SC6.9 Consultation planning scheme policy

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1 Introduction

1.1 Relationship to planning scheme

This planning scheme policy:

1. provides information the Council may request for a development application;
2. provides guidance or advice about satisfying an assessment benchmark which identifies this planning scheme as providing that guidance or advice.

1.2 Purpose

1. This planning scheme policy provides information guidance and advice for preparing and conducting community consultation as part of a development application.
2. Consultation and negotiation, especially with immediate neighbours, are recommended in the formulation of any development. This will minimise conflicts, including appeals to court.
3. The advantages of consulting with the community are:
4. it helps to identify community concerns and values;
5. it informs the community of possible changes and actions they can take;
6. a well-informed and involved community is less likely to object to a development if their views have been heard and responded to;
7. local knowledge can help improve a development proposal; for example, by making it more marketable, providing information on local history, identifying available local resources and reflecting community needs;
8. it helps to establish credibility and to overcome public mistrust and cynicism in the community;
9. it can provide information to help inform the assessment of community impacts;
10. it helps balance and improve decision making, delivering better outcomes for all parties;
11. positive relationships in the community can benefit the applicant and the Council.

2 When community consultation will be required

1. Community consultation will be requested as an integral part of impact assessable development where the proposal in question is:
2. of a significant nature such as requiring the preparation of a structure plan or precinct plan; or
3. where not specifically envisaged by the planning scheme, including proposals that are consistent with the policy direction in the Strategic framework but pre-emptive of the current scheme provisions.
4. Community consultation will be requested in providing additional information in support of a development application where this additional information takes the form of an impact assessment report or management plan.

3 Consultation principles

Consultation programs are to be carefully planned and comply with the following principles:

1. People affected by a development proposal or project have the right to be informed and to have the opportunity to participate. This may include tenants affected by the development.
2. The consultation program is to be meaningful, equitable in terms of physical access and access to information, inclusive of all stakeholders, particularly those who are hard to reach and adequately resourced.
3. Consultation is to commence early and form part of the development formulation and assessment process rather than being a one-off event, so that community input can be considered and incorporated where appropriate.
4. The history of previous consultation programs is to be taken into account.
5. The consultation program is to clearly articulate the scope of influence stakeholders can expect to have, showing which aspects of a proposal can and can’t be influenced.
6. The purpose, expected outcomes and decision-making process are to be clearly communicated to all parties participating.
7. A diversity of consultation techniques and opportunities are to be implemented to maximise opportunity for participation.
8. Consultation objectives are to be matched with appropriate techniques as outlined in Table 1.
9. The consultation is to be constantly evaluated against its objectives and modified accordingly to meet changing needs.
10. Participants are to be progressively informed on how the issues raised through the consultation have been addressed in the development proposal/outcome.
11. Timely feedback is to be given at the conclusion of the consultation reflecting how input has been considered and what final outcomes have been determined.

4 Consultation program

4.1 Process and results

The process and results of the consultation program are to be documented and form part of assessment reports. It is recommended the following steps be followed in planning and undertaking the consultation program.

4.2 Clarify the purpose

The consultation program is to identify what the consultation is intended to achieve and communicate this clearly to everyone involved. In planning the consultation program and determining the level of consultation needed, the following criteria are to be considered:

1. the significance of the impacts anticipated, e.g. economic, social and environmental;
2. the extent of controversy anticipated;
3. the nature of the community affected;
4. the nature and extent of the proposal;
5. who is responsible for decision making and how consultation will inform this;
6. the scope for community influence on the decision making;
7. the time frame and resources available;
8. the type of information that needs to be made available and/or communicated;
9. the reasons for the scope and type of consultation to be undertaken;
10. the stages of the community impact assessment process at which consultation is to be undertaken;
11. the techniques to be used;
12. how the program can be adapted to address issues and needs as they arise;
13. how feedback will be given to all those with an interest;
14. how the information gained will be documented.

4.3 Identify who to involve

1. The consultation program is to identify the communities who may need to be consulted. These may include:
2. geographically based communities, such as neighbours, residents in the street and the wider neighbourhood;
3. interest groups, such as workers, residents (both owner occupiers and tenants), visitors, housing agencies, people with disabilities, cyclists, young people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Aboriginal communities and service providers;
4. new communities, such as greenfield development, urban infill sites and new industrial estates. It can be difficult to involve people who are not yet residents. However, an effective alternative is to consult people who now occupy recently developed areas to learn from them what impacts need to be managed.
5. Affected communities often include people from a geographic area and non-geographic communities of interest. The following provides a guide to determining the affected community:
6. local street impact – development that impacts on the adjoining premises and neighbouring premises in the block in which the site is located, including premises opposite the site. Examples include housing for older people, and people with disabilities, and refugees.
7. immediate neighbourhood impact – development that has a local street impact and developments which would have impact for a larger part of the street in which the site is located. Examples include a childcare centre, community care centre and youth centres.
8. wider impact – development in the previous two categories and development which may have an impact beyond the immediate or local community. This development may be of interest to city-wide interest groups such as the National Trust for development applications involving a heritage building. Examples of these developments may include:
9. redevelopment or demolition of a boarding house;
10. funeral parlours;
11. expansion or development of educational establishments or health care service;
12. new residential suburbs or housing developments that significantly change population size;
13. large cultural or religious centres (places of worship);
14. licensed premises, such as bars, hotels and nightclub entertainment facility;
15. retirement facility or residential care facility;
16. redevelopment of ex-industrial sites for other uses.
17. Popular interest groups – Developments which may have an impact on communities of interest such as service providers, youth, cultural groups and cyclists. Examples include:
18. housing for older people and people with disabilities;
19. alterations to major centres;
20. new residential suburbs or housing developments that significantly change population size;
21. large cultural or religious centres (places of worship).

4.4 Establish a time frame

The consultation program is to ensure that consultation events occur at appropriate times to enable the information gathered to inform the critical decision-making stages. Starting consultation early allows higher levels of participation and encourages more trust in the authenticity of the consultation process.

4.5 Decide the resources required

The consultation program is to ensure that there are sufficient resources available to support the consultation program being designed.

4.6 Plan the process

1. The consultation program is to be planned to meet the requirements defined in the preceding steps and keep it flexible to enable it to be adjusted to changing needs as the process unfolds.
2. Table 1 describes the types of techniques that can be used to achieve different objectives. It also indicates the affected community type that each of these techniques is suited to.

4.7 Implement and monitor

The consultation program is to be implemented and continually evaluated as to how well it is achieving its stated objectives. Events, techniques, timing or resources are to be adjusted as required.

4.8 Present the results

The consultation program is to clearly show how the results of the consultation have informed the final decision and this is to be communicated to all the parties involved. These results could be presented in the format in Table 2 and is to clearly indicate:

1. the stakeholders consulted;
2. the issues raised;
3. the consultation methods used;
4. the recommendations from stakeholders.

Table 1—Techniques to achieve objectives based on the community affected

| Technique | Objective | Affected community type | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Local street impact | Immediate neighbour-hood impact | Wider impact | Particular interest group |
| Letters | Informing the community | x | x |  | x |
| Brochures and information updates/leaflets | x | x | x | x |
| Media releases |  |  | x |  |
| Signage on land | x | x | x |  |
| Display |  |  | x |  |
| Questionnaires | Informing the community and obtaining specific feedback |  |  | x | x |
| Discussions with adjoining property owners | Information exchange, involving the community and obtaining some feedback | x | x | x |  |
| Street meetings | Information exchange, involving the community and obtaining feedback | x | x |  |  |
| Community information sessions |  |  |  | x |
| Personal interviews | x |  |  | x |
| Workshops | Information exchange, educating, collaborative problem solving, prioritising options, involving the affected community and obtaining specific and broad feedback |  |  |  | x |
| Community advisory committee | Information exchange, collaborative problem solving, prioritising options, educating and involving the community, building support and obtaining feedback on a wide range of issues |  |  |  | x |

Table 2—Results of consultation

| Stakeholders consulted | Issues raised | Method used | Recommendation |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Identify the types of stakeholders consulted, include information about geographic catchment area and how many businesses, residents, community representatives etc. were consulted. | Describe the issues, objections, suggestions and options raised by stakeholders | Describe the method/s used to consult with the stakeholders participating | Identify the amendments, conditions, compensation and other mitigation strategies recommended |

5 Reference material

Useful references which may assist in developing and implementing a consultation program include:

1. The community participation handbook: Resources for public involvement in the planning process, edited by Wendy Sarkissian and Donald Perlgut, 1986. Available from the Institute for Science and Technology Policy, Murdoch University;
2. Community participation in practice: A practical guide, by Wendy Sarkissian, A. Cook & K. Walsh, 1997. Available from Institute from Science and Technology Policy, Murdoch University.