy outlines Council's formal approach to community engagement, covering three stages:

- Level 1 (low) – dissemination of information only
- Level 2 (medium) – requires feedback from parts of the community
- Level 3 (high) – requires comprehensive feedback from a wide range of stakeholders.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Council staff involved in formulating draft plans and policies, managing major Council projects and undertaking the delivery of services to the community in the Shellharbour Local Government Area.

3. References

Report of Commissioner Richard Colley into Shellharbour City Council, July 2008
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 Local Government Act
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 Complaints Management Policy

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Community – refers to the people who live, work, visit and/or own property or businesses in the Shellharbour LGA.

Community Engagement - Community engagement refers to the processes and practices that Council uses to:

- inform the community
- gather feedback from the community; and
- works with the community to implement a range of projects/programs/services

Stakeholder – is a person or group that has an interest or stake in an issue or project

5. Variation and Review

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this policy

Review History

Date Policy first adopted – Version 1	19 May 2009
Date amendment adopted – version 2	30 August 2011

6. Policy

- 6.1 Shellharbour City Council recognises the need for a comprehensive and transparent approach to community engagement. This will ensure that the community of the Shellharbour local government area has the opportunity to be actively involved in decisions on plans, projects, policies and services that impact on residents, ratepayers and other stakeholders.

It must be recognised that Council performs many routine activities on a daily basis, and this policy is not intended to cover every task. Rather, it applies to broader decision-making about strategies, plans, policies, projects and service delivery.

Council acknowledges that engagement is a process to gather opinions and ideas. It does not guarantee agreement between all parties. However, by engaging the community early and effectively in a project, there is a far greater chance of fostering community “ownership”, and of achieving a positive outcome for the majority of stakeholders.

Council also recognises that views gathered through engagement should be representative of a broad cross section of the community, and that to be effectively engaged, community members need appropriate information and time to respond. The Community Engagement Policy has been developed with due consideration of the social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights, as set out in Council's Community Strategic Plan.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Elected Council is responsible for:

- Ensuring that community engagement directly informs Council decisions.

- Supporting and encouraging community engagement appropriate to the needs of the project and/or issue
- Providing adequate funding and/or resources to support engagement activities

Council Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is appropriately implemented and applied

The community has a role in supporting the principles of community engagement. The community is encouraged to actively participate in engagement activities and contribute to Council's decision making processes.

Engagement Stages

Council's approach to Community Engagement is in three stages. Level 1 involves information only, with no specific call for engagement. Level 2 sets out specific activities to engage the community for projects or activities with a "medium" level of impact. Level 3 is the highest level of engagement, and relates to major plans, projects and policies with a broad impact.

Large, high-impact projects with an extended timeframe may require different levels of engagement at various project stages. Other may, depending on their nature, require a mix of activities from different levels. Decisions about which level of engagement is appropriate will rest with the relevant Council Group Manager, based on a recommendation from the officer responsible for the project and with advice from the Communications Unit as required.

Level 1 (low)

Level 1 is communication disseminated from Council to the community in a variety of forms. It is essentially one-way in nature, in that its focus is primarily to *inform* rather than *seek a response*, although the community has access to ongoing methods of responding to Council at any time, through letters, emails, personal representations etc.

Applies to:

- Issues and projects where formal, Council-initiated engagement has already taken place as part of broader planning;
- Issues where there has been formal, Council-initiated consultation on a similar and directly relevant issue, and this can assist in reaching a well-informed decision (note: this is not a means to avoid formal engagement, but is aimed at avoiding unnecessary duplication and 'over-consultation' on general issues. It would not apply to site-specific matters where statutory notification is required);
- Issues where Council has no control over the decision, eg required by law;
- Projects with no/limited impact on the community;
- Urgent projects or activities where time does not permit another level of engagement (subject to approval by relevant Group Manager)

Required activities:

- Information published on Council's website ("What's On" section)
- Information published on Council's social media sites (eg Facebook and Twitter)
- Information published in Council news page in *Shellharbour Advertiser* and/or Community Update page in the *Lake Times*
- Issuing of media release and/or inclusion of information in General Manager's newspaper column
- Letter box drop (for local issues relating to a specific geographical area)
- Staff update
- Information in library branch/es (where appropriate)

Level 2 (medium)

Applies to:

- Issues which apply to one specific locality within the city;
- Issues that apply across the local government area but are low impact or impact a relatively small, well-defined audience;
- Long-term issues where formal, Council-initiated consultation has already taken place;
- Issues where options have already been identified based on factors such as risk management, previous consultation, financial, environmental, social and governance aspects.

Required activities:

- All basic communication requirements listed at Level 1 (For website, information will be published in "Have your say" section)
- Production of additional communication tools such as a fact sheet, posters, library displays, Lamerton House foyer display
- Liaison with existing networks and committees where appropriate, for example formal Council committees, specific groups such as bicycle users or young people
- At least one community forum in the impacted locality or impacted target audience

Level 3 (high)

Applies to:

- High impact city-wide issues;
- Significant issues impacting on more than one suburb;
- Long-term planning issues;
- Issues where initial direction is still being sought.

Required activities:

- All requirements listed at Levels 1 and 2
- At least two community forums, enabling residents in impacted areas to choose the most convenient date and venue (for high-impact city-wide issues, forums would be held in the city east, city centre and city west)
- At least one mechanism for gauging broader community views, examples may include but are not limited to an on-line survey, letterbox survey, formal phone survey, focus groups (either formal or informal), an opportunity for formal comment
- Report back on consultation outcomes, through website, media release, newspaper pages and columns as appropriate

Community Engagement Toolkit

In determining the appropriate level of engagement for a specific project, plan or activity, staff will complete eight steps as part of a Community Engagement Toolkit:

1. Situation analysis
2. What information am I seeking?
3. Are there any legislative requirements that will impact on this project?
4. What is the impact of the project on the community?
5. What level of engagement is required?
6. Identify and prepare engagement tasks
7. Conduct engagement

8. What was the outcome, including an evaluation of the engagement process and how will I report it back to stakeholders?

In addition to the three levels of community engagement for specific activities or projects, Council also undertakes *ongoing* community engagement activities. These include, but are not limited to:

- Addresses to Council at Council meetings
- Advisory Committees with community representation
- Community surveys conducted by an external organisation
- Notification procedures for development applications and other planning instruments (eg development control plans and local environmental plans)

7. Related Forms

Nil

8. Attachments:

Nil

Policy Authorised by:

Name: MANEX

Date: 30 August 2011

Community Engagement Activity Table

The following table identifies all the engagement activity that will be undertaken as part of the Community Engagement Strategy. It lists and describes the activities, who the key stakeholders are that are targeted by the engagement, the level of engagement as defined by Internal Association of Public Participation (IAP2), the Integrated Planning and Reporting document that the engagement will inform the development of and the proposed time frame of when the activity will take place.

Stage 1 - Review of Previous Engagement					
Activity		Description	Key Stakeholders	Level of Participation (IAP2)	IP&R Document/s
January - March 2013	Review of Engagement	Review engagement undertaken by staff since CSP implementation in 2011. Audit web, intranet and media files and collate results	Internal staff	Involve	CSP RS DP OP
Stage 2 - Continuing the Conversation (Undertake Community Engagement Activities)					
Activity		Description	Key Stakeholders	Level of Participation (IAP2)	IP&R Document/s
March 2012	Community Survey (IRIS Research)	Bi-annual telephone community survey to canvass resident attitudes and opinions about the services and facilities provided by Council.	Broad community over 18 years of age. Representative sample of community. Approx 500 residents.	Consult	CSP RS DP OP
August - September 2012	Objective refinement workshop	Previous CSP Workshop participants will be invited to assist in the review and rewrite of the objectives. These objectives will then formed the basis for all further engagement activities.	Community members involved in CSP 2011 Engagement	Collaborate	CSP
August - October 2012	Consultations with children and young people	In partnership with Community Connections staff, develop specific engagements appropriate for children and young people (High school students).	Children (5-12) Young People (13- 18)	Involve	CSP DP OP

August - October 2012	Photographic Competition and Exhibition	Hold a Photographic Competition and exhibition asking residents to submit photographs and a caption demonstrating what's special to them about Shellharbour.	Broad community not usually engaged through workshops etc, people accessing Facebook	Consult	CSP
September - October 2012	Community Strategic Plan Review and Service Level Workshops	Workshops held to identify the services and assets that they value the most and to nominate whether they would reduce, maintain or increase levels of services whilst considering the financial implications for the budget.	Broad community, Minimum of 4 workshops held across the City during the day and night.	Involve	CSP DP OP
November- December 2012	Strategy Development Workshop	A workshop will be held with the elected representatives and Council Senior Managers to determine what the strategies should be for the CSP.	Elected Representatives Senior Management Executive	Collaborate	CSP
December 2012	Action Development Workshop	A workshop will be held with staff to develop actions and key performance indicators.	SCC Staff	Collaborate	DP OP
Stage 3 - Resourcing the Vision (Seek feedback on a proposed Special Rate Variation)					
Activity		Description	Key Stakeholders	Level of Participation (IAP2)	IP&R Document/s
October - November 2012	Budget Allocator Tool (Bang the Table)	Conceptual online Budget Allocator Tool to find out what residents value the most to assist Council in finding the right mix of assets, services and programs while maintaining financial sustainability.	Broad community that has access to web. Workshops to be held at Libraries.	Consult	DP OP

November 2012 - February 2013	Telephone Survey (IRIS Research)	Telephone survey by IRIS Research of a statistically valid sample of Shellharbour residents to gather feedback on the proposed special rate variation. Deliberative polling method (information distributed to sample prior to undertaking survey).	Broad community over 18 years of age. Representative sample of community. Approx 400 residents.	Consult	DP OP
January - February 2013	Special Rate Variation Brochure	A brochure outlining Council's financial position and asset renewal ratio and proposed SRV to be prepared and distributed.	Distribute brochure to all rate payers and Telephone Survey participants.	Inform	DP OP

Stage 4 - Checking In (Public Exhibition)

Activity		Description	Key Stakeholders	Level of Participation (IAP2)	IP&R Document/s
March 2013	Promotion of exhibition	Advertise exhibition and provide documents for review.	Through web, e-networks, Council Administration Building and Libraries February - March 2013 Business Community	Consult	CSP RS DP OP
	Meet with Council Networks and Advisory Groups	Present draft documents for comment and invite submissions.	Aboriginal Community People with a disability Recreation and sporting clubs Community Service Providers	Consult	CSP RS DP OP
	Meet with State Government Agencies	Present draft documents for comment and invite submissions.	State Government Agencies	Consult	CSP RS DP OP
	Kiosks	Present draft documents for comment and invite submissions.	Broad community. Kiosks to be held in locations across the City during business hours and weekends	Consult	CSP RS DP OP

CSP Community Strategic Plan

RS Resourcing Strategy (Long-term Financial Plan, Asset Management Plan and Workforce Management Plan)

DP Delivery Program

OP Operational Plan