

State Government Community Engagement Charter - submission

Strategic Alignment - Our Corporation

Public

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City Finance and Governance Committee

Program Contact:

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Approving Officer:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement of the City of Adelaide's submission to the State Government on their new Local Government Community Engagement Charter. The Office of Local Government released the new Community Engagement Charter on 30 May 2025 and is undertaking consultation until 29 June 2025.

Council endorsement is sought in order to finalise the submission (**Attachment A**) and respond to the Office of Local Government by the deadline of 29 June 2025.

The City of Adelaide prepared a submission on the State Government's Local Government Participation and Elections Review in early 2024. As part of the review, the State Government sought feedback on ideas and suggestions on how communities can better engage with their councils throughout a council term and, particularly, at election time. The submission to the review was endorsed by Council on 26 March 2024, following a workshop at a City Finance and Governance Committee on 19 March 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 24 June 2025 for consideration

THAT THE CITY FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL

THAT COUNCIL

1. Endorses the City of Adelaide's submission to the new Local Government Community Engagement Charter included in Attachment A to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Finance and Governance Committee held on 17 June 2025.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer or delegate to make minor, typographical or syntactical updates to the documents contained in Attachment A to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Finance and Governance Committee held 17 June 2025.

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	<p>Strategic Alignment – Our Corporation</p> <p>This aligns with the following under ‘Our Corporation’:</p> <p>Key Action - Use community feedback, data and research to monitor, maintain and adapt our range of quality services to continuously improve the value and efficiency.</p> <p>Indicator of Success – Review the Community Engagement approach by 2025</p>
Policy	Council’s Community Consultation Policy is relevant to the consideration of information within this report (Link 1) and will be impacted by the final Local Government Community Engagement Charter.
Consultation	No consultation is required as a result of this report. However, the report relates to the manner by which consultation activities are currently conducted and how these may be impacted as a result of the new Local Government Community Engagement Charter.
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Not as a result of this report
Opportunities	Council’s submission allows it to advocate for improved public consultation across the local government sector as well as for specific provisions as they apply to the City of Adelaide.
24/25 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Proposed 25/26 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Not as a result of this report
24/25 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

Background

1. Between October 2023 to March 2024, the Office of Local Government sought feedback on ideas and suggestions on how communities can better engage with their councils throughout a council term, particularly at election time. The purpose of the consultation at the time was to inform reforms proposed and the development of the bill to amend local government legislation.
2. As part of the review, the Office of Local Government prepared a discussion paper for feedback. Administration provided a draft submission in response to the discussion paper and presented it to the City Finance and Governance Committee on 20 February 2024 ([Link 2](#)), which resolved that the matter be deferred to a workshop at a future City Finance and Governance Committee meeting. The workshop was held 19 March 2024 ([Link 3](#)) with a Special City Finance and Governance Committee held 21 March 2024 before Council endorsed the submission on 26 March 2024.
3. The City of Adelaide's submission to the Local Government Participation Elections Review can be found here ([Link 4](#)). In addition to the City of Adelaide submission, 92 submissions were received directly by the Office of Local Government, and 406 surveys were completed on the South Australian Government online engagement portal 'YourSAy'.

Consultation on the new Local Government Community Engagement Charter

4. On 30 May 2025, the Office of Local Government released the new Community Engagement Charter (the new Charter) for public consultation ([Link 5](#)). The new Charter sets principles for engagement and also stipulates minimum actions that councils must comply with to meet these standards. These mandatory actions vary according to what councils are consulting on and ensures that they are making the optimal effort to reach all community members who are interested.
5. The new Charter was developed based on feedback received as part of the Local Government Participation and Elections Review. In response to this feedback, the new Charter:
 - 5.1. Includes different categories of consultation
 - 5.2. Sets mandatory requirements for each category
 - 5.3. Gives councils flexibility in how they meet those requirements, and
 - 5.4. Places greater emphasis on consultation for more significant decisions.
6. The new Charter consists of the following sections.
 - 6.1. Principles – outlines principles that members of the community should have reasonable, timely, meaningful and ongoing opportunities to participate in relevant processes; have information that is accessible and in plain language; foster and encourage constructive dialogue, discussion and debate; participation methods are appropriate to the level of significance and likely impact of the proposed initiative; and community members are provided with information on how their views have been taken into account.
 - 6.2. Categories – establishes categories of engagement (significant for example, annual business plan and rating policy, and standard, local, and inform) and the requirements that are appropriate to each category.
 - 6.3. Mandatory requirement definitions – outlines the requirements such as news publication, public meeting, website notice, for each category.
7. The City of Adelaide has prepared its submission based on the sections listed above and will provide this as an attachment to a letter to the Minister for Local Government (**Attachment A**). Below is a summary of the feedback provided in the submission.
 - 7.1. Principles – the City of Adelaide is generally supportive of the principles proposed however further clarification is required on how the new Charter interacts with the *Local Government Act 1999* (SA) and individual councils' current public participation policies.
 - 7.2. Categories – the proposed categories provide a useful framework however further refinements are recommended to provide better structure and clarity.
 - 7.3. Mandatory requirements – the City of Adelaide proposes further revisions to the mandatory requirements and notes that the approaches outlined continues to prioritise 'traditional' engagement methods over more contemporary approaches.

Next steps

8. Pending Council's endorsement, the City of Adelaide's submission on the new Community Engagement Charter will be finalised and submitted to the Office of Local Government by the agreed timeframe of 27 June 2025 so it meets the consultation deadline of Sunday 29 June 2025.
9. Administration is also progressing a broader piece of work on reviewing community engagement at the City of Adelaide, including revising the City of Adelaide's current Community Consultation Policy and Guidelines.
10. This work will build on previous feedback from Council Members on City of Adelaide community engagement practices, align with the final Community Engagement Charter from the State Government and further leverage the success of the 'Our Adelaide' brand. It also delivers on the measure of success, 'review the Community Engagement approach by 2025' under the 'Our Corporation' aspiration in the City of Adelaide Strategic Plan 2024-2028.
11. Council input will be sought once the details of the project have been articulated.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 - [Community Consultation Policy](#)

Link 2 - [Draft submission to the Local Government Participation Elections Review](#)

Link 3 - [Local Government Participation and Participation Election Review Workshop](#)

Link 4 - [Local Government Participation Elections Review Submission](#)

Link 5 - [Office of Local Government new Community Engagement Charter](#)

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – City of Adelaide submission to the new Local Government Community Engagement Charter

- END OF REPORT -