

## COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

### INTRODUCTION

~~The Town of Cottesloe has prepared and developed a community consultation policy for the Town.~~

~~The following pages provide details of the consultation process and a framework for community consultations to take place.~~

This policy aims to give the community a clear view of the importance of consultation in democratic governance. It also aims to be a practical document that will assist Council to undertake effective consultation in Cottesloe.

Every Council report includes a section on ~~internal and external~~ consultation to ensure that proper attention has been given to this area of decision making. This policy **fosters a consultative culture** and ensures that the consultation genuinely reaches people affected by a decision and ~~that~~ they have every opportunity to **make an impact** have input on Council decision making ~~and foster a consultative culture~~.

### 1. CONSULTATION POLICY

#### 1.1 Definition of Consultation and Democratic Governance

Consultation for this document is defined as a process of two way, informed communication between ~~the~~ Council and the community on an issue prior to Council making a decision. ~~on that issue~~.

Democratic governance involves community participation and input into governance and decision making. Consultation is a vehicle for obtaining this input ~~and~~ as it enhances the decision making process. It fulfils a need to ensure that views can be identified and communicated. Consultation does not **impact over-ride on the** Council's ~~role~~ **responsibility** to make decisions and its accountability for its decision making. It does not imply government by referendum.

#### 1.2 Aim of the Consultation Policy

The aim of the consultation policy is to create and foster a consultative culture ~~within~~ in the Town of Cottesloe.

#### 1.3 Key Principles

The following principles form the basis of the consultation policy.

##### Inclusiveness

- Consultation will encourage ~~the~~ participation of people affected by or interested in a decision.
- Affected and interested parties will be given equal opportunity to participate in the consultation process.
- Affected groups and interested parties can select their own representative to work with Council.
- Consultation will be sensitive to the needs of particular groups to maximise their ~~ability~~ **capacity** to contribute.
- Council will actively seek out people for consultation.

## TOWN OF COTTESLOE POLICY

### Focus

- Consultation will be purpose driven.
- ~~Chosen~~ Consultation methods will be appropriate for the task.
- A clear statement ~~about what~~ on the consultation process ~~is to achieve~~ will be provided.
- A clear statement ~~will outline about~~ the role of Council and the role of participants in the consultation process.
- Internal coordination will ensure Council ownership of the consultation.

### Responsiveness

- Council will ~~understand~~, consider and respond to contributions from all participants.
- Consultation will be transparent ~~and accountable~~. All people involved will have a clear understanding of how their feedback and comments are to be used.
- Council will maintain openness, ~~and take consider new ideas advice on board~~ and alter the course of actions if required.
- Council will ~~ensure~~ respect ~~for~~ the diverse range of interests that may be represented during a consultation.
- Council will make reasonable attempts to resolve conflicts, if they arise, and reach a suitable solution.

### Provision of Information

- Information relating to ~~the~~ consultation will be readily available to allow participants to make informed and timely contributions.
- Information relating to ~~the~~ consultation can be accessed easily by everyone involved before key decisions are made.
- Relevant information will be presented in an easily understood format.
- In some instances full details about an issue may not be fully disclosed to the public because of its commercially sensitive or personal nature.

### Implementation and Evaluation

- All consultations ~~s~~ will be evaluated after the decision making ~~to which they contributed~~ is complete.
- Participants will receive feedback about inputs received and how the final decision was reached.
- If a difference occurs between the input and the final decision the reasons for this will be clearly documented ~~and communicated~~.
- As part of its commitment to the effectiveness of ~~a~~ consultation, Council's ~~associated~~ decision making process will be evaluated once a final decision has been made.

## TOWN OF COTTESLOE POLICY

### 1.4 Levels of Consultation

The principles are general to all consultation processes, but there are clearly different levels of consultation to meet different requirements.

Democratic local government, with its very broad charter, needs to consult across all levels. ~~Which~~ This may range from consultation ~~about~~ on the future use of a specific site in the Town of Cottesloe, to consultation on the community's view of a state-wide issue which impacts on the community and therefore requires a Council position.

The levels illustrated in Table One indicate different approaches to consultation. These general principles will be used to develop ~~these approaches and the different functional areas will be involved in the development of~~ specific strategies.

### 1.5 Tools of Consultation

There are a number of ways ~~in which we can~~ to commence a dialogue with the community. These are outlined in Table Two.

### 1.6 Consultation Matrix

The Council and the community need to determine which tools are appropriate at ~~which~~ different levels of consultation. The template for the matrix appears as Table Three.

#### TABLE ONE

Examples of the different levels of decision making requiring different approaches to consultation are:

<b>Site specific</b>	Matters about a particular site, such as a change in use or sale of property. Excluding matters to be decided under the Planning and Development Act.
<b>Area improvement</b>	Matters that affect people in a neighbourhood, or precinct, eg change in local service delivery, traffic management plans, precinct plans and significant planning initiatives.
<b>Service planning for the entire Town of Cottesloe</b>	To develop or improve a service that would see a significant change in the level of service. The service could have an impact on the whole of the Town of Cottesloe.
<b>Policy development</b>	To develop or improve policies for Council's position on particular matters. Policies may affect the whole of the Town of Cottesloe. Does not including internal operating procedures.
<b>Key strategic issues/ major development facilities</b>	Projects of such a size that <del>they</del> impact on the finances or future of the Town of Cottesloe eg aquatic facility or beachfront redevelopment.
<b>Strategic Plan for the Town</b>	Establishing the decision making framework of Council.

## TOWN OF COTTESLOE POLICY

**TABLE TWO**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertisements in the local newspapers</li> </ul>	<p>Advertisements in <del>the news section of</del> the local papers are an important means of advising the community about the matter under consultation and how they community might have <del>their say</del> input.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web page Sites</li> <li>• Online "Have your say" consultation</li> </ul>	<p>Information will be placed on the Internet at <a href="http://www.cottesloe.wa.gov.au">www.cottesloe.wa.gov.au</a></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cottesloe Council News</li> </ul>	<p><del>This</del> Cottesloe Council News is the regular publication of Council. It can carry articles <del>about</del> on a policy or issue. If it is used for consultation, then the article must inform and encourage feedback. The newsletter is an important vehicle to report the results of other consultations.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a letter</li> </ul>	<p>This is a personally addressed letter to all affected households. It outlines <del>the</del> issues and invites comment. It always indicates where the comment should be directed within Council.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ratepayer groups</li> </ul>	<p>Ratepayer groups such as SOS are a valuable means of receiving feedback on a range of issues.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media release</li> </ul>	<p>This involves issuing media releases and conducting interviews with local journalists. If it is part of the consultative process, the Council spokesperson should always indicate to the media representative that feedback from the community is valued. The media release will be made available to local newspapers.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey</li> <li>• Deliberate Polling</li> </ul>	<p>This is a statistically correct survey of particular attitudes, beliefs or information. It may be done by phone, written survey or door knock of individual households.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letterbox drop</li> <li>• Fact Sheets</li> </ul>	<p>This is a non-addressed leaflet or flyer that summarises the issues and invites feedback to Council. The flyer indicates how that feedback can be given. These will only be used in the affected area.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal briefings</li> </ul>	<p>These are held at the request of a member/s <del>of members</del> of the local community to discuss a particular issue with a responsible officer. <del>They</del> Personal briefings may include the Mayor and/or Councillors.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups/review groups</li> <li>• Advisory Groups</li> </ul>	<p>These are discussion groups of around 15-20 people, usually led by a trained person (facilitator). The participants are invited because they are residents or because they have a particular interest, involvement or stake in the subject being discussed. The group may <del>be comprised of</del> professionals or residents with particular skills and competencies relevant to the <del>particular</del> issue. The purpose is to find out the range of opinions that exist on a particular topic. Focus groups cannot measure how widely those various opinions are held in the community.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information session</li> <li>• Public Meetings</li> </ul>	<p>This may be held at a community venue, <del>at the</del> on site of the matter under consultation, or at <del>the</del> Council offices. Invitations will be sent by one or more of the following methods:</p>

**TOWN OF COTTESLOE POLICY**

- advertising in **the** local papers
- letterbox drop
- media.

1- every time 2- All in local newspapers 3- all in local newspapers 4- all in local newspapers 5- all in local newspapers

1	4	1	4	1	5	3	2	2
1	1	1	4	1	5	2	3	2
1	1	1	5	1	3	2	2	2
1	1	5	4	5	3	4	4	2
5	5	5	0	5	4	2	2	2
5	3	2	5	3	4	2	3	2

This page contains the text of the policy.

TOWN OF COTTESLOE POLICY

**TOWN OF COTTESLOE POLICY**

**TABLE THREE – CONSULTATION MATRIX**  
**(left align columns for ease of reading)**

	Ad in paper	Web page	Newsletter	Write	Ratepayer group	Media release	Survey	Letter drop	Personal briefing	Focus groups	Information session
Site specific	2	3	3	2	3	4	5	4	3	5	5
Area improvement	2	2	2	3	2	4	5	4	3	3	5
Service planning	1	1	2	4	2	3	4	4	3	2	4
Policy development	1	1	1	4	1	2	3	3	3	3	4
Key strategic issues – major projects	1	1	1	4	1	2	3	3	3	2	3
Strategic plans	1	1	1	4	1	2	2	3	3	2	3

1=every time 2=will in most circumstances 3=may depending on the program 4=on the odd occasion 5=in the rarest of circumstances

## 2. SCOPING A PROJECT FOR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

A successful consultation requires the following steps:

### 2.1 Research

- Identify the range of issues that may be involved.
- Identify any policies or strategic plans of Council that may impact on any of these issues.
- Identify ~~the~~ issues that are core to the consultation.
- Identify any residents' groups that may have an interest. ~~in any of the issues.~~
- Remember that the existence of such a group is a reflection of a past perceived failure by Council to address residents' concerns. Understand what those failures have been.
- Establish ~~what the~~ responsibilities of Council ~~are~~ in relation to each of the ~~identified~~ core issues. ~~that have been~~

### 2.2 Setting the Framework for the Consultation

- Define the purpose of the consultation.
- List the specific aims of the consultation.
- Define all ~~the~~ internal stakeholders who may have an interest in the consultation.
- Define all ~~the~~ external stakeholder groups or individuals that need to be included.
- When an issue is likely to be controversial always include an independent expert who can develop credibility with both sides.
- Using the consultation matrix define the most appropriate entry point ~~for working out how~~ to reach ~~these~~ audiences. Is it a policy, a major project or a strategic plan? Or does it relate to locality, a specific site or a neighbourhood issue?

### 2.3 Plan the Consultation Processes

- Using the matrix identify how ~~you will~~ to reach each of the audiences.
- Establish the order ~~you will use~~ to reach them.
- Prepare a ~~realistic~~ timetable for consultation. ~~that is realistic.~~
- Establish ~~a that you have the necessary~~ budget for the consultation process.
- Prepare ~~the~~ initial information on which ~~to base the~~ consultation ~~will be based.~~
- Circulate ~~this~~ information or provide access points ~~to it~~ for all ~~the~~ identified stakeholders. ~~you have~~

### 2.4 During the Consultation

- Keep the community focussed, acknowledge side issues, ~~and then return them there~~ always returning to the purpose of the consultation

## TOWN OF COTTESLOE POLICY

process. Side. Be flexible to emerging or unplanned ideas that contribute positively to outcomes.

- When ~~you have completed the~~ consultation has been completed ~~close the loop. Tell all those who have been consulted about the~~ advise all participants on the outcomes.

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