

DRAFT COMMUNITY CONSULTATION MATRIX 2009



Table of contents page

Introduction	2
How to use the Matrix	2
Step 1: Assess level of Impact	3
Step 2: Assess level of community participation	5
Step 3: The Matrix	6
Types of Consultation: <i>Descriptions, Strengths & challenges</i>	8
<i>Informing</i>	8
<i>Consulting</i>	9
<i>Involving</i>	11
<i>Partnerships</i>	12

Introduction

The community consultation matrix aims to guide staff on when and how they should consult with the community. The matrix is relevant to all staff who have dealings with the community.

The type and level of consultation may vary between activities and projects and the level of consultation may be more intense and detailed depending on the needs of particular groups or a community within the LGA, the nature of the project/proposal and level of impact of that project/proposal. The matrix provides the minimum levels that should be considered when planning activities and projects. It is not intended that the Matrix be prescriptive, rather a guideline only, acknowledging that many routine actions and services of Council do not require the undertaking of public notification, community consultation or participation.

A Communications Plan should be part of any project being undertaken by Council staff, including appropriate methods and timeframe for consultation.

How to use the matrix

The matrix identifies different levels of impact of the project, issue, service or action that would reasonably require certain levels of consultation. When planning your activity or project you need to assess the level of consultation according to the impact.

The main steps to using the matrix are as follows:

[Step 1: Assess the level of impact](#)

Determine the likely level of impact of the project, issue, service or action using the assessment criteria in the tables.

[Step 2: Determine Community Participation:](#)

Determine the desired level of community participation/ involvement: Do you need to inform of a decision or involve the community in the decision making process? This will be influenced by the degree of impact and the desired outcomes of consultation. Use the guidelines on Page 4 to help with this decision and also consider legislation and other Council Policy requirements or Council decisions.

[Step 3: Determine the Type of Consultation](#)

Use the Matrix to determine the type of consultation that should occur.

[Step 4: Establish a consultation/communication strategy](#)

Using the matrix and the detailed chart, plan a communications strategy for your project or issue which incorporates a timetable for communications and consultation. Timeframes for consultation are important and each project should include adequate timelines for consultation with the community i.e. enough time to disseminate information to allow the community to make a considered response. Include a way to provide feedback to the community on the consultation and related decision-making process.

[Step 5: Enter information into the Council Corporate Calendar](#)

All consultation dates, including mail outs and advertisements for exhibitions, must be entered into the Corporate Calendar – Microsoft Outlook > Public Folders > All Public Folders > Corporate Calendar.

Step 6: Complete assessment of consultation

Complete the assessment form, which may include feedback from the community about the consultation process. These assessments will be used in reviews of Council's consultation processes.

Step 1: Assess level of Impact

The Community Consultation Matrix is based on four (4) impact levels, where impact relates to the 'effect of an action or change on the community'. The impact levels are as follows:

Level of Impact	Descriptions
Level 1 High	High level of impact on the city or local community
Level 2 Low	Lower level of impact on the city or local community

These levels are based on the assumption that any project, issue, service or action will have some real or perceived impact on the community.

To determine the Level of Impact, staff will firstly need to determine the community group/s and stakeholders that are affected by the project, issue, service or action. It may be appropriate to involve other Council staff in making these decisions and the approach to involving other staff should be determined early in the process, as recommended in the Consultation Strategy.

The criteria that staff should use to determine the 'level of impact' of a project, issue, service or action is provided below. Examples of activities across Council are also provided to assist staff to more accurately make their decision.

Criteria for Determining Level of Impact

Use the following criteria to determine the likely 'level of impact' of your project, issue, service or action.

	Level 1: High Impact	Level 2: Low Impact
CITYWIDE	<p>High level (real or perceived) on whole of city Significant impact on attributes of high value to community (environment/ heritage) Impact on health, safety or well being of community Potential of high degree of controversy or conflict High level of community interest Potential impact on state or regional strategies or directions Entails significant expenditure and/or reallocation of resources</p> <p>Examples City Strategy Management Plan Cultural Centre Rates & Levies DLEP Disability action plan Strategy Plan (youth culture aged) Removal of - or significant changes to- a whole of city service Provision of a regional facility (sport or cultural centre) Economic Development Policy Vegetation Management Plan</p>	<p>Recurrent large scale programs and activities which impact across the city but have a lower level controversy or potential for dispute</p> <p>Examples Improvements to city wide services Upgrade of regional park/facility Changes to customer services e.g. payment of rates, office hours Review of community needs, annual survey Weed & Bushcare programs Capital Works Program (overall) Tourism promotion Road sealing programs Fuel management plans Community events such as NAIDOC celebrations, Youth Week, Seniors Week</p>
LOCAL AREA	<p>High level (real or perceived) impact or risk on local area, community or group Loss or significant change to a local facility or service Potential for high degree of controversy or division in community Entails significant expenditure and/or reallocation of resources</p> <p>Examples Removal or relocation of local playground/park Changes to or loss of service eg. local youth services Redevelopment of park or sportsground Masterplan process Local street works or closure Changes to local car parking Area planning, Plans of Management DCP's, Town Centre studies & designs</p>	<p>Only a small change or improvement to a facility or service at a local level Low risk of conflict at the local level</p> <p>Examples Upgrade of local playground Local street or area upgrade Changes to a local activity Local road changes/upgrades Park upgrades, changes Community building upgrades/introduction Local events – celebrations Specific groups events</p>

Step 2: Level of Community Participation

Having decided on the 'level of impact', the next step is to determine the level of community participation that is appropriate for the particular project, issue, service or action. Not all 'high impact' projects or issues will require a high level of community involvement or partnership, although some will.

Due to the diversity of activities in Council, staff need to have flexibility in making this decision. It then becomes the responsibility of staff to fully understand the impact of their project or issue on the community and to select the appropriate level of community participation to match the situation.

Four (4) levels of community participation have been developed, based on the level of involvement of the community. These levels are defined below.

Level of participation	Definition
Inform	Advise the community of a situation or proposal Inform on a decision or direction Provide advice on an issue No response required – people are free to seek further levels of participation
Consult	Undertake research to help identify needs or issues Seek comment on proposal, action or issue Seek feedback on service or facility Require response, limited opportunity for dialogue Take account of consultation in decision making
Involve	Involve the community in discussion or debate Ensure informed input through briefing and information Adopt innovative and participatory approach -meetings forums Involve at different times of the planning process - advisory committees; focus groups, resident feedback panel
Partner	Establish partnerships for involvement in decision making - task force, resident feedback panel Enable ongoing involvement and keep informed Allocate responsibility in achieving initiatives

Level of Impact	Level of Participation generally required	Exceptions
Level 1: High Impact	Informing Consultation Involving Partnerships	- In emergency situations it may not be possible to consult before taking action - Partnerships may be appropriate, alternatively a local advisory committee to provide input into plans or issues
Level 2: Low Impact	Informing Seeking Information Involving	- May conduct a survey to assess needs rather than involve – especially if community has been previously involved in consultation - Partnerships may be appropriate for events

At any time during a project, issue or action, it may be necessary to reassess the Level of Impact and vary the consultation approach accordingly, due to a change in the situation or recognition of implications.

Step 3: The Matrix

Use the Matrix on the following page to decide the specific types of consultation that are appropriate for the chosen 'Impact Level' and for the desired level of community participation.

In particular:

1. Select the desired level/s of participation in the left hand column.
2. Move to the appropriate Impact Level column.
3. Be guided by the symbol in that column.

The symbols are intended to have the following meaning:

- ★ Essential (the task must be undertaken).
- ◆ May be Appropriate (task may or may not be appropriate depending on the situation).

Staff will need to use the chart in Step 4 to determine whether a task that is designated 'Desirable' or 'May be Appropriate' should be undertaken for a specific situation.

The Matrix is divided into four (4) sections linked to level of participation, ie:

- Informing
- Consulting
- Involving
- Partnerships

Appropriate consultation types/ tasks are listed under each level of participation. Symbols have then been allocated firstly for the overall level of participation, ie informing, seeking information etc, and then for each of the consultation types/ tasks.

It should be noted that the recommended consultation approach for a 'level of participation' will not necessarily match the specific tasks. For example, if a level of participation such as 'informing' is designated as essential, this does not mean that a specific task will also be essential. Instead it means that 'in general' the level of participation must be undertaken and that one or more of the specific tasks must be selected by staff to achieve this.

Type of consultation	Level 1 High Impact City Wide	Level 1 High Impact Local Level	Level 2 Low Impact City Wide	Level 2 Low Impact Local Level
Informing	*	*	◆	◆
Telephone contact	◆	◆	◆	◆
In person meeting	◆	◆	◆	◆
Written correspondence	*	*	◆	◆
Pamphlet	◆	◆	◆	◆
Letter box drop	◆	◆	◆	◆
Public Notice in local paper	*	*	◆	◆
Notice in newsletter	◆	◆	◆	◆
Media release	*	*	◆	◆
Site display	◆	◆	◆	◆
Displays in other locations	◆	◆	◆	◆
BMCC Website	*	*	◆	◆
SMS notification	◆	◆	◆	◆
Consulting				
Suggestion box			◆	◆
Telephone survey	◆	◆	◆	◆
Written survey	◆	◆	◆	
Hotline/phone in	◆	◆	◆	
Letter inviting submissions	*	◆	◆	
Media release inviting submission	*	*	◆	◆
Public exhibition	*	◆	◆	
Interview	◆	◆	◆	◆
Focus Group Session	◆	◆	◆	◆
On-line consultation / survey	*	*	◆	◆
Social media (Blog, Vlog, Facebook, Youtube, Twitter etc)	◆	◆	◆	
Citizen Jury	◆	◆		
Future Search Conference	◆			
Resident Feedback Panel	◆	◆		
Deliberative Poll	◆	◆		
Consensus Conference	◆	◆		
Involving				
Media release inviting involvement	*	*	◆	◆
Meeting with user groups/stakeholders	*	*	◆	◆
Meeting with existing groups	◆	◆	◆	◆
Workshop session	◆	◆	◆	◆
Meeting by invitation	◆	◆	◆	◆
Site tour/meeting	◆	◆	◆	◆
Public meeting	◆	◆	◆	
See above On-line consultation Social media Resident Feedback Panel Citizen Jury Future Search Conference Consensus Conference Deliberative Poll				
Partnerships				
Media release inviting involvement	*	*	◆	◆
Committee of Management	◆	◆	◆	
Taskforce or working party	◆	◆	◆	
Citizen Jury	◆	◆		
Resident Feedback Panel	◆	◆		
Joint venture	◆	◆		

The following chart is provided to help staff define their specific approach to consultation, particularly where the Matrix identifies a consultation task as 'may be appropriate'. The chart provides a brief description of a variety of consultation methods and highlights the benefits and the constraints of the approach. **Note that this is not an exhaustive list of consultation methods.**

Type of consultation	Description	Strengths	Challenges
Informing			
Personal Telephone Contact	Informal unstructured information exchange	Personal contact Opportunity to exchange basic information	Tend to be customer initiated No formal record/ tracking of information
In person meeting	Informal or semi informal discussion either one-to-one or in a small group	Allows discussion of specific issues and points of view	Limit to number of people accessing information
Correspondence	Personally addressed letter informing resident of a service, action or project	All residents receive the same information	Assumes literacy level of residents
Pamphlet	Designed to provide information on particular project or issue	All residents receive the same information in the same format Allows more detailed information, diagrams etc	Assumes literacy level of residents More costly – distribution and dissemination needs to be addressed
Letterbox Drop	Designed to provide information on particular project or issue	All residents receive the same information in the same format Allows more detailed information, diagrams etc Can be targeted to certain areas	Assumes literacy level of residents May be perceived as "Junk mail" and discarded
Notice in local paper	Advertisement or public notice in Council page or other sections	Widespread notification	Assumes residents read local papers
Media release	News story and/or photo in media	Creates interest by making issue "news"	Depends on media using release and time sensitivity
Site display	On site information about proposed project/ activity	Information for those with access to the site – immediate information for passers by	Depends on location of the site and quality of information or display
Displays in other locations eg villages, shopping centres, community noticeboards	Information placed in areas of high public use	Can inform a cross section of the community	Depends on quality of information or display Assess the need to update information
Website	Information posted on BMCC or related websites	Widely accessible	Limited to those with internet access

Type of consultation	Description	Strengths	Challenges
SMS notification	Notification/alert to residents via mobile phone SMS	Quick notification of brief information	Requires resident database Limited information exchange Limited to those with mobile phones
On hold telephone	Recorded message on BMCC on-hold phone message	Compliments other methods of informing community Low cost	Limited to those people contacting BMCC by phone
Consulting			
Suggestion Box	Place for residents to provide ideas or feedback at council offices or on the website	Easy access to ideas and easy for community input	Feedback needs to be provided by BMCC on suggestions made by residents
Telephone survey	Phone contact to complete a structured interview	Provides data to assess needs Wide consultation Trends can be plotted	Costs Limit/target questions Expert analysis of results Excludes those without a phone Telemarketing fatigue
Written survey	Structured survey to gather information	Provides data to assess needs Wide consultation Trends can be plotted	Costs Limit/target questions Expert analysis of results
Hotline/phone-in	Time-limited opportunity for residents to make contact and provide feedback	Capacity to gather information from interested parties and clarify concerns	Relies on skilled interviewers Relies on publicity and public interest
Media promotion inviting submissions	Ask the community for written submissions on a proposal, concept or activity	Useful as part of wider consultation process Broadens potential information source Easy to implement Enables formal comments on an issue	Limited opportunity for dialogue or clarification Attracts literate, motivated and organised groups and individuals
Public exhibition	The formal exhibition of a plan or document at key locations for a set period of time	Gives the community the opportunity to view and comment on a plan or strategy	Requires high level of promotion Requires motivated residents to respond
Interview	Face to face structured interview	Forms the basis of assessing issue and trends Rich source of resident information Capacity to reflect, expand and clarify points	Time consuming and costly May not be representative of all groups
Focus Group Session	Semi-structured interview in a small group (with invited participants)	Participants explore and build on issues Allows in-depth discussion	May not be representative of all groups

Type of consultation	Description	Strengths	Challenges
Meeting with user/stakeholder group	Face to face semi-structured meeting with a specific group	Capacity to draw out issues of concern to the group Opportunity to clarify issues of contention and uncertainty Opportunity to develop an action that responds to issues	Requires a competent and effective facilitator
On-line consultation	Independently moderated forum for comments, dialogue and voting amongst residents	Accessible 24/7 Captures 'silent majority' Acknowledges time-poor residents Extensive information available for view	Limited to residents with internet access Cost
Social media	Internet-based technologies allowing e-engagement, digital networking and user-generated content on issues.	Inexpensive Inclusive Contemporary community engagement Access time poor & youth sectors	Limited to residents with internet access Staff resources to monitor and contribute to social media
'Citizen Jury'	Provides the opportunity for citizens to learn about an issue, deliberate together and develop well-informed, common-ground solutions to difficult public issues.	Comprehensive, in depth & representative High quality citizen input Involve wider community	Costly – time & budget Commitment to the findings & recommendations of the jurors
Future Search Conference	A two-day meeting where participants attempt to create a shared community vision of the future focussing on trends and issues rather than specific concerns.	Useful in identifying issues at the early stages of a project or process. Provides guidance on how the participation process should be run. Can provide advice on who to involve in the participation process and gain support for ongoing involvement. Empowers individuals to become better informed, and better able to express their opinions. Participation of large groups.	logistically challenging Requires experienced facilitator. Can be difficult to gain complete commitment from all participants. Costly in time staff resources.

Type of consultation	Description	Strengths	Challenges
Resident Feedback Panel	Panel of residents created in order to give feedback (usually via questionnaire, phone survey, focus group) about services, facilities, issues & actions	Cost effective Draw on wide cross-section of community Elicit detailed views & opinions	Panel selection and management
Deliberative Poll	The deliberative opinion poll is a more informed opinion poll combining small-group discussions involving large numbers of participants with random sampling of public opinion. Its overall purpose is to establish a base of informed public opinion on a specific issue. Citizens are invited to take part at random	a random sample of the population so that the results can be extrapolated to the community as a whole. The DOP advises decision makers and the media what the public would think if they had enough time to consider the issue properly.	involve a large number of participants (between 250 and 600), costly time & budget requires access to experts participant management
Consensus conference	A consensus conference is a public meeting, which allows ordinary citizens to be involved in assessing an issue or proposal The conference is a dialogue between experts and citizens. It is open to the public and the media.	Assists in the facilitation of public debate from a range of perspectives. Empowers lay people to be informed & contribute to the development of policy on a sensitive topic. Bridges the gap between experts and lay people.	Costly – time & budget Panel selection and management Stakeholders' analysis participatory processes. Strict adherence to the rules of implementation Rapid production of reports and findings required. Requires effective facilitator
Involving			
Meeting with existing group e.g. parents, school children, youth aged etc	Link to an existing group to discuss broad issues	Involves people who would not normally come to other meetings	Requires a competent and effective facilitator
Workshop session	Structured approach where participants work through and issue to develop solutions	Can produce a plan or recommendation All participants involved in discussion and outcomes	Requires a competent and effective facilitator Needs limited numbers to be effective
Community forum	Panel of speakers provide information and facilitate discussion on a topic	Greater information on all aspects Good to generate general interest in a topic	Need to ensure a balance of speakers

Type of consultation	Description	Strengths	Challenges
Community Debate	Organised speakers and debating panels used to discuss an issue	Promotes informed thinking Ensures managed debate and discussion and the recognition that there is more than one side to an argument	Needs to be clear sides to an issue Need to ensure balanced and articulate speakers
Public Art Session	The integration of public art into the consultation process i.e. using public art as a tool to encourage people to express their views, ideas and values	A positive and creative way to involve people Contributes to community development Results in a Product that can be used to enhance the built environment	Resources required for materials Requires a skilled facilitator
Site tour/meeting	Structured meeting on site	Opportunity to view or visualise issues or proposals	Good organisation and high quality display material
Public meeting	Gathering of large numbers of residents to inform them and enable comment	Broadcast of information to a large group Open to all	Requires skilled facilitation and informed staff to answer questions Risk of disruption by interest groups
Community Advisory Committee	Community representatives who can help disseminate information to the community and comment on plans	Cross section of representatives can give input on plans Can help structure plans for release to the wider community	Need to ensure broad representation Terms of reference need to be clear – does the committee decide or advise?
See above: On-line consultation Social media Resident Feedback Panel Citizen Jury Future Search Conference Consensus Conference Deliberative Poll			
Partnerships			
Committee of Management	Committee that works with council under delegated power to manage a service or facility.	Shares responsibility for the management of a facility or the delivery of a service Involves community members in the care and control of local resources	Need to ensure broad involvement Risk of control by select few Methods of representation – appointment or election need to be clear

Type of consultation	Description	Strengths	Challenges
Taskforce or working party	Groups of people selected to work with Council to complete a task or develop a new service or facility	Opportunity to maximise skills and resources in the community	Requires a skilled chair to maximise contribution of all members
'Citizen Jury'	Provides the opportunity for citizens to learn about an issue, deliberate together and develop well-informed, common-ground solutions to difficult public issues.	Comprehensive, in depth & representative High quality citizen input Involve wider community	Costly – time & budget Commitment to the findings & recommendations of the jurors
Resident Feedback Panel	Panel of residents created in order to give feedback (usually via questionnaire, phone survey, focus group) about services, facilities, issues & actions	Cost effective Draw on wide cross-section of community Elicit detailed views & opinions	Panel selection and management
Joint venture	A formal arrangement with stakeholders or organisations to plan and achieve a project or service (eg funding a joint venture)	Greater commitment and responsibility from the community to establish a facility or service Less reliance on council funding and resources	Ongoing costs – maintenance etc