



Policy 39 – Community Consultation and Communications

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Statutory Authority: **Local Government Act 1993**
Related Document: **Strategic Plan 2014-2018**

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework that facilitates understanding and decision-making between the Council and the Dorset community.

The Community Consultation and Communication policy objectives are to:

- Achieve good governance by facilitating open, fair and constructive dialogue.
- Allow for informed decision-making and achieve together an improved quality of life in Dorset.
- Achieve active public participation through involvement and inclusiveness.
- Communicating with the public Council's participation processes and decisions of Council.

POLICY

The Dorset Council recognises the right of the community members to be informed and have input into decisions which affect their lives.

Dorset Council values effective consultation and communication in developing a positive relationship with its community and recognises that public participation contributes to better decision-making.

Council seeks to take account of the views, needs, issues and aspirations expressed by the community and to balance these with other influences such as budgetary constraints to make informed decisions.

Council will consult and/or communicate with local community committees / groups when required during Council's community consultation and decision making processes.

In applying this policy, the Council will demonstrate its values of leadership, creative thinking, customer service, engagement, financial responsibility and respect. This policy will be referred to by Council when undertaking consultation in the Dorset Council municipal area.

Council will determine the method of consultation/communication on a project by project basis.

Consultation / Communication Process

The following is a guide that may be used in determining the appropriate form of consultation/communication to be undertaken in the Dorset Council municipal area:

Step 1 - Identify & scope the issue/project



Step 2 - Identify key stakeholders

(Identify who are stakeholders and their level of engagement in the issue/project)



Step 3 - Determine appropriate means of consultation

(Determine the method of consultation (e.g. focus groups, newsletters, website, questionnaires etc.) and the process of engagement with stakeholders)



Step 4 - Communicate the process

(Advise the community on opportunities for input)



Step 5 - Communicate the issue and parameters to the community

(Budget, statutory requirements, time frames)



Step 6 - Implement Consultation Process

(Implement consultation process based on process identified in step 3)



Step 7- Report to Councillors and the Community

(Report with summary of feedback obtained from the community, recommend a proposed course of action for Council to consider, and report to and be made available to the public in a timely manner, prior to a Council decision.)



Step 8 - Determine course of action

(Council decision based on community consultation, strategic and annual plan, planning, environment & statutory requirements, risk management, financial and asset management implications.)



Step 9 - Communicate the implementation of actions

(Milestones achieved etc)



Step 10 - Communicate the final outcomes to the community

(Including responses to alternative options raised)