

Community Engagement Charter and Community Engagement Policy – Consultation

Strategic Alignment - Our Corporation

Public

Tuesday, 19 August 2025

**City Finance and Governance
Committee**

Program Contact:

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Approving Officer:

Anthony Spartalis, Chief
Operating Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks Council feedback on the principles and structure of the proposed City of Adelaide Community Engagement Charter (CoA Charter) and an updated City of Adelaide Community Engagement Policy (CoA Policy). The feedback received will be incorporated in the CoA Charter and CoA Policy to be endorsed by Council for public consultation at its meeting on 26 August 2025.

'Reviewing the Community Engagement approach by 2025' is a key success indicator under the 'Our Corporation' aspiration in the City of Adelaide (CoA) Strategic Plan 2024-2028.

In February 2025, Council resolved that Administration commence an immediate review of Council's Consultation Policy, and for a Community Communications and Engagement Policy and a Community Engagement Charter to be developed in time for implementation in the last quarter of 2025.

The development of the draft CoA Charter and CoA Policy is in response to Council's request. These consolidate previous work undertaken by Administration to improve CoA community engagement and is based on feedback received from Council Members at a workshop in April 2023. Administration has subsequently progressed several successful initiatives to implement Council's feedback and improve the way we engage and consult with our community, including:

- Launch of the new online community engagement platform and brand 'Our Adelaide'.
- Conducting more in-person community engagement.
- The development of an Integrated Community Engagement Framework (the Framework), which was endorsed by Council at its 26 September 2023 meeting. The integrated approach ensures that the community is aware of significant decisions of council in advance and provides input into multiple decisions at one time making it easier to participate in decision making (e.g. City Plan, Strategic Plan 2024-2028 and Integrated Transport Strategy).

Furthermore, the Minister for Local Government released the Local Government Community Engagement Charter (State Charter) for public consultation from 30 May 2025 to 29 June 2025. CoA's response to the Minister was approved by Council at its meeting on 24 June 2025.

The State Charter provides additional guidance for the City of Adelaide regarding its engagement with the community, and this has been considered when developing the CoA Charter and CoA Policy.

When the State Charter is finalised, Administration may need to undertake further work to ensure the CoA Charter and CoA Policy are aligned with the final version.

Council is committed to actively seeking and valuing community feedback to ensure that decisions are made with a thorough understanding of community perspectives.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 26 August 2025 for consideration:

THAT THE CITY FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL

THAT COUNCIL

1. Notes the proposed draft City of Adelaide Community Engagement Charter (CoA Charter), as contained in Attachment A and an updated draft City of Adelaide Community Engagement Policy (CoA Policy), as contained in Attachment B, to Item 7.1 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Finance and Governance Committee held on 19 August 2025 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 CoA Charter and draft CoA Policy arising from the meeting of the City Finance and Governance Committee held on 19 August 2025 to be presented to the meeting of Council on the 26 August for final adoption for the purposes of community engagement.
3. Endorses Administration undertaking community engagement on the draft CoA Charter and draft CoA Policy for a period of four weeks commencing on 1 September 2025.

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Our Corporation Review the Community Engagement approach by 2025
Policy	The updated City of Adelaide Community Engagement Policy, once approved by Council, will replace Council's current Community Consultation Policy (Link 1).
Consultation	Consultation on a Community Engagement Policy for the City of Adelaide must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1999 (SA) .
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	While every effort has been made by Administration to align the new CoA Charter and revised CoA Policy with the current legislative requirements, there is a risk changes may be required should the final State Charter be significantly different from the version that was provided for public consultation in May/June 2025.
Opportunities	Not as a result of this report
25/26 Budget Allocation	Public consultation costs are within existing operational budget
Proposed 25/26 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. At the 18 April 2023 meeting of the City Finance and Governance Committee, a workshop was held seeking feedback from Council Members on desired changes in Council's approach to engaging and consulting with our community.
2. The following summarises the feedback received:
 - 2.1. There needs to be a breakdown of our city demographics to better understand the needs of our community.
 - 2.2. There was a genuine lack of trust in the previous online engagement platform and brand, Your Say.
 - 2.3. Our Council and community would like more face-to-face interactions and we need to ensure we use different ways to engage.
 - 2.4. We need to be more considered in packaging engagement information from our community.
 - 2.5. We need to utilise existing relationships, groups and precincts and provide tools to support them to be involved in decisions.
 - 2.6. It's important we work with other organisations and stakeholders and ensure they are aware of council's projects and activities.
 - 2.7. Our engagement needs to be inclusive and accessible to all community members.
 - 2.8. Community engagement is vital to the success of the City of Adelaide (CoA).
 - 2.9. Our engagement needs to be innovative and inclusive and not just about 'surveys'.
 - 2.10. We need to ensure we hear the voice of our community and learn from their knowledge.
3. Since the April 2023 workshop, Administration has progressed several initiatives to implement Council's feedback and improve the way we engage and consult with our community. These include:
 - 3.1. Conducting more in-person community engagement by attending existing events to reach different community groups and where possible presenting multiple projects for public consultation (e.g. Fringe Vibes on Hutt, Meander Markets on Melbourne Street).
 - 3.2. Launch of the new online community engagement platform and brand 'Our Adelaide' to better align with the CoA Strategic Plan 2024-2028 vision of 'Our Adelaide. Bold. Aspirational. Innovative'. This has facilitated the use of innovative and interactive tools to better support meaningful engagement and has resulted in over 500 new registrations to the platform since its launch and record participation rates such as for the following projects - Hutt Street Revitalisation (1000+ contributions), Draft Cultural Policy (600+ contributions) and Integrated Transport Strategy – Stage 1 (400+ contributions).
 - 3.3. Extensive promotion and marketing of the 'Our Adelaide' brand and its bold new design across the city to capture new audiences and better engage with the city community so that their voices can be heard in Council's decision-making.
 - 3.4. The development of an Integrated Community Engagement Framework (the Framework), which was endorsed by Council at its 26 September 2023 meeting (Link 1). The purpose of the integrated approach was to ensure that the community was aware of significant decisions of council in advance and provide input into multiple decisions at one time to make it easier to participate in decision making.
 - 3.5. Quarterly updates on the integrated approach were presented to Council up to 23 April 2024 (Link 2) when Council endorsed the provision of future community engagement updates via quarterly E-news.
4. "Reviewing the Community Engagement approach by 2025" is a key success indicator under the 'Our Corporation' aspiration in the CoA Strategic Plan 2024–2028. It also supports a key action under the 'Strategy, Value and Efficiency' outcome, which focuses on using community feedback, data and research to monitor, maintain and adapt our services thereby ensuring continuous improvement in value and efficiency.
5. Council resolved at its meeting of 25 February 2025 to call for:
 - 5.1. 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.

- 5.2. 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.
- 5.3. This work be completed in time for implementation in the last quarter of 2025.

Local Government Community Engagement Charter (State Charter)

6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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 ([Link 3](#)) with the final version endorsed by Council on 26 March 2024 ([Link 4](#)).
9. On 30 May 2025, the Minister released the State Government's draft Community Engagement Charter (State Charter) for public consultation. The State Charter sets out the principles for engagement and specifies minimum actions that councils must comply with when engaging with its community.
10. These mandatory actions vary depending on the subject of consultation and are designed to ensure councils make every reasonable effort to engage all interested members of the community. CoA's response to the Minister's consultation was approved by Council at its meeting on 24 June 2025. ([Link 5](#)).
11. Once the State Charter is finalised, Administration may need to undertake further work to ensure the CoA Charter and CoA Policy are aligned with its final version.

Development of the new City of Adelaide Community Engagement Charter (CoA Charter) and updated City of Adelaide Community Engagement Policy (CoA Policy)

12. The CoA Charter outlines the high-level principles through which we will deliver our commitment to our community in relation to the way Council conducts community engagement (**Attachment A**).
13. A range of support mechanisms such as training, resources and tools will be developed internally to aid in the implementation of the CoA Charter.
14. The CoA Charter reflects Council's vision for community engagement and is based on Council Member feedback.
15. The CoA Charter supports Council Members in their decision-making and confirms their commitment to our community regarding the manner in which CoA undertakes community engagement.
16. The development of the CoA Charter and CoA Policy consolidates work previously undertaken by Administration through the integrated community engagement approach and launch of 'Our Adelaide'.
17. **Attachment B** contains a draft version of the updated CoA Policy, which reflects consideration of the following:
 - 17.1. The CoA Charter, which provides high-level strategic guidance and direction on engagement principles.
 - 17.2. The revised State Charter, which outlines updated requirements and expectations for community engagement.
 - 17.3. Legislative and statutory obligations required under the Local Government Act 1999 (SA).
 - 17.4. Council's broader commitment to meaningful, inclusive, and transparent engagement with the community.
18. The CoA Policy updates and contemporises the 'Community Consultation Policy', which was last amended in 2021 and reflects COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time.

Next Steps

19. Approval of the CoA Charter and CoA Policy is required at the 26 August 2025 Council meeting to enable community engagement to take place from 1 September to 1 October 2025.
20. Timing ensures that consultation is undertaken prior to the busy Christmas period.
21. The consultation outcomes, along with the final CoA Charter and CoA Policy will be presented back to Council in November.

22. Administration will continue to liaise with the OLG and Local Government Association of SA on the finalisation of the State Charter and will ensure any inconsistency between the State Charter and the CoA Charter and CoA Policy are identified and, where necessary, amendments made for Council's subsequent consideration and endorsement.
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DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 - Council's current Community Consultation Policy

Link 2 – *Local Government Act 1999* (SA)

Link 3 - Draft submission - City Finance and Governance Committee on 20 February 2024

Link 4 - Final version - Council on 26 March 2024

Link 5 - CoA's response to the Minister's consultation, approved by Council at its meeting on 24 June 2025

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – draft City of Adelaide Community Engagement Charter

Attachment B – draft City of Adelaide Community Engagement Policy
