Community
Engagement Strategy

Contents

Prepared By:
The Regional Development Company

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this document

Greater Shepparton City Council is committed to sound community engagement, based on our belief that:

- People in our communities should be involved in the decisions that affect them.
- People in our communities deserve high quality public services shaped around their needs and priorities.
- Our Council policies and strategies should reflect local circumstances and aspirations.

This Community Engagement Strategy recognises the importance of community input in developing and delivering better services. It is a guide to involving residents, industry, business, non-government organisations and other tiers of government prior to Council decision making, so that decisions will be more likely to reflect all of the concerns and interests, and provide well thought through solutions.

The purpose of the strategy is to:

- Enhance community involvement in the planning of Council services and programs in Greater Shepparton
- Provide a consistent, whole of Council approach to community engagement
- Support Council to engage with a wider cross section of the community, including groups that are harder to reach.

The effectiveness of our Community Engagement Strategy will be measured by the degree to which it leads to better decisions (policies, plans and projects) which means better outcomes for the Council and the community.

"Community involvement with the development of this strategy and the toolkit has been vital to shaping a document that meets our community's needs and their preferred methods of engagement."

The strategy defines community engagement and the purpose, principles and benefits of community engagement to the people and the Greater Shepparton City Council. It describes our community engagement framework and describes the various stakeholders we want to engage with and the ways in which they want to be engaged. The strategy also gives an overview of when engagement will occur and what types of engagement are most appropriate.

This strategy will be supported with a Community Engagement Toolkit: a how-to document to guide Councillors and staff on planning for community engagement, including appropriate tools to use for different types of engagement, and a checklist to help improve the way in which engagement is undertaken.

Community involvement with the development of this strategy and the toolkit has been vital to shaping a document that meets our community's needs and preferred methods of engagement.

"The Greater Shepparton City Council is committed to engaging community, industry and business stakeholders in the Council's decision making process, using consultation methods considered appropriate to the context of the decision being made."

1.2 Link to Council Policy

In November 2006, Greater Shepparton City Council adopted a Community Consultation Policy.

The policy states:

"The Greater Shepparton City Council is committed to engaging community, industry and business stakeholders in the Council's decision making process, using consultation methods considered appropriate to the context of the decision being made."

Policy was adopted in the recognition that active engagement demonstrates a commitment by Council to understand the needs of its community, aiming to develop and improve services.

The Community Engagement Strategy builds on this policy, bringing it to life as a working document, supplemented by the toolkit.

While a number of State Acts place specific obligations on the Council to engage on particular issues, we consider these obligations to be the minimum engagement necessary to determine the views of our community. This Community Engagement Strategy commits us to go beyond the minimum engagement requirements so we can strengthen the relationship with our community. We want to include community views in our decision making processes and be openly accountable for the outcomes of our decisions.

The Community Engagement Strategy is a key element in the Council Plan and links with the Greater Shepparton 2030 Vision document. Council's Communication Strategy and Customer First Commitment are also key reference documents.

1.3 Council's commitment to community engagement

Greater Shepparton City Council has a strong commitment to building partnerships and seeking greater community involvement in the activities and decision making processes of Council. We recognise that community engagement does not replace appropriate decision-making by the elected, accountable public representatives, but that these decisions can be enhanced through understanding the needs of our residents and the impacts of our decisions.

Council has undertaken engagement activities in the past, but recognises that it needs to improve the quality of its engagement and its responsiveness to the input received from stakeholders.

As part of this increased awareness of the importance of community engagement, Council is committed to training and development for its Councillors, staff and council committee members to support the application of its Community Consultation Policy and this strategy.

Ongoing evaluation of community engagement processes will be undertaken, so that Council can continually improve its ways of working with the community and receiving input and advice.

1.4 Our community

Our community comprises the people who live within the City of Greater Shepparton and those who wish to live, work, visit or invest in the municipality. The community includes residents, ratepayers, landowners and members of the general public (including individuals, groups, organisations, industry, business and government) who have an interest in the City of Greater Shepparton.

2. What is community engagement?

2.1 The definition of community engagement developed by Council

Councillors and staff of the Greater Shepparton City Council developed a definition of community engagement. This definition was further refined in consultation with the community.

"Community engagement is two way communication to seek and provide information, feedback and advice about council processes, services, future directions and community programs."

2.2 The purpose of community engagement

Greater Shepparton City Council recognises that community engagement enables Council to best meet the needs of the community by ensuring that planning and decision making is based on an understanding of the needs and aspirations of the community.

The objectives of effective community engagement are to:

- Enhance decision making – based on a comprehensive understanding of the needs and aspirations of our community
- Enhance relationships with our diverse community
- Increase participation by our community in the life of Greater Shepparton and the affairs of local government.
- Enabling our community to work together on issues that matter to them.

2.3 Principles

Councillors and staff of the Greater Shepparton City Council developed a set of core principles which will guide Councillors and staff in their practice of community engagement processes. The literature[1] on principles for effective community engagement was used to further refine these principles.

Fair and transparent process

- Clear explanation of the aims of the engagement process is provided to participants.
- Clear statement of how community feedback, advice and concerns will be used in the decision making process.

- Feedback to the community on 'this is what we heard' and how it influenced the decision.
- Timelines for the engagement process give the community the best chance of influencing the outcomes.
- Council is accountable for monitoring, reviewing, evaluating and reporting on community engagement activity.

Honesty, integrity and respect

- Genuine engagement – not tokenistic or contrived.
- Clear outline of what is negotiable and not negotiable.
- Actively listening to and respect for differing community views and perspectives.
- Allow consideration of the big picture so people can become engaged in the process.

Open and inclusive process

- A variety of community engagement processes will be used to enable all communities and stakeholders to effectively participate and to influence decisions.
- The interests and concerns of communities and stakeholders directly affected by decisions will be keenly sought.
- Everyone involved in the process is treated equally.

Well informed effective communication

- All information relevant to the community's understanding and evaluation of a decision will be made available in a clear, concise manner
- Actively listening to community views and perspectives
- Ensure community has time to become well informed.

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1   Carson L. and Geiber K. (2001) Ideas for community consultation – a discussion paper on principles and procedures for making consultation work.

2.4 Standards[2]

Council will measure the quality of any engagement activity against the following standards:

- All communication must meet the needs of the targeted community. Any written and/or verbal communications will be in plain English and in community languages as appropriate.

- Council staff and external consultants employed by Council involved in implementing community engagement activities will have appropriate skills and experience to undertake the tasks.

- An adequate period of notice will be given for each community engagement activity. Notice of not less than two weeks will be given for any activity that requires people to attend or be involved in an engagement activity. At least three weeks will be given for people to respond in writing to requests for feedback on policies, plans and strategies. Where we cannot meet these timeframes we will clearly explain why.

- We will acknowledge all written submissions received within 10 working days, outlining our timeframe for considering submissions and indicating when the writer can expect to hear from us again.

- Participants will represent a cross section of the community and be contacted using a wide range of communication methods as appropriate.

2.5 Benefits[3]

The benefits of successful community engagement are many. Effective community engagement will enable the Greater Shepparton City Council and the community to develop a shared vision for the municipality, a greater level of mutual understanding and a partnership relationship. The key benefit of community engagement is to improve outcomes through more informed decision making.

For local government:

- Community input can improve the quality of outcomes and policy being developed, making it more practical and relevant.

- Community input can ensure that services are more targeted and delivered in a more effective and efficient way for that community.

- Social, economic and environmental problems can be complex. Local government working with the community can gain new sources of information, build a sense of joint purpose and increase the possibility of finding sustainable solutions.

- Including diverse community groups in decision-making can increase issues. New perspectives can test assumptions and serve as a reality check so solutions are appropriate.

- Engaging with communities is a way for local government to check the health of the relationship face-to-face. It can also explore ways in which local government and its diverse communities could work more closely on issues of concern to those communities.

- Early notice of emerging issues puts local government in a better position to deal with those issues in a proactive way, instead of reacting as anger and conflict arise.

- Good engagement enhances the reputation of Council as open, accountable and willing to listen.

For stakeholders and communities:

- With purposeful and well-planned engagement, there will be more opportunities for communities to become involved and participate ensuring a greater diversity of voices on issues which matter to people.

- Communities can expect Council to meet certain standards of engagement and give feedback on its ability to meet those standards.

- Communities are able to identify their priorities for themselves.

- There may be more ownership of solutions to current problems or plans for the future so that the community shares in decision-making and has a higher level of responsibility for creating that future.

- Engagement can foster a sense of pride and greater sense of belonging to a diverse community and there are considerable benefits to working together on behalf of the community.

- Individuals may become empowered to raise issues and be proactive with regard to issues that affect them including global issues such as climate change.

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2   Adapted from Rockdale City Council Community Engagement Strategy and Policy – revised to reflect GSCC input

3   Civil Renewal Unit, Home Office, UK (2004) The Benefits of Community Engagement: A review of the evidence
     www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz/the-basics/benefits
     Department of Sustainability and Environment (2005) Effective Engagement: building relationships with community and other stakeholders

3. Our community engagement framework

Greater Shepparton City Council recognises that engagement can range from simply informing the community that a decision has been made, through to high levels of participatory decision making and feedback depending on the issue.

Council has identified four levels of participation in community engagement[1]:

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve and collaborate
- Empower.

The framework is a continuum of increasing community participation, ownership and responsibility.

The Inform level of the continuum underpins all the other levels: that is, each level of engagement will require appropriate information for community members and stakeholders so they can fully participate. The transparency of information flow to and from Council and what is done with the information (how it is used in the decision making) are basic prerequisites for successful engagement.

The framework aims to assist staff to determine the level of community engagement most appropriate for the issue, program or project. The first step for staff is to decide on the specific purpose or objective for the planned interaction with the community or stakeholders. Once the purpose is clear, staff will be able to match their purpose with one of the four levels of participation in the framework: inform, consult, involve/collaborate and empower.

The framework lists the objectives of each level, the promise the Council is making to the community, and guidance for when each level is most appropriately used. Community preferred methods and tools and checklists for each level are included to assist staff with implementation. The methods, and checklists are outlined more fully in the associated toolkit document.

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1   Using the Public Participation Spectrum developed by the International Association for Public Participation as a basis.

Greater Shepparton City Council   Adopted: 7 July 2009   Reviewed:

Levels of participation

	Inform	**Consult**	**Involve / Collaborate**	**Empower**
Our Objectives	To provide the public with information to assist them to understand: • Changes to services, programs or processes • Who to contact • The decision made, how it was made and further action is possible • Potential issues, directions and alternatives.	To obtain public feedback on: • Concerns and issues • Interests and ideas • Preference • Analysis • Alternatives, and/or decisions.	• Involve community groups and stakeholders in shaping projects and programs • Partner with stakeholders and community organisations in the development and management of projects and programs	• To place final decision-making in the hands of the public
Our promise	• Keep communities informed and up to date	• Listen to and understand community views • Provide feedback on how information was considered in the decision making	• Work collaboratively with community groups, organisations and stakeholders to plan, develop and manage projects and programs • Provide feedback and updates	• The final decision is made by the community
Use when the issues are….	In the planning stage, with inform tools used to build community engagement and/or information where the decision has already been made or there is no opportunity for the community to influence the final outcome. This may include: • Legislative responsibilities • Local laws • Information on services or facilities.	• Site specific issues, area improvements or service planning, such as: • Development proposals • Access issues • Library services	Service planning, policy development, strategic plans and major projects such as: • Transport connections • Neighbourhood renewal • Community development • Budget • Council Plan	Council elections and community owned projects
Example methods/ tools/ process	• Website • Direct mail-outs • Media • Newsletters • Signage	• Focus groups • Interviews with key representatives • Local community meetings • Meetings with key authorities	• Steering committees/ advisory groups • Working groups – targeted stakeholders • Face to face meetings with existing groups	• Ballots • Task force groups
Things to remember	• Clear communication, clear explanations, jargon free • Consider potential communication barriers including language and disabilities	• Consideration of appropriate timelines, venues, access • Ensure communities have enough information • Provide feedback	• Involve stakeholders early • Ensure stakeholder input in the process design • Facilitate collaborative working relationships	• Only appropriate when Council will give complete ownership to the community

4. Who do we engage with?

4.1 Our community and key stakeholders

Greater Shepparton City Council's Community Consultation Policy commits the Council to engaging with the community, industry and business stakeholders.

Community engagement is about providing opportunities for people who are affected by or interested in a Council decision to participate in the decision making process in order to enhance the decision, plan or project.

Councillors and staff identified key communities and stakeholders that need to be included in engagement processes. These may include:

Our whole community: the people who live within the City of Greater Shepparton, including rural areas and rural towns in the municipality and those who wish to live, work, visit or invest in the municipality. The community includes residents, ratepayers, landowners and members of the general public (including individuals, groups, organisations, industry, business and government) who have an interest in the City of Greater Shepparton.

Community stakeholders: all those affected by the decision or those with a vested, perceived, or encouraged interest in a plan, project or service.

Community groups/clubs: including sporting groups, user groups, special interest groups, township groups.

Community sectors: such as youth, aged, people with a disability, migrants, families.

Industry and business groups: including

- **Industry and business stakeholders:** all those affected by the decision or those with a vested, perceived, or encouraged interest in a plan, project or service.

"Councillors and staff identified key communities and stakeholders that need to be included in engagement processes."

- **Industry sectors: for example:** education, food, agriculture, manufacturing, retail, communications, tourism, media, arts and culture.

Government agencies and non government agencies including health, education, youth, aged care, disability, indigenous services, migrant support, family services, child support services and emergency services.

Our staff, contractors and consultants including affected departments, Councillors, Council management and volunteers associated with Council.

The associated toolkit document will provide staff with tools to help identify specific communities and stakeholders that need to be included in an engagement process and provide advice on the most appropriate methods to use in the engagement process. Consideration will be given to processes for engaging with hard to reach groups[5] and the disengaged such as:

- Young people
- Older people
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Indigenous people
- People with disabilities.

5   As defined by the Victorian Local Governance Association
     www.vlgaconsultation.org.au

5.1 Issues for engagement

There are a number of key issues that trigger the need for community engagement. The engagement process will vary to suit the type of issue. There are seven different types of issues that will trigger community engagement:

5.1.1 Information or feedback on decisions

These are issues where the decision has already been made or there is no opportunity for the community to influence the final outcome. This may include such issues as implementation of legislation or local laws, or information on Council budget issues.

Additionally Council needs to provide the community with feedback after an engagement process has occurred and then after a decision has been made to keep the community informed and up to date. This will assist the community to understand the decision made and how or why it was made.

Council may also need to inform the community on services and facilities available, community groups, community events and key contacts for further information.

5.1.2 Site specific

These are issues that only affect a particular site, such as changes in planned use for facilities or reserves. This may also include access issues or car parking issues for a particular site.

5.1.3 Area improvement

These are issues that impact on a particular neighbourhood area, such as rezoning of land, changes in traffic flow, changes in parking, street scaping projects, or minor development proposals. This may also include planning and identifying improvements in community safety and transport for a particular area.

5.1.4 Service planning

These are issues that relate to changes to improve, develop or redevelop a service. These services could impact the whole municipal area such as changes to library services, health services, child care services, waste collection services or

changes to how services are accessed or changes to service levels. These services could be developed in response to emergency incidents or other events such as drought, fire or flood. These services may also be developed in response to needs and concerns identified by the community.

5.1.5 Policy development

This relates to the development of Council policy, reviews of Council policy or changes to Council policy on a range of matters. This would include the development of a rural strategy, land zoning policy and potential changes in regulations.

5.1.6 Major projects/strategic issues

These include projects that would impact on future developments and budgets and include two or three year projects such as transport and infrastructure projects, tourism projects and community development projects or developments for town centres.

5.1.7 Strategic directions and plans

Establishing and reviewing the policies, plans and strategies of Council. This would include the development of community visions for the future.
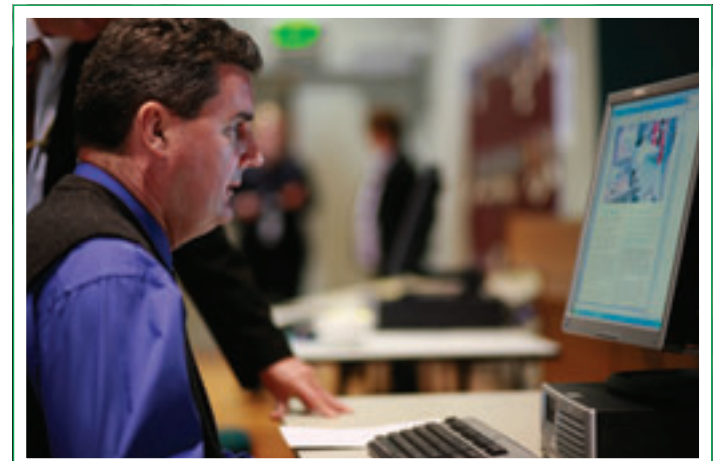
6. Methods of engagement

This section outlines various methods of engagement which can be used by Councillors and Council staff, dependent on the target audience and topic under consideration. Councillors and staff are encouraged to consider using a number of different methods rather then relying on one method and to consider potential accessibility concerns of the target audience.

The information in the following table can be referenced to the Community Engagement Toolkit which outlines in more detail each method, how and when it could be used, the benefits and weaknesses of each method and the suggested target audience.

Letter

This is a personally addressed letter to all affected households. It outlines the issues and invites comments and directs the recipient to who, where and how feedback can be given to Council.

Letterbox drop

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.

Survey

This is a statistically valid survey collecting data on particular attitudes, beliefs or information. It can be conducted by an independent survey specialist or using Council staff expertise and can be done by phone, online, written survey, doorknock of individual households or street survey.

Advertisements in the local newspapers

Ads in the news section of the local papers (except for statutory requirements) are an important means of advising the community about the matter under consideration and how they might have their say.

Community leaders

Community groups have their own systems of communication. In any engagement process, the leaders of those community groups can play an important role in circulating information, receiving feedback and encouraging community members to participate in engagement activities. It may also be helpful to invite a community leader to be actively involved with the engagement process, for example, chair a meeting, take minutes or undertake door-to-door surveys.

Task force/working group

A group comprising people representing various interests, points of view and fields of expertise. The group is formed for a specific purpose, often to advise and provide feedback to Council on issues relating to a specific sector of the community. It allows for a two-way collaborative approach and input directly into Council decision-making.

Media

This involves issuing media releases and conducting interviews with local journalists. It involves print, radio (including community radio) and television media. If it is part of the engagement process, the Council spokesperson should always indicate to the media representative that feedback from the community is valued and the processes for providing feedback to Council.

Council newsletter

This is the colour publication, "Our Greater Shepparton magazine", produced quarterly by Council and sent to every household and business in Greater Shepparton. It carries articles and information about issues, events and activities that are taking place in the Greater Shepparton area. If it is to be used for engagement it must contain concise information about the issue, encourage feedback and clearly indicate how the feedback can be given. It may also contain a written survey for people to complete and send back to Council at no cost.

Community newsletters

A number of other newsletters exist in the community, including school newsletters or for example the Parkside Neighbourhood Renewal Community Group newsletter. If Council is to use these for engagement the information must be concise, encourage feedback and clearly indicate how feedback can be given. It must also be submitted to the school or community group with sufficient lead time for community members to receive the information with enough time to respond.

Special publications

These can range from a special news-sheet to a brochure or a draft printed policy or plan. They are designed to inform the engagement process and can be used to invite submissions.

Personal briefings

These are held at the request of a member or members of the local community to discuss a particular issue with a responsible Council officer and/or Councillor. Alternatively, briefings may be offered to the public as a regular activity and again may involve Council staff and or Councillors.

Focus groups

These are discussion groups of around 5-20 people, usually led by a trained facilitator. The participants are invited because they have a particular interest, involvement or stake in the subject being discussed. 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.

Meeting called by the community

With some issues the community may decide to call its own meeting as part of the engagement process. As part of this they may invite relevant Councillors and staff to attend. If this is the case, Council personnel should go well prepared, with ample information about the issue, the engagement process and the 'negotiables' and 'non-negotiables'.

Public meeting

This may be held at a community venue, at the site of the matter under consideration, or at the Council offices. Invitations will be sent by one or more of the following methods:

- Ad in the local papers and on local radio
- Letterbox drop
- Media release
- Direct contact with community leaders
- Invitations to community groups.

Neighbourhood meeting or walking town meeting

This is a public meeting, but held at a localised and targeted level – a neighbourhood or street for example. It could involve a meal (a barbecuefor example), or morning tea and could be located in a local park, private home or other local and familiar venue. These could be annual or quarterly events to discuss local issues.

Texting/SMS

This involves the promotion of one to two key questions and inviting a response to be sent by mobile telephone text function to a nominated number. It requires background technology so that the information is collected through email.

Community feedback register

A randomly selected group of citizens created to give feedback to Council on its services and priorities. A register would usually involve several hundred citizens who nominate online, and who agree to make themselves available to respond to surveys for a fixed period, and perhaps to contribute to a focus group or planning workshop once a year.

Social Networking

Social networking provides Council with interactive technology which invites input, particularly from young people. Using YouTube, a visual/audio message can be recorded which gives information and invites a response. Social networking can be used to set up community groups and online forums. Links to both can be provided on the Council website and advertised through media and information posters.

Information posters

These can be put up in places where community members come together, for example, community houses, youth centres, libraries, meeting rooms. They offer concise information and invite feedback, with clear communication as to how feedback can be provided to Council.

Attendance at community group meetings/activities

Council staff and/or Councillors ask to be invited to attend a community activity or community group meeting to give information about a particular issue and invite feedback. This is particularly relevant when an issue relates to a particular community sector or location.

Council website/Council 'hotline'

For issues of significant community interest, for example major projects, a page on the Council website can be developed with specific information and a link to an online survey. For community members who do not have access to the internet, a Council phone number can be provided which they can call for information.

Open House event

An Open House allows Council to provide information to the public in one venue where people can drop in at a time of their choosing, obtain a variety of information about an issue, a proposal or a draft plan and speak to staff or project proposers in an informal way. These events need to be publicised well and the range of activities offered need to take into account the likely participants.

7. Partners in engagement

Council is responsible for the delivery of a range of programs and services, including aged and disability services, sustainability and environment, family and children's services, health, leisure, economic development, youth and arts and culture. To deliver these services effectively, Council needs to work closely with a number of delivery agencies and organisations in the community. These include:

- Youth agencies
- Community health providers
- Disability agencies
- Indigenous groups
- Environmental bodies
- Aged care services
- Community centres/neighbourhood houses.

Generally, these organisations recognise Council as a valued partner and want to work more collaboratively with Councillors and staff to achieve the best results for the Greater Shepparton communities in their delivery areas. Communities ultimately reap the benefits of collaborative arrangements. For example:

- Collaboration can help solve complex or difficult problems. Complex issues cut across sectors. Working in partnership, Council and communities can pool their financial, human and information resources, and work together to achieve shared goals.
- Collaboration can increase local commitment to getting results, as responsibilities for decision-making and management are shared.
- Collaboration can make best use of community knowledge, networks and resources. Communities know who's who, who's doing what, and which processes work best within their community.
- Collaboration can provide better delivery of services to the community. A partnership may lead to greater operational efficiencies.
- Collaboration can build local skills, leadership capacity and organisational development.

A collaborative approach does not clear Council or a delivery agency from their own responsibility to meet service needs and contractual obligations; however, through collaboration, each organisation can better reach their goals and outcomes.

7.1 Principles of collaborative engagement

Several principles, developed through the engagement process and reinforced through literature, underpin the establishment of collaborative partnerships between Council and delivery agencies. These are:

1. Identify the key delivery agencies Council should work closely with in a particular service area.
2. Establish relationships with key personnel in those organisations.
3. Establish sound meeting procedures, including timing and notification of meetings, protocol for distributing minutes and feedback in a timely and efficient way, and guiding the meeting to ensure the agenda is met.

4. Treat all partners with respect and value their knowledge and skills.
5. Be willing to share information and create a trusting relationship so others feel safe to share.
6. Listen actively when others are speaking.
7. Use facilitative approach in gaining and sharing information, expressing and discovering opinions, planning for action, and problem solving.
8. Use appropriate and jargon-free language for both oral and written communication.
9. Be willing to both give and receive feedback from partners.
10. Always remember to give others credit for their ideas and accomplishments.

7.2 Elements of good practice on collaborative engagement

- There is a focus on the quality of partnerships established rather than their quantity.
- The appropriate stakeholders are involved in the partnership and there are clear goals or targets around which the partners come together.
- Each partner is engaged in all planning and implementation stages and the roles and expectations of partners are clear to all.
- The purpose and parameters of the partnership are clearly documented and readily available to all stakeholders.
- Conscious efforts are made to build the positive relationships of commitment, inclusion and trust that underpin collaborative work.
- Coherent, integrated planning of activities fosters collaboration and strengthens partnerships between stakeholders.

8. Evaluating engagement[6]

The effectiveness of Council's Community Engagement Strategy will ultimately be measured by the degree to which it leads to better decisions (policies, plans and projects) which means better outcomes for the Council and the community.

However, each element of the engagement can also be evaluated to ensure better processes and engagement. It is important to consider how community engagement processes will be evaluated prior to embarking on the engagement activity. This ensures a process of continuous improvement to make sure that the most appropriate and effective methods of engagement are used when working with the communities of Greater Shepparton.

The following table outlines some ways of evaluating the engagement. The toolkit will provide a checklist for this evaluation process.

© Image courtesy of Innovative Resources, 1995

Evaluate when Evaluate what	During the stakeholder engagement process	At the completion of the stakeholder engagement process
Process	Are we reaching a broad representation of the Greater Shepparton communities? Are the methods we are using accessible and timely, and easy to use for particular community members? Can we improve our processes or try different processes and approaches? Do those Council personnel undertaking the engagement have appropriate skills and experience?	Check the process against the standards/ outcomes established during the planning process • Which outcomes/standards were met? • What contributed to meeting them? • Which standards/outcomes were not met? • What can be changed to improve the result for next time?
Outcomes	Use indicators and targets identified in the planning process to check if the engagement objectives are being achieved – are we getting the information we need? Gather data from stakeholders (including Council staff who may be implementing the engagement) Do the objectives for the rest of the process need reviewing and improving?	Use indicators and targets identified in the planning process to check if the engagement objectives have been achieved. Did we get the information we needed? Did we meet the standards? Hold a debrief with all staff involved with the engagement process: • What worked? Why? • What didn't work? Why? Summarise data collected throughout the process. What can be improved next time?

6   Adapted from The Australian General Practice Network Community Engagement Workshop, Twyford Consulting, February 2007

9. Supporting documents
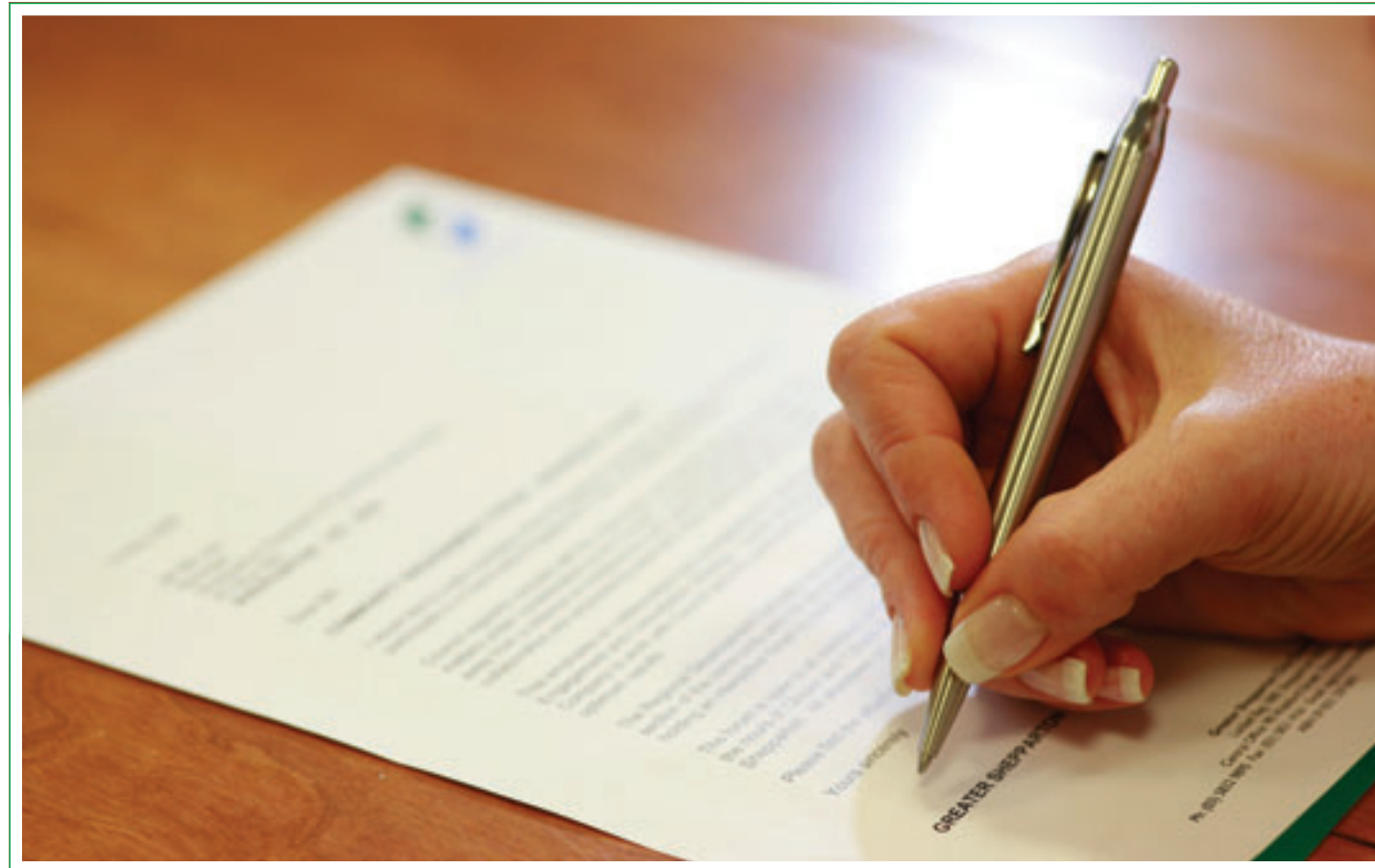
The strategy should be read in conjunction with the full range of Council policies and strategies. The following documents are linked closely to the Community Engagement Strategy.

Document	Relationship to Strategy
Greater Shepparton City Council Community Consultation Policy	Underpins the Community Engagement Strategy
Greater Shepparton 2030 Vision	The Community Consultation Policy and Community Engagement Strategy are key elements in implementing the 2030 Vision
Greater Shepparton City Council Communication Strategy	Links closely with the Strategy by providing overarching principles of communication to be used by Greater Shepparton City Council
Customer First Commitment	Outlines the Council's commitment to exemplary customer service, of which engagement is an integral part
Greater Shepparton City Council Community Engagement Toolkit	Provides tools to implement the Community Engagement Strategy