



Community Engagement Strategy 2016-2020

Part B
Key actions for the next four years to achieve the strategic directions on enhancing community engagement practice



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Introduction

The Community Engagement Strategy 2016-2020 as a whole comprises three separate documents:

1. Golden Plains Shire Council Community Engagement Strategy 2016-2020 (Part A)
2. Action Plan for the Golden Plains Shire Community Engagement Strategy 2016-2020 (Part B - this document)
3. Golden Plains Shire Council Community Engagement Practice - Background Research Summary Report 2016

The three documents provide a simple approach to understanding the Strategy, how it is going to be implemented and what has contributed to its development. Different groups will be interested in different parts of the overall Strategy.

This document is focused on the specific actions that are recommended for the implementation of the Strategy for the next four financial years of Council. Included in the Action Plan are specific budget requirements so that these can be allocated in the coming financial years, providing confidence that the actions will be prioritised and if funded, will be implemented, coordinated and reported on annually. The actions identified as 'contingent' require additional funding resources to be made available in order to be completed.

Further information about the relevant research and the project activities that contributed to the development of the Strategy can be found in:

- Golden Plains Shire Council – Community Engagement Practice – Background Research Summary Report, March 2016

The Strategic Directions – In Summary

The aim of these Strategic Directions is to build on current effective practice and create a more comprehensive and consistent approach to engagement processes that responds to community interest and achieves the Council's corporate objectives. In summary they include:

1. Accessible and transparent engagement practice
2. Improved internal communication and engagement
3. Aligned Policy and Practice Framework
4. Enhanced understanding, capacity and skill in community engagement practice
5. A more coordinated approach to community engagement practice

Strategic Direction 1:

Accessible and transparent engagement practice

We will:

- Develop and promote a range of options for communities to participate in engagement processes
- Create more opportunities for active participation in engagement processes
- Reduce the barriers for wider community involvement
- Actively communicate the decision making process, including decision making criteria when engagement is planned
- More consistently communicate how the community input has contributed to Council's decision making processes.

What's important to the community?

- More openness of Council's decision making processes
- Greater choice of method options to participate in engagement opportunities
- More than sharing information and responding to surveys
- More active involvement in engagement activities – sharing ideas with other community members
- Showing the community how their input has been considered in the outcomes.



Item No.	Actions	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe and Budget			
			2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
1.1	Develop and implement a model for the establishment of a 'community reference panel' as a regular consultation forum to parallel other engagement activities. (Refer to Explanatory Notes on page 14 for more detailed information.)	CE Officer	Staff time \$2,000	Staff time \$2,000 - contingent	Staff time \$2,000 - contingent	Staff time \$2,000 - contingent
1.2	Develop and promote a minimum standard for CE processes for different types of work projects ¹	CE Officer	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time
1.3	Develop a post-decision feedback template to include in CE Toolkit.	CE Officer	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time
1.4	Investigate and develop an annual program of Councillor community briefings in at least four locations throughout the Shire	SMT CE Officer	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time
1.5	Investigate and develop an approach that includes more active engagement activities in the community, including attendances at Markets, Community Events, use of mobile library and community group meetings or through the development of Council listening posts	CE Officer	Staff time \$3,000	Staff time \$7,000 - contingent	Staff time \$7,000 - contingent	Staff time \$7,000 - contingent
1.6	Review relevant policies and local laws to enable improved access for the community to raise matters of interest with Council ²	Corporate Services Director; SMT	2017	Staff time		
1.7	Review and expand Council's 'Have Your Say' online engagement approach.	CE Officer; SCMO		Staff time \$5,000 - contingent	Staff time \$5,000 - contingent	Staff time \$5,000 - contingent
1.8	Promote and build capacity of the community to access Council's new website and 'Have your Say' online engagement page	CE Officer SCMO	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time

¹Likely to be included in CE Practice Framework

²Refer Processes of Municipal Government Local Law, Council Meetings: Business papers Policy and Deputations and Petitions Policy in particular.



Strategic Direction 2:

Improved internal communication and engagement

We will:

- Develop mechanisms for the regular sharing of key projects impacting on other areas of Council
- Improve shared understanding of key functional areas to facilitate more effective internal engagement

What's important to the community?

- A coordinated approach to communications and engagement
- Be more proactive than reactive
- Embedded in Council's culture
- Centralised messages

Item No.	Actions	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe and Budget			
			2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
2.1	Introduce and monitor a system of reporting on Council wide CE activities to FMT ¹ and Council	CE Officer	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time
2.2	Convene a once off Forum for internal stakeholders to explore and improve internal communication and shared project management responsibilities that are relevant to engagement activities. See further explanatory notes at end of document.	Executive Unit Manager; CE Officer		Staff time		
2.3	Identify occasions when Councillors need to be effectively engaged early in a project in order to understand scope and expectations of the decision making processes	CE Officer SMT	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time

¹ This action is to create a habit of sharing information of CE activities across Council departments. A standard template can be developed and used by CE Officer.



Strategic Direction 3:

Aligned policy and practice framework

We will:

- Review and develop a contemporary community engagement policy and practice framework that aligns with Council's vision, mission and strategic objectives
- Ensure that the revised policy and practice framework is known and understood by all staff and Councillors
- Ensure that the community engagement policy and practice framework is actively used in the planning of engagement processes

What's important to the community?

- More transparency about Council's decision making processes
- More consistency in practice across Council
- The use of a standard template that is easy to implement
- Change to Council policies and procedures to be more inclusive of communities

Item No.	Actions	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe and Budget			
			2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
3.1	Review and consolidate the current Community Engagement Principles within the CE Framework	FMT CE Officer	Staff time			
3.2	Review Staff and Community Engagement Policy	CE Officer	Staff time			
3.3	Revise the Community Engagement Framework to support staff to plan, deliver and evaluate engagement processes from customer service interactions with the community to large-scale engagement activities between Council and the community	CE Officer	Staff time \$10,000			
3.4	Develop CE Toolkit with relevant templates (hard copy and digital format)	CE Officer	Staff time \$3,000			
3.5	Coordinate a marketing campaign to raise awareness of the new community engagement policy and practice frameworks (including Toolkit) both internally and externally	CE Officer SCMO		Staff time		





Strategic Direction 4:

Enhanced understanding, capacity and skill in community engagement practice

We will:

- Strengthen the shared understanding of why, and how Council will engage, including community expectations and Council's capacity to deliver
- Broaden the skills in community engagement practice across Council's functional areas
- Create opportunities for the community to understand Council's practice framework for community engagement and to develop skills in engagement practice.

What's important to the community?

- More effective community engagement practice
- An understanding of what community engagement processes will be used
- Knowing that the engagement is genuine
- Knowing that the input from consultations will be considered and not ignored

Item No.	Actions	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe and Budget			
			2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
4.1	Develop a CE training component to Council's Induction Program to use for existing staff and any new staff joining the Council	CE Officer		Staff time		
4.2	Review the Leadership Development Plan to integrate the identified skill development needs such as facilitation skills, managing conflict and preparing communication tools into the Plan. Resource funds are required to implement outcomes of the review.	CE Officer OD Manager		Staff time \$10,000 - contingent	Staff time \$10,000 - contingent	Staff time \$10,000 - contingent
4.3	Implement targeted CE training focusing on the CE Policy and Framework	CE Officer		\$10,000 - contingent	\$10,000 - contingent	\$10,000 - contingent
4.4	Create a 'community of practice' ¹ within Council made up of interested staff from across Council, and those that have completed CE training (refer IAP2 Certificate in Engagement)	CE Officer			Staff time	Staff time
4.5	Develop an annual showcase of diverse CE projects for internal and external presentations	CE Officer SCMO FMT		Staff time	Staff time	Staff time
4.6	Review and develop practice standards (including terms of reference) for use of community committees and advisory groups.	CE Officer		Staff time \$5000 - contingent		
4.7	Develop a CE awareness training/ induction program for community coordinators, Sect 86 committees and relevant volunteers	CE Officer		Staff time \$5,000 - contingent	Staff time \$5,000 - contingent	Staff time \$5,000 - contingent

¹'Community of practice' participants or champions can become champions for advancing the practice and guiding others in their work areas on the policies and appropriate tools and templates that are available.



Strategic Direction 5:

A more coordinated approach to engagement practice

We will:

- Align Council's human resources in community engagement with Communications and Marketing Unit
- Create and promote a space on Council's intranet for tools, templates and resources to support community engagement activities
- Create systems that allow for the sharing of information on community engagement activities

What's important to the community?

- More proactive approach to engagement rather than reactive
- More advanced notice of engagement opportunities
- A Community Hub portal that the community can access and see the progress on engagement processes

Item No.	Actions	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe and Budget			
			2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
5.1	Development of a dedicated page on Council's intranet site for the storage of relevant information and tools/templates that guide CE practice	CE Officer SCMO	Staff time			
5.2	Establishment of a system and relevant processes to support an annual calendar of CE activities	CE Officer SCMO	Staff time			
5.3	Review relevant Position Descriptions and incorporate CE knowledge and skill standard as appropriate	OD Manager CE Officer	Staff time			
5.4	Use an Action Learning approach to the community engagement planning for targeted Council projects in 2016/17 (see Action 5.5)	FMT CE Officer	Staff time			
5.5	Prepare a proposal for Council to highlight more active engagement opportunities and implement active participation around specific projects – including but not limited to the Council Budget, Council Plan and the Municipal Public Health Plan	SMT CE Officer	Staff time \$30,000	Staff time \$15,000 - contingent	Staff time \$15,000 - contingent	Staff time \$15,000 - contingent
5.6	Develop and maintain a system whereby CE Officer is notified of CE activities in order to monitor and report on CE activities	CE Officer	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time
5.7	Report on the performance of community engagement activities undertaken by Council in Council's Annual Report (see also Action 2.1)	Executive Unit Manager CE Officer	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time
5.8	Review implementation of the Action Plan items on an annual basis and report to FMT, Council and community	CE Officer	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time
5.9	Review the positioning of the CE Officer role within the organisation	SMT			Staff time	

Explanatory Notes

1. Action 1.1 suggests the development and implementation of a Community Reference Panel Register as a regular consultation forum to parallel other engagement activities. The intent of the register is that it would be made up of a large group of diverse community members, representative of the Shire demographics, various sectors, and geographical areas. Members from the register would be called upon to participate in engagement processes as determined by the scale, location and type of project.

The Panel Register could include existing groups so as not to create duplication but importantly would be extended to fill gaps in current representation. The establishment of the Panel Register would save the need to establish advisory groups each time a significant project was being initiated.

There would need to be clear terms of reference, appropriate induction program and regular maintenance of the Panel Register.

2. Action 2.2 suggests that a once off Forum be held involving relevant internal stakeholders to explore and improve internal communication and shared project management responsibilities. The intent of the Forum is to:

1. Explore the effectiveness of internal communications considering both vertical and horizontal lines of communication in the organisation as it relates to shared projects
2. Identify some of the factors that may be contributing to poor communication
3. Identify processes to more effectively identify and engage internal stakeholders when planning community and stakeholder engagement
4. Identify appropriate strategies to improve the transition of projects between different departments in the organisation and therefore maintain effective communication for external stakeholders.



Glossary

Term	Explanation
Community	Individuals or organisations who may have an interest in the outcome of a project and/or who may have some influence over the outcome of the project.
Community Engagement	Community engagement is the activities that the Golden Plains Shire use to gather and share knowledge, interact with relevant stakeholders and the community in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include community knowledge in the design and implementation of Golden Plains Shire strategies, programs and initiatives• Seek feedback from the community on proposed services, strategies, programs and initiatives• Involve the community in the implementation and monitoring of identified programs and projects• Develop enduring partnerships with key stakeholders that enable the sharing of ideas, resources and responsibilities for the Golden Plain Shire's strategies, programs and initiatives• Better inform the community about Golden Plains Shire Council's services, strategies, programs and initiatives.
Community Engagement Plan	A well thought out, comprehensive, written down plan prepared before a project commences that sets out how Council will engage the community in relation to that project.
Council	The Golden Plains Shire including staff, Councillors and the policies and guidelines that deliver the services, events, projects and initiatives.
Project	A particular piece of work being undertaken or facilitated by Council. This includes constructing a facility, staging an event, planning or delivering a program or service, or undertaking a study or strategic planning.

Acronyms

Acronym	Explanation
CE	Community Engagement
FMT	Full Management Team
OD	Organisational Development
SCMO	Senior Communications and Marketing Officer
SMT	Senior Management Team





Phone: (03) 5220 7111
Local call: 1300 36 30 36
Fax: (03) 5220 7100

Bannockburn Office
2 Pope Street
Bannockburn Victoria 3331

Linton Office
68 Sussex Street
Linton Victoria 3360

Postal Address
Golden Plains Shire Council
PO Box 111
Bannockburn Victoria 3331