

Comments to State Planning Commission on Implementation 'Considerations' & 'Ideas for Measures' in Discussion Draft Community Engagement Charter



Note: these comments were adopted by Council on 26 September 2017

Implementation 'Considerations'

In the Discussion Draft Community Engagement Charter, the Commission seeks feedback on the following 'considerations' to be taken into account in making decisions about the type of engagement required to suit the need of the project (decision making framework) and subsequent performance (evaluation measures).

The below table sets out the Draft Charter's 'considerations' and Council's 'comments'

Implementation 'Considerations'	Comments for the Commission
<p><u>Reach</u>: establish how many people are impacted and the level of participation that is expected.</p>	<p>Reasonable consideration as it asks the proponent of the engagement to consider 'who' is impacted.</p> <p>Suggest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the consideration to explicitly include 'who is impacted' • Expand the consideration to include what 'variety of different interests', as invariably, there are a wide variety of people with different interests in a particular matter • 'How many' be reviewed as it suggests it's a numbers question whereas what is more important is accurately identifying who and the range of interests. • Review the word 'impacted'. Use of 'impacted' may limit the reach as some people seek to be 'informed' whereas others may be directly 'impacted' by the proposal.
<p><u>Impact</u>: determine how much influence the community will have in the final decision with reference to the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation (Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Empower).</p>	<p>Reasonable consideration as it asks the proponent of engagement to consider the extent of change to a proposal that they are open to receiving from engagement.</p> <p>Suggest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review use of the term 'Inform'. The intent of the Charter is that engagement is genuine which means the proponent needs to be open to some degree of change to their proposal. Thus, an engagement being limited to 'informing' is at odds with the Charter's intent for genuine engagement • 'Community' be defined for the purposes of the Charter. The Discussion Draft does not define or reference what is meant by this term. Discussions at 'Planning Together' affirmed 'community' as meaning all South Australians whereas as the 'consideration' is drafted, it appears more limited to, for instance, residents. For information, the <i>City of Adelaide Act 1998</i> has the following definition 'City of Adelaide community includes all people who live, work, study or conduct business in, or who visit, use or enjoy the services, facilities and public places of, the City of Adelaide'. • In defining 'community', also consider the term 'stakeholder' which acknowledges that certain people or groups have a 'stake' in a matter due to their particular interest. • In lieu of term 'community', one option is to use the term 'participants in engagement' as this is wide.

<p><u>Sociability</u>: to what degree does the engagement need to involve ongoing interaction with each other and community capacity building.</p>	<p>Reasonable consideration as it asks the proponent of engagement to consider moving from 'consultation' on a proposal to 'involving' and 'collaborating' with people with different interests, thereby building community capacity, cohesion and less division.</p> <p>A lot of planning projects have an outcome where, for instance, the land has been rezoned. Engagement associated with this type of planning project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is often characterised by submissions and responses by people with different interests, rather than fostering dialogue and consensus building to the extent possible between different interests. • Comes to an end where different interests are left with at best limited relationships and no consideration around fostering ongoing healthy relationships. <p>Any planning proposal will impact an established community, with its residents, businesses, groups of various forms and government agencies. Any engagement needs to start at the 'starting point' of where the existing community is at and also acknowledge the outcome from any previously undertaken engagement.</p>
<p><u>Tone</u>: what is the anticipated level of concern within the community, and likely level of emotion that could be elicited by the proposal?</p>	<p>Reasonable consideration as it asks the proponent of engagement to consider the degree of angst or not likely to arise from the proposal. This assists preparing a process that acknowledges sensitivity.</p>
<p><u>Sustainability</u>: to what degree do we want to build capacity in community and have them engage in similar processes in the future?</p>	<p>Unsure about this consideration as its intent is unclear and it appears to overlap 'sociability'.</p> <p>We suggest this consideration be reviewed to be explicit about its outcome and with regard to the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it seeking to avoid people being engaged with experiencing consultation fatigue? • Is it seeking that people being engaged 'better understand' the planning system so they are better prepared to participate in the future? • Is it seeking each stage of a multi-stage engagement being considered in a way to avoid consultation burnout?
<p><u>Depth</u>: determine how much information and knowledge needs to be gained for the community to genuinely engage in the process and what depth of conversation is required?</p>	<p>Reasonable consideration as availability of professional investigations underpinning a proposal and communicated in easy to understand ways is essential. Question 'gained' and suggest replace with 'understood' as the test is around whether 'who' is being engaged with 'understands' what is proposed in order to be able to then be 'involved'.</p>

Ideas for Measures

The Commission has prepared some draft ideas of possible measures (see of this document) which could be used to evaluate the success of an engagement process. The Commission seeks feedback on these draft measures.

The Charter recognises that engagement is undertaken to achieve better outcomes, decisions, projects and policies. Therefore, a key objective of the Charter is to ensure that there are measures in place which can be used to gauge how successful an engagement process has been.

Whilst the list prepared by the Commission is extensive, Council has the following **comments**:

1. There needs to be clarity between measures of the Charter itself as distinct to measures of engagement completed. The table appears to confuse the two.
2. Numerous proposed measures are about 'satisfaction' with the engagement rather than extent or level of participation. For example, 1000 land owners/occupiers may be written to about a proposed policy amendment and 100 may respond. For the 100, their engagement experiences can be measured in a variety of ways but they remain 10% of invited owners/occupiers. A measure is suggested to explore how engagement processes could be improved to increase the number of people who actually participate in engagement after being contacted.

Attachment 1: Discussion Draft Charter Ideas of Possible Measures

What needs to be measured	Possible measures
<p>Reach</p> <p>Did everyone who is impacted and/or interested have an opportunity to participate?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The number of people engaged ■ % of people engaged who reported: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the size and method of engagement was appropriate for the issue they were engaged on – they were supported to actively contribute to the engagement ■ the engagement was accessible and jargon-free
<p>Impact</p> <p>Was community input considered in the final decision?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ % of people engaged who reported that their views were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – heard and genuinely responded to – genuinely considered in the final decision ■ % of people engaged who were satisfied with the planning outcome ■ % of people who understood how and why the final decision was made
<p>Sociability</p> <p>How did people interact with each other, and did the process build community capacity?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The number of opportunities that brought people together ■ % of people engaged who reported the engagement process had a positive impact on community cohesion ■ % of people who reported they heard alternative views and opinions that were different than their own
<p>Tone</p> <p>What was the level of emotionality and controversy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The number of self-formed community groups in relation to the project ■ % of people engaged who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – reported that their views were heard and genuinely responded to – reported the engagement process had a positive impact on community cohesion
<p>Sustainability</p> <p>Would people participate in similar process in the future?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The number of engagement plans ■ % of people engaged who understood why they were being engaged ■ % of plans consistent with Charter Principles ■ % of engagement processes that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – measured performance using one or more performance measures from this Charter – demonstrated improved performance through implementing Charter Principles ■ % of people designing the engagement demonstrating they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – learnt from the experience – made process improvements
<p>Depth</p> <p>Is there an opportunity for different knowledge and perspectives to be shared? And did people have access to the information they needed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ % of people engaged who reported diverse views were included ■ % of people who reported they had the right information available to them to contribute to the process.