



Kingborough

Communications and Engagement Framework 2020

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

Our vision: Our community is at the heart of everything we do

Our purpose: To make Kingborough a great place to live

Our values: Accountability, respect, excellence and inclusiveness

A key priority of Council is to encourage and support a safe, healthy and connected community.

The Communications and Engagement Framework has been developed to provide a consistent approach to both communications and engagement across all aspects of Council to support this priority. By implementing this framework, Council aims to engage with and enable the community.

We aim to inform the community on matters, considerations, innovations and projects that impact them, and will make sure members of the community are heard and their views considered as part of Council's decision-making process.

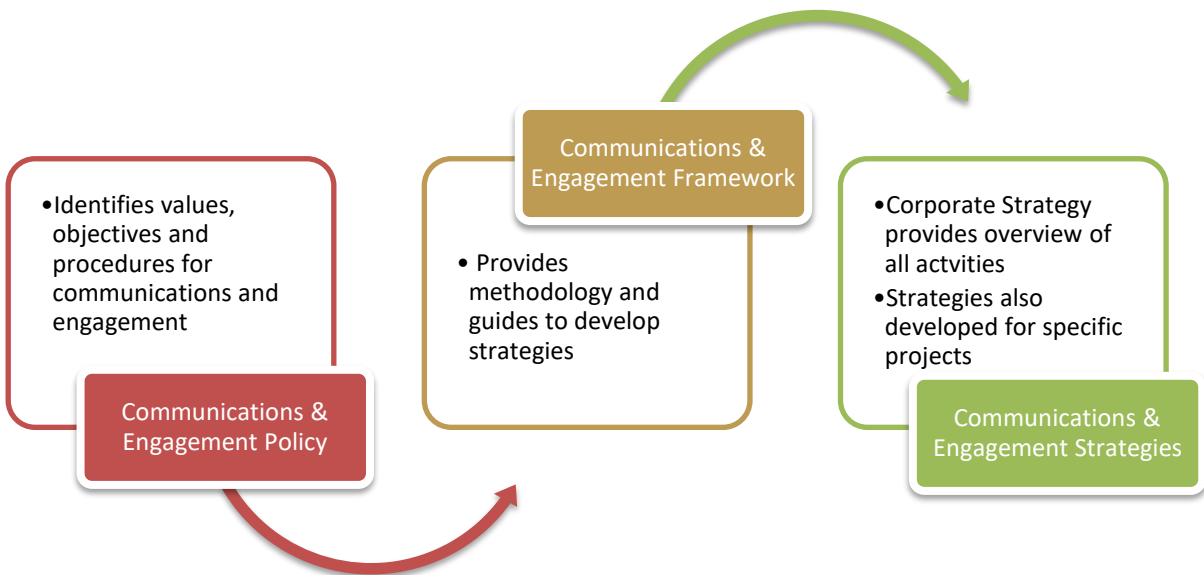
Recognising stakeholders and individuals in the community are often time-poor and busy people, Council is committed to making sure effective engagement is achieved, and that Council is carrying out active and authentic participation with the community.

In order for Council to make sure effective engagement is achieved, and that Council is encouraging active and authentic participation with the community, templates have been created to assist officers in developing communications and engagement strategies. Training will be delivered to officers involved in developing communications and engagement projects.

This framework is an on-going and evolving document. Council is committed to continuous improvement and striving for best practice approaches when implementing this framework.

This Framework has been influenced by the principles and practices shared by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).

1.1 Communications and Engagement Process



2. CONTEXT

2.1 Objectives

In our communications activities, we aim to:

- Promote the contribution we make to the quality of life for ratepayers and residents.
- Keep ratepayers and residents informed about services and opportunities provided by the Council.
- Keep ratepayers and residents informed about Council decisions and policy.
- Communicate across several formats for maximum engagement – E.g. newsletters, social media, community events, mainstream media.
- Be consistent in our key messages and branding.
- Keep our own staff informed of Council's vision and decisions.
- Promote the Council's achievements – especially achievements that are unique in Tasmania or the local government context.
- Promote the Council's values.
- Encourage ratepayers and residents to participate in community life.

In our engagement activities, we aim to:

- Encourage ratepayers and residents to participate in Council consultation and engagement projects.
- Develop and maintain a council approved framework for engagement practices and principles based on procedural fairness, transparency and accountability.
- Train staff to engage with community members and stakeholders by using simple and effective tools.
- Provide a clear and consistent approach, which will help to make sure stakeholders and then community members are involved in projects relevant to them and contribute to decision-making.
- Analyse and report outcomes of engagement activities.
- Promote collaboration when addressing contentious issues.

2.2 Guiding Principles

The development and delivery of Council's communications and engagement activity is guided by the following principles:

Communications:

- Keep it simple and timely.
- Recognise different information needs for various audiences.
- Express expectations and impacts clearly.
- Ensure commitment and participation from all staff.
- Explore new communication channels.
- Be flexible in approach and maximise the use of channels to reach a wider demographic.
- Use two-way channels.
- Use feedback mechanisms to monitor the effectiveness of communications.
- Avoid internal language and professional jargon and use Plain English.

Engagement:

- Clear Scope – a community engagement process must be clear about who Council will consult and how;
- Informed - participants in community engagement must be provided with objective, factual, relevant and timely information to inform their participation;
- Representative - participants should include community organisations and individuals who have specific qualifications and interest on a subject and be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter of the subject of the community engagement;
- Supportive and Inclusive – a community engagement process should enable meaningful and informed engagement; and
- Transparent and Accountable - participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making.

2.3 Definitions

COMMUNICATIONS

“Communications” means the provision of one-way information to advise the community and stakeholders about a project, initiative or issue. It can also involve two-way dialogue with community and stakeholders to achieve a particular outcome.

COMMUNITY

“Community” means all residents, ratepayers, landowners and members of the public including individuals, groups, visitors, organisations, government and business.

ENGAGEMENT

“Community Engagement” is an expression representing the variety of methods used by Council to inform, consult, and involve the community in the development of policies, services and infrastructure within the Council.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

“Public Participation” means the involvement of those affected by a decision in the decision-making process.

STAKEHOLDER

“Stakeholder” means a person, group or organisation who may be affected by, have a specific interest in, or influence over, a council decision or issue under consideration.

2.4 Roles and Responsibilities

The General Manager will be accountable and responsible for the review and promotion of this Policy. The Communications and Engagement Advisor will be responsible for the implementation of the Policy, providing advice for staff as required and on a project by project basis.

All staff with management responsibilities shall be accountable for compliance with this framework making sure the appropriate engagement methodologies are used at the most relevant time to enable relevant and timely input.

Council has the responsibility to engage the community on strategic, high-level issues, as well as acting as a conduit and advocate for the community to Council staff and other levels of government. Community engagement is the responsibility of all Council service areas, teams and employees.

Failure to comply with this framework could adversely affect the reputation of Council and impact on the timeliness and quality of service delivery and the intended outcomes for the community.

2.5 Implementation

Kingborough Council is committed to communicating and engaging with its community in a timely and mutually constructive manner. Effective communication and engagement allows Council to identify and understand the motivations, concerns, passions, pressure points, needs and aspirations of its communities. However, engagement with the community does not override the ultimate decision-making power invested in Councillors.

It is the role of governed representatives to strike a balance between community sentiment, which is captured through the utilisation of communication and engagement functions, with detailed evidence and recommendations compiled and put forward by officers as part of Council's operations and strategic decision making.

It is essential that key stakeholders be provided with comprehensive information in a timely manner prior to their involvement. This information should be given during the initiation phase of a project. As a project or issue progresses, Council will remain active in communicating and engaging the community.

Council **will** engage

- On projects or issues of community interest
- When an outcome has the potential to have a considerable impact on the community or a stakeholder group
- When there is a strategic opportunity to involve the community in decisions relating to the nature, scope, design or delivery of a project or initiative
- When an outcome involves a change in services or infrastructure provided by Council
- When Council has a statutory, legislative or regulatory requirement to do so

Council **may not** be in a position to engage

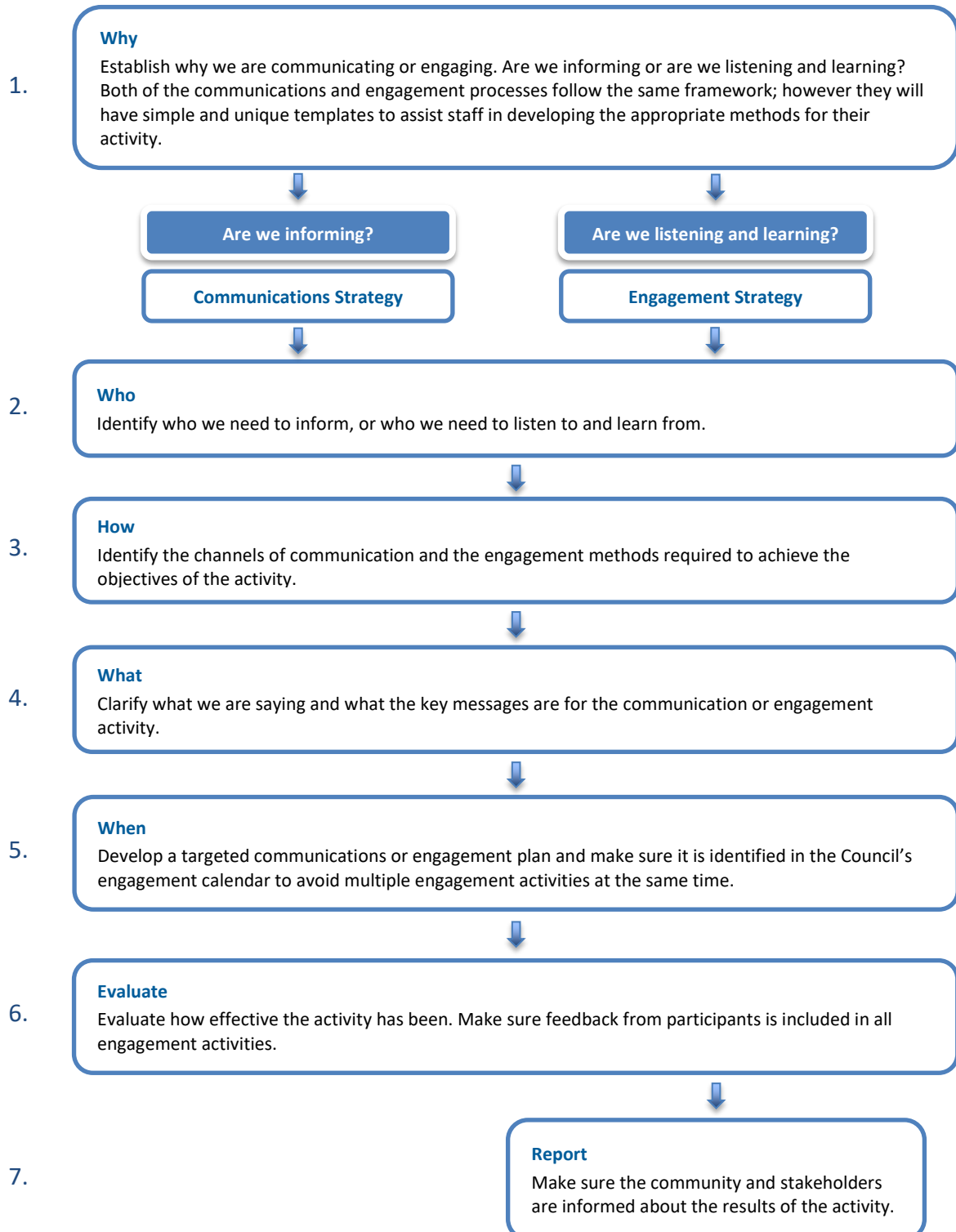
- When timeframes and direction has been provided by other levels of government
- When an immediate response is required, such as in an emergency situation
- When a decision must be made because of legal or safety requirements
- When the activity is considered "business as usual" and there is no new information to review, and where it is not considered economically viable to engage the community
- When it is the opinion of Council or appointed staff that an issue has had excessive engagement and will result in an adverse effect on Council reputation, processes, or project outcomes.

Engagement training will be organised for Council officers and introduced during staff inductions.

3. COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The below framework displays the steps for developing a communications and/or engagement strategies, which should be used during the initiation phase of each project to assess the level of communication and/or engagement required for each project.

Project managers should liaise with the Communications and Engagement Advisor for access to additional guides and factsheets, which can be used when implementing relevant communications and engagement strategies and methods.



3.1 Why

Are we informing or are we listening and learning?

3.1.1 Project Details and Objectives

This first step establishes why we need to communicate or engage and includes understanding the project background and any previous communications and/or engagements.

Consider what the goals are for the communication or engagement activity. Include any particular outputs you are seeking. These need to be clearly defined in order to set realistic expectations of what the engagement project aims to achieve, and what it not achievable. This provides clarity and enables transparency of the process for the stakeholders and community.



A Communications Strategy should be developed for key issues, changes to services, works or large events, which require a number of key messages to be delivered to particular audiences over a period of time. *For example: an ongoing issue; a capital works project which may impact people's movement; and a community event.*

A communications plan developed as part of the strategy will make sure information is distributed to the appropriate audience and in the right way. This will avoid confusion in the community and will make sure they are aware of where to find accurate information and who to contact should they have any issues.

Wherever possible, we should be pro-active and on the "front foot" with any issues or projects, instead of responding to customer or media enquiries.



An Engagement Strategy should be developed for when we are seeking any feedback or input from the community or specific stakeholders. *For example: seeking input into a policy or strategy, changes to service delivery, assistance in designing infrastructure/recreational areas etc.*

A strategy will assist in identifying the right audience and appropriate methods used to achieve the objectives of the project.

Consider the following when identifying why we need to engage:

- What is the scope of the engagement?
- What are you hoping to achieve?
- What is the background – how did we get here?

Ask critical questions to help define the desired outcomes such as:

- What is the situation and how did we get here?
- What are the things you can change and what are the things you cannot change?
- What are the things the stakeholders and community can influence and shape?
- Are there any compromises that can be achieved?
- Are there limits in time and resources about possible solutions?

The **Community Engagement Model**, developed by IAP2 will help identify the approach to the type of engagement and outcome for your project. Once you have identified the model, you will then be able to consider the level of community involvement required that will support your goals.

The model considers the following definitions:

- **Leads** – Who is responsible for identifying the problem or opportunity to be solved and who will carry out the engagement process.
- **Acts** – Who is responsible for leading the actions that arise from the decision made.



Organisation Leads / Organisation Acts	Organisations lead engagement and seek input to shape the policies, projects and services for which they are responsible. This is a familiar and traditional approach to policy development, project management and service delivery. Engagement is used to inform the community about the proposed policy, project or propositions and to provide some input to them.
Organisation Leads / Community Acts	Organisations can lead the conversation with communities and individuals taking responsibility for action.
Community Leads / Organisation Acts	A community leads in this profile to identify, highlight and propose the action required to solve a problem or take an opportunity. To achieve the desired action requires the response of a focal organisation. The community alone cannot achieve the desired result and therefore advocates to motivate the organisation to act.
Community Leads / Community Acts	Communities can lead the conversation and have responsibility for the action in a range of areas such as sport and recreation, well-being, environmental action and education. They are able to support, design and deliver their own projects and programs.
Shared Leadership and Action	Leadership and actions can be shared, where communities and organisations participate and contribute to the decisions, and also lead and take responsibility for action towards the outcomes.

Identify the level of community involvement that is required according to the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation (see below). Note that you may need to incorporate more than one level of involvement during different stages of your engagement project.

ELEMENTS	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Community engagement goal	To provide balanced and objective information to assist understanding of a topic, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain community feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work with the community throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the community in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place the final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the community	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, 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 community input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decision to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
When to use this element	This element is utilised to enhance knowledge, understanding, support and transparency. It provides the community with information on something that has been decided and is to be implemented.	This element is used to gather information and have discussions with the community. Feedback is provided to the community on the outcome of those discussions.	This element actively seeks the input of the community into any policy, plan or activity which may directly or indirectly affect them.	This element is utilised when Council seeks to work in partnership with communities to identify joint solutions and develop initiatives.	This element is used when Council is prepared to put into place the decision made by community.

3.1.2 Risk Assessment

A risk assessment will consider what the risks are to Council for the project, the level of risk, and actions to mitigate the risk.

Potential Risk	Level of Risk	Risk Mitigation
<i>e.g. Community does not understand why a decision has been made, which may erode public confidence</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Communicate outcomes and process to decisions, include who was engaged and other factors regarding decision</i>

3.2 Who

Who are we informing / engaging with?

Identify who we need to learn from by developing a stakeholder analysis. This will help to identify and classify stakeholders (individuals and groups/organisations) that are important to a project. Note that internal Council Officers and Departments may also be key stakeholders.

The analysis aligns engagement strategies with audiences, identifies partners as advocates of programs and projects, and targets key stakeholders to contribute to and support communication delivery (e.g. through existing forums, committees and partner communications).

When creating a stakeholder list determine who is interested and/or affected by the project, their history, as well as how much control or influence the stakeholder has over the project. Identify who in the Council is the Officer mainly responsible for the ongoing relationship with the stakeholder.

To achieve effective communications and engagement it is important to make sure the right channels are in place to connect with and engage a broad cross section of the community. Consideration should be given to providing equal opportunity for engagement with those who are hard to reach such as marginalised groups. This includes members of our community who may be disadvantaged, those who are geographically and socially isolated, and minority groups (e.g. people with disabilities; those who are language, culturally or gender diverse).

Person or Group	Interest / Connection <i>(what the expectations / concerns are of the stakeholder)</i>	Benefit of Involvement <i>(what benefits the stakeholder can bring to the project)</i>	Level of Interest <i>(what level of interest they have on final outcomes)</i>	Level of Influence <i>(what influence stakeholder has on final outcomes)</i>	Level of Impact <i>(the level of impact the project outcome will have on stakeholder)</i>	Preferred Channel / Method	Relationship Officer
<i>e.g. Kingborough Dog Walking Association</i>	<i>To provide advice on the allocation of dog exercise areas</i>	<i>Advice on current areas (design, signage etc.) Highlight opportunities for new areas Assist in communication and key messages to members</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Significant impact</i>	<i>Meetings / Workshops Official email address Social media & online engagement forum</i>	<i>Councillors Compliance Coordinator Recreational Officer</i>

3.3 How

How are we telling them or how are we listening and learning from them?

Identify the channels of communication and engagement methods to be used for the communications and/or engagement project.

3.3.1 Communication Channels

The following channels of communication are used by Council to deliver key messages:

CHANNEL	DESCRIPTION
Council Publications	This includes the quarterly Council News, monthly Snapshot on Kingborough (not published when the Council News is published), Annual Report, Annual Plan, Kingborough Information Directory and information sheets/brochures/notices for specific topics.
Website	Kingborough Council's website offers an easy to use platform to share Council's information. The website has also introduced easier to use online forms for users. These forms should be used for all Council forms where possible.
Intranet	Internal webpages providing information for staff on organisational structure, contacts, policies, help desks and systems access.
Media Releases	The Kingborough Chronicle, Kingston Classifieds, Bruny Island News and Kingston & Huon FM (local community news outlets) – for self-written and external stories that highlight grassroots achievements, services, events (both successful and upcoming), Council policy and decisions, and human interest situations that are specifically relevant to local Kingborough ratepayers.
	The Mercury Newspaper – for exclusive stories that highlight unique or novel achievements, significant events, or human-interest situations that are likely to interest a broad southern Tasmanian audience.
	Southern Cross TV News and / or ABC TV and Radio News and / or WIN TV News – for stories that contain strong visuals and interviews to highlight that highlight unique or novel achievements, significant events, or human interest situations that are likely to interest a broad Tasmanian audience.
	Various commercial radio news outlets – for sending recorded grabs on issues, achievements and events that are likely to interest a broad southern Tasmanian audience. Also, for facility closures and updates during crisis situations.
Digital & Social Media	Email & E-newsletter via MailChimp – For distribution of internal information to staff along with the Council News and Snapshot on Kingborough to subscribers. The E-newsletter is also advertised via social media and published in the Kingborough Chronicle.
	Facebook for all council messages, events, services, emergency information and works programs. Facebook advertising helps to promote specific surveys, events or publications. Sharing partner organisations key messages and achievements through Facebook generates support in turn.
	Twitter – for alerts, events, works and other emergency information in Kingborough.

	Twitter also provides the opportunity to engage with and share partner information.
	Instagram – for highlighting and exploring the municipality through visual images.
	YouTube – audio visual channel for interviews, fly-overs for developments and events.
	Flickr – acts as an online visual library to share photographs from events, scenery and infrastructure. Any members of the public and media outlets are able to download copies for reuse.
	Our Say – online engagement forum. This is a supporting tool for all engagement projects, so that community members who are unable to attend meetings or events are able to contribute at any time online.
Paid Advertising	Advertising placed in printed media outlets for community notices about important information such as road closures and planning notices, and advertisements for events and services. Consideration should also be given to audio visual advertising on local television.
Printed Materials	Posters for programs and events and notices for planning and other local government messages are printed and displayed in the Civic Centre, Bruny Island Service Centre and other appropriate outlets such as local shops etc.
Signage and Branding	The brand is the corporate identity of Kingborough Council and can take many forms, including the name, sign, symbol, colour combination and slogan. Branding creates consistency in the look and feel of Kingborough Council and the use of our logo and corporate colours creates brand awareness, to make sure we are instantly recognisable.
Meetings / Focus Groups	Meetings are an effective way to communicate and engage both internally and externally. Staff meetings are arranged quarterly along with workshops and presentations as appropriate for specific topics. The Kingborough Community Consultative Forum is held quarterly at the Civic Centre with representatives from community groups within the municipality. Other information sessions and meetings are arranged as appropriate for specific topics and council representatives may attend community association group meetings to consult on specific programs and projects. All members of the public are invited to attend each Council Meeting and the Annual General Meeting.

3.3.2 Engagement Methods

There is a variety of engagement methods you can use to achieve the level of community involvement and model of engagement you have adopted. Contact the Communications and Engagement Advisor for advice on which engagement methods would be suitable for the project.

Level	Proposed methods (Examples)
Inform	<i>Digital web page</i>
Consult	<i>Online & Hard-copy survey</i>
Involve	<i>Community workshop or online forum</i>
Collaborate	<i>Establishment of Community Working Group/Advisory Committee, Digital interactive map</i>
Empower	<i>Citizen Jury</i>

3.4 What

What are we telling them or what do we need to learn?

Project managers should consider and design key messages to clearly explain the purpose and key points of the project.

All communications and engagement messages must adhere to the guiding principles.

The Communications and Engagement Advisor can assist with drafting key messages. Below are some examples.

Examples:

- *Kingborough Council is the first council in Tasmania to trial Reconophalt, which uses Single-use plastics (including plastic bags) and glass bottle equivalents in a new road surface. The new products will provide longer road life (by 15% or an extra three years) and durability, proving to be a more cost-effective option for Council.*
- *We want to know what makes a great town centre for you. Help us by filling this 5 to 7-minute survey and tell us your big idea for Kingston. Your feedback will help shape future planning decisions for central Kingston.*
- *The water sampling at Blackmans Bay over winter has shown good results, however the advisory signs against swimming at the southern end will remain, as the long-term rating provided by the Derwent Estuary Program (DEP) still applies.*

Communication content and engagement activity will be subject to approval from the General Manager and the Mayor in line with the approved protocols in the Corporate Communications and Engagement Strategy (Section 8).

3.4.1 FAQs

Project managers will need to anticipate questions that may be asked by the community and prepare responses. This will build the participants' confidence in Council and the process.

Prepare a list of pre-emptive questions that may be asked and update the list as new questions are added.

Examples:

Q: What will happen to my street while the project is underway?

A: There will be special access for local residents, however minor traffic delays are expected for the day. Please follow any traffic management controls and take care if passing.

Q: What will be the outcome of the survey?

A: The survey will provide Council with information on what the community needs and wants are for central Kingston and will help us develop a Kingston Strategy.

Q: Is the southern end of Blackmans Bay Beach closed?

A: Council does not have the ability to close or prevent access to a beach. However, if a beach is rated as 'poor' as part of the Derwent Estuary Program's long-term rating system, we are required to advise people not to swim at the location.

3.5 When

When are we telling them or when are we listening and learning?

Outline the communications and engagement activities in a plan, which should include timing, activity, audience, location, required resources and feedback.

Promotion of an engagement will be determined in consultation with the Communications and Engagement Advisor. This will include identifying communication channels, and how the engagement activities will be advertised.

Projects that are likely to go for a longer timeframe may require an identity or name so that it is easy to recognise and distinguish against other engagement activities. Council's Communications and Engagement Advisor can provide advice on how to best promote engagement activities. Include the communication and promotion activities in the plan.

Each plan should be prepared by an officer or manager and included within the overall strategy for projects. These should be endorsed by a manager and approved by the Communications and Engagement Advisor, who will then present the report, updates and outcomes to the Managers and Executive Managers meeting once a month.

Who – who are we informing?	What – what are we telling them?	How – how are we telling them?	When	Evaluate – did everyone get the message?	Notes	Responsible
Example Communications: Residents & Local Businesses	<i>Confirm date of one way trial</i>	<i>Letter (mail drop) Poster Social Media Media Release VMS Trailer</i>	<i>3 April</i>	<i>Survey analytics/ social media messages/ correspondence to Council.</i>	<i>Map to be included demonstrating flow Feedback survey URL confirmed</i>	<i>Roads Engineer Communications Advisor</i>
Example Engagement: Kingston business	<i>Their suggestions for improving Kingston CBD</i>	<i>Workshop</i>	<i>23 April</i>	<i>Workshop notes and summary from workshop endorsed by participants</i>	<i>Maps and demographics to be included in presentation</i>	<i>External consultant and CEA</i>

3.5.1 Engagement Support

Consider whether additional support and finance is required for the engagement.

Engagement Event Tasks

It is useful to have a run-sheet itemising all the support and key tasks that need to be completed for each engagement activity and required equipment, who is responsible for the task, and the timeline for its completion. This will help make sure no crucial steps are overlooked and helps project managers keep track of planning the engagement.

Example Event Tasks:

Task/ Support	Who	Due Date	Cost	Notes	Progress
<i>Set date</i>					
<i>Book venue</i>					
<i>Invitations / Letters</i>					
<i>Safety Officer check</i>					
<i>External Facilitator</i>					
<i>PA system collected/tested</i>					
<i>Scout Group for sausage sizzle</i>					

Staffing Requirements

Consider the tasks involved in the project and how many staff members will be needed for each activity. (for example: venue set up, meet and greet, table facilitator, scribe, photographer, note-taker etc.), and include them in your Engagement Event Tasks.

Sometimes the subject is sensitive or highly emotive and using a third party like an external facilitator may be advantageous to the engagement process.

Are there any external groups who could support the engagement (for example: community groups to run a sausage sizzle, or local community association to help promote activity).

Equipment

What equipment/resources are required (e.g.: whiteboard, markers, name tags, butchers paper, catering, laptop, projector, leads, cameras etc.), and include them in your Engagement Event Tasks.

Financial Resources

Anticipate costs and make sure they are within budget. (for example, some cost may be: facilitator, catering, hall hire, giveaways etc.)

3.6 Evaluate

Did everyone hear and understand what we were saying?

Did everyone understand what we wanted to learn?

Did everyone feel confident they were able to tell us?

Feedback mechanisms will be incorporated into communication and engagement activities to track and measure how effective they have been. The Engagement Evaluation Template is to be used for engagement activities.

Other evaluation mechanisms include:

- Website/social media analytics
- Surveys
- Meeting/email feedback
- Customer Service feedback

Evaluation will focus on consistency of message, levels of awareness, understanding and commitment of stakeholders, pockets of confusion and frequency. Stakeholder engagement activities and messages will be updated based on evaluation and feedback results.

3.6.1 Evaluating and debriefing your engagement activity

Evaluation may be carried out during the implementation phase to see if your engagement activities are delivering the right information or attracting the right stakeholders; as well as at the end of the process to see what you would do again, and differently next time.

Evaluation and debriefing an engagement activity is important for staff development and training; and to work through any difficulties raised.

3.6.2 Considerations for evaluating and debriefing

Consider all elements when evaluating an engagement:

- Stakeholders identified
- Questions asked and engagement activities used
- Presentation materials used
- Venue booked
- Time and date of engagement activity
- Promotional material and campaign timeframe to promote the event
- Facilitator and supports

An effective debrief can use these following questions:

- Was the activity responsive and inclusive to the needs of all participants?
- Did the activity achieve the desired outcomes?
- What worked well? Why?
- What was challenging?
- What has been learnt?
- What would you try next time?

3.7 Report

Did we use what we learned?

The most important part of any community engagement activity is demonstrating to participants that their views have been heard and that their time and input is valued.

A process must be established and identified within the engagement strategy and plan. The community should be advised upfront so participants can understand how their information will be used throughout the project. The process used will depend on the depth of engagement you are conducting.

It does not mean that every sentiment or statement collected from the community can be implemented; there may be conflicting opinions in the community, or the subject may require more research. Rather it is a promise that a participant's time and contribution will be considered and respected.

Feedback to the participants can be in the form of a community engagement summary (synthesised findings) or a write up (verbatim) of the community's comments. It can be used as a way of keeping up the momentum of a project, while the project moves through Council's process (e.g. interim to a Council report).

The outcomes of how their contribution has affected decisions will also be communicated. Closing the loop is essential in building trust and transparency in the decision-making process.