

Community Engagement Policy Consultation

Tuesday, 19 May 2026
City Finance and Governance
Committee

Strategic Alignment - Our Corporation

Program Contact:
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Director Governance & Strategy

Public

Approving Officer:
Anthony Spartalis, Chief
Operating Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to commence community engagement on the updated draft Community Engagement Policy (**Attachment A**).

On 11 December 2025, the Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter (State Charter) and related amendments to the *Local Government Act 1999* (the Act) were published in the South Australian Government Gazette ([Link 1](#)).

Local councils have a period of nine months from the commencement of the amendments to the Act to review and adopt a Community Engagement Policy that aligns with the State Charter. This is required to be completed by 11 September 2026.

On 25 November 2025 Council adopted the City of Adelaide Community Engagement Charter ([Link 2](#)) and Community Engagement Policy ([Link 3](#)).

The City of Adelaide Community Engagement Policy has been amended to align with the requirements of the State Charter.

The amended Community Engagement Policy will supersede the existing Community Engagement Policy adopted by Council on 25 November 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT THE CITY FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL

THAT COUNCIL

1. Approves the updated draft City of Adelaide Community Engagement Policy (CoA Policy), as contained in Attachment A to Item 7.3 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Finance and Governance Committee held on 19 May 2026 for the purpose of community engagement.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to make any necessary changes, together with any editorial amendments and finalisation of the document's formatting and graphic design, to the draft City of Adelaide Community Engagement Policy arising from the meeting of the City Finance and Governance Committee held on 19 May 2026 to be presented to the meeting of Council on 26 May 2026 for final adoption for the purposes of community engagement.
3. Endorses Administration undertaking community engagement on the draft CoA Policy between 3 June 2026 to 2 July 2026.

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	<p>Strategic Alignment – Our Corporation</p> <p>Review the Community Engagement approach by 2025</p>
Policy	The updated City of Adelaide Community Engagement Policy, once approved by Council, will replace Council's current Community Engagement Policy.
Consultation	Consultation on the Community Engagement Policy for the City of Adelaide must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Local Government Act 1999 (SA)</i> .
Resource	Activities outlined in this report will be conducted using existing resources or approved budgets. There are no additional resources required as a result of this report.
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Councils must adopt a new policy by 11 September 2026 in alignment with the <i>Local Government (Transitional Provisions) (Public Consultation) Amendment Regulations 2025 (SA)</i> (Link 4).
Opportunities	Not as a result of this report
25/26 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Proposed 26/27 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
25/26 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. Council at its meeting on 25 February 2025 resolved for:
 - 1.1. An immediate commencement of the review of the Adelaide City Council Community Consultation Policy considering the current policy states it should be reviewed every two years and the last review was due in May 2021.
 - 1.2. The development of a Community Communications and Engagement Policy and a Community Engagement Charter to ensure our community can be informed and participate more fully in decision making about our City.
 - 1.3. This work to be completed in time for implementation in the last quarter of 2025.
2. Consequently, Council approved the draft City of Adelaide Community Engagement Charter (CoA Charter) and draft Community Engagement Policy (CoA Policy) at its 26 August 2025 meeting for the purpose of public consultation from 1 September 2025 to 6 October 2025.
3. At its 26 November 2025 meeting, Council adopted the final City of Adelaide Community Engagement Charter and Community Engagement Policy.

Local Government Community Engagement Charter (State Charter)

4. Between October 2023 to March 2024, the Minister for Local Government (the Minister), through the Office of Local Government (OLG), sought feedback on ideas and suggestions as to how communities can better engage with their councils throughout a council term, particularly at election time.
5. The purpose of the consultation at the time was to inform reforms proposed and the development of the *Statutes Amendment (Local Government Review) Bill 2021* that amended various pieces of legislation governing local government.
6. Administration provided a draft submission in response to the request for feedback from the OLG at the City Finance and Governance Committee on 20 February 2024 with the final version endorsed by Council on 26 March 2024.
7. On 11 December 2025, the Minister released the State Government's Gazetted Community Engagement Charter (the State Charter). The State Charter sets out the principles for engagement and specifies minimum actions that councils must comply with when engaging with its community.

Legislative changes

8. Local councils have a period of nine months from the commencement of the amendments to the Act to review and adopt a Community Engagement Policy that aligns with the State Charter. This is required to be completed by 11 September 2026.
9. The Local Government Association of South Australia has developed the following guide for steps to be undertaken:

Policy development and internal approvals	April – May 2026
Council Meeting to endorse Draft Community Engagement Policy (<i>for consultation purposes</i>)	May/June 2026
Engagement Period (<i>Period to be determined by council</i>)	Mid June – late July 2026
Council Meeting to adopt Community Engagement Policy (<i>post consultation</i>)	August 2026
Date by which Community Engagement Policy must be adopted:	11 September 2026
3 month transition period - both Public Consultation and Community Engagement Policies can be applied: (<i>or earlier if adopted prior to 11 Sept</i>)	11 September – 10 December 2026
Community Engagement Policy must be applied from: (or earlier if adopted prior to 11 Sept)	11 December 2026

10. The State Charter replaces the consultation requirements previously contained within the Act. The State Charter establishes five levels of community engagement based on the significance and impact of a decision, including:
 - Significant – Annual Business Plan and Rating Policy
 - Significant
 - Standard
 - Local
 - Inform
11. Each level has minimum engagement requirements, for example:
 - Minor matters, such as changes to council office hours or some road proposals, may only need information shared with the community.
 - Major matters, like the Annual Business Plan, must include a public notice published in a local news publication and a chance for the community to give feedback.
11. A comparison table between the previous legislative requirements and the new requirements introduced through the State Charter is outlined in [Link 5](#).

Key changes to the Community Engagement Policy

12. The City of Adelaide Community Engagement Policy has been amended to align with the requirements of the State Charter (Attachment A).
The following amendments have been made:
 - 12.1. Introducing the five engagement categories established under the State Charter, including the minimum engagement requirements for each category such as legislated consultation periods and notification requirements.
 - 12.2. Clarifying the relationship between the State Charter, the City of Adelaide Community Engagement Charter and the City of Adelaide Community Engagement Policy.
 - 12.3. Added a 'Delegations' section to provide clarity on roles that have power to make decisions in relation to community engagement under the State Charter and the Act.
13. The draft Community Engagement Policy will be available for community feedback between 3 June and 2 July 2026.

Alignment with the State Community Engagement Charter Principles

14. The State Charter includes principles established under Section 50 of the *Local Government Act 1999* (SA). These principles include:
 - 14.1. members of the community should have reasonable, timely, meaningful and ongoing opportunities to gain access to information about proposed decisions, activities and processes of councils and to participate in relevant processes
 - 14.2. information about issues should be in plain language, readily accessible and in a form that facilitates community participation
 - 14.3. participation methods should seek to foster and encourage constructive dialogue, discussion and debate in relation to proposed decisions, activities and processes of councils
 - 14.4. participation methods should be appropriate having regard to the significance and likely impact of proposed decisions, activities and processes
 - 14.5. insofar as is reasonable, communities should be provided with information about how community views have been taken into account and reasons for decisions or actions of councils.
15. The City of Adelaide Community Engagement Charter aligns with the State Charter's principles through its guiding principles of:
 - Community Centric
 - Accessible and Inclusive
 - Transparency and Trust

17. As the existing City of Adelaide Community Engagement Charter guiding principles align with the principles of the State Charter, no amendments are proposed to the Charter.

Next Steps

18. A briefing will be held with the City Finance and Governance Committee on 16 June 2026 on the Community Engagement Toolkit.
19. A report on the feedback from community engagement on the draft Community Engagement Policy will be presented to the City Finance and Governance Committee on 18 August 2026.
20. Once adopted by Council, the new Community Engagement Policy will replace the existing Community Engagement Policy adopted on 25 November 2025.

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 - Minister for Local Government's Community Engagement Charter

Link 2 - City of Adelaide Community Engagement Charter

Link 3 - City of Adelaide Community Engagement Policy

Link 4 - Local Government (Transitional Provisions) (Public Consultation) Amendment Regulations 2025

Link 5 - Community Engagement - Comparison Table

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – draft Community Engagement Policy

- END OF REPORT -