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Council’s vision, themes and priorities

Vision

In partnership with the community, protect and enhance life across the Macedon Ranges.

Themes

Liveability: strengthen community resilience, inclusion, safety, accessibility and connectivity; protect our natural environment, heritage and rural character.

Efficiency: smart service delivery, asset management and resource allocation.

Sustainability: consider and respect the needs of current and future generations in all we do.

Priorities

In pursuing our vision, Macedon Ranges Shire Council believes in, and is committed to, the following priorities:

- Promote health and wellbeing
- Protect the natural environment
- Improve the built environment
- Enhance the social and economic environment
- Deliver strong and reliable government

Source: Macedon Ranges Shire Council Plan 2017-2027

How this framework has been prepared

Council’s framework have been underpinned and informed by the widely-recognised International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum of engagement (see Appendix A).

Council recognises that community engagement occurs at any or all of the elements contained in the spectrum.

Each of the levels of engagement within the IAP2 spectrum is appropriate in particular situations to achieve particular outcomes and careful consideration of the level of engagement and method of engagement will be made by Council.
Why and when do we consult?

The purpose of consultation

Consultation is the process by which Council gathers information to make decisions that impact on the community. Council is committed to meaningful consultation and recognises the important role that it plays in democratic governance and civic life.

Good democratic governance occurs when a government governs for and on behalf of an informed and engaged community. An engaged community feels part of the overall governance and activities of that community. Community members are informed, connected, participate in services and activities relevant to them, and feel they have a role to play.

There needs to be valid reasons to commit to consulting with the community and investing Council resources and the community’s time into conducting a consultation.

For effective consultation to occur, communities need to be informed and engaged. This occurs when there is timely and equal access to information, good ongoing information flow, consultation and participation between a Council and its community.

Consultation is a process of informed, two-way communication between Council and the community on an issue prior to a decision being made:

- It recognises that Council has the mandate to be the decision-maker.
- In most cases, consultation impacts on a decision through influence, rather than power.
- Depending on the issue, Council may in some instances choose an empowering model of decision-making (see page 8).
- It aims to recognise and communicate the needs and interests of all impacted stakeholders. (this is from IAP2 core values)

When Council will consult

Consultations are conducted for a specific purpose that has been identified by Council. In determining the need for consultation, officers consider the intended outcomes and benefits that will be derived from the consultation, what resources will be required and how the information gathered will influence Council’s decision making. These considerations demonstrate when consultation will enhance the work of Council.

Council will use consultation, and this framework, to guide the following:

- Development of strategies that guide future decision-making and service delivery. For example, the development of the four-year Council Plan, or 10 year Walking and Cycling Strategy.
- How Council allocates resources to services and projects through its annual budget process.
- New or revised policies and local laws that set expectations or rules that govern the use and enjoyment of public space.
- Changes to service delivery, including discontinuing or altering a service, and identifying new opportunities or areas for improvement.
- Infrastructure projects, including construction, alteration or closure of buildings and facilities.
- Specific decisions that are guided by legislation, such as the Local Government Act and the Planning & Environment Act. See Appendix C for more information.
- Any other projects that significantly impact on the environment, character, economy or liveability of the shire, or particular localities in the shire.
When Council may not consult

This framework applies only to matters requiring a decision by Council.

When a decision has been made, it is more appropriate for the Council to inform/advise on its implementation.

Furthermore, this framework does not apply to routine works or day-to-day activities such as tree maintenance, road and footpath works. When undertaking these activities, Council will inform people living at affected properties.

There may also be occasions when Council does not consult on a matter due to circumstances beyond its control, such as statutory requirements, and funding or policy requirements of other levels of government.

When there is no genuine opportunity for the community to influence particular decisions, it is not appropriate to conduct consultation that implies the public can influence the outcome.

How we will consult

Single stage consultations

For low to medium public impact issues, or for highly technical documents where specialised knowledge is required, a single stage consultation is usually appropriate. For details on how to determine the impact of an issue, see Levels of Participation on page 8.

Two stage consultations

Resource and timeframe-permitting, for medium to high public impact issues Council will use a two-stage consultation process before making a decision:

1. Pre-position forming engagement (to seek input from the community before forming a preferred position)
2. Post-position forming engagement (to test the preferred position before making a final decision).

Two-stage consultations require more resources and a greater lead time, so this will need to be factored into planning.

The expected level of impact and public participation required will be determined in consultation with the relevant manager and director, Council’s communications team and in some circumstances the Executive team.

For example when developing a new four-year Council Plan, a 10-year Community Plan, annual budgets and/or major strategies or proposed service changes that impact a large portion of the community.
Principles underpinning Council’s consultations

1. Planned

1.1 Every consultation is appropriately planned, including purpose, scope, stakeholders, risk, level of participation, activities, resources and timeframes.

1.2 Consultations will be planned and developed on the principle of obtaining community input before Council makes a decision on a matter.

1.3 In every communication, there is a clear statement about what the consultation is about, the role of Council and the community in the consultation, and how participants’ input will be used.

1.4 The type of consultation that is chosen is appropriate for the level of public impact (see Levels of Participation, page 5).

1.5 Council may do some development work on an issue or proposal, prior to the commencement of the consultation. This work will generally be described as the scoping work or study. This scoping work will be the factual information that Council puts into the public arena for consultation.

1.6 Council may develop a preliminary preference for a particular position. When this occurs, Council will indicate what that preliminary position is. This will assist the community to understand where the Council stands at the start of the consultation.

1.7 The resource implications of various consultation methods as detailed on page 11 will be considered when planning consultations and selected appropriately with consideration to budget, time constraints and staffing capacity.

2. Inclusive

2.1 The consultation must give equal opportunity to, and encourage the involvement of, all people and groups who are affected by or interested in a decision.

2.2 The consultation is designed to ensure that views are captured from a representative cross-section of the community, using appropriate methods that will reach a range of demographic (e.g. age, gender, locality, cultural background and income) and stakeholder groups.

2.3 There is a balance of consultation methods and channels, including both one-way and two-way communication, and print, electronic and face-to-face. Two-way and face-to-face methods are the best ways to engage the community in a conversation with Council. Online surveys should also be made available as print versions, and these should be placed in customer service centres and mailed out upon request. Online surveys should also have a ‘free-text’ area so participants can provide general feedback on the topic if desired.

2.4 Council may request feedback through specific channels e.g. online submission, email, however general feedback provided through other channels on a consultation e.g. social media comments may also be considered.

2.5 The type of consultation or contact that is made is sensitive to each stakeholder group’s particular needs.

2.6 All participants are treated with respect, courtesy and honesty throughout the consultation process. Council will ensure its consultation practices are appropriately designed in order to maximise participation by people living with a disability. If required, additional support can be offered to participants to ensure they can provide their feedback e.g. over the phone if vision-impaired

2.7 Affected groups and interested parties can select their own representative to work with Council.

2.8 There is a commitment from Council that it will respect the diverse range of interests and views which may exist around a particular issue, while recognising that it has the ultimate decision-making role.
3. **Timely**

3.1 The consultation will take place early enough in the decision-making process to ensure that its outcomes are able to be considered prior to the decisions being made or determining a direction on an issue.

3.2 The timeframe for the consultation process will be clearly communicated, including when decision-making is to take place.

3.3 The timing of any consultation activities is appropriate to the stakeholder group/s, such as parents/families with childcare commitments or working professionals and commuters. Face-to-face/drop-in sessions should be timed to ensure participation of the maximum number of people. Consider going to the community (via existing venues such as libraries and neighbourhood houses or community events e.g. markets, local agricultural shows) rather than expecting the community to come to Council offices.

3.4 Generally, each public consultation phase should run for 4-6 weeks to allow a broad range of community members to participate. While it may be appropriate for high-interest consultations to run for more than 4-6 weeks, it is important to do this sparingly in order to avoid ‘consultation fatigue’ for participants.

3.5 Council will time its consultations appropriately throughout the year, key holiday periods such as the Christmas/New Year should be avoided or factored into the total duration of the consultation phase.

3.6 If the progress of a matter that Council is or has consulted on is delayed or extended due to unforeseen circumstances or if the matter is part of the development of a broader issue that may not be completely resolved for some time, the Council will provide appropriate updates to those who have participated in the consultation process.

4. **Informed**

4.1 Information relating to the consultation is presented in an easily understood format and can be accessed easily by everyone involved before key decisions are made.

4.2 Participants are informed enough to be able to contribute in a meaningful way. They are given all the information required to be able to weigh up various factors and considerations that will impact a decision.

4.3 As far as is reasonable to expect, Council will make all relevant information on issues that Council is consulting upon available to the community. Exceptions include information that is commercially sensitive, of a personal nature, or is the property of other agencies, and information that legislation forbids us to make public.

4.4 Council recognises that at times the volume and format of documentation it wishes to put on public display may be costly and logistically difficult. In such instances Council will endeavour to facilitate access via individual viewing, loaning of the material and or other appropriate methods. Additionally, Council will endeavor to make documentation available via its website in an accessible format and printer-friendly.

4.5 All those who opted into receiving updates about the process will be informed of the timing of the Council meeting where the decision will be made and the details of the final decision (using appropriate communications methods available to Council).

4.6 In communicating about the final decision Council will provide a summary of the feedback received and a clear rationale for the decision.

4.7 For issues of high community interest and public impact, Council may choose to publicly release a detailed summary of feedback received throughout the consultation (resource and privacy-permitting).
Levels of public participation

Council will determine the level of participation for each consultation activity based on the timeframes, available resources, expected level of public impact, and expected level of community interest in the issue.

1. **Inform: low level of public impact**
   Provides information to the community with balanced and objective information to assist them in their understanding of a problem, alternatives, opportunities and possible solutions. Most appropriate when the activity is routine in nature, and affects a limited number of people in a limited way.

2. **Consult: low to medium level of public impact**
   Obtains feedback from the community on analysis, alternatives and decisions. Usually involves developing a preliminary or preferred position before releasing it for community input. Most appropriate for projects which affect larger numbers of people but in a limited way. Methods may include community information sessions, surveys and email or written submissions.

3. **Involve: medium level of public impact**
   Works directly with the community to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered throughout a process. This may involve the community in various stages of the project in seeking specific answers to issues as opposed to broad general feedback sessions. Methods may include focus groups, workshops, advisory committees and online consultations.

4. **Collaborate: medium to high level of public impact**
   Partners with the community in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. Community collaboration may be fostered through deliberative engagement such as steering committees, planning cells, consensus forums, 21st century dialogue/town meetings, Co-Design Process, Deliberative Polls, World café, negotiation tables, online consultations, policy roundtables, citizen panels, search conferences and formal and informal partnerships.

5. **Empower: high level of public impact**
   May use similar methods for lower levels of participation, but instead of Council making the final decision, decision-making is placed in the hands of the community.

Adapted from the International Association for Public Participation’s Public Participation Spectrum
Consultation categories
Council has identified five categories of issues to help determine the required level of participation and consultation methods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>Matters that change the current arrangements/uses on a single site</td>
<td>Any significant redevelopment of a community facility, e.g. kindergarten renovation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Matters impacting on an area, neighbourhood or township</td>
<td>Traffic management proposals/solutions, streetscape proposals e.g. installation of roundabouts, speed humps, local open space developments, sporting club rooms at a recreation reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Service planning matters which have impacts across the shire</td>
<td>Changes to the garbage service, changes to aged care services or maternal child health services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Major plans which have impacts across the shire</td>
<td>Development of strategies relating to residential/industrial land use, or Council’s strategic position related to issues such as open space planning, economic development, arts and culture or youth development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>Major projects or issues with shire-wide impacts</td>
<td>Development of a new aquatic centre, annual budget deliberations, Council Plan development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consultation process

The following process steps are based on best practice stakeholder engagement for one stage consultations. They provide a guide for Council staff in planning, implementing and reviewing community consultation activities. See Appendix B for detailed checklists under each phase.

For two stage consultations, once you formalise a Council position, you go back to the community (in the ‘do’ column) to invite further feedback.

Plan

- Understand the context
- Establish scope and purpose
- Identify stakeholders and their needs/interests/level of influence
- Assess stakeholder and project risks
- Select level of participation, consultation activities and their sequence
- Identify required resources
- Set project timeframes
- Secure leadership commitment

Do

- Organise resources
- Invite participation
- Provide information to participants
- Conduct consultation activities

Review

- Assess community input
- Formalise position
- Report back to community
- Evaluate process against principles and outcomes
- Store and share data/findings for future planning

Community Consultation Framework
### Consultation methods

The following matrix should be used as a guide after determining the level of participation (page 5) required for the issue or project. For an explanation of each method below, see Appendix C (page 19).

**Other methods:** The methods below do not provide a comprehensive list, as there are many ways to inform, consult, involve, collaborate with and empower communities. Council staff are encouraged to explore other methods that support the chosen level of participation. See appendix D for comprehensive list of engagement methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of engagement</th>
<th>Inform</th>
<th>Consult</th>
<th>Involve</th>
<th>Collaborate</th>
<th>Empower</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct mail to affected people, groups or key stakeholders</td>
<td>Council newsletter</td>
<td>Community newsletter article</td>
<td>Media release/advert</td>
<td>News item on Council website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely resources required (including preparation time, budget and staff)</td>
<td>Low - medium (postal costs depending on scale)</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category one: Matters that change the current arrangements/uses on a single site</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category two: Matters impacting on an area or neighbourhood</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category three: Service planning matters which have impacts across the shire</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category four: Major plans which have impacts across the shire</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category five: Major projects or issues with shire-wide impacts</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Making a decision

Following planned consultation activities, Council will:

- analyse the feedback received
- consider the feedback in the context of the other data, advice, strategies and/or legislation that is relevant to this matter;
- review the proposal in the context of concerns or suggestions expressed. There is a commitment from the Council that it will respect the diverse range of interests and views which may exist around a particular issue and make genuine attempts to resolve conflicts, while recognising that it has the ultimate decision-making role.
- Where appropriate a report will be presented to Council for a decision. Consultation participants who have opted in for project updates should be notified of the report going to Council prior to the meeting taking place.
- The decision will be communicated to all stakeholders involved in the consultation and the broader community through the appropriate channels.

Reviewing results

Council will regularly review its consultations for their effectiveness against the project goals and the principles and guidelines in this document. Records, specifically consultation plans developed for each consultation need to be retained and completed in full before the consultation will be considered closed. The plan template includes a section that requires officers to document what worked and what didn’t work and the lessons learned. These completed plans will be kept as an internal reference for future consultations, and a register of best practice examples will be shared within the organisation.

Sharing consultative data

Council gathers valuable feedback through its consultations—both specific to the issue under consideration and also on related issues. Where resourcing allows, Council is committed to improving its capacity to capture, collate and analyse this data, and will continue to improve our systems and processes for aggregating and sharing this data across the organisation. This will help to build a database of knowledge about our communities’ views, needs and aspirations and how they evolve and develop over time.

Privacy

Local government decision-making and consultative processes usually affect both public and private interests. In many instances, Council will seek written submissions and input to proposals. These public processes imply a certain amount of public disclosure of information and therefore a degree of privacy loss.
Appendix A: IAP2 Spectrum of engagement

The Spectrum of Public Participation was developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) to help clarify the role of the public (or community) in planning and decision-making, and how much influence the community has over planning or decision-making processes. It identifies five levels of public participation (or community engagement).

The further to the right on the Spectrum, the more influence the community has over decisions, and each level can be appropriate depending on the context. It is important to recognise they are levels; not steps.

For each level it articulates the public participation goal and the promise to the public.

Source: International Association of Public Participation (https://www.iap2.org.au)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL</th>
<th>INFORM</th>
<th>CONSULT</th>
<th>INVOLVE</th>
<th>COLLABORATE</th>
<th>EMPOWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC</td>
<td>We will keep you informed.</td>
<td>We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.</td>
<td>To place final decision making in the hands of the public.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Spectrum of Public Participation as articulated by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2).
Appendix B: Consultation checklists

PLAN

☐ Understand context: What is the history of the problem or proposition? What is considered best practice in this space? What is the relationship of Council with the communities impacted/interested?

☐ Purpose and scope: what is the goal of the consultation process? What is the reason for and focus of the project? What information does Council need from the community to make a decision? What is negotiable and can be influenced by stakeholders and what is non-negotiable?

☐ Stakeholders: Identify all internal and external stakeholders who may be affected by or have an interest in the decision (see intranet for Council’s stakeholder analysis template). Consider factors such as age, gender, occupation, location, existing interest groups and note the differing interests and information needs/habits of each.

☐ Category: identify the category of the issue, project or policy. See page 9.

☐ Participation: what level of community participation is appropriate for this particular project? See page 5. This will depend on stakeholder interests/expectations, the complexity of the issue and the timing/resources available.

☐ Activities: using the matrix on page 10, identify the communication and consultation activities.
  - Select activities according to the required category and level of participation identified above. Consider your purpose, the scale of the consultation, duration of the consultation process and the engagement context.
  - Cross-check the chosen activities with stakeholder groups above to ensure they are inclusive of all.
  - Ensure both one-way and two-way communication methods have been chosen.
  - Ensure there is a mix of print, electronic and face-to-face channels.
  - Consider the sequence of different consultation activities to ensure there is a common sense logic when implementing the various activities and that activities build and progress relationships with participants.

☐ Timing: are you timing information and consultation activities appropriately to allow people to have meaningful input?
  - Determine a time of year for the consultation that balances stakeholder and project requirements. Check Council’s consultation calendar, ideally there should be no more than 3–4 concurrent consultation activities affecting the same stakeholder group at your proposed time.
  - Make sure your chosen time is early enough in the decision-making process to provide a genuine opportunity for community input. Provide as much advance notice as possible to the community that your consultation is about to get underway.
  - Ensure that the timing of the chosen activities fit well into the overall project timing, e.g. ShireLife newsletter content submission and publication dates.
  - Ensure that any communications activities informing people of meetings, workshops or the release of any documents gives people sufficient time to plan their involvement or consider their response.
  - Determine the timeframe for decision-making to occur.
Key messages: what are the main points you want to get across to stakeholders about this issue? Develop 3-4 broad, succinct statements that you want people to hear, understand and remember. Be mindful of using simple, accessible language.

Accessibility: ensure that the chosen activities above are accessible to all identified stakeholders, regardless of background or circumstance (language, age, access to technology, mobility). If any of the stakeholder groups identified above are difficult to access, consider how you can make your consultation activities more accessible to them.

Budget and resources: what financial and other resources are required to undertake the proposed activities? Are they adequate? Is additional cost involved in making certain documentation publicly available and if so, should there be an associated fee on request?

Risks: assess any project or stakeholder-related risks related to the engagement process, the involvement of community and the impacts on the organisation, such as capacity to deliver, willingness of community to participate, and risks to the organisation

Complete the consultation plan template reflecting the above and seek input from the Communications unit, then gain leadership support through gaining approval from your Manager and Director.

DO

When developing communications and information resources, ensure that you address:

- **Why** is this consultation being undertaken? Why now? Why is this a priority?
- **Who** is being consulted? Who is impacted? Who is interested? Who should influence the decision?
- **What** type of input is Council asking for:
  - views on a proposed preliminary position or draft (closed consultation)?; or
  - broad ideas and input about an issue (open consultation)?
- **How** can people be informed and have their say:
  - What information/resources/issues do people need to consider to be able to have meaningful input?
  - How can a broad range of people be involved?
  - How will the consultation improve the final outcome—how will people’s input be used?
  - How will people be informed of the decision?
- **When** will the consultation period start and finish, and when is a decision expected to be made?
- **Accessibility**: is your communication clear and easy to understand?
  - content should be presented in plain English
  - documents/surveys etc. should be readable, particularly for those with vision impairment, and follow Council’s writing and visual communication guidelines.
  - Captions and transcripts need to be provided for video/audio content
- **Privacy**: specify how submissions will be treated with respect to Council’s privacy policy, e.g. whether their names and addresses will be included in public documents such as Council reports.
- **Branding**: is the information appropriately branded or co-branded and is it clear it is coming from Council or its representatives?
When conducting consultation activities:

- Ensure the timing and location of any consultation activities is suitable to your stakeholder groups:
  - **parents/families** may need access to child minding to attend
  - **commuters** may only be able to attend out of hours
  - **shift workers** may not be able to attend out of hours
  - **young people** may only be able to attend out of school hours
  - **internet/computer access**: due to variability in internet and computer access throughout the shire, all online consultation and communication methods must be supplemented by face-to-face and written methods and all documents must be made available in hard copy in Council service centres.
  - **people with a disability**: all venues and information/content provided at consultation sessions need to be accessible to those with a disability. This includes people in wheelchairs, with sight or hearing impairments, or any other physical or mental disabilities which may impact a person’s ability to participate in consultation activities.

- Advise affected groups and interested parties that they can select their own representative to work with Council if they are unable to participate/attend.

- Prepare and provide relevant information to consultation participants via dedicated webpage content where appropriate, fact sheets, studies, maps and other documents. At a minimum, a 1–2 page summary should be developed including:
  - Purpose
  - Background
  - Consultation process/activities
  - Key dates including closing dates for submissions
  - Contact information for public comments (phone, email and web).

- Provide an opportunity for participants to share their phone, email and postal contact details with Council so that they can be updated in the project and notified of the outcome.

- When conducting face-to-face consultations, make available customer request forms so participants can provide general feedback and information which may not be relevant to the particular consultation.

- If collecting private information during consultation activities, indicate how this information will be used and stored, in accordance with Council's privacy policy.

**REVIEW**

- Regularly review your consultation plan as the project progresses updating the information contained in the plan. Monitor the effectiveness of the process/methods (are there voices missing?) and make changes to the plan as required.

- Keep stakeholders and community up to date with the process and upcoming activities as required.

- Collate online and offline results, and formal/informal feedback received, into a centralised database that can be accessed across the organisation.

- Identify any biases in the data collected based on the participants. Was a representative sample collected such as when conducting deliberative engagement? Consider factors such as age, location, gender. If there is a strong bias towards a particular group, or absence of other voices, consider how this could be counteracted, e.g. through further, targeted consultation with hard-to-reach groups.
In assessing community feedback, carefully consider the diverse range of interests and views around the issue and make genuine attempts to resolve conflicts and balance competing interests.

Inform all those who received project updates of the timing of when the final decision will be made (if it will be adopted in a council meeting). Provide adequate notice to enable participants to attend the meeting if they desire.

Inform all those who had input of the final decision, using appropriate communications methods available to Council. (This is where collecting phone, email and postal contact details during consultation activities can be useful).

In communicating the final decision, provide a summary of the feedback received and a clear rationale for the decision.

For issues of high community interest and public impact, consider releasing a detailed summary of feedback received throughout the consultation (resource and privacy-permitting).

Evaluate the effectiveness of the consultation after the decision has been made against the principles on page 6. In particular, consider the following:

- Were all relevant stakeholders identified or did some new interest groups emerge during the process?
- Was a representative sample of community views collected or were some groups/voices absent or over represented in the consultation process?
- Were the chosen activities effective in addressing the purpose of the consultation and did they capture a range of views?
- Was the timing of the consultation and related activities appropriate?
- Were the materials developed to inform people of the issues comprehensive, clear and easy to understand?
- What were the participation rates?
- What did the engagement process cost?
- Was any feedback on the consultation process provided by participants? What were the key themes in the feedback?
- What are the reflections of those who delivered the consultation activities? What worked, what needed improvement?
- Observations and recommendations from the Communication team
- What actions/changes can be identified to sustain and improve engagement practice in the future?
- Consider sending a feedback survey to participants covering some or all of these questions, to assist with your evaluation.
Appendix C: Statutory consultation

Council has responsibilities and makes decisions under a wide variety of Victorian and Australian legislation. In many instances the legislation sets standards and provides minimum requirements in regard to notifications and referrals. This relates to the following matters:

- Setting Councillor and Mayoral allowances
- Adopting a Council Plan
- Making a Local Law
- Changing the Council’s system of land valuations for council rates
- Adopting a budget
- Declaring a special rate or a special charge
- Selling, exchanging or leasing land
- Entering into a regional library agreement
- Deviating or discontinuing a road.

The consultation required by law for these matters must include the following:

- The Council must publish a public notice (in a local or daily newspaper, and on the council’s internet website) that identifies the proposal and tells people that they have the right to make a written submission to the council.
- People who wish to make submissions must lodge them by the date specified in the public notice, which is a date not less than 28 days of the public notice.
- Anyone who has made a written submission and asked to be heard in support of this submission is entitled to speak to the Council or a committee appointed for the purpose. The submitter may appear in person or be represented by someone else.
- The Council must fix a time, date and place for this meeting and give reasonable notice of the meeting to each person requesting to be heard.
- The Council or a Council committee must consider any submissions received before making a decision.
- After it has made a decision, the Council must write to a person who has lodged a submission advising of the Council decision and the reasons for it.

(Note: where a submission is lodged on behalf of a number of people, the Council notice of the meeting is required to be sent to the person specified on the submission and the notice of the Council decision is only required to be sent to one of the people.)

This consultative framework is designed to complement these statutory obligations. This means that, in addition to meeting legislative requirements, this framework will be applied to the above matters in the same way as other consultative projects.

Planning scheme amendments

Specific consultation arrangements apply in relation to proposed amendments to the Planning Scheme under the Planning and Environment Act 1987. These arrangements enable a person to make a submission:

- to the planning authority about an amendment to its planning scheme
- to a panel appointed to consider a planning scheme amendment.

Council is required to give public notice when proposing amendments to its planning scheme, including advice about how submissions can be made.
Consultative protocol for planning permits

In dealing with any planning application, council uses the following consultative protocol:

- An assessment of the impact of the proposed use or development on surrounding residents/landowners will be undertaken by the planning officer. This may involve an on-site inspection.

- On the basis of the assessed impact, the planning officer will make a decision on the necessity or otherwise and/or extent of notifications required to surrounding residents/landowners.

- In making this decision the planning officer will consider, amongst other issues, the scale of the development, the nature and type of use or development and the impact on the surrounding area. The planning officer will consider whether there is any material detriment to any person as is required by state legislation.

- Councillors are advised of permit applications fortnightly, including the extent of advertising and referral to authorities if undertaken. These applications include those with recommendations of refusal, which involve objections, where there are proposed car parking reductions of extension of times.

- In circumstances where the planning officer decides that a proposal has the likelihood of having impacts beyond the immediate neighbourhood area, letters to adjoining landowners/occupiers and a sign will be required to be placed on the site. In some instances in addition to the letters and sign on-site, public advertising of the proposal will occur in the local newspaper(s).

- Notifications to surrounding residents/landowners will advise people on how they can view any plans and supporting information on a proposal. In such instances the information will be available at the relevant Council service centres and online. The advertising period for planning permit application is 14 days.

- In some circumstances where high levels of community interest are anticipated, community information sessions will be held, either by the developer alone or jointly with council.

- All submissions on a proposal will be considered in determining any application. If there are objections, the planning officer may convene and facilitate an applicant/objector(s) meeting involving the relevant ward Councillors and other interested Councillors.

- Any planning application that has received objections may be referred to council for decision. Applicants and objectors will be advised of council’s decision.

- Planning applications that have shire-wide or significant community input and/or interest, will be referred to Council for decision.
## Appendix D: Explanation of methods

### Inform

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct mail to affected people, groups or key stakeholders</td>
<td>Letters/flyers can be distributed via Australia Post or private delivery (mailing house). This form of direct communication is effective in reaching targeted groups or individuals. Carefully consider your distribution list and ensure your message is in clear, simple language. Have your letter checked for appropriate language, clarity and grammar by the Communications unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council newsletter</td>
<td>This could be an article or series of articles in Council’s ShireLife newsletter, an existing eNewsletter, or a dedicated print or email newsletter for the project. Council produces five Shire Life newsletters per year. For print editions, 22,000 copies are printed and distributed via Australia Post’s Household Delivery Service to all roadside letterboxes and PO Boxes. Council also distributes topic-based e-newsletters to subscribers. For privacy reasons, information distributed to these mailing lists must fit with the topic to which they have subscribed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community newsletter article</td>
<td>Ten community-based newsletters are distributed monthly in specific towns/localities across the shire. The content is usually specific to that community, which makes this method most suitable to area-specific projects. These newsletters have a very high readership in their areas. Some community newsletters accept paid advertisements as well as article submissions. A range of school-based newsletters in the shire also accept submissions. For details, see Council’s intranet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media release or advertisement</td>
<td>A media release is a tool for generating ‘free’ media coverage on an issue, while an advertisement is paid space in a newspaper or other media publication. Depending on the target audience, the media release can be sent to local, regional or metropolitan newspapers, radio and television. It needs to be written in journalistic style, include comments from a spokesperson, and a contact person for further comment. Photo opportunities also assist in generating media coverage. Consider timing your media release for presentation at a Council Media Briefing. An advertisement should be clear and concise and written in plain English. A strong visual can help to engage the reader. If you wish to advertise you must follow Council’s advertising process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News item on Council’s website (other social media channels)</td>
<td>Council has a ‘Have Your Say’ tab on its homepage where individual consultation news items can be listed. The Communications unit can also cross-reference these articles in relevant sections of the site. This is a quick and cost effective way of promoting and informing stakeholders about your consultation. It is accessible to those who may have a vision impairment, as it provides the ability to increase the type size and may be read by a screen reader device/software. Downloadable files and links can be included to other relevant online resources, webpages or surveys. Files must be provided in both MS Word and PDF format (for accessibility reasons) at no larger than 5MB per file (for slower internet speeds).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notice on site or on community noticeboard</td>
<td>Signage can be placed on site (for consultations about a particular site), or on community noticeboards and shop windows, at Council facilities (e.g. service centres, kindergartens, leisure centres, libraries), or on real estate boards (e.g. at entrance to towns). For more info, see Council’s intranet.</td>
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</table>

**Consult**

| Email and written submissions | Email and written submissions can be either free-form or follow a template with some open-ended questions. For accessibility reasons all submissions should be able to be made via email or post. |
| Online and written survey | Surveys are a useful way of gathering and analysing community views, provided they are well crafted and the results can be easily collated and dissected. Surveys should follow Council’s survey guidelines, and for accessibility reasons, be made available in both hard copy and online formats. Council has a Survey Monkey subscription which provides a range of powerful analytical tools. Incentive prizes can also be useful in encouraging survey participants. |
| Council organised meeting or forum. | There are many ways to consult with people in a group setting. Think about the most appropriate times, venues, places and methods. |
| Input via an existing advisory committee | Council has a number of advisory committees. These committees comprise community members and Councillors. Whilst they primarily focus on their areas of expertise, the responsible officer for each committee will usually be open to the committee being consulted on relevant issues. |
| Doorknocking, listening posts and discussions with key stakeholders | These informal discussions can be a very effective way of gauging community sentiment and engaging with hard to reach groups who may not respond to more formal methods. Consider approaching residents or businesses in a particular area who may be affected by a decision, or developing relationships with key community |

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**Macedon Ranges Shire Council**

Community Consultation Framework
representatives who can be useful sounding boards for consultative projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend community-organised meetings or events</td>
<td>A range of community events happen throughout the shire that Council can tap into such as markets, festivals and sporting events. It may be possible for Council to establish a stall or listening post at these events by consulting with the event organiser. Council’s presence needs to be strongly identifiable (branding/banners) with engaging information displays (static or interactive/video). Members of the public can be invited to informally share their views or complete a survey in hard copy or via a mobile device that is provided e.g. an iPad.</td>
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</table>

## Involve

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Input via a dedicated committee or working group</td>
<td>It may be appropriate to establish an advisory committee, steering committee or community reference group for your consultation, particularly where there is a range of community interest groups and views on the issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus groups or facilitated workshop</td>
<td>This types of guided discussions enable groups of people to explore a specific issue or topic and develop ideas on how to respond or act. They need to be carefully designed and expertly facilitated, so may require the involvement of an external consultant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Social media or online consultation platform | Social media and web 2.0 technology offer powerful ways to engage in a conversation with communities through the use of commenting, sharing, voting, liking, polling and other features. Free, existing social media channels that are conducive to obtaining feedback include Facebook and Twitter. Council has corporate social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn) and a range of other social media including topic-based Facebook pages where you can host an online discussion, if appropriate to the topic:  
  - Arts & Culture  
  - Emergency Alerts  
  - Gisborne Fitness & Aquatic Centres  
  - Kyneton Toyota Sports & Aquatic Centre  
  - Youth  

It may be more appropriate to consider establishing a dedicated channel, whether through an existing, free social media platform like Facebook or Twitter, or the use of a paid online engagement platform such as Delib or YourSay with approval from Executive and the Communications unit after presenting a business case for such an initiative. |
## Collaborate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning cells</th>
<th>Planning cells is a method for deliberation designed to be a sort of “micro-parliament.” In a planning cell, twenty five people from various backgrounds work together to develop a set of solutions to a problem delegated to the participants by a commissioning body.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-design</td>
<td>Consumers and users work with designers to co-design products, services or processes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Empower

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision via citizen panel or juries</th>
<th>A process that gathers a randomly selected and demographically representative panel of citizens to carefully examine an issue and come to a collective decision.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision via ballot process</td>
<td>A general vote by citizens on a single question or issue which has been referred to them for a direct decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-managed body or committee</td>
<td>Council can support and facilitate the establishment of a community-based incorporated body or committee, bestowed with its own decision-making powers. There is also the example of a shared (Council and community) Project Control Group for community initiated capital works projects. This is can be a powerful way of giving the community ownership of a project, facility or service.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Full details of a broad range of methods are available at IAP2.org.au or Council’s intranet