

Changes to Community Engagement

**Local Government Act 2020**

The Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) states that each council must adopt and maintain a Community Engagement Policy (the Policy). This policy must be in place by 1 March 2021.

The requirements under the Act include:

**Section 55:** **Community Engagement Policy**

(1) A Council must adopt and maintain a community engagement policy.

(2) A community engagement policy must—

 (a) be developed in consultation with the municipal community; and

 (b) give effect to the community engagement principles; and

 (c) be capable of being applied to the making of the Council's local laws; and

(d) be capable of being applied in relation to the Council's budget and policy development; and

(e) describe the type and form of community engagement proposed, having regard to the significance and complexity of the matter and the level of resourcing required; and

(f) specify a process for informing the municipal community of the outcome of the community engagement; and

(g) include deliberative engagement practices which must include and address any matters prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this paragraph and be capable of being applied to the development of the Community Vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan and

 (h) include any other matters prescribed by the regulations.

(3) A Council must adopt the first community engagement policy under this section on or before 1 March 2021.

**Section 56: The community engagement principles**

 (a) a community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope;

(b) participants in community engagement must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation;

(c) participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement;

(d) participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement;

(e) participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making.

Councils will also be required, at a minimum, to apply their Community Engagement Policy in the development of the following:

* Planning and financial management
* Community vision
* Council plan
* Financial plan
* Revenue and rating planning
* Asset plan